

Developing Indicators for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals: Employing a Peacebuilding Lens

Erin McCandless, Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow
(*Technical Advisors, IDPS civil society network*)

Developed for the South-South Knowledge Exchange
on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Indicators
Nairobi, Kenya, 22 October 2012

The Interim Guidance Note for fragility assessment underlines the importance of avoiding duplication of indicators associated with the Millennium Development Goals and more general development. Rather, ***the New Deal process should focus on indicators that reflect how sectoral efforts interact with drivers of conflict and fragility.*** This guidance attempts to provide more detailed suggestions about how to do this.

I. Indicators and Strategies for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

The PSGs represent broad goals agreed by members of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, comprising the g7+ and international partners. Shared indicators for these goals will provide useful information to track broad trends and progress across countries in broadly agreed PSG areas. Context-specific indicators, on the other hand, monitor progress on peacebuilding and statebuilding goals in particular contexts. These need to be situated in an overarching national strategy – that is, as envisioned by the ‘one vision one plan’ and the compacts.

Strategy development and indicators

In normal planning processes, the ***development of indicators follows determination of a strategy and requisite priority interventions.*** This would start with assessment of development challenges, then move to establish goals, then to identify benchmarks, and then to produce indicators to monitor progress against these benchmarks.

Unlike normal development planning, processes aimed at developing peacebuilding and statebuilding strategies centrally include an analysis of the major drivers of conflict and fragility and of peace. Stages of good practice include:

- 1. Development of a conflict and/or fragility assessment.*** This should include an analysis of the major drivers of conflict and fragility and of peace.
- 2. Articulation of desired ‘end state’ or vision.*** A vision should include, for instance, a more detailed articulation of what ‘peace consolidation’, ‘resilience’, or ‘development’, means in a particular context. In the New Deal process to date, peacebuilding and statebuilding, and

also resilience, have been regularly conflated, while they mean very different things. This creates challenges for the development of clear benchmarks and indicators within national settings and across them.

- 3. Identification of a theory of change.** A **theory of change** represents a rationale for why a particular overarching national strategy or programmatic approach will result in desired changes in a particular context. The New Deal process generally assumes that meeting the PSGs will produce the desired end state. These generalized assumptions suggest the need for nationally developed *theories of change* that explain *how* a country will progress from the current situation to the desired end state (that is, from fragility/crisis to resilience/peace/development). These theories cannot be the same for all contexts.
- 4. Selection of shorter and longer-term goals and priorities to address the vision, including the drivers of conflict/fragility and peace.** This will mean identifying what the PSGs mean in a given context, prioritizing which goals and drivers need to be addressed and in what sequence. Well-defined strategic goals are the basis for defining benchmarks.
- 5. Assessment of existing efforts and gaps, including parallel strategies.** Understanding where the gaps are will help to refine priorities. To what extent do existing efforts by all stakeholders address the vision and the drivers of conflict and fragility? What is missing? While PRSPs are likely to tackle a great number of development priorities, they may not be designed with a peacebuilding lens and/or with attention to conflict sensitivity – that is, with attention to the ways in which they can interact (sometimes negatively) with conflict drivers. Some conflict analysis tools include this kind of analysis.¹
- 6. Development of benchmarks.** This will involve identifying targets of progress within specific time frames (e.g., 2 years, 5 years) that reflect the vision and theory of change. With the New Deal fragility assessments, the dimensions across the stages and PSG areas of the fragility spectrum can be considered benchmark areas, within which countries can develop context specific benchmarks.
- 7. Identification of indicators.** Such indicators should measure whether and to what extent benchmarks are being achieved (some may be direct, some may be proxy).

While these are presented as logical steps in a strategy development, they might occur in slightly varying ways in different contexts. These steps provide a logical sequencing of activities that can inform a robust vision/plan and compact, as articulated in the New Deal.

¹ See for example, UNDP's Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA), the UN's Inter-agency Conflict Analysis, Do No Harm analysis and the Reflecting on Peace Practice conflict analysis framework.

II Developing Indicators with a Peacebuilding Lens

Developing indicators with a peacebuilding lens starts with consideration of the stages above, and in particular a robust conflict analysis in a participatory manner involving all societal stakeholders. This will support the generation of collectively agreed priorities that should inform a societally owned compact – one likely to deliver the vision. Building on the conflict analysis, **the following are useful approaches to developing indicators with a peacebuilding lens:**

1. **Identify specific indicators to track conflict drivers.** A valid conflict analysis/fragility assessment will make it possible to identify specific indicators tied to the drivers of conflict and peace in the specific context. For instance, in some settings land-related conflict, youth bulge plus high unemployment, and group and/or regional inequalities may be identified as key drivers—and indicators can be developed to track progress in these areas.

Currently, the degree to which conflict drivers, grievances and levels of conflict are tracked in the existing fragility assessments is uneven—indicators are often missing or buried in larger categories (such as levels of violence, including criminal violence). There are, however, good examples, noted in the box below, which can be shared and built upon.

Examples of indicators for conflict drivers

- In terms of methodology, *the DRC undertook a conflict analysis* prior to populating the fragility spectrum. They included a separate column in their fragility spectrum for ‘causes of conflict’. Specific indicators that speak to the conflict drivers include the **number of active militias in the country, number of communal conflicts, and level of active participation of civil society in peacebuilding and statebuilding actions and activities.**
- **In Liberia,** land disputes are often identified as a conflict driver – at local, community, county and national levels. Issues are found in a wide range from interpersonal disputes over specific plots of land, to inter-group conflicts regarding historical and post-war access to land, to national policies regarding the status of communal land “titles” and expropriation and compensation. Indicators identified include – **land/religious/ethnic disputes settled by relevant actors, land policy formulated/laws revised.**
- **In South Sudan,** a newly independent state, indicators that support peace consolidation and statebuilding include **monitoring of the constitution, viability/honouring of political/conflict resolution agreements, trust in the police, and cooperation and open communication among groups.**

2. **Use disaggregation and a combination of subjective and objective indicators relating to the PSGs to ensure that data reflects some of the conflict impacts of policies and behaviours.** In most if not all wars and situations of fragility, ‘horizontal inequalities’ are at play. These refer to significant inequalities in power and resources between identity groups

that generate grievance, and often, violent conflict – suggesting that they are important for their prioritization for peacebuilding and statebuilding. Gathering **disaggregated data** is a crucial step towards promoting fair and equitable resource allocation where group inequalities are a result of historical patterns of politics and development. In some countries data by region might serve as an adequate proxy for identity group, where collecting data by identity might be politically sensitive.²

Examples of the use of disaggregated data

Public perceptions of safety, and fairness of the national security entities, of the justice system and of social service delivery, can be disaggregated by identity group or region. This can provide a robust indicator for measuring grievances that can lead to violent conflict.

Relatively **objective indicators** can also be used to show the impacts of policies or programmes. Examples include the number of judicial cases processed, levels of unemployment, percentage of population with access to potable water or income inequality. If these factors were disaggregated by group or by region, it would generate useful information regarding the impacts of progress in statebuilding and development.

Understanding and **responding to group grievances** will be a pivotal peacebuilding and statebuilding strategy in many cases. This suggests the need for ways to measure the degree to which groups feel that their grievances are being addressed.

Example of regional power and resource disparities: Historically, a particular province has exerted disproportionate influence over national politics. Men from the province have controlled the military and six of ten presidents since independence have been from this province, which has, therefore, received more than their fair share of development funding and private investment. National statistics show sharp differences across all economic indices among the nation's provinces—one of the grievances driving the recent civil war. A set of indicators regarding resource flows and the relative economic positions of provinces would provide evidence of rebalancing of resources. This could result in shifts in perceptions, as well as changes in observable conditions.

3. Develop specific indicators to support capacities for peace. Work to support capacities for peace can include either reinforcing existing factors or dynamics or creating new institutional mechanisms or capacities. For instance, in many settings traditional local dispute resolution mechanisms have failed, due to the social disruption of war, because new types of disputes have arisen, or significant numbers of people may have moved to urban areas where traditional dispute resolvers are not present. In these cases, indicators can track the renewal/revival of older mechanisms and/or development and institutionalization of new procedures.

² Regions, for example, might not serve as a good proxy in Burundi, where various ethnic groups live in all regions.

- 4. Develop indicators that measure results rather than simply outputs, while illustrating progressive realization over time.** Outputs rarely point to significant changes, although they may show programme performance. Indicators should attempt to measure at least outcomes and, where possible, progress towards the country-specific vision for peace. Significant changes are not achieved in the short term, and showing progress towards challenging goals can build societal appreciation for government and other efforts, supporting peacebuilding and statebuilding. Indicators can be calibrated to show a series of incremental steps that represents important forward motion towards long term objectives—which has been termed “progressive realization”.

III. Capturing Interactions Across the PSGs

Integrating a peacebuilding lens involves tracking interactions among the PSG areas, and the indicators that address the dimensions within them. Some types of indicators might be cross cutting or include elements of several PSGs. This is an advantage: it can promote coherence across PSG areas, and support the achievement of overarching strategic goals. Approaches to capturing interactions across the PSGs include:

- 1. Developing indicators for conflict drivers and grievances, and factoring them to each of the PSG areas.** For instance, if *exclusion* is a driver of conflict, it may have a political dimension, a security dimension and an economic dimension, and it will be more effective to address it holistically across the PSG areas. This will also promote better coherence across sectors and prevent unintended negative consequences from actions in one PSG area on another.
- 2. Interpreting indicators with a systemic conflict lens.** As indicators are designed with attention to context, so too must they be interpreted in particular contexts and their relationship to conflict factors. As suggested in the previous example, conflict and fragility do not operate in single PSG areas. For example, macro indicators regarding overall economic performance can hide more nuanced conflict dynamics, such as differential group quality of life indicators. Progress in one PSG indicator area, considered alone, might suggest a positive dynamic, while the activity might be having a negative impact in other PSG areas.

Example of the need to view indicators through a systemic conflict lens

Analysis revealed that lack of police presence in rural areas of a country contributed to physical and psychological insecurity in the population. Funding was provided and new police were recruited, trained and deployed – considered a positive result. However, in a short time, it emerged that the new police were systematically abusive and corrupt, thus inducing a decrease in citizen trust of government and a sharp increase in complaints filed against individual policemen.

3. **Selecting specific groups of interest and ensure tracking of information regarding their status and/or perceptions.** For example, youth interact with all of the PSG categories. In certain settings, collecting in-depth data on youth may provide cross cutting information that links the different PSGs, thus providing more integrated analysis and policy/programme responses.
4. **Paying attention to how particular sequencing decisions can inadvertently do harm.** It is well established that appropriate sequencing lies at the heart of strategy. Applying a peacebuilding lens to decisions of sequencing for a peacebuilding strategy makes good sense. Examples of lessons in sequencing include the growing consensus that there is need for greater attention to the building of national institutions *before* rapid liberalization (both political and economic) in early post conflict settings.³ Similarly, the notion of ‘DDR sequencing flexibility’, a term being promoted by DPKO, recognizes the need to adapt to the unique DDR needs of the context, so that the sequencing of *disarmament, demobilization and reintegration* will vary and adapt to emerging needs and changing dynamics.⁴

IV. Criteria for Shared Indicators on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

A few criteria emerge from the perspective of this guidance that can inform the selection of shared PSG indicators:

- **They address negative peace** (such as levels of violence, number of displaced people, numbers of non-state armed groups, political assassinations)
- **They address positive peace** (such as indicators of social cohesion, inclusive politics, levels of transparency, social norms for tolerance, effective mechanisms to deal with grievances and handle conflict)
- **They address cross-cutting conflict drivers** (such as exclusion in political, economic, and social dimensions)
- **They address regional factors that prevent or address conflict and support peacebuilding and statebuilding** (such as indicators that measure small arms flows or cross-border movement of non-state armed groups). This is particularly important, given that national PSGs and their indicators are unlikely to address these factors.

³ For example, Paris, Roland. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*, Cambridge: CUP, 2004.

⁴ DPKO, *Second Generation DDR in Peace Operations*, 2010.

Helpful Resources

There are a number of resources that offer indicators AND provide datasets for a number of countries. A comprehensive set of resources for developing and tracking indicators, as well as datasets can be found in the Appendices of *Monitoring Peace Consolidation: United Nations Practitioners' Guide to Benchmarking*. <http://www.unpbf.org/news/united-nations-practitioners%E2%80%99-guide-to-benchmarking/>

In addition to this source, others that specifically focus on applying a peacebuilding lens to indicator development include:

- OECD-DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Situations of Conflict and Fragility*, 2012.
- J. Mata & S. Ziaja, *User's Guide on Measuring Fragility* (Bonn and Oslo: German Development Institute and UNDP, 2009), http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/oslo_governance_centre/governance_assessments/a_users_guide_tofragility.html
- The Global Peace Index (especially the positive peace index). <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/>

Sector specific indicator development examples:

- Development of a Basket of Conflict, Security and Justice Indicators (Scheye, E and Chigas. D, 2009). Available at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/23391272/Conflict-Security-Justice-Global-Indicators-Final-Report>
- Measuring change and results in voice and accountability work (DFID Working Paper 34).
- Fragile states and peacebuilding programs: practical tools for improving program performance and results (Social Impact, 2006)
- Developing indicators to measure the rule of law: a global approach (Vera Institute of Justice, 2008)