

Within and Without the State

Strengthening civil society in conflict-affected and fragile settings

*A summary of current thinking and
implications for practice*

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This report sets out the main findings from the global study commissioned as part of the development of the DFID-funded Fragility and Conflict Global Programme, co-ordinated by Amanda Buttinger in the Programme Policy Team at Oxfam GB.

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Summary

There is a growing sense within Oxfam that traditional approaches to working with civil society are yielding insufficient results in conflict-affected and fragile states. This global study was undertaken to help develop innovative approaches to strengthening civil society in such settings and, in particular, to identify lessons for the development of three planned pilot programmes. It was based on a review of existing literature and interviews with representatives of INGOs, academic institutions, and donors, and was complemented by a scoping exercise undertaken in South Sudan in September 2011. The main findings of the global study are as follows.

Emerging thinking on state building and citizenship points to the importance of relationship building between the state and the citizen, and highlights the important condition of trust which must be established for this to take place effectively.

Strengthening civil society appears to be about state building to enhance legitimacy rather than the promotion of a certain form of democracy. A central part of such work is building trust between the state and its citizens – both male and female. This involves moving towards a more overt political engagement and raises many ethical challenges and dimensions for multi-mandated organisations.

Political economy analysis is central to furthering effective programmes in conflict-affected and fragile states.

However, the question of how to use the analysis has had limited treatment in the literature and was acknowledged in several interviews as being the main shortcoming in efforts to date, with a relatively small evidence base gathered for how to use this analysis to build the relationship between the state and civil society. Consideration of how to gender this analysis will be key if the situation for male and female citizens is to be properly understood.

The need to work with a broader range of stakeholders, including from the informal sphere, is important and challenging.

An analysis of informal influences is critical not only to identify positive and negative factors that may impact on programmes, but also to identify the broader coalition of agents through whom change might take place. Such a coalition, if truly broad, may not be an easy forum with which to engage, particularly as any process of change will lead to changes in who ‘wins’ and who ‘loses’. As such, the situation is dynamic and unpredictable and maintaining an ongoing analysis of changing stakeholder incentives will be important.

The nature of civil society and its relationship to accountability has implications for programme development.

The complexity of the concept of civil society suggests a further emphasis on analysis to understand the different interests and investments of civil society actors. In fragile situations, an emphasis on activities that demonstrate outcomes closest to the point of impact is more likely to yield results than participation in broader-based process activities that may not yield results in the lives of the most marginalised people, such as women and girls, for some time to come. However, connections need to be made between local-level activities – which might combine voice, accountability, and governance components – with national-level activities that contribute to state legitimacy. Establishing the mechanisms to facilitate this might be the central contribution that Oxfam can make to augment civil society’s own efforts to bring about change.

Insecurity and violence are part of the canvas with which organisations work and need to be considered as a core part of programme design.

An understanding of the impacts of violence and its continuing presence in people's lives is necessary to gain a more realistic understanding of citizens' ability to engage in civil society activities.

Looking at change models currently in use, a different approach is proposed.

This new approach challenges the current emphasis amongst donors for results-based programmes (which is also challenged by evidence of the slow pace of change) that make it hard for organisations to adopt a different, less prescriptive approach to working with civil society. There is an opportunity to consider this through an approach that seeks to facilitate channels for communication and relationship building around areas of common interest, where these are desirable, and to use this process more reflectively to set out incremental steps for change.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the consultancy was to assist Oxfam to develop innovative approaches to strengthening civil society in fragile settings and to capture learning for wider dissemination. Two tasks were commissioned. The first was a global study to update previous reflections on engaging in fragile states work, inform organisational thinking and global strategy development, and identify lessons for consideration in the development of three pilot programmes in Afghanistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and South Sudan. This report primarily focuses on the findings and recommendations of the global study.

The second component of the consultancy was to undertake a scoping exercise in South Sudan to see what programme options might exist that could be further developed. This visit was completed in September 2011 and a report submitted to Oxfam.

The background to this study was a growing sense that traditional approaches to working with civil society did not appear to be yielding sufficient results in conflict-affected and fragile states. Oxfam has been undertaking a series of internal reflections on this, with a greater sense emerging of the need to work with a broader range of actors, in a way that can respond much more rapidly to changes in the context likely for such complex conflict-based environments.

Such challenges are recognised by the Department for International Development (DFID) in its development of a more integrated approach to conflict, security, and development: 'There is a tendency in development to work "around" conflict and fragility. A step change in international approaches is required.'¹

2. Methodology

The primary focus of activity of this study was a series of 23 interviews (see Annex A) with representatives from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), academic institutions, and donors. INGOs were selected primarily, though not exclusively, from a list of DFID Programme Partnership Arrangement (PPA) holders on the basis of potential opportunity for joint learning – with particular emphasis placed on speaking to organisations that have worked on topics or in ways that vary from Oxfam's approach.

Additional names were added to the interview list as recommended by respondents. Where several interviewees came from the same organisation, this reflected the different roles and responsibilities held within that organisation, given that civil society work cuts across a number of different themes, programmes, and geographical areas.

An additional literature review was undertaken following pointers from interview respondents to useful references. This did not seek to be a comprehensive documentation of civil society issues, given the potential breadth of this subject, the time constraints of the study, and the purpose for which the literature search was undertaken. Rather, it was used as a catalyst to identify emerging thinking and to understand how such thinking might be applied at a practical level.

Two constraints encountered during the study were that it took place during the UK Summer holiday season and that respondents had other pressing priorities. This made it difficult to make contact with potential interviewees and resulted in some significant gaps, including representation from the private sector, faith groups, and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) – which has done considerable work on some of the emerging issues.

¹ DFID (2010) 'Building Peaceful States and Societies: A DFID Practice Paper', p.6.

On the other hand, the South Sudan field trip offered an opportunity to test some of the emerging ideas at the country level. This both informed the South Sudan recommendations and resulted in further iterations of emerging ideas in this study.

The policy framework for this work is governed by Oxfam GB's Programme Policy Guidelines (Oxfam GB 2011), which set out the challenges of working in fragile and conflict-affected countries and explored some of the ways that change might emerge in these contexts. Specifically, the Guidelines identified a number of factors to consider in selecting the focus of programmes, including:

- What other actors are present and what their competencies are in comparison with Oxfam's;
- Whether there is a place for Oxfam to support an increasingly accountable state or to prevent further decline, with a reflection that where this is the case, it is often more likely possible at the local level;
- What potential there is for supporting civil society, social enterprise, and community welfare, with the local level again identified as an appropriate focus;
- What contribution Oxfam can make in linking the local to the district/regional, national, and international levels;
- What value there may be in building coalitions and 'unlikely partnerships'.

The Guidelines highlight the unpredictability of working in such contexts and the opportunities these contexts afford to engage in areas of work that might not be appropriate in other settings:

'This requires a broader view of potential partnerships, intimate knowledge of the cultural context and real power relations, and a link with and understanding of the work of organisations engaging more directly on conflict and peace building than Oxfam might usually do.'²

These points are highlighted here as central themes that are further explored within this study. The emphasis of the study is on exploring how these might be applied through the provision of a framework to strengthen civil society that can be tested in the DFID-funded pilot projects.

Oxfam is also exploring the use of the 'power cube' developed by IDS in its analysis of power relations. This provides a simple schema to understand the different forms of power, the different spaces in which power is acted out, and the different levels at which the exercise of power takes place (see Annex C). This has been used as an organising concept for considering the opportunities and challenges of working in fragile and conflict-affected countries, recognising that power is a primary issue in such contexts and reflecting Oxfam's intent to 'transform power relations, so that poor men and women have greater influence over the policies, structures, and social norms that affect their lives' (Oxfam 2009).

² Oxfam GB Programme Policy Guidelines (2011) p.7.

3. Findings

The study highlighted findings in a number of areas that need to be considered in programme development. These include:

- A consideration of the underlying relationship of civil society to the state;
- The use of a type of context and stakeholder analysis that is unusual for development agencies to undertake in complex settings;
- An identification of new actors to work with, again going beyond those that development agencies might be comfortable working with;
- A reflection on the nature of civil society, what accountability means in these contexts, and what implications this has for programme development;
- The place of violence and insecurity in constraining development opportunities, particularly for women and girls, and the importance therefore of designing programmes with this in mind.

The gender implications of the findings of this study were not explored in detail and would warrant further consideration. With the knowledge that development opportunities have not been distributed equally to men and women, and that women, in general, bear the burden of poverty globally, then the question arises of how conflict-affected and fragile settings further exacerbate this situation. The prevalence of conflict at all levels of society, from the household to the national level, for many conflict-affected and fragile countries, suggests that there will be a relationship between the gendered dimensions of that conflict and opportunities for development. Some of this is explored later in this report around the barriers to participation. It is, however, a complex study in its own right because, while it is important to recognise in the first instance the sex discrimination inherent in those reduced opportunities for women and girls, it is also important to gain a much deeper understanding of the role that conflict plays in the lives of boys and men, particularly in relation to the link between male identity and violent behaviour. Whether such behaviours are directed at women, or more broadly contribute to community instability, is perhaps not the critical question. Rather, understanding how to address these deeply ingrained identities, in order to establish more stable environments, is the key towards establishing an enabling environment for change that, if appropriately crafted, will yield change also for women and girls.

Emerging thinking on state building and citizenship points to the importance of relationship building between the state and the citizen and highlights the important condition of trust which must be established for this to take place effectively.

A starting point for this study might be to ask what the purpose of strengthening civil society is, in order to determine what aspects of civil society to focus on and in what way this might be relevant to a conflict-affected and fragile state context.

The definition of fragility is well documented in the literature (and summarised in Oxfam 2009 and Ndaruhutse 2011). Both these reviews highlight the challenge of defining fragility clearly across many different contexts and configurations. However, certain elements appear as common threads across definitions, including what have been called legitimacy failures, service delivery failures, and authority failures in all or part of the state. The literature demonstrates the common 'state-centred' and state-building approach to addressing these failures at the national level – focusing on legislation, constitutional development, elections, and the rule of law (Oosterom 2009).

At the same time, much of the literature also focuses on citizen participation, voice, and accountability as tools that promote a greater level of good governance and enable positive change through greater accountability of decision-making bodies (Rocha Menocal 2008). The same report highlights that these are not new areas of interest, but have been prevalent since the 1990s. What they have lacked until more recently, however, is a political analysis that really considers the context in which they are exercised.

Civil society initiatives are described as demonstrating governance-based citizen action – making civil society and citizenship almost synonymous (Oosterom 2009). Citizenship is the expression of individual action, while citizen action is the bringing together of that action into a collective effort (Benequista 2011).

Several issues emerge in terms of the relationships between civil society, the state, and the citizen, including how to work on governance; citizen expectations of the state; and the links between peace building and state building.

i) An emerging perspective is that **it is not just about working on the ‘supply’ and ‘demand’ side of governance (i.e. either the state or civil society), but rather that working across such domains is necessary**, in recognition of the fact that they are interdependent (Benequista 2011). The rationale behind this is based on the view that a social contract is being established between the citizen and the state (Ndaruhutse 2011). The same document also highlights an argument that fragile states may be less fragile than first thought, and that there are many different types of social contract being formed, resulting perhaps in Western models of democracy having less relevance or appropriateness to the context. It is suggested therefore that it is not a standard institutional design that emerges from this relationship (Benequista 2011).

This raises the question of whether strengthening civil society is about promoting democracy or about something else. Several documents highlight the importance of citizen perceptions of legitimacy in addressing issues in fragile settings and in promoting the state³ as a legitimate authority, while also recognising that this may be complicated by de facto non-state authorities being perceived as more legitimate in the eyes of citizens because of what they can provide for them (Oosterom 2009). Legitimacy is described in terms of the state’s role (establishing authority, providing security, providing services), but also in terms of citizens’ perceptions of and engagement with the state – i.e. it is not possible to strengthen the legitimacy of the state, a necessary precursor to effective government, without strengthening citizens’ *capacity and interest* to engage with it, and thereby increase the legitimacy of the state in their eyes. As the state increasingly fulfils its role, citizens should need to look less towards de facto authorities (whose legitimacy will therefore change as far as the citizen is concerned) and more towards the state, though in reality this is a lengthy process and one that is not linear.

The idea that the two domains of state and citizenship are mutually interdependent goes beyond the rather technical concept of citizens as individuals or as members of movements influencing decision-making in the formal arena. This alone does not provide a basis for building a social contract where some form of exchange is taking place. Several documents highlight the reality that even where citizens do participate in decision-making fora, this does not necessarily result in tangible changes to their lives or in their expectations being met. Even where conditions are set out to establish the social contract, as DFID suggests⁴ (Ndaruhutse 2011), this does not quite capture the intangible nature of the relationships – built on trust, transparency, honesty, and openness – that is suggested

³ Ndaruhutse et al. (2011) highlight the distinction drawn here between state and government legitimacy i.e. the demonstration of institutional capability as compared with the route taken towards that capability.

⁴ Identified as i) addressing the causes and effects of conflict and fragility; ii) supporting inclusive political settlements; iii) developing core state functions; and iv) responding to public expectations.

as a key element in building state legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. The absence of trust as an inhibitor of the developing role of civil society organisations (CSOs) is well illustrated in South Sudan (Moore 2009).

ii) **A further issue in building the relationship between state and citizens is what citizen expectations of the state might encompass.** Several documents highlight the private and domestic nature of citizenship (Benequista 2011) and therefore of the state's potential reach into people's lives. For citizens to become exercised enough by an issue to engage with it, there is a need for some level of individual aspiration for change, but such aspirations will be affected by prior experiences of violence and by the level of safety that they now perceive (Oosterom 2009). This may be a particular issue for women and girls who are often survivors of personalised forms of violence as well as community based violence, that undermines confidence and aspiration. While it may be debatable that individual aspiration is a prerequisite (with Afghanistan providing an illustration of a context where individual interests are subordinate to wider and more influential group aspirations), the impact of violence and conflict on people's lives appears central in considering the issue of working with civil society in fragile contexts, the levels of aspiration that civil society might have, and the ability of civil society to engage safely in a 'process of struggle and consternation' (Benequista 2011).

iii) A third area of consideration in building the relationship between the state and the citizen is **the growing recognition of the links between peace building and state building.** In the past these domains have been treated separately, with a separation between traditional development activity and the activities of more specialist organisations focused on peace building and conflict transformation. Increasingly, an overlap has been identified, particularly in relation to peace building, as this has the potential to establish a basis for development, and in the importance of exploring underlying causes of violence to establish real peace (Ndaruhutse 2011). As DFID highlights (DFID 2010), a more integrated approach puts peace building and state building at the centre of its work, recognising the link between conflict, security, and development. There are, however, potential operational challenges to this, such as the ability to work to humanitarian principles and the implications of supporting an undesirable authority (Ndaruhutse 2011).

Strengthening civil society appears to be about state building to enhance legitimacy rather than the promotion of a certain form of democracy. A central part of such work is building trust between the state and its citizens – both male and female. This involves moving towards more overt political engagement and raises many ethical challenges and dimensions for multi-mandated organisations.

The place of political economy analysis is central to furthering effective programmes in conflict-affected and fragile states.

If recognising the overt political nature of the context is a challenge, the literature and interviews point to the need for much deeper analysis to meet that challenge (Fritz 2009). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Collinson) sets out a working definition of the scope of such analysis:

'Political economy analysis is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time.'⁵

⁵ OECD website:

http://www.oecd.org/document/8/0,3746,en_2649_34565_37957768_1_1_1_1,00.html (last accessed January 2012)

Such analysis would need to cover therefore a deeper understanding of the context, the stakeholders involved, the history and causes of conflict and violence, and the incentives for elites in maintaining or changing the status quo (DFID 2009). Fundamentally, it is an analysis of who holds power over what resources; its emphasis on the specific context means that there are no 'quick fixes' towards gaining a deeper understanding of that context or towards understanding what to do with that analysis once gained.

The emphasis on context is further underlined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) principles (OECD 2007), which set out context analysis as a first principle for bilateral and multilateral international actors who are active in fostering engagement between national and international stakeholders. The need for such context analysis is summarised in the recognition that every fragile situation reflects a different combination of capacities, political will, and legitimacy.

In reality, donors have been pursuing political economy analysis since the mid-2000s. Several have developed tools for political economy analysis, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Bank, and the European Community (DFID 2009). The World Bank has incorporated political economy analysis into country-level tools, such as its Institutional and Governance Reviews and Poverty and Social Impact Assessments. The OECD has incorporated political economy analysis into its programme 'Making Reform Happen' (Fritz 2009).

Notably, however, the literature and interviews highlighted the fact that donors have not seen this translate across into development agency activity in general, with few existing examples of tools for undertaking political economy analysis at the country level (World Vision 2010). A tool from World Vision, driven by a recognition of the potential to do harm in contested contexts, appears to be unusual for a development organisation. It is not entirely clear why this translation into development agency activity has not happened, but two reasons may be the underinvestment in and 'projectisation' of chronic conflict contexts and the focus on independent and impartial humanitarian assistance away from anything that might be considered political in nature. Although development agencies have not adopted political economy analysis systematically (though may have been undertaking elements of it), the interviews highlighted that this is an approach that those working on peace-building and conflict transformation initiatives use as a matter of course.

Undertaking political economy analysis requires a systematic approach with the right timing, the involvement of relevant stakeholders, and the right tools to implement it (DFID 2009). It is a dynamic rather than a static process, requiring moments of 'deep' analysis followed by ongoing monitoring of changes in the context. It is therefore an analysis process that requires both time and skilled staff to complete; it was notable that several interviews highlighted the training of DFID staff over recent months to strengthen understanding of and capacity for political economy analysis.

It is also important to note that country-level analysis may be insufficient to understand the full scope of what happens at a local level, given the limited reach of the state at that level in many contexts. A country-level analysis may be too broad to provide sufficient insights into the specific political economy of thematic areas, such as the service sectors, and how these operate at the local level. As such, it may be necessary to implement political economy analysis at different levels or across different themes, depending on what aspect the organisation is concerned with (Oosterom 2009), although in both the interviews and the literature the point was made that links to the national level must be made eventually (Benequista 2011).

The question of how to use political economy analysis is a next step that has had limited treatment in the literature and was acknowledged in several interviews as being a key shortcoming in efforts to date, with a relatively small evidence base gathered for how to use this analysis to build the relationship between the state and civil society. Consideration of how to gender this analysis will be key if the situation for male and female citizens is to be properly understood.

The need to work with a broader range of stakeholders, including from the informal sphere, is important and challenging.

The need to map the different stakeholders and their interests as part of a political economy analysis arises from an understanding that the state and its citizens are not the only participants in the political economy. Rather, informal actors (traditional leaders and faith leaders, amongst others) and armed actors (whether state-sanctioned or non-state actors) co-exist and hold power alongside other influences such as the private sector, regional players, and international actors (Oosterom 2009). It may be possible for a stakeholder to be a member of more than one group, exercising power in different domains and at different levels. The power cube (see Annex C) provides an illustration of the different 'spaces' in which power is exercised, highlighting the visible, invisible, and hidden aspects of power (Oxfam 2009). An analysis of which stakeholders are present in the context, and what their interests and incentives might be, provides the 'who' and 'why' of the informal sphere. Setting this within the analytic framework of the power cube allows a deeper exploration of 'how' power is used and what this means for those working to influence and change the context.

While the focus of programmes may tend towards building a stronger relationship between the citizen and the state, this will be affected by the realities of these informal influences, regardless of the extent of fragility and conflict. The anti-logging campaign in Tanzania (Harris 2011) provides an explanation for this, as it illustrates the way that informal rules can prevail, demonstrating the co-existence of different logics of accountability and legitimacy. Harris' report shows that informal rules (e.g. patronage) can co-exist alongside a context where CSOs seek to hold public officials accountable for their behaviour. The former set of rules is likely to lead to more immediate outcomes, while the latter may have a delayed benefit as the impact of process-based rules takes effect. However, for citizens living with the effects of conflict, outcome-based benefits may outweigh rules-based ones. It therefore becomes possible for standard notions of accountability to exist alongside corruption and nepotism to quite a significant extent, as contexts such as Afghanistan demonstrate.

Informal influences may not always be negative and in some situations are seen as providing an important complement or alternative to the state. The presence of armed actors has a significant impact on how citizens engage with the state (Oosterom 2009), but in many cases, where the state has failed to provide for citizens (in terms of security, humanitarian assistance, or basic services), such actors have been instrumental in providing for their needs and may have gained considerable legitimacy in doing so. The role of faith groups has been pivotal at points during periods of conflict in providing assistance to people and in providing important motivations in moving towards peace (for example, the role of the Churches in South Sudan in supporting the 'Liberation Struggle' and in seeking a model of restorative justice following the peace agreement).

Furthermore, there are examples where the important role of informal influences has been incorporated into formal systems. For example, a Council of Traditional Leaders is recognised in the South Sudan interim constitution, and at the local level a mechanism for governance comprises a Liberation Council including political, administrative, and traditional leadership.

Interviews highlighted the dynamic nature of informal influences on state-building, with the possibility that benign influences can also be captured by local elites. A variety of examples exist from contexts such as Afghanistan, where stakeholders have transitioned between formal and informal authority at different points in the state-building process, as different types of accountability and legitimacies have prevailed.

Several documents in the literature review highlight the importance of including these various influences from the beginning, to offset grievances and to work towards inclusive settlement of the conflict and its underlying issues (DFID 2010). The OECD principles also highlight the importance of this. Such decisions will need to be set within a detailed political economy analysis that looks beyond the visible demonstrations of power towards that which takes place within invisible and hidden spaces.

An analysis of informal influences is critical not only to identify positive and negative factors that may impact on the programme, but also to identify the broader coalition of agents through whom change might take place. Such a coalition, if truly broad, may not be an easy forum with which to engage, particularly as any process of change will lead to changes in who 'wins' and who 'loses'. As such, the situation is dynamic and unpredictable, and maintaining an ongoing analysis of changing stakeholder incentives will be important.

The nature of civil society and its relationship to accountability have implications for programme development.

In considering the task of 'strengthening civil society', it is important to articulate what is meant by 'civil society' and what is meant by 'strengthening' it. There appear to be very different approaches to this in the literature, although a number of documents identify human rights as a basis for civil society action. Various terms are used to refer to what might be seen as traditional civil society activity, such as collective 'civic engagement' (Benequista 2011) and 'citizenship' (Oosterom 2009). In the former, multiple forms of citizenship are identified and the point is made that, although civic action might focus on the range of human rights that people hold (civil, political, social, etc.), in reality accessing social rights is a precursor to being able to enjoy civil and political rights. This is particularly important when the prevailing focus may be on institutional building for the state (the rule of law, the constitution), resulting potentially in a much greater focus on civil and political rights (as with South Sudan currently) than on access to other types of rights, such as social, economic, or cultural rights (access to health and education, for example). In South Sudan, low literacy rates were cited repeatedly as a factor that would undermine building a stronger civil society, as without access to social rights (the right to education), citizens are not able to engage meaningfully in issues concerning their civil and political rights. Given the differential in these low literacy rates between women and men, the opportunities for women to engage meaningfully is even further reduced.

While for some the term 'civil society' cuts across a very broad constituency of actors, including trade unions, human rights organisations, development agencies, the media, and donors (BetterAid 2011), for others it is more narrowly defined as international and national NGOs, community-based organisations, and the United Nations (Odhiambo 2008). It was notable that in South Sudan people appeared to use the term largely to mean national and local NGOs.

A broad definition of civil society includes:

'... members of families, households, villages and the larger community and the forms of organised, collective representation that are formally or informally supported by them. These include: community based self-help, religious and development-orientated organisations; trade unions, business-support organisations, consumer and activity groups, professional organisations, civil society support networks and other structured or semi-structured initiatives in the non-governmental and non-profit sectors.' (Riak, quoted in Moore 2009)

In interviews, others referred to civil society as 'everything between the citizen and the state' or as those who 'care about the public interest without private or sectarian influence'.

The term therefore covers a plurality of visions 'articulated through a plurality of modes that contribute to civil and peaceful ... interaction' (Pearce, undated). Pearce highlights the importance of not confusing this with observations of associational patterns that may *not* in reality point to either civil or peaceful interactions. This underlines a point made in several interviews that civil society as a collective group is neither homogenous nor necessarily benign. One respondent highlighted the way that civil society has been idealised, with considerable analysis done on building its capacity, but relatively little analysis of the tensions inherent in civil society relationships. Such tensions are based on the reality that development is a contested political process and, as such, vested interests will be challenged. These may be interests determined by, for example, gender, religion or ethnicity, where the same dynamics that play out around these issues in society more broadly are also likely to play out inside CSOs themselves.

It is important, therefore, to treat the concept of civil society with some caution, recognising that power is exercised in visible, invisible, and hidden ways in civil society relationships, as much as it is in any other. It is also important to note that the voices heard within civil society movements (with voice seen as a key element to promote state-building through greater institutional accountability) are not 'unproblematic' (Rocha Menocal 2008), even though they are often treated as such. The voices of poor people may be far from complementary and indeed are quite likely to be in competition with one another. An example from Bangladesh demonstrates this well. Slum dwellers experienced civil society alliances working with government to address urban issues as part of the harassment problem that they were facing, as CSOs were effectively engaged in moving them off the sites where they had built shelters (Benequista 2011). In this example, some CSOs were campaigning for changes to improve the urban setting, while other members of civil society – the slum dwellers – were campaigning for their right to remain on the sites.

Interviews also highlighted, however, the importance of international organisations seeing their role as one of facilitator rather than as a leader or director of process. A civil society group will be more familiar with the context, interests, and issues facing it than an international organisation is likely to be, and so will be best placed to determine its own direction from the analysis.

Several documents highlight the importance of 'agency' as an important element in people's willingness and capacity to engage in civil society activity. This sense of personal power is affected by social inequalities, such as those arising from gender inequity, as well as by external factors such as violence, but recognition of its importance is seen in the allocation of donor funding to strengthen the capability of more marginalised groups to have a voice (Rocha Menocal 2008). Rocha Menocal's research found that the more this was targeted to the needs of the most marginalised and socially excluded people, and to the needs of non-traditional civil society groups such as trade unions, the greater the evidence that empowerment was achieved.

The power cube again helps to make sense of why this is important in its explanation of the different ways in which participation is experienced. Participation can be experienced on an invited or open basis, or may not be possible at all (closed). While the terms of participation may be determined to some extent by power holders, the capacity, confidence, and aspiration to engage with participatory opportunities meaningfully relates also to individual and group access to voice, as well as to the perceptions of legitimacy and accountability described earlier.

Evidence shows that the most effective citizen activist is the one who is most versatile, able to move between local and global alliances and to maintain different partnerships

and approaches (Benequista 2011). Such activity for the effective citizen is possible only where internal boundaries (such as poor self-confidence, skills, or knowledge) or external boundaries (such as violence or discrimination) are removed.

Although there are different perspectives on the level of civil society with which to engage, there were repeated indications in the literature that targeting local-level associational activity (gatherings of community members on issues of concern, such as safety, health, or education), where appropriate, may be beneficial. Several documents indicated that it was particularly at the grassroots level and where settings were more fragile that associational activity was beneficial (Benequista 2011). Even in settings where violence was a continuing issue, there was evidence that associational activity provided safe spaces for people (including women) to interact together; however, these activities are often not recognised by incoming organisations (Oosterom 2009). A key point is made by Benequista (2011) that education about rights is not effective without action. Associational activity therefore needs to result in outcomes that build greater legitimacy.

Defining what is meant by 'stronger' civil society is also more complex than it might at first appear. Several documents provided the example of Bangladesh as a state with a large number of CSOs, but with a very poor record in terms of the legitimacy of its formal authorities (with corruption and nepotism both endemic in state functions). If the task of working with civil society is about building state legitimacy through a relationship of trust and mutual accountability, then the task of making it 'stronger' must involve establishing better mechanisms and means through which to do this, as much as it involves strengthening the capacity to formulate and express views.

The complexity of the concept of civil society suggests a further emphasis on analysis to understand the different interests and investments of civil society actors. In fragile situations, an emphasis on activities that demonstrate outcomes closest to the point of impact is more likely to yield results than participation in broader-based process activities that may not yield results in the lives of the most marginalised people, such as women and girls, for some time to come. However, connections need to be made between local-level activities – which might combine voice, accountability, and governance components – with national-level activities that contribute to state legitimacy. Establishing the mechanisms to facilitate this – i.e. creating fora for dialogue between different stakeholders at the local community level with local authorities and other actors, including at the national level, and considering the gendered elements of this – might be the central contribution that Oxfam can make to augment CSOs' own efforts to bring about change.

Insecurity and violence are part of the canvas with which organisations work and need to be considered as a core part of programme design.

The literature, interviews, and field visit to South Sudan highlighted the extent to which violence and insecurity affect people's lives in conflict-affected and fragile contexts, even after apparent peace agreements have been struck. Some of this lies in the reality that violent activities continue along different lines of dispute that may be ethnically or resource-based or have their origins in a deep history of conflict between certain groups (Johnston 2010). However, several views were expressed that in South Sudan many reported 'tribal conflicts' are in fact a continuation of the war by proxy between North and South, suggesting that assumptions about the nature and origin of conflict and continuing violence need to be avoided.

However, this accounts for only some of the elements of violence and insecurity that people who have experienced wide-ranging conflict are exposed to. There is evidence that crime and interpersonal violence increase after conflict and are particularly an issue in fragile states and post-conflict settings (World Bank, undated), as well as in transitional settings where ethnic diversity is high (Pearce et al. 2011). In such contexts gender-based violence may have its roots in male identity issues, where violence is a way to affirm masculinity (Johnston 2010), or in more general gender inequalities, which become

amplified in post-conflict situations as roles and relationships are reasserted. Research in South America also provides examples where violence has increased rather than diminished as the state has become more democratically established, challenging the view that greater democracy will always lead to reduced levels of violence (Pearce et al. 2011).

As has already been suggested, the impact of violence on citizens is significant. It affects people's sense of agency through feelings of fear and insecurity (Oosterom 2009) and also affects their perceptions of the legitimacy of the state and other actors (such as traditional leaders and armed non-state actors), with the non-state actors often offering better outcomes for security than the state might be able to. The state may not simply be in dereliction of its duty to provide security, but may itself be perpetrating violence against certain groups of the population, further contributing to alienation of the citizen from the state and to a loss of legitimacy (Pearce et al. 2011).

Several documents point to the cycle of violence that is experienced in some settings (World Vision 2010), moving away from a linear interpretation of conflict and post-conflict settings towards the concept that certain contexts are never completely free of violence. Such documents also point to the importance of building development agency responsiveness to these cycles of violence and an ability to be flexible where the situation requires this. The DAC principles highlight the importance of prevention and the importance of seeing the link between political, security, and development objectives towards achieving this (OECD 2007). The literature and interviews suggest that it is important to build greater state resilience towards conflict (World Bank, undated) and to ensure that disagreements can be managed without recourse to conflict. A resiliency agenda for the state and for its citizens, although ill-defined, therefore appears to be an important component in understanding the context of violence and of building civil society strengths and state capacity to deal with conflict and the threat of violence more effectively.

An understanding of the impacts of violence and its continuing presence on people's lives is necessary to gain a more realistic understanding of the ability of citizens to engage in civil society activities. Oxfam GB's protection work provides an opportunity to link this analysis of the impact of violence to programme approaches that address protection issues better and that focus particularly on community safety and community support models.

Change models that are currently in use and a proposal for a different approach.

The models of change identified in interviews and the literature (DFID 2009) largely reflect Oxfam's internal reflections on how change happens (Green 2007). These set out a framework of the components that contribute to change, including structures, institutions, agents, and trigger events. 'Structures' are seen as slow-moving elements of change, such as demographic changes or changes in resource bases or technologies, whereas 'institutions' largely relate to the rules governing behaviour – and, as illustrated earlier, these can be both informal and formal and may refer to attitudes and beliefs as much as to other types of institutional factor. 'Agents' refers to organisations and individuals who promote or block change, while 'triggers' refers to one-off events that might 'tip the balance' of change.

As indicated in earlier sections, programmes seem to fall largely between state building and civil society strengthening. When analysed against models of change, the emphasis appears to fall either on strengthening institutions or on strengthening agents, generally in the form of civil society. With institutions, the emphasis may be on policy change, formulating better rules, or on capacity building, strengthening institutions to be more capable.

Some programmes work to empower individuals and organisations as 'agents' to respond to and transform their own situations; while others emphasise working with

both the supply and demand sides of governance by mobilising 'agents' around a defined issue to influence institutions. Context appears to be relevant in the emphasis placed on what change seems possible, with one interview highlighting that work may be less about propelling things forwards in a given situation and more about stopping slippage backwards.

A few organisations emphasised the need for spaces for dialogue (in some cases specified as inclusive dialogue) either to promote debate or build action over areas of mutual interest; one in particular highlighted the importance of working with others to build greater resilience in-country.

Several organisations recognised the links between peace building and security as central to successful development work, although only one of these organisations approached this from the perspective of a development organisation, and that with some hesitancy as to whether to embrace this strategy of working on peace building as part of its development agenda, as a departure from its usual approach.

There are then a range of activities being carried out by other organisations that Oxfam would recognise in its own activities, and also some interesting and consistent threads within this study in terms of establishing channels and mechanisms for dialogue and in integrating a focus on peace building within development programming.

However, it is notable that an evaluation of donor-funded voice and accountability programmes – programmes that might form the core part of work to strengthen civil society – highlighted the fact that, although positive changes could be identified in relation to behaviour and beliefs as a result of this work, particularly where it was closely targeted to marginalisation, there was relatively little evidence to demonstrate a link between this work and development outcomes (Rocha Menocal 2008). These findings were echoed in other research, with the suggestion that donor expectations of participation were too high and that middle ground indicators of attitudes and behaviour change were important to show progress towards development goals (Benequista 2011).

While voice and accountability work does not cover the entire range of interventions that different organisations referred to when describing their focus on civil society, these findings suggest that the following assumptions about how change happens may be incorrect:

- An assumed automatic relationship between an enhanced citizens' voice and improved government accountability;
- An assumption that citizens' voice represents the interests, needs, and demands of a homogeneous 'people';
- An assumption that more effective and efficient institutions will naturally be more transparent, responsive, and ultimately accountable;
- A related assumption that citizens' voice and accountability interventions can be supported via a traditional focus on capacity building of formal institutions;
- An assumption that democracy leads to improved developmental outcomes (including poverty reduction).⁶

The report proposes deeper political analysis of the situation before investing in such programmes, working with formal and informal institutions that are in place rather than the ones that are not, focusing on political as well as technical capacity building, working on both sides of the supply and demand equation in the same intervention, recognising the slow pace of change, and working with a wider range of 'non-traditional' actors.

⁶ Rocha Menocal (2008) p.xi.

An alternative perspective on change models is one that focuses on a more emergent theory of change. This suggests that it is in fact quite difficult in the complex, unpredictable, and multiply influenced environments that conflict-affected and fragile states represent to determine the end-point of an intervention (Mowles, undated) and certainly even harder to demonstrate and attribute change to the result of one organisation's isolated interventions (Ndaruhutse 2011). Rather, a coalition of the 'unexpected' is proposed that might enable more wide-ranging and relevant thinking at local levels, with a reflective approach that enables a greater investment in considering the impact of practice in stages, as each next step of the intervention emerges.

'When we act with intention into the world we act into a web of intentions of our partners and beneficiaries, and others, as well, and we owe it to them not to impose our targets on them, but to negotiate with them what is possible. Strategy-making is continuous and skilful improvisation with others and the exploration of what that improvisation means to us and our intentions.' (Mowles, undated)

This perspective challenges the current emphasis amongst donors on results-based programmes (which are also challenged by the evidence of the slow pace of change cited above), which makes it hard for organisations to adopt a different, less prescriptive approach to working with civil society. However, there is an opportunity to consider this through an approach that seeks to facilitate channels for communication and relationship building around areas of common interest and to use this process more reflectively to set out incremental steps for change.

4. Implications for programming

The findings of the global study suggest a number of implications for programming.

1. Ensure a policy framework is developed that provides guidance to country staff regarding how to use political economy analysis, how this relates to the humanitarian mandate and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), how to work with non-state actors, and how to monitor emergent change.

A primary issue is to recognise the political nature of this programme and to underpin this with guidance and support to country teams on the policy dimensions of this and on the approaches to be taken. In particular, this will be necessary in terms of interpreting the humanitarian mandate (which teams may struggle to reconcile with this more political focus) and in terms of recognising the very limited impact of this work towards advancing the MDGs). If a more emergent approach is taken towards programme development, then this might require policy guidance on the development of measurements of change. It may also be necessary to develop clearer guidance on working with non-state actors or 'undesirable states'.

2. Invest in staff capacity to implement political economy analysis and prioritise this analysis in all pilot programmes.

The extent to which Oxfam and others have invested in staff development in conflict-affected and fragile states was not identified in this study, but an initiative by Save the Children to strengthen the general humanitarian response functioning of its country teams in such contexts has highlighted the value and cost of such an investment.

Although staff may have been exposed to some elements of political economy analysis, it is assumed that this has not been undertaken systematically or comprehensively, and it is therefore recommended that staff development be undertaken. This will include a range of different levels and types of analysis, and will also require investing in training, on-the-job coaching to implement such analysis, and ongoing guidance to monitor changes in the situation. Particular emphasis is needed on mapping stakeholders across and within formal and informal institutions, civil society, and other sections of society; mapping and understanding the historical reasons for conflict; analysing current dimensions of violence, conflict, and insecurity; and analysing where there are obstacles and drivers for change. The purposes of such mapping are to help build a stronger relationship between civil society and the state and to help enhance state legitimacy.

Although Oxfam may choose to adopt a more emergent theory of change, it could be guided by DFID's tools for political economy analysis, including understanding the structural, institutional, individual, and organisational components that may contribute to change at the country and local levels, and could use reflective analysis to track where events trigger unexpected changes. The power cube may also be a useful tool in this process.

Involvement with specialist organisations undertaking specific aspects of this analysis – for example, organisations with a particular focus on safety and security or on conflict transformation – would be one way to access expertise in these areas more quickly, as well as to enhance joint learning.

3. Promoting community conversations with a broad-based and inclusive constituency.

It is difficult to start this process before knowing what it is that communities want and what Oxfam wants to achieve, and is somewhat counter-intuitive to the way that the organisation might usually work. However, in each pilot it is recommended that Oxfam works with a select few organisations and associational groups at the local level who demonstrate a motivation towards the public interest, to promote community conversations. Conversations could be promoted around civil society trust building, perceptions of legitimacy and accountability, and any issues of concern that such groups have. Oxfam's role would be to identify where it can facilitate mechanisms for dialogue and debate with formal and informal institutions regarding these concerns. Three avenues open themselves as a particular focus, but as a 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to be successful, each context will need to be assessed for the particular opportunities it presents.

These avenues are:

- Conversations concerning security, safety, and violence and their impacts at the household, community, and national levels;
- Conversations concerning the immediate outcomes communities are looking for, particularly in relation to areas of work where Oxfam is already active, for example water supply, sanitation, livelihoods, protection, health, education, and humanitarian issues;
- Conversations concerning perceptions of the state, issues of legitimacy, and perspectives on accountability.

The purpose of these conversations would be to:

- Shape and inform the next steps of engagement for Oxfam with these partners in these contexts (it is important that there are tangible outcomes for participants of the project in due course);
- Start to document an evidence base of how political analysis and emergent change is a useful way of working in fragile states;
- Develop alternative accountability models that generate a more positive exchange between the state and its citizens across invited and open participatory spaces.

4. Developing alternative models of accountability

The study highlighted how accountability is perceived and experienced differently by citizens, largely in relation to the state and informal institutions, along with potential for the co-existence of informal and formal accountabilities alongside one another. It also highlighted the approach commonly used by civil society to 'challenge' the state and hold it to account.

There may, however, be value in exploring different models of accountability that work towards trust building and the strengthening of the relationship between civil society and the state. Such an approach would suggest promoting a more transparent, honest, and open conversation and would first involve small steps in safe environments for such dialogue to take place. Oxfam would need to model this approach in its own relationships internally, with partners, and with formal and informal institutions.

5. Implications for management

One of the key issues for any organisation working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is the lack of opportunity for staff development and investment. In many instances it is not surprising therefore that the potential of staff may not have been fully realised, resulting in challenges for organisations in how to make the step change described above as a consequence of this under-investment. Staff skills and knowledge will be necessary to undertake the following:

- Political economy analysis, with a gender focus;
- Community-based facilitation of discussions amongst a diverse group of stakeholders (requiring strong participatory, networking, representation, and dispute resolutions skills);
- Identification of new programme opportunities as they emerge from discussions;
- Judgement and management of sensitivities to do no harm (requiring analysis of how, where, and when to intervene in those sensitivities);
- Ability to take risks (being both empowered to do so by clear organisational guidelines and management support, while also being accountable for those risks taken, requiring an informed understanding of immediate and longer-term reputational and security risks);
- Ability to work in genuine and equal partnership, to be comfortable with challenge and dispute, and to let go of the need to control outcomes;
- Provision of an exemplary level of accountability.

This is a daunting list and it would be unrealistic and unreasonable to expect such skills and knowledge to reside in one person or, in some instances, even in the whole team, if this is far from their experiences to date. As such, Oxfam will need to provide resource investment to teams. Several options present themselves, therefore, each with their own positives and negatives.

1. The appointment of a strong lead to manage the project with global experience. In settings like Afghanistan and South Sudan, there are many highly skilled nationals with the experience and knowledge to run such programmes for Oxfam, but they tend to work for organisations that provide better remuneration packages. If such personnel are not available, or are unwilling to work for Oxfam packages, then it may be necessary to recruit internationals (although recognising this is at a time when Oxfam is trying to move towards teams led by national personnel). One option would be to accept that these are exceptional situations that require the very best of staff and to make an exception on HR policy that allows the organisation to recruit the best national personnel available; or move ahead with recruitment of an international staff member with the right profile of experience in tandem with a national counterpart. It is likely that compromise one way or the other will be necessary to broker the kind of innovation suggested here.

2. A variation on the above would be to share a global role across several pilot programmes with counterparts in each country. This would have the benefit of cross-programme learning, identifying common threads, and achieving more quickly the goal of building a body of evidence globally for the use of political economy analysis and the use of an emergent approach to change.

3. Working in consortia with other organisations may address the institutional shortfalls Oxfam might encounter in implementing all of the above; perhaps through working in a more systematic global, rather than project-based, approach with those organisations that have shown themselves interested in partnership with Oxfam and who bring specialist skills in the use of media, in safety and security analysis, or conflict transformation. Such an approach could provide the technical skills that may not be evident in Oxfam's own teams in the pilot countries, but would still require strong management skills to develop and deliver Oxfam's contribution to any consortium that was established. Besides working at the programme level, a consortium of this nature could also work with the wider sector nationally to develop common approaches on curricula for training programmes, ensuring that these are more tightly focused than might usually occur and that efforts are co-ordinated.

4. Supporting teams to invest in reflection may require additional investments from academic bodies/think tanks. Several such organisations have already expressed interest in working further on this with Oxfam, and it may be that Oxfam could contract out elements of the programme where appropriate to other organisations, reducing the burden on country teams. Areas that lend themselves to this approach could be: establishing the baseline in each context; developing an appropriate model of political economy analysis for a specific context; developing a monitoring process managed by stakeholders rather than Oxfam; and bringing theoretical rigour, even if an emergent approach to change is the model utilised, to programme design and analysis.

6. Summary and recommendations

The table below sets out core elements that this study suggests should be incorporated into programmes that are seeking to strengthen civil society.

The innovatory nature of these suggestions lies in the approach proposed rather than in what these suggestions might seek to achieve. This includes linking development to a deeper analysis of political economy, security, safety, and violence as central issues to consider in programme design, besides considering them as risk management issues; focusing on locally based, small-scale, action-orientated outcomes, but doing this at the pace and direction of participants; and promoting dialogue, conversation, and debate between civil society and the state, while also recognising the need to promote alternative models of accountability that are grounded in a realistic expectation of what the state can do. Such models could promote stronger relationships around trust, transparency, and openness.

Other elements that are incorporated into the overall approach include building a coalition of 'unexpected' participants to further this dialogue and relationship, and recognising the importance of including marginalised groups and sections of society. Lastly, innovation lies in developing an approach that is emergent, recognising the challenges and unpredictability of conflict-affected contexts and therefore relying less on mapped outcomes towards change and more on building the processes within which change might occur. This includes building reflection as a core process within the programme's implementation and providing the opportunities to bring together agencies interested in building a learning forum around lessons emerging from this work.

The recommendations drawn from this study are as follows.

Programme framework	Action
Gendered political economy analysis is implemented as a process throughout the life of the programme	Develop a policy framework that guides the use of this analysis Bring together tools and agencies to implement joint analysis where possible and ensure an ongoing monitoring of analysis
A gendered analysis of violence and security is built into programming	Incorporate an analysis of how, in what way, and on whom violence impacts in this current situation and where this prevents participation or promotes it, especially in relation to women
Civil society voice and participation are a focus, particularly for marginalised groups and non-traditional CSOs	Work at the local level and eventually national level to facilitate the intentions of civil society bodies from as broad a constituency as possible and particularly from marginalised groups Facilitate a focus on issues of immediate concern and over which civil society, including associational groups, can have some control

	Identify relevant aspects of state capacity that might be enhanced through this facilitation
	Anticipate supporting institutional capacity building for civil society and possibly for the state, but only where this is well targeted, co-ordinated with others, and includes a follow-up process for accompaniment and support
A coalition of the unexpected is facilitated	Use media as a forum for communication and promote community conversations that build an evidence base and increased understanding of trust building between formal and informal institutions and civil society ⁷
	Incorporate an analysis of risk into this element of the work
Accountability models are explored towards building trust between civil society and the state	Work with representatives from public, private, and civil society sectors, identified on the basis of the above to facilitate dialogue and debate and seek to promote new models of accountability across these
	Agree what kinds of accountability model and checks and balances have currency for participants in the programme; model and promote these through mechanisms and channels of dialogue and discourse
Towards an emergent model of change	Introduce the process of reflective practice between Oxfam and its partners, to identify emergent lessons and develop further programme steps on this basis
	Document this learning longitudinally and systematically as an alternative approach to how change happens
	Bring together organisations interested in developing a shared understanding of political economy, civil society strengthening, and emergent theories of change

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Annex A: People interviewed

Karen Barnes, DFID

Mike Battcock, DFID

Jonathan Cohen, Conciliation Resources

Pilar Domingo, ODI

Simon Gray, Saferworld

Alison Hannah, Penal Reform (email response to questions)

Paul Jenkins, British Red Cross

Professor Mary Kaldor, London School of Economics

Marie Pierre Lienard, Union Internationale des Avocats

Geoff Loan, International Committee of the Red Cross

Alina Rocha Menocal, ODI

Chris Mowles, Complexity and Management Centre, University of Hertfordshire

Wale Osofasan, HelpAge

Nicola Palmer, UNDP

Professor Jenny Pearce, International Centre for Participation Studies, University of Bradford

Emma Roberts, Save the Children

Paneer Salvan, Panos

Francesca Silvani, Article 19

Siobhan Wainwright, Panos

Hans Wasseling, Peace-Building and Stabilisation Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Simon Weatherbed, Responding to Conflict

Tim Williams, Panos

Annex B: Interview template

Questions to guide semi-structured interviews with key informants

The purpose of these interviews is to identify what experience others have in relation to the core questions for the project and how organisations have responded to this in terms of strategies, programmes, and partnerships that they have developed as a result. It is anticipated that these discussions will highlight where there is tested practice already, where innovation is taking place, and what remaining gaps might exist that Oxfam may be able to fill. It may also identify potential new linkages for the organisation at both global and country levels for advocacy and programme purposes.

The questions below are structured around seven lines of enquiry, with the intention to ask the main question and follow up with the details only if these points do not emerge in the discussion.

Interviews will take up to one hour.

1. Establishing the organisation's engagement with and approach to conflict and fragile countries

Could you provide an overview of current and forthcoming work in conflict-affected and fragile states?

- Spread of countries (number and types)?
- How does the organisation define fragility, is it important or useful to them – if so, why?
- Content of work (humanitarian, development, risk reduction; focused on what sectoral aspects)?
- What is actual (in progress and tested) and what is planned (aspirational)?
- What do you think is working well or not working well?

2. Clarifying institutional direction of travel (if not clear from the above)

What is your strategic intent with the work in conflict-affected and fragile countries? Do you have a formal document (strategy or policy) capturing this?

- End points – what does it look like?
- When is enough enough?
- What measures of success/benchmarks are you looking for? How have these emerged as measures (process and participation)?
- How long will it take to deliver it?
- Who is the organisation partnering with to achieve this intent? Are there any gaps?

3. Gauging the organisation's interpretation of the role of civil society

What role(s) does civil society have in these conflict-affected and fragile countries?

- What do you mean by civil society? Where are the poor and marginalised in this picture?
- Is (are) the role(s) described the optimum role(s) or does the organisation envisage something different?
- How has the organisation developed its analysis about the role(s) of civil society?

- Has it developed or is it developing any innovative approaches⁸ in working with civil society? What stage are these at?
- Where would you see progress now on civil society development in the named countries? Is there any significance of this to global initiatives?
- What more is needed?
- What changes do you think are needed and what stops change from happening with civil society?

4. Understanding institutional assumptions about how change happens

How would you define the model of change you are using for this work?

- Structures (slow-evolving), institutions (rules that govern behaviour), agents (individuals and organisations), events (triggers).
- Has this been tested or assessed/evaluated in any way? With what results?
- In the organisation's experience, what obstacles and opportunities are there for promoting successful models of change?
- What more do you think is needed on this? What are the blockages to achieving it?

5. Developing conceptual thinking and testing ideas out on the organisation

To what extent does the organisation use resilience as a concept in addressing the needs of conflict-affected and fragile states?

- What would a resilient civil society look like?
- What is the organisation's experience of building trust between the state and the citizen/between the state and civil society?
- Similarly, what is the organisation's experience of building trust between the citizen and civil society?

6. Clarifying mechanisms for learning and programme iteration

What mechanisms does the organisation use internally and externally to disseminate learning?

- Formal and informal?
- Which are the most effective?
- Are there any gaps?
- How do these change programmes?

7. Clarifying investment

Given the above, in what way are you making new investments/changing existing investments?

- Where and how are you prioritising investment and resources?
- Are you making new, additional resources available?
- Are you shifting resources from elsewhere (doing less of something else)?

⁸ Where innovation is identified then, if time, this may need more detailed explanation or subsequent follow-up.

Annex C: The power cube

Based on work undertaken by the Institute of Development Studies⁹

Power takes different forms:

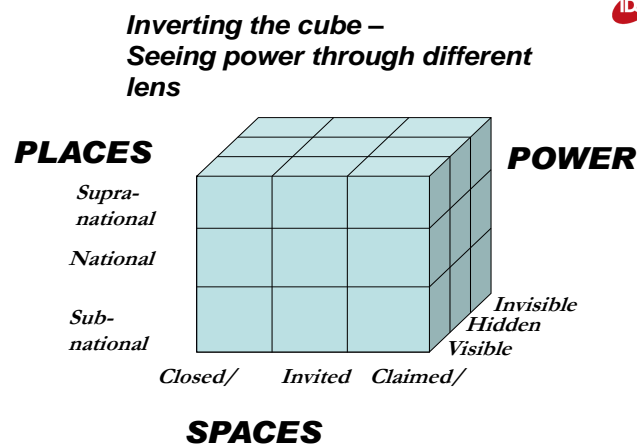
- Visible: observable decision-making mechanisms
- Hidden: shaping or influencing the political agenda behind the scenes
- Invisible: norms and beliefs, socialisation, ideology

Power is acted out in different spaces:

- Closed: decisions made by closed groups
- Invited: people asked to participate but within set boundaries
- Created: less powerful actors claim a space where they can set their own agenda

Power occurs at different levels:

- Household
- Local
- National
- Global



⁹ <http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/what-is-the-powercube/background-to-the-powercube>
(last accessed October 2011)

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