



Helpdesk Research Report

Benefits to society of an inclusive societies approach

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Question

What is the evidence for the benefits to society of an inclusive societies approach?

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1. Overview

There are **many claims for the benefits to society** of an inclusive societies approach¹ across a broad range of societal outcomes. The anticipated development benefits of inclusive societies are increasingly present in donor policy thinking and global dialogues, including the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goal framework. The desired impacts range from economic benefits to other development goals, social cohesion and sustainable peace.

¹ An 'inclusive societies approach' is defined by DFID as an approach that leaves no one behind by ensuring opportunities for all. This includes supporting inclusive economic, political and social institutions, tackling the structural barriers that keep some people from opportunity and tracking progress across different population groups. Success will be getting to zero on poverty and achieving development outcomes across all economic and social population groups. (DFID 2014 internal policy note)

The **strength of the empirical evidence varies**² for the range of societal benefits from inclusive development approaches. This is not surprisingly given the broad range of outcomes and interventions this topic covers. This brief review finds evidence of broader benefits to society of lower income inequality, improved human development outcomes, women's and girls' empowerment and inclusive growth approaches. There remain, however, evidence gaps and ongoing debates over findings. There is a gap in evidence on the impact of voice, empowerment and accountability approaches on long-term, transformative change. Empirical cross-country evidence on the impact of inclusive economic and political institutions on economic and other development indicators is contested. The evidence on the macro-level economic and social impacts of social protection and increasing service delivery is limited and inconclusive. Lastly, with contested concepts, indirect effects and long time horizons, it is perhaps inevitable that evidence linking inclusive development approaches and peacebuilding and state-building outcomes is scarce.

It is impossible for this brief review to cover all of the many different inclusive interventions and their broader impact for society. The report takes a deliberately '**broad-brush' approach to manage the evidence synthesis**, providing a top-level indicative summary of the empirical evidence on the broader impacts of inclusive development interventions, which are grouped into broad and overlapping categories. This review does not cover evidence on the impact and costs of inequality or exclusion, which are often also used to justify an inclusive societies approach.

It is important to note that **methodological and data issues** hamper examination of the contribution of inclusive societies approaches to broader societal impacts. There are attribution issues as, at the level of societies, results are normally dependent on a range of factors. There is a lack of data on some of the issues, especially for emerging concerns such as measuring wellbeing. Moreover donors often do not measure the wider developmental impacts of their interventions, and the evidence base for development impacts in conflict-affected countries and fragile states is particularly weak. Finally it may be too early to evaluate the longer-term impacts for many of the recently introduced inclusive approaches. In particular indirect effects – such as on social norms or policy – may accrue later on (O'Neil et al 2015).

The **key findings** on the state of the evidence uncovered by this review for the selected range of societal benefits and types of interventions include:

Economic growth, productivity and employment

- There are substantial and credible conceptual and historical analyses on the positive relationship between **inclusive institutions** and long-term growth, but highly contested, mixed findings from empirical quantitative, cross-country evidence on the effect of institutions on growth.
- There is mounting evidence of the impact of **inclusive growth approaches** on reducing poverty and inequality, when excluded groups gain greater access to education, employment and business opportunities. Also emerging evidence exists of the positive relationship between diverse workforces and company profitability. There is more limited evidence of the impact of inclusive

² GSDRC helpdesk queries do not assess the quality of individual sources. Assessments of the strength of evidence included in this report are taken from other reviews of the evidence. We endeavour to include the best recent work for the query, guided by the following checklist: Is it published by a known and credible organisation? Is it written clearly? Does it have a logical structure and do the conclusions seem backed up by the research presented? Is it based on empirical research, or opinion? Is it argumentative and normative, or objective and balanced?

approaches on employment rates, and the economic benefits of disability-inclusive development approaches, but some positive case studies.

- There is evidence **gender equality** can promote economic growth, with positive impacts on macro-level growth, human capital and labour agricultural productivity.
- Some quantitative evidence indicates that **extending services** may boost economic growth but few in-depth case studies look at this. A small evidence base shows that **participatory development projects** more broadly have limited impact on income poverty.
- There is overwhelming evidence of the positive impacts of **social protection** on growth at the household level and at the local level, but evidence of macro aggregate effects on GDP is more limited. There is a growing consensus that social protection's role in reducing inequality is positive for economic growth.

Other development outcomes, including wellbeing

- There is inconclusive cross-country quantitative evidence on the relationship between a **country's democratic status** and poverty reduction and other development outcomes. Deeper measures of political inclusion (e.g. political competition) are likely to be significant.
- Limited and inconsistent evidence exists on the impact of **voice, empowerment and accountability** approaches on broad development outcomes. There are some positive effects in isolated cases, but a gap in evidence on long-term, transformative change. Moreover the literature stresses that the impact on development outcomes is not automatic and depends on the social and political context, including the pre-existing levels and drivers of exclusion.
- There is evidence of cases where women and girls' education and economic empowerment has contributed to postponed marriage, lower fertility and improved health and education outcomes for future children. There is an established body of evidence that women's increased income control and role in household decision-making improves their own and their children's health and wellbeing. Moreover there is some evidence increased women's political participation can further political concerns to improve family daily life. There is, however, limited evidence on, for example, women's economic empowerment on its own leading to transformational societal impacts.
- In-depth qualitative case studies demonstrate strong positive effect of efforts to make **services more inclusive** and improve progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), benefiting broader society. Some did not result in broader health or economic benefits, usually due to poor implementation.
- Well documented, strong evidence of the **social protection** impacts on education and health exists, but there is less clarity on whether this translates into broader societal outturns e.g. improved educational attainment, better labour market outcomes, escape from chronic poverty.

Social cohesion, peace and state-building

- There is research pointing to the positive relationship between peaceful societies and more **inclusive states** with state-society relations based on legitimacy rather than coercion, and greater associational life that generates trust and inter-group cohesion.
- Evidence suggests **inclusive political settlements and broader political processes** are essential for fostering peaceful societies. Inconclusive evidence exists on whether more inclusive peace processes and agreements make political settlements more inclusive and/or more sustainable.

- There is little robust evidence of the causal connections between **gender-inclusive interventions** and peacebuilding and state-building goals. Some qualitative studies find a positive correlation between women’s empowerment in post-conflict contexts and broader societal outturns; others that levels of gender equality are correlated with the prevalence of conflict.
- A lack of empirical evidence confirms the relationship between **service delivery** and state-building. Some very limited evidence exists of improved service delivery fostering improved state-society relations at the local level. Qualitative analyses of **community-based approaches** in fragile and conflict affected contexts find that inclusive approaches contributed to strengthening social relations in some cases, but results were not automatic.
- There is a lack of rigorous evidence on the impacts of **social protection** on state-building and social cohesion.

2. Economic growth, productivity and employment

Inclusive institutions³

In their literature review, Evans and Ferguson (2013: 6) find ‘a very substantial and credible’ theoretical literature on the importance of institutions, and economic institutions in particular, for economic development. Conceptual studies and historical analyses set out how ‘open access societies’ (North et al 2009) with inclusive political and economic institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012) have been more successful in promoting long-term growth and broader development⁴.

There is also a large body of empirical (cross-country, quantitative) studies attempting to demonstrate the effect of institutions, inclusive or otherwise. Their findings are, however, highly contested. Evans and Ferguson’s (2013: 6) DFID literature review concludes:

- ‘The case that economic institutions matter is persuasive. The ability of the research to isolate specific economic institutions that boost growth is more limited, and less persuasive. ...
- The evidence shows that democracies enjoy higher incomes, and that democracies are necessary for the maintenance of growth. However, there is no evidence to show that democracy is in itself a cause of higher incomes.’

Evans and Ferguson (2013) also point out that a large body of high quality research shows that different institutions matter in different temporal and geographical contexts. Moreover an exclusive focus on institutions may underplay wider political, economic and geographical factors that are key for development.

Inclusive growth approaches

Alexander (2015) provides a comprehensive review of the literature on inclusive growth. He cites evidence of the benefits of an inclusive growth approach which – through investment in equality of opportunity and social protection as well as economic growth – can reduce poverty and inequality. Much of the evidence comes from Asia’s experience (Cook 2006; Alexander 2015). Alexander highlights emerging empirical evidence that ‘more equal distribution of income is associated with longer periods of growth’ (Alexander

³ See Carter 2015 for a longer synthesis of the evidence on the impact of inclusive and exclusive institutions.

⁴ See Evans 2012 and Rocha Menocal 2015 forthcoming for brief reviews of these studies

2015: 1, citing IMF studies analysing cross-country datasets). Other studies calculate the potential impact on GDP of ending the long-term exclusion of often quite large sections of the population (for example, racial groups in Latin America), and the resulting increased human capital, widening economic markets and reduced risk of political instability (Khan 2009).

Alexander (2015: 14) reports a 'clear consensus among donors, practitioners and academics that creating **productive employment** is central to fostering inclusive growth'. Empirical evidence of the impact of inclusive development approaches on national employment rates is, however, difficult to find. A review of donor approaches to address employment and labour markets finds little evaluative material on the employment impact of past interventions, with a relatively short history of donor support, a wide range of different approaches and instruments, and lack of quality data on informal employment (OECD 2009: 37). There are, however, case studies that explore the impacts of individual programmes, some highlighting where inclusive approaches have resulted in increased employment. For example, in Viet Nam, the IFC/ILO Better Work programme support to better employment for women workers in factories has led to well-documented improvements, including increased employment among over half of the factories involved (cited in Combaz 2015).

There is also emerging evidence of a positive relationship of having a **diverse workforce** for company profitability. While much of the research is on large multinationals or companies based in richer countries (ICSI 2014; Smedley 2014), the more limited evidence on diverse workforces in developing economies presents similar findings. For example, a Times of India commissioned study of top 100 Indian companies found that companies with women on their boards have a positive impact on return on equity (ICSI 2014: 6; Mukherjee and Singh 2014). While other evidence has reported average lower productivity of female-headed businesses compared with male-headed ones (e.g. in Sub-Saharan Africa), differences in sector of operation and size of firm contribute significantly to this gender gap (Hallward-Driemeier 2013; World Bank 2011).

In a review of the economic benefits of **disability-inclusive** development approaches, literature reviews (Walton 2012a; Morgon Banks and Polack 2014) find a strong theoretical basis (backed by epidemiological and modelling studies) to support the pathways from disability inclusion in education, work and health to economic impact at the societal level, but limited empirical research. Walton (2012a) finds a handful of studies that present good practice examples demonstrating the economic benefits of adopting a disability-inclusive approach to development. Economic benefits are clearest, and have been most commonly highlighted in programmes that supported disabled people's livelihoods and employment or access to credit or finance. Some inclusive education programmes also make explicit links to economic benefits (Walton 2012a).

Women's empowerment

Recent literature reviews find strong evidence that **gender equality can promote economic growth**. An evidence review by Ward et al (2010) finds clear evidence of positive impacts of gender equality on human capital, labour productivity and agricultural productivity among others. Ward et al (2010) find potential but inconclusively evidenced impacts on other crucial factors for growth – rule of law, macroeconomic stability, provision of infrastructure, openness to trade and investment. The World Development Report 2012 on gender sets the evidence (mainly simulations) for why gender equality is 'smart economics', as removing barriers that prevent women from having the same access as men to education, economic opportunities, and productive inputs can generate broad productivity gains. A review by Kabeer (2012) for IDRC and DFID finds the evidence suggests fairly strong empirical support for the claim

that gender equality has a positive impact on economic growth. Kabeer notes that ‘the relationship is most consistent with regard to education (the most widely studied) and employment (less frequently studied), holding for a variety of different countries and across differing time periods over the past half century’ (Kabeer 2012: 4).

Inclusive service delivery

In a review of the development impact of inclusive service delivery⁵, Walton (2012b) finds that the broader quantitative literature provides some comparative evidence to suggest that extending services may boost economic growth. Walton cites studies on India and China that have shown that investing in human capital supports economic growth, productivity and poverty reduction. There are, however, few in-depth case studies that examine the links between extending basic services and improvements in economic growth (Walton 2012b).

Mansuri and Rao (2013) assess the impact of participatory development projects more broadly, which include inclusive service delivery interventions. They draw on econometric, case and large sample observational studies and conclude that the scarce evidence shows limited impact of these inclusive approaches on income poverty.

Inclusive service delivery aims to improve human development outcomes⁶ (Walton 2012b), and there is increasingly strong evidence on the contribution of better human development outcomes to economic growth (for example, see IMF 2004 on the positive relationship between health outcomes and growth of GDP per capita).

Social protection

The theoretical literature on social protection sets out wide-ranging objectives for social protection, which include protecting and empowering marginalised and poor people (Browne 2015a). The literature also claims the various social protection programmes can have benefits for wider society. One such anticipated benefit is a contribution to a society’s growth process, through fuelling a cycle of consumption and enabling poor entrepreneurs to take more risks (Alexander 2014). A literature review by Browne (2015a) finds that there is, however, stronger evidence on the impact of social protection on poverty reduction and health and education outcomes, and less clarity on whether social protection has increased economic growth.

In their review of the contribution of social protection programmes to growth and productivity, Mathers and Slater (2014) find overwhelming evidence of the positive impacts of social protection on growth at the household level and also evidence of a multiplier effect at the local level by enabling increased consumption and improved labour market outcomes. With, however, only a handful of studies (mostly simulations) on macro aggregate growth effects, evidence that social protection has positive impacts on GDP is more limited and not conclusive. One indirect channel is social protection’s contribution to reducing income equality. Mathers and Slater (2014) find that consensus is growing that the role of social protection in reducing inequality is positive for economic growth, especially in low income countries and middle income countries (citing the example of Brazil’s *Bolsa Família*).

⁵ These efforts mostly involve extending access to under-served groups, but in cases where under-served groups already have access to services, they may also focus on improving utilisation or the quality of services delivered to marginalised groups (Walton 2012: 1).

⁶ See section 3 for evidence of its success.

3. Other development outcomes, including wellbeing

Inclusive institutions

There are a number of cross-country quantitative studies that investigate the relationship between a country's **democratic status** – which can be seen as an imperfect proxy for the inclusiveness of its institutions – and its ability to improve poverty reduction and broader development outcomes. The literature review by Evans and Ferguson (2013) finds the evidence inconclusive. While some econometric studies find no systematic relationship between democracy and similar measures of development, others find that better – more inclusive – governance reduces poverty and improves human development outcomes relating to, for example, infant mortality, literacy, and health.

Evans and Ferguson (2013: 38-39) note that these findings may hinge on how 'democracy' and 'good governance' are defined. They find that while holding elections alone has no significant impact on broader development outcomes, **deeper measures of political inclusion** – including political competition, issues-based political parties, and competitive recruitment to these parties – are significant.

Voice, empowerment and accountability approaches

Donors support voice, empowerment and accountability because they see VEA as instrumental to achieving a broader range of development goals including 'including inclusive institutions, improved access to and quality of public services, and human development outcomes' (Combaz 2015: 1). Combaz' (2015) literature review finds the evidence of the impact of VEA approaches on development outcomes is limited and inconsistent. There are few rigorous evaluations of broader impacts (e.g. changing norms/attitudes, increased equity, collective action). Only a small body of literature has analysed their (potential) role in supporting development goals – largely focused on more measurable effects in the area of service delivery, particularly in the health and education sectors. The key conclusions of Combaz' review are:

- Voice and participation have had positive effects on education outcomes in a small number of isolated cases, but evidence of links between participation and inclusive institutions is mixed.
- Empowerment is positively associated with improvements in health-promoting behaviour and women's protection against violence, although there remains a gap in evidence of the long-term effects of empowerment on social and political inclusion.
- Transparency and accountability initiatives have had mixed effects, but transparency has been linked to reduced capture, and some positive impacts on access to services have been documented.

Combaz highlights a common finding that connections between these inclusive approaches and human development outcomes are not automatic. The effects on development processes depend on context: specifically formal and informal political systems, social norms, power relations, leadership capacities and pre-existing levels of equity or exclusion (Combaz 2015).

Another GSDRC review has explored the literature on the relationship between empowerment and wellbeing. Browne (2015b) found that both are highly contested terms and the literature is unclear on the relationship between them. Some scholars see wellbeing, particularly psychological wellbeing, as a contributor to empowerment, while others see empowerment as leading to wellbeing. The conceptual literature is in general agreement that autonomy, competence and agency – which inclusive development approaches may foster – are crucial aspects contributing to wellbeing, as these determine how people can

exercise choice and control (Browne 2015b: 2). This review has not been able to find empirical evidence on the pathways between inclusive development approaches and societal wellbeing – except for normative discussions of how economic and other development outcomes are essential for wellbeing.

Women’s empowerment

Recent analyses present evidence showing that progress on gender equality is central to achieving many wider development goals, and lead to better development outcomes, including the seminal 2012 World Development Report on gender equality and development (World Bank 2011; Ward et al 2010; Jones et al 2010). For example, Jones et al. (2010: 4) find convincing evidence that communities with educated, empowered women are healthier, have more educational options and are less poor. They cite cross-country studies that present evidence that educating girls can postpone marriage; reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS; increase family income; lower eventual fertility; improve survival rates, health indicators and educational outcomes for future children; increase women’s power in the household and political arenas; and lower rates of domestic violence. They present empirical evidence of community-level effects, including positive impacts of educating women and girls on fertility choices (Ghana), child mortality (India), community health facilities (India), and water and sanitation facilities (cross-country). Moreover, Jones et al (2010) highlight cross-country evidence that educated women are more likely to participate in community forums, thus furthering not only the democratic process but also political concerns that tend to improve the daily lives of families.

Others caution that there is limited and mixed evidence on the links between women’s empowerment and broader development outcomes. Looking at economic empowerment, Domingo et al’s literature review concludes there are ‘mixed findings on whether women’s access to financial and productive assets and increased labour force participation improve their health, education and other outcomes’ (Domingo et al 2015: 88 – see also Combaz and Mcloughlin 2014). Domingo et al also caution that there remains ‘limited evidence that women’s economic participation on its own can lead to larger transformational shifts in women’s bargaining power and decision-making (such as women’s choices related to reproductive health issues) or shifts in deep-rooted social norms (such as the gender-division of labour)’ (ibid.: 85). They do, however, find ‘an established body of evidence that demonstrates that women’s increased control over income and greater-decision making in the household improves their own and their children’s health and wellbeing’, and ‘some evidence that social norms can change as women enter the workforce – such as increased mobility and acceptance of women in public spaces’ (ibid.: 88)

Inclusive service delivery

In his review Walton (2012b) identifies many in-depth qualitative country case studies of efforts to make services more inclusive⁷ and improve progress towards the MDGs. These cover a broad range of interventions, from programmes extending education in rural areas to conditional cash transfers aiming to increase the use of health services. He finds that the majority of these studies demonstrate a strong positive effect of these efforts, with, evidence of positive education and health outcomes. Some, however, did not create broader health or economic benefits, usually due to poor implementation. The successful

⁷ Walton notes that these efforts mostly involve extending access to under-served groups, but in cases where under-served groups already have access to services, they may also focus on improving utilisation or the quality of services delivered to marginalised groups (Walton 2012: 1).

programmes were underpinned by broader improvements in governance and in social and economic development (Walton 2012b).

Social protection

Browne's (2015a) social protection literature review finds well documented strong evidence from impact evaluations of immediate positive effects on education and health outcomes of social protection measures, with less clarity on the benefits for nutrition. She notes, however, that there is less evidence on longer term impacts, such as whether increased schooling translates into improved knowledge and educational attainment, better labour market outcomes, or an escape from chronic poverty. Similarly a very small evidence base suggests some impact of social protection programmes on inclusion (through increasing social participation and social networks, and addressing the drivers of social exclusion) but there is no evidence of transformative change (Browne 2015a).

4. Social cohesion, peace and state-building

Inclusive institutions

Rocha Menocal (2015 forthcoming) finds that quantitative historical research and conceptual analyses find that 'over the long term, states that are more inclusive also tend to be more peaceful and resilient and rooted in society on the basis of legitimacy rather than coercion'. She cites one of the central findings of the 2011 World Development Report – that 'states and societies function better when there exist ties of trust and reciprocity and a rich associational life binding citizens together and linking citizens to the state' (Rocha Menocal 2015 forthcoming: 12).

In their review, Evans and Ferguson (2013: 40) find a significant body of literature that explores the concept of social capital, looking at the links between civic associations and the production of positive social norms. They note the literature argues that 'countries and regions with greater associational life tend to generate trust and inter-group cohesion and in turn have better service delivery, financial accountability and adherence to democratic norms' (ibid.). A synthesis of ten years of DFID-funded research on governance and fragile states (DFID 2010b: 54) also highlights that 'when citizens actively participate in society through local associations and movements outside the state, there are benefits to both state and society'. These can include deepening democratic practices and more responsive states. The counter evidence is that these associations and attempts to support them can at times reinforce negative social norms, particularly those constraining the rights of girls and women (Evans and Ferguson 2013: 40).

Inclusive political settlements

The available evidence suggests inclusive political settlements and broader political processes are essential for fostering peaceful societies (Rocha Menocal 2015 forthcoming; Evans, 2012; DFID 2010a). Castillejo (2014) finds this is particularly the case in contexts where exclusion has been a major conflict driver.

The literature on political settlements tends to focus on either the forging of elite pacts or on state-society negotiations and the development of the social contract on the other. In his DFID literature review, Evans (2012: 11) finds 'an extensive and sophisticated literature', of empirical and more conceptual studies, on the importance of the inclusiveness of elite bargains in forging political settlements and building sustainable peace. Empirical evidence includes Lindemann's (2008) case study analysis of the key

contribution of elite coalitions to political stability in Sub-Saharan Africa from 1945 to 2007, and Call's (2012) mixed methods study showing a high correlation between political, security or territorial inclusion and the consolidation of peace across 42 cases. The 2011 World Development Report presents case studies to highlight the importance of building 'inclusive enough' coalitions to rebuild state-society relations and create sustainable pathways out of violence, between state actors and the private sector, traditional institutions, and nongovernmental organisations. Case studies include Chile, Ghana and South Africa among others.

There is, however, inconclusive evidence on what type of inclusion is relatively more important – inclusive processes for negotiating the settlement or inclusive distributional outcomes – and how best to support inclusive outcomes (Rocha-Menocal 2015 forthcoming; Castillejo 2014; Elgin-Cossart et al. 2012). Evans (2012) finds very mixed, inconclusive evidence on whether more inclusive peace processes and agreements (either of elites or broader civil society) make political settlements more inclusive and/or more sustainable. Rocha Menocal (2015 forthcoming: 19) notes that, while there is a donor normative bias towards support process-based inclusion, 'political settlements that may be considered narrow in terms of the elites that constitute it can in fact produce distributional outcomes that are more broadly inclusive'.

Women's empowerment

There is a lot of conceptual literature claiming the beneficial role of women in peace- and state-building activities. There is, however, little robust evidence and few rigorous impact evaluations of the causal connections between gender-sensitive interventions (such as inclusion of women in peace processes and increased women's presence in the broader political systems) and peacebuilding and state-building goals, according to literature reviews by the Overseas Development Institute and the GSDRC (Domingo et al 2013; Kangas et al 2014). Moreover, a key finding from the emerging literature on this topic is that while women and gender concerns are being increasingly included in peacebuilding and state-building interventions, their inclusion remains marginal and uneven (Domingo et al 2013: iv).

Nevertheless some qualitative studies have found a positive correlation between gender inclusive approaches to post-conflict interventions and broader societal indicators. For example, a qualitative analysis of post-conflict experiences in four middle-income countries by Petesch (2011) finds that the communities with more empowered women experienced more rapid recovery and poverty reduction. Other studies (cited in Strachan and Haider 2015: 8) find correlations (if not causation) between levels of gender equality (such as lower fertility rates, higher percentage of women in the labour force and the percentage of women in Parliament) and the prevalence of conflict.

Inclusive service delivery

Since the rise of the state-building agenda, donors supporting service delivery in fragile states expect to not only meet basic human needs, but also build state capacity, reciprocal state-society relations and state legitimacy (McCloughlin and Scott 2014: 7). Carpenter et al. (2012: ix), however, undertaking systematic reviews, find 'still a dearth of empirical evidence confirming (or challenging) the supposed relationship between service delivery and state-building'. What they do find is some, although still very limited, evidence of the potential for service delivery to foster improved relationships with the state at the local level (citing a study of links between the quality of service provision and improved legitimacy of the state ministries of health in Nigeria) (Carpenter et al. 2012: 66).

Cross-country analysis and single case evaluations of community-based approaches in conflict affected and fragile contexts find that inclusive activities contributed to strengthening social relations in some cases. See for example a World Bank (2006) review of community-driven development initiatives in thirteen conflict affected countries and Fearon et al.'s (2009) evaluation of community-driven reconstruction in post-conflict Liberia⁸. However, these results are not automatic. The evaluations identify wide-ranging recommendations for improving the longer-term and broader impact of these interventions on community and state-society relations.

Social protection

In their literature review, Mathers and Slater (2014) find that despite many positive claims, there is a lack of rigorous evidence of the impacts of social protection on state-building and social cohesion. Carpenter et al.'s (2012) review, focusing on impacts in fragile and conflict affected states, finds that studies on social funds and community driven development projects show both positive and negative impacts on levels of social cohesion and violence, with mixed impacts in Afghanistan, Northern Uganda and the Philippines. In addition Mathers and Slater (2014) highlight that recent experiences (such as in Brazil and the Arab Spring uprisings) show that even in states with strong and expanding social protection programs, social and political unrest can still occur.

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⁸ Additional case studies are profiled in Haider 2009 – a review of community-based approaches to peace building in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

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