



# Conflict Prevention & Peace Building

*MDG-F Thematic Study: Key Findings and Achievements.*

## Executive Summary

### Background

#### **The challenge of conflict prevention and peace building**

About 1.5 billion people live in areas where violent conflict limits their ability to live, work and get educated. Social and economic inequalities and lack of good governance and the rule of law still represent the greatest challenges in the achievement of the MDGs and in determining the transition to sustainable development and democratic participation in decision-making processes. Conflict can reverse developmental gains by decades and it is a huge impediment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



The gap in MDG performance between post-conflict or conflict-affected countries and other developing countries has widened, and the reality is that no low-income fragile state has achieved any of the MDGs. Inequities are staggering: 60% of the world's undernourished people, 61% of the impoverished and 77 % of children not enrolled in primary school live in conflict-affected or fragile countries. About 65% of people with no access to water and sanitation, and 70% of infant deaths worldwide occur in the most fragile countries. Many of these most vulnerable people live in countries in Latin America or in Sub-Saharan Africa. Many of the fragile states that have experienced violent conflict have a high chance of relapsing into violence.

Peace building is about reducing the risk of relapsing violence and conflict. One crucial aspect of the relationship between development, peace and security is the capacity and legitimacy of the State. After a violent conflict, the provision of social services by the state can go a long way towards (re)establishing trust and legitimacy and reinforcing commitment to the peace process—especially if inequity and discrimination issues were some of the drivers of the conflicts and disputes.



## The MDG-Fund Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Sector Thematic Window

The 20 Joint Programmes (JPs) under the thematic window on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (CPPB) received a significant allocation of US\$ 94 million from the MDG-F to support interventions focusing on conflict prevention and violence reduction, livelihood improvements to mitigate youth violence, and the fostering of dialogue and equity.

The 20 countries of intervention experience differing degrees of conflict, but one common premise across all JPs is ensuring that people know and exert their rights as an important component of a peace building and conflict prevention strategy. Some JPs also pursued more context-specific outcomes, such as helping Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) or building the capacity of a particular minority.

JPs' interventions can be grouped under the following thematic areas:

- Promoting and Protecting the Rights of IDPs (Mexico, Serbia, Croatia)
- Conflict and Violence Prevention (Serbia, Sudan, Guatemala, FYR of Macedonia, Haiti)
- Access to Justice, Strengthening of the Rule of Law (Afghanistan, Mauritania, Bolivia, Mexico)
- Enhancing Inter-Ethnic Community Dialogue (Colombia, FYR of Macedonia, Chile, Serbia)
- Citizen Security (El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti)
- Preventing Conflict, Targeting the Most Vulnerable Areas (Lebanon, DR Congo).

The JPs supported a variety of stakeholders, including the most vulnerable populations, the government at the national and/or local levels, and civil society, community and local leaders.

## Achievements and Results

### Key trends

An analysis of the JPs' key achievements has revealed the following trends:

**Integrated multi-sectoral approaches:** The cases of Serbia, DR Congo, Mexico and Colombia stand out for creating a good synergy among key stakeholders, leading to integrated results that better serve the beneficiaries.

**Equity:** Three JPs stand out in the area of addressing inequalities: Chiapas/ Mexico, Narino/Colombia, and Southern Serbia were particularly successful in tackling inequities in marginalized communities.

**Regional Trends in Citizen Security:** Latin America is a good example of how the JPs helped foster best practices in CPPB to:

- Support national dialogue processes to prevent and transform the impact of conflicts on the basis of consensus (Nicaragua, Honduras).

- Promote the strengthening of national and local capacities to mitigate the impact of conflicts (Bolivia, Mexico, Colombia).
- Improve citizen security in Central America through the support and design/implementation of national citizen security policies (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala).
- Support institutional and legal frameworks (Mexico's new law in Chiapas).

**Inclusion of a Gender Dimension in Joint Programmes:** Social inclusion of women is important for sustainable development, reconciliation and conflict prevention (Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Chile).

## Sustainability and replicability



Regarding the sustainability and possible 'replicability' of many of the JPs, the cases of Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Lebanon, Serbia and FYR of Macedonia provide interesting practices.

In the area of '**Promoting and Protecting the Rights of IDPs**', a new Law on the prevention of internal displacement in the State of Chiapas, Mexico, has been quite innovative in its approach to protecting the rights of the most marginalized and vulnerable communities. It put displacement on the political

agenda, and is now owned by the regional government as well as the newly empowered beneficiaries. The law is significant in the context of a growing internal displacement challenge at the national level in Mexico, due --in areas outside Chiapas -- to narco-traffic. This law protecting the rights of the displaced and most marginalized has a good chance not only of becoming sustainable in Chiapas, but also of being replicated in other regions of Mexico.

The JP in Colombia, likewise, stresses community and government participation, including a close interaction with civil society, women and youth groups. This approach makes it a prime candidate for sustainability and provides evidence of national and local ownership.

In Eastern Europe, another JP that focuses on marginalized minorities and their rights has a good potential for sustainability. The reason for the success of the programme in Southern Serbia is the close collaboration with the government on ownership, visibility of results and impact. The root causes of conflict in the region are inequity, discrimination and economic issues. The JP projects targeting youth and women have been successful because they focus on creating economic opportunities for marginalized populations. These youth and gender initiatives have a good chance of being replicated across other vulnerable communities in Southern Serbia.

**Citizen security** is a common concern in Latin America, and especially in Central America. El Salvador provides a good practice in citizens security which is not only sustainable, but has also provided a good example to other countries in Central America who are now replicating this approach, such as Panama and Costa Rica.

## Key Conclusions and Recommendations

The study identified a series of key factors for generating an enabling environment at the programmatic level:

- **Local Ownership:** Pursue locally owned solutions and the principle of 'do no harm'. Local ownership starts with ensuring that peace building priorities, needs and approaches are determined locally.
- The governance of solutions needs to be localized. Increased access by vulnerable communities to social services and legal aid is crucial, as is better access to information about their rights and about services. The examples of Serbia, Mexico and Colombia showed how this approach helps vulnerable and ethnic communities be less marginalized.
- **Foster trust:** Enabling factors within the programme approach include outreach to communities. Design of capacity building initiatives and selection of trainees—adapted to the local context and to beneficiaries—is also crucial. Multi-sectoral partnerships and dialogue are essential. Ensuring that programmes create mechanisms to bring local actors together for dialogue and co-operation helps build trust and social cohesion as well as the resilience of communities.
- Empowering and strengthening the capacities of individuals, communities and institutions to manage conflicts is essential to peace building. Focus is also needed at community level to increase resilience in local institutions and civil society.
- Ensure inclusive participation at all stages. Community participation fosters ownership and accountability.
- Leverage equity to build peace. Redressing inequalities is crucial to peace building.
- Pursue innovative partnerships. The scale and multidimensionality of peace building demands collective engagement.
- Mainstream gender in all peace building interventions, including gender disparities and GVB; strengthen the peace building roles of women and girls.



## The way forward: the Post-2015 development agenda and the MDGs.

The MDGs, agreed in 2000, helped galvanize anti-poverty efforts by setting out eight ambitious goals to be achieved by 2015. But with less than three years left, many of the goals will be missed --particularly in fragile settings-- and social inequality is becoming a pressing issue following the Arab Spring.

One important lesson from the MDGs is that any new framework must be formulated transparently and inclusively, informed by the voices and knowledge of people living in poverty and exclusion.



**Access to full report:**

<http://on.mdgfund.org/Wp9tNi>