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## Executive summary

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### Background

This report presents the synthesis of the thematic evaluation '*CFA's on the Road to Conflict Transformation*' in which four major Dutch Co-Financing Agencies (CFAs) (Cordaid, ICCO, Oxfam Novib and Plan) have participated. The co-ordination of the evaluation was taken up by Partos, the association of Dutch civil society organisations in international development co-operation, and is part of Partos' mandate to promote the quality of the work of its members. An independent group of northern and southern experts has implemented the evaluation. A Co-ordination Group, composed of the Partos Evaluation Manager and representatives of the four participating CFAs, accompanied the entire evaluation process. It had the assistance of an External Reference Group consisting of external experts who provided advice on the quality of the process and results of the evaluation.

'Conflict transformation' as a subject is directly linked to the work of the CFAs, since many countries where CFAs are active through their partner organisations are countries where conflict happens and seriously interferes with the work aimed at development. Because CFAs consider it of utmost importance to remain active in these areas; working in and on conflict is part and parcel of their work.

The overall aim of the evaluation was to gain more insight into the results of the activities in the area of conflict management, prevention and resolution to date, and thus to learn lessons about the CFAs' existing and potential contribution to conflict transformation. The results of this evaluation are meant to serve accountability, learning and policy development purposes.

The evaluation addressed six major evaluation questions:

- *Main evaluation question*: to what extent has the work of CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict-affected regions over the period 2003-2006 achieved their conflict-related objectives and contributed to conflict transformation?
- *Relevance*: to what extent have the programmes matched the policy priorities of the CFAs and their partner organisations, and have the needs of the beneficiaries in the local context of conflict been addressed?
- *Conflict sensitivity*: to what extent have the programmes been prepared and implemented in a conflict sensitive way?
- *Coherence, complementarity and co-ordination*: to what extent have the programmes been coherent, complementary and co-ordinated with those of other actors?
- *Effectiveness*: (related to the main evaluation question) to what extent have the projects achieved conflict-related results and wider outcomes?
- *Sustainability*: to what extent are the results of the programmes likely to continue after the withdrawal of the CFAs?

The evaluation team developed an evaluation framework to assess the performance of the CFAs and their partners with regard to these questions, while at the same time analysing the reasons for the differences in results of the programmes assessed. The evaluation faced some important challenges. The vagueness of the evaluation subject was a first and serious difficulty: the title of the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) (CFAs *on the road* to 'conflict transformation') already indicates that, over the evaluation period, CFAs have not yet fully adopted 'conflict transformation' as an approach or guiding principle for their work in conflict-affected countries. In addition, the title might suggest that *all* CFAs have decided

to direct their peace and conflict-related work towards 'conflict transformation', while, with the exception of ICCO, they prefer to have this work guided by other approaches. In other words, ICCO attaches much importance to 'conflict transformation' as a theme, and works on specific policies related to conflict transformation while others do not. So, different concepts are in use at the level of the CFAs, while at the level of partner organisations there is even more variety in the concepts used. As such, it was impossible to use a terminology that takes into account the specificity of each CFA and partner organisation. The evaluation has hence adopted a pragmatic approach, using 'conflict transformation' as **a generic term** referring to all actions and processes that seek to alter in a positive way the characteristics of the conflict. In addition, the evaluation's ToR did not pay attention to humanitarian assistance, while CFAs undertake important humanitarian actions in (post-) conflict regions. Finally, the ToR had a strong focus on the project level at the expense of the general global policy and meso levels, which needed also to be addressed to allow for a comprehensive assessment. While the evaluation team has found solutions to these challenges that have worked out well in practice, the difficulties depicted above prevented the evaluation team from developing an overall intervention logic (including expected results), against which the performance of CFAs (both in general and individually) and their partners could be assessed.

The evaluation covered the efforts of CFAs over the period 2003-2007. The evaluation focused first on the CFAs' overall policies related to conflict transformation and on their actions and performance at the meso level (policies, strategies and practices at country and regional levels). It furthermore studied in detail the CFAs' efforts in six selected countries/regions (Afghanistan, Burundi/East Congo, Indonesia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and South Sudan). In all, 60 projects were assessed through a desk study; 31 projects were visited in the field (in Burundi/East Congo, Indonesia and Sierra Leone). Overall, this sample represented about 13% of the projects in these countries/regions and roughly 1.6% of the CFAs' total budget over the above-mentioned period.

### **CFA policies and strategies deal in different ways with 'conflict transformation'**

Although the CFAs participating in the evaluation do not attach equal importance to 'conflict transformation', this does not necessarily influence the importance of their presence in a conflict-affected country. CFAs use different concepts related to conflict transformation, and the concept of 'conflict transformation' as such is only explicitly used by ICCO as part of its 'Democratisation and Peace Building' programme, one of its three major themes of action. Cordaid mainly uses the concepts of peace, reconciliation and justice. For Oxfam Novib, work related to conflict transformation is part of its rights-based approach and falls more particularly under 'the right to life and security'. Plan positions its conflict transformation work in its overall focus on improving the living conditions of poor children. Looking more closely, the way CFAs have framed their work related to conflict and peace has much to do with their identity and with the way in which this theme has developed over time within the organisation; internal dynamics have been a major factor in shaping the programme and determining the terminology used.

While all CFAs have invested in defining conflict transformation or related policies, there exists a clear gap between policies and practice, as no clear measures have been developed to ensure policy coherence at lower levels (the country, the project). Rather than formal policies, specific factors such as the role and position of CFA staff, the history of CFA presence in the area, the characteristics of the country portfolio, etc. play a more important role in shaping the programme at the local level and determining its performance. Most often, these factors do not show a specific CFA related pattern, which implies that differences in performance at

country level cannot be linked with the different profiles and policies of the CFAs concerned. Their general policies do, however, have an added value as they ensure that programme portfolios at country level reflect their thematic choices.

Policies related to conflict transformation deal with work that *directly* focuses on the peace and conflict dynamics (the so-called *on conflict work*), but fail to address how so-called *in conflict* work is to be conceived and implemented. This '*in conflict*' work does not directly interact with the peace and conflict dynamics and can be 'regular' development work in the areas of poverty alleviation, capacity building and lobby and advocacy, but also humanitarian work. Country policies, in as far as they exist, also fail to address this issue. This has important consequences for most of the *in conflict* work undertaken, which often does not systematically address the particularities of work in a context of conflict. At the level of implementation, however, some of the *in conflict* work (e.g. ICCO in Indonesia) tries to effectively incorporate the particularities and specific requirements of working *in conflict* regions.

The picture above needs some further nuancing, in the sense that, in conflict-affected countries and regions, the situation on the ground is often highly volatile and difficult to predict; hence, investing heavily in overall and country/region policies might not be the most appropriate answer, as classic 'rational' (or 'scientific') approaches can only provide a partial solution. What is also needed, are good skills and a kind of intuition which allow one to recognise (and anticipate) key trends, to dream about the unimaginable, to identify key resource persons who can play a role in shaping and implementing policies at the local level, to take good decisions by combining different pieces of information, etc., elements that belong to what we have called the 'art' dimension of dealing with conflict transformation. It has been found that CFAs and their partners often have been able to incorporate well this 'art' dimension in their work and approaches.

In conclusion, it has been found that the importance of 'conflict transformation' (in the generic way in which the evaluation team defined the term – see above) varies heavily among CFAs, as do the levels of policy development in this regard. In addition, policies are mostly poorly operationalised at the meso and local levels, but nevertheless have made country programme portfolios reflect overall policies. The lack of operationalised policies has further implied that in particular *in conflict* projects have limited access to guidance for systematically taking into account the particularities of work in a (post-) conflict context. On the other side, CFAs and their partners often have available specific skills to adequately address the challenges of a conflict context (the 'art' dimension of conflict transformation), which have allowed them to compensate partially the above-mentioned weaknesses.

### **CFAs and their partners have been able to identify and exploit opportunities for conflict transformation in an often highly constraining context of conflict**

It is obvious that contexts of conflict seriously influence the action of CFAs and their partners. This is particularly true in countries or regions characterised by high levels of insecurity and instability. In such situations, the preconditions for work are often simply absent and the population lives under extreme pressure, while long-lasting periods of insecurity and violence have a devastating effect on local resilience, capacities and willingness to withstand external destructive forces. On the other hand, people often show tremendous capacities to cope with threats and survive in extremely difficult situations. CFAs and their partners have often been able to rely upon them.

Post-conflict phases have provided better opportunities, as they are mostly characterised by substantially lower levels of violence, which, in principle, makes work safer and easier to implement and sustainable results easier to achieve. However, most often the situation remains complex (or even increases in complexity) as the process towards sustainable peace never runs smoothly. As a rule, CFAs and their partners still had to take into account violence that still occurs occasionally and the root causes of the conflict that are not or only partially addressed, whereas key components of peace agreements (such as the disarmament of warring factions and reintegration of ex-combatants) are badly implemented. The institutional landscape often has become increasingly complex with old powers disintegrating and new actors emerging. Such situations have imposed important limitations on the work of CFAs and their partners, and require high levels of skills, knowledge and affinity with the local situation, which they have often been able to deploy fairly well.

Notwithstanding these huge difficulties and challenges, it was found that CFAs and their local partners have been able to identify and exploit many opportunities for meaningful work. Partners often have knowledge, skills and competence that distinguish them from mainstream development and political actors. They also can deal better with the situation of instability, mostly characterised by weak governance, high levels of corruption, lack of transparency and lack of accountability mechanisms. In particular, organisations that implement on conflict projects almost by nature show a high level of conflict sensitivity. This is understandable, as dealing with the conflict and its key dynamics and actors is part and parcel of their work. Their capacity to develop a high level of conflict awareness is enhanced by their strong embedding in local society. In this regard, it can be mentioned that no significant differences in performance have been noted between *faith-based and secular partner organisations*. Both types of organisations have their specific advantages and disadvantages. In some contexts (e.g. in Papua where Christianity is part of local identity), faith-based partners offer clear advantages. In contrast, it is important to carefully select religious partners in multi-religious settings where 'religion' is a major factor in a conflict (as is the case in other parts of Indonesia and Sudan, for instance).

*International organisations (including CFAs)* are visibly present in (post-) conflict areas, but do not have the same 'natural' advantages. While they outscore their local counterparts in terms of administrative and financial skills, their identity as international organisation has often proved a disadvantage. Their presence often leads to unrealistic expectations at the grassroots level, their support is easily targeted by warring factions, and their lack of affinity with the local situation makes it difficult for them to adequately 'read' local dynamics and take the right decisions. A strategy not to intervene directly, but rather to use their specific expertise to increase the capacities of local actors, has been the most adequate in creating win-win situations.

In summary, CFAs and their partners have been seriously hampered by the constraining conflict environment, but in particular local partner organisations that are strongly embedded in local reality have been able to react adequately and develop coping strategies that allowed them to engage in highly meaningful work. Compared to other mostly better resourced actors, such organisations seem often to have distinctive skills and competence.

**CFAs and their partners have achieved meaningful results, but these remain rather scattered and limited in scope, so that substantial changes at a broader level often have not been achieved**

In addition to their capacity to identify and work on opportunities for meaningful action, most CFAs and their partners also have effectively contributed to conflict transformation. A broad variety of outputs and outcomes has been achieved, covering all dimensions of 'conflict transformation'. However, many of these outputs and corresponding outcomes have remained isolated and few synergies have been realised. In addition, gender has been addressed in an unequal way: in some countries, gender has been consistently addressed (though not by using conflict-specific approaches), while this has not been the case in other countries. Overall, gender specific data with regard to the results achieved are lacking, in particular at the outcome level.

The main outputs that CFAs and their partners have achieved include: strengthened community institutions and leadership, increased awareness of the population (related to human rights, to the nature of the conflict), support to conflict victims, the adoption of peace enhancing regulations by local governments, and support to the implementation of peace conferences and peace agreements. They have also succeeded in increasing the attention paid to peace building and related issues at the international level and with the public at large. Other outputs that have contributed to higher-level results include the organisation of numerous training sessions and seminars, the production of analyses, specific tools and instruments to enhance peace building and conflict prevention, the provision of a voice to people and civil society in an often difficult situation and the documentation of human rights violations.

At the outcome level, the CFAs' efforts have led to strengthened partner organisations that have become better equipped to deal with conflict transformation and take up their role as a countervailing power against forces that jeopardise the peace process. Having become institutionally stronger, many partners are now increasingly recognised by other stakeholders as key actors. In particular at the grassroots level, they have been able to improve the people's peace building and conflict resolution capacities, leading to decreased conflicts. Other important outcomes that can be clearly linked with the action of CFAs and their partners include reduced traumas with victims of conflict, increased resilience against provocations and increased conflict prevention capacities, and contributions to diminished violence (by key conflict actors, including the state) as well as increased openness (of these actors) to peaceful solutions.

Also *in conflict* projects, under certain conditions, have contributed to conflict transformation, even when they did not explicitly aim to do so. By producing valuable goods or service for the people in a conflict sensitive way, they often contribute to removing structural problems that constitute a major cause of the conflict or of the obstacles to solving the conflict. Projects doing well in this regard were characterised by going beyond the simple provision of services. They used sound participatory approaches that paid much attention to building up capacities and creating ownership at the grassroots level and, above all, to consciously promoting the restoration of positive social capital.

The results presented above illustrate that CFAs and their partners deal mainly with 'positive peace promotion', i.e. efforts to change the attitudes of actors and structural factors that are a source of direct physical violence. *In conflict* projects deal mainly with underlying factors that (might) contribute to violence if not properly addressed. As such, these results have contributed to increased security and social cohesion. Fundamentally, this outcome refers to the gradual restoration of normal living conditions in an environment that has been traumatised by the destructive effects of conflict. It allows increased interaction and

exchange, co-operation between former enemies, etc. This in its turn leads to other positive evolutions that reinforce each other, such as increased trust among different (ethnic, religious, age) groups, the proliferation of social interaction and local institutions (women's groups, youth clubs, social associations), mixed marriages, increased co-operation and social and economic interaction, etc. that constitute important triggers for the normalisation of life at the community level, lead to clear socio-economic benefits and most often take form without external interference.

While CFAs and their partners have covered the various dimensions of 'conflict transformation' (focus on behavioural, attitudinal and structural/contextual aspects), they have done so mostly at the grassroots level, which is the level where their comparative advantages are most obvious. Many of these results have remained limited in scope and isolated by a lack of a co-ordinated and strategic approach combining the various dimensions of conflict transformation in an integrated way. While their effects certainly add to the peace process, they have often remained limited in scope. On the other hand, the evaluation has identified many advocacy efforts that have successfully linked the reality on the ground with broader advocacy aims. Many *in conflict* projects that might have reached their (not conflict-related) objectives have not tapped their potential contribution to conflict transformation. While it is subject to debate to state that *in conflict* projects must optimise that potential, *in conflict* and *on conflict* efforts could (and should) at least have been better co-ordinated, which would clearly have enhanced their effectiveness and have created synergies.

Most projects have also been unaware of the potential negative effects they might unwillingly produce, and have not undertaken efforts to identify such effects. The evaluation had no time to conduct in-depth analyses in this regard, but experiences from elsewhere indicate that in situations where the local population (in particular women and children) is highly vulnerable and social relations and networks have a precarious character, projects can easily but unwillingly do harm.

Finally, it has been very difficult to clearly draw conclusions on the probability of *sustainability* of the benefits achieved by the projects, in particular in regions where the situation is so unstable that forecasts are difficult to make. The reliability of benefit sustainability forecasts is somewhat better in post-conflict regions, but even there the process towards sustainable peace is complicated and vulnerable. Considering the magnitude of the problems that exist in conflict zones, there is a serious danger that changes in the conflict and peace dynamics can easily destroy results that have been achieved with much effort. The sustainability of the conflict transformation results obtained remains highly dependent on the evolution of factors the CSO and beneficiary community often can only marginally influence.

In view of this high level of uncertainty, the CFAs' policy to design a strategy that heavily relies on local partners and on developing sustainable relations with these partners (rather than focusing on project benefit sustainability) might be considered adequate. That said, the reliance on partners has sometimes prevented CFAs from assessing and monitoring projects with sufficient care; as such, CFAs and their partners could have done more to optimise the chances of project benefit sustainability.

In summary, CFAs and their partners have been able to contribute to conflict transformation in various ways and their actions on the ground have produced clear effects. However, due to a lack of clearly operationalised policies and strategies at the country level, many chances for synergies and more meaningful results have been missed. Gender has been addressed unequally. Most results at the local level have remained isolated and have not been part of a broader integrated approach that is often key to contributing to substantial changes in peace

and conflict dynamics, which is what CFAs actually aim to achieve. Many advocacy efforts have nevertheless been well linked with actions at the local level.

### **Relevance, appropriateness and conflict sensitivity**

The projects assessed in this evaluation are relevant in view of the population's needs and problems. This in itself is not a surprise, considering the important needs the population, in particular its poorer segments, is experiencing in conflict and post-conflict settings. Participatory project planning and the inclusion of stakeholders in design and implementation have been strong factors, ensuring that the projects understand the actual needs of the population. The local embedding of partners and the fact that partner staff has most often lived and worked in the conflict environment for a considerable length of time, imply that they have a high level of awareness on the conflict situation and its dynamics and, hence, the needs of the population. CFAs, from their side, have succeeded in acquiring considerable knowledge on the local situation, because of their long-standing involvement in the region and capacity to update their knowledge continuously. In addition, as value driven organisations, CFAs and their partners almost by nature embrace values like impartiality and neutrality, and focus on the people's fate and their empowerment. This provides them with a natural advantage when intervening in conflict settings that are often highly complex and sensitive. The strong adherence to these values and principles has often also allowed partner organisations in particular to become broadly respected and regarded as neutral and reliable actors in an often turbulent environment where people do not trust each other.

As such, CFAs and their partners have available important assets that are linked to their identity and to long-lasting processes of internal capacity building. They have, however, not yet succeeded in fully optimising them. More specifically, CFAs and their partners do not sufficiently engage in accurate and formal conflict analyses, which implies that relevance and appropriateness of projects are rather intuitively assessed and followed up, and that the possible emergence of unintended effects is not addressed. Good intuitive knowledge is not well linked with more systematic approaches and, hence, not optimally used in strategic decision-making and day-to-day implementation. Correspondingly, the development of programme portfolios remains rather ad hoc and intuitive and lacks a clear strategic focus.

In addition, many projects poorly address gender in context and conflict analyses, project identification, implementation and monitoring. This is particularly serious, as it is widely known that women and children suffer most from the negative effects of conflicts.

The selection of partners and the development of long-standing partnerships have become the cornerstones of CFA policy and strategy implementation at the country level. Even more than in other (non-conflict) regions, CFAs 'invest' in and rely on their partners in various ways. CFAs show a clear preference for long-standing partnerships, rely heavily on local partners for updating their knowledge on the conflict situation, attach much importance to partner dialogue (notwithstanding the fact that its quality and effects are not always convincing), promote exchange and co-operation among partners through various initiatives (organisation of conferences, partner meetings, etc.) and, last but not least, are ready to generously invest in the capacity building of their partner organisations. While this deliberate choice for partnership is not to be questioned, it has important consequences. Particularly in difficult contexts, projects tend to become rather a means (to realise and continue the partnership) than an end in themselves. This has weakened the quality of preparation and assessment of projects, which in particular in a highly volatile and unpredictable context should get more attention than elsewhere.

Most projects, partners and CFAs also underestimate the specific requirements and challenges of work in conflict-affected regions. CFAs and their partners have hardly any specific tools and management mechanisms available (appropriate levels of staffing, formal approaches for flexible project management) that address the specific characteristics of work in conflict regions. In addition, they do not undertake specific efforts to assess which groups the projects reach effectively (they are often different from those initially planned) and which varied effects (planned and unplanned, wanted and unwanted) the projects produce at the level of (often heterogeneous) target groups.

In conclusion, it can be stated that specific characteristics, which are linked to the CFAs' and their partners' identity, have provided a solid guarantee for the relevance and appropriateness of their action in conflict-affected regions. This makes that CFAs and their partners are well placed to work in conflict regions. However, failure to adequately address the specific requirements and challenges of work in conflict areas and a lack of good context and conflict analyses, among other things, have implied that so far CFAs and their partners could not fully realise their potential.

### **Coherence, complementarity and co-ordination: an unfinished story**

Overall, CFAs and their partners are well aware of other actors and the need to co-ordinate their actions with those actors. They actually succeed in avoiding overlap and contradiction, but the positive picture stops there. Indeed, with a few exceptions, there are no joint analyses or global frameworks that could facilitate co-ordination and complementarity. The important efforts many CFAs undertake at the country level to encourage co-operation among partners and, hence, avoid fragmentation and isolated action, and increase overall coherence and complementarity, have so far not produced the envisaged results. The institutional self-interest of partners and high dependency on donors seem to be important stumbling blocks in this regard. There are also relatively few cases of *proactive* co-ordination towards the establishment and implementation of mechanisms wherein all actors position themselves willingly under a co-ordinating body and are ready to give up their individual positions and interests. As such, the CSO community as a whole often does not succeed in acquiring enough clout to address powerful actors and dynamics effectively.

While it seems difficult to ensure co-ordination with other CSO actions, partners and CFAs succeed better in achieving complementarity with the action of other development actors. There are many examples of partners and CFAs engaging in actions that complement important initiatives undertaken by the international donor community or government institutions.

CFAs rarely co-operate among themselves, but joint lobby initiatives are an important exception in this regard. In some countries and regions (Great Lakes, Papua, Afghanistan, Sudan, Nepal) CFAs and some of their key partners have effectively pooled their resources and insights for lobby efforts towards the EU and the Dutch government.

In (post-) conflict regions, various intervention approaches co-exist, but ensuring coherence among them has proven difficult, in particular as far as the articulation between humanitarian and structural development support is concerned. At best, structural development efforts have benefited from experience acquired through humanitarian actions. The situation is somewhat better as far as the articulation of lobby and advocacy activities with initiatives at the local level is concerned. Quite a lot of examples of coherent action and the creation of synergies exist, but they are not systemic and rather the consequence of personal initiatives and affinities.

The lack of commonly agreed frameworks seems a major impediment to co-ordinated action. Furthermore, local partners – whether they like it or not – have to compete for scarce donor funds, which makes co-operation difficult. In addition, the specific requirements for good quality networking and co-operation are not well understood and few are ready to devote the necessary time and resources.

In conclusion, the performance of CFAs and their partners in terms of co-ordination and complementarity is rather weak and constitutes a major cause of their too fragmented results and all-in-all limited impact on general peace processes. The lack of commonly agreed frameworks of analysis and action, and of well arranged co-ordination mechanisms that imply giving up short-term self-interests, seems the major stumbling blocks in this regard.

### **Main recommendations**

The main recommendations of the evaluation read as follows.

1. *CFAs and their partners should become more aware of the fact that work in conflict settings requires specific approaches, management tools and mechanisms that are substantially different from those used in more regular settings.* Only when such specific approaches are consistently applied, will CFAs and their partners be able to make full use of the comparative advantages that seem to equip them better for conflict transformation activities than other actors.
2. *When designing specific approaches, tools and mechanisms, CFAs and their partners should aim to maintain a balance that takes into account their comparative advantages (mostly related to the creative/art dimensions of conflict transformation approaches) and more 'scientific' elements that should be blended in a coherent approach.* In other words, CFAs and their partners, in line with their own identity, should engage in designing their own specific set of approaches and tools while taking into account the need to ensure co-ordination and complementarity of their action with that of other actors.
3. *The development of such adapted policies, strategies and corresponding tools should, however, be adapted to the CFAs' ambitions in conflict-affected regions.* Different options (corresponding to different levels of ambition with regard to conflict transformation, ranging from conflict transformation as a key area of intervention to the option to engage in *in conflict* projects only) can come to mind that basically require different policy settings and development of instruments.
4. *Efforts should be stepped up to improve gender mainstreaming in all initiatives undertaken in conflict-affected regions.* In addition, gender should be a key consideration in the policies, strategies and tools to be developed (see above) and in efforts better to identify and assess the unplanned effects of projects.
5. *'Conflict sensitivity' should be a key notion and mainstreamed in all work in (post-) conflict settings. While this might be rather easily achieved by on conflict projects, it should also become a guiding principle for 'in conflict' projects, which need to be framed in such a way that they try to optimise their contribution to conflict transformation.* This implies a two-way approach in relation to conflict (influenced by the conflict and influencing the conflict), particular attention to potentially harmful consequences, specific attention to effectively reaching targeted groups, adapted management mechanisms, good and regularly updated knowledge of the conflict

(acquired through in-house competence and/or from elsewhere). This implies also that project objectives and approaches are designed in such a way that the potential to contribute to conflict transformation is maximised.

6. *Long-standing partnerships should remain (or become) the cornerstone of the CFAs' strategy in conflict areas.* This would imply *inter alia* the association of (key) partners to all strategic decision-making and the transfer of some key management functions to qualified partner organisations. At the same time, efforts should be made to eliminate the current pitfalls of an often too heavy reliance on partnerships. More attention is to be given to the quality of project design, preparation and implementation, and concerted efforts are to be made to address present weaknesses of partners in terms of context and conflict analyses, inadequate monitoring systems, lack of a clear sustainability strategy, etc.
7. *CFAs should step up their efforts to come to more effective co-ordination and co-operation at the local level, starting with improving co-operation among partner organisations.* Co-operation processes should be reinforced by the development (or acceptance) of joint analytical frameworks as a major reference for action, the extension of the planning horizon, the development of incentives for co-operation and joint action by partners, open discussions about competition for donor funding among partners and how to deal with it, etc.

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## List of abbreviations

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AMM	Aceh Monitoring Mission
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation(s)
CFA	Co-financing Agency (in this report: Cordaid, ICCO, Oxfam Novib and Plan Netherlands)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ICCO	Interkerkelijke Organisatie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
KDHCO	Kenema Diocese Healthcare Co-ordination Office (Sierra Leone)
KIA	Kerk in Actie ( <i>Church in Action</i> )
MHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation (Sierra Leone)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OI	Oxfam International
ON	Oxfam Novib
SPM	Strategic Portfolio Management
TOR	Terms of Reference

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

This report presents the synthesis of the thematic evaluation 'CFAs on the Road to Conflict Transformation' in which four major Dutch Co-Financing Agencies (CFAs) (Cordaid, ICCO, Oxfam Novib and Plan) participated. The co-ordination of the evaluation was taken up by Partos, the association of Dutch civil society organisations in international development co-operation, and is part of Partos' mandate to promote the quality of the work of its members.

'Conflict transformation' as a subject is directly linked to the work of the CFAs, since some of the countries where CFAs are active through their partner organisations, are countries where conflict happens and seriously interferes with the work aimed at development. Because CFAs consider it of utmost importance to remain active in these regions, working in and on conflict is part and parcel of their work. The choice for 'conflict transformation' as the theme of this evaluation refers to the notion that conflicts, especially when they are not violent, should not be seen as a merely negative force. Indeed, conflict is sometimes necessary for social change to happen, and constructive conflict can be seen as a vital catalyst for change. Despite the high price that is often paid in terms of human suffering, the same is true for destructive, violent conflicts: in certain cases they too may offer new opportunities for positive change. CFAs hope to learn from this evaluation if and how these opportunities can be seized in a timely manner.

## 1.2 Aims and main research questions

The overall aim of the evaluation is to gain more insight into the results so far of the activities in the area of conflict management, prevention and resolution, and thus to learn lessons about their existing and potential contribution to conflict transformation. The results of this evaluation are meant to serve accountability, learning and policy development purposes.

Learning (both at the level of the CFAs and their partner organisations) is at the centre of this evaluation. This learning process deals both with projects that address directly the root causes of the conflicts and attempt to influence the peace process (so-called '*on conflict*' projects), and projects that pursue general development objectives (improved health, increased income, etc.) but do so in conflict-affected regions (so called '*in conflict*' projects).

### Initial evaluation questions

The main evaluation question, as stipulated in the Terms of Reference, reads as follows: **To what extent has the work of CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict-affected areas over the period 2003-2006 achieved their objectives and contributed – or can contribute – to conflict transformation?**

The initial underlying evaluation questions, as formulated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), were quite generic in nature and related to 'traditional' evaluation criteria: efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability (see annex 2 for more details).

### Adapted evaluation questions

While the ToR of the evaluation elaborates, in an interesting and quite detailed way, the context and paradigms related to working in conflict and are quite specific in as far as the methodology and deliverables are concerned, the evaluation questions were not elaborated

in the same way. This situation left the consultants with the challenge to arrive at **a realistic and feasible approach** that could serve, within the resource limitations of this study, the three objectives of the evaluation. It was decided to work out an approach that would allow the implementation of an evaluation that could produce **meaningful results**, which implied in first instance **a delineation of the evaluation subject**. ‘Delineation’ meant in first instance **making choices** and limiting the evaluation to those issues that are most relevant in view of this exercise, which is a *thematic* evaluation, related to ‘*conflict transformation*’.

Against this background and after discussion with the evaluation Co-ordination Group<sup>1</sup> it was decided to alter the formulation and scope of some of the evaluation questions. The most important changes and their rationale can be summarised as follows:

- First and most importantly, it was decided to limit the scope of the analysis with regard to the main evaluation question and the connected effectiveness question **to conflict-related results (outputs and outcomes) only**. As such, these questions aimed to assess both (1) effectiveness in terms of the direct conflict-related effects of the work of CFAs and their partners and (2) the impact, i.e. the contribution (existing or potential, intended or unintended) of their work to conflict transformation. The second part refers to the higher levels in the results chain, in particular the ‘beyond project’ level, and could not be properly addressed in this evaluation. The main reason for narrowing down the main evaluation question of the ToR was that – in the context of this *thematic* evaluation on *conflict transformation* – the added value of analysing the level of achievement of objectives of *in conflict* projects related to health, drinking water, capacity building, agriculture, micro-credit, etc. would be limited. However, information related to the level of success of the projects in terms of reaching their objectives has been assessed in broad terms, as their performance might produce an effect (directly or indirectly) on the conflict situation.
- Secondly, it was decided not to fully address ‘*efficiency*’, but to replace this criterion by ‘*conflict sensitivity*’.  
This decision was taken for two reasons. Firstly, addressing ‘*efficiency*’ conveniently in evaluations is mostly highly demanding. It applies *a fortiori* to thematic evaluations on a subject that is relatively new. Secondly, through this decision it was possible to address project implementation issues in a focused way, i.e. by looking at them from a conflict sensitive perspective. It should thereby be underlined that ‘*conflict sensitivity*’ became a key criterion in evaluation efforts related to conflict transformation and encompasses all dimensions of work in conflict regions. Efficiency, on the other hand, is a less relevant or a more problematic criterion. As such, the evaluation also deals consistently with the process dimension of ‘*conflict transformation*’, which is supposed to lead to a ‘transformed’ conflict<sup>2</sup>.
- Thirdly, the evaluation team has formulated an additional question pertaining to the *co-ordination and complementarity* of the CFAs and their partners’ work in relation to that of other actors.  
The main reason to include this question is that co-ordination and complementarity are considered key issues in evaluation work in conflict regions, as they are seen as vital factors for achieving meaningful results with regard to the peace and conflict dynamics.

1) Some background on the role and function of the Co-ordination Group is provided in point 1.6.3 below and in chapter 8 of the TOR presented in annex 2 of this report.

2) More details on the actual meaning and use of the term ‘*conflict transformation*’ in this evaluation follow below, under point 1.3.2).

In summary, the main evaluation question and the underlying evaluation questions should read as follows:

- *Main evaluation question*: to what extent has the work of CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict-affected regions over the period 2003-2006 achieved their conflict related objectives and contributed to conflict transformation?
- *Relevance*: to what extent have the programmes matched the policy priorities of the CFAs and their partner organisations, and have the needs of the beneficiaries in the local context of conflict been addressed?
- *Conflict sensitivity*: to what extent were the programmes prepared and implemented in a conflict sensitive way?
- *Coherence, complementarity and co-ordination*: to what extent have the programmes been coherent, complementary and co-ordinated with those of other actors?
- *Effectiveness*: (related to the main evaluation question) to what extent have the projects achieved conflict-related results and outcomes?
- *Sustainability*: to what extent are the results of the programmes likely to continue after the withdrawal of the CFAs?

## **1.3 Operationalisation of the main evaluation questions**

### **1.3.1 Evaluation framework**

Considering the triple objective of the evaluation (accountability, learning and policy development), an evaluation framework was developed that has allowed both to *determine the performance* of the CFAs and their partners in terms of their contribution to conflict transformation, and to look *for explanations* for that performance. This framework can be presented as follows:

- On the one hand the evaluation criteria (see the evaluation questions above) are addressed. The aim is to **determine the performance** of the work of both the CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict-affected areas via their work related to *in/on conflict* programmes. This 'performance' relates in first instance to their contribution to conflict transformation, but should also deal with other evaluation criteria related to relevance, effectiveness, conflict sensitivity, coherence and complementarity, and sustainability. The performance assessment should also be conducted in a gender specific way and aim at identifying unintended effects. Conceptually, these various performance dimensions are *the dependent variables (or variables to be explained)* of the evaluation research.
- On the other hand explanations for the performance are identified. More specifically, the evaluation team aims to analyse whether there are **differences in results** (or performance) between the various types of programmes (specific work on conflict, integrated work on conflict, work in conflict), the intervention strategies (poverty alleviation, civil society building, lobby & advocacy) and the different types of partner organisations (faith based, secular, etc.). The following types of factors can be distinguished:
  - **context** related factors (the literature provides ample evidence of the influence of the political, legal, social and other contexts and actors on conflicts and conflict transformation efforts); these are exogenous factors that are beyond the influence of the CFAs and their partners;

- **programme characteristics**, related to the type of programme, the intervention strategy, the type of partner organisation, the organisation of the aid chain; these factors can be influenced by the CFAs and their partners;
- **programme management** related factors are equally important, as development experience has largely learned over the last decades; these are endogenous factors that can be influenced by CFAs and their partners<sup>3</sup>.

Conceptually, these are *the independent variables (or explaining variables)* of the evaluation research.

Both the independent and dependent variables were further worked out in judgement criteria and indicators that are presented in annex 3. They have allowed the evaluators to measure the level of achievement with regard to the main evaluation questions. They have subsequently provided the basis for the development of more specific evaluation tools (see annex 4) and the format of the reports drafted (project notes, country reports and synthesis report).

### **Adaptations during implementation**

The initial evaluation framework was largely maintained during implementation and has constituted the basis for all major evaluation tools that have guided implementation. However, the concept of *relevance* was 'expanded' to include '*appropriateness*', to better capture the quickly changing reality in conflict and post-conflict regions, which implies that the relevance of actions can quickly change over time and needs actually to be constantly assessed.

### **1.3.2 Issues and challenges related to the implementation of the evaluation framework**

#### **Difficulties in defining the evaluation object**

From the early stages of the evaluation process, it became clear that the evaluation subject was difficult to define. This is actually already suggested by the title of the evaluation: "CFAs on the road to 'Conflict Transformation'". The following elaborates these difficulties:

- Different CFAs use different concepts related to conflict transformation. ICCO works explicitly with the concept of conflict transformation. Cordaid uses mainly the concepts of peace, reconciliation and justice, while Oxfam Novib and Plan use different concepts in practice. The evaluation team necessarily has to adapt to the terminology in use at each of the CFAs. However, in the end, a terminology that takes into account the specificity of each CFA had to be used.  
Similarly, different partner organisations use different concepts. The evaluation teams in the field had no choice but to adapt to the terminology in use by the various selected partner organisations.
- Not all CFAs attach equal importance to conflict transformation as a priority theme. Be this as it is, it seems not to have influenced the importance of their presence in a conflict region.

3) The distinction between exogenous and endogenous factors seemed important to us in view of the learning objectives of this evaluation.

4) Later on, in the field phase, it was found that very few projects work 'around' conflicts (as defined by J. Goodhand).

- In practice, it was sometimes difficult to make a distinction between projects working ‘around’, ‘in’ and ‘on’ conflict. Whether a project works ‘around’ conflict is hard to assess on the basis of documents alone<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, an important number of projects was found that is basically working ‘*in conflict*’, but have developed an ‘*on conflict*’ component.

This reality forced the evaluation team to adapt to the terminology used by the various selected partner organisations. It implied also that it was neither desirable nor possible to apply a common and univocal terminology that could capture the diverse frameworks the CFAs use. The team has, on the contrary, opted for a **pragmatic approach** that takes into account the reality at CFA and partner levels. In practice, and with the aim to capture the large diversity of CFA initiatives in the field of conflict and peace, the evaluation has used **conflict transformation as a generic term** referring to all ‘actions and processes which seek to alter in a positive way the various characteristics and manifestations of conflict’. In other words, the term has been used *also* to refer to actions (projects, programmes) that do not include all aspects that differentiate ‘conflict transformation’ from other (less comprehensive) peace building approaches<sup>5</sup>.

### Difficulties in assessing effectiveness and impact

Four issues made it particularly difficult to assess effectiveness and impact:

- Although justified and the only viable option in the context of this evaluation, the decision to use ‘conflict transformation’ as a generic term (that includes all actions and processes which seek to alter the conflict) led to additional challenges, in particular in as far as the assessment of effectiveness and impact is concerned. Indeed, this open attitude towards ‘all actions and processes’ implied that – *ex ante* – the criteria of effectiveness and impact could not be fully operationalised and no firm yardstick could be defined against which the performance of the projects could be judged. The evaluation has hence, through various data collection efforts, tried to record *all* contributions to conflict transformation of both *on conflict* and *in conflict* projects and has only *ex post* tried to group and interpret these effects (among other things by using a scheme based on Galtung, see 3.4).
- This approach led, in turn, to other challenges. It implied that no clear delineation could be made between ‘expected’ and ‘unexpected’ results. This applied in particular to *in conflict* projects that mostly did not aim directly at influencing peace and conflict dynamics.
- Another challenge related to aggregation: the evaluation has recorded a very broad range of effects, of a disparate and varied nature, and hence difficult to aggregate.
- In addition, ‘aggregation’ as such was not that meaningful in view of the small sample of projects that could be assessed. Even in regions that were visited in the field, the projects assessed only constituted a minor part of the entire portfolio of the CFAs.
- Finally, both at the project level and the CFA policy level, conflict transformation related objectives were little quantified, operationalised or defined in a gender specific way, which resulted in CFAs and their partners being unable to offer a yardstick against which they could assess their performance in the field of conflict transformation.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter 3 of annex 3 for more details on the key concepts used in this evaluation.

## **Differences between policies and practices, and specific characteristics of the aid chain**

Some CFAs have developed specific policy papers related to conflict transformation (Cordaid and ICCO), while others have not. The evaluation has, however, quickly discovered that the degree of implementation of these policies also varies from one organisation to another and even from country to country within one organisation. Overall, linkages between policies and field realities are weak. In other words, linkages are missing between policies and practices on the ground. While all CFAs have invested in defining conflict transformation or related policies, there exists a clear gap between these policies and practices, as no clear measures have been developed to ensure policy coherence at lower levels (the country, the project). Rather than formal policies, specific factors such as the role and position of CFA staff, the history of CFA presence in the area, the characteristics of the country portfolio, etc. play a more important role in shaping the programme at the local level and in determining its results. These factors do not show a specific, CFA related pattern, which implies that differences in performance at the country level cannot be linked with the different profiles and policies of the CFAs as such. Their general policies do, however, have an added value, as they ensure that programme portfolios at the country level reflect their thematic choices.

Furthermore, CFAs do not directly implement their policies, but select partner organisations with whom they engage in a dialogue on policy, programme and project implementation. The initiative may be taken either by the CFA or by the partner organisation. In the area of conflict transformation CFA field offices, liaison desks or external advisors often play a role to facilitate the interaction. Traditionally, and with the exception of Plan, CFAs do not have many field offices for their regular activities. For humanitarian assistance field offices have, however, often been established. As conflict transformation is both related to humanitarian and to structural assistance, more CFA staff is present in the field than in other contexts. These complexities of the aid chain had to be taken into account while evaluating the contribution of the CFAs to conflict transformation.

## **Institutional differences among CFAs**

Not only do conflict transformation related policies and the implementation of these policies show considerable variation among the CFAs, but organisational and institutional issues too seem to affect their performance in the area of conflict transformation to an important extent. Some CFAs have undergone an important restructuring in recent years, and frequent staff changes have occurred. Other differences are related to expert staff (internal or external) that has worked directly on conflict transformation, the application of project or programme approaches, the way CFAs relate to partner organisations, the linkages of 'regular' work with partner organisations to lobby activities, etc.

## **Main consequence of these challenges**

The issues presented above actually might lead us to the conclusion that this evaluation actually came too early, as CFAs are still too much 'on the road'. The point of departure was to prepare one global generic evaluation framework with judgement criteria and indicators based on the conflict transformation policies and practices of the CFA (see Annexe 2). This was the yardstick against which performance has been measured. However, given the above-mentioned problems and differences, the assessment of performance against this generic framework based on a general intervention logic proved to be problematic. Nevertheless, by using a pragmatic approach without giving up its clear conceptual framework, the evaluation team feels it was able to clearly assess the CFAs' performance, extract findings and formulate conclusions and recommendations.

## 1.4 Scope and coverage

The Terms of Reference (ToR) specified that the evaluation covers the period 2003-2006. In reality, the evaluation also paid attention to developments in 2007, and for two reasons: firstly, almost 'by nature' key stakeholders are interested most of all in the present and the recent past and, secondly, some of the participating CFAs have undergone important reorganisation processes that were only formally adopted or finalised in 2007; failure to take these evolutions into account would have considerably reduced the usefulness and relevance of this evaluation.

While the ToR defines the evaluation scope mainly in terms of countries/regions and projects to be covered, the actual scope of the evaluation covered three levels: the overall policy level, the policies and practices at country/regional level and at the project/programme level. The importance of the first two levels, however, only became gradually important as the ToR did not provide indications on their importance.

Following the ToR, the desk study should focus on a maximum of six geographical regions and the field study on a maximum of three regions out of the about 25 conflict countries/regions the four CFAs are working in. Already during the first meeting with the Co-ordination Group (CG), the six desk study countries/regions were selected: Afghanistan, the Great Lakes Area (in particular Burundi and East Congo), Indonesia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Sudan. Later on, of these six countries/regions, the Great Lakes Area, Indonesia and Sierra Leone were selected for the field study<sup>6</sup>. It was further decided to only include those projects that had a minimum budget of € 50,000, and had concluded in 2004 at the earliest or started in 2006 at the latest.

The following table provides some data on the relative importance of the work of the CFAs related to 'conflict and peace' and the extent to which this work is covered by the evaluation.

**Table 1: CFA involvement in 'conflict and peace' and its coverage by the evaluation (period 2003-2006, in million euro)**

	<b>Cordaid</b>	<b>ICCO</b>	<b>Oxfam Novib</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total budget (°)	675.5	512.2	548.5	107.6	1843.8
Amount spent on 'peace and conflict' theme (°°)	101.0	136.2	13.2	19.9	270.3
Amount spent in 7 countries included in evaluation (°°)	148.7	37.6	64.6	17.1	268.0
Amount spent on the 60 projects selected to be included in evaluation (°°°)	14.7	5.3	9.1	1.4	30.4

6) A more detailed description of the evaluation framework, approach and methodology, including the criteria used for the selection of countries/regions and projects included in the field study, is presented in annex 3.

- (°) including all types of funding, without the CFAs' overhead costs
- (°°) on the theme 'Democratisation and Peace Building' in the case of ICCO; in the conflict countries in the case of Plan
- (°°°) actually on 59 projects (financial data of one project could not be retraced)

The preliminary analysis of the CFAs' project portfolio allowed the establishing of an initial database of more than 450 projects implemented in the seven countries mentioned above,

from which 60 projects were selected for study in more depth in the desk study selected<sup>7</sup>. During the field visits, 31 of these projects were visited, whereas five projects in the field study countries were only studied on the basis of a documentation analysis, interviews and/or questionnaires. The desk study focused on South Sudan, Nepal and Afghanistan; 18 of the 24 projects of the initial desk study were retained for a second phase that also included interviews and a questionnaire.

The data above allow the conclusion that this evaluation only covered a small portion of the work of the CFAs in conflict areas. This said, efforts were made to ensure that the actions studied were representative for the work of the CFAs.

The main evaluation outputs and building blocks are presented in Annex 3.

## **1.5 Methodological limitations and validity**

In addition to the difficulties related to operationalising the evaluation framework (see 1.3.2 above), the evaluators had to deal with a few other important challenges, which impacted on the validity of the evaluation findings. First of all, the evaluators had to find an adequate trade-off between depth and coverage of their research and had to deal with unexpected events and setbacks, which implied that not all activities could be implemented as planned. In the early stages, the fact that the number of eligible projects was far more important than initially estimated forced the team to adapt the evaluation approach. In this regard it should be mentioned that prior to the evaluation and the finalisation of the ToR, no portfolio analysis had been conducted.

Another important limitation relates to the fact that the importance of the link between 'regular' development work and humanitarian assistance in conflict regions was not clearly recognised in the ToR, and this became obvious only gradually, in particular during the field phase. As such, the coexistence and complex relationship between these two ways of intervening could not be sufficiently addressed.

Furthermore, it was found that the evaluation approach focused too much on, on the one hand, the overall policies of the CFAs and, on the other hand, the projects as such, at the expense of the intermediate level. It would have been better to have paid more attention to the project portfolios in the selected countries/regions and to analyse these before actually proceeding to a selection of the case study projects. Considering the size of the country portfolios, this would, however, have been a considerable effort for which no resources were available.

Overall, the reliability and validity of the findings were positively influenced by, among other things, the overall positive climate of the evaluation, which was considered as a joint undertaking, the effective support of the members of the Co-ordination Group, the in-depth preparation of the field visits, the well crafted evaluation design, the evaluators' ability to create a good relationship with all stakeholders concerned, allowing them to gather high quality information in a short period of time, and the fact that, despite the limited time available for each project, the evaluators managed to 'triangulate' their data gathering at the local level. The organisation of restitution seminars at various levels (project, country, global) also provided high quality feedback on the results of the evaluation. On the other hand, the team has received only limited written comments on the reports, except from Oxfam Novib.

<sup>7</sup> Annex 6 presents an overview of these projects.

Negative factors in this regard were the relatively short period available for the field research, the fact that many projects had to be assessed on the basis of only a document analysis and a questionnaire, and the limited time available for assessing the project effects on the ground through extensive discussions and research at the level of the target groups. Difficulties in this regard were exacerbated by the lack of data at the higher-level (outcomes and impact) results and even on the outputs of the projects, and by the difficult working conditions faced in the field, in particular in DRC. In the absence of these data and in view of the limited time available, the evaluators could do nothing more but try to identify these results through their discussions at various levels. The evaluation team responded to these challenges in various ways, the most important being the use of a mix of data collection efforts (see annex 2, sub-chapter 2.3 for more details).

The evaluators also had to confront a number of difficult moral and ethical issues. In particular at the grassroots, they had to deal with vulnerable and traumatised communities. Evaluators had therefore to adopt a careful and highly 'conflict sensitive' attitude, which often forced them to sideline their own ambitions and objectives so as to pay the necessary respect to the traumatised population. More particularly, they had to be mindful about the potential impact of their questions on local social dynamics and victims of violence, invest considerable time in creating an atmosphere suitable for an open but respectful discussion, resort to individual interviews (mainly conducted by local evaluators), etc.

All in all, the evaluation team is of the opinion that the findings presented in this study are reliable and valid.

## **1.6 Organisation of the evaluation**

### **1.6.1 Evaluation phases**

The evaluation was implemented in three phases, which partially overlapped. The desk study phase (November 2007 – January 2008) included *inter alia* the review of the main documentation related to the subject, the selection of the countries and projects for the desk study and field study, the study of relevant documentation with regard to the projects and countries selected, the elaboration of a methodology for the field studies, and interviews with key staff at the level of the CFAs. The field phase (December 2007 – April 2008) started with a seminar bringing together most of the evaluators involved in the fieldwork in the three countries/regions selected. Later on, the findings of the fieldwork were supplemented by three limited desk country studies pertaining to South Sudan, Afghanistan and Nepal. The synthesis phase (April – September 2008) that summarises the findings of the desk and field studies concluded this evaluation.

### **1.6.2 Evaluation team<sup>8</sup>**

The evaluation team was composed of five northern senior consultants, two northern medium level consultants and five southern consultants. Four junior researchers provided support in the documentation phase of the evaluation. Each of the senior consultants participated in a field study and teamed up with one or two southern consultants for the country field analysis. Prior to the field visits, northern and southern consultants met during a one-week workshop to fine-tune the evaluation methodology and engage in discussion with CFA staff.

<sup>8</sup> See annex 9 for more details on the evaluation team.

A senior staff member of HCSS provided backstopping at key moments in the evaluation process.

### **1.6.3 Interaction with the Co-ordination Group**

The evaluation manager at Partos was in charge of the overall co-ordination of the evaluation, with the assistance of a Co-ordination Group made up of representatives of the four participating CFAs (see annex 7). The Co-ordination Group was in charge of the selection of the evaluation team, and facilitated the contacts with resource persons in the CFAs as well as the access to relevant information. The group met six times to discuss overall progress of the evaluation and the draft progress, country and synthesis reports.

### **1.6.4 Role of the External Reference Group**

The External Reference Group consisted of external experts and advised the Co-ordination Group on the quality of the process and results of the evaluation. The group gave advice on the Terms of Reference, the draft Progress Report and the draft Synthesis report. Annex 8 provides details on the composition of the External Reference Group.

## **1.7 Report outline**

This report is structured as follows. The next chapter focuses on the policy context, describing the CFAs' policies, strategies and practices. The third chapter focuses on the effectiveness and sustainability of the CFAs' and their partners' work related to conflict transformation and peace building. Chapter four deals with the relevance, appropriateness and conflict sensitivity of their programmes, while chapter five analyses the level of co-ordination, complementarity and coherence. Chapter six presents the main factors that explain the performance of the projects, partner organisations and CFAs. The seventh and last chapter presents the study's overall conclusions and recommendations.

Chapters three to six, which deal with the analysis by the main evaluation criteria, have a similar set-up. After a short introduction, they all start with the presentation of the main findings, in line with the judgement criteria and indicators developed. The closing section of each of these chapters consists of two parts: some evaluative reflections that build further on the findings and are formulated to encourage further learning and reflection, and the conclusions as such.

These chapters also contain an important number of boxes to illustrate our findings and conclusions. Most of these boxes deal with positive examples, which are considered most adequate to stimulate learning, but should not be considered as representative of the programmes analysed.

Nine annexes complete this report. They include the terms of reference of the study, the evaluation approach and methodology, a list of the evaluation tools used, a list of the main documents and bibliography used, an overview of the projects included in the desk study phase and field analyses, the composition of the Co-ordination Group, the External Reference Group and the evaluation team.

## 2. Policy and strategy analysis

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The policy and strategy analysis has followed a double track approach. It focused first on the analysis of the situation at CFA level (via study of documents, interviews with CFA staff). Second, the influence and relevance of CFA policies has been assessed via the analytical framework that focused on the influence of policies on performance at the level of project and programmes. The second level of analysis is only partially dealt with in this chapter, but will be addressed further in the report.

### 2.1 The CFAs' policies and practices related to conflict transformation

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#### 2.1.1 Cordaid

##### Overall policies

Policies and strategies of Cordaid have undergone important changes over the last years in an attempt to narrow down its programmatic focus over time. Until early 2007, *'Peace and Conflict'* was one of Cordaid's main themes. It became one of Cordaid's five key thematic areas in 2002, while the organisation's work in the South remained structured along geographic lines. Subsequently, efforts were undertaken to develop a policy and promote it inside the various regional departments of the organisation. An overall policy document was issued in 2003 (Peace and Conflict Policy Paper 2003 – 2006).

*'Peace and reconciliation'* is a theme that Cordaid has for long been involved in, often in close co-operation with church related institutions, such as *Justitia et Pax* and the Justice and Peace secretariats connected to the dioceses. The policy document was the outcome of an internal process that started with assigning a thematic representative to the theme *'Peace and Conflict'*. This person co-ordinated a team with representatives from the various regional departments, to define a strategy on *'Peace and Conflict'* for the period 2003-2006. The document presents the organisation's overall objective related to work in conflict-affected regions: *to support peace processes by investing in social, economic and political structures, mechanisms and relationships, that enable people on the ground to end injustice and inequality, handle conflicts in a peaceful manner and shape reconciliation processes.* This overall objective is further operationalised in specific objectives related to two themes (reconciliation and peace, and empowerment of marginalised groups) and to results at the local, beyond local and regional/global levels.

The policy document also provides an overview of possible causes and factors of modern day conflicts. The second chapter claims to provide theoretical approaches to peace building and conflict transformation and prevention. The approaches presented (conflict-sensitive aid, just peace, ecumenical approach, local capacities and capabilities for peace approach) were selected because of their relevance to Cordaid's own work and their use by specialised catholic institutions, such as Pax Christi, with whom Cordaid is associated. While they present interesting information, they fail to define, distinguish and operationalise the various peace- building approaches (including conflict transformation) that are encountered in mainstream literature and are often referred to in the document. In addition, the document is quite heavy and not user-friendly.

The strength of the policy paper lies in its attempts to link theory with Cordaid's history and practices, in particular at the counterpart level, and with its identity as a multi-dimensional

organisation, providing the potential to produce an added value through its 'linkage' approach. This is illustrated by the double track approach (cfr. the two specific objectives), which aspires to combine direct interventions related to reconciliation and peace with the empowerment of marginalised groups. The paper further recognises the distinct characteristics and requirements of *Peace and Conflict* related work, which implies, among other things, the need to develop a diversified portfolio of counterparts and strategic partnerships, more travel by staff members, a different approach towards accountability, and longer-term financial support and flexible funding. The policy paper further highlights the importance of gender in conflict areas and the need for capacity building, also at the level of Cordaid.

Since its internal reorganisation in January 2007, Cordaid has changed its geographic set-up by organising its work mainly along thematic programmes. Four programme sectors were defined (Participation, Emergency Aid and Reconstruction, Health and Well-being, and Entrepreneurship); each composed of two or three programmes. The initiatives that used to fall under the '*Peace and Conflict*' theme have now mainly been classified under the 'Reconciliation and Reconstruction' programme (which is part of the programme sector 'Emergency Aid and Reconstruction') and the 'Participation' programme (which also includes many conflict related programmes). It is obvious that the dividing of the Peace and Conflict portfolio over two distinct programmes diminishes the visibility of the theme and brings specific challenges in terms of co-ordination and integration.

## Policies, strategies and activities in the regions studied

### Asia

The Asia regional policy paper 2003 – 2006 briefly 'contextualises' the theme and, in line with the overall policy, endeavours to develop a double track approach focusing on developing a network approach and on empowering marginalised groups to fight for their rights in a peaceful manner. The promotion of human rights and building a civil society based on democratic principles are considered crosscutting in all work for peace. The need to integrate a gender perspective in the conflict analyses is mentioned, but gender is further not addressed in the document. No further reference to the overall policy is made.

*In Indonesia*, Cordaid has a broad programme, composed of *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects, and including an important number of activities in several conflict areas in Indonesia (mainly Papua and Kalimantan), which corresponds well with the double track approach mentioned above (focus on grassroots empowerment combined with lobby activities, such as those related to the precarious human rights situation in Papua), but contains no further reference to the policy documents.

Partnerships in these regions are often long standing. Cordaid has also been present in Maluku and Aceh, through its Emergency and Rehabilitation Department<sup>9</sup> and in response to the emergencies. It then worked through local Cordaid offices, which differed from Cordaid's mainstream approach in Indonesia (including in conflict areas) to implement projects through partner organisations. These emergency efforts did not take Cordaid's '*Peace and Conflict*' policies into account, but considered the existing conflicts as an important contextual factor that needed to be considered in the programmes.

*In Afghanistan*, Cordaid's activities have changed from emergency aid (before 2002) to development projects with a focus on health, livelihood development, organisational and civil society development, and gender. None of the projects supported has a peace building focus. In addition to project-based support, Cordaid's liaison office in Kabul has provided

<sup>9</sup> In that period, different departments still existed within Cordaid; the activities of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Department were not integrated in the 'regular development programme' implemented via the Indonesia desk.

organisational support to its partners. Important to mention are the lobby and advocacy activities conducted via the DNNA (Dutch Afghan NGO Platform, of which ICCO and Oxfam Novib also form part) and focused on the Dutch parliament, dealing with issues such as the Dutch military presence in Uruzgan and poppy production. Cordaid also participates in the ENNA (European NGO Network Afghanistan) for its lobby of the European institutions.

### Africa<sup>10</sup>

The principal policy document that guides Cordaid's work in Central-Africa is the "Strategic Plan for the Great Lakes Region". This plan contains a brief but useful conflict analysis, including an identification of some of the conflict's root causes and an analysis of the conflict's influence on the overall functioning of society. In the description of the "Peace and Conflict" strategy, however, no explicit link is made to this conflict analysis or to Cordaid's overall Peace and Conflict policy.

Cordaid is prominently present in *East Congo* where it supports an important number of projects, both dealing directly with the conflict and focusing on other issues (health, elections). It has also invested considerably in emergency related projects. An important number of its projects covers various provinces or even have a national or regional coverage and is implemented in partnership with catholic institutions. It has several representation offices that are each in charge of a sector or theme and manage the contacts with the partners in charge of project implementation. In addition to a clear focus on activities in the area of peace and conflict, the programme is characterised by the aim to promote exchange and learning among local partners and to strengthen their capacities. The number of *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects is nearly equal. Cordaid is also actively engaged in lobby and advocacy activities with regard to the situation in the Great Lakes Region, in particular via the Great Lakes Platform and the Congo Platform.

Cordaid's activities in *Burundi* have undergone important changes after the Arusha Agreement of 2000, which initiated a period of relative peace in the country. Regular development projects have become more important, but often find their roots in humanitarian actions (rehabilitation of health centres, support to refugees) that were undertaken previously. A few partners were specifically selected to develop the peace and conflict sector and constitute the only obvious link with the policy related to this theme. Furthermore, other sectors are covered such as health and (still) emergency and rehabilitation. Actions in this last field are supposed to gradually adopt a development approach. Compared to East Congo, lobby activities remain relatively small; they are implemented via the Burundi Platform (in which ICCO and Oxfam Novib also take part), which is part of the overall Great Lakes Platform.

Important to mention is a pilot set up by Cordaid in the Great Lakes area in which development and humanitarian aid was managed in an integrated way. It included local partners in the process of defining its policy. Conflict and peace was an important area of attention and a policy in this regard was being developed at the moment the pilot was stopped, early 2007, as a consequence of Cordaid's internal reorganisation.

10) An Africa regional policy paper related to 'Peace and Conflict', which was drafted after the overall policy, could not be retraced and has been, in any case, of only limited significance.

Cordaid has a long track record of supporting projects in *Sierra Leone* and remained active in the country during the war years. The projects supported cover various sectors addressing a situation of extreme poverty in a country that to date has not recovered from the 1991–2002 war. Numerous projects with a peace building focus have been supported or have addressed conflict-related issues, such as the repatriation of refugees and the worsening human rights situation in the post-war era. Strengthening local partner organisations is considered a major issue in this country that is characterised by its weak institutional capacity.

The organisations now united in Cordaid have been involved in emergency and development activities in *Sudan* for about 30 years. Cordaid's overall '*Peace and conflict*' policy was integrated in the 2003-2006 Sudan country programme which had a clear strategic focus on the theme 'Peace and Conflict', concentrating on peace building issues, conflict prevention and human rights (women's rights). In addition, projects were supported in the sectors education and health, civil society building, restructuring of communities and emergency aid. Seven projects had a peace building focus. In-country lobby and advocacy initiatives were aimed at the promotion of peace and the improvement of the position of women. International lobby and advocacy initiatives focused on oil and on peace building. The regional office in Nairobi has been responsible for the Sudan programme. Currently, Cordaid has two offices in Sudan (Darfur and South Sudan) that are involved in the implementation of mainly short-term emergency aid projects. In addition, a new office in Juba will focus on capacity building activities.

After Cordaid's internal reorganisation, the entire Sudan portfolio was placed under the Reconciliation and Reconstruction programme. A context analysis was made to increase the team's understanding of the conflict dynamics in order to improve programme effectiveness.

## 2.1.2 ICCO

### Overall policies

ICCO's policies and strategies have changed considerably over the last decade. Since 2000, its overall programme has narrowed in focus by gradually delineating the themes and countries of intervention. Three major themes have evolved and presently constitute the core of the organisation's work: 'Democratisation and Peace Building', 'Access to Basic Social Services' and 'Fair Economic Development'. In addition, ICCO has a Communication and Lobby Unit that undertakes initiatives that can relate to any of the themes above. Clear policies related to these themes were formulated in the period 2003-2006, while the organisation remained geographically structured; however, work in each country slowly started to focus on one or, at most, two themes. From 2007 onwards, the organisation has been structured along the three above-mentioned themes, but in practice the notion of working at the country level remains important with country specialists working within the thematic set-up.<sup>11</sup> In parallel, ICCO started developing a programmatic approach at the local level, which aims to plan, implement and co-ordinate actions of different partners in a coherent programmatic framework. The approach aims to achieve that the overall programme becomes more effective and coherent, and achieves effects at higher levels; by 2010, 80% of the actions are supposed to be part of a broader programme.

ICCO contracted a peace and conflict specialist who drafted a substantial, well-researched document in 2004 (*Positioning ICCO in Peace Building, To manage, settle, resolve, transform and prevent conflicts*), which has been used as an important input in policy-making and has provided the basis for ICCO's decision to focus on 'conflict transformation'. The document provides some interesting starting points for strategic choices in peace and conflict<sup>12</sup>. It has succeeded in providing a comprehensive overview of the conflict transformation discourse, relates it to ICCO's policy and practices by that time, and closes with concrete considerations for ICCO's strategic choices. According to the paper, the organisation's main focus within the Peace Building theme should be on conflict transformation, as it is considered the only approach that aspires for true positive peace (i.e. focus on improving attitudes and relations, and on changing underlying structures). It is also considered, by addressing the underlying structures of a conflict, as the approach closest to ICCO's 'regular' development approaches.

11) The Communication and Lobby Unit continues however to exist, with staff specialised in each of the three thematic areas. The co-operation between the Unit and the Democratisation and Peace Building Department is defined through so-called Service Level Agreements that are specified for a series of focal issues (speerpunten).

12) In absence of a policy document (which is currently being drafted), the document is consistently referred to by those dealing with peace building.

While partner organisations may only address one particular aspect of conflict transformation, for the country as a whole there should be a balanced set of activities and partners. In addition, it is interesting to note the lobby aspect of the document. The document states that further research is needed on how to make best use of lobby strategies within ICCO. Indeed, ICCO's practice until 2007 seems to have (increasingly) included lobby activities. Furthermore, and in line with the conflict transformation approach, the document recommends training officers to become more aware of structures, rather than focusing on the behavioural aspects of conflicts in partner countries. Moreover, it stresses the need to base the selection of partner organisations on whether or not they are able to link up with government agencies in their conflict transformation activities.

Following-up on this position paper, in 2005 a manual for Conflict Analysis and Peace Building was developed, which was, however, not user-friendly and therefore never consistently used. In 2006 ICCO initiated a baseline study to provide a systematic and critical overview of its efforts and results in the field of conflict transformation in Africa and the Middle East. The baseline highlighted the urgent need for strengthening the capacities of ICCO and its partners to undertake thorough conflict analyses, and further pointed to problems such as the absence of clear links between analysis and priority-setting and the lack of impact indicators. By the end of 2007 ICCO produced a user-friendly manual for conflict analysis, which is expected to be used more consistently as a first step to developing an effective conflict transformation programme. Meanwhile, ICCO staff started using this manual in the DRC and Indonesia.

## **Policies, strategies and activities in the areas studied**

### Asia

In 2003, a document was drafted outlining ICCO's role in conflict areas in Asia, Europe and Oceania. It pays attention to the situation in Indonesia, Afghanistan and Nepal; most attention goes to Indonesia as the most prominent country for the development of a democratisation and peace programme. As the document was worked out prior to ICCO's important efforts to clarify its policies and concepts (see above), it lacks conceptual and strategic clarity and has a rather operational focus.

The document analyses in brief the conflict in the three countries without paying attention to gender issues. It further defines ICCO's strategy in view of its overall policies and identity, and the characteristics and dynamics of the conflicts. Strategies and activities are defined without overall strategic framework, and, for each country, include important lobby and advocacy efforts. To our knowledge, the document has never been adapted to the results of the policy work undertaken.

*In Indonesia*, the promotion of democratisation and peace building constitutes the core of ICCO's programme, which has for quite some time now focused on major conflict regions in the country (Aceh, Central Sulawesi and Papua). The inter-religious dialogue (also in other geographical areas), the strengthening of local cultural identity and the strengthening of local partners are key characteristics of the country programme. Furthermore, since 2001 its lobby and advocacy efforts in the country have also mainly dealt with peace building and democratisation, and, among other things, focused on the role of the EU in post-war Aceh and on human rights abuse in Papua.

ICCO has been active *in Afghanistan* since the 1990s. After the fall of the Taliban, its support has changed from mainly humanitarian aid to a programme with a rehabilitation

and development perspective. ICCO has a relatively small programme, encompassing rural development, water and sanitation as well as gender. Three projects had a peace building focus or have addressed direct conflict-related issues, such as assistance to repatriated refugees. Lobby and advocacy activities related to Afghanistan started in a fragmented manner in 2001, and became more coherent when a parliamentary mission to Afghanistan and Pakistan was organised at the start of 2004. ICCO participates in the DNNA and ENNA (see above) to strengthen its lobby efforts on Afghanistan.

*In Nepal*, ICCO used to have a relatively small programme with *in conflict* projects almost exclusively concentrated in the health sector, and a few *in conflict* projects of an integrated nature. The *on conflict* projects are situated at the national and regional level and aim at promoting a democratic society, social justice and peace. In 2007, ICCO initiated a more programmatic approach based on a context analysis conducted with its partners. It was then decided to focus more explicitly on local governance as part of a broader effort to promote democratisation and peace. ICCO also has been involved in lobby and advocacy actions towards the EU and the Dutch government with regard to the political situation in Nepal.

### Africa

The ICCO's programme in DRC focuses on two main strategic objectives: 'access to basic services' (with a strong focus on food security) and 'democratisation and peace building'. In contrast to the other CFAs, ICCO has not (yet) developed a long-term strategic plan for its work in the DRC or in the Great Lakes Region. The only policy documents presently existing are the annual plans at the country level. The annual plans for the DRC briefly describe the existing strategies and interventions, but neither contains a detailed conflict analysis nor an explanation of the rationale of the strategic choices made. No reference is made to ICCO's overall research and policy documents on conflict transformation. A strategic plan for the Great Lakes Region is presently being drawn up, based on a participatory assessment (involving the local partners) of the conflict situation.

ICCO has a strong presence in *East Congo*. Its projects are concentrated in South Kivu and most are '*in conflict*' projects. ICCO has two representation offices in the region (and also used to have an office in neighbouring Burundi) meant to facilitate contacts and dialogue with the local partners that are in charge of project implementation. These representation offices are presently being replaced by a single regional co-ordination office, based in Bukavu. Together with, among others, Cordaid and Oxfam Novib, ICCO is engaged in lobby activities around the situation in the Great Lakes Region. Sexual violence against women in conflict zones has become a major issue in lobby and campaigning, of the Dutch parliament and government as well as of the public at large. The programme relies on its excellent contacts on the ground, where eight local partners are involved in a programme to combat sexual violence.

ICCO's portfolio in *Burundi* reflects its policy to focus on democratisation and peace as the major sector of intervention in the country with diverse activities including support to radio broadcasting, human rights related research, reconciliation and monitoring of the transition process. Many of the programmes supported have a national outreach. Lobby and advocacy activities are conducted in the framework of the Burundi platform (see above), but remain rather limited. In order to focus more on the theme of conflict transformation, partnerships in Burundi were ended and new partners working *on conflict* were selected.

In 2004, 'democratisation and peace building' became the main theme and 'support to basic services' the sub-theme of ICCO's country programme in *Sudan*. The country portfolio

reflects, however, a broader focus. A field representative 'democratisation and peace building' has been stationed in Sudan for capacity building and lobby and advocacy activities since October 2005. ICCO has supported the lobby and advocacy activities of some of its local partners, among other things those related to oil incomes and balanced emergency aid. ICCO is a member of ECOS (European Coalition on Oil in Sudan), which is lobbying for wealth and power sharing issues related to oil.

### 2.1.3 Oxfam Novib

#### Overall policies

Oxfam Novib is member of Oxfam International (OI) and, together with eleven other sister organisations, aims to achieve a just world that is free of poverty for everyone. Oxfam Novib follows a rights-based approach aimed at realising five basic rights, inseparably connected:

- the right to a sustainable livelihood;
- the right to basic social services;
- the right to life and security (no deprivation, disease or death through armed conflict, natural disasters or communal violence against the individual);
- the right to social and political participation (civil rights, political rights, inclusive democracy);
- the right to an identity.

Oxfam Novib does not have a specific policy on conflict transformation or conflict prevention, but activities related to this theme are classified under right 3, which mainly deals with humanitarian activities. A common Oxfam goal under this right is: "considerably fewer women, men and children fall victim to personal violence, communal violence, forced relocation and armed conflicts"<sup>13</sup>. A specific aim linked to this right addresses conflict prevention and peace building.

According to the Business Plan 2007-2010, "Oxfam Novib will be spending 17 million Euro in 2010 (10 percent of total spending) on its programme for the basic right to life and security. This will be spent on preventing and preparing for disasters and on reconstruction. Oxfam Novib wants to give local organisations a stronger voice in the debate on quality, especially women's and human rights organisations. This will be about a fair distribution of aid materials, access to natural resources and opposing the possession of arms. Oxfam Novib is taking up the third theme in co-operation with Amnesty International and peace organisations". In the Business Plan little explicit attention is given to the theme of conflict prevention and transformation, but some specific issues catch the attention such as the support to women's and human rights organisations and the attention to lobby against arms, which is linked to the collaboration with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

Oxfam International has published some Policy Compendium Notes related to the evaluation theme, which confirm Oxfam's attention for lobby activities:

- an OI Note on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), May 2007
- an OI Note on the UN Peace Building Commission (August 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Business Plan Oxfam Novib, 2007-2010, p. 25

Within Oxfam Novib, attempts have been made to further develop operational policies in the field of conflict transformation. There is one specific person in charge of this theme in

the department dealing with humanitarian programmes. In 2005, Oxfam Novib organised a Consultative Forum with partner organisations on “Violence, security, conflict”. In reaction to responses from partner organisations, specific points for discussion were identified, which included the need to address multi-level violence, cultures of violence and the absence of enabling conditions. Moreover, the issue of ‘inclusion’ of women, youth and civil society at large in peace building and democratisation processes is identified, and finally also the task of linking up local organisations to the level of international aid implementation.

Other internal notes on conflict prevention also mention these issues of missing linkages. Within right 3, which focuses on humanitarian activities, the link with conflict prevention is problematic. Moreover, the logical link between conflict prevention and right 4 on participation is missing in theory, while in practice linkages are being established. The internal notes and the interviews with Oxfam Novib staff reveal that Oxfam Novib has identified two different gaps:

- The policy-practice gap: on paper conflict prevention is directly linked to humanitarian programming, but in practice apparently most of Oxfam Novib’s conflict prevention work takes place in the context of structural development programmes. This points at a clear problem to establish clear linkages between humanitarian activities in conflict regions and conflict prevention approaches, which is considered a missed opportunity.
- The lobby programme gap: most lobby efforts are focused on conflict related *humanitarian* issues, while conflict prevention activities take place mainly in *structural development* programmes; this should, however, not be interpreted in too strict a way, as many lobby efforts (e.g. the small arms campaign in the Great Lakes Region) are relevant both in a humanitarian and a regular development setting; regular development partners also played a key role in this campaign.

Within Oxfam Novib, a few strategies are tried out to bridge these gaps. More attention is paid to the development of conflict sensitive policies and programming both for humanitarian activities and for structural development. Nevertheless, there is no decision yet to develop a more comprehensive policy framework with operational guidelines to bridge these gaps.

### **Policies, strategies and activities in the areas studied**

Oxfam Novib works with multi-annual and updated annual country strategies, so-called SPMs. In these documents the country context is described and in this context analysis some attention is paid to the conflict situation. However, no in-depth conflict analysis is made. In the risk management part of these documents the risk of (renewed) conflict and the risk of governance and corruption are frequently mentioned. The ‘strategies for change’ parts of these documents reflect the overall policy themes where little attention is paid to conflict prevention or transformation. For example, in the 2007 SPM for DRC, gender mainstreaming is mentioned as an important theme, just as governance sensitivity, while community re-integration of ex-combatants is mentioned as a specific theme. However, no specific attention is paid to issues of conflict sensitivity. The same applies to the SPMs for Burundi and Indonesia.

#### **Asia**

Despite the lack of overall policy attention, Oxfam Novib’s portfolio in the various regions shows some distinctive characteristics. Regarding its portfolio in *Indonesia*, Oxfam Novib did hardly support initiatives *in Aceh* before the tsunami. After the tsunami, it joined the Oxfam International Tsunami Fund (OITF) that co-ordinated and managed the tsunami response of the Oxfam family. This response initially (and understandably) focused on relief and rehabilitation, with relatively limited attention to the conflict in Aceh. Within this overall OI

framework, Oxfam Novib now supports a programme with a large range of activities related to, among other things, the capacity building of local NGOs and human rights groups. Oxfam Novib has exerted influence in the OI family to set-up a so-called partnership unit, allowing local CSOs to recover from the devastating effects of the tsunami. This has led to a broader OI focus. Oxfam Novib intends to pay increased attention to local programmes for peace building and conflict sensitive livelihood recovery, which is in line with the increased attention to conflict sensitive programming. *In Maluku*, for more than a decade Oxfam Novib has been supporting a network of local NGOs and grassroots organisations, which has played an important role during the conflict and now engages, among other things, in conflict resolution at the local level. Several lobby and advocacy programmes relate to Indonesia, but none of them are directly linked to one of the conflict regions and no specific attention is paid to the conflict dimension of some of the advocacy themes.

*In Afghanistan*, Oxfam Novib has been engaged in all five aims. Its programme places a particular emphasis on three areas: rural livelihoods, basic social services and capacity building. Another important programme area for Oxfam Novib has been human rights, especially the social, political and economic rights of women. In its country programme Oxfam Novib provided support to one peace building partner. A country office has been set up both to facilitate capacity building activities and to co-ordinate humanitarian assistance. Oxfam Novib undertook several lobby and advocacy activities with the Oxfam family, such as the campaign for community peace building, and is member of DNNA and ENNA (see above).

Oxfam Novib has pulled out from *Nepal*, but supported three projects in the country in the period 2003-2006, covering different sectors: the empowerment of small NGOs and CBOs, a health and nutrition project and support to a human rights national coalition.

## Africa

In *East-Congo*, Oxfam Novib is well represented with four times more *in conflict* activities (51 projects) than *on conflict* activities (13 projects). Oxfam Novib's intervention strategies in Congo are described in a country strategy note. However, as 'conflict prevention and resolution' is only one of the eight intervention strategies of the Congo programme, little specific attention is given to it in the strategy note. The strategy on conflict prevention and resolution in Congo mainly focuses on aspects of good governance. Another policy choice made by Oxfam Novib (although not made explicit in the strategy note) is to work in the more remote regions where few other donors are active. Hence the relatively large number (eleven) of projects supported in Maniema. Oxfam Novib co-ordinates with other Oxfams present in the region, among other things, in the field of emergency aid. In The Netherlands, Oxfam Novib is actively engaged in lobby and advocacy activities on the Great Lakes Region. It participates in the Great Lakes Platform and the Congo Platform, and works on a number of specific lobby files, often worked out in close co-operation with its Congolese partners.

Regarding *Burundi*, it is interesting to see that the policy gaps referred to above are visible in practice. On the one hand, Oxfam Novib's portfolio consists of three bigger development programmes, previously humanitarian aid programmes that typically belong to the '*in conflict*' type of programmes. On the other hand, three '*on conflict*' programmes can be distinguished with an important focus on human rights and support to media (radio). The small arms campaign typically reflects the lobby versus programming gap.

The country portfolio for *Sudan* has grown from emergency assistance during the war and is geographically scattered. Most of the partner organisations are working in multiple sectors.

The *'in conflict'* projects include emergency aid projects with development components. More than half of the projects have a peace building focus. Nevertheless, partner selection and strategic choices have not been based on conflict transformation related considerations; conflict sensitivity has, however, become a key criterion in assessing potential partnerships. The organisation has also a regional programme for the Horn of Africa, which includes Sudan. This programme is focused on support to livelihood and gender networks, but also supports national networks dealing with peace building. Oxfam Novib undertook several lobby and advocacy activities with the Oxfam family and is member of ECOS (European Coalition on Oil in Sudan).

## **2.1.4 Plan**

### **Overall policies**

Plan Netherlands is part of Plan International, a worldwide humanitarian, child focused development organisation aiming at improving in a sustainable way the living conditions of poor children and the families and communities they belong to.

Children are at the heart of everything Plan does and it seeks to use a 'Child Centred Community Development' approach. Plan does not have a specific policy related to conflict transformation or working in conflict countries/regions. It does, however, work in conflict regions, but in such regions it will define a policy 'on the spot' whereby it always tries to ensure that it effectively reaches and supports children. A special area of attention is work with children during (after) disasters, including armed conflicts. The protection of child rights, in particular in conflict-affected countries, has become an important niche for Plan Netherlands.

Using a rights-based approach, Plan Netherlands has developed a document named 'Children in armed Conflict' that highlights the need of a separate child-focused policy and distinguishes three areas of intervention that now guide Plan Netherlands' efforts in conflict-affected countries: the protection of children's rights, peace education and reintegration, and psychosocial care. The document has been used to influence Dutch and EU policies with regard to the position of children in conflict regions. More generally, Plan Netherlands lobbies for an increased focus on the needs and potential of children in conflict transformation processes. Furthermore, it tries to integrate its views and concerns in this regard in the existing programmes and country strategy papers of the Plan offices in the South. In addition, Plan Netherlands and Plan country offices can liaise with the Plan International Knowledge Centre that provides support in terms of child protection in emergency situations and work in conflict regions.

### **Policies, strategies and activities in the regions studied**

Within the broad policies outlined at the level of Plan International, each national Plan office can develop its own niches and accents. As such, Plan Netherlands has focused much on partnership development, lobby and advocacy, and strengthening local capacities (among other things related to children in conflict). It co-operates with some of the so-called programme countries that submit specific projects/programmes for funding, which are part of their multi-annual country strategic plans. As a rule these plans also contain conflict analyses that often are conducted with external expert assistance. Part of this support is from funds that Plan has obtained as a co-financing agency.

## Asia

*In Indonesia*, Plan Netherlands has supported six programmes, situated mostly in the eastern part of the archipelago, and dealing with a broad range of issues (education, water supply and sanitation, malnutrition, etc.). It aims to intensify its co-operation with Plan Indonesia. The programme included in the evaluation dealt with the tsunami response in Aceh. The programme's initial focus was on disaster relief, which implied that Plan's work on 'children in conflict' was not taken into account. An argument not to do so was that the peace agreement was signed when the programme started. As such, Plan ignored the legacy of the decades-long conflict in terms of vulnerability of social networks, constrained relations, etc.

*In Nepal*, Plan Netherlands has supported seven programmes, dealing, among other things, with early childhood development and birth registration. One programme focuses specifically on children in conflict and another on the promotion and protection of the rights of children at risk.

## Africa

*In Sierra Leone*, Plan Netherlands' has been one of the major supporters of Plan Sierra Leone. Its focus has been on supporting activities in the Education sector, driven by its *Education Renewal Programme*, which was launched in 2000. Activities include teacher training, school health and sanitation, school construction and rehabilitation, the provision of teaching and learning materials, psycho-social support and trauma healing, institutional capacity development and child rights/youth group support.

## **2.2. Evaluative reflections and conclusions**

### **2.2.1 Evaluative reflections**

The existence within the CFAs of a gap between overall policies and practices on the ground is not new, and has already been identified in other similar evaluations. Other development agencies face similar problems. As such, one should ask whether vertical policy integration, which is – at least – an implicit ambition of the CFAs, is desirable and, if so, whether it is realistically achievable. The following considerations seem to be important in this regard:

- A high level of vertical integration might lead to strong policies that enable CFA staff to make the right choices, but goes against the prevailing culture in CFAs, which highly values informality and considerable levels of operational freedom in shaping programmes at the country level; CFA staff can, however, add some personal flavour to their work, which in many cases leads to unique and very interesting results that can hardly be achieved through a formal approach.
- In addition, at the end of the chain there are partners and projects; in the present 'business model' of the CFAs, partners are key in programme performance, but (in particular stronger partners) might have their own views that are difficult to streamline with overall CFA policies and derived country policies. Moreover, strong partners do not need CFA policies to design and engage in meaningful activities.
- While the considerations above apply to CFA work in general, some specific considerations related to the situation in conflict-affected regions are worth mentioning:
  - in conflict-affected countries and areas the situation on the ground is often highly volatile and difficult to predict; hence, investing heavily in overall and country/region policies may not be the most appropriate answer;

- o overall, the specificity of conflict contexts implies that classic ‘rational’ (or ‘scientific’) approaches can only provide a partial solution. What is also needed, are good skills and a kind of intuition which allows staff to recognise (and anticipate) key trends, to dream about the unimaginable, to identify key resource persons who can play a role in shaping and implementing policies at the local level, to take good decisions by combining different pieces of information, etc.; elements that belong to the ‘art’ dimension of dealing with conflict transformation. The following table tries to describe – in an ideal-typical way – the expressions of both ways of dealing with conflict and peace.

**Table 2: The science and art of conflict transformation and peace building**

	<b>Science</b>	<b>Art</b>
<b>Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict analysis</li> <li>• Explanation of conflict dynamics</li> <li>• Intelligence quotient (IQ)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of mind (coup d’oeil)/ intuition</li> <li>• Seeing the big picture</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Sensitivity/listening to feelings</li> <li>• Emotional quotient (EQ)</li> </ul>
<b>Prognosis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early warning</li> <li>• Conflict- and peace building impact assessment</li> <li>• Assessment of the difficulty of conflict transformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imaging better futures</li> <li>• Creativity, generating alternative options to resolve conflicts</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of the end state (peace)</li> <li>• Peace building deficiency assessment</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Prioritisation</li> <li>• Sequencing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconciling competing values on the way to peace</li> <li>• Integrative peace- negotiation.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilisation of material and human resources</li> <li>• Co-ordination of efforts</li> <li>• Awareness of the limits and possibilities of different measures</li> <li>• Understanding of the cross impacts of efforts in different sectors and on different levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive leadership</li> <li>• Coalition building</li> <li>• Inspiring/motivating</li> <li>• Raising hope</li> <li>• Building trust</li> <li>• Moral courage/strength of mind and soul</li> <li>• Resolution and boldness</li> <li>• Circumspection</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of project objectives and unexpected effects</li> <li>• Use of mainstream evaluation criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Creating a climate for raising questions about the concerns of the owners and stakeholders</li> </ul>

The table does not mean to pitch two alternative approaches against each other: conflict transformation is *both* an art and a science; as such different but mutually complementing approaches are needed. As a science it helps us to analyse conflicts, provide early warning systems, and plan and evaluate conflict transformation and peace building efforts. The transformation of conflicts and peace building, however, require more than analysis, planning and evaluation. It also needs a presence of mind, intuition, empathy, imagination, creativity, adaptive leadership and a great deal of courage. Peace building is about recognising dissonance and searching for consonance. It requires the capacity to transcend political, mental and scientific boundaries in order to create synergies.

## 2.2.2 Conclusions

### Conflict transformation has not been a guiding concept for CFA work in conflict-affected regions

While the level of development of policies related to ‘peace and conflict’ varies among the CFAs (see above), each CFA has developed its own way of dealing with the theme, whereby each applies its own perspective (linked with its history and identity) and uses its own terminology and approach that might correspond, or not, with mainstream practices. Cordaid’s policy relates to the concepts and terminology – e.g. reconciliation and justice - used by its specialised Catholic partners such as Pax Christi. Oxfam Novib situates its work in the peace and conflict domain within one of its five main aims, the right to life and security, thereby focusing on conflict prevention and peace building. Plan Netherlands uses the perspective of children when dealing with the theme. Only ICCO’s policy refers explicitly to the concept of ‘conflict transformation’, but in its practice other terms are used as well, as they are considered to fall under ‘Conflict Transformation’.

This overview indicates that the way CFAs have framed their work related to conflict and peace has much to do with their identity and with the way this theme has developed over time within the organisation. In other words, internal dynamics have been the major factor to shape the programme and determine the terminology that is used. ‘Conflict transformation’ has not been a guiding concept in this process (see also 1.3.2) and, as such, has not been consistently (i.e. systematically taking into account all its dimensions) used.

### A gap between policies and practice

This evaluation has found that there exists a gap between policies and practice, in the sense that nowhere the apparently implicit paradigm of ‘vertical policy integration’ (CFA → cross-country region → country (→ in-country region) → partner selection → project selection) has been consistently applied<sup>14</sup>. The significance and value of policies seems hence to be less important than one should expect and might be officially claimed.

General policies do, however, have an added value, as they ensure that programme portfolios at the country level reflect the thematic choices of the CFAs. In other words, they are significant as a means for delineating the areas of involvement of the CFAs, as is explained below.

### A good match between overall policies and country portfolios

ICCO has spent most efforts to develop overall policies and tools related to conflict transformation, and Cordaid has also invested much in defining its policies in the areas. This is less the case for the two other CFAs (Oxfam Novib and Plan). This difference can be largely attributed to the relative importance of ‘conflict transformation’ as an area of intervention

<sup>14</sup> CFAs attach much importance to the partners’ own policies and views. As such, the vertical integration might to a certain extent stop at the country level. On the other hand should partners and their projects fit clearly in the CFAs’ policies?

of each CFA. In addition, both ICCO (since 2000) and Cordaid (since 2007) have decided to take thematic issues as the main principle of their internal organisation, which, in principle, facilitates theme-centred policy development. Oxfam Novib on the other hand organises its action geographically and develops country specific strategies. Plan Netherlands has internally a thematic set-up, but co-operates with Plan country offices on the basis of their country plans.

As a complement to overall policies, CFAs in principle formulate country or regional strategies that are supposed to provide the major policy guidance to CFA staff, as in the case of ICCO and Cordaid, who organise their work by thematic choices. These strategies typically contain a context analysis and focus on the sector(s)/thematic area(s) of intervention, which are determined on the basis of a crude weighing of the CFAs' overall policy choices against the overall situation in the country and on the history of their programme in that particular country. However, these country or regional strategies do not always exist (e.g. for Cordaid and ICCO in Indonesia, Cordaid in Afghanistan), or are not worked out in depth (e.g. many Oxfam Novib country strategies that have to address five different aims/sectors). And if they exist, they, at best, provide an overall reference to overall policies and an inclusion of their main elements and principles. Furthermore, these policies are not regularly updated, which constitutes a handicap in conflict-affected countries where the situation can change drastically over a short period of time. Hence, CFAs generally do not succeed in consistently operationalising their overall policies at regional/country level, except for ON that organises its work geographically – but ON's country documents do not address the conflict situation appropriately either. Consequently, regional or country policies related to 'conflict transformation' are also quite weak overall or non-existent (even at the level of organisations with a strong overall policy), and if they exist, they also do not provide explicit guidance for programming interventions in a way that takes the particularities of the conflict environment into account and highlights gender as a crucial factor.

This situation of a lack of operationalised policies does not, however, prevent programme portfolios at the country level from reflecting clearly the overall CFA policy choices in terms of the thematic areas the CFAs want to engage in. The CFA activities in the countries studied are in line with the CFAs' respective overall policies and strategies related both to 'conflict transformation' and other areas, which in itself is quite understandable considering the extensive nature of most of these policies and strategies. While there is a good match between activities supported and overall policies, there remains, however, much variety in the quality of policies and strategies that are supposed to provide the basis for these country programmes.

This finding seems to suggest that overall policies do have an important influence, be it less specific than expected: broad thematic choices clearly 'trickle down' to the level of country portfolio managers and guide their decisions in terms of project selection.

Finally, CFAs seem not to dispose of well established policy cycles consisting of clear steps for defining, implementing, evaluating and revising policies. At certain moments in time, for reasons that are not always clear, huge policy efforts are undertaken, which later on might be well, only partially or poorly followed up and/or revised. It is not clear which factors determine whether policies are or are not followed up.

### **The particularities of 'in conflict' work in conflict-affected countries remain a largely unaddressed issue**

CFA policies try to develop guidelines both with regard to themes they focus on and countries/regions where they work. In as far as they exist, policies related to conflict transformation deal with work that directly deals with the peace and conflict dynamics (the *on conflict* work), but largely fail to address how *in conflict* work should be implemented in conflict affected areas. This '*in conflict*' work can be 'regular' development work in the areas of poverty alleviation, capacity building and lobby and advocacy, but also humanitarian work. Country policies, in as far as they exist, also largely fail to address this issue.

As will be further worked out later, this has important consequences for most of the *in conflict* work undertaken, which often fails to deal with the specificity of a conflict context (among other things related to gender issues) in a well structured way.

### **The coexistence of humanitarian and development aid**

In all countries included in the study, CFAs have engaged in both development support and humanitarian aid. Most often, 'regular' development work, both *in* and *on conflict*, has succeeded humanitarian interventions, but in various cases (e.g. DRC, Indonesia, Sudan) both types of interventions also co-exist. Conflict transformation related policies at least implicitly refer to regular development interventions only and do not address the relationship between humanitarian and development aid. Within the CFAs, the units dealing with development and humanitarian aid operate separately. As such, a framework seems to be absent to consistently address the transition from emergency and rehabilitation to 'regular' development work (*in* or *on conflict*).

### **Gender is only superficially addressed**

As a rule, CFA policy frameworks mention the importance of attaching specific attention to gender issues in conflict regions and conflict-related work. With the exception of ICCO's manual, however, this issue is not further operationalised and no specific guidance is provided on how gender concerns should be addressed.

### **Importance of lobby and advocacy, but difficult policy articulation of lobby and advocacy with other work**

All CFAs include in their programmes lobby and advocacy efforts related to the situation in the conflict-affected countries and the often corresponding humanitarian crises. While they are undertaken by separate units, such efforts are considered as important and an integral part of the CFAs' policies and strategies. In reality, however, no clear strategic outline exists to link the lobby and advocacy efforts with the overall policies and in-country programme portfolios. Systematic discussion of lobby strategies and agendas with partners (as ICCO has conducted in Indonesia, which has led to a multi-annual lobby programme) remains an exception, notwithstanding the fact that all CFAs are aware of the need to link their lobby efforts at higher levels with the situation on the ground. As will become clear later, good practices of linking the local level with broader efforts do, however, exist, notwithstanding the lack of a clear policy framework.

### 3. Effectiveness and sustainability

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This chapter deals with the main results achieved by the projects and their sustainability. In line with the aims of this evaluation, and as explained in the introduction and the methodological annex, it limits itself to presenting the main *conflict-related* outputs and outcomes, both intended and unintended, achieved by both *on conflict* and *in conflict* projects. Both the analysis of effectiveness and the analysis of sustainability are based on the judgement criteria and indicators of the evaluation framework, but the presentation of the findings has been ordered differently to increase readability.

This chapter will start with the presentation of the main conflict-related results. First, the most important conflict-related outputs will be presented (3.1). Then follows a presentation of the conflict-related outcomes achieved both through *on conflict* and *in conflict* projects (3.2), while the next sub-chapter deals with the unexpected results. The rather factual description of the main conflict-related achievements will be followed by some more analytical sub-chapters. First, the results achieved will be situated in view of the conflict transformation paradigm; then follows an analysis of the potential sustainability of the benefits achieved. This chapter ends with the presentation of our main conclusions and evaluative reflections.

The evaluation initially undertook efforts to estimate the scope of the results achieved (in terms of people trained, seminars held, partners strengthened, traumas diminished, etc.) and their aggregated and interlinked effects, thereby also trying to assess results in a gender specific way. This proved impossible, however, because of the high level of variety among the results recorded, the lack of precise (and sex disaggregated) data at the level of most CFAs and the fact that in most countries only a minor part of the CFA work could be addressed. As such, the main sections below constitute to an important extent a juxtaposition of the results achieved by CFAs and their partners, with limited mutual linkages.

#### 3.1 Major outputs

Conflict-related outputs have only been produced by *on conflict* projects, as they directly focus on results related to conflict transformation and need to produce outputs in this regard, whereas *in conflict* projects only (can) achieve conflict-related effects indirectly.

*On conflict* projects have in many ways dealt with the conflict reality and have developed various approaches in this regard, which at the same time illustrates the need to develop responses that are geared to local realities and the creativity and variety of NGO efforts to contribute to conflict transformation. The list below presents, across countries, the main types of conflict-related outputs produced.

- **Strengthened community institutions and leadership.** This is an important output of many projects that illustrates the partner organisations' capacity to work effectively at the grassroots level. Important to mention is the capacity of some organisations to create and/or strengthen female leadership so that women leaders are able to take up a more prominent role, both in conflict prevention and in dealing with the negative consequences of conflicts. This output can take various forms, for example: grassroots peace committees set up and trained in community leadership and peaceful conflict handling; or revived traditional institutions that again take up their role in conflict resolution. Many community leaders and organisations have also been strengthened in the area of conflict prevention, in particular in their capacities to anticipate new tensions and take timely preventive

measures. It may also happen that community structures set up for other purposes (health committees for instance) widen their function to play a role in conflict transformation processes.

- **Increased awareness at the level of the population.** As part of broadly based peace building efforts, many partner organisations try to inform public opinion in various ways; through public seminars, radio programmes, magazines, press statements, local peace brigades, etc. Such efforts have in part increased the people's awareness on basic human rights, often 'adapted' to the particular characteristics of a conflict setting, paying special attention to vulnerable groups, such as women, children and internally displaced persons. Information efforts also have influenced more directly the attitude and behaviour of the population with regard to the conflict (in particular toward other ethnic groups with whom they were living in discord), and/or provided a counterweight to biased perceptions of the conflict situation, which were promoted through provocative information, uncontrolled rumours, etc. The role of radios is quite important in this respect, as became clear in the field studies in Burundi, DRC and Sierra Leone (see boxes).

***Box: Radios, a key actor of civil society in Burundi***

Burundi currently has 10 private radio stations, four of which have a religious (catholic, protestant, Muslim) background. These radio stations created after 2000, have contributed much to the fight against impunity by covering the crimes. They were very instrumental in the successful implementation of the 2005 elections. There is good co-operation between the radio stations, in particular during periods of increased tension, and their journalists try to cover the entire country, highlighting relevant facts, such as attempts to defraud the election results. As such, these radio stations take on the role of countervailing power. Attempts to silence or control them, for example by imprisoning journalists, have failed so far. The success of the stations among their listeners is linked to the quality of their analyses, their outspoken critique and their capacity to expose misconduct by the government.

***Box: The importance of Radio in the DRC***

Radio Maendeleo, a partner of Cordaid, plays a key role in the defence of human rights, in the distribution of independent news and the creation of a 'culture de parole', during which problems are discussed and solutions are proposed. Radio Maendeleo entertains a permanent dialogue with 140 local 'radio clubs' in South Kivu and frequently sends journalists into the field. Every theme, even very sensitive ones, such as corruption, is discussed and citizens are invited to give their opinion. During the war, several journalists and members of the 'radio clubs' received threats, as the radio promotes humanism and coexistence. It is impartial and also gives a voice to groups that are considered 'enemies'. When rumours reign, Radio Maendeleo tries to stop them in their tracks and clarify the truth.

- **Training, seminars and workshops for key conflict actors.** This output is achieved in various countries (Burundi, Nepal, Afghanistan and, very rarely, in Indonesia). Some NGOs have managed to organise seminars and workshops for actors who play a role in the conflict (army members and officers, police officers, key government officials) or those supposed to play a key role in transformation processes (politicians, key civil servants). Quite similar to these outputs are the **informal peace negotiations** facilitated by a few partners organisations in DRC.

- **Production of analyses, tools and instruments.** A broad range of analyses dealing with specific aspects of the conflict, specific tools and instruments (related to approaches of trauma healing, theatre for peace, guidelines for conflict victims to pursue their rights, etc.) and policy briefs have been produced and widely distributed.
- **Support to victims of conflict.** This support can take on various forms; trauma healing being the most straightforward. Particularly in Indonesia, but also in Burundi and Nepal partner organisations have supported victims to organise themselves in interest groups to help each other, defend their rights and pursue justice.
- **Human rights violations documented.** Many local partners (in particular in East Congo, Burundi and Indonesia) have invested much in documenting human rights violations committed by the parties in the conflict. These efforts can serve various purposes. They can constitute a form of relief for the victims and/or their families and are an important step in their healing process. They can provide the information to build a case to pursue justice and fight impunity. And they can be used to inform and put pressure on third parties to engage in conflict transformation efforts. It is also important to note that the consistent documentation of human rights violations is often a highly relevant strategy when partners have to deal with the justice vs. peace dilemma. While partners mostly do not want to compromise justice, they understand that an uncompromising stand can hamper the peace process. In such cases, the documentation of human rights violations in view of eventual efforts (i.e. once peace is established) to obtain justice often becomes an adequate solution.
- **Peace enhancing regulations adopted by local governments.** This output is mainly achieved in Indonesia, where, at least in some regions, government services still function more or less adequately. Regulations that have been adopted include a legal framework for the management of coastal and marine resources, the recognition of traditional governance systems and institutions as conflict resolution bodies, and obligations on local authorities to adopt participatory (inclusive) approaches prior to the drafting of local laws and regulations (see box). Once these regulations are completed with implementation decrees, they are expected to substantially influence relations among actors involved in the management of coastal and marine resources.

***Box: An inclusive approach to set a new legal framework for the management of coastal and marine resources in Aceh***

The second component of the Green Coast (GC) project, supported by Oxfam Novib, relates to policy advocacy for a legal framework for the management of coastal and marine resources. The project has established co-operation, on a regular and structural basis, with NGOs, provincial and district governments, local parliaments, the organisation of the *Panglima Laot* (traditional leaders with respect to marine issues), academics and former GAM (Movement for an Independent Aceh) members. The approach started with discussions involving all stakeholders to analyse and compare both the existing (formal) local regulations and the local customs and rules related to the management of coastal and marine resources. Based on this discussion, a draft policy analysis was written and presented to the public to obtain their input before finalising and publishing it. The document has been used to lobby relevant local government institutions and local parliaments to draft new or revise existing local regulations. These institutions have reacted favourably, and new regulations that take into account extensively the work of the GC project are expected to be issued soon. Most probably, they constitute an important step toward avoiding conflicts related to the management and use of coastal and marine resources.

- **Support to the implementation of peace conferences and peace agreements.** In East Congo and Indonesia (Aceh and Maluku), some key staff members of local partners and/or CFAs have been instrumental in the implementation of peace conferences (such as, recently, the Goma conference in East Congo) and the implementation of the Aceh Monitoring Mission's mandate and other parts of the peace agreement. A similar achievement was the establishment of a high-level peace secretariat in Nepal to initiate the necessary actions for a peace dialogue between the government and the Maoist rebels.
- **Increased attention to peace building and related issues at the international level and with the public at large.** This output is often achieved through co-operation among CFAs, including selected local partners. While co-operation on the ground among CFAs is rather an exception, this is not the case for lobby efforts at the national and in particular the international levels. Good practices of co-ordinated lobby efforts directed at Dutch political bodies and the EU exist with regard to most countries. In particular the work of the Great Lakes Platform and country-related forums have enabled CFAs and partners to let their voice and perspective be heard in political circles. CFAs have succeeded in putting conflict transformation and specific problems (such as sexual violence in East Congo, the situation of children in conflict in Nepal) on the international agenda and under the attention of the public at large. The same has happened with the lobby to extend the EU's commitment in Aceh when the mandate of the Aceh Monitoring Mission ended. Another, slightly different, example is found in Papua (Indonesia) where district governments are ready to adopt inclusive approaches before taking decisions on forestry policy and resources, which is an important achievement in enhancing conflict transformation. Similar outputs have been achieved in the Great Lakes Region, where the existing platforms have been able to change the opinion of political figures and place the situation in the region on the political agenda of the Dutch parliament.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the outputs achieved cover various dimensions of conflict transformation. As will become clear further on in this report, many of these outputs (and the corresponding outcomes, see below) are relatively isolated, due to the lack of an overall strategy inside the CFAs to ensure synergies of their efforts and due to weaknesses in terms of co-ordination and complementarity, in particular among civil society actors. As such, a broad variety of outputs can be identified, without it being possible to link them up. In addition, it should be underlined again that the evaluation could only address a minor part of the CFA work.

### **3.2 Outcomes**

Considering the different relationship of '*on conflict*' and '*in conflict*' projects with conflict transformation, and also for reasons of clarity and learning, we decided to present separately the outcomes achieved through *on conflict* projects and the outcomes achieved through *in conflict* projects.

### 3.2.1 Outcomes achieved via *on conflict* projects

The most important outcomes that emerge from the outputs described above include the following.

- **Improved peace building and conflict resolution capacity leading to decreased conflicts at the local level.** This is the most important outcome of the CFAs' and their partners' work with regard to conflict transformation at the local level. Through various approaches (see the outputs described above), local communities and their institutions have been trained to solve conflicts at the local level, both disputes that emerged recently and tensions related to long-standing unresolved conflicts. Not only have these institutions and communities acquired the capacities, they actually are using them effectively, resulting in a substantial decrease of local conflicts, which in turn produces tremendous impact on social relations in local communities (see below and box).

*Box: How local communities ensure peace in the absence of a government initiative*  
Baileo, a partner of Oxfam Novib, runs a Training Centre on Haruku Island (Maluku, Indonesia) that has been one of the centres of working on revitalising customary law, but also functioned as a meeting place for conflict resolution initiatives. Prior to the conflict, two companies tried to engage in gold mining on the island. At the time, community leaders were able to respond effectively to this move, arguing that it posed a big danger to the environment. When the conflict that began on Ambon blew over to the island, both Muslim and Christian villages (Kailalu, Romoni, Kebau and Pelau) were ready to fight. Baileo sent its Muslim and Christian facilitators to convince local people not to be influenced by the course of events elsewhere in the archipelago. They stressed that local communities had adhered to peaceful traditions for over one hundred years, that fighting would not bring any benefit and that, instead, the mining companies, with the backing of 'security' forces, would use the opportunity to seize their land. After meeting individually with community leaders from both groups, Baileo's facilitators invited them to the training centre to commence dialogue without the involvement of government instances. In the end, all village leaders agreed to declare and protect Haruku as an island free from conflict.

- **Increased resilience against provocations and increased conflict prevention capacities.** This outcome is closely related to the previous one, though not that spectacular and more difficult to substantiate. It is one of the results of the efforts of partners in the field towards leadership training, awareness raising, peace education, setting up peace committees, promoting social and economic activities implemented jointly by groups previously in conflict, etc. that have succeeded in creating in communities decreased levels of suspicion, more openness, tolerance and understanding of 'the other' and, most importantly, the analytical capacity and mechanisms to deal with provocations and minor incidents that might ignite major conflicts if not adequately handled.
- **Reduced traumas.** This outcome is achieved in various ways in several countries (Burundi, Indonesia, Nepal), either by targeted professional psychosocial support to victims (individually or in groups), by support to self-help groups of victims of conflict or simply by implementing community activities involving groups or individuals who used to oppose each other. Needless to say, people who experience fewer traumas are better capable of taking on their role in their family and society at large.

- **'Negotiated' peace agreements.** In situations of open conflict and the total absence of the state (as is the case in certain parts of East Congo), local partners have succeeded in supporting the population in their negotiations with armed groups and reaching agreement on the conditions under which people can more or less live normal lives, thereby acknowledging that lasting peace is not achieved and that the 'agreement' is far from ideal. Though this does not offer a final solution, such settlement of conflicts constitutes an important achievement for the local population (see box).

**Box: 'Negotiated' peace agreement in Mwenga (DRC)**

When armed groups, in particular the '*interhamwe*', are told that humanitarian NGOs have provided food aid to the villages, they will go to these villages, ransack them, destroy the houses, rape the women and then go back to the forest. To avoid this from happening, the people requested the humanitarian organisations to first distribute food items to the armed groups, so that they would refrain from attacking the villages. The humanitarian organisations, however, refused to do so, because the authorities forbade them to deal with security matters. Subsequently, APIDE (a partner of Oxfam Novib), facilitated the villages to take the initiative in solving the problem. In the event of receiving food aid, part of the aid is set apart and taken to the armed groups, followed by negotiations to stop them from entering the villages.

- **Improved role and position of women.** In particular in the Great Lakes Region, many women have played a leadership role in conflict mediation at the local level, which has contributed to improving their position in society, which, according to local observers, has led to decreased incidents of polygamy and divorces, voluntary AIDS screening and an openness towards family planning. This achievement should not, however, make us turn a blind eye to the fact that women are often also perpetrators in war-torn countries and regions such as the Great Lakes Region. The effect of the CFAs and their partners in this field is rather localised and limited.

**Box: Reasons for hope: Burundi women on the way to empowerment.**

The protracted conflict in the country has affected all Burundians, but women and girls were particularly hard-hit. At the height of the crisis, many of them lost male relatives and became the main providers of their families. Many women and girls are victims of sexual violence. According to the figures, the situation is not improving now that Burundi is moving into a post-conflict phase. The 2006 Annual Report of League Iteka mentions that in 2003, 938 rape cases were registered, whereas the number for 2006 was 1,930. Seruka Centre, an organisation that shelters rape victims, estimated in 2006 that 79% of its clients were girls younger than 12.

The majority of the partner organisations in Burundi see women not only as victims of the conflict, but also as formidable agents of change. According to their empirical experience, women have a stronger motivation to persist in resolving and transforming conflicts. They also have a strong influence in the education of children, which leads the NGOs to maintain hope that a durable resolution of the crisis can be reached. Finally, NGOs act on the premise that (organised) women's groups in society can act as models of empowerment and be catalysts in solving wider community problems. For example, in the suburbs of Bujumbura, a grassroots organisation of prostitutes acts to prevent armed men from taking girls and women by force, hence reducing the incidents of rape in the community. In another community in Bujumbura Rural, older women talk to men about issues linked to sexuality, in order to ensure that the abuse of younger women is prevented.

Dushirehamwe (a partner of ICCO) has opted to work exclusively with women, whom they consider as the main victims of the conflict. They are also often excluded from conflict resolution initiatives, while they are better placed to deal with conflict and peace dynamics (in periods of high tension, only women are at home). While Dushirehamwe ensures that men are also included in grassroots initiatives, one can wonder whether their strategy to only build the capacities women leaders can be considered effective for reaching sustainable peace.

- **Contribution to the demobilisation of combatants and re-integration of ex-combatants.** Partners in East Congo and in Indonesia (to a lesser degree) have contributed to the demobilisation of combatants (as part of a peace agreement) and the (often informal) reintegration in the community of ex-combatants, thereby addressing one of the issues that often remains unsolved and constitutes a major threat to lasting peace. A similar outcome is **the reintegration of internally displaced persons and children associated with the armed forces.**
- **Contribution to reduced state-sponsored violence and increased openness to peaceful solutions.** Indonesian partners claim that their efforts have contributed undoubtedly to a decrease in state-sponsored violence in Papua and Aceh (through of the exposure of atrocities in these regions to the national and international public via concerted action of partners and CFAs) and to more openness on the part of state actors and rebel groups to negotiations on a peaceful solution. The lobby of CFAs and partners has also succeeded in continuing the commitment and presence of the EU in Aceh after the ending of the Aceh Monitoring Mission mandate and the involvement of the EU in the 2006 elections in Aceh. In Sierra Leone, interventions have also led to a reduction in violence and latent tensions in the targeted communities (and beneficiary groups – e.g. refugee groups). Similar effects have been recorded in Afghanistan and Sudan.
- **Increased security and social cohesion.** This outcome is a major effect of the CFAs' and their partners' efforts and of the outputs and outcomes they produced. It relates – simply but fundamentally – to the gradual restoration of normal living conditions in an environment that was traumatised by the destructive effects of the conflict. Even when peace has been formally restored, communities have a long road to travel to overcome the destructive legacy of the conflict. Meanwhile they remain extremely vulnerable for a long period. The social capital that has often disappeared when open hostilities end, needs to be built up again. All the above-mentioned effects contribute to this process and allow for increased interaction and exchange, co-operation between former enemies, etc. This will in turn lead to other positive developments that reinforce each other, such as increased trust among different (ethnic, religious, age) groups, the proliferation of social interaction and local institutions (women's groups, youth clubs, social associations), mixed marriages, increased co-operation and social and economic interaction, etc., which constitute an important trigger for the normalisation of life in the community. They lead to clear socio-economic benefits and most often take form without any external intervention. All this implies that people have a growing interest in defending something and are therefore less tempted to become involved in conflicts again. On the contrary, they are motivated to preserve the newly acquired peace. In other words, improved social relations can provoke a broad range of actions that go far beyond the anticipated project results (see boxes).

***Box: Inter-religious co-operation and mixed couples as peace brokers in Tehoru (Maluku)***

CBCM-EEP, a partner supported by ICCO & KIA, has been successful in re-establishing inter-religious co-operation among 12 villages in Teluti bay, sub-district of Tehoru, Seram, Maluku, three years after the region was devastated by a conflict between groups with different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Both Muslim and Christian community members, who had fled their villages, have returned home and started a new life. CBCM-EEP has provided motivation and training, related to conflict awareness, peace promotion and conflict management, to community leaders and to local government officers. Local Community Organisers, two from each village, were trained and recruited to help facilitate further the reconciliation and rehabilitation process. A protestant priest is now the treasurer of the local mosque construction committee, while a Muslim cleric was appointed as chair of the village's church construction committee.

Saunulu was one of the most devastated villages by the raid from outside forces supported by nearby Muslim villagers. Six people were killed in defending the village, two churches and all houses were burnt down, all properties were looted, while 1,100 villagers fled to the nearby forest and hid there for more than two years. CBCM-EEP recruited community organisers to facilitate the normalisation process, so that all displaced people could eventually return home. Customary law was revitalised and mixed couples were motivated to engage in reconciliation initiatives between villages, as had been the habit before the conflict. After two years, sisterhoods between Muslim and Christian villages developed again. In addition to exchanging free labour, Muslims from nearby villages have donated roofs, timber and cement for the construction of the church, while Christians have done the same for rebuilding the mosque.

***Box: Successful 'on conflict' projects can offer important developmental outcomes***

Two case study projects of Plan Netherlands in Sierra Leone illustrate how successful 'on conflict' projects with a clear peace building focus can yield important developmental outcomes. *Quest for Peace's* work has led to increased social cohesion among the community in general and youths in particular. This has manifested in a number of important ways. Association life in the communities has been strengthened. Existing clubs and groups (e.g. women's or youth groups) were energised and new ones were created, addressing important issues in the community, such as agriculture, health and village credit. In addition, several communities were able to mobilise previously disenfranchised youths to undertake public works projects that have improved village life. The *Kids Waves Child Radio* has also delivered wider developmental outcomes. Child broadcasters in Moyamba cited examples of repairs to water and sanitation infrastructure and to a particularly dangerous bridge in the District that had come about following both on-air and off-air lobbying by youths of the Chief Administrator.

- **Strengthened partner organisations to deal with conflict transformation.**

This outcome is the effect of the considerable efforts that all CFAs have undertaken to strengthen local partner organisations. It has allowed them to better take up their role as a countervailing power against forces that jeopardise the peace process. Partners were strengthened through various types of training activities, both locally and externally. These capacity building efforts reflect the awareness that strong local institutions are needed for playing a role in conflict transformation, but also the awareness that in many conflict regions local NGO capacity is still weak in view of the magnitude of the problems to

be addressed. While the results achieved are certainly meaningful, the degree to which capacity building efforts have been successful could not be fully assessed by a lack of unambiguous data. Moreover, many capacity building efforts have an ad hoc character and are not suited in a longer-term process of institutional strengthening. Quite often, support is also mainly aimed at increasing the managerial capacities of the organisations concerned, while other skills related to '*on conflict*' work await upgrading. In Burundi, however, partner organisations themselves were quite aware of the need to upgrade their '*on conflict*' skills and sought international expertise to help realise this. Experiences in Sierra Leone show the difficulties of developing the skills (notably in terms of capacity to formulate and then implement strategic plans) in partner organisations to handle the transition from humanitarian assistance in the emergency phase to longer-term, more structural development interventions.

Notwithstanding these critical remarks, tangible results have certainly been achieved in terms of increased partner capacities to deal with conflict transformation. In most countries, examples were found of partners that have grown into professional organisations that occupy an important place in the local institutional landscape. The fact that CFAs often engage in long-standing partnerships and, hence, ensure a continuous flow of support, certainly played a role here.

- **Increased recognition as key actor.** Related to the previous point, the dynamics of the conflict transformation process have allowed some partner organisations to position themselves as important actors in the process and/or to develop approaches that are considered interesting as supports of the peace process. Such examples include the 'negotiated peace approach' in RDC (see below), which actually emerged from the dynamics generated through various actions of local NGOs. Other examples include the state adopting specific approaches developed by partners (use of traditional institutions for conflict resolution at the local level in Indonesia).

In conclusion, it can be said that CFAs and their partners have achieved important conflict transformation related outcomes that cover various dimensions of conflict transformation. However, for reasons already mentioned (see also 1.3.2), by absence of clearly operationalised judgement criteria, it is impossible to conclude whether or not CFAs and their partners have been truly effective. In addition, the outcomes are relatively isolated, due to a lack of an overall strategy in the CFAs to ensure synergies among their efforts and because of weaknesses in co-ordination and complementarity, in particular among civil society actors. This does not correspond with the CFAs' policy ambition, which aims to substantially contribute to peace building processes and related effects.

### 3.2.2 Outcomes achieved by *in conflict* projects

The assessment of the effectiveness of *in conflict* projects has not included their performance in regarding 'non-conflict' related results. Overall, the evaluators, however, had the impression that most *in conflict* projects were able to produce tangible outputs<sup>15</sup>, despite the often difficult circumstances they work in. This achievement, as such, has in some circumstances constituted a preliminary condition for any positive contribution of *in conflict* projects to conflict transformation.

15) ... which are however only very rarely conflict-related.

In all country studies, substantial qualitative evidence was gathered that, at least in some cases, *in conflict* projects have contributed substantially, though indirectly and often in an unintended way, to conflict transformation, by addressing problems that are linked to the root causes of the conflict. There are the following examples:

- Overall, well designed and implemented *in conflict* projects have often also strengthened local institutions, intensified local interaction and dealt impartially with local groups. The simple fact that people meet and discuss more than they did before, has contributed to increased social cohesion (see box). This is in particular true when previously opposing groups were organised to tackle local problems jointly (e.g. related to access to health services, drinking water, waste disposal, etc.). The CFAs and their partners' experience is not exceptional, as in many regions in the world such co-operation has proven to be a powerful tool for collective trauma healing<sup>16</sup>.

**Box: Well-designed and implemented 'in-conflict' projects generating wider peace building benefits**

Cordaid's Integrated Health Care Programme for the Diocese of Kenema in Sierra Leone demonstrates how well designed and implemented '*in conflict*' projects can generate important wider developmental and peace building benefits. It has yielded positive outcomes that go beyond the mere provision of healthcare, by the manner in which it engaged community members. The principal objective was to mobilise community support for the development of a hospital and clinic, but in bringing people together it has also helped forge increased social cohesion in the community. In addition, the unexpected way in which the project brought together victims and perpetrators around the clinic or hospital can be seen as contributing to the process of reconciliation.

- *In conflict* projects that were able to produce valuable goods or services for the people in a conflict sensitive way (e.g. the provision of good quality housing and social infrastructure or services) have not only alleviated poverty, but often contributed to reducing tensions and competition among social groups. This can be explained by the fact that local communities and individual families were given something they are ready to defend, which gives them strong reasons not to engage in conflict behaviour.
- Many results related to human rights and democratisation, though not directly contributing to conflict transformation, clearly produce (mostly explicitly envisaged) 'spill-over' effects that impact on peace and conflict dynamics. Particularly in Nepal, partners insist that work on human rights and democratisation was highly instrumental in creating the necessary conditions for peace, among other things by assuring the commitment of opposing parties to respecting human rights.
- A partner organisation in Papua claims that by strengthening the capacity of local government institutions and corresponding accountability mechanisms, and by strengthening civil society's capacities to conduct social audits and policy advocacy, suspicion towards non-Papuans could be decreased and reactions to state violence could be channelled appropriately. A partner in Nepal claims a similar effect by ensuring that marginalised groups receive a fairer allocation in local government budgets, while a partner in Afghanistan says that its contribution to strengthening the health sector helps in building the state, which plays a major role in the peace process.

<sup>16</sup> Some on conflict projects, e.g. on Maluku in Indonesia, actually use this approach as their major conflict resolution tool.

Overall, it is clear that some of the *in conflict* projects have clearly contributed to conflict transformation related outcomes: in nearly all cases these contributions were unintentional. While these results are substantial, it is also clear that a more adequate positioning regarding the conflict – consider the conflict not only as a disturbing factor, but also analyse how it can be positively influenced – could have led to more substantial results in terms of conflict transformation. Many projects lost the opportunities to influence conflict and peace building dynamics positively.

### 3.3 Unexpected results<sup>17</sup>

To start with, it should be remembered that part of the contribution of *in conflict* projects to conflict transformation and peace building is actually ‘unexpected’, in the sense that it was mostly not planned explicitly. We dealt with the results above. In addition, it should be underlined that the evaluation team had difficulties in identifying ‘unexpected’ results. As explained already, partners and CFAs are rather weak in analysing and documenting the higher-level effects of their projects; they have not undertaken systematic attempts to identify the unexpected results of their action. The ‘do no harm’ principle constitutes an illustration of development actors’ awareness in this regard, but is often formally adhered to without being consistently applied in project implementation. Despite the danger of ‘doing harm’, partner organisations and CFAs only seldom engage in specific efforts to obtain an insight into the unexpected effects of their action. An interesting exception is the EOA study (see box), which was an attempt to analyse the effects on social capital of a Cordaid post-tsunami project. The findings of this study confirm that there is much ground for saying that probably many projects have unexpected results, but that they could not be documented by this evaluation team<sup>18</sup>.

**Box: The Eye on Aceh social capital mapping assessment**

Cordaid, which had no previous experience in Aceh, requested Eye on Aceh, a locally based NGO, specialised in social research, to conduct an assessment to assist it in identifying whether, how and how far its post-tsunami reconstruction programmes have affected social capital in beneficiary villages and to make recommendations about possible interventions that might help Cordaid (and its partners) to minimise any negative impact on social capital in these communities, and about ways to seize the opportunity to build social capital in the villages presented by infrastructure-related aid interventions. This interesting initiative, which can serve as a model for any organisation involved in humanitarian action, produced interesting but (for Cordaid) critical findings, which, among other things, indicated that the project, by following a needs-based approach, failed to avoid a problem common in post-disaster circumstances: the programme was developed by Cordaid and delivered to the beneficiaries. Hence, the approach created an environment of dependency that is not conducive to real and sustainable community development and the growth of social capital.

**17)** Unexpected results are those results that projects, partners and CFAs do not explicitly aim for.

**18)** Unexpected results, in particular those at the level of the communities targeted by the projects, were difficult to identify by this evaluation team, which could only spend on average 2,5 to 3 days on each project.

Against this background, only a few meaningful unexpected results (related to *on conflict* projects) can be mentioned.

- The fact that many local staff members, in particular staff belonging to partners dealing with *on conflict* initiatives, are often intimidated, threatened and even tortured and killed, is undoubtedly the most important ‘unexpected’ and ‘undesired’ effect of the projects and programmes supported. We think the term ‘unexpected’ is suitable in the sense that

partners are aware of the dangerous environment and take the (in their eyes) necessary measures to ensure an acceptable level of security for their staff. Key problems in this regard are that parties in the conflict or sometimes even large population groups no longer consider partner organisations as impartial, and that conflict dynamics are so complex that they become largely unpredictable, which implies that security is always at risk. Correcting such an image is difficult, and often not systematically attempted by partners.

- It seems that many local partners that work in conflict zones for various reasons (see also the next sub-chapter) become highly dependent on external funding. While there may be no possibilities of reducing dependency for as long as the local situation remains unstable, partners seem to experience difficulties to adapt to the changed situation once it has returned to normalcy.
- Many international aid (INGOs and others) efforts have absorbed many talented staff of partners and other civil society organisations, both in crisis and post-crisis situations. In regions such as Aceh, this has had considerable adverse effects on local institutional capacity. In Burundi and Sierra Leone it is clear that NGOs, due to their international funding, are better staffed than most government institutions, which can create local distortions.
- Significant contributions to conflict transformation, both via *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects, often lead to ‘unexpected’ improvements in the situation of women and girls, who were often the worst affected during crises. In situations where gender awareness is high, the return to normalcy can provide chances for women, with the support of partners, to regain power and, positively, take important initiatives to support conflict transformation processes. However, when gender is not adequately mainstreamed, adverse effects can emerge (see box).

**Box: Unintended impact on gender – evidence from Sierra Leone**

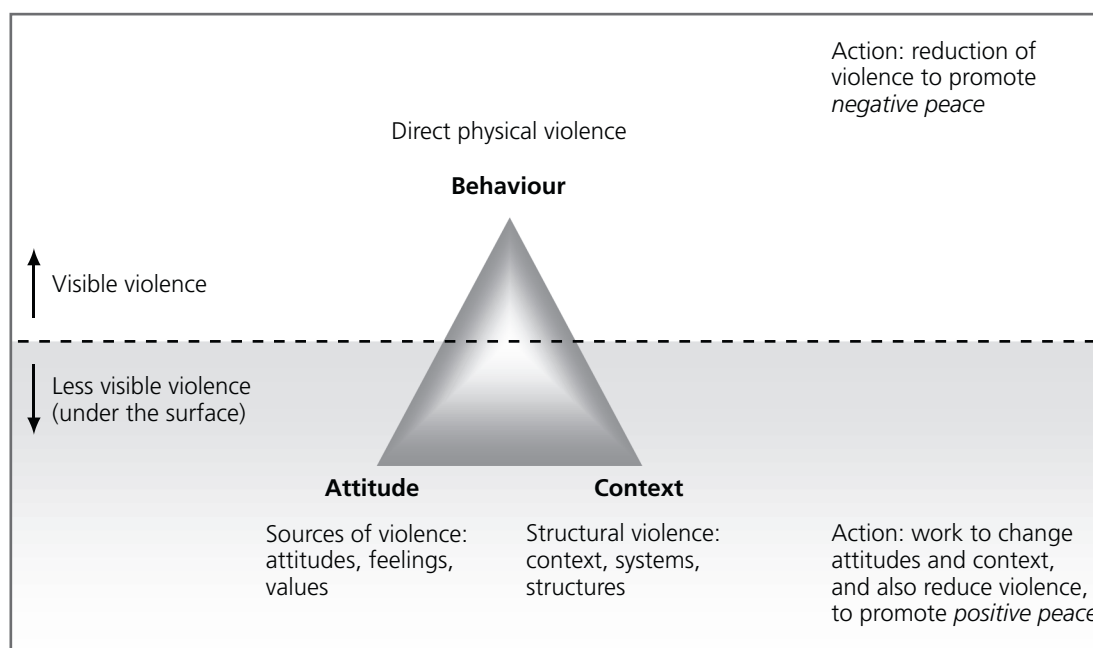
Evidence from Sierra Leone shows the scope for unintended gender impact from the activities of a partner organisation – both at the project and the institution levels. In Plan’s *Kids Waves Child Radio*, boys had a more active involvement in the project, because parents were unwilling to allow their daughters to attend broadcasting sessions due to increased fears for their safety. Equally, anecdotal evidence suggests that women were less involved in the village-level sessions organised through Plan’s *Quest for Peace* – as a result of the pressing demands of both family life and farming responsibilities. It also appears that women might not always be adequately represented in the workforce of partner organisations. An explanation for this is their apparent unwillingness to travel by motorbike to remote project locations – citing personal safety and modesty reasons.

### **The importance of unrecorded effects**

While this could not be substantiated, the work of the evaluation team at the partners’ and projects’ level has clearly highlighted the importance of informal and ad hoc work undertaken by project staff and the partners’ leadership. The volatility in the local context often obliges them to invest considerable time and efforts in peace building actions that do not fit in the official project plans, but are equally crucial to ensuring progress. Actions in this regard relate much to the ‘art’ dimension of conflict transformation and their effects are seldom recorded and reported, and hence to a certain degree unplanned and unexpected, but they help in establishing local partners as well respected actors in the peace process.

### 3.4 Placing achievements against the notion of 'conflict transformation'

In section 1.3.2 'conflict transformation' was defined as a generic term, pointing to efforts dealing with the structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict. It was also found that CFAs and their partners do not consistently use the concept of conflict transformation, and when they do, they use it as a generic term without reference to its initial comprehensive character. This evaluation has used the term in a similar way.



A useful tool for assessing the efforts and effects of the CFAs and their partners' work is the model presented above, developed by Galtung and adapted in ICCO's policy paper 'Positioning ICCO in Peace Building'.

Using the above model, depicted as reference, one can conclude that:

- CFAs and their partners deal mainly with 'positive peace' promotion, i.e. efforts to change the attitudes of the actors and the contextual factors. In other words, they focus on the underlying factors that actually are the main causes of direct, visible violence. Most *on conflict* projects deal, in one way or another, with the attitudinal aspects and rarely try to influence directly actors who are responsible for direct physical violence. Most *in conflict* projects deal with contextual factors, which are a key element in ensuring positive peace.
- Linking the model to another typology, that of the level of actors (tracks I, II and III)<sup>19</sup>, one can conclude that most actions of CFAs and partners relate to the track III level, but that an important number of efforts (and effects) is situated in track II and even track I, among other things because of the relative importance and success of higher-level lobby and advocacy efforts.
- The focus of CFAs and partners on underlying structural and attitudinal factors is understandable, as it fits with the identity of CFAs and partners as civil society structures. Work in these areas is vital not only to remove the causes of direct physical violence, but also to complement efforts of other parties that deal more with the promotion of

<sup>19</sup> Track I actors are the national political, military and religious leaders; track II actors are the middle range leaders; and track III actors are the grassroots organisations and respected leaders. For more details, see (for example) p. 21 of the ToR of this evaluation.

'negative' peace and are less capable of also taking on positive peace promotion. As such, one can say that the action of CFAs and their partners is not only strategically important but also contributes indirectly to reduced violence.

- Furthermore, many efforts of CFAs and partners deal with the strengthening of structures and institutions, whose capacities to perform actually are preconditions for acting on each of the 'family' of factors that causes violence. Results at this level are to be considered as crucial 'for letting the peace process work'.

The above model also teaches that *combined* action is needed in all settings: in (full) conflict settings action is needed at the three levels of the triangle, in post-conflict settings both the attitudinal and contextual factors need to be addressed, but often also the behavioural aspects. The same applies to conflict prevention efforts. Many actors on the ground are aware of the necessary combination of activities of a varied nature and some actually try to engage in both *in conflict* and *on conflict* actions, often with limited success as highly different skills are needed to successfully implement such actions (see box). This said, the necessary interplay between actions pertaining to the attitudinal and the contextual dimensions is hardly considered in the CFAs' strategies and portfolio management.

***Box: A need to retain a focus in projects – Evidence from Sierra Leone***

Experiences from Sierra Leone show that, whether '*in-conflict*' or '*on-conflict*', the most successful projects appear to be those that retain a visible focus on the areas they work in. In contrast, projects that seek to do too much, risk undermining their performance in all areas. Cordaid's support to Caritas Makeni combined livelihood support, health (in the shape of HIV-AIDS sensitisation) and human rights awareness-raising. It failed to deliver significant and sustainable benefits in all areas and arguably would have performed better had it focused all its efforts on making the livelihoods component work. Furthermore, the late inclusion of a human rights component had negative effects (thus contravening the fundamental principle of 'do no harm') and clearly shows that partner organisations should resist the temptation to include additional peace building/conflict resolution components in their projects, when they are ill equipped to deliver.

### **3.5 Sustainability of results**

In line with the approach adopted above, this sub-chapter focuses on the (potential) sustainability of benefits related to conflict transformation. The analysis of sustainability poses specific challenges. Indeed, measuring sustainability implies drawing conclusions, or at least staging probabilities, about *future* events: we have to predict how a certain level of benefits will develop over time and which factors will influence it positively or negatively. The degree of uncertainty obviously increases when social, cultural and institutional factors are expected to play an important role and/or are unstable, which is the case in conflict environments. In addition, many of the projects included in the evaluation were still in their implementation stage at the time of the evaluation, which made forecasting the sustainability of their future benefits even more speculative.

These difficulties in assessing thoroughly the sustainability of benefits have made the evaluators decide to not only assess the (likely) sustainability as such of benefits (3.5.1), but also to look carefully at factors which are commonly considered as having an important

influence on sustainability (3.5.2): the level of inclusion of the notion of sustainability in project design, approach and appraisal, the attention given to sustainability during implementation and the sustainability of partner organisations as such. These factors can be considered as proxy indicators of sustainability of benefits and were as such included in the evaluation framework.

### 3.5.1 Sustainability of conflict-related benefits

The (likely) sustainability of conflict-related results is mixed in all country studies. Many projects were able to achieve results that contribute, directly or indirectly, to conflict transformation. Overall, the potential sustainability of benefits is substantial in many cases, as many efforts were undertaken to embed mechanisms in local society, to set up or reinforce local institutions that 'own' the process contributing to sustainability and by using approaches that empower the population to take its destiny into their own hands and ensure their own welfare (see box). However, in situations of high levels of instability this is far from enough to ensure the sustainability of benefits. CFAs, their partners and beneficiaries simply do not have the power to withstand major negative developments instigated by powerful actors.

In post-conflict settings mostly characterised by a slow but unpredictable evolution towards normalcy, the prospects of sustainability are evidently better. Nevertheless, the picture remains mixed. Projects that have invested much in training people and strengthening local structures are clearly the most successful, because local communities have often acquired the skills and competence to deal effectively with the unpredictable character of local developments. This applies in particular to social cohesion: local structures often impress by succeeding in safeguarding it, helped by the skills acquired and most peoples' strong desire not to reignite conflicts. Indeed, traumatic experiences in the past often constitute a powerful factor in efforts to prevent the eruption of new conflicts.

**Box: RATA's trauma counselling approach**

RATA (working in Aceh, Indonesia) has long been known for its expertise with regard to trauma counselling of victims of conflict. A discontinuity in its funding, however, resulted in it losing most of its competent staff. ICCO entered into a partnership with RATA so that it could take up its activities again. A specialised agency trained the new and inexperienced RATA staff in trauma counselling and assisted them in working out an approach that starts with the identification of people in need at the village level, and then proceeds to set up self-help groups of 6-8 victims. Supported by RATA's staff, these groups meet weekly to discuss a theme related to their traumas. After eight weekly sessions, an internal evaluation is held and groups are asked if they want to continue autonomously or not. Most groups decide to do so and meet regularly as self-help groups without the support of RATA's staff. As such, they became independent from RATA's external support. Research by external specialists indicates that most participants experience a substantial decrease of trauma-related problems after three months.

An important number of projects, however, has failed to invest in creating the necessary (but insufficient) conditions for eventually achieving sustainability. Many explanations can be found. Sometimes, the simple failure to adequately take the conflict context into account in project design, make benefits unsustainable. Such cases typically occur when *on conflict* partners with limited expertise in economic development undertake activities in that field, as they are considered to support the peace building process. In other situations, in particular in projects aimed at income generation, conflict-related factors were underestimated and

impacted on the sustainability of benefits. Also, sometimes partners were not capable of securing the support that lasted long enough to secure sustainability, or they simply lacked the technical and methodological capacities to implement the projects.

A special case are post-emergency projects as set up in Aceh and Maluku. Despite heavy pressure to come up with fundable proposals quickly, those in charge of project design undertook conscious efforts to ensure the sustainability of benefits. This was, however, not enough effectively to ensure sustainability, and for various reasons: the incapacity to create genuine ownership at the grassroots level, the lack of embedding of the projects in local institutions and, probably most importantly, the limited period (as imposed by donors) for project implementation. As such, in this case the sustainability of benefits cannot yet be assured.

### **3.5.2 Sustainability enhancing factors**

In an effort to supplement the analysis above, we present below an analysis of a few factors that have been identified as major factors contributing to sustainability.

#### **Inclusion of the notion of sustainability in project design, approach and appraisal**

The inclusion of the notion of sustainability in project design and approach varies considerably in some countries (DRC), but is quite consistent in others (Indonesia). Overall, partners clearly are aware of the constraints imposed by the context and inform their CFA counterpart of this. The way these constraints are dealt with in project design and approach, however, varies. In Indonesia it seems to have become standard practice, in particular by designing approaches enabling local communities autonomously to ensure benefit continuation once external support has pulled out. Such approaches are often quite original (e.g. setting up autonomous self-help groups of trauma victims at the village level, or the creation of groups of victims of conflict who pursue their rights and help each other) and merit to be promoted on a broader scale. Post-tsunami projects, though not always entirely successful, included sustainability as a key notion in their design, despite heavy external pressure to quickly come up with a 'fundable' proposal. It is clear that projects that consistently, from the design phase, deal with the sustainability of benefits, have better changes to secure the sustainability of benefits once major external support has been withdrawn.

CFAs include sustainability considerations in their appraisal and dialogue with their partners, but the future sustainability of project benefits is not systematically assessed, even though it mostly figures among the issues to be looked at carefully in the appraisal process. CFAs seem to implicitly accept that the strict appraisal by the criterion of sustainability of proposals in conflict regions is not that relevant, nor desirable. Indeed, many problems are *that* big and complex, that their solution lies beyond the capacity of local partners (and CFAs). CFAs therefore seem to focus rather on the institutional capacity of local partners (see below), which is considered crucial for the long-term sustainability, not so much of project benefits but certainly of their presence in the region. This attitude also explains the openness of all CFAs to partners' demands to include important capacity building efforts in their support and to adapt a flexible attitude to changes in project approach and objectives during implementation.

While the CFAs' propensity is to focus in first instance on partner continuity, the relative lack of attention to the sustainability of project benefits implies that chances are missed to ensure a better sustainability of benefits.

## Sustainability of partner organisations

Even more so than in non-conflict regions, partner organisations are a key factor in the CFAs' intervention strategies and attempts to contribute to conflict transformation. Partners are seen as the major means to ensuring continuity in the region and most CFAs rely on a few key partners to take strategic decisions and develop their programme portfolios. In line with this strategic option, a CFA's policy generally favours long-term partnerships, encourages capacity building at partner level and allows flexibility in project implementation. As such, local partners get the opportunity to grow as an institution, learn lessons and capitalise on their experiences. As mentioned above, this is one of the major outcomes achieved. These positive factors are, however, partially offset by constraints, such as the difficulty to ensure staff continuity (many staff members leave because of mental pressure or to take up work at better paying international organisations) and the need to constantly develop new competence in view of the changes on the ground. Furthermore, key leaders of partners are in some countries approached by political parties to enter into politics.

The efforts of CFAs have paid off in the sense that some partners are now generally recognised as well established and reliable institutions that cannot be disregarded in the peace process. Such partner organisations obviously have more chances to ensure their sustainability and play a role in the peace process. As such, they are also better able to ensure additional funding for actions that need additional support to ensure the sustainability of benefits.

Developing local sources of income as a means to diversifying income and to decreasing donor dependence, is extremely difficult in conflict regions. Hence, almost all partners continue to depend heavily on the availability of external funding for the continuation of their activities. This said, partners often fail to assess thoroughly local funding possibilities that are often quite substantial, in particular for *in conflict* projects in post-conflict settings. While this is understandable for many reasons (the privileged relation with their northern partner(s), the pressure from the environment, etc.), partners could be encouraged to explore opportunities more systematically.

The model Plan applies is also worth mentioning. Plan works through institutionally strong country programme offices, whose funding is well secured through the linkages with the international headquarters and the branches in northern countries. As such, it can adjust the funding of its projects (and indirectly of its local partners) quite easily.

Local partners also face specific challenges when the situation on the ground changes. This is particularly true when peace building efforts really acquire substance and other approaches and types of support are needed. In addition, such periods of transition often lead to major changes in the donor community; many donors leaving and others entering the scene. Experiences in Sierra Leone and Indonesia teach that some organisations succeed in adapting themselves and benefit from the new opportunities, while others fail, often because they stick too long to their previous modes of operation.

### 3.5.3 Concluding remark on sustainability

Overall, it remains extremely delicate to make unequivocal statements about the probability of the sustainability of benefits achieved by the projects, in particular in areas where the situation is so unstable that forecasts are difficult to make. The reliability of forecasting the sustainability of benefits is somewhat better in post-conflict areas, such as Indonesia and Sierra Leone, even though there too it is said that the process towards sustainable peace is

complicated and vulnerable. Considering the magnitude of the problems that exist in conflict regions, one should accept that changes in the conflict and peace dynamics can easily destroy results that were achieved with great effort. The sustainability of the conflict transformation results obtained remains highly dependent on the evolution of factors the CSO community often can only marginally influence. As such the CFAs' option to simply ensure continuity in terms of their presence and support (while hoping that sustainable results will be achieved), is understandable and adequate. It should not, however, prevent them from designing appropriate approaches and strategies that take the conflict context fully into account.

## **3.6 Evaluative reflections and conclusions**

### **3.6.1 Evaluative reflections**

#### **Untapped conflict transformation potential of in conflict projects**

Overall, the success of *in conflict* projects in terms of conflict transformation is very much conditioned by their relevance (with regard to the conflict situation) and their level of conflict sensitivity. It is therefore important to look more carefully at what determines success in terms of the contribution to conflict transformation of *in conflict* projects.

Apparently, most, if not all *in conflict* projects have the potential to contribute, at least indirectly, to conflict transformation, because in one way or another they (can) contribute to solving structural problems (see the model presented under 3.4) that are important sources of the conflict. The evaluation has identified important outcomes related to conflict transformation that were achieved by *in conflict* projects, in an intended or unintended way. There exists, however, much difference in the *in conflict* projects' contribution to conflict transformation. A closer look at the reasons for some projects effectively succeeding in doing so and others less, indicates that the potential contribution is determined by (1) the relevance of the projects' objectives for the population (which is most often assured quite well, considering the many problems populations in conflict zones face) and (2), more importantly, the degree of 'conflict sensitivity' of the projects concerned. The more the projects are conflict sensitive, the bigger the chances that they, almost by their nature, contribute to conflict transformation. More in particular, the best results are achieved by projects that are capable of adopting inclusive and participatory approaches, that monitor the effects of their action on social relations between and within different social groups and, most importantly, that explicitly recognise the potential to also contribute to conflict transformation and peace building.

#### **CFAs and partners often have comparative advantages in working at the grassroots level**

Apparently, many partners, with the support of CFAs, are able to make a difference at the grassroots level. This is not surprising, as it is this level that most partner organisations have affinity with and where they can best use their distinctive competence related to their capacity to analyse well the local situation, develop participatory approaches, strengthen local institutions, etc. The local level is the most appropriate level for practicing approaches related to the 'art' dimension of conflict transformation. Other actors (in particular international aid organisations but also government services) are weak precisely at this level, which implies that partners can easily 'occupy' this domain. Moreover, at the local level it is relatively easy to analyse and document changes (in terms of outcomes and impact) that are achieved and engage in learning processes.

This is not to say that partners and CFAs cannot be successful at higher levels. They are,

but results at these levels are more difficult to achieve and also more difficult to attribute to the CFAs' and their partners' efforts. Successes seem often characterised by long-term involvement in the area, co-operation among various actors and a good integration of work at the grassroots, intermediary and higher levels, including direct action with the population and lobby and advocacy.

### **Unintended effects: an issue to be better addressed**

Above, we stressed the importance of interpreting with caution the presentation of the unexpected results. Indeed, it is commonly known that development work is tempted to turn a blind eye to unexpected (negative) effects of its efforts. They are rarely searched for and documented through consistent attempts. In as far as evidence has been gathered and shows, it suggests that the negative side effects of projects are often more important than one would expect.

There are many reasons to believe that the same can be said about projects in conflict regions, where the potential to do harm unwillingly is even much bigger, considering the vulnerability of the local population and the precarious character of social relations and networks.

### **Relying on local partners has been a rewarding strategic option**

Strategy-wise, sustainable peace can only be achieved in as far as strong long-term processes, structures and institutions that support peace building can be created. In this regard, the CFAs' option to work with well embedded and strong partners and engage in long-term co-operation has proven to be adequate, not only to ensure continued presence in the region but also to allow local partners, individually or jointly, to slowly become institutions that cannot be ignored as key actors in the peace process, which for instance seems the case with partner organisations in East Congo and Papua. On the contrary the efforts of CFAs to set up new structures (such as the '*Plate-formes de la Paix*' and the '*Cadres de Concertation*' in East Congo) appear not that sustainable as they fail really to strike roots. Strengthening and encouraging existing organisations in their networking and co-ordination efforts seems to lead to more sustainable results than creating new structures.

### **The difficult relationship between in conflict and on conflict work**

The importance of both types of actions is obvious and clearly recognised at the local level; it has also become clear how both types of work can positively influence each other. Ensuring a comprehensive approach, however, seems very difficult. Many organisations dealing with *in conflict* work have a certain aversion to *on conflict* work and fear they would be losing their neutrality when doing so. While this is understandable, it often leads to creating a dichotomy and, more importantly, to a loss of opportunity to contribute to conflict transformation. In addition, many *in conflict* partners started to engage in *on conflict* activities (with mixed results) in response to the needs they saw in this area. On the other side, many *on conflict* projects/partners recognise the need of *in conflict* work. Some of them also started such activities, again with mixed results.

Evidence on the ground suggests that it is difficult to combine, in one organisation, *in conflict* and *on conflict* work. What seems the most interesting model in this regard are projects that undertake *in conflict* work with the specific aim to *also* contribute to conflict transformation.

### **Contributions to State building: a poorly addressed issue**

State building is considered a crucial action, in particular in post-conflict situations, to achieve sustainable peace. Many projects do not assess to what extent it is feasible/desirable to involve state institutions in their action or even strengthen them. This is to a certain degree understandable, considering the weakness of state institutions in (post-) conflict settings, their lack of neutrality and recognition by the population (in some cases) and the 'natural' focus of many projects on the grassroots and grassroots empowerment. This said, certainly at the strategic level, CFAs and partners seem often tempted to ignore the state as a crucial actor, which might compromise the effect of conflict transformation issues, in particular in the long run.

### **3.6.2 Conclusions**

#### **CFAs and their partners have achieved results related to conflict transformation despite substantial constraints**

The evaluation has found that CFAs and their partners were capable of achieving results in difficult circumstances; virtually all projects have realised meaningful results. This is certainly the case at the output level, but also at the outcome level. There are many factors explaining this performance; most probably the high level of embedding of partners constitutes, in particular in conflict settings, a major advantage.

The achievements should, however, be placed in perspective by looking carefully at the *scope* of the activities and the results. As partner organisations often work at the community level in relative isolation, their activities tend to be somewhat dispersed and aggregate results are not easily achieved, especially because co-ordination and complementarity are rather weak. Therefore, the outputs and outcomes are often only realised on a (too) limited scale, which does not correspond with the CFAs ambitions.

#### **Good coverage of the various dimensions of 'conflict transformation' but no strategic approach**

Comparing the results with the conflict transformation model and other useful schemes (such as the distinction of three levels/tracks), it is clear that the results cover all the dimensions and levels of conflict transformation that CFAs and their partners can reasonably<sup>20</sup> address. However, many of the results achieved remain isolated. The evaluation was not able to address the extent to which isolated results can, in the absence of results at the level of the other dimensions, contribute to conflict transformation. However, the feeling at the local level is that this is clearly the case and that these results, in one way or another, add up to the peace process. While this might be true, it might be equally true that the lack of a strategic approach leading to synergic action has negatively impacted on the eventual outcomes of the CFAs' and their partners' action, which makes it difficult to come up with findings and conclusions on aggregated results.

#### **Unawareness of unexpected results: a dangerous blind spot**

Most partner organisations and CFAs are not aware of the unexpected (unplanned, unattended) effects of their actions, which is rather disturbing as they might have caused harm unwillingly and unknowingly in view of weak social institutions and situations of generalised vulnerability that characterise (post-)conflict situations. While this lack is part of the broader problem of weak monitoring and evaluation of higher-level results and is a 'standard' bad practice in development work in general, turning a blind eye to this issue is particularly problematic in conflict situations that are characterised by vulnerability and fragility of social relations.

<sup>20</sup> One cannot expect CFAs and their partners to take up a direct role in negative peace promotion.

### **A contextualised but not optimal approach to dealing with sustainability**

The likely sustainability of benefits was difficult to assess for various reasons (see above).

Evidence suggests that the results are mixed: in some cases the sustainability of benefits can virtually be assured, while in other cases the opposite is the case.

Looking at factors that might affect the future sustainability of benefits, it was found that CFAs' prefer to 'contextualise' the sustainability criterion when assessing proposals originating from conflict regions, which is understandable and acceptable in the evaluators' view. The same applies for the heavy focus on the partner organisations, which is in line with the CFAs' intervention model that heavily relies on their partners for programme implementation. In addition, it is clear that continued presence in a region is 'rewarding' in many ways and at least indirectly contributes to sustainability. As such, and while it remains difficult to unequivocally assess the level of sustainability of the results achieved, many results seem to have reasonable chances of becoming sustainable, despite the constraints highlighted above (such as work in relative isolation, limited linkages with other dimensions of the conflict transformation triangle).

The results achieved in terms of sustainability or in optimising sustainability chances are, however, not optimal. The practice of CFAs not to consider sustainability consistently, seems to be rather implicit and nowhere clearly formalised. In addition, the heavy focus on the partner organisation often implies that project proposals are no longer critically appraised, whereas they should always try to incorporate sustainability considerations. The fact that contextual factors in particular are a major constraint should not be a reason for not 'demanding' sustainability; there are many examples of projects achieving sustainable results in highly difficult contexts.

## 4. Relevance, appropriateness and conflict sensitivity

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The relevance criterion is central to this evaluation of conflict transformation. The traditional definition of the criterion should, however, be expanded to be able to respond to the specific circumstances in conflict-affected regions. As the situation in most (post-)conflict regions is volatile, the 'relevance' of conflict transformation efforts often changes over time: what is highly appropriate at a certain moment in time might become irrelevant or even counterproductive later. Accordingly, when assessing relevance, it is important to focus not only on the higher-level goals and purposes of interventions and their relation to the (dynamics of the) local context and needs, but also on the level of appropriateness of implementation: the way inputs and activities are tailored to respond to local needs, increasing ownership and cost-effectiveness<sup>21</sup>. In view of the above and the fact that relevance and conflict sensitivity are actually intrinsically linked, it was decided to present jointly the findings with regard to relevance and conflict sensitivity, though they were dealt with separately at the level of the evaluation framework and corresponding judgment criteria.

Building further on the above, the main issues to be considered are:

- Are CFAs and partners making an accurate analysis, identifying the key driving factors and actors in the conflict?
- To what extent are their projects (and by extension their programme portfolios) based on this analysis; how is this translated into practice?
- How relevant are (remain) projects in view of the needs of the population?
- How do CFAs and partners deal with changes in the conflict dynamics; to what extent are they *conflict sensitive* (understanding not only the conflict, but also the interaction between the conflict and their operations, so that they are able to act accordingly to maximise performance).

<sup>21</sup> 'Appropriateness' is a criterion developed in the context of humanitarian aid as an 'expansion' of the relevance criterion to better capture the specific reality of humanitarian aid. This evaluation felt that this 'expansion' is also useful in the context of conflict transformation and peace building efforts. The DAC defines appropriateness as: the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness accordingly.

### 4.1 Quality of conflict analysis

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#### 4.1.1 At CFA level

Conflict analyses are generally (e.g. in specialised literature) considered a corner stone, guaranteeing the quality of policies and strategies related to countries or regions affected by conflicts. The practice of CFAs has been mixed in this regard, and no consistent patterns exist among or even inside the CFAs. Well elaborated conflict analyses that correspond to the state of the art are, however, an exception. In some cases (e.g. Cordaid in Sierra Leone and recently in Sudan, ICCO in Afghanistan and Nepal) a comprehensive analysis is available, backed by a long-standing presence and experience in the region. In other cases (e.g. Oxfam Novib in DRC), regular workshops are organised with partners to exchange views on the conflict dynamics and improve understanding, to sharpen conflict sensitivity and formulate recommendations for future action. Conflict analyses are included in the country/region strategies of some of the CFAs working in Burundi, DRC, Sierra Leone and Sudan, but remain rather limited. Such analyses do not exist for Indonesia, where – to complicate matters even more - conflicts are to a major extent region specific, which is actually also the case in DRC. In addition, it should be underlined that external advisors often play a role in writing these analyses; while this is understandable in itself, it is not clear to what extent the analyses are fully accepted, owned and integrated in the CFAs' work.

It is, however, important to note that CFAs dispose of other ways to ensure the accurateness of their conflict analyses or, at least, to complement their weaker formal analyses. These ways

rather refer to the 'art dimension' of conflict transformation work explained above. Indeed, the evaluation found that CFAs in general have a considerable body of knowledge on and affinity with the situation in the conflict-affected countries where they work, which can be largely attributed to their long-standing involvement in these countries and their capacity to liaise with qualified resource persons and update their knowledge and insights through regular visits, exchange and dialogue with their partners and, sometimes, via their physical presence in the field. Some nuances should, however, be added in this regard:

- Much of the CFAs' knowledge is concentrated with a few staff members who have dealt with the region/country over a long period; it is poorly recorded and systematised and, hence, can disappear quickly when the staff member concerned leaves the organisation or is transferred, e.g. following an internal reorganisation. In this last case, experienced staff can still provide specific assistance, but this situation is far from ideal.
- Staff members in charge of programmes in conflict-affected countries do not have *specific* skills and capacities related to conflict transformation, even when 'peace and conflict' is a key area of intervention (ICCO staff dealing with Afghanistan is a rare exception). Some of these staff members enjoy the back-up support of in-house thematic specialists, but this is rather an exception and certainly not formalised. At Cordaid and ICCO (for whom 'peace and conflict' is a key area of intervention), some efforts have been undertaken to introduce staff to relevant policy documents and tools, but with limited effect. It even happens that CFA staff members, in particular new staff members, have no detailed knowledge of the specific peace and conflict policies of their organisation.
- While they did not dispose of specific skills and capacities, CFA staff were not supported either by simple guidelines and user-friendly tools allowing them to better structure their knowledge and experience and, where needed, identify blind spots in their analysis and approach. With a few exceptions (e.g. ICCO's reviewed manual for conflict analysis) such tools are not yet available (see box)

**Box: ICCOs Conflict Analysis manual**

Over the last five years, ICCO has undertaken considerable efforts to take stock of its work related to conflict transformation, work out a policy paper and some other documents, including a manual, which, however, was considered to be not user-friendly. Therefore, a new and simplified tool was developed, meant to fill the gap and help the staff of ICCO and KIA, its partners and consultants, make in-depth conflict analyses.

The manual was recently field-tested and the first experiences are promising; many partners who are actually aware of the conflict situation, feel that it brings added value in terms of analysing the conflict in a more structured way. ICCO has also recently developed draft guidelines for vision development to complement the conflict analysis tool. This document deals with the development of a joint vision, the formulation of the preconditions for realising this vision and of strategies for working on these preconditions.

From a conflict transformation perspective, it would be interesting to complement these tools with an instrument analysing the possible future trends.

- Many CFAs have in-country representations in conflict-affected countries or regions. These representations could actually play a role in deepening the existing knowledge on conflict and country strategies, but usually their mandate is rather technical and circumscribed, which can also be explained by the restrictions they impose on themselves with regard to

their role in the field. In addition, by nature, CFAs do not have the same conflict-related knowledge as well embedded local partners. This poses additional challenges to CFAs, which they try to address by recruiting local staff, liaise with local actors and participate in broader networks. These mechanisms are relevant as such, but do not allow these structures to deal with the conflict in the same 'natural' way as local actors. This can constitute a handicap, in particular when CFAs want to take up an operational role in the field.

- The lack of well operationalised conflict analyses (and other related specific tools – see below) also implies that CFAs do not systematically address unintended (positive and negative) effects that might be produced by their interventions. A high level of affinity with the local context (ensured via long presence in the area, good local networks, quality dialogue with partners) cannot entirely compensate for this lack.
- Finally, internal reorganisations (in particular in ICCO and Cordaid) and staff turnover have impacted on the CFAs' capacity to draft and update overall and country analyses. These changes have often had considerable impact, as knowledge with regard to both conflict transformation in general and the situation on the ground in the countries in conflict (both in terms of the nature and dynamics of the conflict and the characteristics – potential, weaknesses, positioning – of the partner organisations) is often not well systematised but mainly kept in the heads of key staff. While in some cases the staff member who used to be in charge of the programme could still be called upon later for specific assistance, the lack of well elaborated practices to keep the institutional memory intact seems to constitute a major constraint in this regard.

#### **4.1.2 At the level of partner organisation**

The CFA partners are nearly exclusively organisations that are locally embedded and, hence, have worked in a conflict environment for a considerable period of time; many of their staff members have faced the conflict's reality when the situation was at its worst and have often been personally affected by the conflict. Living and working in a conflict-affected environment has become an intrinsic part of their existence. As a consequence, partner organisations, both those working 'on' and 'in' conflict show a high level of awareness of the conflict situation: they are able to identify its main drives and underlying causes, present dynamics and, in a post-conflict phase, possible threats. With a very few exceptions, this awareness is, however, rarely codified in formal analyses and policies so that strategic decision-making remains largely intuitive and implicit. While these (implicit) analyses and policies seem well fed by the partners' experience on the ground, in very few cases they include notions related to conflict transformation or related concepts. In other words, local knowledge and experience is not enriched with external expertise related to conflict transformation, which could actually allow for placing local expertise and wisdom in a broader and more consistent perspective.

There exists much variety in the level of depth and exhaustiveness of the conflict analyses conducted by partners and also in the frequency their analyses are updated. Overall and quite logically, *on conflict* partners have better and more updated conflict analyses, by engaging in systematic efforts in this regard and through daily interaction with the reality of the conflict. In line with the findings presented above with regard to the partners' policies, their conflict analyses remain – with a few notable exceptions in all countries – rather intuitive and implicit. Most often, the macro level of the conflict and peace process is only referred to in broad terms. In addition, and with the exception of the partners in Burundi and Sudan, and to some extent Afghanistan and Nepal, these analyses lack a gender perspective.

The situation is different at the level of *in conflict* partners. The way they consider the conflict (as an important external factor, or *also* as a reality to be transformed) is reflected in the way they analyse the conflict. Those considering the conflict as a contextual factor analyse the conflict context and in particular its consequences on the situation in the sector they are involved, in order to justify the programme's relevance and to be able to assess the security risks. They do not, however, analyse the conflict *as such*, which, in contrast, is done clearly by those *in conflict* partners that aspire to contribute to conflict transformation.

## **4.2 Appropriateness of positioning in view of conflict transformation values and principles**

All CFAs, partners and project proposals adhere, explicitly or implicitly, to key peace building values and principles such as impartiality, inclusion, non-violence, fulfilment of human rights, dialogue and 'do no harm'. This is not so much linked to the CFAs' and partners' explicit knowledge of and reference to these peace building values and principles (CFAs and partners actually rarely refer to these key concepts), as it is to be explained by the high level of compatibility between these values and those constituting the identity of most civil society actors and by the partners' typical approaches (participation, multi-stakeholder involvement) that are close to the principles mentioned above.

The strong adherence to key values such as impartiality and neutrality, and the focus on the people's fate and their empowerment, provides unequivocal guidance in delineating the partners' and CFAs' strategic choices and approach in particular in full conflict or precarious post-conflict situations (such as in DRC, Afghanistan, Sudan, Nepal and Indonesia). This is obviously important for '*on conflict*' projects that deal with the conflict dynamics on a continuous basis and as such face opposing parties on a daily basis. It also helps, however, '*in conflict*' partner organisations to position themselves vis-à-vis the conflict's reality. In this regard, it is striking that this unique characteristic apparently allows the adoption of two different positions: some (actually most) '*in conflict*' partners (and their CFA partner) only consider the conflict as an environmental factor which they need to take into account when designing and implementing their programmes, while other projects are clearly positioning themselves in a conflict transformation framework by stating that they want to address key causes of the conflict. As will be demonstrated further on, this different positioning can have important consequences in terms of (potential) contributions to conflict transformation. In Burundi, where the situation is slowly stabilising, the issue of impartiality and neutrality is gradually becoming less important and is not a main theme of discussion anymore. None of the partner organisations work together with the only still active rebel movement that does not accept the peace and ceasefire agreement. Impartiality and neutrality is even less of an issue in Sierra Leone, which is now more than six years into the post-war era and where the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels have long since disbanded.

CFAs and partners are not only able to adhere to the above mentioned principles on paper, their continued interaction with the conflict context has also provided ample learning opportunities to put these values and principles into practice. This has allowed many partner organisations in particular to become widely respected and high profile actors in an often turbulent environment (for example Plan Sierra Leone and Kenema Diocese Healthcare Co-ordination Office in Sierra Leone). It is obvious that such recognition allows local partner organisations to strategically use their position to influence the conflict and peace dynamics and/or effectively defend the interests of the population.

## 4.3 Partner and project selection

### 4.3.1 Partner selection

Partners occupy a key position in the CFAs' intervention strategy, as CFAs rely mainly on partners for realising their objectives in the South. In this regard, CFAs can act merely in a reactive or a proactive way, or use both approaches. ICCO seems to have undertaken most proactive efforts (e.g. in Burundi and Aceh, Indonesia) to identify partners that are in line with its policies. CFAs seem to focus more on partner selection and dialogue with their partner organisations than on the actual assessment of the projects these partners propose. This is understandable in view of the poorly operationalised country policies and the volatility of the local context, which make CFAs adopt de facto the strategy of relying on their partners for choices at the local level. CFAs typically seek new partnerships with organisations that share their overall views, work in areas that correspond with their thematic choices for that particular country and seem to have the necessary capacities to successfully implement actions in these thematic areas. Partners' capacities are, however, mostly treated in broad managerial terms (capacity to implement projects and account for implementation), and less in relation to the specific technical and methodological skills needed to implement the projects and, by extension, the CFAs' policies and strategies.

In this regard, it is important to mention that many projects contain capacity building efforts that are geared, in particular, to strengthening local partners. Various approaches are followed in this regard: training of partner staff, support via external consultants, the development of a 'linking and learning' approach, and, maybe most importantly, seminars to exchange information, views and experiences and bring in new notions and concepts. Only in a few cases (e.g. CVICT, a partner of ICCO in Nepal), however, do these capacity building efforts explicitly focus on strengthening the skills of partners with regard to conflict transformation issues (acquisition of skills related to conflict analysis, gender in conflict situations, conflict prevention and resolution, inter-religious dialogue, psychosocial trauma work, but also conflict sensitivity of *in conflict* projects). As such and despite the relative importance of capacity building in projects, the lack of capacities to implement *on conflict* projects and to make *in conflict* projects truly conflict sensitive has not been adequately addressed.

The importance accorded to partners that are a cornerstone of the CFAs' strategy, implies also that many partnerships last for many years and involve numerous projects (e.g. Cordaid's support to diocesan organisations in Sierra Leone and Papua). In long-standing partnerships, the dialogue with partners becomes even more important and partners play an important role in strategic reflection processes at the CFA level. A similar strategy, adopted by Plan to deal with the complexity of a (post-)conflict situation, is to duplicate projects and approaches that have proven their success elsewhere.

Notwithstanding the crucial role of partners, CFAs adopt rather intuitive and qualitative approaches to build up their partner portfolio. They rely on their (often not systematised) knowledge of the region, their varied contacts at the grassroots and higher levels, their good intuition and gut feeling. This mix of factors ensures that the lack of a well formalised partner selection approach has no adverse effects on the quality of the partner portfolio: the partners selected are all relevant in view of the policies and strategies of the CFAs, including those related to conflict transformation. Moreover, even when clear choices are made at country level in terms of themes and sectors, it might take a long time before the actual project portfolio reflects this choice (e.g. the ICCO programmes in Sudan and Afghanistan, the Cordaid programme in Burundi).

### 4.3.2 Project selection

When looking more closely at the ways *projects* are selected, it is clear that the analysis of the projects' relevance (consistency with the CFA policies and stakeholders needs) is done rather intuitively, based on an overall interpretation of the local situation by CFA staff, in particular on the perception of the capacities of the local partner. Even when the local situation changes drastically (e.g. through a peace agreement ending an open conflict), this rarely leads to reconsidering strategic

choices. In such circumstances CFAs will continue to rely on local partners and their readiness and capacities to change their approach. Furthermore, one can say that:

- The *on conflict projects* selected are all considered relevant in as far as they aim at contributing to conflict transformation, which needs a broad range of actions of a varied nature to become effective. While the link between these initiatives and overall policy and strategy choices is clear, project portfolios as a *whole* lack a clear strategic focus and overall coherence, as they are not framed in an accurate and comprehensive analysis and conflict transformation strategy. As such, CFAs seem generally satisfied when they can ensure that the initiatives supported individually add up to a broad process of conflict transformation. This might be understandable in case 'peace and conflict' is not a major area of intervention. If this is the case, however, CFAs could actually be more ambitious and try better to ensure that their support addresses key driving factors in the peace process and, hence, contributes more effectively to conflict transformation.
- The *in conflict* projects respond always to the thematic choices of the CFAs. Their overall relevance (in terms of responding to the people's material needs) is mostly straightforward, considering the high level of developmental and humanitarian needs that most often exist in (post-)conflict contexts. CFAs do not, however, apply 'conflict sensitivity' as a criterion in project selection; at the most a reflection is made on the risk the conflict constitutes to project implementation and effectiveness. Most importantly, the question whether or not the project has the prospect to contribute to conflict transformation is not explicitly addressed in the approval process, which implies that opportunities are often lost.

In many areas, CFAs also combine their 'regular' development work with humanitarian aid and lobby and advocacy efforts. There is no clear-cut pattern with regard to how these activities are prioritised, identified and approved, nor to which extent their relation with the regular programmes in the conflict regions is a consideration in deciding on support for these actions. Apparently, mainly external factors play an important role in this regard: the evolution of public opinion (e.g. with regard to a humanitarian crisis), political developments providing a window of opportunity for lobby in the Netherlands and/or at the EU level, the priorities of the local partners, developments on the ground and the local political scene, etc.

## 4.4 Projects' relevance in view of the needs of the population

The projects supported are characterised by a high level of sensitivity towards and understanding of the actual needs of the population, both in global terms and related to the (post-) conflict situation as such. Both *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects respond to the needs of the population, which in itself is not surprising considering the huge and diverse needs of the population who most often constitutes the main victim of the conflict. *In conflict* projects all addressed urgent humanitarian and development needs of the population and so did *on conflict* projects that often dealt with delicate issues that were not taken up by

other development actors. CFAs and their partners also often choose to work in regions that were not covered by other development actors.

This said, and in line with good NGO practice, most local partners and projects implemented by CFA-related units were careful in assessing the situation on the ground and included the local population and other key actors in the preparatory stages of the projects, in order to tailor these to the population's needs and characteristics and lay down a basis for effective project implementation and eventually beneficiary ownership. Again, gender considerations were poorly integrated, with Burundi and Nepal as major exceptions.

A few projects in Indonesia were set up as a response to a humanitarian crisis (tsunami, outbreak of violence in Maluku) and in their design phase clearly suffered from external pressure to come up with a 'fundable' project design at short notice. In addition, these projects were mostly not initiated by local partners. While project initiators have done their best to deal with these serious constraints, they could not entirely avoid design errors that have jeopardised subsequent project implementation and sustainability. More in particular, these projects show weaknesses in tailoring their activities and approach to the specific needs and particularities of the local socio-cultural context, in particular the fragile social cohesion at the grassroots level.

Finally, it must be mentioned that, when addressing the suitability of projects in terms of the needs of the population, it is not only important to assess *what* problems are addressed (actually there are rather many relevant issues to be addressed) but also – and even more importantly – *how* these issues are dealt with, how appropriate the projects are. This brings us to the analysis of the interaction between projects and their environment.

## **4.5 Interaction of CFAs and partners with peace and conflict situations and dynamics**

### **4.5.1. At the partner organisation and project levels**

#### **Efforts to reach targeted groups effectively**

Project proposals do not always indicate why they have chosen a particular geographic area and population group(s) to be included in the intervention<sup>22</sup>. Often, clear indications are provided why projects want to address the situation of specific target groups, but no justification is provided why specifically these groups are included and not other disadvantaged groups.

This issue is, however, important, both in '*in conflict*' and '*on conflict*' projects, as experience has provided ample evidence that in *in conflict* situations the level of urgency of support can vary considerably between regions, areas and different population sub-groups. Moreover, support can – willingly or unwillingly - produce a differential impact on these groups; an issue that should be dealt with both ex-ante (by carefully designing and assessing the approach to be followed) and via adequate monitoring. Last but not least, in particular *in conflict* projects that provide tangible benefits to people, run a high risk of being 'hijacked' by more powerful groups, so that the benefits no longer reach the intended beneficiaries. Projects and partners are often not aware of these specific dangers and challenges and undertake few, if any, efforts to assess which groups were in effect reached, to what extent and with what effects.

22) Exceptions here include the Cordaid and ON programmes in East Congo that show a preference for work in isolated areas not reached by other development actors and Cordaid's support to diocesan bodies in Sierra Leone that often work in remote parts of the country. ICCO's choice for Aceh was also inspired by the desire not to work only in areas with a relatively high Christian population.

## Positioning

Partner organisations not only put forward key principles and values, such as impartiality and inclusiveness, as an important part of their identity and code of conduct, but also succeed well in living up to these principles in an often extremely complex and challenging environment. This allows them to interact well with all actors, notwithstanding the fact that most partners combine their position of impartiality with an unequivocal commitment to helping the victims of the conflict.

This finding might be somewhat surprising because, as is the case with their CFA counterparts, many partner organisations do not have *specific* (formally codified) skills and instruments related to conflict analysis and work in conflict contexts. Many have, however, been able to develop sensible and feasible approaches 'on the road' using a learning-by-doing approach (the 'art' dimension of conflict transformation). Some '*on conflict*' partner organisations (e.g. in Burundi and Indonesia) have also benefited from the support of specialised institutions that work in the region. Such support, often punctual in nature, has clearly boosted the quality and effectiveness of their programmes.

Notwithstanding the good performance of partners in this regard, in highly settings of high conflict partners cannot always guarantee that all parties continue accepting them. In Indonesia, for instance, close contacts of partners with the population and their failure or unwillingness to liaise with the army and the police (parties in the conflict largely considered as major human rights perpetrators) has meant that the latter no longer considered them impartial. Some partners in DRC have experienced similar problems. Even if they have an explicit policy of impartiality, they are not seen as impartial simply because their director, staff or part of their target group belongs to a specific ethnic group.

Losing their image of impartiality can have severe consequences. It affects the organisation's capacity to support victims of conflict and to intervene in the peace building process. In such situations, security risks to staff members also increase. Notwithstanding these consequences, most partners in both countries do not react consistently when their impartiality is questioned.

## Peace deficiency assessment<sup>23</sup>

Peace deficiency assessments have the potential to make clear how to deal with the past, monitor the present in terms of progress made and discuss the desired future with other stakeholders in a transparent and structured way. Only in a few cases (in DRC, Sudan and Indonesia) do partners engage in a systematic attempt to assess peace deficiencies by defining the envisioned future, making explicit their assumptions about the necessary conditions for peace, and elaborating the steps to be undertaken to reach it (see box). Nonetheless, many partners in their analysis, views and vision have included key components of a peace deficiency assessment. In doing so, they often tend to over-stress certain issues that are linked to their identity and perception (e.g. organisations dealing with human rights will heavily stress that no peace can be achieved without justice), while turning a blind eye to other elements.

### **Box: Building a culture of peace in Papua (Indonesia) and South Sudan**

In November 2002, with the support of Cordaid, SKP (the Office of Justice and Peace of the Jayapura Diocese) organised a workshop on 'Building a culture of peace towards Papua a Land of Peace'. The workshop, which was a follow-up of earlier initiatives, was attended by a broad range of stakeholders from local civil society, regional government, religious and academic organisations, and mass media. The workshop succeeded in laying down the policy and paths to peace summarised in a publication '*Papua Land of Peace: Addressing Conflict Peace Building in Papua*'. The document presents

**23)** Peace deficiency assessment' is an approach to specify what conditions ideally tend to enhance peace building in a particular situation (country, sector, programme, project), to check the reality against this ideal framework and to assess the missing preconditions for peace building in order to eliminate the peace building deficiencies. This step is of crucial importance because it raises the awareness of different understandings of peace and allows for assessing the relevance and impact of an intervention.

nine components that are needed to achieve an existence of peace. Not only has the document become the major guideline for SKP's work, it also is considered a general reference for those committed to bringing peace in the region. Much remains to be done, however, in terms of socialising the document at the grassroots level. The NSCC (New Sudan Council of Churches, a partner of ICCO) together with the SCC (Sudan Council of Churches) undertook a similar initiative and produced a *'Joint strategy paper for just and lasting peace in Sudan: Strategic considerations for Post Peace Accord Period in South Sudan'*, which thoroughly reflected on the role of the churches following the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The absence of a well elaborated peace deficiency assessment might, or might not, hamper the partners' capacity to think, act and react strategically. Much will then actually depend on their capacity to compensate through other mechanisms for this lack of a systematised approach. However, as will be discussed further on (see chapter 5), the lack of a clearly outlined peace deficiency assessment might also impact on the partners' dialogue with other actors in view of co-ordinated and synergetic action towards peace.

### **Interaction between project operations and the conflict context**

Both *in conflict* and *on conflict* partners typically have a wide network of contacts to monitor developments in the conflict context and assess their potential impact on project activities and the security situation. *In conflict* projects mostly do not have direct contacts with the parties in the conflict, except when they constitute a direct threat to their activities. This type of contacts does exist, almost by nature, in the case of *on conflict* projects that try to directly influence conflict dynamics. These contacts and the close interaction with the population, as well as the reality on the ground, imply that 'grassroots' *on conflict* partners are well informed about important developments in the conflict context and how they impact at the local level. On the contrary, *on conflict* partners working at a higher level (and dealing with research, training, etc.) might lack this close connection with the field realities. From their good embedding and high level of conflict awareness, many projects have developed interesting approaches to taking the conflict context fully into account. These go beyond the consistent application of key values and principles (see above) to including original ways of dialogue, consultation, etc., including groups in conflict. Many partners also show high levels of awareness of the danger of unconsciously fuelling existing tensions and conflicts and try to design approaches to minimise risks in this regard (see box).

#### **Box: POLE Institute - Coping with conflict risks**

Research in conflict regions is a risky business. Academic freedom is a scarce resource in conflicts. One of the organisations that delivers high quality research is Oxfam Novib's partner Pole Institute, based in Goma, North-Kivu. The research of Pole Institute includes highly sensitive issues, such as the role of coltan in North Kivu and the formal and informal cross border trade in eastern DRC. The institute reduces the risks by pursuing transparency, publishing good-quality analyses, dialoguing with the actors implicated in the studies and by establishing good relations with external partners in the US and Europe. Furthermore, highly politically sensitive issues seem to be avoided. For instance, most research documents focus on very specific topics related to the conflict (such as coltan), but a comprehensive and critical analysis of the conflict transformation process in the Kivu region, as well as at the broader national and regional level, is lacking. The same was found for two other research organisations contacted during the field visit.

This said, changes in the conflict situation do not always lead to corresponding adaptations in the partners' overall priorities and approach, even when partner organisations are well aware of these changes. Indeed, partners often have difficulties in adapting their approaches (e.g. in Burundi and smaller partners in Sierra Leone) or have the tendency to hold on too long to their 'traditional' work whereas developments in the conflict context might call for work on other more relevant issues (Indonesia).

In addition, three critical remarks need to be formulated:

- Although they are aware of the precarious situation of many population groups and the harm that can unwillingly be caused by incautiously designed and implemented interventions, very few partners have engaged in systematic attempts to monitor the influence of their work on the conflict context in order to avoid negative impact and maximise positive effects. In other words, their adherence to the 'do no harm' principle remains mainly formal and is poorly operationalised. Monitoring, when conducted, focuses only on the planned (and desired) project effects, not on those that are unplanned or unwanted. Correspondingly, few formal mechanisms exist to assess who is actually benefiting and suffering from project support and to what degree.
- Many partners learn through their interaction with the conflict and gradually acquire important new skills, but, again, this happens mostly in an intuitive and informal way, because formalised learning does often not constitute part of their practice and because such forms of learning are difficult to implement in conflict settings. Some (minimal but well tailored) support from specialists could make a big difference in such situations and allow partner organisations to close their learning circle and increase the quality of their work more rapidly, as experiences in Burundi and Indonesia have demonstrated.
- *In conflict* partners (and CFAs alike) mainly deal unidirectionally with the interaction between project (partner) and the conflict. The conflict is mainly conceived as an external risk that might influence the project and, hence, should be reckoned with. Most partners and CFAs are strong in anticipating and assessing the risks, but do not pay systematic attention on how the project can (indirectly but positively) influence the conflict.

### **Coping with conflict risks**

For obvious reasons, in those countries where hostilities are ongoing, 'security' is the issue that is most formalised and elaborated in partners' policies. Many partners, both those working *in conflict* and *on conflict*, have a code of conduct with clear rules for their staff (the situation in Sudan and Burundi seems an exception in this regard). Coping strategies to deal with risks are, however, not limited to such a code of conduct, but make use of a combination of measures which often constitute creative answers to a constraining situation and to a major extent are closely linked with the partners' solid embedding in local reality (see box).

**Box: Conflict coping strategies in Afghanistan**

‘Sometimes the conflict situation triggers a change/modification in our approach. The nature/scale and dimension of activities can swell and shrink depending on security, the intensity of the conflict and the resulting suffering of the people. It can also be limited by safety concerns for staff and other people involved with the project. However, we try to continue, if not in direct way. Indirect approaches then become the option i.e. distance operation/monitoring by us, while local communities are given a bigger role in implementation and hence fulfilling the objectives’. (ADA, an Oxfam Novib Partner in Afghanistan)

Overall, security enhancing measures are based on continuously stressing the principle of impartiality of the partners. However, in cases where this impartiality is questioned, systematised corrective attempts are lacking. Other measures include the development of close connections with a broad range of stakeholders, in particular at times of high conflict intensity, communication ‘lifelines’ with the outside world, psychological support for traumatised staff, informal contacts with ‘benign’ individuals belonging to the parties in conflict, the setting up of informal information networks with other actors, participation in security briefings, the development of alternative ways to maintain communication with local communities at times of high risk, the setting up of alert (early warning) committees, the exposure of atrocities of the army and police to the international community (e.g. in Indonesia, where the government is very conscious of its international image), etc.

24) This is also the case for Cordaid, whereas its main policy paper (Peace and Conflict Policy Paper 2003 – 2006) unequivocally discusses the management consequences of its Peace and Conflict policy and, among other things, states that ... Cordaid should allow for funding arrangements that match the complexity and unpredictability of the conflict transformation and peace building (p. 37), .... One can think of project requests by organisations that comprise a budget line for contingency, experimentation and innovation, which does not have to comply with ‘normal’ result-based funding requirements (p. 38).

While these measures are quite impressive and often illustrate the partners’ creativity and capacity to adapt to challenging and rapidly changing constraints, they have not been entirely effective: some partners have lost staff members who were killed or forced to flee the region. It has also become apparent that in situations of extreme insecurity, partners and their staff often lack the necessary clout that would enable them to continue working without running unacceptable risks. Despite these critical remarks, it should be realised that much of the specific added value that partners (and civil society organisations at large) produce in conflict-affected regions is linked to their capacity to cope well with the risks of their environment on a daily basis.

**4.5.2 At CFA level**

**Lack of specific tools, procedures and instruments ...**

CFAs have a broad range of instruments and tools to manage and develop their country portfolios. Earlier in this chapter, we already described how the selection of partners constitutes the major instrument for assuring policy coherence. We underlined that the specificity of ‘work in a conflict context’ is not explicitly taken into account in the appraisal process at both the partner and project levels. What matters most is the degree to which partners and projects are compatible with the (rather broad) thematic policy choices, and the partner’s capacities to implement the project.

Many other CFA management tools and procedures do also not take into account the specificity of ‘work in a conflict context’ and the interaction with a conflict context. Although CFAs generally acknowledge that programmes in a conflict context require specific tools and procedures, and in general a more ‘labour intensive’ approach, this also has not yet lead to substantial changes in CFA management practices, at least not in a formal way<sup>24</sup>, nor have many efforts been undertaken to develop conflict-related tools. The entire management cycle (with much stress on administrative and financial matters), and corresponding instruments

that CFA staff are supposed to apply, does not differ substantially from that applied in non-conflict regions. As such, the workload – which is already considerable in more regular settings – often becomes very heavy for staff dealing with programmes in conflict regions. These constraints prevent staff from actually focusing more on the content aspects of their work, which would produce added value and increase the quality of their work.

### **... but many ad hoc solutions to deal with the challenges**

This said, many CFA staff members are aware of the problems brought about by the situation depicted above. They have looked for solutions at their level and seem apparently to have significant freedom to do so. Such solutions include the creation of local offices, the option to go for longer-term partnerships, an increased frequency and duration of field visits (e.g. ICCO in Aceh), co-operation with local organisations specialised in management support that can assist local organisations in financial and narrative planning and reporting, the mobilisation of external expertise to complement their own analyses and provide support to programme implementation, the *de facto* adaptation (i.e. downscaling) of internal standards related to the quality of proposals and reports, increased flexibility with regard to the level of correspondence between programme implementation and initial plans, etc. While these measures are relevant as such, they are ad hoc and do not fit in an overall approach that would allow for dealing adequately with the complexity of work in conflict regions. As a consequence, not surprisingly, CFA staff members, through a lack of formalised guidance, quite often find themselves in a delicate position when they have to take importance decisions, e.g. on the continuation of a partnership.

### **Projects implemented by CFA offices and international organisations**

Another CFA option is to entrust project implementation to CFA offices that are set up locally or to international organisations. Indeed, in various countries, CFAs have for different reasons chosen to take care themselves of project implementation, through their local representative offices and project management offices, specifically established for that purpose and accountable to the CFAs' head offices. In addition, in many countries, international organisations implement CFA funded initiatives. Such a move is often taken in situations of a humanitarian crisis and the subsequent post-emergency phase when, at least in the eyes of the CFAs, no adequate local institutions are available to implement the projects. Such structures are well aware of their limited capacities to understand local conflict dynamics and the need to develop appropriate approaches accordingly. They, therefore, engage in important efforts to establish linkages and co-operation with other local actors, recruit qualified local personnel, etc. These measures certainly help, but are mostly insufficient to compensate for the lack of local embedding and affinity with the local context. This has made ICCO decide to end its working relationship with international NGOs in Afghanistan.

### **Difficulties of articulation among various forms of support**

Humanitarian aid and regular development support coexist or are sequential almost by nature in conflict and post-conflict regions. Particularly in the Great Lakes Region, CFAs have undertaken various attempts to better co-ordinate and integrate these different types of support, among other things by co-operating with 'structural' partners for emergency support. Cordaid also set up a pilot to arrive at an integrated approach, which was stopped, however, when it reorganised internally. All in all, linking humanitarian aid and development support remains an issue that has not been sufficiently addressed, which detrimental consequences, also at the partner level (see box).

***Box: The challenges of engaging in structural development support when humanitarian aid is prevalent***

APIDE, a partner of Oxfam Novib, is the main NGO working in the region of Mwenga (DRC). It aims for promoting food security through an agricultural chain approach. Such an approach is, however, difficult to apply. Not only is there the constant danger of plundering, but, even more importantly, target groups are influenced by the availability of humanitarian aid in the region. Understanding the different approaches of development actors is difficult for them and increasingly makes them opt for the most easy solution. Hence, it has happened that local groups supported by APIDE decided to consume seeds (instead of sowing them), because they were convinced that they could certainly find another 'partner' to provide them the seeds. APIDE's director said that it is becoming increasingly difficult to promote a structural approach.

A similar remark can be made on the relation between lobby and advocacy and more 'regular' development work. Despite successes in terms of inter-CFA co-operation, in particular at the international level, CFAs have not dealt with the specificity of the interplay of lobby and advocacy and actions on the ground in conflict settings as such.

### **Internal reorganisations as a complicating factor**

With the exception of Oxfam Novib, in the last five years all CFAs have undergone important internal reorganisation processes, which were most outspoken at Cordaid and ICCO. Overall, it is known that drastic reorganisations, even when they are implemented carefully, increase at least temporarily the workload and lead unavoidably to a loss of institutional memory, which can substantially affect programme performance. This certainly applies to conflict regions, considering their highly complex and volatile contexts.

The choice at ICCO and Cordaid for an internal reorganisation along thematic lines, in principle brings opportunities to develop a theme like 'conflict transformation' (or 'Peace and Conflict') in a more comprehensive way. As was found in this study, such a change, however, also brings new challenges as thematic expertise is needed, also at the programme management level, while specific knowledge related to the country remains key to appropriate programme implementation.

## **4.6 Evaluative reflections and conclusions**

### **4.6.1 Evaluative reflections**

CFAs and their partners mostly do not have well operationalised conflict transformation policies and, hence, do not engage in systematised and accurate conflict analyses. This might (but does not necessarily) imply that they fail to identify key actors and factors and, hence, do not take optimal decisions in terms of the partners they want to co-operate with and the contents of their projects. The question is to know to what extent this has impacted on the CFAs' and their partners' performance. Again, we can look at this from different perspectives, using the 'science and art' metaphor.

Using the 'scientific' perspective, one can say that strategies and project design show important weaknesses in terms of the CFAs' and partners' articulation with some key requirements and characteristics related to conflict transformation:

- Conflict transformation efforts can only provide an optimum contribution in as far as they are part of a comprehensive and integrated approach, which is preferably defined on the basis of an accurate conflict analysis and with a broad range of actors, because single projects cannot address this challenge alone. Project design and approach fail, however, to properly situate the action in a broader framework that indicates other initiatives needed for realising sustainable peace. As such, projects that are relevant as such only offer partial solutions that might prove unsustainable if they are not complemented by other actions.
- Related to the previous point, CFAs and partners do not systematically compare their comparative advantages and capacities with the many requirements of a conflict transformation process. Hence, they sometimes wish to address issues that might fall beyond their capacities or leave aside important problems they can successfully address.
- Although partners and CFAs are very much aware of the constraints of working in conflict regions and take these difficulties into account in project design, some risks that are typical to a (post-)conflict environment are often not explicitly addressed. They include: the danger that project benefits are hijacked to become the benefit of groups they were not intended for, the high level of vulnerability of the people (in particular women and children), the lack of social cohesion and the high level of paralysis (often reinforced by inadequate emergency aid), which often characterise local communities that have lived in a conflict situation for a long time.

Looking at the CFAs and partner organisations from the 'art' perspective, one can say the following:

- The lack of formalised policies within partner organisations (and also CFA) seems to have various causes: it is certainly linked to the prevailing culture, which is often informal, personalised, leaves much room and freedom to the initiative and dynamism of its staff members and is predominantly action oriented and pragmatic. In addition, the constraining and quickly changing environment often simply does not allow CFAs to focus consistently on 'rational' policy development and formalisation of practices. This 'informal' culture might therefore constitute an asset rather than a liability in a conflict context.
- Considering the way CFAs are managed and operate, there is an additional reason to question the relevance and usefulness of working out heavy thematic policies at the macro level. These policies would only make sense when policies and implementation are (or can be) strongly vertically integrated, which actually is not and probably never will be the case considering the CFAs' culture, the desire to build further on what already exists on the ground and the preference to rely on local partners and their views on implementation.
- More fundamentally, one should not forget that well crafted policies, strategies and analyses are a means and not an end in themselves. What matters is the CFAs' and their partners' capacity to influence significantly the peace and conflict dynamics. This might imply that they are indeed able to identify and address key driving actors and factors of the conflict, to work on the right (conflict and non-conflict related) issues and to show the desired level of responsiveness and flexibility when the situation on the ground requires. All this can also be achieved without relying on formal policies and approaches.
- Related to the previous point, both CFAs and their partners have developed coping strategies to deal with the challenge of having comprehensive and current knowledge on the local conflict reality. At the CFA level, these strategies include: the option for long-term

presence in conflict regions, allowing them to accumulate knowledge and experience in various ways and put their involvement in a longer-term perspective, the development of rich networks and communication systems with local resource persons (including local partners) and, sometimes, the presence of CFA staff on the ground. All this implies that CFAs often have gained a considerable knowledge and expertise on the situation in particular countries. However, this knowledge remains mostly highly personalised, which may turn out to be problematic in case staff leave the organisation or are transferred.

Below are a few arguments that attempt to illustrate the relevance of a position in the middle between the 'scientific' and the 'art' perspective:

- CFAs mostly (emergency interventions are sometimes an exception) work in close relationship with local partners that are mainly in charge of implementation and *the* key actors in realising policy objectives. As such, it seems important that these partners have a clear view on the conflict situation and have the necessary knowledge and skills. The fact that CFAs and partners generally adopt the same approach in terms of policies and analyses, implies that as a whole the CFAs' and partners' modus operandi are vulnerable when they need to take quick strategic decisions in complex situations. Although CFAs often organise seminars with their partners in order to exchange views and work on a joint framework for reflection and action, this might only provide a partial solution. This finding is reinforced by the failure to attune capacity building to the specific needs related to work in conflict areas.
- Requirements with regard to the level of comprehensiveness and updated character of policies and conflict analyses might vary along specific parameters, such as the relative importance and the level (grassroots, intermediary, macro) of the work on peace and conflict, and the phase of the conflict. For instance, in a post-conflict phase, the depth and pace of changes might drastically reduce while in the crisis phase CFAs and their partners precisely need specific and updated analyses in order to be able to position themselves appropriately and take the right decisions. Similarly, CFAs and partners that merely work at the grassroots level might not need the same scope of knowledge on the conflict dynamics and actors as those involved in conflict transformation efforts at higher levels.
- The lack of well established global conflict transformation policies and strategies constitutes a serious constraint when CFAs cannot (or do not want to) work in close connection with well embedded local partners and/or in regions where they have not been working before (which was for instance the case in Aceh where Cordaid and Oxfam Novib desired to intervene after the tsunami). In these situations CFAs do not only lack the critical contextualised knowledge on the conflict, but also the experience and instruments to set up and implement actions in a conflict sensitive manner. Time pressure (to come up with viable proposals in a short period of time, to deliver quick results and phase out rapidly) is an additional constraint. The complex interaction and interdependencies that should characterise the relationship between humanitarian and 'regular' development intervention call for some key strategic guidelines and commonly shared principles of action.
- While 'conflict transformation' is certainly an art, even artists need technical skills. Both staff members of CFAs and partner organisations have acquired some of these skills through a learning-by-doing approach and manage fairly well to think and act in a conflict sensitive manner. Our analysis has, however, shown that this way of working has its intrinsic limitations, and that for certain aspects of work in conflict regions, a more structured

and formal (call it 'scientific') approach is needed. 'Scientific' is actually too big a word, it relates more to identifying and using a series of simple tools and capacity building efforts. Experiences (in Indonesia and Burundi) have proven that, when adequately designed and applied, such tools and skills are easily acquired as they constitute an adequate complement to the considerable knowledge and skills staff members already have.

- The finding that the management tools and practices, in particular at CFA level, do not sufficiently take into account the specific constraints of work in conflict-affected regions needs serious consideration. Reflection in this regard can be placed in a broader framework that deals with the question to what extent appropriate management in the North can provide added value to interventions in the South. The finding that partner organisations are a key actor and factor in the CFAs' model of operation suggests that the entire management cycle should be built around these partner organisations.
- Last but not least, and irrespective a relative preference for the 'scientific' or 'art' dimension, CFAs and their partners, both in *on conflict* and *in conflict* projects, need to deal with some specific requirements related to work in conflict contexts, in particular with regard to the assessment of who is actually reached, to what extent and with what (foreseen an unforeseen) effects.

#### **4.6.2 Main conclusions**

##### **CFA programmes in conflict regions are – quite understandably - relevant and appropriate as such**

The programmes assessed in this evaluation are relevant in view of the population's needs and problems. This in itself is not a surprise, considering the important needs the population, in particular its poorer segments, is experiencing in conflict and post-conflict settings. In addition, the approaches followed for project implementation are mostly appropriate and often more appropriate than those of other actors. Participatory project planning has been a strong factor, ensuring that the projects understand the actual needs of the population, both in general and specific (related to the conflict) terms. Moreover, in some regions CFAs and their partners clearly provide an added value by dealing with delicate issues other actors did not take up and by opting to work in areas not covered by others.

Several findings (see below) suggest, however, that there is still a considerable margin for improving in terms of choosing the most relevant and appropriate actions and approaches.

##### **Weak formal conflict analyses ... compensated by alternative but insufficient mechanisms to understand and follow up the conflict and its dynamics**

The relevance and appropriateness of work in conflict regions is to a certain extent conditioned by the quality of the conflict analyses implemented. The practice of CFAs and partner organisations is rather mixed in this regard; well elaborated formal conflict analyses are an exception. However, this weakness in terms of formal approaches is at least partially compensated by both CFAs and partners. CFAs often have a considerable knowledge on the local situation, which can be attributed to their long-standing involvement in the areas, their capacity to provide insights through visits, their linkages with key resource persons, etc. At the partner level, the local embedding and the fact that partner staff has most often lived and worked for a considerable time in the conflict environment imply that they have a high level of awareness on the conflict situation and its dynamics. As such, CFAs and partners alike have much potential to realise adequately their partnership in view of effective conflict transformation.

While awareness and knowledge are strong assets to ensure conflict sensitivity, they remain too informal and too little structured, which implies that they are not optimally used in strategic decision-making and day-to-day implementation, and might not sufficiently address unintended effects of their action. The fact that CFAs and their partners, to a major extent, are good ‘artists’ in working on conflict transformation, is not sufficient to ensure an optimal interaction with the conflict reality. Moreover, partners and CFAs do not dispose of sufficient *specific* (‘technical’) conflict transformation related tools, skills and capacities. Knowledge and experience are often also concentrated with a few staff members without being properly recorded, which easily leads to problems when these staff members leave the organisation or change position as a consequence of internal reorganisations.

In conclusion, one can say that the informal approach of partners and CFAs is not a satisfactory answer to ensure optimal relevance and conflict sensitivity, in particular in terms of the understanding of and responding to the interaction of project operations with the conflict.

### **Strong (NGO) values and principles are an important asset in the adequate positioning in a complex and demanding environment**

The evaluation has confirmed the image of CFAs and their partners as value driven organisations, which ‘by nature’ embrace values like impartiality and neutrality, and the focus on the people’s fate and their empowerment. This provides them with a natural advantage when intervening in conflict settings that are often highly complex and sensitive. This has not only proven important for ‘*on conflict*’ but also for ‘*in conflict*’ projects that are often subject to the intimidation of external actors who want to obtain privileged access to goods and services.

The strong adherence to these values and principles has often allowed partner organisations in particular to become broadly respected and regarded as neutral and reliable actors in an often turbulent environment where nobody can trust the other.

### **Partner selection as a key mechanism to ensure a good match with overall policies**

The selection of partners has become the main instrument of CFA policy implementation at the country level. While overall policies are well followed, it often takes a long time before country portfolios reflect the policies made in terms of themes and sectors. Overall, CFAs focus more on partner selection and partnership development than on the actual selection of projects these partners propose. All CFAs have, rightly, opted for long-standing partnerships in conflict regions. However, when the conflict situation changes drastically, this neither necessarily leads to a review of the partner (i.e. project) portfolio, nor are partners systematically encouraged to review their strategy and approach.

### **Lack of strategic focus because of intuitive approaches in project selection and portfolio development**

By lack of accurate formal conflict analyses, project relevance is rather intuitively assessed; the (perceived) capacities of the partner to implement the project are most often the major consideration. The high level of awareness and implicit knowledge of the conflict situation, however, ensures a high level of relevance of the projects and the CFAs’ overall policies. On the other hand, this intuitive approach in project selection often implies that project portfolios as a whole lack a clear strategic focus and coherence, which is a preliminary requirement to achieve ‘full’ conflict transformation or, more broadly, to ensure well co-ordinated and

complementary action. Overall, the partners selected do fit well into the overall picture, but how (and whether) these partners have to interrelate and co-operate is mostly not an issue addressed. This can be explained by the fact that most CFAs (with the exception of ICCO that tries to change this through a programmatic approach) adopt a merely reactive approach in developing their portfolios (they wait for proposals to be submitted) and still conceive the core of their dialogue with partners on a one-to-one basis. The lack of operationalised country level policies and strategies is another explanation.

**The specific requirements related to work in conflict regions are mostly underestimated and adapted tools, instruments and procedures are lacking**

Partner organisations and CFAs mostly succeed in positioning themselves adequately towards the parties in conflict, not only because of their strong commitment to key values and principles, but also because of their capacity to develop 'on the road' sensible and feasible approaches (the 'art' dimension of conflict transformation work). They also deal effectively with security risks and are mostly much better placed than external actors to assess insecurity and take acceptable risks.

Nevertheless, institutional capacities are low in conflict regions. Many of the projects therefore include an important capacity building component. Capacity building is, however, most often geared to strengthening 'classic' skills related to programme management, but mostly fails to recognise the specific skills needed to optimise the performance of both *on conflict* and *in conflict* projects. In particular the lack of capacities to make these projects truly conflict sensitive has not been adequately addressed.

Most projects, partners and CFAs also underestimate the specific characteristics, interactions and demands of work in conflict-affected regions, and do not undertake efforts to assess which groups the projects reach effectively the projects and what effects (planned and unplanned, wanted and unwanted) the projects produce for (often heterogeneous) target groups. Moreover, in particular CFAs fail to adapt their management tools and mechanisms to the specificity of work in conflict regions. Specific tools for work in conflict regions are rarely used. As such, CFA staff is often forced to look for ad hoc solutions (such as the mobilisation of external expertise). Outsourcing might, however, not be a good option here, as conflict analyses and peace deficiency assessments are not (only) 'technical' and 'scientific' exercises, but rather adaptive processes that need the constant involvement of those supposed to use them.

## 5. Coherence, complementarity and co-ordination

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Considering the multitude of initiatives that are undertaken in most conflict regions, a good knowledge of the other actors and their respective places in the institutional landscape is an important condition for the adequate positioning and co-ordination of projects and actors. In addition, it is generally agreed that good co-ordination among key actors is a prerequisite for tangible contributions to peace. This chapter, therefore, first focuses on the way CFAs and their partners position themselves vis-à-vis other development actors and the actions they undertake to contribute directly or indirectly to conflict transformation. The level of complementarity and co-ordination is analysed of the work both at the local and the international levels. We then follow with a short analysis of the coherence among the various approaches adopted by CFAs before we present our conclusions and evaluative reflections.

### 5.1 Positioning of CFAs and partner organisations

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In all countries studied, both CFAs and partners seem to be well aware of the development actors that are present in the region and also of all other parties that play a key role in the conflict and peace dynamics, such as the military and rebel groups. Knowledge of other development actors is closely related with the CFAs' and partners' desire at least to avoid duplicating the work of organisations active in the same domain and geographical area. Other factors that explain the high level of awareness of each other, are the existence of information forums (e.g. on the security situation), often initiated by international organisations, and the inclusive approaches adopted by in particular *on conflict* projects.

This said, both CFAs and partner organisations are best informed about actors that have similar characteristics. As such, CFAs present in the region seem, quite naturally, to be better informed about other international actors than their local counterparts, who, correspondingly, have a more comprehensive view and understanding of local actors and their position. Furthermore, the depth of the relationship between local actors can vary considerably and is influenced by institutional considerations geared to safeguard their access to donor organisations. In addition, very few partner organisations have defined clear relationships with the parties directly involved in the conflict. In as far as such relations exist, they have an ad hoc character.

### 5.2 Complementarity and co-ordination at the local level

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#### 5.2.1 Lack of a common framework

Overall, one can say that co-ordination and complementarity are difficult to achieve in as far as there is no general policy framework or, more specifically related to the context of conflict transformation, clear context analysis and peace deficiency assessment, including compatible views on the desired post-conflict situation and the steps needed to reach it. Such overall frameworks guiding the action of civil society organisations and other actors, have only rarely be found (Papua and South Sudan are exceptions in this regard). In the absence of such overall frameworks, local actors and CFAs define their action according to their own partial (and often intuitive) analyses and mostly do not proactively and systematically engage in efforts to ensure coherence, complementarity and synergies with others.

## 5.2.2 Complementarity

### Complementarity among partners

As CFAs and partners are mostly well informed about other actors and initiatives (see above), they mostly succeed to avoid contradiction and overlap with other initiatives, irrespective of the fact that they are supported by other CFAs or not. A few exceptions were found, however, e.g. in Papua, where several organisations (all funded by CFAs) 'fight' to work with the same victims of conflict. Another example is that during several of the evaluation team's field visits in Burundi to one and the same community, it became clear that two partner organisations were working *on conflict* in the same community, making use of the same contact persons, however without any co-operation or communication on how to interact in this community.

Some CFAs, in particular ICCO, have tried to promote increased programme coherence and complementarity through setting up local partner consultation forums, e.g. in East Congo and Aceh (Indonesia). All CFAs further regularly take the initiative to organise (less binding) seminars and workshops to exchange views, promote joint action, etc. These attempts to increase coherence and synergies through a more programmatic approach have so far had limited success. A major stumbling block seems to be situated at the level of local partners that are inclined to think that fully participating in such moves might not be in their institutional interest; hence, many of them are reluctant to fully engage in more co-ordinated efforts for fear of losing their access to donor funding.

#### ***Box: Co-operation among NGOs in a post-conflict Burundi***

Burundi civil society is still in its infancy. Organisations are therefore simultaneously coping with an ever-shifting context and the need to carve out a niche for themselves in an increasingly crowded NGO landscape. Co-operation with other local NGOs is therefore not at the top of their agenda. NGOs in the field are aware of the presence and main lines of activities of other actors in Burundi. Although timidly, efforts are being made to ensure that as little duplication as possible takes place. However, there is still little effort to ensure real complementarity between the various actors in the field, which goes beyond avoiding overlaps. Although organisations meet to exchange information, little discussion takes place about the ways in which efforts could be combined to achieve more impact.

All organisations share a vision of a more prosperous and pacific future, but often their chosen methods of intervention vary. With the emergence of new needs, many NGOs feel the pressure to diversify their services accordingly. For example, organisations set up to act directly on transforming the conflict are embarking on supporting economic activities at grassroots levels. The degree of success of such undertakings varies from case to case and may sometimes be counterproductive for the internal and external coherence of organisations.

As in the case of local NGOs, the Dutch CFAs have also taken steps to ensure that the duplication of efforts is avoided. For example, they agreed that only one Dutch CFA supports any given organisation in Burundi. Moreover, exchanges take place regularly and some activities are undertaken jointly in the "Great Lake Platform" aimed at informing Dutch politicians and government officials about the situation in that region and encouraging them to take action. Nonetheless, the evaluation team feels that in Burundi there is scope for Dutch CFAs to achieve a better complementarity of their respective activities, possibly by exploring the option of further specialising in fields where each of them has developed a comparative advantage.

As a consequence, there are a few cases of clear complementarity and synergy *among* CFA partners (and other CSOs), where partners have a clearly different profile and competence and clearly see the advantage of co-operation for their respective interests. Co-operation in these cases can both be intense and broad, or ad hoc and issue-based (see box).

***Box: Anticipating the creation of the Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission***

The creation of this Commission is an important part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Indonesia and the Aceh Freedom Movement, which so far has not been realised, while for many Acehnese it is a cornerstone of the agreement and a pre-condition to the establishment of true peace. As the Commission is supposed also to focus on human rights violations conducted by GAM (the former rebels), it is not only elements in the military and the government of Indonesia that are reluctant to push for its establishment. Against this background, a series of civil society organisations, including two partner organisations supported by ICCO and Oxfam Novib, have set up a committee to promote and prepare the creation of the Commission. The committee members have defined a comprehensive plan, including the development of an alternative model and legal draft for the establishment of the Commission, and the inventory and documentation related to human rights abuses.

### **Complementarity with the action of other actors**

Successful examples of complementarity and synergies with other actors were identified in all countries:

- The action of local partners has, in several cases, been highly complementary with that of big international donors and government services (e.g. in the sectors of health and education), as local partners often have specific knowledge and skills in participatory approaches and grassroots development (see box).

***Box: Complementary action in Maniema***

The DDR programme (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) is a very big programme implemented by the World Bank and the DRC government, which experiences major problems because of its lack of affinities with the local situation. In Maniema, this programme is helped very much by the *barzas* that were created through the efforts of the CRONGD, a partner of Oxfam Novib, to promote peace in and between local communities, following a participatory approach. The perpetrators, the victims and vulnerable families are brought together to work together on reconciliation, on the material and socio-economic rehabilitation of the region and the on people starting a new life. This approach seems to be delivering better results than other programmes, because the process is supported by the people. More arms are turned in, the area is more peaceful, the approach is supported by the army, and there are practically no suicides. CRONGD has many local partners, represents Catholic, independent, Muslim and Protestant communities, interacts with local communities, and has relations with the army, the armed rebels and the traditional leaders.

- Post-conflict work undertaken through public institutions often tends to predominantly focus on reconstruction efforts in the 'hard' sectors and to underestimate the need for restoring social cohesion by engaging in reconciliation efforts on the ground, in trauma

healing, etc. In cases where public institutions engage in these actions, their programmes are often ill designed and implemented. Many local partners (for instance in Aceh and Papua, but also in Sierra Leone) take up an important complementary role in this regard, which is vital to ensuring lasting peace.

- Another complementarity is the option (e.g. of Oxfam Novib and Cordaid in east Congo) to work mainly in regions that are not covered by other development actors.

To end this section on a critical note, it should be noted that some partners provide services, in particular in the sectors of health and education, which actually should be assured by local governments. While such a move can often be justified, because of the weakness of local institutions, it is sometimes implemented without liaising with these institutions in project implementation or without defining a clear path towards handing over these services to competent local institutions. This happens in Afghanistan, for instance, where the continued provision of service in regions not covered by the government has led to parallel structures that actually function in an entirely independent way. In particular in post-conflict settings, when support to a legitimate state is crucial in the transition process towards normalcy, CFAs and their partner organisations are expected to pay careful attention to this issue, which does not always seem the case. There are even different approaches within the same partner organisations in a country. For example, in Sierra Leone, Caritas Makeni attends the monthly District Inter-Agency Forum meetings (the key, state-organised donor co-ordination platform) in one district, but not in other districts. On the other hand, good examples do also exist (see box).

***Box: Strong co-operation with the Government in the Healthcare Sector in Sierra Leone***

The Kenema Diocese Healthcare Co-ordination Office (KDHCO), a partner of Cordaid, is a good practical example of the way it co-operates with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MHS). It attends the monthly co-ordination meetings of the Kenema District Health Management Team, which means that it stays abreast of healthcare developments in the District as well as the activities of the MHS and other important healthcare providers. KDHCO has also been active in implementing the government's national programmes for vitamin A distribution, the provision of mosquito nets and Lassa, and the prevention of tuberculosis and leprosy. Importantly, the benefits of co-operation flow in both directions – as shown by the recent donation of a fridge by the MHS to KDHCO and the fact that the Medical Superintendent at the Kenema Government Hospital also covers a KDHCO Hospital when the Cordaid-sponsored expatriate doctor is on leave. KDHCO's co-operation with the MHS has recently been formalised through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, which will also enable KDHCO to access funding provided through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

### **5.2.3 Co-ordination and co-operation**

With the exception of some joint lobby initiatives (see below), local co-ordination at CFA level is limited to avoiding that a local partner is funded simultaneously by more than one CFA. In regions where several CFAs have representation offices, these do not engage in specific efforts to look for increased complementarity and synergies. Important exceptions are Sudan and Afghanistan where CFAs have a formalised co-operation to exchange information and engage in other joint actions such as capacity development and international lobby (see box and further below on this last issue). Other international organisations join this initiative of co-ordination.

**Box: Formalised co-operation among CFAs**

In the case of Afghanistan, Cordaid, ICCO and Oxfam Novib have formalised their co-operation. The three CFAs, together with Save the Children and Health Net, have joined hands and have been working together on information exchange, capacity development and lobby activities since 2004. Lobby and advocacy activities are taken up together within the Dutch Afghan NGO Platform. This unique co-operation on project, and on lobby and advocacy, can be explained by the fact that CFAs all face the same difficult situation in Afghanistan. They have to work in extremely difficult circumstances with an almost non-existent civil society and would like to speed up development. Another factor explaining the collaboration between the Dutch NGOs has been the lack of security in certain regions in Afghanistan.

The co-ordination of activities is commonly interpreted in a rather narrow way: sitting together, exchanging views and liaising with each other. 'Co-ordination' at that level is commonplace and some partners even complain of too many 'co-ordination' meetings. The aim of such co-ordinating activities is essentially to make arrangements for each actor to get its share of the work that needs doing (which is, indeed, mostly very substantial), whereby each actor tends to stick to its own competence and preserves its identity, expecting the others to adapt ('co-ordinate') themselves to their choice. As such, CFAs and their partners deal with a variety of issues and sectors, which directly and indirectly influence conflict transformation dynamics, but this variety does not imply that conflict transformation is addressed in the most strategic and effective way.

As co-ordination is often interpreted so narrowly, partner organisations often *de facto* work in isolation. They are aware of the activities of others in the same intervention region, but hardly communicate on or invest in specific forms of co-operation. Usually there are no direct negative consequences, but in Burundi some negative examples were found: one partner organisation changed its approach from humanitarian to more developmental work and supported the creation of a tree nursery as an income generating activity. However, another organisation continued its humanitarian approach and still provided the trees for free. As a consequence the nursery failed.

Few actors consider 'co-ordination' in a more challenging way, as a mechanism through which all actors position themselves willingly under a co-ordinating body that might take (and even impose) certain decisions 'for the common good', that do not necessarily reflect the individual position and interest of the participating actors.

The major consequence of this lack of 'positive' co-operation and co-ordination is that in many instances efforts of CFAs and their partners are not consolidated and, hence, often lack the power and clout to be reckoned with.

### **5.3 Complementarity and co-ordination at the international level**

Considering the rather negative picture in terms of co-ordination and complementarity at the local level (see above), it might be surprising to find a rather positive picture with regard to efforts at the international level. These deal mainly with advocacy efforts directed at key political institutions in the EU and in the Netherlands. Many examples of good co-operation and co-ordination have indeed been found:

- In the Great Lakes Region, important platforms exist in which Cordaid, ICCO and Oxfam Novib participate (*Plate-Forme des Grand Lacs* and the country specific sub-platforms, *Comité de Concertation pour la RDC*). The Dutch CFAs are also well co-ordinated in their efforts to influence Dutch constituencies.
- Another example of good co-operation is Cordaid's and ICCO's international lobby on the situation in Papua, which succeeds in establishing vertical linkages from the grassroots to international forums such as the United Nations.
- In Afghanistan, Cordaid, ICCO and Oxfam Novib, together with Save The Children fund and Health Net, have formalised their co-operation and engage in lobby activities together with the Dutch Afghan NGO Platform. In Sudan, a similar set-up exists
- Plan Netherlands and ICCO have joined different co-ordinated lobby initiatives to influence European and Dutch policy-makers on the peace process in Nepal and the situation of children in conflict zones.

Successful linkages seem, however, often to be more the consequence of personal initiatives and affinity than structurally assured.

## **5.4 Level of coherence among various approaches**<sup>25</sup>

Conflict-affected areas are often characterised by the co-existence and/or sequencing of different intervention approaches, such as regular development work at the grassroots level, humanitarian aid, reconstruction, lobby and advocacy at the local, national and international levels. This situation brings additional requirements to ensure coherence, both internally (inside each CFA) and externally (among actors) in an already highly complex environment.

### **The articulation between humanitarian aid and structural development support**

CFAs that are engaged in both emergency/rehabilitation and more structural development support continue to struggle with ensuring internal coherence and with establishing useful linkages between these approaches at the field level. In this regard, Cordaid started an interesting pilot project in the Great Lakes Region to gradually integrate structural development co-operation and emergency aid. This interesting initiative was stopped when Cordaid began an internal reorganisation. By that time, the pilot project had not really produced the expected results, precisely because of the difficulty to find ways to bridge the gap between the two very different types of intervention.

While CFAs have difficulties in ensuring a coherent coexistence of both types of intervention, in some countries (Burundi, Indonesia) they have been able to use the experience gained via humanitarian assistance in subsequent 'regular' development actions when the situation improved. The experience in Burundi proves, however, that these transition processes are far from easy.

### **The articulation of lobby and advocacy activities with initiatives at the local level**

A particular area of concern is the 'integration' of lobby and advocacy activities with the core programmes of the CFAs at the country level. All CFAs are well aware of the need for well co-ordinated and integrated approaches in this regard and have been looking for solutions;

**25)** Coherence is defined here as a situation, at CFA and partner levels, where policies and actions in a particular field are not undermined or obstructed by policies or actions in another field.

the important reorganisation processes some CFAs have gone through have, however, complicated things in this regard.

CFA lobby staff most often only deal with a limited group of local partners. This is understandable for various reasons: not all partner organisations are dealing with issues that should be included in lobby and advocacy (even if they are interested in the lobby efforts of CFAs in the North with regard to the situation in their country). Furthermore, involving all partners might simply be undesirable for efficiency reasons, and finally, there is often a lack of an overall forum to discuss and co-ordinate action.

Lobby and advocacy is also conducted at the local and national levels, both *within* one project or through local or national networks:

- Local partners sometimes combine different strategies (poverty alleviation, capacity building, and/or lobby and advocacy) in their work. While this is not obvious considering the varied nature of these strategies and the limited capacities of many local partners, there are clear examples of success (e.g. in Indonesia), in particular when partners succeed in convincing government institutions of the appropriateness of particular approaches that they successfully applied at grassroots level.
- Some national NGO networks, e.g. in Nepal, were able to undertake effective action, linking the grassroots with the centre in supporting the peace process; such successes were, however, rarely found. In some countries (e.g. in Indonesia), the relations between the centre and the periphery are sometimes rather problematic.

## **5.5 Evaluative reflections and conclusions**

### **5.5.1 Evaluative reflections**

#### **Compatible views are important but difficult to agree upon...**

Experiences all over the world point to the existence of commonly agreed frameworks as a major factor for co-ordinated action towards peace. As such, the lack of shared compatible views related to peace deficiencies and the strategies to be followed to achieve peace, seems to constitute a major constraint. In the few cases where such common view exists (e.g. in Papua, following the '*Papua, Land of Peace*' initiative), it clearly produces beneficial effects despite signalled weaknesses (in this case, the lack of 'trickle down efforts' ensuring that the grassroots are part of the initiative).

There are many reasons why it is so difficult to reach such shared views. First of all, the lack of formalised conflict analyses plays a role. Furthermore, the informal culture prevailing among CSOs is an explanation, as is the desire to safeguard and even put to the forefront the uniqueness of their own organisations. This is reinforced by the CFAs' policies to deal mainly with their partners on an individual basis. There are, however, also other, more valid reasons. Most importantly, it might be delicate to take an open position on the desired end situation; such a position might dissatisfy certain key actors and bring the organisations concerned in a dangerous position.

### **Intrinsic limitations of the present CFA co-operation model**

The present architecture of NGO development co-operation implies that local organisations (and also CFAs to a minor extent) have to compete for donor funds; many state even that this competition is actually increasing. In such a context, mutual mistrust and self-interest easily emerge, determining both agendas and positioning, and making genuine co-operation difficult. Attempts of CFAs to come to more co-ordination and strategic action at the level of their field programmes do not yet seem able to deal effectively with these constraints. Easy solutions do not exist in this regard, but making explicit these constraints in the partner dialogue and trying jointly to find solutions seems more than needed. In view of the increased call for more co-ordination and harmonisation and the apparent success of bilateral and multilateral donors in better streamlining their agendas, the NGO community is faced here with a formidable challenge it needs to address urgently.

### **Limited understanding of the specific requirements for networking and co-operation**

As is the case with many initiatives that imply networking or joint action, many of them lack the basic generic requirements to be successful. It always remains a surprise to find out how many efforts and funds are devoted to networking and joint initiatives and how amateurish these efforts are often undertaken. Networks are mostly intuitively set up, without their members paying sufficient attention to defining the appropriate level (depth) of their co-operation, agreeing on a common vision and goal, laying down procedures and mechanisms that allow participation, democratic decision-making or trust building, while at the same time recognising leadership and diversity. Even in less constraining contexts, not meeting (part of) these basic requirements leads to many failures.

### **How serious are the consequences?**

It is, of course, difficult to imagine what would be the situation if CFAs and their partners were to succeed in co-operating better. As conflict transformation is a complex process needing co-ordinated efforts in various domains, one can, however, safely say that the effectiveness of conflict transformation would have been higher if co-operation had been better structured. This is particularly the case at the higher levels, where the civil community remains too fragmented and, hence, often lacks the necessary clout to be considered an actor to be reckoned with.

## **5.5.2 Conclusions**

Overall, CFAs and their partners are well aware of other actors and the need to co-ordinate their actions with those actors. They actually succeed in avoiding overlap and contradiction, but the positive picture stops there. With a few exceptions, there are no joint analyses or global frameworks on the desired peace situations that could facilitate co-ordination and complementarity. The important efforts many CFAs undertake at the country level to avoid fragmentation and isolated action as well as increase overall coherence and complementarity, have not produced the envisaged results so far. Institutional self-interest of partners seems to be an important stumbling block in this regard. There are also relatively few cases of proactive co-ordination towards the establishment and implementation of mechanisms through which all actors position themselves willingly under a co-ordinating body and are ready to give up their individual positions and interests. As such, the CSO community as a whole often does not succeed in acquiring enough clout to address powerful actors and dynamics effectively.

Good but mainly coincidental complementarity with the initiatives of other actors  
While it seems difficult to ensure co-ordination with other CSO actions, partners and CFAs succeed better in achieving complementarity with the action of other types of development actors. There are many examples of partners and CFAs engaging in actions that complement important initiatives undertaken by the international donor community and government institutions. These 'achievements' should, however, be interpreted cautiously as, by nature, CFA's and their partners deal with issues that major international donors and government institutions tend to ignore. As such, the complementarity achieved might be less the result of a deliberate action than a consequence of a 'natural' focus on different issues. The fact that there is limited institutionalised co-operation with other than civil society actors, government institutions in particular, supports this hypothesis.

### **International lobby initiatives as a example of good intra-CFA co-operation**

CFAs rarely co-operate actively. Joint lobby initiatives are an important exception in this regard. In some countries and regions (Great Lakes, Papua, Afghanistan, Sudan, Nepal) CFAs and some of their key partners have effectively pooled their resources and insights for lobby efforts towards the EU and the Dutch government.

### **Ensuring coherence among different approaches remains a challenge**

The co-existence of various approaches is high in (post-) conflict regions, but ensuring coherence among them has proven difficult, in particular as far as the articulation between humanitarian and structural development support is concerned. At best, structural development efforts have benefited from experiences acquired through humanitarian actions. The situation is somewhat better as far as the articulation of lobby and advocacy activities with initiatives at the local level is concerned. Quite a few examples of coherent action and the creation of synergies exist, but they are not systemic and rather the consequence of personal initiatives and affinities. Advocacy efforts at the local level are more successful in the sense that they succeed in 'uplifting' good practices and influencing other actors

## 6. Explanations for performance

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The performance of projects, partner organisations and CFAs in terms of their contribution to conflict transformation and peace building is influenced by various factors, which are both exogenous (related to the context) and endogenous (related to the CFAs' and partners' policies, organisation, implementation practices, etc.).

### 6.1 The role of context factors

In periods of crisis, violence not only affects the parties in conflict but also (and most often even predominantly) the local population and those acting in their support, such as staff of local partners and international organisations. Working in such situations is extremely difficult, both for *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects. The latter are in principle better equipped to face the consequences of high-intensity crises, but at the same time their staff is more exposed to threats and even physical elimination. Indeed, in such periods accusations of partiality most easily emerge and the number and variety of (sub-)conflicts proliferate, which makes that *on conflict* projects often find themselves in a minefield where any wrong move can bring deadly consequences. In some cases, staff of *on conflict* partners has no other option but leaving the region or operating in a (semi-)clandestine manner.

In the case of *in conflict* projects, in situations of high conflict intensity the pre-conditions allowing them to work often are simply not met, and if they are, the resources (equipment, vehicles, etc.) of these projects are often targeted by warring parties, as are their achievements on the ground (e.g. plundering of harvests or hospital equipment). In such situations, the population also lives under extreme pressure and long-lasting periods of insecurity and violence have a devastating effect on local resilience, capacities and willingness to withstand external destructive forces. Often, local capacities to engage in joint action for the common good were severely affected and communities are often also confused by the different approaches used by charity oriented organisations and those promoting self-development. On the other hand, people often show tremendous capacities to cope with threats and survive in extremely difficult situations. Moreover, projects implemented with a high technical quality and in an impartial way have often succeeded in mobilising the local population to secure, for example, health centres.

Post-conflict phases are mostly characterised by substantially lower levels of violence, which, in principle, makes work safer and easier to implement, and sustainable results easier to achieve. However, most often the situation remains complex (or even increases in complexity), as the process towards sustainable peace never runs smoothly. As a rule, violence still occurs occasionally, the root causes of the conflict are not or only partially addressed, whereas key components of peace agreements (such as the disarmament of warring factions and reintegration of ex-combatants) are ill implemented. The institutional landscape becomes increasingly complex with old powers disintegrating and new actors emerging. Actors that used to solve their conflicts violently might now have entered mainstream politics, which requires from them a different type of behaviour they sometimes adopt with difficulty. Post-conflict phases also witness a process towards normalisation of political life, which might bring the danger, for well-considered partner organisations and their leaders (both at the intermediary and the grassroots levels), of political assimilation or abuse. Notwithstanding these huge difficulties and challenges, post-conflict phases also offer many opportunities for civil society organisations. These phases require a lot of work and competence in areas such as grassroots reconciliation and capacity building, which are either

ignored or badly approached and implemented by mainstream development and political actors. In addition, the improved security situation implies that people more easily dare to out the human rights abuses they have suffered from. Local partners that promote justice and fight against impunity often want to support them. However, efforts to promote justice often are opposed by the newly installed powers, which often count among themselves parties or individuals with blood on their hands. The delicate balance between 'peace' and 'justice' and the strategies to follow in this regard are often the subject of heated debates, also in civil society circles.

Needless to say that situations of instability are mostly characterised by weak governance, high levels of corruption, a lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms and of a lack well qualified non-state actors able to develop a countervailing power and assume the necessary democratic control function. The collusion of the new political elite with the heirs of previously warring factions and (sometimes) elements of the regular army and business groups, creates an explosive cocktail that can easily destabilise vulnerable processes towards peace.

In summary, conflict and post-conflict settings obviously seriously hamper the work of development actors. But in general the latter have been able to develop coping strategies that allow them to engage in meaningful work. Below, we try to identify what endogenous factors can play a role in this regard.

## **6.2 Project and programme characteristics**

### **In conflict versus on conflict projects**

Both *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects are needed for successful conflict transformation processes. In other words, sustainable change in the peace and conflict situation can only be achieved in as far as both the conflict and peace dynamics *and* the material needs of the population (in terms of income, food, health, education, etc.) are directly and consistently addressed. CFAs have understood this, in the sense that in all conflict regions they are inclined to support both types of projects, which does not, however, imply that synergies between both are explicitly planned or searched for (see below). Neither does this imply that each CFA should deal with both *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects; on the contrary, the difficulties in combining both suggest that they had better specialise, if possible.

Partner organisations implementing *on conflict* projects almost by nature show a high level of conflict sensitivity. This is understandable as dealing with the conflict and its key dynamics and actors is part and parcel of their work. Their capacity to develop a high level of conflict sensitivity is enhanced by their strong embedding in local society: virtually all partner organisations involved in *on conflict* projects have strong roots in local society and work with staff that has grown up locally and has experienced the conflict over a major part of their lives. On the other hand, too much familiarity with the conflict situation often implies that more systematised and 'scientific' approaches are not adopted.

Partner organisations implementing *in conflict* projects need, more than *on conflict* partners, to engage in additional efforts to become 'fully' conflict sensitive. Some of them show a reluctance to 'deal with the conflict' and tend to mix up 'conflict sensitivity' with 'work on the conflict'. Too strong a technical focus might (but does not necessarily) imply that they do not take the conflict sufficiently into account. Projects doing well in this regard were characterised

by going beyond the simple provision of services by using sound participatory approaches that spent much attention to building up capacities and creating ownership at the grassroots level and, above all, to consciously promoting the restoration of positive social capital. It seems also that sound interaction with the grassroots provides *in conflict* projects and partners a platform for learning about the conflict, updating knowledge in this regard, and increasing conflict sensitivity, including 'early warning' mechanisms in case harmful effects threaten to occur.

In some cases, international NGOs are involved in the implementation of these projects. Although they are aware of the need to get fully acquainted with the context (and therefore recruit local staff, engage in networking, co-operate with local organisations in project implementation, etc.), project implementation often suffers from a lack of affinity with the local context, the conflict reality in particular. It is also more difficult for them to deal adequately with the conflict risks. Moreover, in a context of (post-) emergency, these organisations are often considered (rightly or wrongly) by the population as resource rich, which makes it more difficult for them to induce locally led development processes and ownership. An additional complication is that *in conflict* projects (including humanitarian projects) deal most often with the material needs of the people. As such, there is a bigger danger that interventions are biased and do not reach those most in need (in particular when international NGOs are directly dealing with beneficiaries) and, even more seriously, that they become a target of warring factions in search of additional resources. All this seems to suggest that, as outsiders, international NGOs face considerable challenges when they intervene in conflict regions.

### **Narrowly versus broadly focused projects**

Both 'specialised' and 'integrated' projects have strong defenders among development specialists. In the context of work in conflict regions, it has been confirmed that projects with a clearly defined scope (both *on conflict* and *in conflict*) are well able to produce quality outputs. On the contrary, projects that addressed a broad range of issues were often less effective (e.g. in Sierra Leone and Burundi). A special case in this regard are partners (or projects) that both work '*in conflict*' and '*on conflict*'. In many cases, the combination of both types of actions was decided on as a consequence of the partners' analysis and/or pressure from the grassroots: *in conflict* projects felt they could not reach their aims without addressing directly the conflict reality, and *on conflict* projects felt peace could not be achieved as long as the material problems of the people are not solved. This led to both types of projects engaging in new sets of activities, often with limited success for various reasons: lack of capacities and experience, confusion at the level of the beneficiaries, suspicion at the level of the government and other key actors, etc.

Both in Indonesia and DRC there are a few examples of successful integration of both types of activities, but they are often cases where partners explicitly designed *in conflict* work as a means for conflict resolution and peace building. As '*in conflict*' organisations, some DRC partners have the advantage of being considered 'neutral' and aiming to bring tangible benefits to the people, which, however, often have not succeeded because of the complexities of the conflict situation.

The failure of broadly focused projects, in particular projects combining '*in*' and '*on*' *conflict* work can certainly be explained by the complexity of the context and the relatively limited institutional capacity of partner organisations in conflict regions. This said, the concern of partner organisations (working both *in* and *on conflict*) that their interventions might not be effective if the 'other dimension' is not addressed, is relevant and calls, once again, for better co-ordination and complementarity.

## The influence of the project intervention strategies

Many partners (notably in Indonesia) combine poverty alleviation and/or civil society building with lobby and advocacy efforts. In most cases, this combination has proven to be successful, in the sense that internal synergies could be created and bigger impact achieved. In particular the combination of in-depth action at the grassroots level with advocacy efforts (at the local, national and even international levels – often with the support of the CFA partner) seems to provide the partners concerned with the necessary credibility so that their messages are better taken into account. On the other hand, these successes make that these organisations, which often rely essentially on a few strong staff members and leaders, become overstretched and cannot always guarantee the quality of their work.

## Type of implementing organisation

A broad range of organisations, each with its own identity and characteristics, has been involved in implementing projects in conflict regions. They can be classified by different parameters: small – big, faith based – secular, local – national - international, etc. The following is an attempt to derive (carefully) some conclusions related to the performance of the different types of organisation.

- **International versus national (local) organisations.** Overall, international organisations outscore their local counterparts in terms of administrative and financial skills; in many cases, local NGOs co-operating with them could learn a lot from them in this regard. When working in a (post-) conflict context, the identity as international organisation has, however, often been a disadvantage (see also above), in particular when such organisations were directly involved in activities at the village level. In many cases this has led to unrealistic expectations at the local level and considerable difficulties in developing genuine community participation. The problems and limitations of international organisations are often exacerbated when international NGOs are dealing with humanitarian aid in conflict regions. Aware of potential difficulties in this regard, some international organisations have tried avoiding such problems by including local actors (in particular NGOs) in project implementation. This has worked very well in some cases, but less in other situations. Clear win-win situations were created by international organisations with a specific expertise that have mainly focused on creating added value by increasing the capacities of local actors they liaised with. In Indonesia, the involvement of Jakarta (or Java) based organisations in conflict transformation efforts in conflict regions has often caused problems similar to those experienced by international organisations. Only those organisations that have decentralised unequivocally were able to embed strongly locally and avoid the difficulties described above.
- **Faith-based versus secular partner organisations.** The faith-based orientation of some partner organisations clearly brings about some characteristics that can constitute important advantages in conflict-affected regions: faith-based organisations often have an important network in the country (region) that reaches out to isolated villages, they dispose of a moral authority that can be extremely important in tense situations (even those belonging to parties in conflict are often influenced by religious leaders), they dispose of staff motivated by religious beliefs and, hence, willing to work in difficult circumstances and remote areas. Faith-based organisations are often also less vulnerable to intimidation and pressure from warring factions, and they have easy access to specialised church related networks (*Pax Christi*, etc.), which can play an important role in advocacy efforts at the international level. Finally, dealing with justice and peace is part of the

tradition of these organisations. On the other hand, such organisations often have a more informal working culture, are less specialised and in some cases (Sierra Leone) suffer from a lack of autonomy from the church hierarchy. And even when these organisations adopt inclusive approaches, communities with another religious background might feel reluctant to co-operate with them. Nevertheless, in Burundi two faith-based organisations were among the most professional partner organisations working *on conflict*.

On the other hand, many secular organisations display the same or similar advantages, partly because many of their staff members are also religiously inspired and share the same values and commitment. Apparently, the identity of the partner organisation *as such* does not allow one to make far-reaching conclusions. One can, however, say that in specific contexts being faith-based or secular can constitute an advantage or disadvantage. This can be illustrated by two contrasting examples in Indonesia. In Papua, where Christianity is part of the identity of the local population and the churches are among the few stable institutions, working with faith-based organisations brings various clear advantages that can be difficultly matched by secular counterparts. In Maluku on the other hand, where the parties in conflict have different religious backgrounds, and where religious differences were used by some parties to ignite the conflict, strong connection with the local church was a major disadvantage for one project, despite its genuine attempts to work for all population groups. There are similar experiences in Sudan where the role of the churches in peace building is generally acknowledged, but where there also church leaders who encourage aggression against Muslims. All this calls for an extremely careful selection of religious partners in multi-religious settings.

- **Smaller versus bigger organisations.** Partner organisations and CFAs face formidable challenges when working in conflict regions. Experiences at the field level suggest that ‘size matters’, in the sense that bigger organisations are often also well structured and organised, dispose of professional staff, etc. Organisations that are well known, respected and have of a good track record in peace building are less vulnerable and can use their reputation to play a role in delicate initiatives. Including such organisations in the programme portfolio (and/or investing in local organisations so they reach such a status) seems vital for those CFAs that have conflict transformation ambitions that go beyond improving the situation at the grassroots level. Smaller or highly specialised organisations have, however, their place in the CFAs’ country programme portfolios. If they are included, one should avoid (more than is the case now) that they work too much in isolation.

### **6.3 Programme and project management**

#### **The CFA intervention model (strong focus on partner selection and partnership) is more important than CFA policies and strategies**

The policies and strategies of CFAs have an important, but only *general* influence on the contents and characteristics of the programme portfolios at the country level. In the case of Cordaid and ICCO (and to a minor extent Plan too), thematic specialisation is clearly reflected at the country level, in particular when the decision was taken to concentrate on one or a maximum of two themes. In the case of Oxfam Novib, the inclusion of a particular country in its list of core countries implies that the programme will reflect activities pertaining to Oxfam’s five strategic aims. For all CFAs, partner (and project) selection constitutes the main instrument to making programmes at the country level reflect policy and strategy choices, thereby adding the nuance that portfolios are the result of historical processes and that it can take some time before a country portfolio reflects entirely the policy choices made.

The importance of partner selection actually is only one dimension of a broader reality that makes 'partnership' the cornerstone of the intervention strategy of CFAs. In conflict-affected countries, this is even more the case considering the CFAs' preference for long-standing partnerships, the reliance on local partners for updating knowledge on the conflict situation, the importance attached to partner dialogue (notwithstanding the fact that its quality and effects are not always convincing), the CFAs' attempts to promote exchange and co-operation among partners through various initiatives (organisation of conferences, partner meetings, etc.) and, last but not least, the readiness of CFAs to invest generously in the capacity building of their partner organisations.

While it is true that policies and strategies have a clear influence, this influence remains general, in the sense that existing policies, strategies and even country studies related to conflict transformation have only a limited impact at the level of project design and implementation. In other words, other factors – in the first instance the dynamics at the partner level – determine the actual shape and contents of the programmes. This is also explained by the fact that CFA policies are hardly known by CFA staff concerned and, hence, rarely included in their interaction with partner organisations. In addition, many partner organisations are well-established, strong institutions, which do not need CFA policies to identify and implement meaningful actions.

### **Quality of planning and design**

Most partner organisations use participatory approaches in planning their projects and organisational strategies. In most cases, efforts are undertaken to include beneficiary groups, but some projects (in particular *in conflict* projects) rely more on the expertise of a limited number of stakeholders, in particular project staff and technical experts. Many partner organisations can also rely on previous experiences and include these in the planning process. The inclusive character of planning processes adopted by many partners is a major explanation for the high level of relevance and appropriation of most projects. Project planning, on the other side, also shows some important weaknesses that were found in all countries:

- Most often, no specific conflict analysis is included in the planning process and if there is a conflict analysis, it remains quite general and/or is not explicitly linked with the strategic choices that underlie the projects. Related to this finding, it was found that CFA policies and tools related to 'conflict and peace' (in as far as they exist) are not well known by CFA staff who relate to the partners in conflict regions and, hence, ignored also by the partner organisations. Only recently has ICCO undertaken efforts to introduce its partners to a specific conflict-related tool.
- Related to the previous point, external risks are not consistently identified and described in project proposals, neither do CFAs assess them in depth in their screening process as they attach more importance to the partnership than on the project. This implies also that the sustainability of future project benefits is not adequately dealt with during the screening process.
- Local partners only rarely engage in formal needs assessments and baseline surveys, which implies that subsequent monitoring and evaluation at the outcome and impact levels become very difficult.

The critical remarks presented above should be interpreted with care. An implicit bottom-line, for both CFAs and partner organisations, is that good planning and good planning

documents are of limited value in highly volatile and unpredictable contexts such as those prevailing in regions affected by conflict. An adequate and continuous capacity to 'read' changes and explore adequate responses (the 'art' dimension), and adapt projects accordingly seems to be more important. In addition, in particular in constraining contexts, CFAs seem to attach more importance to supporting their partner organisations and assuring the continuity of the partnership and, in that way, of their presence in the region. Projects then become more a means to realising this ambition than an end in themselves; and proper risk identification and assessment might become a process that is incompatible with this pattern.

While it might be indeed appropriate to put in perspective the importance of projects (and in particular of well crafted project proposals), a better analysis of the conflict and of the existing risks would undoubtedly add to the quality of not only project implementation, but also of the partners' positioning and strategic decision-making as a whole. It would help partner organisations and CFAs alike constantly to reflect on their own premises and interact with their environment in a more comprehensive and structured way. In this regard partner organisations are clearly requesting high quality support of their CFA counterparts, which should complement already existing capacity building efforts. Considering the high affinity of most partners with the conflict context, limited but well tailored support can bring substantial gains, as experiences in Burundi and Indonesia have shown.

### **Quality of implementation**

The evaluation was not designed to fully assess the quality of implementation of the projects and programmes included in the study. Nevertheless, a few issues are worth mentioning.

- Staff members are the most important resource of partner organisations. Everywhere, the evaluators were impressed by their capacity to cope with the constraints of their environment and to continue functioning adequately in often dangerous circumstances. Many of them are competent, highly motivated and experienced. As such, they have built up valuable wisdom and expertise. Few of them, however, are specialists in conflict transformation; if they have some skills in this area, they have acquired them through a learning-by-doing approach.  
While partner organisations have been present for a long time in a conflict region, which adds to their credibility and influence, the same is not always true for their staff. In particular in Sierra Leone and Indonesia, for various reasons, partner organisations have lost valuable staff, which has often led to a loss in the institutional memory of the organisation. Many organisations in these countries also appear highly dependent on a limited number of competent staff.
- CFAs have shown a high level of understanding with regard to the constraints of working in a conflict environment. They grant their partners a high level of confidence and freedom, have allowed them to be flexible in project implementation and adapt initial project plans when necessary. Indeed, the quickly changing project environment often has forced partners to adapt their projects. Such changes mostly could be decided on internally (and quite informally) at the partner level, without being discussed *ex ante* with their Dutch partners. Although this might be justified in some situations (e.g. '*on conflict*' partners working in difficult circumstances), it requires from the partners and CFAs a high level of skills in order to remain on track and able to optimise resources. Considering their failure accurately to analyse and monitor the conflict context and identify risks, one can wonder whether this has been always the case.

The description above gives the impression that CFAs are taking the particularities of the conflict into account in project implementation and do this by making partnerships the cornerstone of their approach. While the quality of partnerships is undoubtedly highly important in conflict settings, one should ask whether the present practice has not been tilted too much into the direction of flexibility and intuition. Project management tools that are standard in regular settings might indeed be unfit for conflict settings or require adaptations. They can, however, also be replaced by alternative approaches that allow structured action and reflection and monitoring project implementation in a less intuitive way. Such alternative approaches, however, appear lacking at this moment. CFAs have a long way to go in designing management systems that take the particularities of conflict settings fully into account.

### **Weak quality of monitoring**

Practices with regard to monitoring are mixed, but partner organisations that have a good monitoring system that includes learning are rather an exception. There is obviously a link with the lack of good baseline data and the fact that project plans have often to be adapted to changing circumstances. But this finding relates certainly also to a generalised weakness among development actors: monitoring systems are often weak, and if they exist, they deal mainly with the output level. In addition, designing and implementing well defined monitoring practices might for many partner organisations not be a priority considering the contextual pressures and the 'understanding' and flexibility of their CFA counterparts. Last but not least, the lack of well elaborated conflict sensitive approaches implies that monitoring efforts ignore often unexpected effects and fail to assess which groups are effectively benefiting.

## 7. Main conclusions and recommendations

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### 7.1 Main conclusions

The conclusions presented below recapitulate the most meaningful conclusions that were derived from the findings and analysis in the chapters above. They are supplemented with a few conclusions that cut across the analysis in the previous chapters.

#### **Conflict transformation policies vary considerably from one CFA to another, but common features are the lack of operationalisation and weak vertical integration**

CFAs undertake a considerable part of their work in conflict regions. The level of policy development related to 'conflict transformation' depends on the importance of the theme for the CFAs. ICCO and Cordaid, for whom work around conflict and peace is a priority, have both developed general policies in this regard. Oxfam Novib and Plan have not (yet) fully adopted 'conflict transformation' as an approach or guiding principle for their policies and work in conflict-affected countries. The CFAs use many terms related to work in the area of conflict and peace, but these are seldom explicitly defined and applied. Conceptual vagueness is rather common. While the level of exhaustiveness of policies differs among CFAs, these policies are rarely operationalised to the lower levels across country regions, country, in-country regions), which leads to a lack of vertical policy integration.

This finding is, however, less dramatic than it appears at first, as CFA staff and their partner organisations have developed various alternative mechanisms to ensure quality action.

#### **Partner selection by the CFAs is a strong point and a key element in the CFAs intervention model**

Despite the problems with policy operationalisation in general, the selection of partners is an exception to this finding. Programme portfolios at the country level match well with overall CFA policy choices. Programme managers, helped by their often long-standing involvement in the region, apparently succeed in ensuring a good match between overall policies and country portfolios in conflict regions. They do so through the selection of adequate local partners that often support them in analysing the local situation; mostly long-term partnerships are developed and help to ensure continuity in an often volatile environment. Nevertheless, because of a lack of clear policies and the heavy focus on partner, portfolios still lack overall strategic consistency so that chances to create inter-linkages and synergies (between *in conflict* and *on conflict projects*, between lobby and advocacy and other types of action, between humanitarian and development work) are often missed.

#### **Satisfactory level of effectiveness...**

Despite the difficult circumstances that are found in (post-) conflict areas this evaluation has found that CFAs and their partners are able to produce clear, diversified and meaningful results. These results relate both to '*in conflict*' and '*on conflict*' projects. When situating the results achieved in the triangle behaviour–attitude–context/structural factors, which is often used in conflict transformation literature, it can be concluded that CFAs and their partners cover the main dimensions of 'conflict transformation':

- CFAs and their partners deal mainly with ‘positive peace promotion’, i.e. efforts to change the attitudes of actors and structural factors that are a source of direct physical violence. *In conflict* projects deal mainly with underlying factors that (might) contribute to violence when not properly addressed. ‘Negative peace promotion’, which fits less well with the role and position of CFAs and partners as CSOs, is, however, also addressed;
- CFAs and their partners intervene at various levels (tracks), but are most often active at the grassroots level;
- CFAs have reached substantial results in strengthening local structures and institutions, which are key to building sustainable peace in a (post-)conflict context;
- CFAs and their partners do, however, pay too little attention to the unexpected results of their action, which often occur in volatile settings and are important to be assessed in view of the vulnerability of the local population, women and children in particular. The partner organisations, as local civil society organisations, have specific qualities that have contributed to these results and even imply that they can often provide unique contributions. These qualities include strong local roots, capacities to genuinely involve the local population at all stages of the process, inclusiveness, impartiality and, above all, skills adequately to work, position themselves and survive in often complex and threatening contexts where no other pro-people actors are meaningfully present on the ground.

### **... but many chances are missed for better performance related to higher level objectives**

Results of *on* and *in conflict* activities remain dispersed and are poorly interlinked. This contrasts with the fact that, from a conflict transformation perspective, combined action at various levels that addresses coherently various dimensions is clearly the best way to achieve significant success. As such, it is difficult to identify convincingly results at the outcome and certainly at the impact level.

### **... while unequal attention is paid to gender issues**

Women are generally acknowledged to be victims of conflict, although they have also been active as combatants. Sexual violence particularly affects women. The country studies revealed that only in roughly half the countries gender policies were an integral part of the approaches of partner organisations. This meant that partner organisations had not only formulated and implemented gender objectives, but also in lobby and advocacy, and at the grassroots level gender considerations were taken into account. This was reflected in female leadership at various levels, women’s desire to speak out even on very sensitive issues, women taking an active attitude towards peace building etc.

### **Both in conflict and on conflict projects are necessary**

From a conflict transformation perspective, but also from experiences at the grassroots, it has become clear that both types of projects (*in* and *on conflict*) are needed and should produce tangible results for conflict transformation to take place. Well implemented *in conflict* projects can produce benefits that contribute to conflict transformation (both intentionally and unintentionally) and facilitate the implementation of *on conflict* actions. Even so, well implemented *on conflict* projects create or consolidate a basis that is much needed for sustainable economic and social development.

Though many ‘*in conflict*’ projects did contribute indirectly to conflict transformation, many have done so without this as an explicit aim of the project. The position of quite a few *in conflict* projects to the conflict (considering only the potential impact of the conflict

on the project and not the reverse relationship; 'aversion' to *on conflict* work) and the approaches typically used (focus on tangible service with its delivery at the expense of – also – strengthening vulnerable social networks) means that these projects missed opportunities to optimise their contribution to conflict transformation.

On the other hand, some *on conflict* projects tend to ignore the importance of *in conflict* activities in order to achieve sustainable peace. After all, some of the root causes of conflict are linked to *uneven* social and economic development.

While both *in conflict* and *on conflict* projects are needed, specific expertise is required for *on conflict* and *in conflict* activities. Experiences from the field (in Burundi and Sierra Leone, for instance) have indicated that the combination of both types of expertise in one and the same organisation is often problematic, partly because different competences are required.

### **Incapacity to truly co-ordinate and co-operate (with international lobby efforts as an exception) are a major constraint on higher effectiveness**

For various reasons (the prevailing culture among partners stressing their own identity, the lack of experience with binding co-operation, the importance of short-term institutional self-interests in a context of competition for donors, etc.), many partners are reluctant to achieve more programmatic and coherent approaches that are needed to contribute more substantially to conflict transformation. As such, the CSO community as a whole often does not succeed in acquiring enough clout to address powerful actors and dynamics effectively.

### **Some weaknesses at the level of CFAs and of partner organisations**

CFAs show a high level of understanding of the precarious working conditions of their partners and *de facto* adapt their requirements in terms of project proposals and reporting. Nevertheless, the design and implementation of programmes show some important weaknesses that cannot be entirely solved by relying on (well qualified and well embedded) partners. These include: the lack of flexible, accurate and formalised conflict analyses and risk assessments, and the lack of specialist staff related to conflict transformation and inadequate monitoring systems. Moreover, staffing at CFAs does not sufficiently take into account the laborious character of managing a project portfolio in a conflict country. Last but not least, the reorganisations of various CFAs and the high turnover of staff negatively affected performance. This could not be completely compensated by the substantial number of external experts that were contracted both by the CFAs and the partner organisations.

### **Conflict transformation, an art and a science – and as such a high potential area for NGO involvement**

This evaluation has clearly shown the particularities of work in conflict-affected regions. Effective work in these regions cannot be assured by formalised approaches only. These need to be complemented by skills (or talents) such as imagination, creativity, inspiration, intuition, etc, which can help project leaders in taking the right decisions at the right moment. Many NGOs typically dispose of such qualities or have a culture in which they are allowed to develop. This provides them with a potential to provide contributions towards conflict transformation that other actors are unable to ensure.

## 7.2 Main recommendations

1. *CFAs and their partners should become more aware of the fact that work in conflict settings requires specific approaches, management tools and mechanisms, which are different from those used in other contexts.*

As with humanitarian aid and development aid, where it is commonly agreed that implementation follows distinct logics, the same is needed for work in conflict settings – irrespective whether this work is *'in conflict'*, *'on conflict'* or a combination of both. Only when such specific approaches are consistently applied, will CFAs and their partners be able to make full use of the comparative advantages that seem to equip them better for conflict transformation activities than other actors.

2. *When designing specific approaches, tools and mechanisms, CFAs and their partners should aim to maintain a balance that takes into account their comparative advantages (mostly related to the creative/art dimensions of conflict transformation approaches) and more 'scientific' elements that should blend in a coherent approach. When doing so, they should take into account the need to ensure the co-ordination and complementarity of their action with that of other actors.*

Broadly speaking, this implies that from the 'artistic' side opportunities and resources remain available to liaise with all types of actors, and engage in continuous reflection and experimentation (in and outside the borders of policies and strategies). From the 'scientific' side, this implies that adequate, but in essence light frameworks, tools and procedures are designed and applied that give the minimum structure and guidance the 'artistic' efforts need. What this implies more concretely is partially outlined below, but should further be operationalised with specialist support.

3. In addition, quality work in conflict regions implies (irrespective whether 'conflict transformation' is a priority area of work, or not) that CFAs:
  - opt for a sufficiently long period of presence in the region and longer-term co-operation with at least a few key partners;
  - ensure in-house or external access to conflict transformation expertise;
  - carefully position their projects and other initiatives against other *in* and *on conflict* actions undertaken by other actors;
  - engage in systematic efforts to identify the unexpected effects of project action, both on targeted and non-targeted groups;
  - Provide substantial support to strengthen the organisational aspects of partners that are often affected by the conflict, both in general terms and related to conflict transformation.
4. *The development of specific policies, strategies and corresponding tools (cfr. supra) should be adapted to the CFAs' ambitions in conflict-affected regions and cover both in conflict and on conflict projects.*

Different options can be thought of that basically require different policy settings and correspondingly different instruments. These options can be roughly the following:

- Conflict transformation can be a major domain of intervention with 'fully fledged' conflict transformation as the guiding implementation principle. This option requires a comprehensive strategic framework, a tool box with adequate conflict transformation instruments for different conflict situations and partner organisations, sufficient in-house conflict transformation expertise, an adequate organisational set-up, and a full range of conflict transformation related activities ensuring both vertical and horizontal integration.
- CFAs can opt for a specific focus on conflict transformation: according to this option, conflict transformation is a major domain of intervention, but actions are not (necessarily)

framed in a 'full' conflict transformation framework. CFAs identify their comparative advantage and specialise gradually in this field while ensuring horizontal and vertical linkages on the ground. Areas of specialisation may include: *in conflict* activities that are fully conflict sensitive while liaising with *on conflict* projects, peace building through *on conflict* projects at the grassroots level; lobby and advocacy at national and international levels, etc.

- CFAs opt for specialisation on a specific aspect of conflict transformation, while addressing this theme at all levels, e.g. children in conflict situations, sexual violence, justice, and while ensuring good linkages and co-ordination with other actors.
  - CFAs opt to only engage in *in conflict* projects: in this case, CFAs and their partners will need to liaise with other organisations to mobilise the necessary knowledge on the local situation; they should also ensure that their actions are truly conflict sensitive and that the linkages with *on conflict* work are well addressed.
5. *Efforts should be stepped up to improve gender mainstreaming in all initiatives undertaken in conflict-affected regions.* In addition, gender should be a key consideration in the policies, strategies and tools to be developed (see above) and in efforts to identify and assess better the unplanned effects of projects.
  6. *All 'in conflict' projects need to be framed in such a way that they aim to optimise their contribution to conflict transformation.* This implies a two-way approach in the relation between the project and conflict (influenced by the conflict and influencing the conflict), particular attention to potentially harmful consequences, specific attention to reaching targeted groups effectively, adapted management mechanisms, good and regularly updated knowledge of the conflict (acquired via in-house competence and/or from elsewhere). This implies that project objectives and approaches are designed in such a way that the potential to contribute to conflict transformation is maximised, which will in the first instance imply that projects go beyond the simple service provision focus (also in emergency settings), try to strengthen social cohesion and are preoccupied by the vulnerability of local social networks and the need to at least maintain and possibly nurture them through their action.
  7. *Long-standing partnerships should remain (or become) the cornerstone of the CFAs' strategy in conflict regions.* This would imply *inter alia* the association of (key) partners with all strategic decision-making and the transfer (or at least structural involvement) of some key management functions (related to local policy development, conflict analysis, etc.) to qualified partner organisations. At the same time, efforts should be undertaken to eliminate the present pitfalls of an often too heavy reliance on partnerships. More attention is to be given to the quality of project design, preparation and implementation, and concerted efforts are to be made to address present weaknesses of partners in terms of context and conflict analyses, inadequate monitoring systems, lack of a clear sustainability strategy, etc.
  8. *CFAs should better ensure coherence of humanitarian and 'regular' development efforts.* In conflict and post-conflict regions, CFAs often work with various coexisting approaches. As these approaches are of a different nature and often refer implicitly or explicitly to different paradigms, ensuring coherence between them is not easy. CFAs should, however, increase their efforts to achieve such coherence, which, in the first instance, will imply that the units dealing with humanitarian and 'regular' development work communicate and co-operate better, both in terms of policies and activities on the ground.

9. *CFAs should step up their efforts to come to more effective co-ordination and co-operation at the local level, thereby improving co-operation among partner organisations.* Co-operation processes should be reinforced by the development (or acceptance) of joint analytical frameworks as a major reference for action, the extension of the planning horizon, training on 'co-operation and networking' and systematic inclusion of networking requirements in joint initiatives, the development of incentives for co-operation and joint action by partners, open discussions about competition for donor funding among partners and how to deal with it, etc.
10. *CFAs should pay more attention to the consequences of reorganisation on in-house knowledge, skills and contacts that are vital for the quality of their work in conflict regions.* Specific measures should be designed to avoid a loss of institutional memory and skills in the organisation. Related to this, CFAs should also avoid that key knowledge and experience becomes too personalised and remains informal.



# Annexe 1: Assessment of External Reference Group

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## 1. Meeting needs

The report adequately meets the information needs expressed in the terms of reference in a way that reflects the stated priorities. The demands which were made during the evaluation process are mentioned, and satisfied when possible.

***Comments:** The report meets most information needs expressed in the ToR, but remains weak on gender and a differentiated approach and analysis with regard to the different CFAs. The ERG also largely maintains its earlier view that the effects and results could have been substantiated better and more transparently, though it observes presentational improvement with regard to earlier drafts. It also maintains its view that the question with regard to the goal achievement has been answered only partially: the nature and context of contributions is better explained than the extent to which such contributions have been materialised. The conclusions have been presented in a more direct and resolute manner than earlier and this has made it better possible to derive the implications of the study. The same applies to the recommendations. The report explicitly mentions the demands made and changes introduced during the evaluation process and has done so adequately in the view of the ERG.*

## 2. Appropriate design

Evaluation questions, key concepts and criteria are precisely defined. The method is described clearly. It is adequate for addressing the questions. Methodological limitations are explained, as well as their consequences on the strength of conclusions, and on the substance of recommendations.

***Comments:** The first chapter outlines the way the evaluators have conceived and limited the original evaluation questions as well as added a question on coordination and complementarity. This is in and of itself clearly and adequately argued, irrespective whether one fully agrees to the reformulation or not. This also applies to the methodology, the limitations and challenges faced. Though one could also here differ on the question whether some of these must not just be deemed normal in evaluations of this type, the way they are described, analysed and tackled is clear and appropriate for the purpose of methodological reliability. Especially, Annex 3 to the evaluation study gives a very detailed overview of the questions, concepts used, judgement criteria and indicators, and components and phases of the study, and, hence, presents overall a very good insight in the approach the evaluators have taken again contributing to the reliability of the study. This annex in fact goes beyond what is normally observed in most evaluation reports.*

### 3. Reliable data

Data are sufficiently reliable with respect to the conclusions that are derived from them. Data collection tools have been applied in accordance to standards. Sources are quoted and their reliability is assessed. Potential biases are discussed.

*Comments: The reliability of the study is good, as argued above under item 2. It seems to the ERG that data collection tools have been applied in accordance to standards and that the evaluators are aware of the study's limitations, and discuss them where relevant.*

### 4. Sound analysis

Data are cross-checked, interpreted and analysed systematically and appropriately. Underlying assumptions are clarified. The main external factors are identified and their influence taken into account.

*Comments: The evaluators have worked on the basis of a plurality of methods and approaches thus heightening methodological triangulation. They also have made systematic attempts at coordinating with their principle and held so-called restitution seminars with stakeholders in the different countries. External factors have been taken into account well. The analysis is generally well argued, but there seem to remain differences of insight with the CFAs, especially on the more critical insights derived from the material. **This in and of itself does not disqualify the findings, but there are (additional) data presented or apparently some minor mistakes of wrong interferences outlined by the CFAs, that could still be considered before the report is multiplied.** Yet, the ERG considers it part of the normal politics of evaluation that there remains a level of controversy or nuance over critical findings.*

## 5. Valid findings

The findings are based on evidence through a clear chain of reasoning. The limitations to validity are clearly stated.

**Comments:** *It is less easy to give a judgement on the validity of the data. In its earlier comments the ERG noted the lack of a clear and precise presentation and interpretation of the findings and a more rigid distinction between empirical evidence-based conclusions on the one hand and assumptions, reflections etc. of the evaluators on the other. Though the ERG is aware of the epistemological complexities involved and the interplay of data, interpretation and reflections, we note that attempts have been made at clarification. Conclusions have now been separated more clearly from the evaluators' considerations. Apart from illustrative boxes, the study in itself does not, and in practical terms could conceivably not, present a lot of primary data. These were reportedly stored in reports and documents for internal use. This makes, however, an external check on validity difficult. Limitations to validity are recognised at certain places in the text .e.g. with regard to the depth of data or analysis and the limitations of arriving at hard conclusions in others. Validity problems are also evident from the rather vague (more qualitative than quantitative, see under 1) approach to effectiveness. We have noted that the language in that particular section has been clarified and unspecific qualifiers have been removed in majority. The descriptions presented here are surely informative about the nature of the contributions and many of the underlying and contextual factors at stake. Yet it remains a challenge to exactly conclude to what extent these effects or contributions are in the end sufficient or not, despite that they are deemed satisfactory. However, though its summative aspect may be somewhat limited, the evaluation gives a lot of insights in process and context and also provides to the CFAs many opportunities to learn.*

## 6. Impartial conclusions

The conclusions are based on explicit criteria and benchmarks. They are free of personal and partisan considerations. Points of disagreement are reported truthfully. Lessons of wider interest are identified.

**Comments:** *The evaluators have specified those in their Annex 3. Conclusions are of course always framed within a particular conceptual or theoretical approach and are also based on interpretations that have some personal colouring, even if only because of the evaluators' earlier experiences, disciplines and types of expertise. Overall, the conclusions are balanced across the CFAs, and generally reported upon and substantiated in fairly elaborate detail. There are also sufficient lessons of wider interest to be taken up at policy and programmatic level.*

### **7. Useful recommendations**

Recommendations stem from conclusions. They are applicable and detailed enough to be implemented by the addressees. The level of recommendations (political, strategic, managerial, ...) reflects that of the questions.

***Comments:** The report offers a number of explicit recommendations based on the conclusions and findings, but also offers implicit and explicit advice throughout the text. Of course, these findings can never be 'blindly' implemented by CFAs and partners, but require in-house discussions and debate as the whole report does. Understandably in view of the scope and coverage of the study, most recommendations are still somewhat general and need to be translated to the different concrete conflict contexts, countries and partners.*

### **8. Clear report**

The style of the report is interesting for and accessible to the intended users. A short summary stresses the main findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations in a balanced and impartial way.

***Comments:** The report is generally well written and has been further improved compared to earlier versions. The summary brings out the main findings in a clear, critical yet constructive manner. It is clearly written and is focusing on major issues of interest. The report is not afraid to formulate clear opinions and is certainly not written to only please. It contains in effect quite a number of critical aspects inviting further thought and analysis on behalf on the CFAs.*

### **Overall assessment**

Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the report satisfies the above criteria

***Comments:** The ERG does not believe that this evaluation was subject to any specific contextual constraints that justify a 'softer' view on its final results. All limitations of this type of work are and were known in advance. This includes the issues the evaluators mention in their summary, such as vagueness of the subject, the partial adoption of the CT approach by the CFAs and their partners and their different usage of concepts and terminology. In conclusion, the report satisfies several criteria fully or in majority (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8), but shows some weaknesses with regard to a few others (1, 5,), as outlined and argued above.*

## Annexe 2: Terms of Reference

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### **Joint Programme Evaluation CFAs on the road to 'Conflict Transformation'**

#### **Participating organisations:**

Cordaid  
ICCO  
Oxfam Novib  
Plan

Amsterdam, 20 aug 2007

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## **List of abbreviations**

AMM	Aceh Monitoring Mission
CFA	Co-Financing Agency
CG	Co-ordination Group
ERG	External Reference Group
IOB	Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department)
MFP	Medefinancieringsprogramma (= CFP: Co-Financing Programme)
MFS	Medefinancieringsstelsel (= CFS: Co-Financing System)
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic, Time-bound
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
ToR	Terms of Reference

## 1. Justification of the evaluation

The Dutch Co-Financing Agencies (CFAs) have decided on a new round<sup>26</sup> of programme evaluations for the period 2007 – 2010<sup>27</sup>, which includes five themes for evaluation. The first theme of this new series is 'conflict transformation'. Four CFAs - Cordaid, ICCO, Oxfam Novib, Plan - have committed themselves to participate in this evaluation. The co-ordination of the joint programme evaluations is with Partos, the association of Dutch civil society organisations in the international development cooperation sector.

An important reason to select 'conflict transformation' as a subject to be evaluated during 2007 was that this subject has not been evaluated during the previous subsidy rounds (2003-2006 and 1998-2002). Although it was originally planned as a joint Cordaid-ICCO evaluation during the period 2003-2006, it did not take place then, since the programmes were not fully operational by then.

'Conflict transformation' as a subject is directly linked to the work of CFAs, since part of the countries where CFAs are active through their partner organisations, are countries where conflict is at stake, and seriously interferes with the work aimed at development. Because CFAs consider it of utmost importance to keep active in these areas, working in and on conflict is part and parcel of their work.

Moreover, the CFAs do not necessarily see conflict, especially when it is non-violent, as a merely negative force. Indeed, conflict is sometimes necessary for social change to happen and constructive conflict could be seen as a vital agent or catalyst for change. Despite the high price paid in terms of human suffering, the same is true for destructive, violent conflict. The CFAs recognise the profound changes it often effectuates. In certain cases or sectors this may offer new opportunities for positive change. CFAs hope to learn from this evaluation if and how these can be seized in a timely manner.

This evaluation covers the period 2003 – 2006. During this period most programmatic activities in conflict-affected areas supported by CFAs, were usually falling within the realms of conflict management, conflict prevention and conflict resolution (see annex I for a list of definitions). Conflict transformation<sup>28</sup> as an explicit objective was identified later in this period. Most CFAs are now gradually moving over to this new objective and strategy, and want to gain more insight in the results of the activities in the area of conflict management-, prevention and resolution so far, learn lessons, and learn about their existing and potential contributions to conflict transformation.

Results of this evaluation will serve accountability, learning and policy development purposes.

**26)** CFP evaluation reports during the previous round (2003 – 2006) can be found at [www.partos.nl](http://www.partos.nl), under 'Kwaliteit', 'Kwaliteitshuis', 'Rapporten Programma Evaluaties'. For example:  
- Synthesis report of Dutch CFA Programme Evaluation HIV/AIDS 2001 –2004 (no 5, Feb 2006)  
- Synthesis Report - Assessing civil society participation as supported in-country by Cordaid, Hivos, Novib and Plan Netherlands (no 4, Dec 2005)  
- Synthesis Report - Evaluation of health related programmes of three co-financing agencies 2002 -2004 (no 3, Oct 2005)  
- Synthesis Report - The Role of Women's Organisations in Civil Society Building 1998-2003 (no 2, Nov 2004)

**27)** Gezamenlijke programma evaluaties 2007-2010, Plan van aanpak, 20 okt 2006

**28)** Please be referred to the next chapter for an explanation of the term 'conflict transformation' in the context of this ToR

## **2. Working in conflict-affected areas and conflict transformation**

### **2.1. Principles of conflict transformation as applied by CFAs**

All participating CFAs currently apply the principles of conflict transformation as described, among others, by John Paul Lederach. Conflict transformation does not suggest that we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather recognise it and work with its 'dialectic nature'. This means that social conflict is naturally created by humans who are involved in relationships, yet once it occurs, it changes (i.e. transforms) those events, people and relationships that created the initial conflict. Thus, the cause-and-effect relationship goes both ways -from the people and the relationships to the conflict and back to the people and relationships. Conflicts change relationships in multiple and complex ways, altering communication patterns and patterns of social organisation, altering images of the self and of the other.<sup>29</sup>

The crux of *conflict transformation* is seen as: 'it aims to transform negative destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict and deals with structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict'.

(cited from: *Glossary in the Berghof Handbook-2004*<sup>30</sup>)

Thus, conflict transformation not only aims to end violence and change negative relationships between the conflicting parties. It also aims to change the political, social or economic structures that cause such negative relationships, i.e. the conditions generating destructive conflict. In this sense, conflict transformation can also be seen as prevention of conflict since it removes the causes for the conflict to re-inflate. Therefore, the aim of conflict transformation is relevant to all stages of the conflict cycle (pre-, during- and post conflict).

29) Source:  
<http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/transform/jplall.htm>

30) Source:  
<http://www.berghof-handbook.net/> : Austin, Alex, Martina Fischer and Norbert Ropers (eds.) 2004. Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict. The Berghof Handbook. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 464-466.

31) Source:  
<http://www.berghof-handbook.net/> : Hugh Miall, Conflict Transformation, a multi dimensional task, 2004, page 10.

In order to better understand the concept of conflict transformation, we can use a typology of five types of transformation, as developed by Hugh Miall (see table one). These five types of transformation can be readily related to the levels of conflict causation or prevention. Context transformations usually occur within the global or regional setting. Structural transformations usually happen at the state/society level. Actor and issue transformations take place at the conflict party and elite levels. Personal transformations demand competencies on the individual level.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 1. Transformers of conflict**

Type	Examples
1. Context transformations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change in the international or regional environment</li> </ul>
2. Structure transformations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change from asymmetric to symmetric relations</li> <li>• change in power structures</li> <li>• change of markets of violence</li> </ul>
3. Actor transformations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes of leadership</li> <li>• changes of goals</li> <li>• intra-party change</li> <li>• change in party's constituencies</li> <li>• changing actors</li> </ul>
4. Issue transformations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transcendence of contested issues</li> <li>• constructive compromise</li> <li>• changing issues</li> <li>• de-linking or re-linking issues</li> </ul>
5. Personal/elite transformations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes of perspective</li> <li>• changes of heart</li> <li>• changes of will</li> <li>• gestures of conciliation</li> </ul>

Source: Hugh Miall, *Conflict Transformation, a multi dimensional task, 2004, page 10.*

## **2.2. The relation between working in conflict-affected areas and conflict transformation at CFAs**

The line of thinking that conflict transformation is a vehicle for structural change enabling communities and societies to work with conflict in a more positive and constructive way, is relatively new within CFAs. Conflict transformation as an explicit objective was usually identified later in the studied period 2003-2006. Most CFAs are now gradually moving over to this new objective and strategy (some are further in this process than others).

During the 2003-06 period most programmatic CFA activities were usually falling within the realms of conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict prevention (see the list of activities defined for this purpose in Annex II). These were the first and foremost aims of the conflict strategies. Often this type of work was jointly implemented, and integrated with programmes oriented to development-like objectives (e.g. food security, education, democratisation etc.).

At the same time, within conflict-affected countries development programmes are implemented that do not -explicitly- take the conflict component into account. They operate in a conflict-ridden country but accept the reality as it is, and mostly ignore the conflict situation.

The involvement of development co-operation in conflict can be succinctly summarised with a reference to Jonathan Goodhand's triad working *around, in* and *on* conflict (2001). The current practice of development assistance generally still implies working *around conflict* rather than working *in* or *on conflict*. This means that development activities in conflict-affected countries are carried out as 'business as usual'. This may, for example, apply to large

donor programmes and the loans of the international financial institutions and regional banks. Working *in conflict* denotes higher level of awareness and leads to some modest adjustments, while development agencies working *on conflict* have incorporated a clear conflict perspective in their work. They refocus development programmes on the root causes of conflict and provide incentives for peace and disincentives for war. Playing a more active role *on conflict* requires a corresponding change in the approach, assumptions and strategy by development policy-makers and practitioners (Goodhand, 2001)<sup>32</sup> (see table two).

**Table 2. Terminology used by Jonathan Goodhand**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Working around conflict</b>	<b>Working in conflict</b>	<b>Working on conflict</b>
<i>Assumptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict is a 'disruptive factor' over which little influence can be exercised</li> <li>• Development programmes can continue without being negatively affected by conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development programmes can be negatively affected by, and may have a negative impact on the dynamics of conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development programmes can exploit opportunities to positively affect the dynamics of conflict</li> </ul>
<i>Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdraw from or keep out of conflict-affected areas</li> <li>• Continue to work in low risk areas on mainstream development activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reactive adjustments are made to programmes in medium and high risk areas</li> <li>• Improve security management</li> <li>• Greater focus on 'positioning', i.e. neutrality and impartiality</li> <li>• Cut back on high input programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refocus programs onto the root causes of the conflict, e.g. governance, poverty alleviation, social exclusion</li> <li>• Attempt to influence the incentives for peace and disincentives for violence</li> <li>• Support for mediation efforts</li> <li>• Focus on protection of human rights</li> </ul>

32) Georg Frerks: Conflict, Development and Discourse. In: Georg Frerks, Berma Klein Goldewijk, and others. Human Security and International Insecurity, 2007, p.52

Within the context of CFAs, 'working around conflict' means avoiding the issue of conflict or treat is as a negative externality. In areas of open conflict activities may be withdrawn and development work is put 'on hold'.

'Working in conflict' in the context of the CFAs means recognising the need to be more sensitive to conflict dynamics and adapt policies and programmes accordingly. This may mean adapting lobby and programmatic activities according to an analysis of conflict-related risks. It might also involve greater experimentation with sustainable livelihood approaches in unstable contexts. These programmes may not address conflict in the short term, but may decrease a region or locality's predisposition to conflict in the long term.

'Working on conflict' could involve a more explicit focus on conflict management, resolution and prevention. Policies which limit, mitigate or contain the opportunities for violent and open conflict would need to be developed. For this evaluation it is important to realise that here CFA programme strategies and objectives explicitly state the will to contribute to the prevention, mitigation, containment or resolution of violent conflict and possibly conflict transformation.

As said before, 'work on conflict' is not necessarily a project or programme in itself, but is often integrated within other structural development activities implemented in conflict-affected areas. In the case of conflict resolution and management, the whole issue of contribution to structural development is even more difficult to address. In this situation 'work on conflict' aims to contribute to structural improvements both in the realm of conflict prevention and in other sectors, e.g. with work in the social services sector, food security or human rights work. Development activities in such projects have both intended and unintended consequences for its conflict-affected context. To distinguish between the outcome of explicit conflict resolution and management activities and broader structural development activities in terms of conflict transformation is a really complicated task.

Realising that, the CFAs are interested to know the different types of effects (whether intended or unintended, existing or potential) of these programmes on conflict transformation.

### **2.3. Differences and commonalities in work in conflict-affected areas implemented by CFAs**

As can be seen in Annex II (part 2) all CFAs work on conflict at different levels: at strategic level (organisational and often also country-, or region-wise), at programmatic level, at lobby and also at campaigning and media levels.

Much of the CFAs' work in conflict-affected areas is conducted at a local and sub-national level. In peace building terms this work is on track II and track III diplomacy. An assumption shared by all four participating CFAs is that the involvement of local groups (grass roots organisations) is essential in the transition to sustainable peace. Strengthening the voice and position of civil society is a crucial factor for the creation of popular support for (local) peace initiatives.

Another commonly shared assumption is that gender is a crucial factor in the process of transforming conflicts. The perception of gender is often manipulated and instrumentalised through power structures during violent conflicts, making both men and women into victims and perpetrators in different ways. All organisations work one way or another on changing perceptions, behaviours and structures in the relation between gender and conflict. In this way gender is an important aspect in conflict transformation and needs to be taken into account throughout the evaluation.

There are also important differences: Cordaid and ICCO also support faith-based organisations, with the assumption that these organisations could play a key role in processes of peace building and reconciliation, whereas Oxfam Novib is more inclined to work with secular, often rights-based organisations. Plan is very specific in its focus on child rights and child protection. It would be interesting to see how these different angles yield different results and to what extent they are complementary to each other.

### **3. Proposed evaluation questions**

#### **The main evaluation question is as follows:**

To what extent has the work of CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict-affected areas during the period 2003-2006 achieved their objectives *and* contributed -or can contribute- to conflict transformation?

#### **More specific, underlying evaluation questions:**

Efficiency:<sup>33</sup>

To what extent are CFAs and their partner organisations properly equipped (knowledge, resources, experiences, conflict sensitive way of working)?

Effectiveness:

To what extent have the programmes<sup>34</sup> of CFAs and their partner organisations achieved their goals?

Relevance:

To what extent have the programmes matched the policies' priorities of the CFAs en their partner organisations and have been suitable for the needs of the beneficiaries in the local context?

Sustainability:

To what extent are results of the programmes likely to continue after withdrawal of the CFAs?

*For all underlying evaluation questions: further specify the existing and potential contribution to conflict transformation*

33) See annex III for an explanation of the terms efficiency, effectiveness, relevance as well as sustainability.

34) The term 'programmes' may refer to programmes, projects or activities. CFAs may use a different terminology for the subsidised unit

#### **Elaboration of the evaluation questions**

In answering these questions, CFAs like to know whether there are differences in results between:

- Three types of programmes in conflict-affected areas:
  - 1) Programmes that are specifically focussed on 'work on conflict',
  - 2) Programmes that integrate the specific focus on 'work on conflict' into development work
  - 3) Programmes that aim to do development work in a conflict-affected context ('work in conflict'), without a -specific or integrated- focus on 'work on conflict'.
- The three intervention strategies, that are core to the development work of the CFAs: direct poverty alleviation, civil society building and lobby & advocacy (see annex IV).

- Different type of partner organisations (in the South as well as in the North). The co-ordination group<sup>10</sup> is interested in whether different types of partner organisations (e.g. faith based, secular, womens' organisation) yield different results.

For learning purposes, the co-ordination group<sup>35</sup> ask the consultants to pay attention to certain cross cutting issues during the data collection and analysis:

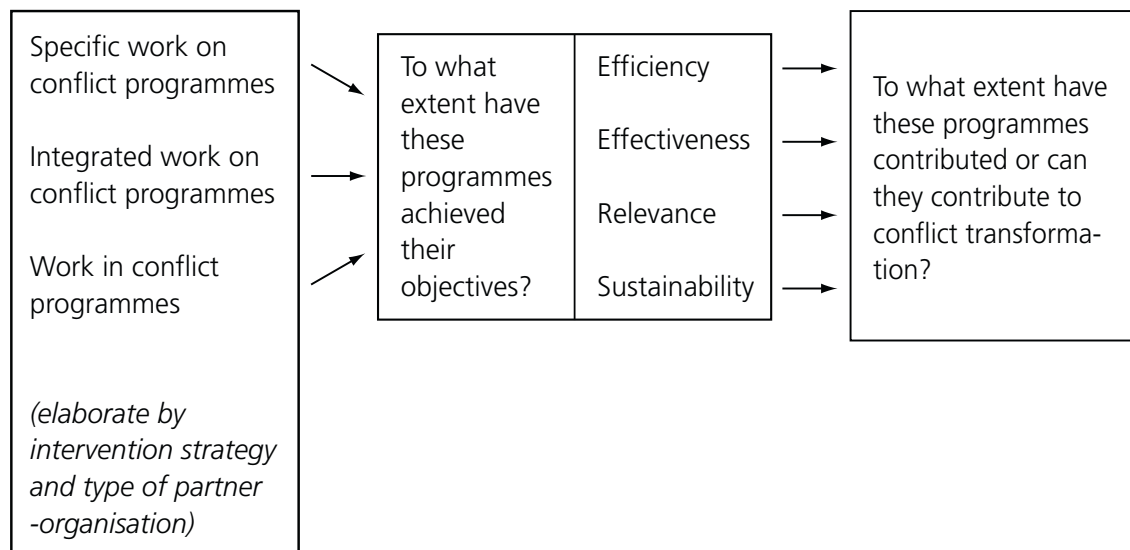
- Data collection, findings, results and conclusions should be formulated in a gender-specific way, and need to look at intended as well as unintended consequences.
- Present some examples of some good, bad and new or innovative practices
- Some suggestions on how, after the report is completed, the results should best be shared with the CFA and between CFAs, partners, and public. That is: suggestions for an innovative learning track.

Further operationalisation of the evaluation questions is left to the evaluators. Consultants are requested to capture the evaluation questions into different judgement criteria in their proposal for a Plan of Approach to this Terms of Reference (see chapter 9). Each evaluation question should have at least 1 to 2 judgement criteria.

Figure one summarises the evaluation questions in a frame.

**Figure 1. Evaluation frame**

**Three types of programmes:**



**35)** See chapter 8 for an outline of the steering and management of the evaluation

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. The evaluation process**

Once the external evaluation team has been contractually engaged, the evaluation process will continue through three phases (desk, field, synthesis) as follows:

1. Desk study of all four participating CFAs: a systematic review of relevant files, reports or other documents (e.g. existing studies, project evaluations) available at the CFAs and interviews with desk- and programme officers at the CFAs. Relevant project material focuses at first instance on files including 'work on conflict' (specific and integrated), secondly a sample will be drawn from 'work in conflict' programmes.

The desk study focuses on a maximum of six geographical areas, like e.g. Afghanistan, Indonesia, Philippines, Central Africa, Horn of Africa, Colombia. The final list of geographical areas to be included in the desk study will be agreed upon together with the co-ordination group<sup>10</sup>.

With this information, the consultants should be able to:

- a. summarise the range of activities identified as 'specific and integrated work on conflict' (including choices made and financial expenditures) and a representative selection of 'work in conflict' at the CFAs during the period 2003 – 2006 in the selected geographical areas.  
Members of the co-ordination group have already started with disentangling financial expenditures on 'work on conflict' during 2003-2006.
- b. get an insight in the relation between policy (if available), knowledge and practice of desk and country officers within each CFA.
- c. clarify the intervention or programme logic, and a first impression of the link of 'work in and on conflict' to conflict transformation should be made clear. With this information, the judgement criteria –already developed in the proposal for this ToR- have to sharpened, and suggestions should be made for indicators to be used in the evaluation.

Furthermore during this first phase, the consultants will, in preparation of the next steps in the evaluation:

- d. select a maximum of three geographical areas for field studies. For these selected regions, a context analysis needs to be made (at most CFAs this is already available).
  - e. select partner organisations to be included in the field visits.
  - f. prepare a more detailed timetable and methodology to be used in the field study.
  - g. propose to the co-ordination group whether the field study reports should result in country (regional) -, organisational reports, or even otherwise.
2. Field study: The field study consists of a maximum of three geographical areas. Field studies need to be implemented together with local consultants. This phase only starts after approval by the co-ordination group of the first phase draft report (see chapter 5 as well).

The aim of the field studies is to:

- a. collect missing information, verify already collected data, and collect additional data on partner organisation- and target population level (looking for intended as well as unintended effects, to existing and potential contribution to conflict transformation). In

addition to partner organisations, other reliable and appropriate data sources may need to be consulted as well. Triangulation of data found in the desk study is needed.

- b. share the information collected with at least the partner organisations, but preferably also other relevant stakeholders in the field, in order to create a common understanding and stimulate the learning process at relevant stakeholders.

The consultants are challenged to use qualitative or innovative research methods. This will enable us to put the quantitative data within the broader context, and in getting answers to the 'why- questions', and thus have an insight look of what is the story 'behind' the data.

3. Synthesis: based on information from phase 1 and 2, one final synthesis report needs to be prepared, which summarises all findings (of desk and field studies), conclusions and recommendations, and answers the evaluation questions.

The three phases may run over into each other. A Go – No go moment is built in between phase 1 and 2. Depending on the results of phase I, the co-ordination team will decide whether to continue with phase 2.

## **4.2. Expected methodological difficulties**

- The aim of the evaluation 'to what extent has the work of CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict-affected areas achieved their objectives and contributed or can contribute to conflict transformation?' is rather abstract. It is therefore important to disentangle the intervention logic, and based on that, sharpen the judgement criteria.
- Since work on conflict is mostly integrated into other projects and programmes, it may be difficult to disentangle results due to activities focussed on work on conflict (attribution problem).
- For the same reason, selection or sampling of the project files at the respective CFAs may be a difficult task. Per CFA and between CFAs there are varying ways of categorisation and classification. E.g. work on health in a conflict area may have been categorised under 'health'(work in conflict) as well as under 'conflict work '(work on conflict). One should look carefully to the aims as described in the project documents.
- Baseline data may not be available. If possible, they may need to be reconstructed.
- Multiple level analysis: Within the aid chain, CFAs as well as partner organisations may or may not have monitoring data. Be aware that in case there are hardly data available at CFA level, they very well may be available at the level of partner organisations. Different PME systems may be used within the organisations (at CFAs and at partner organisations, as well as the link between CFAs and partner organisations), so this should be taken into account.
- Multiple intervention strategies: CFAs work through three intervention strategies that are closely linked to each other (direct poverty alleviation, civil society building and lobby & advocacy). It may be hard to disentangle these strategies.

## **5. Deliverables and deadlines**

All final products need to be in English. Depending on the selected areas for field study, translations may need to take place to French or Spanish.

### **Expected products, delivered by the consultants, and deadlines**

Period phase 1, inception - and desk study: 22 October – 26 November 2007

(time available for the desk study is 5 weeks)

During the desk study phase, the consultants:

- a. will have a meeting on the progress in the implementation of the work plan with the co-ordination group (after 2,5 weeks, so at 7 November). The discussion includes:
  - o problems faced so far and solutions found
  - o reliability of data collected
  - o more information on judgement criteria and provisional indicators
  - o selection of the geographical areas to be included in the field study
  - o suggestions as to whether field studies should result in country-, regional-, organisation reports or otherwise
  - o indication of the time table (including a itinerary) for phase 2 plus methodology: data collection techniques, data sources, input for draft questionnaires
  - o verification that all important sources of information have been/will be used.
- b. should submit a draft desk study report at 16 November. This draft report is also sent to the External Reference Group<sup>10</sup> for comments.
- c. should submit a final draft desk study report at 26 November, including any comments received from the co-ordination group during the discussion as mentioned under a) and on the draft report. This final draft report includes at least:
  - o an overview of the different policies (formal or informal), intervention or programme logic, judgement criteria plus indicators, practices and main activities during 2003 – 2006 of the four participating CFAs regarding work in and on conflict
  - o an assessment or a SWOT analysis of the work in and on conflict programmes at CFAs
  - o an overview of expenditures by CFAs (total and MFP budget) and the number of partners involved in work on conflict (most of this is already done by the co-ordination group)
  - o an insight in the existing and potential contribution of 'work in and on conflict' activities to conflict transformation.

Number of pages for the final draft desk study report: max 40 main text, excl. annexes

Format: electronic version (MS Word format)

Period phase 2, field study: 3 Dec – 10 March 2008

(time available for the field study is 14 weeks)

At the end of the field study phase, the consultants will:

- a. submit four draft organisation-, country (regional) reports, or otherwise (18 Feb at the latest). These reports will also be shared with the partner organisations for comments. These reports should include at least:
  - o reports of the field briefings and debriefings (meetings or workshops) in the countries/ regions
  - o context analysis, methodology, findings, conclusions and a maximum of four organisation specific recommendations regarding the evaluation questions

- b. give a presentation of the findings to the co-ordination group (around 3 March 08)
- c. submit four final organisation-, country (regional) reports, or otherwise (no later than 10 March), including any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft reports.

Number of pages for each report: max 40 main text, excl. annexes

Format: Draft organisation/or country reports: electronic version (MS Word format)

Final organisation/or country reports: hardcopy (5 copies of each report) plus electronic version (MS Word format)

Period phase 3, synthesis study: 11 March – 17 April 2008

(time available for the synthesis report is 5 weeks)

After the field study phase, the consultants will:

- a. submit a draft Synthesis Report (around 27 March 2008) of the desk and field studies: besides answering the evaluation questions, the draft final report should also synthesise all findings, conclusions and recommendations into an overall assessment of the programme. This draft Synthesis Report is also sent to the External Reference Group for their comments and concerned parties.
- b. give a presentation on the draft report to the co-ordination group (around 10 April 2008), followed by a discussion on:
  - o findings, conclusions
  - o quality of the report
  - o utilisation of the report, including transferable lessons and recommendations, suggestions for an innovative learning track
- c. submit a final Synthesis Report (no later than 17 April 2008), including any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report. This report needs to match the standards set out by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB10), an independent body of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see annex V, in Dutch).

Number of pages of synthesis report: max 60 main text, excl. annexes

Format: Draft Synthesis report: electronic version (MS Word format)

Final Synthesis report: hardcopy (5 copies) plus electronic version (MS Word format)

The final Synthesis Report will include an annex 1 with the formal assessment of the External Reference Group. It will be printed and distributed by Partos, and put on the Partos website

## **6. Evaluation team**

The team leader should have expertise in managing complex evaluation processes. Experience with evaluations which go beyond policy level; knowledge of the working conditions and contexts of local partner organisations in the South is a must.

Team members will have to complement the specific 'conflict transformation' expertise, gender expertise, and have experience in quantitative and qualitative survey techniques. Language skills needed are Dutch, English and French, in order to be able to read and interpret the files available at the CFAs. At least one team member should have an understanding of the Dutch co-financing system. Preferably, the team should be a mixture of northern and southern consultants.

Team members should not have had a working relationship with the involved CFAs during 2002-2006, the period just before and under evaluation.

Working with local consultants during field studies is a pre-condition. Consultants, who will implement the field phase, need to have experience with working in conflict and post conflict areas.

It is the responsibility of the team leader to assure:

- composition of the team
- a realistic time frame and budget for the evaluation
- the consistency of the deliverables with the ToR
- the quality of the content of the deliverables

The team leader is ultimately responsible for finalising the report and co-ordinating and guiding the evaluation process (including all logistic arrangements).

## **7. Budget**

The budget needs to be separated into the before mentioned three phases. A breakdown needs to be included of the expected number of days per team member and their fees. Prices need to be calculated in Euro's, excl VAT/BTW, and are maximum prices and cannot be changed during the contract.

The payment procedures are as follows:

25% at acceptance by the evaluation team of the task

25% after approval by co-ordination group of the draft desk study report (end phase 1)

25% after approval by co-ordination group of the final organisational or country reports  
(end phase 2)

25% after approval by co-ordination group of final report and financial justification  
(end phase 3)

## **8. Management and steering of the evaluation**

### **Co-ordination Group (CG)**

The evaluation is managed by the evaluation manager within Partos, with the assistance of a co-ordination group consisting of members of the four participating co-financing agencies. The co-ordination group members have prepared the current Terms of Reference. The main function of this group is:

- To select the evaluation team who actually implement this evaluation.
- To ensure that the consultants have access to and have consulted all relevant information sources and documents related to the project/programme available at the agencies.
- To validate the evaluation questions.
- To discuss and comment on notes and reports delivered by the consultants. Comments by individual group members are compiled into a single document by the evaluation manager and subsequently transmitted to the consultants.
- To assist in feedback of the findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the evaluation back into their organisations.

## External Reference Group (ERG)

Partos, together with the Co-Financing Agencies have installed a Reference Group of external experts to advise the co-ordination group on the quality of process and results of the joint programme evaluations. The External Reference Group gives advice on the Terms of Reference, the draft deskstudy report, the draft Synthesis report, and prepares a final assessment on the quality of process and results. Their independent assessment will be included in the final synthesis report as an annex<sup>36</sup>.

## Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB)

The CFAs are accountable to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch public for the obtained results. The evaluation reports will be open for public use and are reviewed by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, an independent body of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, according to a Quality Assessment List (annex V, in Dutch).

### Contact person during the evaluation:

All contracting, payment and correspondence concerning the evaluation goes through Partos:

Nieuwe Keizersgracht 45  
1018 VC Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
Tel : 020 – 320 9901  
Fax : 020 – 620 8049

Contact person: Marja Exterkate, me@partos.nl

## 9. Minimal requirements for proposals

In case your organisation is interested, we invite you to prepare a proposal for implementation (max 15 pages, excluding annexes). The proposals should be written in English. We expect a plan of approach, with *at least* the following information:

Understanding context and evaluation questions:

- Fine tuning of the evaluation questions, including a first draft of 'judgement criteria'.  
The evaluation questions need to be captured into different judgement criteria developed by the consultants. Each evaluation question should have at least 1 to 2 judgement criteria. The achievement of these criteria during the period 2003 -2006 can be assessed or judged through indicators, which need to be developed by the consultants during the first phase of the evaluation, the desk study.

Evaluation capacity:

- A proposal for a methodology, the way in which data will be collected and data sources needed, taking into account the expected methodological problems and data shortcomings.
- A proposal for how to analyse data in order to answer the evaluation questions.

<sup>36</sup>) An example of such an assessment can be found at [http://www.partos.nl/index.php?page=5\\_2\\_3](http://www.partos.nl/index.php?page=5_2_3), Synthesis Report of Dutch CFA Programme Evaluation - MBN HIV/AIDS Evaluation, 2001-2004 on page 111-112.

Evaluation team:

- An overview of the roles, expertise and skills of the team members in the evaluation.
- Time table, including possible risks, and measures you may take in order to reduce those risks.

The proposal should include at least the following annexes:

- Composition of the evaluation team with cv's, showing their knowledge, skills and experiences
- List of relevant evaluations within the last 5 years

A separate document including a breakdown of the requested budget should be sent with the technical proposal, but in a separate envelope. You should give the reference number "Partos /263/07/me/800, technical -or- financial proposal" for quotation on the envelopes.

Technical and financial proposals (5 hardcopies each, in two different envelopes) should be sent in quintuple to the contact person at Partos (mentioned in chapter 8), and need to be in her receipt no later than 25 September 2007 at 17.00 o'clock Dutch time.

## Annexe 3: Evaluation approach and methodology

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### 1. Evaluation questions, evaluation framework, judgment criteria and indicators

The generic evaluation questions as formulated in the TOR read as follows:

- *Efficiency*: To what extent are CFAs and their partner organisations properly equipped (knowledge, resources, experiences, conflict sensitive way of working)?
- *Effectiveness*: To what extent have the programmes of CFAs and their partner organisations achieved their goals?
- *Relevance*: to what extent have the programmes matched the policies' priorities of the CFAs and their partner organisations, and have addressed the needs of the beneficiaries in the local conflicted context?
- *Sustainability*: to what extent are the results of the programmes likely to continue after the withdrawal of the CFAs?

In chapter 1.2 it was explained how and why these evaluation questions have been changed, so that the main evaluation questions have read as follows:

- *Main evaluation question*: to what extent has the work of CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict-affect areas during the period 2003-2006 achieved their conflict related objectives and contributed to conflict transformation?
- *Relevance*: to what extent have the programmes matched the policies' priorities of the CFAs and their partner organisations, and have addressed the needs of the beneficiaries in the local conflicted context?
- *Conflict sensitivity*: to what extent have the programmes been prepared and implemented in a conflict sensitive way?
- *Coherence, complementarity and coordination*: to what extent have the programmes been coherent, complementary and coordinated with those of other actors?
- *Effectiveness*: (related to main evaluation question) to what extent have the projects achieved conflict-related results and outcomes?
- *Sustainability*: to what extent are the results of the programmes likely to continue after the withdrawal of the CFAs?

As mentioned under 1.3.1, the evaluation framework consists, on the one hand, of a series of dependent variables, related to the evaluation questions and a series of independent variables that explain performance. This framework is based on a global reconstruction of the intervention logic as explained in chapter 2. The framework has been operationalised by defining judgement criteria and indicators that have served as a major guideline for data collection and analysis. The results of these operationalisation efforts are presented below.

#### 1.1 The variables to be explained

Judgement criteria<sup>37</sup> and indicators have been agreed upon at the start of the evaluation. These criteria and indicators were considered to be indicative. In fact, more adaptation of the judgment criteria and indicators was required than initially thought, because of the problems with the evaluation object (see chapter 1). It has become clear that more attention had to be paid to unexpected results (in particular, but not solely, in relation to *in conflict* projects)

**37)** The following definition of a judgment criterion is followed: "A judgment criterion specifies an aspect of the merits or success of the evaluated intervention. It is used to answer an evaluation question positively or negatively" (EuropeAid Co-operation Office, Joint Evaluation Unit, Evaluation Methods for the European Union's External Assistance, Methodological Bases for Evaluation, Volume 1, p. 54).

and that 'relevance' and 'conflict sensitivity' are closely related and even partially overlapping because of the unstable (conflict or post-conflict) environment in which the projects have to operate. Both are actually 'bridged' by using the criterion of 'appropriateness'.

- Relevance question: *To what extent have the programmes (1) matched the policies' priorities of the CFAs and their partner organisations and (2) have been in view of the needs of the population and requirements of the peace building process?*
  - Judgement criteria for part (1) of the question:
    - existence (at CFA and partner organisation level) of clear policy on work in conflict areas and dealing with different types of conflicts
    - adequate inclusion of CFAs' and partners' policy priorities (related to work in conflict areas) in the programmes implemented in conflict areas
  - Judgement criteria for part (2) of the question:
    - adequacy of programme design and objectives in view of conflict specificities (filling the 'gaps' – deficiencies – towards peace) and basic needs of local population (the vulnerable, in particular women and children, in first instance);
    - appropriateness of (anticipated) level of interaction with the key factors and actors that drive the conflict;
    - consistency of project approach and objectives with conflict prevention and peace-building values
  
- Question related to conflict sensitivity: *To what extent have (1) CFAs and (2) their partner organisations adopted a conflict sensitive way of working?*
  - Judgement criteria for part (1) of the question:
    - adequate level of knowledge, capacity and experience related to work in the conflict affected area (including gender sensitivity)
    - adequate policy and strategy mechanisms (partner selection, positioning in view of other third actors and potential comparative advantages)
    - adequate management (financial, administrative) mechanisms to cope with the specific characteristics of programmes in conflict affected areas (uncertainty, high risks, indeterminacy, ...)
    - adequate positioning with regard to the conflicted parties
  - Judgement criteria for part (2) of the question:
    - adequate level of conflict awareness (nature and gravity of existing tensions, of groups involved, ...)
    - adequate quality of analysis of the conflict and peace dynamics (appropriate assessment of level of difficulty of the conflict, appropriate analysis of the conflict: level, actors, issues, ...; capacity to anticipate)
    - adequate coping mechanisms and strategies: assessment of possible negative influence of conflict on project; quality of mechanisms to be informed on conflict development; quality of dealing with conflict risks; level of capacities to analyse, monitor and cope with conflict environment; quality of conflict and peace impact assessment
    - quality of peace deficiency assessment: clarity of vision on desired future peace and on how to realise it, quality of assessment of peace building deficiencies
    - adequate positioning with regard to the conflicted parties
    - quality of interaction with the key factors and actors that drive the conflict
    - adequate management mechanisms permitting to function with high 'tolerance levels' (capacity to respond to uncertainty, indeterminacy, risks, losses, pressure, sudden changes, ...)
    - adequate learning process in terms of positioning towards the conflict

- Coherence/complementarity<sup>38</sup> question: *To which extent do the programmes take into account other initiatives pursuing similar objectives?*
  - Judgement criteria:
    - the CFAs and their partners are aware of the other actors (third parties) that play a role in the peace process
    - the objectives and approach of the programmes are not contradicting those of other interventions
    - the programmes are adequately positioned in view of other similar initiatives
    - the programmes are meant to maximise the comparative advantages of the CFAs and/or their partners
    - the programmes have contributed to the development of compatible views on the desired post-conflict situation (or on the path to be followed towards that situation)
    - the programmes pursue synergies with other similar initiatives (a.o. by promoting a so-called 'coordination regime' and developing mutually reinforcing approaches)
  
- Effectiveness question: *To what extent has the work (programmes) of CFAs and their partner organisations in conflict affected areas during the period 2003-) contributed to conflict transformation?*
  - Judgement criteria: effective or potential, planned and unplanned contribution to the conflict and peace dynamics:
    - increased (institutional and other) capacity to prevent/manage/ resolve violent conflicts and promote tolerance and build peace
    - altered perception, attitude and behaviour among the conflicted parties
    - positive (i.e. transforming destructive dimensions) changes (for men and women) in the characteristics and manifestations of the conflict
    - altered (conflict decreasing) access to individual or collective material and non-material resources (for men and women)
    - decreased level of (socio-economic, ethnic, religious) tensions
    - improved military and human security (for men and women)
    - improved political structures and processes (possibility to use typology of 5 types of conflict transformation of Miall – see ToR page 5-6 – as a means to classify the various types of change)
  
- Sustainability question: *To what extent are the programme achievements likely to continue after withdrawal of the CFAs?*
  - Judgement criteria:
    - adequate inclusion of the sustainability notion (perspective) in project design and approach
    - probability of continuation (after withdrawal of external support) of those activities and outputs that are needed to produce benefits (welfare/prosperity) for the target groups (men and women)
    - probability of continuation (after withdrawal of external support) of the benefits for the target groups (men and women)

**38) Coherence** is defined here as: the extent to which the intervention (logic) does not contradict other interventions with similar objectives. **Complementarity** is defined as: the extent to which an intervention is convergent (incl. avoiding duplication) with other interventions pursuing similar objectives.

## 1.2 The explaining variables

A broad range of factors potentially influences the performance of the programmes. In view of the learning and policy development purposes of the evaluation, three separate categories will be distinguished: context factors (exogenous which can hardly be influenced), programme characteristics (endogenous factors which can be influenced mainly in the design phase) and programme-system factors (endogenous factors which can be continuously influenced).

- Context factors: a broad range of factors can directly or indirectly influence the performance of programmes in conflict areas. In particular actors and factors driving and inhibiting conflicts will provide explanations for the performance. Most of the important contextual factors can considerably vary from one region to another but will certainly include:
  - (political, economic, social, security, regional/international) issues that (1) underpin and drive community tensions or (2) inhibit tensions and (can) serve as a basis for peace
  - (political, economic, social, security, regional/international) dynamics among the various types of actors (spoilers, supporters, ...)
  - overall (and partially derived from the previous points): the conflict phase and the level of difficulty of the conflict (type of relation between primary actors, number of parties involved, quality of the leadership, level of existence of conflict profiteers, length of the conflict, level of presence of internal and external willingness to build peace, ...)
- **Programme characteristics<sup>39</sup>:**
  - type of programme: programmes specifically focused on 'work on conflict', programmes integrating that specific focus into development work, programmes that 'work in conflict'
  - intervention strategy: poverty alleviation, civil society building, lobby & advocacy, or a combination of 2 or 3 of these strategies
  - type of partner organisation: sort (faith based, secular, NGO/CBO, ...), years of existence, scale, experience with work in/on conflict, level of embedding in local community, ...
- **Programme-system factors:**
  - quality of program design: quality of the identification/formulation process (including role of stakeholders and description of situation of target group), quality and feasibility of the intervention logic, inclusion of sustainability considerations (incl. relation between external support and local input base), quality of screening at CFA level, ...
  - quality of programme implementation:
    - at the level of the partner organisations: level of conflict sensitive management
    - at the level of the CFA: quality of support by CFA at policy level, quality of partner selection, dialogue with partner organisations, adapted support mechanisms (capacity building, funding, monitoring and evaluation, positioning towards other actors) in view of conflict situation, etc.

## 2. Evaluation approach

### 1.1 Evaluation coverage and delineation

The Terms of Reference (TOR) specified that the evaluation desk study should focus on maximum six geographical areas and the field study on maximum three areas out of the about 25 conflict countries/areas the four CFAs are working in. Already during the first meeting with the Coordination Group (CG), the six desk study countries/regions were

<sup>39</sup> It might be considered to also include other characteristics, such as the type of transformation or level (track) being adopted.

selected: Afghanistan, Great Lakes Area (more in particular Burundi and East Congo), Indonesia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Sudan. The main criteria for selecting these countries were: the presence of the participating CFAs in the country and the (perceived) importance of this presence. It was further decided to only include projects with a minimum budget of 50,000 €, and being finalised in 2004 at the earliest and having started in 2006 at the latest.

Later on, out of these six countries/regions, the Great Lakes Area, Indonesia and Sierra Leone were chosen for the field study. The selection of these three countries was done on the basis of the following criteria:

- inclusion of main geographical areas,
- number of CFAs present in the country/area,
- importance of the presence of the CFAs in the country/area,
- presence of various types of the projects in the country/area,
- security situation in the country (now and expectations in the months to come), and
- possibility of fieldwork and contacts with target groups.

When applying these selection criteria on the six countries, it became immediately clear that two countries/regions (The Great Lakes and Indonesia) clearly stood out in comparison with the other countries. The decision was taken to opt for Sierra Leone as the third country for the field study, as otherwise (i.e. in case the most evident country, Sudan, would be chosen) one of the participating CFAs (Plan) would only have its projects included in the field evaluation in one country (Indonesia)<sup>40</sup>.

The preliminary analysis of the CFAs' project portfolio allowed establishing an initial database of more than 500 projects implemented in the six countries mentioned above; about 454 of these projects could be categorised as project *in* or *on conflict*; projects that were pure emergency interventions were classified separately, as was also the case for organisational support 'projects' of the CFAs such as the provision of specialised manpower or vehicles for a local CFA office. For each of the projects retained, 13 data were recorded (country, CFA, project title, project code, project location, start date, ending date, budget, 'in' or 'on' conflict project, main objectives, project sector, intervention strategy, type of partner). The fact that the participating CFAs dispose of relatively comprehensive and accessible databases constituted an important advantage in this regard. The so-called '*kenschetsen*' (résumés of the projects) have been very helpful to obtain the desired information; in most cases the CFA staff in charge of the projects provided some additional support.. As far as ICCO is concerned, several databases had to be consulted, which might imply that a few projects might have been omitted. Furthermore, the exclusive reliance on the '*kenschetsen*' (which are drafted before the actual start of the project) implied that possible changes in the project set-up and objectives during implementation could not be taken into account.

Out of the 454 in and on conflict projects, 60 projects to be studied more in depth in the desk study were subsequently selected<sup>41</sup>. The evaluation team initially has opted for the following criteria for the selection of the projects: inclusion of projects of all CFAs present in the country (with a relative over-representation of CFAs being less prominently present), a balance between (1) '*in*' and '*on*' conflict projects (in as far as possible), (2) the different sectors, (3) the different intervention strategies and (4) the different types of partner organisations. Moreover, the possibility of generating learning effects has been an important criterion and has eventually led to the selection of many projects being considered by the CFA staff as successful or problematic. In addition to those criteria, during the second meeting of the Coordination Group a decision was made not to let guide the selection of the projects for the

**40)** During the kick-off meeting the Plan representative had voiced as a major concern that it should be avoided that Plan would be submerged by the three other, much bigger, CFAs. However, later on in the process, Plan pulled out of the Indonesia country study as Plan Indonesia refused for various reasons to include the selected Aceh project in the study.

**41)** Some key characteristics of these projects are presented in annexe 6.

field study by efficiency considerations only (because of the rather tight budgetary and time restrictions) which would have implied that only projects that are situated in safe and easily accessible areas could be maintained. In view of the high level of heterogeneity in terms of the project characteristics, it was also decided to at least partially give up the initial idea to focus the fieldwork on a few areas only to allow higher levels of comparison among the projects. These options have allowed to open the door for the inclusion of less 'evident' projects (in rather isolated areas, in zones with higher conflict risks) that however offer the opportunity to develop additional learning effects that are particularly relevant in the context of conflict areas.

Out of the 60 projects selected for the desk study, 36 projects were situated in the three countries/regions selected for the field visits. With the exception of Indonesia, virtually all these projects have been effectively visited; in Indonesia, the field visits were limited to two of the three conflict areas (Aceh and Maluku) retained, whereas projects in the third area (Papua) were only analysed on the basis of documents, a few phone interviews and a questionnaire.

The projects situated in Afghanistan, Nepal and Sudan were only studied via a desk study approach. Preliminary project notes were drafted for all these projects, and most of them (18) were also included in the country desk analysis as such, which, at project level, implied a more in-depth analysis, based among others on the results of a questionnaire survey.

The following table provides an overview of the evaluation coverage and delineation in as far as the projects in the six selected countries are concerned:

	Field study countries / regions				Desk study countries		
	Bu-rundi	East Congo	Sierra Leone	Indonesia	Sudan	Afghanistan	Nepal
Projects included in initial database	30	116	44	127	65	53	19
<i>of which in conflict</i>	14	84	34	91	40	43	15
<i>of which on conflict</i>	16	32	10	36	25	10	4
Number of CFAs included	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
Projects included in desk study	6	10	6	16	9	8	5
<i>of which in conflict</i>	3	4	4	6	3	6	4
<i>of which on conflict</i>	3	6	2	10	6	2	1
Number of CFAs included	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
Projects included in field study	5	8	5	10			
<i>of which in conflict</i>				3			
<i>of which on conflict</i>				7			
Number of CFAs included	3	3	2	3			
Projects included in follow-up desk study					7	5	5
<i>of which in conflict</i>					2	4	4
<i>of which on conflict</i>					5	2	1
Number of CFAs included					3	3	3

The data above allow concluding that this evaluation only covers a small portion of the work of the CFAs' in conflict areas.

## 1.2 Study approach and phasing

Initially a rather linear approach has been designed, starting with a preparatory desk phase, followed by field phase and completed by a synthesis phase. However, the actual approach has become more complicated so as to formulate a better response to the complexities of the evaluation, which are related to the heterogeneity of the programmes to be studied and of the institutional and policy context<sup>42</sup>.

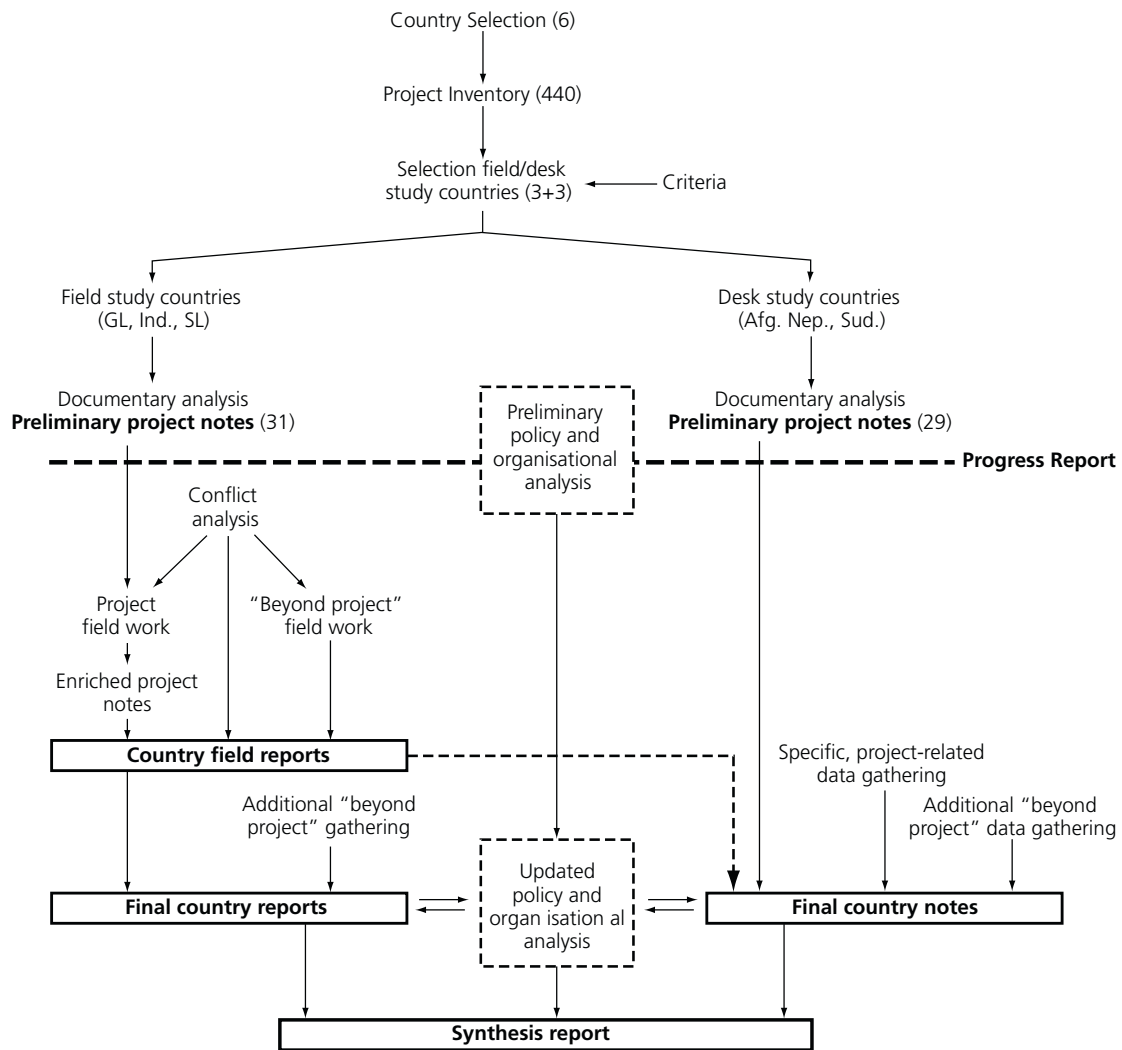
The evaluation has been implemented in three phases, which have partially overlapped. The desk phase included *inter alia* the review of the main documentation related to the subject, the selection of the countries and projects for the desk study and field study, the study of relevant documentation with regard to the projects and countries selected, the elaboration of a methodology for the field studies, and interviews with key staff at the level of the CFAs. The field phase started with a seminar bringing together most of the evaluators involved in the fieldwork in the three countries/areas selected. Later on, the findings of the fieldwork were supplemented by three limited desk country studies pertaining to South Sudan, Afghanistan and Nepal. The synthesis phase that summarises the findings of the desk and field studies, has concluded this evaluation.

Broadly spoken, three different but interconnected study tracks can be distinguished, two related to the study of the situation in the field, one to the CFAs' policy and organisation. These three tracks can be shortly summarised as follows (see also schematic presentation on the following page):

- *Field analysis in three countries/regions*: this analysis has started with the drafting of the preliminary project notes, and included a preparation of the country evaluation teams (including discussions with CFA staff), among others via a one-week workshop in which most field evaluators have participated. It has further included a broad range of data collection efforts at various levels (see also 2.3 below): the conflict context, the institutional context, and the situation at partner and project level. At the end of the fieldwork, so-called country field reports have been drafted which allowed deriving conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned at country level, which have guided additional efforts with regard to the two other tracks. Additional 'beyond project' and organisational data gathering has then be conducted which, together with the country field report, has allowed drafting self standing final country reports.
- *Desk analysis in three countries*: this analysis has also built further on the results of the preliminary project notes but has only been continued once the initial drafts of the country field reports were available. As is the case with the previous track, additional 'beyond project' and organisational data gathering has been conducted, which has been further completed by additional project related data gathering efforts via a questionnaire and (in some cases) follow-up phone calls. The result of these efforts has been synthesised in final country notes, which remain internal documents but also constitute a building block for the synthesis report.
- *Policy and organisational analysis*: although this analysis has been planned from the onset, it has gained in importance as it has become clear that the usefulness of the evaluation (in terms of learning and policy development) will be limited if no adequate policy and organisational analysis can be conducted. This analysis has allowed putting the findings at project (partner) level more in perspective and according sufficient attention to crucial issues such as partner selection and dialogue, and innovations such as attempts

<sup>42</sup> For more details on the rationale of these adaptations, see the Progress Report, in particular chapters 3 and 5.

to develop a more strategic (as opposed to project/partner) approach. It should on the other side be underlined that this analysis, in particular its organisational component, has remained restricted and, hence, unable to grasp exhaustively the complexities of the processes of organisational change most CFAs underwent recently.



### 2.3 Data collection methods and techniques

Data have been collected in various ways (see below) and at various levels:

- the CFAs in the Netherlands, for the three study tracks mentioned above;
- the projects and implementing partner organisations, and the broader institutional context (actors related to the conflict reality, external observers, ...) in the countries/regions included in the field study;
- the projects and implementing partner organisations in the countries/regions included in the field study.

The evaluators have used a broad range of data collection methods and techniques, including:

- *document analysis*, both dealing with CFA, project and partner organisation related information, as information with regard to 'beyond project' initiatives, key developments in the study areas, in particular those related to the conflict and peace building dynamics;
- *meetings* with CFA staff, mainly to review overall and country specific policies, discuss the projects and partner organisations included in the study and present the preliminary findings;
- *meetings* with project staff and (exceptionally) partner organisations' board members, mainly to review and assess the intervention logic and its formulation process and its adaptation over time, collect missing information in particular with regard to conflict sensitivity; checklists were used to guide the discussions during these meetings;
- *meetings*, in the field study countries/regions, with other stakeholders and key resource persons (such as government officials, representatives of other NGOs) to complete the evaluators' view and knowledge on the local context, obtain external information on the partner organisation (including its perceived role, performance, ...);
- *meetings*, , in the field study countries/regions, with beneficiaries, that focused in particular on their changes in attitude, behaviour, relations, activities as a consequence of the projects' intervention;
- *focus group discussions* at the level of the beneficiaries, to discuss their perception on the conflict transformation process, the main (positive and negative) results and the role/ contribution of the partner organisation and other actors in this regard;
- *collection of 'most significant change' stories* at several occasions (combined with 'ordinary' meetings or focus group discussions at beneficiary level);
- *expert interviews* with independent specialists who complemented and where necessary questioned the evaluators' perception and analysis with regard to the conflict situation and the role of the various stakeholders in the three areas studied;
- *debriefing meetings* at the level of each partner organisation and the CFAs in which the evaluators presented their main preliminary findings, conclusions and lessons learned. On the basis of the results of these discussions the consultants finalised the project notes, which have been sent for verification to the projects concerned.

Much attention has been paid on the restitution and validation of the preliminary study results, both via the organisation of restitution seminars at the end of the field visits, the discussion of the preliminary field country study results with the CG and the organisation of a one-day workshop for CFA staff to also discuss the findings from the field country studies.

### **3. Key concepts and their actual use in the evaluation**

Annex 1 of the TOR provides a list with some definitions related to the evaluation subject, which have been used by the evaluation team as a major reference for their work. In this regard, it should however be underlined that the four participating CFAs do not attach equal importance to conflict transformation as a priority theme and that the CFAs use different concepts related to the 'conflict and peace' theme. ICCO uses explicitly the conflict transformation concept (at least at policy level). Cordaid uses mainly the concepts of peace, reconciliation and justice, while Oxfam Novib and Plan use different concepts in practice.

This reality forced the evaluation team to adapt to the terminology in use by the various selected partner organisations. It implied also that it was neither desirable nor possible to apply a common and univocal terminology that could capture the diverse frameworks the

CFA's are using. The team has on the contrary opted for a pragmatic approach that takes the reality at CFA and partner level into account.

In particular the following concepts have been important in the context of this evaluation.

### **Conflict transformation**

There exist many definitions of 'conflict transformation'. In the TOR conflict transformation is defined as:

*'A generic, comprehensive term referring to actions and processes which seek to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of conflict by addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the long term. It aims to transform negative destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict and deals with structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict. The term refers to both the process and the completion of the process. As such it incorporates activities of processes such as Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution and goes farther than Conflict Settlement or Conflict Management.'*

The reality at CFA and field level has learned that the concept is not consistently used and that, when it is used, its users are mostly unaware of its actual comprehensive nature (in particular its orientation on the root causes of a conflict) as outlined in the definition above. In practice and with the aim to capture the large diversity of CFA initiatives in the field of conflict and peace, the evaluation has used conflict transformation as **a generic term** referring to all 'actions and processes which seek to alter in a positive way the various characteristics and manifestations of conflict'. In other words, the term has been used *also* to refer to actions (projects, programmes) that do not include all aspects that differentiate 'conflict transformation' from other (less comprehensive) peace building approaches. As such, the evaluation has chosen to adopt a pragmatic approach trying to judge all CFA efforts in conflict areas, irrespective the conceptual and policy framework they are situated in.

### **Conflict sensitivity**

The TOR define conflict sensitivity as:

*'the capacity of an organisation to (1) understand the (conflict) context in which it operates, (2) understand the interaction between its operations and the (conflict) context, and (3) act upon the understanding of this interaction in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on the (conflict) context'.*

In the evaluation, conflict sensitivity has become one of the main evaluation criteria and the operationalisation of the concept in judgement criteria is compatible with the definition above. It should be noted in this regard that 'conflict sensitivity' goes further than 'conflict awareness' (another term used often) in the sense that it implies **a proactive attitude** with regard to the interaction between operations and (conflict) context. As such, it is closely linked with the concept of relevance in the sense that the relevance of development interventions can only be assured in as far as these interventions are implemented in a conflict sensitive way.

## Working around, in and on conflict

These terms refer to the terminology used by J. Goodhand and are mentioned in the TOR under chapter 2.2 which deals with the relation between working in conflict-affected areas and conflict transformation. Development cooperation can relate in various ways to the conflict:

- it may consider the conflict as a 'disruptive factor' over which little influence can be exercised and lead to a strategy to withdraw from or keep out of conflict-affected areas and continue to work in low risk areas without being negatively affected by the conflict (working *around* conflict); interventions adopting such an approach were not included in the evaluation, but a few cases were nevertheless identified where such attitude has prevailed during project implementation;
- it may recognise that development programmes can be negatively affected by, and may have a negative impact on the dynamics of the conflict, which might lead to reactive adjustments of the programme, a greater focus on positioning (neutrality, impartiality) and improved security management (working *in* conflict);
- it may consider development programmes as an opportunity to positively affect the dynamics of the conflict, thereby refocusing the programmes onto the root causes of the conflict, focus on the protection of human rights, attempting to influence the incentives for peace and disincentives for violence, etc. (working *on* conflict).

The distinction between projects working '*in conflict*' and projects working '*on conflict*', though not always easy to apply, has been important for the purpose of this evaluation. It has, for instance, been one of the criteria for the selection of projects to be studied. CFA programmes and strategies can contribute to conflict transformation in various ways. First of all, they can do so by engaging *directly* in efforts to prevent, mitigate or resolve violent conflicts. Second, CFAs can contribute to conflict transformation *indirectly*, by contributing to structural improvements, both in the realm of conflict prevention and in other sectors, so as to address – in an intended or unintended way - the roots causes of the conflict. Many CFA projects on the ground are also *mixed*, having components dealing directly with the conflict dynamics and other components dealing with other sectors.

In practice, projects have been labelled '*on conflict*' in case they endeavoured to *directly influence* the conflict and peace dynamics.

## 4. Main evaluation outputs and building blocks

This synthesis report reflects the results of a complex evaluation process implemented over various stages, using various data collection methods that focuses both on the projects, the implementing partner organisations and the CFAs, and, in particular in the field, also on the broader institutional context (actors related to the conflict reality, external observers, ...).

In the course of the evaluation process, several intermediary outputs were produced, some of which are self-standing.

**Initial database.** This database aimed at getting at conducting an overall portfolio analysis to get an overall insight in the global characteristics of the CFA programme in the six countries/ areas retained and at establishing a basis for the selection of about 60 projects to be studied more in depth in the desk study and for the selection of the three countries/regions for the field study. To that effect, a database was established including 13 data per project (country, CFA, project title, project code, project location, start date, ending date, budget, 'in' or 'on'

conflict project, main objectives, project sector, intervention strategy, type of partner). On the basis of the project documentation available (in particular the so-called '*kenschetsen*' – project résumés), the basic data of more than 500 projects have been gathered of which about 440 projects could be categorised as projects '*in*' or '*on*' conflict<sup>43</sup>. Projects that were pure emergency interventions were classified separately as was also the case for CFA organisational support 'projects' such as the provision of specialised manpower or vehicles for a local CFA office.

**Project notes.** 60 preliminary project notes were drafted on the basis of a documentary analysis and limited discussions with CFA staff. The notes provided general information on the projects, their objectives and their performance in relation to the main evaluation criteria. The preliminary notes pertaining to projects included in the field studies were, with DRC as an exception, completed after the field visits and served as a major input for the field country studies (see below). The notes related to projects situated in the three desk countries were completed with the information obtained via the answers on a questionnaire and, in some cases, follow-up phone calls.

Progress report. **This report was drafted prior to the field visits and presented an overview** of the main results achieved so far. In particular it highlighted some changes in the evaluation methodology and approach and it included the analytical tools that were developed, in particular for the field visits, to ensure internal coherence and exhaustiveness. These tools included: formats for the field project and country reports including all judgement criteria, a format for the conflict description at country level, checklists for the institutional analysis at the local level and guidelines for assessing conflict sensitivity.

**Country reports.** These are undoubtedly the major building blocks of this synthesis report and reflect the results of the field visits. Various data collection methods were used during and after these visits: document analysis, interviews and meetings with key stakeholders, focus group discussions (mainly at the level of beneficiaries), collection of most significant change stories, questionnaires, expert interviews and debriefing meetings (both in the field and at CFA level). Restitution seminars were held in all countries in which the key preliminary findings of the field study were discussed. The reports related to the countries/regions visited (Burundi, East Congo, Sierra Leone and Indonesia) are self-standing documents and official outputs of this evaluation. In addition, reports were drafted to reflect the results of the three desk study countries; these reports are far less comprehensive and have been drafted for internal use only.

<sup>43</sup> During the field visits, it has become clear that in most cases the initial classification has been right. Some problems were nevertheless encountered because the distinction between in and on conflict projects is not always easy to make and because some projects changed in nature during their implementation (e.g. by including on conflict activities that were not initially planned).

## Annexe 4: List of main evaluation tools

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The following evaluation tools have been developed by the team and are available upon request.

- **Operationalised evaluation framework:** this framework is the main methodological document operationalising the evaluation questions through judgement criteria and indicators and listing the explanatory factors.
- **Format for the conflict analysis:** this document presents the format that was used by the local researchers for writing out the conflict analyses.
- **Evaluation tools used during the fieldwork:**
  - General approach for the field study
  - Checklist for the institutional analysis at the local level
  - Guidelines for assessing conflict sensitivity: in conflict projects
  - Guidelines for assessing conflict sensitivity: on conflict projects
- **Desk study questionnaire** (sent to the local partners in charge of implementation of the projects in Afghanistan, Sudan and Nepal selected for the desk study)
- **Reporting formats:**
  - Guidelines for drafting the project notes
  - Format for project notes (in and on conflict projects)
  - Format for the field project notes
  - Format for field country reports
  - Format for synthesis report

## Annexe 5: List of main documents used

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Only the main documents used in this evaluation, in particular for drafting the synthesis report, are mentioned.

### **Cordaid**

- Peace and conflict policy paper 2003 – 2006, October 2003
- Regional Policy Paper 2003-2006, Cordaid Asia Department, June 2003
- Samenwerkingsbeleid / Partnerbeleid Cordaid
- Nieuwe Cordaid beleidscyclus, 2004
- Financieel beleid Cordaid, 2004
- Afbouwen Van De Financieringsrelatie - Hoe Doet Cordaid Dat?, 2004
- Werken aan goed donorschap, 2004
- Debriefnotitie - Cordaid-CWA "Omgaan met Business plannen en Financieel management bij partnerorganisaties"
- Doelmatigheid van de partners en programma's van Cordaid,
- "Innovatie Hoe, wat en waarom?", 2003
- Framework Policy Document Civil Society Building.
- Douma Nynke and Dorothea Hilhorst. "Beyond Conflict" Peacebuilding in policies and practice of Cordaid and its partners in the Great Lakes Region (The experience of DR Congo, Rwanda and Burundi)

### **ICCO**

- Specht, Irma. Conflict Analysis, Practical tool to analyse conflict in order to prioritise and strategise Conflict Transformation Programmes, October 2007, 28 p.
- ICCO Manual for Conflict Analysis & Peace Building, September 2006, 36 p.
- Rol van ICCO in conflictgebieden Regio Azië, Europa & Oceanië
- Borgh, van der, Chris. ICCO Manual for Conflict Analysis & Peace Building, 2005
- Specht, Irma. Baseline Study Conflict Transformation, 2007
- Wormgoor, Otto. Positioning ICCO in Peacebuilding: To manage, settle, resolve, transform and prevent conflicts, 2004

### **Oxfam Novib**

- Oxfam International, Rights in crisis: humanitarian operational plan 2007-2008
- Oxfam International, Consultative Forum: Violence, security, conflict, July 2005
- Conflict prevention: short note on Novib policy and practice
- Oxfam International. OI Policy Compendium Note on Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR), draft, 2007
- Oxfam International. OI Policy Compendium Note on the UN Peacebuilding Commission, 2006
- Oxfam Novib. Consultative Forum: "Violence, security, conflict", 2005
- Oxfam Novib. Conflict prevention: short note on Novib policy and practice, 2005
- Oxfam Novib. Business Plan 2007-2010.
- Oxfam Novib. Conflict Sensitivity ToR International Alert.
- Oxfam Novib. Rights in Crisis: Humanitarian Operational Plan 2007-2008 Main Body Based On The "Rights In Crisis Change Goal", 2007

### **Plan Netherlands**

- Children and armed conflict: the case of Nepal

## Annexe 6: List and key characteristics of projects included in desk and field phase

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
<b>AGHANISTAN</b>							
CO	Geïntegreerde gezondheidszorg in Uruzgan	NGO	2003	2005	3,188,632	IN	Improvement of access to health services in cooperation with the government and contribution to the reform of the Afghan health care system via the set-up of an integrated and decentralised health care system.
CO	Vergroten voedselzekerheid Zuid Afghanistan	NGO	2004	2005	?	IN	Increase of food production and assistance in the eradication of pests, at the level of vulnerable families in the provinces of Uruzgan, Zabul and Helmand.
CO	Vrouwen inkomstgenererend project in Kandahar	NGO	2005	2006	55,491	IN	Increase of the financial autonomy of housewives and strengthening of the women awareness with regard to their rights.
ON	Community Based Rehabilitation through Peacebuilding	NGO	2006	2008	460,000	ON	Continuation and extension of the earlier programmes with the aim to use experiences in other peace and capacity-building activities throughout the country. capacity-building of seven peace groups who will pro-actively intervene in emerging conflicts; facilitation of small revolving funds to enable communities starting small projects to link peace building with development; promotion of peace education.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
ON	Swiss Peace Voter Education project	NGO	2004	2004	204,503	IN	Support to network among Afghan civil society members with the objective to provide civic education for voter registration and elections across Afghanistan.
ON	Integrated Rural Development Programme	NGO	2005	2008	1,215,000	IN	Transferring knowledge by training (irrigation and water management, provision of agricultural inputs and extension services, veterinary services, and vocational training programs for women) to selected community members to be able to maintain the programs after completion
IC	Peace and education	NGO	2006	2008	61,707	IN	Transferring knowledge by training (irrigation and water management, provision of agricultural inputs and extension services, veterinary services, and vocational training programs for women) to selected community members to be able to maintain the programs after completion
IC	Participation women/ Strategic planning 2006-2009	NGO	2005	2006	about 200,000	ON	Increase of participation of women (refugees) in society and politics.
<b>EAST CONGO</b>							
CO	Renforcement des capacités / micro-fonds pour les droits de l'homme (Global Rights)	INGO	.2006	2008	150,000	ON	Pursuing the effective functioning of the Justice sector at the local level and promotion of the rights of human rights victims, via training and technical support to women and human rights organisations.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
CO	Programme Radio Maendeleo (Maendeleo)	ONG	2006	2009	90,000	ON	Establishment of a free, efficient and independent radio in the region, that can contribute to end the isolation of rural areas, to inform the population, to diminish insecurity and tensions among the population and dominant actors, and to accompany its members in the areas of post-conflict and elections.
CO	Programme concernant le financement base sur la performance dans le secteur de la santé (BDOM)	RI (Religious institution)	2006	2009	193,943	IN	Facilitate the access to health services for the poor, improve the quality of healthcare and, at the same moment, improve the motivation of the personnel, via the introduction of a results-based funding.
IC	Programme régional et de la société civile (BOAD)	NGO/ RI	2001	2004	300,000	IN	Support the local Christian organisations and NGOs in setting up civil society organisations and cooperatives.
IC	Programme regional de formation et d'échange (Héritiers de la Justice)	RI	2001	2004	153,150	IN	Establish a regional training centre for human rights in Bukavu.
IC	Plan d'action 2006 (Life & Peace Institute)	INGO	2001	2004	80,000	ON	Contribute to peace and justice by combining research, seminars, conflict transformation programmes and publications.
ON	Programme quadriennal 2003-2007 APIDE	NGO	2003	2007	900,000	ON	Support to agricultural production, marketing, trade union work, peace work, gender and development, health care and nutrition, co-ordination and management

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
ON	DDR 2006-2007	NGO	2006	2007	245,081	ON	The project focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- restoring living conditions of the affected populations through rehabilitation of basic infrastructure</li> <li>- support for taking up agricultural activities through distribution of agricultural kits and technical support and facilitating transport of these products to other regions;</li> <li>- vocational training for young people (former combatants, vulnerable youth);</li> <li>- peaceful settling of conflicts within and between communities</li> </ul>
ON	CPP 2005-2007	NGO	2005	2007	215,000	ON	Education on peace, political dialogue between the different ethnic groups in North Kivu, democratisation, reestablishment of political governance and the social-economic development in the North of Kivu
ON	Plan Triennial Pole Institute	NGO	2003	2006	300,000	IN	To contribute towards raising the awareness of the local people, so as to empower people to defend their own interests.
<b>BURUNDI</b>							
CO	Programme d'analyse du conflit, de promotion de la paix et de la réconciliation (Centre Ubuntu)	NGO	2006	2009	141,000	ON	Contribute to the change in attitudes and awareness of the Burundi population and that of the Great Lakes area, with a focus on the promotion of reconciliation processes and peace consolidation within these groups.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
CO	Programme concernant le financement basé sur la performance dans le secteur de la santé (BDOM)	Self managed	2005	2007	1,665,000	IN	Improve the access and quality of health care, with a specific attention for the most vulnerable groups (via a results based financial system)
IC	Programme 2004-2006 (Mi PAREC)	CBO	2004	2006	318,000	ON	Undertake efforts towards reconciliation at local level via peace education and the set-up of peace committees; work for the reintegration of returned refugees, displaced persons, former combatants and militia members.
IC	Programme 2005 DUSHIRE	NGO	2005	2006	35,000(++)	ON	Support the women of Burundi in their efforts to participate in peace and reconciliation processes; improve the reintegration of refugees and displaced people.
ON	OAP 2006-2008	NGO	2006	2008	360,000	IN	Mobilising the population in taking their development in their own hands, using the auto-promotion approach; animate the population and providing school infrastructure for primary school students; reach the population with micro-credit initiatives.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
ON	Acord 2006-2008	INGO	2006	2008	900,000	IN	<p>1. Getting the population involved in active participation in local governance and local decision-making processes</p> <p>2. Facilitating reconciliation processes through training of local organisation in methods of reconciliation and creation of social contracts between the groups involved</p> <p>3. Increasing capacities of vulnerable people in taking responsibility of their living conditions</p> <p>4. Increasing capacities of farmers on agricultural production</p> <p>5. Providing input into land law as to facilitate participation of population and different needs of the population</p> <p>6. Facilitate debate about the truth and reconciliation committee in Burundi.</p>
<b>INDONESIA: ACEH</b>							
CO	Aceh Utara Reconstruction Programme 2006-2007	INGO (Cordaid Medan)	2006	2007	5,435,000	IN	Reconstruct the basic infrastructure and improve the living conditions of six villages.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
CO	Social Mapping Aceh	Local NGO via INGO (Cordaid Medan)	2006	2006	65,480	ON	<p>1. inventory on how rehabilitation programme was influenced by and on its turn influenced the social cohesion in the target area.</p> <p>2. identification of improvement points for Cordaid's programme to improve the integration of 'do no harm' principles and social cohesion during the project implementation.</p> <p>3. identification of possible new programmes.</p> <p>4. to have a description of the three mapping areas.</p>
IC	Rehabilitation Action for Trauma Victims in Bireuen District (Rata)	NGO	2005	2007	199,495	IN	The provision of medical care and awareness raising related to hygiene and nutrition for people living in barracks; motivate people to return to their villages and support them with seed capital
IC	Access to recovery for Indigenous People of Aceh	NGO	2005	2007	161,417	ON	Support JKMA in its efforts to defend the interests of the indigenous population of Aceh, via strengthening of the member organisations and of the local economy, and the provision of legal assistance.
IC	Koalisi HAM Aceh Suppletion contract	NGO	2004	2007	326,206	IN	Support the six regional branches of the Human Rights Coalition in their legal support activities.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
ON	Coastal Ecosystems Tsunami Affected Asia	INGO	2005	2007	1,355,200	IN	Wetland International aims to combine its competencies with those of others through building capacity, partnerships and cross-regional collaboration and through multi-sectoral field programs, demonstrate innovative solutions to wetland management problems.
PL	Tsunami Disaster Relief: health, habitat & child protection	INGO,	2005	2006	1,064,705	IN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help protect children, particularly those in need of special protection in target areas in Aceh.</li> <li>2. Help provide good health and nutrition for people in target areas, especially the women and children of Aceh.</li> <li>3. Help affected populations in Aceh gain access to housing and basic infrastructure.</li> </ol> - Provide programme support to Plan Indonesia's paid and unpaid staff.
<b>INDONESIA: MALUKU</b>							
CO	Gemeenschapsontwikkeling en Vredesopbouw in the Molukken	INGO (Cordaid emergency dept.)	2004	2007	600,021	IN	Improve capacity of the returning IDPs, fragile groups and affected community to fulfill their basic needs in health and income; stimulate peace and reconciliation; improve the capacity of Cordaid's local NGO partners in programme for community and peace building.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
ON	Promoting Local Capacities in Maluku	NGO	2006	2006	200,661	ON	1 Increase adequate understanding and information on democracy, gender perspective and human rights. 2. Farmers have appropriate skills and access to appropriate services in organic farming, permaculture, product packaging and marketing. 3. local community members have sufficient critical understanding of the importance of basic social services .
IC	CBDRM Community based disaster risk management	INGO (ICCO + univ. Wageningen)	2006	2009	275,890	IN	The involved communities, partner organisations and ICCO/KiA master the CBDRM concept and are implementing the concept in the field by going through a process of joint learning.
<b>INDONESIA: PAPUA</b>							
CO	Mensenrechtenprogramma 2004-2006	RI	2004	2006	179,031	ON	1. follow-up and lead the process of the 'Papua, land of peace' 2. form a coordination committee to give further content on the peace process in Papua.
CO	Conflic-tresolutie bij Ontbossingsthematiek	INGO	2005	2005	320,430	ON	Prevent and reduce conflicts that are based on the use and management of the forest.
IC	General HR Program & HR Advocacy Papua (PBHI)	NGO	2004	2006	679,643	IN	To promote and protect human rights; the realisation of a civil society that is aware of its rights and ready to defend these, and of a state that respects and protects human rights.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
IC	Strengthening democracy (ICS)	NGO	2004	2007	131,197	IN	Improvement of the capacities of government official and legislative bodies, strengthening of civil society organisations aiming at promoting democracy and transparency of the government.
ON	YPLHC-4 year programme 2005-2008	NGO	2005	2008	665,833	IN	To promote and support sustainable development in Irian Jaya by developing local environmental education programs that raise the (environmental) awareness of the wider community and provides a stimulus for the sustainable management of natural resources with a respect for local values, norms and knowledge.
<b>INDONESIA: NATIONAL (WITH FOCUS ON ACEH AND PAPUA)</b>							
ON	Kontras 2005-2007	NGO	2005	2007	385,000	ON	Promotion of democratisation processes via putting the attention on human rights violations and involuntary disappearances in Indonesia (Kontras has branches in Aceh and Papua).
IC	Kontras 2005-2007 Programme	NGO			650,000	ON	Idem
<b>NEPAL</b>							
IC	CVICT Women Trauma Centre	NGO	2005	2006	320,000	IN	Support to victims of torture via trauma healing and lobby for legal protection against torture.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
IC	Community Based Programme WOREC	NGO	2005	2008	245,000	IN	Promote positive and sustainable change in the lives of women and children via the strengthening of local groups, awareness raising, support to victims of women trafficking and HIV.
IC	INSEC Online	NGO	2005	2006	125,000	ON	Promotion of a democratic society with an improved human rights situation and social justice.
ON	PATH Phase-III	NGO	XX	XX	437,500	IN	Empowering small NGOs and CBOs; Joint policy advocacy and awareness raising
PL	Promotion and Protection of Children at Risk and Children in Conflict Situation	NGO, GO, CBO	2001	2004	185,546	IN	<p>1. Ensure the protection of children at risk of abuse and exploitation on the streets as well as the protection of orphans and lost, abandoned and delinquent children, and rescue.</p> <p>2. Increase the right holders and duty bearers' knowledge of child rights and lobby for policy reforms.</p> <p>3. Enhance the participation of children in issues of child protection and development.</p>
<b>SIERRA LEONE</b>							
CO	Caritas Makenir rehabilitatie van de landbouw	RI	2004	2006	175,282	IN	Restoration of the livelihoods of returned refugees; stop the proliferation of AIDS among this groups and institutional building of the partner organisation
CO	Geïntegreerd gezondheidsprogramma Bisdome Kenema	PA	2005	2007	482,087	IN	Improvement of the access to health care; improvement of the quality of curative and preventive healthcare.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
CO	Inspraak-bevordering vluchtelingen	INGO	2003	2006	300,000	ON	Protection of the rights of refugees and material support for these groups.
CO	Twee model onderwijscentra voor achtergestelde meisjes	NGO	2005	2007	396,526	IN	Provision of alternative forms of education for girls who have no access to education.
PL	Kid's Waves	NGO	2005	2007	70,000	IN	Stimulate behavioural/attitudinal changes regarding children, parents and communities on the Rights of the Child through effective use of radio by children themselves .
PL	Psychosocial support to post war communities	NGO + GO	2005	2007	72,000	ON	Children and parents have increased understanding of their roles and responsibilities in building peace by instilling attitudes against war and violence, acceptance of responsibility to create non-violent local environment, enhancing peaceful coexistence.
<b>SUDAN</b>							
IC	Agricultural rehabilitation West Bank Phase II	INGO	2003	2005	330,465	IN	Mobilisation of target groups, provision of agricultural extension and promotion of marketing.
IC	IPCS 2005-2007	INGO	2005	2007	265,473	ON	Capacity building of civil society organisation and local government institutions in eight districts.
IC	NSCC corporate plan 2001-2003	RI	XX	XX	4350,000	ON	Promotion of peace and reconciliation; facilitation of project for basis infrastructure; strengthening the capacities of the member churches.

CFA	Project Title	Type partner	Starting Year	Ending Year	Budget (Euro) (CFA contribution)	In/on conflict?	Main objectives
CO	Vredes- en ont- wikkelings- programma	CBO	2005	2007	212,000	ON	Reduced loss of property from tribal conflicts, water availability increased, increased trade, increased hiv/aids awareness, improved mgt. of cooperatives, etc.
CO	Reconciling communities in Eastern Equatoria	RI	2005	2008	250,000	ON	Fostering respect and regard among communities on human rights, law and order which would translate into reduced inter/ intra ethnic cattle rustling, transformation of violence and ethnic conflicts
ON	Empowerment women's status South Sudan	NGO	2005	2007	301,000	IN	To improve women's status by raising awareness for women's rights and by introducing mechanisms for their protection on community level, via paralegal aid clinics, education for women, advocacy and awareness raising for women's rights.
ON	NRRDO New program 2004-2007	NGO	2004	2006	635,000	ON	Integrated development focusing on food security for Nuba IDPs, education, gender relations, peace building.
ON	Integrated capacity building programme	NGO	2003	2005	275,000	ON	To facilitate effective and coordinated mobilisation of resources and service delivery for sustainable peace, socio-economic reconstruction and community development initiatives for civil society organisations in Southern Sudan.

## Annexe 7: Members of the Coordination Group

Cordaid:	• Herman Lauwerijzen	Policy Advisor Policy and Evaluation
	• Edith Boekraad	Policy Officer Peace and Conflict
ICCO:	• Caroline Ort	Policy Advisor Democracy and Peace Building (until 1 February 2008)
	• Paula Dijk	Programme Specialist Democratisation and Peace Building (since 01 February 2008)
	• Dieneke de Groot	Policy Advisor Research and Evaluation
Oxfam Novib:	• Jogien Bakker	Humanitarian Department
	• Heidi van Hoof	Advisor Quality and Control (until 3 August 2007)
	• Jael van der Heijden	Senior Advisor Quality and Control (6 August 2007 – 11 January 2008)
	• Kirsten Tinnemans	Advisor Quality and Control (since 11 January 2008)
Plan Netherlands:	• Jan Til	Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor
	• Ruth van Zorge	Senior Programme Officer Africa (until 12 October 2007)
	• Yvonne Heselmans	Senior child right advisor (since 2008)
Partos:	• Marja Exterkate	Evaluation Manager

## Annexe 8: Members of the External Reference Group

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- President of ERG: Paul Engel, Director ECDPM
  
- Administrative assistant of ERG: Niels Keijzer, Programme Officer Centre Policy and Innovation, ECDPM
  
- Members of ERG:
  - Anita Hardon, Professor Medical Anthropology (UvA)
  - Rekha Wazir, Co-director International Child Development Initiative
  - Georg Frerks, Centre for Conflict Studies UU, Professor Rampenstudies WUR
  - Geske Dijkstra, Senior lecturer economics, EUR
  - Bert Helmsing, Professor ISS

## Annexe 9: Composition of the evaluation team

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The evaluation team was composed of a **core team** with the Northern senior consultants as its members. They participated in all key activities of the evaluation process and took also part in the fieldwork. **Local evaluators** played an important role in the field work in Burundi, East Congo, Sierra Leone and Indonesia. The core team was assisted by **evaluation assistants** and **junior researchers**. A specialist in peace building and conflict transformation acted as **quality assurance back stopper**.

### Core team members

- **Dirk Van Esbroeck** (South Research); team leader, in charge of the overall management and coordination of the evaluation; conducted fieldwork in Indonesia and co-wrote the country evaluation report; conducted the Nepal desk study; wrote the Progress Report and the Synthesis Report.
- **Luc Reychler** (CPRS); in charge of the field work in East-Congo; co-drafted the Congo country report.
- **Barbara Simaey** (South Research); in charge of the field work in East-Congo; co-drafted the Congo country report.
- **Anneke Slob** (Ecorys); in charge of the field work in Burundi; co-crafted the Burundi country report, the Progress Report and the Synthesis Report.
- **David Smith** (Ecorys); in charge of the field work in Sierra Leone; co-drafted the Sierra Leone country report.

### Local evaluators

- **Moïse Cifende**, in charge of the field work and conflict analysis in East-Congo; co-drafted the Congo country report.
- **Joseph Ndayisaba**, in charge of the field work and conflict analysis in Burundi; co-drafted the Burundi country report.
- **James Vincent**, in charge of the field work and conflict analysis in Sierra Leone; co-drafted the Sierra Leone country report.
- **Dewi Catur Utami**, in charge of the field work in Indonesia, and conflict analysis in Aceh and the desk study of the Papua projects; co-drafted the Indonesia country report.
- **Methodius Kusumahadi**, in charge of the field work in Indonesia, and conflict analyses in Papua and Maluku; co-drafted the Indonesia country report.

### **Evaluation assistants**

- **Frans Panggih Purwoko** (South Research); composed the project data base and participated in the project documentation analysis and drafting of the project notes.
- **Daniela Stoicescu** (Ecorys); participated in the project documentation analysis and drafting of the project notes; participated also in the Burundi field study as evaluation assistant and supported the Burundi country report drafting.
- **Anja Willemsen** (Ecorys); coordinated the project documentation analysis and the drafting of the project notes; conducted the Afghanistan and Sudan desk studies.

### **Junior researchers**

- **Iza Domzalska** (Ecorys); participated in the project documentation analysis and drafting of the project notes.
- **Jessica van Loon**; participated in the project documentation analysis and drafting of the project notes.
- **Hans Rouw**; participated in the project documentation analysis and drafting of the project notes

### **Quality assurance**

- **Ulrich Mans** (HCSS); participated in key meetings and provided feedback on key methodological documents and the draft progress and synthesis reports.