

# Policy Paper

## Achieving Conflict Transformation



*Photo cover:* Somali women explaining the urgent drought situation in her area.  
Picture taken in North-Eastern Kenya, Garissa District, Dadaab, Wajir.  
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Oxfam Novib  
Post Office Box 30919  
2500 GX The Hague  
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 (0) 70 342 16 21  
Fax: +31 (0) 70 361 44 61  
[info@oxfamnovib.nl](mailto:info@oxfamnovib.nl)  
[www.oxfamnovib.nl](http://www.oxfamnovib.nl)

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# **Policy Paper**

## **Achieving Conflict Transformation**



Child in South Sudan playing with the tank left behind from the civil war that ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord from 2005. © Sven Torfinn

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National League for Democracy youth members (Aung San Suu Kyi's party) keep order as crowds come to hear Aung San Suu Kyi at her gate to talk to her people on University Avenue. The junta did not to close the road for these addresses and the NLD was careful to ensure the traffic was not impeded giving an excuse for the junta to close these meetings down altogether. July 1996. © Nic Dunlop

# Acronyms

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CDA	Collaborative for Development Action
CIDCM	Centre for International Development and Conflict Management
CT	Conflict Transformation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
JCAS	Joint Country Analysis and Strategy
KDF	Key Driving Factor
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OI	Oxfam International
ON	Oxfam Novib
OPTI	Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
RIC	Rights in Crisis
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TOC	Theory of Change
WIPNET	Women in Peace Building Network
WPS	Women, Peace and Security



© David Levine



# 1. Executive Summary

Oxfam's mission is a just world without poverty, which seems an impossible task in countries where violence is an everyday feature. Oxfam Novib (ON) works predominantly in countries affected by inequality, violent conflicts and lack of mechanisms to address different and opposed interests. It is for this reason that ON and its partners recognise the need to work on conflict transformation (CT) and make a concerted effort to structurally and positively transform the conditions leading to destructive violence. Oxfam Novib's network, its advocacy potential, and its ability to link the various levels, i.e. local partnerships for development and conflict work, give ON a promising and unique comparative advantage in the field of conflict transformation.

The term conflict transformation describes violence and conflict as multi-dimensional; that direct violence is interlinked with structures and cultures. An important component of this term is using a people-centred approach, as well as working on different levels – from global awareness, to lobby and advocacy, to grassroots' movements.

Oxfam Novib's *vision* in implementing conflict transformation is: *To transform cultures of violence into cultures of peace*. Oxfam Novib *defines* conflict transformation as:

The process of addressing the key driving factors of destructive conflict with actions to transform institutions and discourses that justify and reproduce direct, cultural and structural violence at the global, national and local levels. The desired result of combining all of these aspects is *conflict transformation*.

Changes can be achieved through different strategies, according to concrete opportunities, such as: good governance; addressing land/water/natural resource conflicts; security sector reform; local peace building and mediation; implementation of the United Nations Security

Council (UNSC) resolutions regarding Women, Peace and Security (WPS); disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants (DDR); stopping the proliferation and illicit trade of small arms; monitoring, documenting and advocacy of human rights and international humanitarian law and of illicit practices in the security sector; and reconciliation and the fight against impunity. These strategies are very much linked to other ON programmes.

In this policy paper, some of the general thinking of conflict transformation in both academia and the development field is reviewed; the term conflict transformation and what it entails for Oxfam Novib's work is defined; and, finally, concrete examples of how this more theoretical understanding of CT is translated into practice are provided.

It is important to note that, prior to the development of any CT strategies and programmes, a thorough conflict analysis must be executed, in order to develop a sound theory of change, to identify main entry points for change, and to ensure that ON's work is gender just and has a rights-based approach. This policy paper forms the conceptual framework on CT to inform ON's conflict analyses and further strategic and programme development.



Egyptian women on Tahir Square during a protest against the Military Trial for civilians. © Myriam Abdelaziz

## 2. Introduction

**Oxfam Novib's vision of conflict transformation is to transform cultures of violence into cultures of peace.**

Oxfam Novib works with partners and allies around the world to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice. We work directly with local civil society organisations and we seek to influence the powerful to ensure that poor and marginalised men and women can improve their lives and livelihoods and have a say in decision-making. Much of our work takes place in countries where violent, destructive conflict is a daily norm, whether it is at a national, regional, community, or family level. Albert Einstein said that "Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."<sup>1</sup> Einstein's insight on peace will be key in the discussion around conflict transformations, as the basis of this concept is to first understand the basic human needs and interests of those involved.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, peace is something that has to come from a collective agreement by the local communities to decision-makers at all levels. The term conflict transformation describes violence and conflict as multi-dimensional; that direct violence is interlinked with structures and cultures.<sup>3</sup> To achieve Oxfam's strategic aim of a just world without poverty, it is instrumental that we approach our work from an informed and multi-level framework<sup>4</sup> which includes a gender just approach.

The twentieth century was marked by international conflicts from the world wars to the cold war. As the cold war ended, there was a stark increase of civil wars around the world (Mexico, Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Burundi, and Indonesia to name a few). There has been an increase in non-State armed groups to the point that it is estimated that 50 percent of all armed conflicts currently do not involve government forces.<sup>5</sup> Recurring

conflicts outnumber new ones by a ratio of 1 to 5<sup>6</sup> and countries that seem to be the most at risk for armed conflict "are characterised by weak governance, crippling poverty and, as a result, are most vulnerable to external shocks, such as rises in food prices, provoking social unrest".<sup>7</sup> A factor for increased social unrest in Latin America, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa is the rise of unemployed youth, who are more vulnerable to joining gangs and other armed groups.<sup>8</sup> Youth have also showed they can play a powerful role in creating change such as in the Arab Spring, where they went to the streets and cemented the fact that, as a group, they should not be ignored. Given that conflicts are clearly multi-dimensional, it is imperative that the strategies for peace follow in the same vein.

To preface this discussion, we need to acknowledge that the term peace is not necessarily always interpreted as justice or equality, just as conflict is not necessarily negative. Conflict (which can sometimes include violent conflict) has the potential to bring about positive change, such as the struggle to end Apartheid in South Africa, or the civil rights movement in the United States. Moreover, conflict is part of being human and exists in all societies in one form or another. It is violence, whether that is physical, mental, or sexual, that affects societies and individuals, and is an obstacle for development and human security. Therefore, Oxfam Novib strives to work together with others to address key driving factors of violent conflict and contribute to lasting solutions to poverty and injustice.

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1 Quote from Albert Einstein in translation of speech to New History Society, December 14, 1930.

2 Burton, J. 1990. *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. London: Macmillan.

3 Please see Annex 1 for definitions such as direct violence.

4 In Section 2, Oxfam Novib defines conflict transformation for the organisation.

5 Human Security Report Project. 2010. *op. cit.* Examples offered includes the conflict between Hamas and Fatah, and violence between different ethnic groups in Kenya.

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6 Hewitt, J. 2011. "Trends in Global Conflict 1946-2007" in: *Peace and Conflict 2010*. University of Maryland: Pluto Press.

7 Reindorp, N (consultant). 26 April 2011. "Revised conflict context analysis for Oxfam International Rights in Crisis Operational Plan." Oxfam International.

8 UN-HABITAT. 2007. *Global Report on Human Settlements*. pp. 64-65. Found at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=2432>.

In 2010, Oxfam Novib (ON) chose to make conflict transformation a priority theme in the start of the new 2011-2015 business plan. Oxfam Novib's network, its advocacy potential, and its ability to link the various levels, i.e. local partnerships for development and conflict work create the unique comparative advantage that ON has in the field of conflict transformation. Conflict Transformation falls under Oxfam's Aim 3, Right to Life and Security. Although the concept of conflict transformation encompasses all of Oxfam's aims<sup>9</sup> and should be considered in conflict-affected countries when building the country programme, there are specific conflict transformation areas of work that are specific to Aim 3, which are outlined in Section 4 of this document.

The idea to work on conflict transformation is based on the fact that, as an organisation, ON is committed to contributing to poverty alleviation and justice, and wants to work towards peace in order to end human suffering and enable development, as well as to avoid recurring

and costly humanitarian crises. This is especially pertinent for ON since conflict obstructs sustainable development in the countries where we work, including: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel (OPT/I). However, there is no single agreed definition of conflict transformation by either practitioners or academics; therefore, this document will define what the term means for Oxfam Novib. *The goal of this document* is to help guide Oxfam Novib in developing conflict transformation strategies and programmes. The next sections will review some of the general thinking of conflict transformation in both academia and the development field; define what the term conflict transformation means for the work that Oxfam Novib is involved, and provide concrete examples of how this more theoretical understanding is translated into practice.<sup>10</sup>

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9 Aim 1. Right to a sustainable livelihood. Aim 2. Right to basic social services. Aim 3. Right to life and security. Aim 4. Right to social and political participation. Aim 5. Right to an identity.

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10 This document has been a collective effort of different Oxfam staff members.



Women and child in Israel/Palestine with the symbolic olive tree. © David Levine

# 3. Oxfam Novib's Approach to Conflict Transformation

Section 3 explains the background to Oxfam Novib and conflict transformation and outlines how Oxfam Novib defines conflict transformation. Oxfam Novib's approach and vision to conflict transformation is also discussed.

## Background to Conflict Transformation and Oxfam

Oxfam Novib has long supported partners operating in conflict-affected areas to work on: key driving factors of the conflict; protection of specific groups at risk; continuation of public services; and direct conflict mediation in combination with programmes improving the livelihood of population groups in conflict (see inserted boxes for some examples). In several instances, the conflict programming was linked with direct humanitarian work. Advocacy and public education in the Netherlands were an integral part of Oxfam Novib's programming on and around conflicts.

Since ON became a member of the Oxfam family, conflict prevention has been cemented in Oxfam's specific *Change Objective* for conflict ('SCO 3.2'). SCO 3.2 is embedded in 'the Right to Life and Security', Oxfam's overall aim on disaster response and management. In the Oxfam Strategic Plan 2013-2019, aspects of conflict transformation are addressed in Goal 3 which focuses on saving lives, now and in the future. In this Plan, Oxfam has set itself the objectives to strengthen resilience in high risk countries by building the capacity of civil society groups and communities, in particular women, to manage shocks and address key driving factors of conflict. Moreover, Oxfam strives to create more accountable governments, security forces and regional/international institutions to ensure greater respect for the rights of crisis affected men and women, and to have duty bearers recognize the different impacts of conflicts on men and women.

The Oxfam Humanitarian Strategy 2020 refers to conflict transformation as a cross-cutting issue, stating that conflict

is a key driver of humanitarian need. It states that "Oxfam must adopt a 'conflict lens' when analyzing humanitarian crises, and strengthen its discourse in this area, building up staff understanding of violence and armed conflict for more effective programming and campaigning. Oxfam must link humanitarian and development strategies where appropriate to ensure that Oxfam is not only alleviating the symptoms of direct violence, but also addressing some of the attitudes (aka cultural violence) that are used to justify this violence and some of the root causes (aka structural violence) of conflict."<sup>11</sup>

Oxfam's conflict-related advocacy work is developed under the Rights in Crisis campaign (RIC). Protection and assistance of men and women in crises was the leading theme for the campaign; however, access to livelihoods in (post-) conflict settings is now integrated into RIC. In mid-2012, a new campaign was launched with a focus on gender, livelihoods and insecurity in Africa. Specific foci include lobby on women's rights and UNSC Resolution 1325 and other Security Council resolutions.<sup>12</sup>

As stated above, ON has always continued to support a range of partners that aim to work on violent conflict beyond short-term objectives.<sup>13</sup> Conflict prevention work in the Business Plan 2011-2015 is upgraded to an Oxfam Novib priority theme of 'conflict transformation'. The change of terms implies a new focus for a more coordinated and more systematically integrated work on conflict. The justification for the current upgrade of conflict transformation to the priority theme lies mainly in ON's choice to remain working in countries affected by conflict. Conflict-affected countries typically have: low public service levels; weak and often corrupt and

11 Oxfam Humanitarian Strategy 2020.

12 Resolution 1325 has since been followed by other Resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960), to address sexual violence and demand measures and accountability mechanisms in the UN institutions.

13 Please note that Oxfam Novib does have a twelve year rule with relationships with partners.

suppressive governance practices, and lacking justice systems; political and economic marginalisation of sizeable parts of the population; weak State legitimacy among the population; and (therefore) proneness to violent civil conflict, in which the State itself is often an important actor.<sup>14</sup>

The prominent occurrence of violent conflicts, and the structural obstacles these pose to justice and development in these States, has prompted ON to plan more purposefully for context-specific conflict transformation. In essence, this means that in conflict zones where there is potential for development, ON and its partners will make a concerted effort to structurally and positively change the conditions for persisting violence to achieve peace and human security.

This shift should not be taken lightly, as working in a conflict-sensitive manner in conflict-affected countries in order to “do no harm” is already a difficult task. For Oxfam Novib and its partners to attempt to work on the key driving factors of conflict (in specific contexts) in order to transform the current conflict towards peace, it is imperative that a thorough conflict analysis and a systemic analysis of our strategic entry points is continuously thought through.

## Defining Conflict Transformation for Oxfam Novib

Conflict transformation is used as an umbrella term that encompasses many different activities at various levels within a country, region, and globally that can collectively transform destructive conflict into constructive change. By addressing the key driving factors (the factors without which the conflict either would not exist or would be completely different),<sup>15</sup> it is both a process and an end goal; ultimately we are working towards empowering men and women for change and reforming structures of power in favour of justice for all. Important components of this term is using a people-centred approach, as well as working on different levels – from global awareness, to lobby and advocacy, to grassroots’ movements. Using a gendered lens and a rights-based approach is imperative in how Oxfam Novib implements this concept.

Oxfam Novib *defines* conflict transformation as:

<sup>14</sup> See also: ON paper on fragile states, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2009. “Reflecting on Peace Practice” in: *Participant training manual*. Cambridge, MA.

The process of addressing the key driving factors of destructive conflict with actions to transform institutions and discourses that justify and reproduce direct, cultural and structural violence at the global, national and local levels. The desired result of combining all of these aspects is *conflict transformation*.

Oxfam Novib’s *vision* in implementing conflict transformation is: *To transform cultures of violence into cultures of peace*.

Our *approach* to conflict transformation needs to be based on a current conflict analysis that outlines the key driving factors of the conflict and the strategic entry points of Oxfam Novib and our partners to address specific key driving factors of the conflict. This also means that we accept that we are not neutral players (if that is ever possible) in the context.<sup>16</sup>

To work “around”, “in” and “on” conflict<sup>17</sup> is determined by one’s approach. To work *around* conflict is to develop development/humanitarian projects in conflict areas, but not reflect on how a given project will affect or be influenced by the conflict. To work *in* conflict is to develop and implement development/humanitarian projects where the conflict and its players and impact are recognised, but where the operational strategy is to be conflict-sensitive in order to do no harm. Working *on* conflict is attempting to transform the key drivers of the conflict in order to proactively prevent, mitigate or resolve the conflict(s). Depending on the focus of the country programme, programmes can be classified as either working *in* or *on* conflict. It must be stressed, however, that it is mandatory to be – at a minimum – conflict-sensitive in all of our projects. (Please see Annex 3 for more on conflict sensitivity).

To see how Oxfam Novib defines the terms used in this paper, please see Annex 1.

<sup>16</sup> Oxfam does not claim to be neutral, as our work is based on the rights-based approach, which implies that people have the right to defend the basic human rights they are entitled to, and that Oxfam is an actor in defending and proactively promoting the implementation of these rights. Oxfam is a signatory of the Red Cross and NGOs in Disaster Relief Operations Code of Conduct. This Code does endorse the independence and impartiality principles, but not the one on neutrality, which the IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross) subscribes to. For further information, see Oxfam Humanitarian Dossier, “Oxfam International position on the neutrality principle”, January 2008, available on Sumus.

<sup>17</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2001. “The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict. pp. 22. Found at: <http://www.oecd.org/development/conflictandfragility/1886146.pdf>.

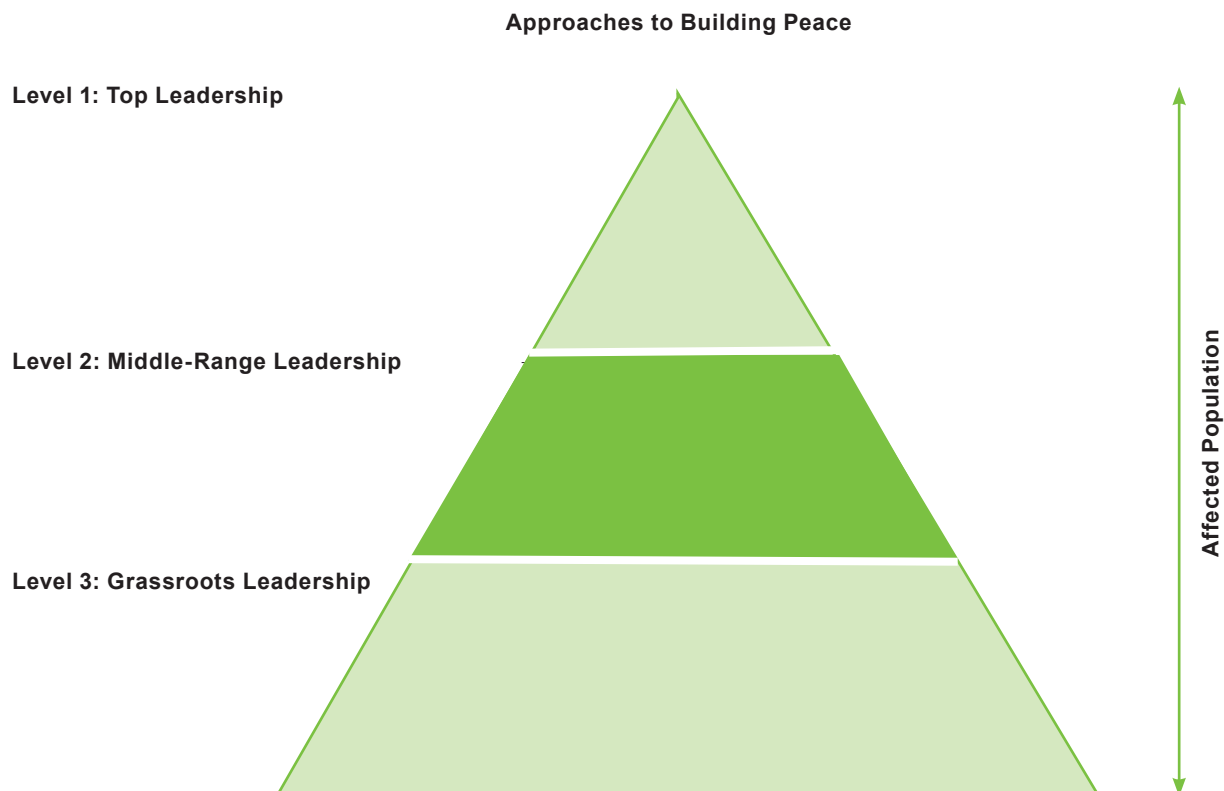
# 4. Conflict Transformation: The Concept and the Analytical Background

Section 4 gives an overview of relevant studies that shape how Oxfam Novib views conflict transformation. Specifically, the terms, conflict transformation and violence, and how these are defined by academics and practitioners are examined, and gender justice as it relates to conflict transformation is also reviewed.

## Conflict Transformation and Violence

For many working in the field of conflict studies, conflict transformation is more encompassing than other terms, as it incorporates different levels of conflict as well as the multiple layers that make up societies, the State and the globe. John Paul Lederach, who is both a scholar and practitioner, explains that he wanted to develop “constructive change” in order to describe constructive responses to violent conflict, and the terms resolution or

Diagram 1: Types of Actors in the Peace Process



Based on: Ramsbotham, O., T. Woodhouse, H. Miall (eds.).2011., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 29.

management did not fit as well as transformation did.<sup>18</sup> Lederach's work argues that peacebuilding is a long and comprehensive process that must include cultural differences and include all levels of society, also the middle range leaders<sup>19</sup> (defined as the ethnic religious leaders, academics and leaders of influential NGOs) because they connect the top (highest leaders of the government and the opposition) and bottom level actors (grassroots' organisations involved at the community level) and can connect the opposing sides of the conflict(s) (See Diagram 1). Furthermore, it is respected middle range leaders that are important, because their strengths are not based on political or military power, but rather more on relationships. Understanding the key leaders and how they work is valuable for Oxfam Novib staff and partners when developing a conflict analysis and theory of change (for more information, please see Section 6 of this document).

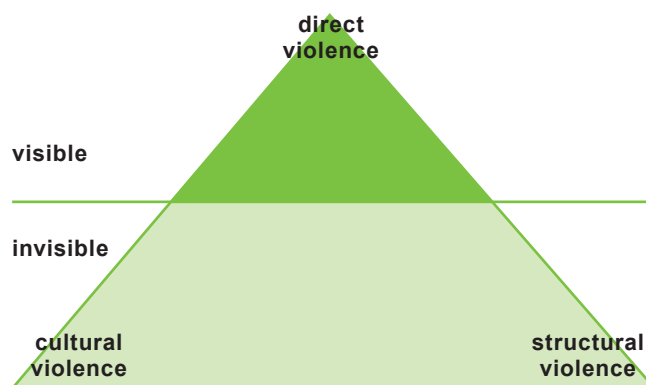
The advocates for the term conflict transformation feel that it looks at the bigger picture, but does not ignore the fact that conflict also has many layers. The editors of the book, *Acting Together* describe the transformation of conflict as:

“working for greater social and economic justice by addressing oppressive dynamics, amplifying the voices of those in less powerful groups, and building coalitions for change. It includes nurturing relationships of respect, understanding, and trust across differences in culture, ethnicity, gender, age, economic class, sexuality, and national identities. In addition to transforming relationships, laws and policies must be changed so that a society's institutions and cultural symbols are inclusive and supportive of the development of all groups”.<sup>20</sup>

This definition incorporates the guiding principles of Oxfam's work around social justice. Furthermore, at the heart of ON's approach on conflict transformation is the desire to work towards changing the elements of society that are perpetuating the violence; for example: the acceptance of violence against women or minority groups (including groups discriminated based on their

sexuality) in society and institutions; a police force that ignores gender-based violence or are the perpetrators themselves; cultural ideas, such as that 'men are not men unless they have weapons'; or understanding how religion plays a role in the conflict, creating arguments to divide people.

**Diagram 2: Galtung's model of conflict**



Ramsbotham, O., T. Woodhouse, H. Miall (eds.).2011., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 10.

In looking at what practitioners and communities want to transform, it is essential to repeat that conflict is not necessarily negative. Conflict is part of daily life and we need conflict in order to bring about positive change of justice for all. Therefore, it is not about avoiding conflict, but how to manage conflict in a way that is constructive and not destructive for communities and societies at large.<sup>21</sup> In the 1960s, Norwegian conflict and peace researcher, John Galtung, developed an influential model of conflict, violence and peace that categorises conflict in a simple triangle structure. Galtung argues that protracted conflicts, besides direct conflict, are characterised by structural and cultural violence (see this triangle in Diagram 2).

Galtung contends that direct violence relates to people's behaviours, structural violence is about contradictions of situations, and cultural violence is attitudes.<sup>22</sup> To understand this concept further, we can see direct violence as children being murdered, structural violence

18 Lederach, J.P. 2003. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear articulation of the guiding principles by a pioneer in the field*. Intercourse: Good books.

19 Lederach, J.P. 1997. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

20 Cohen, C.E., R.G. Varea, P.O. Walker (eds.). 2011. "Acting Together" in: *Performance and the creative transformation of conflict*. pp. 3. Oakland: New Village Press.

21 Dayton, B.W., L. Kriesberg. 2009. "Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding" in: *Moving from violence to sustainable peace*. London: Routledge.

22 Ramsbotham, O., T. Woodhouse, H. Miall (eds.). 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. pp. 11. Cambridge: Polity Press.



as children dying due to poverty, and cultural violence as the reasons men and women use to justify these deaths.<sup>23</sup> In Diagram 2, you see that only direct violence is the obvious and visible violence that outsiders can see. It is the cultural and structural violence that are considered invisible on first glance, but are just as important to conflict transformation. Galtung's model illustrates that conflict transformation only happens when all points of the triangle are addressed. Therefore, direct conflict, as well as cultural and structural conflict must be addressed altogether. Otherwise, there will be no long-term conflict transformation.

### Conflict Transformation and Gender Justice

Gender inequality has its roots in an unequal division of power between men and women. This is culturally and socially defined in every society of the world. It means that women and expected women's roles are less valued, and that men and women have unequal opportunities to decide over their own lives and futures. This signifies that conflicts have a differential impact on women and men, girls and boys, and that armed parties and external actors/interventions use and strengthen these inequalities. In the understanding of ON's conflict transformation strategy, this leads to the analysis of gender inequality at different levels.

Besides the differential impact of violent conflict on women and men, the mere acceptance of gender inequality is a risk factor for violent conflict. Mary Caprioli, a scholar best known for her work on gender and conflict, shows evidence in her research that gender inequality in a country is connected to higher risk of violent conflict as part of structural and cultural violence, and that gender inequality and tolerance for violence against women impact national policy and discourse on the use of violence and militarism.<sup>24</sup>

Conflict transformation aims to enable relationships of respect, cooperation and consent, and constructive means and norms for dealing with conflict.<sup>25</sup> Oxfam

believes this cannot happen without including both women and men, and challenging existing cultural and social norms that result in stereotyping of men and women (such as, 'all men are violent and all women are peaceful') which results in gender discrimination. One of the barriers to change is that discrimination of and violence against women is justified by both men and women because of what they deem as their "culture". Although these traditions can sometimes be explained by cultural influences and power asymmetries, they do not justify them<sup>26</sup> and are often altered and strengthened in conflicts. It is necessary to also analyse sexual violence against men in violent conflicts, equally based on existing unequal gender norms.<sup>27</sup>

While conducting a conflict analysis of the community, area, country or region, it is necessary to take into consideration the gender-based aspects. For example, how is the conflict affecting women and men differently? How are different gender stereotypes/cultural beliefs possibly playing a role (justifying, for example, rape in war)? How are institutions (such as the police force, the military) working towards ending gender-based violence, or are they part of the problem (perpetrators themselves or ignoring the situation)? It is through this analysis that, as an organisation, we can determine our entry points to address these issues. The role of gender in a conflict and the different needs and problems following from it are critical to identify and understand in a conflict analysis.

In conflict transformation strategies, violence cannot be changed without revolutionising the traditional deep-rooted beliefs and practices. This involves long-term goals and strategies, and can create tensions and conflicts. It is imperative to address this cultural violence and the justification of exclusion based on gender.

23 Ibid.

24 See for instance Caprioli, M. 2000. "Gendered Conflict". *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 37, nr.1 pp. 53-68; and Caprioli, M. and M.A. Boyer. 2001. "Gender, Violence and International Crisis." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 45, nr. 4, pp. 503-518.

25 Francis, D. "Culture, Power Asymmetries and Gender in Conflict. Transformation". Cited in: Austin, B., M. Fischer, H.J. Giessmann (eds.) 2011. *Advancing Conflict Transformation. The Berghof Handbook II*. Opladen/ Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers. Online at [www.berghof-handbook.net](http://www.berghof-handbook.net). pp. 6.

26 Francis, D. 2011. "Culture, Power Asymmetries and Gender in Conflict Transformation." Cited in: Austin, B., M. Fischer, H.J. Giessmann (eds.). "Advancing Conflict Transformation" in: *The Berghof Handbook II*. Opladen/ Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers. Found at: <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.

27 This is important to explore more in our work to prevent the simple division of women as victims and men as perpetrators. See for instance: Zarkov, Dubravka. 2001. "The Body of the Other Man: Sexual Violence and the Construction of Masculinity, Sexuality and Ethnicity in the Croatian Media" in: Moser, C. and F.C. Clark (eds.). *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*. Zed Books: London. Or: Sivakumaran, S. 2007. "Sexual violence against men in armed conflict." *European Journal of International Law*. Vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 253-276.

## In Summary

Conflict transformation is looking at the bigger picture that focuses on people-centred change to address conflict. This is done by looking at the key driving factors and needs of citizens in order to respond to the direct, structural, and cultural aspects that comprise the violence. Addressing oppressive dynamics and analysing

the key players at local, national and global levels in order to empower people to make positive change is also vital. It is furthermore imperative that this is done from a rights-based approach, which takes into account the gender dimensions that form part of the violence.



Somali men and youth join together for a community meeting. © Oxfam

# 5. Oxfam Novib's Activities Relating to Conflict Transformation

Oxfam Novib works in a holistic approach on conflict transformation through its five aims. Although many areas of Oxfam's work (such as quality education, livelihood projects, etc.) can and should contribute to conflict transformation, there are specific areas of work that can be funded from the budget 'Programme on Right to Life and Security'.<sup>28</sup> That said, it is crucial that a holistic approach that considers the overall country programme is taken when designing a conflict transformation programme plan.

Oxfam Novib and the Oxfam confederation's comparative strength lies in the fact that Oxfam (Novib) and its partners are active at multiple levels, from local to national to international. Moreover, as a rights-based organisation, Oxfam Novib not only seeks to improve the immediate living conditions of people caught in conflict, but it also seeks to build up and strengthen the (in-) formal institutions within society and at the international level – the infrastructure of peace – to channel conflicting interests in a peaceful manner and uphold people's rights to life and security.

As an actor involved in social change, Oxfam Novib's role is to:

- 1 create linkages between interventions taking place at different levels, including with the international Oxfam Rights in Crisis campaign;
- 2 devise an appropriate mix of different intervention strategies (i.e. direct poverty alleviation, advocacy/campaigning, civil society development, and knowledge and information management);
- 3 devise conflict transformation programmes that span different levels and create synergies between the work of very different partners.

28 In many ways, this is an administrative choice not a philosophical one.

In regards to the 9 activities addressed in the remainder of this Section, it is necessary to determine whether the activity and project are effectively targeting the *key people* who are critical to the continuation or resolution of conflict due to their power and influence.<sup>29</sup> If the key people are being targeted to create change, it is also important to ensure that the *general public* is also on board with change (for example, the majority of the public will support and help implement a specific law or peace agreement). If a project ignores either the key people or the general public, it is less likely that the project will yield success (for more information about who to target in your programmes, please read "Reflecting on Peace Practices").<sup>30</sup>

As mentioned throughout the document, no activities should be planned without being conflict-sensitive (see Annex 3 for a checklist) and a thorough conflict analysis (with the understanding that a conflict analysis is also not a one-time activity and will need to be updated) to ensure that the activities/project is addressing the key drivers of the conflict.

Example of areas of work and activities, which can be funded from the Programme on Right to Life and Security budget (when addressing key driving factors), are mentioned below. Most activities seek to create positive change through policy changes and (monitoring) policy implementation. Please keep in mind that this is just a selection of activities and this list is not exhaustive.

Activities which seek to create direct benefits for a sub-section of the population (such as mediation between communities and security forces to address civilians' concerns, and the creation of employment schemes for former combatants) always need to be accompanied by activities which seek to create policy

29 CDA Collaborating Learning Projects. 2009. "Reflecting on Peace Practice" in: *Participant training manual*. Cambridge, MA.

30 Ibid.

changes/monitoring policy implementation. This is to increase the scale of impact and ensure long-term effectiveness.

## 1 Good Governance

According to the 2011 World Development Report, countries and sub-national areas with the weakest institutional legitimacy and governance are the most vulnerable to violence and instability and the least able to respond to internal and external stresses. Governance refers to the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not).

Governance can be used in different contexts such as international governance, national governance and local governance.

Good governance is the process of decision-making and implementation of decisions resulting in a just and transparent distribution of resources. Good governance has 8 major characteristics: it is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law.<sup>31</sup>

Oxfam Novib and partners can contribute to good governance by strengthening the rule of law, (i.e., creating fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially), protection of human rights (described further under point 8) and action against corruption. Such action requires working both at the national level, where laws and policies are adopted, and at sub-national levels, where implementation takes place.

For participatory and transparent decision-making, citizens need to be informed, organised and active. This requires access to information and freedom of association (civil society space), two key pillars of Oxfam Novib's Programme Right to Social and Political Participation. Conflict transformation objectives can and should therefore be embedded in work on Right to Social and Political Participation, and vice versa.

It is important to note that improving governance is generally slow. According to the World Development Report, no country has transformed governance in less than a generation, with reforms taking 15 to 30 years.

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31 UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)'s "Figure 2: Characteristics of Good Governance." Found at: <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp>.

## 2 Land/water/natural resource conflicts

A lot of violent conflicts are caused by conflicts over access to and ownership of land, water or natural resources such as oil and minerals. Controlling access to resources, and thereby denying access to others, is often a cause of (local) conflict. For the future, in the context of climate change, access to (fresh) water will become more and more valuable and a likely source of contention.<sup>32</sup>

Conflicts over land, water or natural resources can and often take place at multiple levels, such as the local, regional, national and international levels. This means that effective interventions need to address all relevant levels.

Prevention of conflicts over land, water and natural resources in the long-term is contingent on equitable development (including land reform, encouraging pro-poor development policies, as well as monitoring, research and advocacy on the behaviour of the extractives industry); sustainable natural resource management (including mapping of key natural resources for development); and climate change adaptation. There is therefore a close link between conflict transformation and Oxfam's Programme Right to a Sustainable Livelihood. Conflict transformation objectives can and should be embedded in livelihoods work, and vice versa.

Prevention of conflicts over land, water and natural resources in the short-term includes supporting civil society to develop and implement conflict early warning mechanisms, and mobilisation to ensure that policy makers respond adequately to warnings issued; and local conflict mediation and resolution (see point 4 for further explanation).

For interventions in this area to be effective, short and long-term measures must be combined. Finally, it is important to note that conflict-insensitive or misplaced NGO interventions – for example, a livelihoods intervention that favours one ethnic group over another – can be a cause of conflict itself. Conflict-sensitive programming is therefore essential. For further information on conflict-sensitive programming, see the Oxfam Novib Humanitarian Handbook Annex 5.<sup>33</sup>

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32 Ramsbotham, O., T. Woodhouse, H. Miall (eds.). 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

33 The Oxfam Novib Humanitarian Handbook is available at <https://sumus.oxfam.org/humanitarian-handbook>.

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### **SOS Sahel's work on reduction of natural resource based conflict in Sudan**

**SOS Sahel is an Oxfam Novib partner and takes a low-cost, lasting approach to building peace and prosperity through sustained engagement at community level. In Kordofan, SOS Sahel ran successful programmes in reducing resource-based conflict between farmers and pastoralists for many years. For example, in order to capture the main causes of conflict in an area, SOS Sahel consults communities through stakeholder workshops to identify the main causes of conflict in a particular locality. SOS Sahel seeks representations from tribal leaders, women's groups representatives, youth representatives and local government at these stakeholder workshops.**

**This information is then used in programme design: for example, in a stakeholder workshop in El Kewiak (Eastern Rural Locality), held in July 2010, community representatives pointed to tension and conflict between farmers and herders in different locations along the livestock migration corridors, taking place seasonally during the movement of animals in their north and southwards trips, resulting in insecurity and damage to crops. The conflicts were mainly over land use and water. Particular locations were mentioned and specific recommendations were made including demarcation of animal migration routes, provision of additional water sources along the migration routes, and enhancement of the power of the native administration to resolve disputes. These recommendations have then been integrated into SOS Sahel's project work, directly meeting the needs of the local communities.**

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### **3 Security Sector Reform**

In many conflict-affected States, the security forces (military, police, gendarmes and intelligence) are unaccountable, a source of insecurity for the population and undermine the functioning of the State. Looting, corruption, commission of sexual and gender-based violence and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are some of the crimes commonly committed by the security forces. Unaccountable security forces, acting with impunity, also pose problems to aid agencies, hindering humanitarian access.

Over the past fifteen years, security sector reform (SSR) has received increasing prominence, as one element in building peace and security, and democratic governance in post-conflict transitions. SSR includes the reform of security forces as well as civilian institutions to uphold human rights and justice, and effective civilian oversight by parliaments and other legislative bodies, and communities themselves.

National ownership, a key tenet of SSR, along with strong political will at the national level for credible reforms, is essential. During open conflict, when (inter-) national compliance mechanisms are absent, credible SSR cannot take place and should not be pursued. SSR is an area of work which should be carried out only when compliance mechanisms are in place. National ownership must extend to the participation of civil society organisations, research institutes, women's groups, and communities themselves in defining their security needs and holding security forces to account. It is imperative that in peace agreements and post-conflict peace-building processes, communities and civil society organisations (with participation and representation of women and youth) are able to participate in the design and implementation of aspects of SSR processes, and evaluation of the impact.

There are several ways for Oxfam Novib and partners to contribute to SSR, such as (supporting parliament in) monitoring the conduct of and strengthening civilian oversight over the security forces; making complaints' mechanisms accessible to women; mediation between communities and security forces to address civilians' concerns; promoting the participation of women, and gender equality, in the security sector; training security forces on human rights, international humanitarian law and gender sensitivity; advocacy for transparency and accountability in the security sector; exposing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and other misconduct such as corruption and illicit arms trafficking.

For further information, please revert to the Oxfam 'Policy Compendium on the Accountability of National Security Forces to Civilians'.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See <https://sumus.oxfam.org/rights-crisis-policy-and-research-group-ric-org/documents/folders/oi-humanitarian-compendium-police-0>.

## 4 Local peace-building/mediation

Supporting and facilitating local efforts for peace building and mediation are crucial. Not only can immediate results be achieved but local peace building and mediation efforts, when carried out properly, can result in bottom-up (informal) institution building. Sometimes it is appropriate to revive traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, which often have strong legitimacy within communities. Such mechanisms may need to be adapted to ensure that they serve to empower marginalised groups, very often women and girls, and ethnic minorities.

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### **Bhitai Social Welfare Organisation**

**Oxfam Novib partner in Pakistan, *Bhitai Social Welfare Organisation* is part of the Peace My Right Campaign. In the Khairpur district, there are ongoing tribal conflicts which create an insecure environment with young men from each side roaming with weapons and there have been incidents of open fire. Bhitai Social Welfare Organisation has been organising *Merr Minth Qafilo* – an equivalent of *Satth* in Punjab – which is a cultural and traditional practice to visit the conflicting parties collectively by men, women, elders, notables and spiritual leaders. Through these visits, people create an environment for reconciliation to resolve the conflict and remove the causes of conflict through arbitration of notables. As a result, the activists and notables have visited persons in prison from both parties to convince them of reconciliation. Both parties have accepted arbitration of the influential spiritual and political leader, Pir Saddaruddin Shah, to resolve issues related to the conflict. Pir Saddaruddin Shah has also accepted his role for arbitration. This has resulted in communities feeling more secure.**

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It is critical to embed local initiatives in broader interventions targeting conflict resolution and peace building at the regional, national and international levels in order to guarantee that changes at the local level are supplemented by higher level institutional changes that can sustain local peace. In this regard, there is a very close link with good governance.

## 5 Implementation of the UN Resolutions on WPS

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (on Women, Peace and Security), adopted in 2000, acknowledges the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peace building and governance. The goals of the Resolution are to further encourage the Participation and Protection of women; Prevention of violence against women and the Promotion of women's rights; as well as to mainstream gender perspectives in peace operations. Resolution 1325 has since been followed by other Resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960), to address sexual violence and demand measures and accountability mechanisms in the UN institutions. However, implementation of Resolution 1325 (through the establishment and implementation of National Action Plans) and subsequent Resolutions has been weak.

There are several ways for Oxfam Novib and partners to contribute to implementation of these resolutions. These include advocating for the establishment of National Action Plans where they do not yet exist and monitoring implementation where they do; promoting the participation of women, and gender equality, in the security sector, especially police and military; training security forces on gender-specific protection threats; making complaints' mechanisms accessible to women; challenging sexual and gender based violence, including provision of legal aid; supporting the participation and influence of women in peace negotiations and post-conflict peace building; and challenging attitudes obstructing women's leadership in the security and political realms.

There is clearly a close link between conflict transformation and Oxfam's programme on gender justice. The Oxfam Rights in Crisis campaign "African conflicts – safety, livelihoods and gender justice" also contributes to the implementation of aspects of Resolution 1325.

Each year, Oxfam Novib organises an annual training in partnership with the International Law School of Leiden University (The Hague Campus) as part of their academic summer school courses, the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and Clingendael. The two-week training enables participants to increase their knowledge, skills and networks for the effective implementation of the Security Council

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### **The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice**

*The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice* (an Oxfam Novib partner) works globally to promote women's human rights and ensure justice for women through an independent and effective International Criminal Court (ICC).

While focusing on directly lobbying and influencing the ICC to strengthen the Court as a mechanism for gender-inclusive justice for women most affected by conflict, doing case research and producing publications with top notch analyses on gender-based violence including WIGJ's *Gender Report Card on the International Criminal Court (ICC)*, WIGJ is directly connected to different realities on the ground in (post-) conflict countries thanks to their large network of collaborating partners. As such, WIGJ has successfully advocated for, and built capacity of, women victims/survivors, activists, and women's groups and organisations in conflict situations to emerge as leaders for their communities, participate in and influence peace processes, to access justice, and to benefit from reparations.

Concretely, WIGJ ensured the participation of women most affected by the armed conflict in the Greater North of Uganda in the resumed session of the peace talks and collaborated on a statement to the parties of the Talks in January 2008. *Prior to this, women from the Greater North had not been able to access the Peace Talks. WIGJ provided capacity building workshops and facilitated the process for them to develop a women's rights agenda for the peace process. To date, this is the only peace talks agenda produced reflecting the voices of women from the Greater North.* These strategies led to the Mediator of the talks establishing two observer seats for WIGJ's partner, the Greater North Women's Voices for Peace Network GNWVPN, for the remainder of the Peace Talks. It also contributed to the integration of some gender provisions within the implementation mechanisms of the Juba Peace Agreements.<sup>35</sup> In addition, WIGJ mobilised local and international support through the production of an Open Letter published in national newspapers in Uganda and in local language newspapers, supported by 250 organisations (more than 100 from Uganda), calling for a ceasefire and for the LRA to return to the peace talks, and to release women and children from its ranks.

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Resolutions and thus facilitate more inclusive and effective peace building.

### **6 Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants (DDR)**

Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes for former combatants and bloated national security forces are now established as an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction, and a key component to promoting and establishing peace. A failure to disarm former combatants leads to persistent high levels of armed violence and hinders reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Ideally, Oxfam believes that DDR programmes should have the following foundations. First and foremost, the political will and participation from all parties (in many cases, for example, women combatants are not included in the talks and in developing the solutions) involved in the conflict. Second, DDR must also address key driving factors of the conflict; it must be part of a wider process of political and economic recovery that addresses the key driving factors of the conflict. This is likely to include political reform, action to narrow social and economic inequalities, support for the rule of law, and security sector reform. Third, the needs of vulnerable groups, in particular women and children, must be addressed (for example, addressing impunity of GBV crimes, trauma healing, etc.). Finally, there must be a sufficient focus on reintegration, including livelihood opportunities, and reconciliation/transitional justice (see point 9 for further information).

Agencies often bring different priorities to DDR programming. Peacekeepers commonly have a disarmament bias and envision DDR as a short-term strategy to neutralise 'spoilers', collect arms and contain ex-combatants. On the other hand, organisations such as Oxfam Novib advocate a long-term perspective, expanding the livelihood opportunities of ex-combatants and their dependents, bolstering the absorption capacity of communities of return, promoting reconciliation activities, counselling and reconstructing public utilities and services.

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35 Protocol to Agenda Item 3 on Accountability and Reconciliation.

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### Re-Integration of Ex-Combatants in Burundi

Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world, in part due to a long civil war from 1993 to 2005. Oxfam Novib partner organisation, *l'Organisation d'Appui à l'Autopromotion (OAP)*, in Burundi started a project that encouraged 400 ex-fighters from two rival parties to learn to live together and build peace in their communities. The project involved the ex-combatants identifying the main barriers that were holding them back in life and what steps were needed to improve their lives. This was then followed up by a combination of awareness training about root causes of violence and conflict resolution. Furthermore, participants learned how to set up and manage associations and received training on how to prevent the negative effects of floods by tree planting and the construction of drainage systems. The project has contributed to the beneficiaries regaining their sense of dignity and self-confidence. Communities are also happy with the results of the project, as there is improved recovery of crops and homes that were threatened by heavy rains and erosion; less aggression of some ex-combatants with local authorities; theft and crime are decreasing; and it has resulted in 22 mediation committees (set up by ex-combatants) that operate on a daily basis with local officials and departments. Furthermore, in the Rubirizi zone there had been segregated neighbourhoods of combatants from the different parties (FNL and CNDD-FDD) which had been dangerous to travel between, but it is now considered safe to move freely between these areas.

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Programmes need to seek a delicate balance between the high expectations of ex-combatants, the needs of their dependents, and the need to address resentment among the wider population at what may be seen as 'favouritism' towards ex-combatants. Providing the majority of benefits to communities that host former combatants – instead of directly to the ex-combatants – can avoid a number of common problems.

There are several ways for Oxfam Novib and partners to contribute to DDR, such as promoting reconciliation and healing; assisting communities with the reintegration of former combatants; vocational training, apprenticeships, training on civil rights and participation, and labour-intensive employment programmes for ex-combatants and their dependents; and changing attitudes with regard to militarism.

For further information, please revert to the Oxfam 'Policy Compendium Note on Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR)'.<sup>36</sup>

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### Maniema in the Democratic Republic of Congo

For over 20 years, the Democratic Republic of Congo has experienced unprecedented violent conflicts. Each community or tribe has its own militia to feel safe from the neighbouring tribe or community. Following the atrocities, insecurity, killings of civilians, and rape of women, an organisation funded by Oxfam Novib called CRONGD Maniema<sup>37</sup> initiated a project called "social cohesion" in Pangi and Kailo. The project's goal was to appease the two territories by asking all tribal fighters to surrender their weapons in favour of development projects and create "barzas communautaires" (local mediation committees based on pre-existing traditional structures) to enable people to speak to each other and unite under the aspiration of development.

Through the requests of the communities, a modern health centre in Muyengo and four schools were built in Nyioka, Lubao, Lutangi and Lukando. Through awareness building, veterans returned, gave up their weapons and learned skills such as masonry, carpentry, and small trades. Through the collection, 317 weapons were removed and more than four tons of ammunition and bombs were destroyed. The two territories were among the most heavily armed of the province. The communities were also equipped with the Barzas communautaires in order to enable communities to talk about issues causing conflict.

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## 7 Stopping the proliferation and illicit trade of small arms

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) poses a serious threat to the security of men and women, exacerbates poverty and GBV. The illicit trade in SALW is an enabling condition for the violent resolution of conflicts and a way to impose power through intimidation and fear. The proliferation of SALW is also a consequence of armed conflicts.

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<sup>36</sup> See <https://sumus.oxfam.org/rights-crisis-policy-and-research-group-ric-prg/documents/20070515-oi-policy-compendium-note>.

<sup>37</sup> "Conseil Régional des Organisations Non Gouvernementales de Développement du Maniema".



Oxfam is part of the Control Arms ([www.controlarms.org](http://www.controlarms.org)) coalition that lobbied for an international legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to regulate the trade in SALW. The international coalition started with Oxfam, Amnesty International and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). Oxfam Novib and partners can contribute to curbing the proliferation and illicit trade in SALW by: supporting and facilitating local, national and regional civil society efforts to reduce the demand for SALW, including public education and research; advocacy and research to improve firearms regulation, advocacy and research to strengthen controls on and monitoring of arms transfers, including by undertaking campaigns to stop financial institutions such as pension funds from investing in arms; supporting national coalitions for ATT; strong implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) including reviewing / revising national legislation and strengthening National Commissions on Small Arms; and facilitating civil society participation in global and regional processes, including through promoting the voices of survivors.

For more information, please refer to Oxfam Novib partner IANSA, [www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org).

## 8 Monitoring, Documentation and Advocacy on Violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, and of Illicit Practices in the Security Sector

Monitoring of the security sector, and of the conduct of armed actors, and documentation and advocacy is extremely important, both to expose violations and illicit practices (such as illicit arms deals and financial kickbacks) to ensure accountability, but also as a deterrent for future violations. When peacekeeping and peace enforcement forces, and/or foreign troops are present in a conflict, they are also to be held accountable for any misconduct.

Oxfam Novib and partners can engage in monitoring, documentation and advocacy through various activities. These may include: undertaking protection surveys; providing civil society activists with ICT equipment to monitor and document violations; defence budget monitoring; monitoring sexual and gender based violence committed by the security sector; and researching economic interests of the security sector.

## 9 Reconciliation and the fight against impunity

In the aftermath of prolonged conflict, where massive human rights violations have been committed, reconciliation and dialogue, as well as transitional justice through prosecutions of perpetrators and institutional reform of abusive State institutions (such as the police, military and courts), can sometimes form an essential part of conflict transformation. Reconciliation and dialogue are probably most effective at the community level. Very often, not only individuals, but whole communities, need to re-establish trust with each other and engage in healing.

To be effective, reconciliation and dialogue at the community level should be accompanied by actions at the regional and national levels. This is in order to ensure that informal, community level processes are complemented by higher level, institutional reform and accountability mechanisms.

Oxfam Novib and partners can support reconciliation and address impunity through a range of activities: for example, advocating for institutional reform of abusive State institutions and criminal prosecution of perpetrators (including of sexual and gender based violence), supporting community level healing and reconciliation, supporting (inter)national level reconciliation through the mass media, bringing formally opposing groups together for reconciliation, undertaking memorialisation programmes, and advocating for transitional justice and addressing impunity during peace negotiations.<sup>38</sup>

\*\*Please see Annex 2 for a short description of the work our Alliance partners are doing on conflict transformation.

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<sup>38</sup> This section draws heavily from information from the International Center for Transitional Justice, [www.ictj.org](http://www.ictj.org).



2010 Peace March in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. © Liesbeth van der Hoogte

# 6. Being Effective and Having Impact in Conflict Transformation

Section 6 is about having the right tools, plans and frameworks in developing a conflict transformation strategy. In order to be effective, having a thorough conflict analysis (with the idea that it will be a living document) and clear theories of change is mandatory. This section also gives clear steps in planning the conflict transformation strategy and, lastly, this section highlights the basics to any Oxfam strategy, which is the Rights-Based Approach and gender justice.

## Being Effective: Conflict Analysis and Theory of Change

The main components in an effective conflict transformation plan are the following.<sup>39</sup>

### 1 Executing a conflict analysis to understand the key driving factors of conflict and conflict dynamics

Conflict analysis provides an analytical framework in order to devise strategies, programmes and projects to respond to the conflict in question. It is usually done at the country and/or local level of a conflict within a country. ON staff and partners have a lot of knowledge and understanding of the situation, but these are mostly based on different perceptions and interpretations, which can undermine shared understandings and strategies. We should ensure that we also base our analysis on good solid research and consider involving experts. A shared and collective conflict analysis for Oxfam is mandatory to make the implicit more explicit and to have a base for a joint strategy and approach. The methodology proposed has 6 basic steps:<sup>40</sup>

- 1 Identify and prioritise the key driving factors (KDF) of the conflict.

- 2 Identify the stakeholders and actors in the conflict.
- 3 Analyse the dynamic nature of the conflict, the interrelatedness of the different elements.
- 4 Identify the strategic entry points for the strategy, based on the analysis and mandate of the organisation.
- 5 Know about the successes and failures of previous efforts for peace.
- 6 Know about the regional dimensions of the conflict.

When completing these steps, we need to consider how women and men are affected differently and what are the different roles of men and women? What was pre-existing and what was caused or changed by the conflict?

It is important to take into consideration, and/or include the different Oxfam affiliates in the country and make use of the Joint Country Analysis and Strategy (JCAS) when completing this exercise.

### 2 Developing theory of change based on key driving factors

A Theory of Change (TOC) is an instrument to develop solutions to complex social problems. A TOC explains the different strategies and interventions that can bring change, describing the different outcomes that contribute to the long-term goal. It must be based on a thorough analysis and shared assumptions of how change can happen in a given context (given political opportunities, existing organisations and social and cultural contexts, among others). It has advantages over other ways of planning, which are particularly strategic for conflict transformation. It differs from other methods of planning because:<sup>41</sup>

39 CDA Collaborating Learning Projects. 2009. "Reflecting on Peace Practice" in: *Participant training manual*. Cambridge, MA.  
40 Ibid.

41 See [www.theoryofchange.org](http://www.theoryofchange.org).

- It shows a logical and causal pathway from here to there by specifying what is needed for goals to be achieved (e.g. one might argue that children attending school a minimum number of days is necessary if they are going to learn).
- It requires you to articulate underlying assumptions which can be tested and measured.
- It changes the way of thinking about initiatives from what you are doing to what you want to achieve and starts there.<sup>42</sup>

Developing a TOC requires at least the next steps:

- Include a conflict and gender analysis.
- Make assumptions of change and identify opportunities for change.
- Include a stakeholder analysis identifying actions and roles of all actors relevant to transformation of the conflict.
- Formulate Oxfam's current and potential added value as compared to other actors.
- Develop a long-term goal and the set of expected outcomes that contribute to it.
- Identify intervention strategies to achieve outcomes.
- Develop indicators for outcomes to assess assumptions for eventual adjustments (although it is understood that this is difficult in quickly changing contexts).

### Principal starting point to work on conflict transformation

This section contains all elements that need to be completed when developing ON conflict transformation strategies per country/region:

- Complete a conflict analysis of the area you want to work in (see above for guidance). Ensure that you include gender as a key lens to your conflict analysis.
- Identify the strategic entry points for Oxfam and its current or potential future partners.
- Analyse current partner portfolio and related stakeholders – assess if these partners are currently working to address the key drivers of conflict. Analyse if the target audience to the project combines both the

key drivers of change and key members of the general public.

- Design programmes based on your conflict analysis and your key entry points. Keep in mind: addressing direct, cultural and structural violence; keep in mind how this is addressing “key people” and “more people” at the individual and socio-political levels.
- Ensure that you are being conflict-sensitive in this design (see check list in Annex 3).
- Ensure that your assumptions are connected to your conflict analysis when you develop a theory of change.
- Ensure that your vision, goals and activities are realistic and can be measured.
- At key strategic moments, update your conflict analysis to ensure that the programme is still relevant and conflict-sensitive.

### Key components to each strategy: Rights-Based Approach and Gender

The starting point for Oxfam Novib projects is equality and justice. Therefore when approaching conflict transformation it is imperative that the following are part of the strategy:

#### 1 Rights-Based Approach

At the core of all of Oxfam Novib's work is the Rights-Based Approach (RBA). In this approach, human rights and dignity determine the relationship between individuals and groups with valid claims (rights-holders) and State and non-State actors (especially in conflict countries with weak or a non-existent State) with obligations (duty-bearers). The purpose is to help transform the self-perpetuating vicious circle of poverty, disempowerment and conflict into a virtuous cycle in which all men and women are rights-holders and can demand accountability from duty-bearers, and where duty-bearers take the responsibility (in the sense of willingness and capacity) to respect, protect and fulfil men and women's rights (especially men and women whose rights are not being upheld based on their class/status, ethnicity, and sexuality etc.).

A rights-based approach to development programming means that projects, activities, ways of working should be laid out according to and in respect of five main principles, the so-called PANEL: *Participation,*

42 We must be conscious of economic, social and political variables that might disrupt the cause and effect route to change, in other words might distract the theory of change. Dynamics of the conflict – as mentioned above – is something we need to be mindful of.

Accountability, Non-discrimination, Equality/  
Empowerment, and Law.<sup>43</sup>

Oxfam Novib identifies rights-holders (and their entitlements), and corresponding duty-bearers (and their obligations), and works towards strengthening the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims, and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations.

Conflict transformation “acknowledges the need for addressing power imbalances and recognises a role for advocacy and the importance of voices that challenge the status quo. Its concern with direct, structural and cultural violence is thus also highly relevant from a rights perspective”.<sup>44</sup>

## 2 Gender Justice

As with RBA, using a gender lens is imperative in all Oxfam work. For Oxfam’s conflict transformation strategies, this means looking at gender relations/roles/responsibilities at each step of the conflict analysis, the planning, implementing and phasing out of all projects. We must go beyond ‘mere’ participation and representation of women in the political and security realm, but ensure that our strategies contribute to the realisation of women’s rights and gender equality as a condition for positive peace. Using Galtung’s triangle explained in Section 3, we need to look at gender justice in the direct, structural and cultural contexts. For example, with the high prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (direct violence) against women (and men) during war, carrying out projects that protect women (and men) from rapists, while at the same time challenging cultural/traditional/religious beliefs (cultural violence) that justify such acts. Finally, structural change can only be achieved by addressing the flawed institutions (structural violence); these flawed institutions include impunity for SGBV and other crimes, poorly regulated police and military, and absence of rule of law.

## In Summary

Oxfam Novib has a history of working on conflict prevention; however, by committing ourselves to work on conflict transformation, we are pledging to look at the multiple layers that comprise destructive conflict in the social, political and economic spheres at the community, national and global levels. We plan to do so through the tools of conflict analysis and theories of change, by not forgetting to be context-specific with plans, and to address projects from the rights-based and gender justice approaches. We will work to link and learn with our partners from the local to the national and global levels, all in order *to transform* the institutions and discourses that are perpetuating destructive conflict. We recognise that societies do not become peaceful overnight and that it is a historical process of balancing and negotiating.

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43 A backgrounder on the Rights-Based Approach can be accessed via the KPM Programme Resource Desk.

44 Parlevliet, M. 2011. “Human Rights and Conflict Transformation: Towards a more integrated approach.” Cited in: Austin, B., M.Fischer, H.J. Giessmann (eds.). 2011. “Advancing Conflict Transformation.” in: The Berghof Handbook II. Opladen/Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers. Online Found at: <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.



Women participating in a community meeting. © Ami Vitale/Oxfam

# Annex 1: Relevant Terms

How specific *terms* are used and defined by Oxfam Novib:

**Conflict Analysis** defines the practice-oriented analysis of the actors, causes and dynamics of a conflict as well as the identification of (possible) entry points for peaceful conflict resolution and transformation.<sup>45</sup>

**Cultural violence** is the justification for the systematic discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion of groups, through attitudes and beliefs. An example of cultural violence is the belief held by religious extremists that non-believers and believers of other faiths can be insulted and/or killed.

**Destructive or violent conflict** is when there are inadequate channels for dialogue and disagreement, (1) and/or dissenting voices and deeply held grievances cannot be heard and addressed, (2) and/or there is instability, (3) and/or injustice and fear in the wider community and society. The use or threat of violence is leading to the destruction of social relationships and a host of negative personal and social changes, including an escalation of violence, fear and distrust.<sup>46</sup>

**Direct violence** is literally the physical violence one witnesses, for example the killing of civilians during civil war, but also the threat of violence; for example, the fear of activists to hold a demonstration, because (based on past experience) they know that the police will shoot them.

**Do No Harm (DNH) or Local Capacities For Peace (LCP)** is an assessment and programming method (including practice-oriented tools) for analysing the effects of specific International Cooperation interventions on a conflict situation and generating options for modifying the interventions towards conflict sensitivity. DNH analyses whether project elements unintentionally support factors contributing to tensions (see dividers) or factors reducing conflicts (see connectors). It allows to develop change options for not sustaining or

strengthening conflicts and whenever possible for contributing to their de-escalation. (*Mary B. Anderson, 1999*).<sup>47</sup>

**Institutions** are the formal and informal structured patterns of behaviour that regulate a society. Examples of formal institutions are the army, church, government, and laws. Examples of informal institutions are the notions of 'family' and 'marriage'.

**Key Driving Factor of Conflict** can be defined as a factor of conflict that, if it would not exist, the conflict would change drastically or also not exist.

**Peacebuilding** is a term for all kinds of mid- and long-term processes and activities aiming at preventing, mitigating and resolving violent conflicts and creating conditions for sustainable, peaceful and just development.

**Structural violence** is the systematic discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion of groups which leads to grievances. For example, the structural marginalisation of ethnic groups living in the periphery of Sudan by the Sudanese government was an important factor for Darfuris to rebel. Structural violence is often referred to as the key driving factors of conflict.

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45 Definition from: Reimann, Cordula. CORE. Training materials for workshop on conflict analysis. December 2012. CORE website: <http://corechange.ch/index.php/en/aboutcore>.

46 See <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/glossary.htm>.

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47 Definition from: Reimann, Cordula. CORE. Training materials for workshop on conflict analysis. December 2012. CORE website: <http://corechange.ch/index.php/en/aboutcore>.

## Annex 2: What our Alliance partners are doing

Many of our Impact Alliance partners are working on conflict transformation. The following section gives a short description.

### Butterfly Works

Butterfly Works co-designs for a better world. Through serious media, social branding and experiential learning, they share knowledge, trigger creativity and build sustainable businesses. One example of their work relating to conflict transformation is their Building Bridges campaign that encouraged, mapped and connected peace initiatives in Kenya. The 2010 Peace Award finished successfully with 600+ initiatives registered and great winners and runners-up. This platform will continue with all the projects connecting and encouraging more peace initiatives in Kenya. For more information, check out their website at: <http://www.butterflyworks.org/>.

### HIRDA

HIRDA stands for Himilo Relief and Development Association. Himilo means “vision” in Somali. HIRDA is a non-profit organisation founded in The Hague in 1998 by members of the Somali Diaspora in the Netherlands. HIRDA works with other organisations to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering in Somalia, particularly the South and Central regions. HIRDA is actively involved in education and women empowerment. In both areas, HIRDA incorporates peace building and reconciliation activities in the programme to enhance mutual respect and tolerance within the communities through which they contribute to the reconstruction of Somalia. Furthermore, HIRDA stimulates peace and dialogue among the youth through peace building sporting activities whereby they encourage inter-communal relationships.

### SOMO

SOMO is an independent, non-profit research and network organisation working on social, ecological and economic issues related to sustainable development. Since 1973, the organisation investigates multinational corporations and the consequences of their activities for men and women and the environment around the world. In recent years, SOMO has worked actively in a number

of conflict and/or post-conflict areas, focusing on the impacts of companies operating in (post-)conflict zones. This includes research on extractives in the Congo Basin, phosphates in West-Africa, agriculture in Palestinian Territories, and energy production in Liberia. As Coordinator of OECD Watch, SOMO has strengthened civil society in fragile States on the use of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Corporations produced in cooperation with members from the DRC, Guatemala, Liberia and Pakistan.

Between 2012 and 2016, SOMO will carry out a global programme on responsible and conflict-sensitive business as a central element in the peace building process. The goal of the programme is to ensure a fair and sustainable reconstruction process by empowering local communities to improve their livelihoods in relation to private sector development and by ensuring that the foreign private sector operates in a responsible and conflict-sensitive way. The programme will also focus on the role of the war economy, more specifically how to prevent multinational corporations from profiting from conflict and to prevent them from fuelling the conflict through their operations. The programme will be carried out in 6 fragile States (Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Colombia and Palestinian Territories). In addition, SOMO takes part in the Oxfam-led peace building programme in Afghanistan and Pakistan.



## Annex 3: Conflict-Sensitive Approach

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Relevance and application (examples)</b>
<i>Impartiality (inclusiveness, non-discrimination and non-favouritism)</i>	Individuals of conflicting groups will benefit equally from livelihood opportunities, and participate equally
<i>Independence</i>	Organisational/public face of impartiality
<i>Participation and sustainability; legitimacy, social acceptability</i>	Create ownership and opportunity for joint agendas
<i>Accountability and transparency</i>	Organisational requirement for openness
<i>Empowerment</i>	Individuals, groups
<i>Complementarity (and coordination)</i>	No competition
<i>Effectiveness (appropriateness, timeliness)</i>	Performance is an important condition for change (peace dividend)
<i>Security</i>	



Brian Ojok with his kite in Awach IDP camp. © Heather McClintock

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