

The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict
(Executive Summary)
OECD, 2001.

“Development agencies now accept the need to work *in* and *on* conflict, rather than *around* them”, with a culture of prevention and in-depth impact analysis, in order to reach sustainable peace. Lessons learned, unfortunately at high costs, point to a set of principles for preventing conflict, which are as follows:

- “Recognise the potential – and limits - of the international community to take actions that favour peace and discourage violence”.
- “Use constructive engagement and creative approaches that provide incentives to peace”
- Act on lessons learned to do maximum good and “avoid unintended harm”.
- “Be transparent, communicate intentions, and widen and deepen dialogue with partners at all levels in order to ensure ownership”.
- “Actively engage women, men and youth in peace-building and policy making processes.”
- “Work in a flexible and timely manner, guided by long term perspectives [...] even for short term actions”.

Prevention of conflict is therefore a complex mission in which the relation between security and development needs to be better understood. Indeed, “Security, including human security, is a critical foundation for sustainable development”. As a result, in this context of mutual interdependence, concepts of security “have to go beyond the classic requisites of defence from military attack, and have to extend to the well being and the protection of persons and property”.

Strategies and timeframes must be comprehensive and adapted for peace-building efforts must stay focused on human security and civil society even after the peace is deemed to have been won. Indeed and unfortunately assistance too often reverts entirely to the state at that stage, in a shift that can be harmful to civil society and its re-emergence. Peace indeed requires all actors to be involved, and indeed “a legitimate state and a healthy civil society ultimately need each other”. Finally the private sector’s role should not be overlooked for “fostering private sector-led growth in jobs and income within a rights and rules-based approach is a basic long term component of conflict prevention”.

There are therefore many challenges at hand but also many tools and ways to overcome these challenges, through mutual concurring efforts to prevent conflict efficiently while reducing poverty and guaranteeing sustainable development.