

Helpdesk Research Report: Conflict prevention and local engagement

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Query: Please identify key recent literature on effective conflict prevention, particularly related to engagement with local communities, politicians and analysts in the country concerned.

Enquirer: DFID CHASE

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1. Overview

Conflict prevention refers to approaches to avoid, minimise, and/or contain potential violent conflicts, and to prevent violent conflict from re-emerging. Engagement with local actors such as civil society, politicians, and community groups can have an important positive impact on conflict prevention, both in situations that have not yet experienced violent conflict and in post-conflict recovery and stabilisation where the objective is to prevent a return to violent conflict. The success of donor efforts for conflict prevention depends on the interaction between external interventions and local context, including the strength of the domestic constituency for peace and the perceived legitimacy of external interventions. Conflict prevention is more likely to be effective when interventions are designed to work with the domestic political settlement, identify and support domestic constituencies for peace, and feed into local initiatives (Cramer et al. 2010). For these reasons, good knowledge of and integration with local actors is important. Some specific types of interventions include the development of early warning and response systems, containing electoral violence, economic and private sector development, working with the media, and engaging with inequalities along ethnic lines.

Early warning and response includes monitoring a range of indicators to detect rising tensions, analysing risk, and providing information to relevant actors. Effective early warning and response systems require strong engagement with local actors, being based “close to the ground” or having strong field-based networks of monitors, and should have strong links to response mechanisms. (Nyheim 2009) However, early warning and the process of deciding upon responses is inherently political, and it has proven difficult to persuade political leaders and the public to act upon warnings. Civil society organisations are often involved both in early warning and in implementing early responses. (Haider 2009)

In countries without strong democratic traditions, elections can be marred by **electoral violence**, a particular form of violent conflict which can undermine progress towards democratisation and result in long-term disillusionment and frustration. In countries experiencing election violence, civil society organisations and traditional or clan leaders need to be involved in building confidence and encouraging respect and tolerance. (Höglund and Jarstad 2010) Building local capacities for managing elections can contribute to long-term conflict prevention and democratisation (Atuobi 2009) but this requires engagement with a wide range of local actors including the media, the security services, political parties, civil society organisations, and others (UNDP 2010).

Engagement with the **private sector** can play an important role in conflict prevention, as economic instability is a driver of conflict (Specker 2009) and economic recovery, especially through creating employment, has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of future conflict (DFID 2009). A wide range of supports to businesses of all sizes are encouraged, from macro-economic stabilisation to settling property rights to microfinance, including engagement with the private sector in other countries (e.g. through foreign direct investment). (DFID 2009) However, care must be taken: for example, market liberalisation in Sri Lanka has been argued to have increased perceptions of ethnic inequality and increased youth unemployment (Cramer et al. 2010).

The **media** has the potential to play a significant role in conflict prevention by providing access to accurate information (Lange 2009) and by influencing social norms and behaviours (Paluck 2009). Engagement with local media through training and other forms of capacity building, improving people's access to media outlets, and improving cooperation between local and international media are important. (Lange 2009)

While donors may be reluctant to 'ethnicise' aid (Stewart 2010), engaging with **ethnic groups** in a country may be useful in preventing some forms of violent conflict. Ethnicity is not necessarily a driver of conflict in itself, but can be abused as a basis on which to incite conflict (Aapengnuo 2010) and may be linked to inequalities that can contribute to conflict (Stewart 2010).

For the purposes of this report, we have selected materials focusing on engagement with local actors rather than general works on conflict prevention (except in sections 8 and 9), and because the request specifically seeks suggestions for recent literature, we have only included items published in 2009 or 2010. References to additional materials are available in other GSDRC research reports and the GSDRC's topic guide on Conflict, which are listed in section 9.

2. Local communities and civil society organisations

3D Security Initiative, 2010, 'Civil Society and the US Government in Conflict-Affected Regions: Building Better Relationships for Peacebuilding', Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/FINAL%20Report%20Civil_Society_and_the_US_Government_1.pdf

This report summarizes a workshop involving US government agencies and civil society organizations engaged in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, convened to discuss approaches to preventing violent conflict and how to improve relationships between the US government and local civil society actors. The workshop concluded that relations between government and civil society can be mutually beneficial: government agencies offer partnership and support to civil society organizations, while CSOs offer policy recommendations, conflict assessment data, and operational level advice and implementation. The workshop recognised a need to build both "vertical" social capital between the government and CSOs, and "horizontal" social capital within the government and among CSOs. General recommendations included the need to build trust, develop practical and mutually beneficial relationships, and build coordination mechanisms within the international community.

Specific recommendations for government agencies included:

- Listen to civil society actors more closely
- Acknowledge and deal with policy tradeoffs
- Reduce political constraints on local civil society
- Funding should be suitably flexible to foster local sustainability
- Build incentives for government personnel
- Identify convening authority such as a civil society liaison office

Specific recommendations for civil society organisations included:

- Recognize constraints on the government
- Articulate and press for change in government-CSO relationships
- Seek to understand first, then discuss
- Build and strengthen local capacity

USAID, 2009, 'Mid-term Evaluation of the Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM) Project', United States Agency for International Development

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACP571.pdf

The Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM) programme aims to prevent and reduce conflict through community-based initiatives to engage with youth, develop early warning systems and response mechanisms, mainstream conflict management in selected organisations, carry out civic education in support of local elections, and other conflict mitigation interventions. This evaluation report finds that the programme has helped raise awareness of creating and maintaining a culture of peace and supported broad stakeholder engagement in conflict prevention and early warning and response, including reaching out to youth through sports activities, educational institutions, and informal associations and networks. Key lessons mentioned in this evaluation report were: “(1) ensure that program assumptions and interventions match actual conflict patterns, underlying causes, and behaviors of political actors in the areas of planned intervention; (2) apply broad communication and educational programs at all levels of formal and informal education, especially primary school, which is the largest and most powerful forum for introducing Nigerian society to a culture of peace; (3) enhance the role of the press to build an intense public awareness campaign for creating a broad culture of peace; (4) coordinate more effectively with other USAID, government, and donor programs; and (5) provide adequate and timely technical and financial resources against a realistic plan of activities.” (p. vii)

Mottiar, S., and van Jaarsveld, S., 2009, 'Mediating Peace in Africa: Securing Conflict Prevention', report of a seminar held in Addis Ababa 4 March 2009, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/reports/ACCORD_Mediating_Peace_Africa.pdf

This report summarises an international seminar discussing the role of the African Union in mediation and conflict prevention, and while this primarily involves high-level processes, civil society is also recognised as playing a “critical role in the maintenance of peace and security as well as in the process of post-conflict reconstruction and mediation” because of “its ability to reach people at the grass-roots level in African communities” and “its advocacy capacity often resulting in bringing to bear the voice of the marginalised on policy development” (p. 22). Civil society actors can assist early warning and mitigation of conflict, help formulate strategic partnerships creating an environment of stability, bring together important actors, and maintain consistent messages that can help quell tensions. They can also contribute specialised and context specific knowledge, work at multiple levels to broaden the engagement of ordinary people, support and participate in post-conflict state building and nation building. Religious

organisations were particularly acknowledged as playing a major role, as well as youth groups, women's groups, and other civil society organisations.

Marchetti, R. and Luiss-Cersdu, N. T., 2009, 'Redefining EU Engagement with Conflict Society', SHUR Working Paper 04/09, Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociale
<http://www.luiss.it/shur/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/shurwp04-09.pdf>

Civil society organisations are 'pivotal to providing the necessary support for peace' (p. 3) by helping secure and implement peace agreements and pushing for peaceful social and political change. However, providing external support for civil society while upholding its independence and accountability to citizens is problematic. The authors suggest that the EU should support CSOs indirectly by working to 'create a more conducive rule-bound context through the promotion of the rule of law' (p. 27) as well as supporting them directly through dialogue, training, and funding, with a focus on organisations that 'contribute to the desecuritization of conflict through the respect for human rights.' (p. 28)

Lyytikäinen, M., 2009, 'Building Inclusive Post-Conflict Governance: How the EU Can Support Women's Political Participation', Initiative for Peacebuilding, International Alert, London
http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Building_Inclusive_Post_Conflict_Governance.pdf

Post-conflict reform of political institutions provides an opportunity to increase women's political participation and representation in decision-making. Increasing women's political participation supports principles of participation, justice and inclusion; women can bring alternative approaches and points of view to policy-making and can make the whole system more representative; and some argue that women's ways of working and increased diversity can change politics for the better.

The report notes four areas in which the EU can promote women's political participation (p. 7):

- Use diplomatic power to promote the inclusion of women in peace negotiations to guarantee a more inclusive and representative settlement.
- Support more gender-sensitive electoral laws and processes, implementation of specific quotas and capacity-building programmes for female candidates, as well as awareness-raising among political parties and the general public
- Support women's participation in civil society, and provide support to civil society organisations to enable them to fulfil their watchdog role.
- Support more representative and inclusive policy, practice and outcomes through technical assistance, political pressure, and support for CSOs and the media.

The report notes that in order to achieve meaningful participation for women in peacebuilding and governance, interventions in the field of governance and democratisation must be gender-sensitive and informed by an in-depth understanding of each particular context; principles of democratic governance must be in place; and a combination of political will and capacity at all levels in governmental and international institutions, as well as a strong and active civil society, is required.

Interpeace, 2010, 'Voices of civil society organizations (CSOs) on peacebuilding and statebuilding', Background paper for the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
http://www.interpeace.org/images/pdf/interpeace_background_paper_international_dialogue_conf_dili_cs_o_input_final_23042010.pdf

This report summarises a consultation among 49 civil society organisations working on peacebuilding (including conflict prevention, which participants argued should be given more emphasis within peacebuilding). On the question of engagement with external actors, participants notes that 'external actors (neighbouring countries, international donors, international CSOs) have an important role to play in

supporting local capacities. They are enablers, but not do-ers of peacebuilding and statebuilding.’ (p. 8) External actors can engage by providing ideas and knowledge from other contexts, supporting capacity building efforts, providing financial resources, providing protection and serving neutral third parties, applying pressure to keep commitments, supporting national efforts (e.g. controlling illegal trade, promoting fair trade, enabling better representation for fragile states in international fora, critically reflecting on the aid and development discourse), and recognising that these processes require long-term support.

Haider, H., 2009, ‘Community-based Approaches to Peacebuilding in Conflict-affected and Fragile Contexts’, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham
<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/EIRS8.pdf>

This paper explores the principal aims of community-based approaches to peacebuilding, and the key challenges and considerations in designing and implementing them. Community-based approaches can be adopted in various stages of conflict and fragility, including as a means of conflict prevention. They seek to give communities control over investment decisions and project planning, execution and monitoring, through an inclusive process. The basic premise is that local communities are better placed to identify their shared needs and the actions necessary to meet them. The aims of the approaches include fostering participatory and representative local governance, empowering local communities, efficient and cost-effective fulfilment of community needs, supporting social capital and social renewal, and establishing (or re-establishing) the social contract and state-society relations. Approaches include work on:

- Security, for example community-based policing
- Socio-economic recovery, including provision of services such as health and education, infrastructure development, natural resource and environmental management, and livelihoods and employment generation
- Media, communication and civic education, particularly community radio, video, and theatre
- Traditional justice and reconciliation, often focusing on the psycho-social and spiritual dimensions of violent conflicts
- Heritage and cultural preservation

Community-based approaches can contribute to community solidarity and social capital, and can rectify exclusionary practices and poor governance that may drive conflict, but can also threaten established power structures and exacerbate conflicts unless appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms are in place. Community-based approaches are not automatically inclusive unless special efforts are made, and they are subject to elite capture. Community empowerment is often an aim of these approaches, so while donors need to engage with the communities, they also “have to relinquish control over the identification and prioritisation of needs and other decision-making.” (p. 9). Links with local and national government and political leaders can be critical.

3. Early warning and response

Nyheim, D., 2009, 'Preventing Violence, War and State Collapse: The Future of Conflict Early Warning and Response ', Development Co-operation Directorate - Policy Division, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris
http://www.oecd.org/document/41/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_42233001_1_1_1_1,00.html

Conflict early warning emerged after the end of the Cold War and was spurred on by the failure to prevent conflict in Rwanda and the Balkans in the 1990s. “From the start, conflict early warning was envisaged as distinct from intelligence-based analysis that focused on protection of state interests. It sought multi-stakeholder solutions, was gender-sensitive, used open source information and aimed at protecting human lives and creating sustainable peace based on locally owned solutions. However, this approach

has been overshadowed by the new Northern perception of international threats that emerged after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and consequent counterterrorism and counter-proliferation measures taken by the United States and its allies.” (p. 14)

The report outlines several governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental early warning systems (see chapter 2). Of these, non-governmental systems appear to be most closely engaged with local communities and analysts. These systems hold that “integrated multi-stakeholder responses to violent conflict and political instability are most effective” (p. 56) and have developed ways to empower local at-risk communities through training in conflict management and preparedness. (p. 57)

The link between warning and response is critical but problematic. Some success stories include: (p. 57-58)

- ECOWARN averting in Guinea and Togo through regular warning reports and strong links with response mechanisms
- Ituri Watch preventing clashes between communities in the DR Congo through early warnings to catalyse local responses
- The Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project alerted the Kazakh government about potential conflicts, leading to preventative action
- FEWER-Eurasia contributed to the reduction in disappearances in Chechnya through monitoring and dialogue
- OSCE work in the FYROM including monitoring and engagement with root causes of conflict linguistic rights, education, media, and participation of minorities in public life.

The report argues that a “good” early warning system must be based “close to the ground” or have strong field-based networks of monitors, use multiple sources of information including both qualitative and quantitative methods, use appropriate information and communication technology, provide regular reports to key stakeholders, and have strong links to response mechanisms (p. 59). The annex to the report includes the results of a survey of early warning programmes.

Rupasinghe, K., 2009, ‘FCE Citizen-based Early Warning and Early Response System: A New Tool for Civil Society to Prevent Violent Conflict’, Foundation for Co-Existence (FCE), Colombo
<http://earlywarning.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/fce-citizen-based-early-warning-and-early-response-system.pdf>

This paper outlines the Early Warning and Early Response System established by the Foundation for Co-Existence, a Sri Lankan NGO, with assistance from the Swiss Peace Foundation. The project aims to prevent inter-communal violence between the Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka and has been operating since 2003. The system is a “third generation” early warning system – created by people in conflict areas for themselves – and combines early warning and early response. It has intervened in 174 cases of conflict as of June 2009.

The system monitors conflicts at the micro level, especially at the village level, quantifying conflict and peace indicators and generating tables, graphs, and maps. The information fed into the system is collected by the Foundation’s 37 field monitors operating in the conflict zone, who are members of the communities they represent. The system is sustained on the ground by Co-Existence Committees (CECs), made up of volunteers from each major ethnic group and consisting of women, youth, religious groups, media, fishermen, farmers and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). For example, a religious CEC is composed of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim religious leaders in a region.

The system aims both to prevent conflict through early warning and to build a culture of peace and acts both as a structural (long term) and operational (short term) approach. Moreover, the CECs play the roles of ‘connectors’ in overall peacebuilding activities: (1) connectors of early warning and conflict transformation, (2) connectors of different ethnic groups and (3) connectors of early warning and early

response since they work as the first informants of the symptoms of inter-communal violence and becoming stakeholders in interventions.

Wulf, H., and Debiel, T., 2009, 'Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms: Tools for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Regional Organisations? A comparative Study of the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, ASEAN/ARF and PIF', Crisis States Working Paper No. 49, London School of Economics – Destin (Development Studies Institute)
<http://www.crisisstates.com/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP49.2.pdf>

This paper does not focus on engagement with local actors, but it presents a systematic overview of important early warning and response mechanisms, mostly African multilateral institutions. The authors identify five shortcomings of the models used by these mechanisms: they are reliable regarding very stable and very unstable countries, but are not sufficiently accurate on moderately stable countries; they do not reveal causes of conflict; they focus on short-term correlations rather than structural variables; questions of civil society development, participation or local governance and dispute resolution are not adequately incorporated and tested; they do not take into account issues like civil society development, participation, or local governance; and replicability is unclear. In many conflicts, a 'warning-response gap' is apparent due to: 'shortcomings of the EWR models, structural disconnects between early warning advisors and early-response decision makers, political interests and inefficient use of scarce resources.' (p. 26)

4. Electoral violence

UNDP, 2010, 'Elections and Conflict Prevention: A Guide to Analysis, Planning and Programming', United Nations Development Programme
http://www.undp.org/publications/Elections_and_Conflict_Prevention.pdf

This publication discusses the contexts of electoral violence and the links between elections and conflict; analyses the causes and patterns of election-related violence; and sets out the importance of strategic planning to ensure that electoral assistance includes a focus on conflict prevention. Section 4 outlines a range of external assistance measures that have been effective in mitigating election-related violence, including approaches that focus on engagement with local communities, including:

- Promoting social cohesion: voter education and public awareness; political party workshops and training; engagement with the media; creating structures for community conciliation; and working with vulnerable or displaced populations
- Engagement with civil society: multi-stakeholder forums; electoral assistance groups; peace campaigns; religious and cultural leaders' forums; traditional leaders' forums; leadership development and training
- Facilitating constitutional and legal framework reform: negotiating pacts to assure minority representation; codes of conduct and legal requirements for elections; reviewing party registration requirements; legal frameworks; assisting electoral system and election law reform processes
- Working with the electoral management body
- Security sector engagement
- Election monitoring or verification: training monitors; deploying observers; parallel tabulation or other confidence-building measures; ensuring that local monitoring teams reflect the diversity within the society; linking observation with security strategies
- Electoral dispute resolution: special election courts; strengthening the local election management body's capabilities for monitoring and investigating, and developing plans for dealing with prolonged disputes

Lessons learned from UNDP's experience in situations of election-related conflict include: 'the necessity of building trust among key players; the importance of developing an electoral system that has broad support among competing parties and candidates; the critical role of local ownership and local stakeholders playing a leading role in successful violence-prevention efforts; and the need to involve a range of key constituencies and centres of influence, including the media, the security services, political parties, civil society leaders and others in programs to prevent conflict.' (p. vi)

Höglund, K., and Jarstad, A. K., 2010, 'Strategies to prevent and manage electoral violence: Considerations for policy', ACCORD (African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes)
http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/brief/policy_practice1.pdf

This policy brief highlights electoral violence as a particular form of political violence deserving of special attention, which can undermine progress towards democratisation and result in long-term disillusionment and frustration. The authors note that while conventionally, security is upheld by the police, but in countries experiencing election violence, civil society organisations and traditional or clan leaders need to be involved in building confidence and encouraging respect and tolerance. Some of the authors' recommendations for engaging with local actors to reduce the incidence of electoral violence include:

- support political party development, citizen education, and media training
- monitor volatile areas during by-elections as well as national elections
- collaborate with local actors to uncover networks of violence makers and identify peace-promoting elements
- encourage collaboration between national security forces, local security forces, peace workers, political parties and other relevant actors
- encourage international violence monitors and peace missions to access information on local peacebuilding initiatives
- support civil society networks to coordinate tasks
- support an independent electoral agency to assess and evaluate different capacities among actors for specific tasks

Atuobi, S., 2009, 'Peace Support Operations and Post-Conflict Elections: The Case of Sierra Leone', KAIPTC Monograph no. 6, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana
http://www.kaiptc.org/upload/general/Elections_and_PSO.pdf

This paper argues that peace support operations and electoral assistance can contribute to long-term conflict prevention and democratisation if interventions are designed to help build the capacity of local institutions such as election management bodies, civil society organizations, and local observers for managing future elections. In Sierra Leone, UN peace missions provided electoral assistance in 2002 and 2007 (and two additional local elections) and the country benefited from capacity building, increased local ownership, and democratic consolidation. The 2002 process was overwhelmingly dominated by international actors, but the 2007 process was largely led by Sierra Leonean institutions, and it is anticipated that the 2012 elections will further improve the level of local ownership, although state institutions are still weak and political violence is still a significant problem.

5. Private sector

Specker, L., 2009, 'How to involve the private sector in peacebuilding processes', Clingendael Conflict Research Unit

http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2009/20091200_cru_policybrief_specker_peacebuilding.pdf

This policy brief argues that engagement with the private sector can play an important role in peacebuilding in post-conflict states and in preventing a relapse into conflict. Economic instability is a conflict driver, and without economic recovery and job creation, stability will not be lasting. Private sector development can contribute to, among other things, creating a peace dividend and can play a role in demobilisation and reintegration. The private sector often maintains relationships across conflict lines and can be key partners in peacebuilding. Forms of engagement that are suggested include support to small and medium-sized enterprises (e.g. subsidies, training, loans), vouchers or cash transfers to consumers, setting up business incubators, and supporting private investment on the part of international investors.

DFID, 2009, 'Stabilisation through Economic Initiatives: Private Sector Development (PSD)', Stabilisation Unit, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, UK Department for International Development, and UK Ministry of Defence

<http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/resources/PrivSecSINJan09.pdf>

In this *Issues Note*, the inter-departmental Stabilisation Unit argues that private sector development, ranging from "micro businesses such as small-scale farmers and sellers in the informal markets as well as multinationals, large, medium, and small businesses" (p. 1) can play an important role in conflict prevention, because "economic recovery, especially through creating employment, has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of future conflict" (p. 2). Youth unemployment, in particular, is implicated as a contributor to conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, while economic development fosters stabilisation by among other things facilitating networks across divisions in society, re-establishing trust in government, and demonstrating the peace dividend.

Initiatives recommended to establish an enabling environment for public sector development include: support labour market labour reforms, macro-economic stabilisation and reform, settle property rights, ensure security, repair infrastructure, ensure equal access to opportunities, and reinforce existing service providers (including chambers of commerce and business associations). Specific approaches to boosting local economies include *local economic recovery* which is "a participatory, area-based approach... based on local resources, assets and opportunities" (p. 7), *quick impact projects* which are short-term, small-scale initiatives, increasing access to natural resources and infrastructure, labour-based reconstruction methodologies, and preferring local procurement. Direct assistance to the private sector can include training, mentoring, and finance including microfinance.

Channell, W., 2010, 'Business environment reforms in conflict-affected contexts', Practice Note 2, Strengthening the Economic Dimensions of Peacebuilding Practice Note Series, International Alert

http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/practice_note2_march2010.pdf

Economic instability is a conflict risk factor and economic development is a stabilising influence. Violence and the risk of conflict are reduced through negotiated sharing of economic opportunity, allowing for eventual expansion into an open-access (rights-based) economic system. Business laws and regulation can be effective tools for rebuilding both trust and growth by ensuring legitimacy. Developing an enabling environment for business contributes to conflict prevention but offers significant challenges and risks which need to be addressed. Typical risks include insecure property rights dysfunctional court systems, and abuses of regulatory authority. Opportunities include supporting regulatory and legislative legitimacy, expanding and protecting ownership mechanisms, expanding dispute-resolution mechanisms, expanding opportunities for women, and reducing and simplifying regulation. Wide engagement with local actors is required, including with business associations, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, rule-making and legislative bodies, customs and transport services, municipal governments, and NGOs. The authors

recommend that macro stabilisation comes first, demand is the starting point, cultural norms are important, changes should be digestible and incremental rather than sweeping, reform processes should be inclusive and participatory, “quick wins” should not be disconnected from systemic efforts, cartels and monopolies are to be avoided, rights should be enhanced, domestic investment is central, avoid rebuilding unnecessary institutions, recognise the short-term benefits of long-term efforts, move slowly on land and resource reforms, and commit to a long-term process of reform.

Bray, J., 2010, ‘Foreign Direct Investment in conflict-affected contexts’, Practice Note 3, Strengthening the Economic Dimensions of Peacebuilding Practice Note Series, International Alert
http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/practice_note3_march2010.pdf

This paper argues that foreign direct investment (FDI) can be an important ingredient in recovery from conflict and in preventing future conflict. The actors involved in FDI include international companies, financiers such as banks, multilateral institutions (IFC, OECD, UN), international NGOs, the host government, local companies, local civil society, and communities. Issues that need to be addressed (from all sides) in developing opportunities for FDI include: commercial viability, safety, an enabling environment, the legal system, corruption, regional development plans, the record of the investors, the local partners, and good relations between the foreign company and all relevant local actors: a “popular license to operate”. The report notes that good practice requires due diligence, assessment of risks and impacts, local consultation and engagement, adequate security arrangements, partnerships with communities and civil society, good governance, and realistic expectations.

6. Media

Lange, M., 2009, ‘The Role of the Media in Conflict Prevention’, workshop report, Conflict Prevention in Practice Program, Folke Bernadotte Academy
http://www.folkebernadotteacademy.se/Documents/CPP/Report_The_role_of_media.pdf

This report summarises a workshop involving NGOs, media organisations, journalists, and EU institutions held in Brussels in April, 2009 to improve dialogue and promote cooperation among these actors. “There was a general agreement that the media plays a significant role in preventing conflicts, and dealing with media groups is fundamental for the success of operations in the field” (p. 2). Building strong capacity on the part of the media, improving transparency and quality, and ensuring that local people can access media reports (radio usually being the most practical approach), and improving coordination and cooperation between local and international media are all important. Reporting should include paying attention to women and to peace activists as well as conflict parties. The media have strong potential in early warning. New media (Internet, mobile phones) have great potential to empower people through citizen journalism.

International actors could provide journalists in the field with tools and equipment, cooperate with media organisations including NGOs, include managers and owners in training, balance regional and national media information, improve media transparency, prepare strategies for independent local media presence, support investigative and campaigning journalists, and support fragile states in reducing illiteracy. Training for civil society in new media should be provided. The EU should develop a strategy for media issues in fragile and conflict-affected states, support civil society and NGOs, and include media cooperation in country strategy papers.

Paluck, E. L., 2009, ‘Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda’, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2009, Vol. 96, No. 3.
<http://betsylevypaluck.com/Paluck%202009%20JPSP%20Rwanda.pdf>

This research paper reports on a randomised experiment in Rwanda testing the ability of the media to affect personal beliefs, social norms, and behaviour. It examined the impact of a radio soap opera

featuring messages about reducing prejudice, violence, and trauma in two fictional Rwandan communities, compared with a control group who listened to a health radio soap opera. The programme designed to promote reconciliation changed listeners' perceptions of social norms and their behaviours with respect to intermarriage, open dissent, trust, empathy, cooperation, and trauma healing, although it did not change personal beliefs.

7. Ethnic groups

Aapengnuo, C. M., 2010, 'Misinterpreting Ethnic Conflicts in Africa', Africa Security Brief no. 4, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, United States Department of Defense

<http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/AfricaBrief-4.pdf>

This paper argues that contrary to popular perception, "ethnicity is typically not the driving force of African conflicts but a lever used by political leaders to mobilize supporters in pursuit of power, wealth, and resources.... defusing the potency of ethnicity for political ends requires a systematic civic education strategy that helps build a common national identity, which so many African countries still lack" (p. 1). The author argues that "the justice system is key" (p. 3) for reducing the potential for ethnicity to be used as a tool for conflict and that a genuine separation of powers and the rule of law are priorities. Other ways to defuse potential conflicts include encouraging civil society organisations that cut across ethnic lines (including business associations, sports clubs, artist groups, and others), ensuring fair and independent elections, independent mechanisms for safeguarding human rights, social marketing campaigns to reinforce positive social norms, and particularly targeting youth. Engagement with the media, politicians, NGOs, religious organisations, and other civil society organisations can be productive towards these ends.

Stewart, F., 2010, 'Horizontal inequalities in Kenya and the political disturbances of 2008: some implications for aid policy', Conflict, Security & Development, Vol. 10, No. 1

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14678800903553936>

Frances Stewart argues in this paper that severe horizontal inequalities are an important contributing factor to violent conflict, examining a case study of violent conflict in Kenya 2008 following the elections of late 2007. Although most Kenyans say that their identity is defined by occupation, class, religion or gender, or they simply consider themselves 'Kenyan', rather than being defined by ethnicity, nevertheless in politics ethnicity is still perceived as important. Kenya has significant socioeconomic inequalities among ethnic groups and regions, but past governments were fairly inclusive, ensuring representation of all groups in government at cabinet level. Thus, in the Kenyatta administration, groups that were socioeconomically disadvantaged still had high-level political representation, while under Moi, the group that suffered in terms of political representation was still relatively well-off. However, "Kibaki's 2006–07 cabinet excluded major groups from political power, and these were the same groups who were suffering socioeconomic deprivation. It was the prospect of this situation being sustained through perceived electoral fraud that was mainly responsible for the post-election violence." (p. 150) Stewart concludes that addressing horizontal inequalities should be an important part of development policy to reduce the risk of violent conflict.

8. Other recent literature on conflict prevention

The following is a selection of additional papers on conflict prevention published in 2009 or 2010 that do not directly address the question of effective engagement with local actors.

Öberg M., Möller, F., and Wallensteen, P., 2009, 'Early Conflict Prevention in Ethnic Crises 1990-98: A New Dataset', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, vol. 26, no. 1
<http://cmp.sagepub.com/content/26/1/67.short>

This article presents a new dataset on operational conflict prevention in ethnic crises in the period 1990-98, including information on over 700 prevention events undertaken by 7 types of actors, enabling evaluation of the effects of different types of preventive measures and providing an overview of who takes what measures and in what conflicts. Preventive action is most common in Europe and the Middle East and is focused on a small number of high profile cases like those in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq; crises in Asia, on the other hand, receive comparatively little attention. Major Powers (with the exception of China), neighbouring states, the UN, and regional organizations are the most active interveners. Relief efforts and preventive diplomacy appear to have a significant conflict dampening effects, while “carrots” (inducements) actually increase the risk of escalation to war.

The above article is only available to subscribers to Conflict Management and Peace Science, but a conference paper by the authors on the same subject is freely available at:
http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/UCDP_pub/Moller_ISApaper2005_final%20draft050429.pdf

Lund, M., 2009, 'Conflict Prevention: Theory in Pursuit of Policy and Practice', in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, J. Bercovitch, V. Kremenyuk, and I. W. Zartman, eds., SAGE, London
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/events/docs/Conflict%20Prevention-%20Theory%20in%20Pursuit%20of%20Policy%20and%20Practice.pdf>

In this book chapter, Michael Lund argues that despite the benefits of preventing conflict, major powers appear to place a relatively low priority on prevention. He describes prevention work as “little publicized” (p. 294) but notes activities that include “NGO projects in peace building at the local level, such as dialogues, peace radio, and inter-ethnic community development programs” (p. 294) and that programmes intended to prevent conflict are often not explicitly labelled as such. Preventive efforts are moving away from specially dedicated activities to mainstreaming conflict and peace-building criteria into development sectors such as agriculture, health, education, economic growth, environment, youth, democracy- and state-building, civil society building, and the security sector. He also notes that the UN and some donor and multilateral organisations are trying to incorporate conflict-sensitive development into countrywide development strategies such as PRSPs and the UN's Common Country Assessment (CCA) and Development Assistance Framework (DAF)

The chapter recommends focusing more attention at the country level, “where the diverse agendas and tools are most clearly juxtaposed and concretely reconciled” (p.307). Joint consultations are recommended with key actors (governments, UN, EU, regional actors, NGOs) to assess the country situations and devise and implement analytically-based targeted strategies. Lund suggests that this process should be linked to existing country-specific development planning procedures such as the PRSP and CAS, while also engaging with diplomatic and military agencies as well as inside stakeholders.

Woocher, Lawrence, 2009, 'Preventing Violent Conflict: Assessing Progress, Meeting Challenges', United States Institute of Peace.
http://www.usip.org/files/resources/preventing_violent_conflict.pdf

This report argues for greater global focus on the prevention of violent conflict, noting that while the overall level of armed conflict is down significantly since the end of the Cold War, this trend cannot be attributed to effective conflict prevention efforts. Despite well-known adages about the value of prevention, more attention is devoted to intervening in ongoing conflicts than to preventing new ones. Several factors are leading towards increases in conflict risks: an increase in unstable regimes arising from the fall of autocracies, global economic turbulence, climate change, and shifts in global power distribution. Progress has been made towards institutionalising conflict prevention at the global level by strengthening norms and mobilising political support for preventing armed conflict, developing capacities to deploy prevention

strategies, and accruing knowledge about how to design and implement preventive strategies. The author recommends that governments, international organisations, and NGOs should:

- Increase the attention given to conflict prevention so that it is on par with resolving active conflicts and rebuilding post-conflict states
- Monitor implementation of existing commitments to conflict prevention
- Bolster institutional capacities for prevention, including better structures and processes for analysis of conflict risks and decision-making about appropriate preventive actions, and more robust and flexible capacity to undertake prevention strategies of all types
- Expand knowledge on conflict prevention (through empirical research, after-action reviews, scenario exercises, and simulations) to help move from toolbox to effective strategies
- Develop new political strategies to regularise the practice of prevention rather than relying on ad hoc advocacy.

Cramer, C., Keen, D., and Walton, O., 2010, 'What Price Peace? The case for allocating resources to conflict prevention', Synthesis report, School of Oriental and African Studies

This project report examines evidence for the cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention from the DFID-funded "What Price Peace?" study. Regarding engagement with local actors, the report notes that the success of conflict prevention interventions is the result of the interaction with domestic contextual factors and structural attributes (which may include social class structure, the structure of civil society, the media, and others). Interventions are more likely to be effective when interventions are designed to work with the domestic political settlement, identify and support domestic constituencies for peace, and feed into local initiatives. No type of third party conflict prevention activity is effective or ineffective in itself; prevention depends on other conditions, the most important of which are internal to the relations of the parties to the conflict. Conflict prevention activities work best when they find ways of identifying and supporting domestic constituencies for peace and feed into local initiatives.

9. Related GSDRC reports

The following GSDRC materials provide additional reading on conflict prevention:

Topic guide

- **Haider, H., 2009, 'Preventing and managing violent conflict', Chapter 3 in Topic Guide on Conflict, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham** <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/conflict/chapter-3-preventing-and-managing-violent-conflict>

Helpdesk research reports

- **Country strategies on conflict prevention (June 2009)** An annotated bibliography of examples of country (national and sub-national) strategies on preventing conflict and building a culture of peace. <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD606.pdf>
- **Mainstreaming peace and conflict into development and humanitarian interventions in Zimbabwe. (January 2010)** (a) Research on and guidelines for development and humanitarian interventions that provide entry points for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. (b) Examples of and lessons learned from development and humanitarian interventions in Zimbabwe that have provided entry points for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD659.pdf>
- **Election-related conflict (August 2008):** Please identify literature and lessons learned on election-related conflict, including its prevention and mitigation. Countries of interest include DRC/

Kenya/ Afghanistan / Iraq/ Timor.
<http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD548.pdf>

10. Additional information

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Websites visited

The principal web site used in this search were: Google, GSDRC, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, United States Institute of Peace, Global Facilitation Network on Security Sector Reform, Saferworld, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, International Alert, Crisis States Research Centre, Clingendael Conflict Research Unit

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