

## **Conflict and risks:**

### **The consequences for trade union cooperation projects**

#### **Conflict analysis**

##### **1. The purpose of conflict analysis**

Development project planning should encompass a general perspective, covering social, political, economic and health and environmental issues. At the same time, the major problem, poverty, should be present in every aspect of the project. Analysis of all these areas is vital to the design and eventual success of the project and to ensuring the standards the LO-TCO Secretariat of International Trade Union Development Cooperation must be able to guarantee the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Analysis must form an integral part of any efforts aimed at improving project quality and our projects' impact on our target groups, basically underpaid workers in other parts of the world. In the long run, the usefulness of our analyses will become self-evident when our partners see their working and living conditions improving as the project advances.

Our brief and to-the-point check list attempts to define the most important features of conflict, conflict analysis, actor analysis and evaluation of the consequences of conflict. All analysis should be adapted to the needs of the individual project; every programme should be able to demonstrate that analyses were carried out for projects within the programme, together with a general assessment of the situation in the programme's sector. We have proposed for each section a number of apposite questions which may be useful for reduced analyses. We also recommend that project budgets for more serious conflicts should include in-depth strategic analyses at the pilot study stage or during the first project year.

##### **2. Conflict**

Conflict, of course, can be defined in a variety of ways, but today most people would agree that conflicts are an inherent, in fact necessary aspect of development and can be solved, or at least managed, in a way that guarantees human rights. In poor countries, conflicts generally aggravate already bad living conditions; existing infrastructures are destroyed or damaged, lives are endangered, crime increases, public services function precariously, the right to organise and gather in groups is restricted, violence and harassment of women becomes more common, disease may become widespread, education is disrupted and environmental pollution levels rise. All of which obviously impedes the effective implementation of trade union projects

##### **3. Trade unions as actors in conflicts**

Trade unions, to a certain extent, were organised with conflict in mind and frequently contribute to conflict and violence when they intervene to establish certain democratic aims, denounce social injustices and demand respect for human rights. Corrupt regimes often see trade unions as a more serious threat than other organisations in civil society. Unions were created to be able to deal with conflict in a structured way, that is, by negotiation and we might point out, for example, how unions (and employers) can help to mediate in countries where there is armed conflict.

- What is the standpoint of unions and federations on conflict, on violence and prevention of violence, on peace and peace work?
- What part does the union's role as conflict manager play in the project?

NOTE: This check list does not define conflict management, that is, it does not specify how unions and other actors should or in fact can become active participants or trouble-shooters in a given conflict. There are many conflict management methods or models, but this is something which should be dealt with separately.

#### 4. Conflict analysis

In areas of serious conflict where a project is under way, we will have the advantage of an intimate knowledge of the conflict, knowledge which could be very useful to the project. A good strategy would be to concentrate on the actors the cooperation is aimed at as it will be carried out in the conflict context, while also taking into consideration the local conflict situation.

- Has anyone already analysed the situation? (Take care when everyone has access to everyone else's analyses; always check dates.)
- Who is responsible for the analysis?
- Does it refer to one conflict or are there in fact several conflicts (very often violent conflict disguises several other underlying conflicts, that is, there may be conflicts within conflicts).

#### 5. Reference points in conflict analysis

In order to carry out your activities with due awareness of the surrounding conflict, to adopt appropriate strategies to deal with it and to contribute to peace, you must have an understanding of the conflict or conflicts themselves. Your analyses should identify the causes of the conflict, why war broke out, etc. It could be useful to create maps, time schedules or a pattern of the conflict.

- What is the conflict about?
  - Underlying causes: the fundamental cause or causes of the conflict, which may go quite far back in time; the distribution of power and resources, discrimination, etc.).
  - Direct causes: what particular event or events fired off conflict? Transfer of power, exile or murder of individuals or groups, intervention of a third party, etc.?
  - Driving forces: are there other factors prolonging the conflict? Money, drugs, power, influence, etc.?
- Who are the actors in the conflict?
- What peace forces are involved?
- Which organisations provide open or perhaps undercover support for the contending parties?
- Check whether any group has been forgotten: passive or weak groups, women, ethnic groups, etc.
- Behaviour patterns and attitudes: what attitudes lead to violence? What behaviour patterns or attitudes reinforce the enemy's image?
- Where is the conflict heading? Get a picture of its development over time.
- What is the role of the project in the conflict? May our union, or the global union, be linked with a contending party or an actor in the conflict?

#### 6. Analysis of actors or actor mapping

Analysis of the actors involved aims at making it easier to identify possibilities of and impediments to cooperation. A project may inadvertently support groups or individuals seriously involved in the conflict or who have a positive or negative influence on the conflict. This analysis can be carried out separately or with the cooperating organisation, depending on the situation. The governing principle is always that "no-one knows where the shoe pinches like the wearer", so hidden agendas should always be borne in mind.

- Draw up a plan of the various actors in the conflict and interconnect them with positive and negative links. Who supports whom? Who opposes whom?
- What do you know about what the various actors are fighting for or what they stand for?
- What do you think they are fighting for? What do you think they stand for?
- What are their values, their behaviour patterns, their attitudes?
- Cui bono? Who stands to benefit if the conflict continues?
- Is there internal conflict within different groups?

- What links do the actors have with other groups (political groups, contending parties, external interests, donors, economic interests)?

### 7. Risk analysis

Risk analysis aims at assessing the effects of conflict on the implementation and expected results of the project. What might mean the downfall of the project? Problems which pose a risk for the project may worsen during the conflict and rumours and disinformation can create suspicion and a feeling of “us against them”. Fear can trigger off inappropriate or wrong decisions and long-term thinking may be replaced by on-the-spot, quick, short-term decisions and strategies. Key persons may disappear for a variety of reasons.

- Can the project be implemented in spite of on-going or threatened conflict?
- How might the conflict impede the achievement of project goals or results?
- Is there a risk that the contending parties might attempt to prevent implementation of the project or appropriate project resources for their own use?
- Are there alternative strategies for the possibility of conflict escalation? What if conflict breaks out in an area at risk or is rekindled in a post-conflict area?
- What risks will partners and union members be exposed to? What responsibility will the project accept if this occurs?
- Informants: can informants be protected if the project passes on information?
- What are the values we ourselves convey to our partners?

### 8. Assessing the consequences of conflict

Once a conflict, its actors and possible risks have been identified, analysis of the project’s effects on these factors can be carried out, to minimise the possibly negative effects of the project on an on-going, terminated or threatened conflict. Remember that any activity which injects resources or extraneous values into a conflict will affect it!

- Might the project be responsible for triggering or acerbating a conflict? How else might it affect the conflict?
- Map the “connectors” and “dividers” (activities which could be useful for two or more of the actors in the conflict or activities which might separate them even more). How are activities planned so as to minimise further aggravation of the conflict?
- Who has been or will be invited to participate in your activities? Was any discrimination applied during selection?
- Who stands to benefit from the project? Who might possibly stand to lose?
- Who stands to gain more power or greater status from the project?
- Is the project clear about what it will be doing to counteract violence and promote peaceful conflict management?
- Does the project offer equal opportunities for men and women?

### 9. Measures

The following questions and points may be useful during project planning.

- Transparent planning and implementation of projects.
- Codes of Conduct and ethical guidelines within the union or federation.
- Safety routines and routines in case of accident or death.
- “He who wears the shoe knows where it pinches”: inside know-how and capacities should be exploited whenever possible.
- Conflict management and social dialogue training.
- A clear equal opportunities and practice policy
- How will men and women’s knowledge and skills be used in the project?

- How will men and women be made to participate actively in planning, implementation and evaluation of the project?
- How will the project achieve greater equality and justice for men and women?
- Whenever possible, make use of local experts.
- Continuous updating of conflict analysis and analysis of the actors involved.

For all analyses: think “across” the project: will it affect different groups differently?

All projects should have a carefully thought-out strategy for follow-up and evaluation which will be able to demonstrate objectively that the project is on the right track towards achieving its aims!

#### **10. Sources, links and suggested reading**

Most of the points in this check list were taken from Sida’s own guidelines for conflict analysis and from “Building Democracy in the Midst of Conflict” produced by Forum Syd. In addition, training with the unions and international federations helped to adapt our questions to the conditions in which trade union cooperation is normally carried out. If you would like to comment or make helpful suggestions, please do so by e-mail to [info@lotcobistand.org](mailto:info@lotcobistand.org)

[www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se)

[www.forumsyd.se](http://www.forumsyd.se)

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