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IFSP

Conflict Analysis

Workshop Documentation

INTEGRATED FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME
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1 Introduction

Conflict Analysis attempts to structurally understand the nature of specific conflicts: to know more about reasons, problems and actors of a conflict. The main aim of conflict analysis is to enable a better and peaceful dealing with conflicts and prevent their escalation and widening of gaps among and between individuals, groups and communities.

Conflicts are an integral part of life and society. They are inherent in human interaction. As such, conflicts are not negative or unwanted and when dealt with constructively can even be the source of innovation and development. Conflicts that are dealt with in a destructive way can lead to violence and war.

The Integrated Food Security Programme Trincomalee (IFSP) works in an environment which is determined by a protracted conflict. Conflict and food insecurity are closely linked: they are the effect of the war. On the other hand, interventions for food and nutrition security may have an influence on the dynamics and development of the conflict, either through mitigation or aggravation. The impacts of interventions for better food and nutrition security on the conflict are determined by a number of external factors outside the influence of IFSP.

The staff of IFSP is indirectly involved in the conflict. IFSP staff works with the population affected by the war, co-operates with officials from partner institutions and meets with the conflict parties. IFSP staff facilitates development aiming at integrating groups and communities into the regional economy. Last but not least, the IFSP staff and their counterparts from partner institutions belong to one of the ethnic group, viz. Tamils, Sinhalese. and Muslims.¹

To better understanding the possible impacts of IFSP, a conflict analysis would help to analyse and document the perceptions and understandings of conflicts: What is a conflict? How does IFSP staff view conflicts in the project region? How does IFSP staff perceive conflicts and addresses them in their work? Discussions of these questions may allow the approach communities more specifically and better target programme activities. The discussion and findings given in this report are the result of a conflict analysis conducted together with community mobilisers, civil engineers and part of the management team of IFSP. During the one day workshop, two groups described and analysed different conflict settings in Trincomalee District applying the **A3 Method** (Arena, Actors, Agenda). The discussion of definitions of conflicts allows to arrive at a common understanding.

Guiding questions were:

- ⇒ Which conflicts do we observe in our project environment?
- ⇒ How do these conflicts affect us and our work with the communities?
- ⇒ How are we and our work affected?
- ⇒ What could we do to better deal with conflicts?

¹ The term 'ethnic' is applied synonymous for 'community' meaning the ethnic/religious groups Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims.

2 Definition of conflict

The definitions of conflict applied by internationally differ significantly. There is no commonly agreed and accepted understanding of conflict. In discussions, the definition of conflict as 'opposing the interest of two or more groups which are excluding the interests of other groups' is often taken as a working basis.

Presently, GTZ works on common definitions of conflict, thereby applying descriptions and explanations which would allow to address project work. The definition of conflict as 'opposing interests' may serve as a working definition. GTZ defines activities to mitigate conflicts:

'Conflict Management is the attempt to exert influence on the way a conflict is acted out, so as to regulate it, prevent violence and put an end to any existing violence. Conflict management aims to achieve constructive solutions, which benefit all participants². During the workshop the IFSP staff brainstormed for arriving at definitions of conflict. The results showed that a very broad understanding of conflict including a large number of different opinions prevails. However, a striking conclusion was that in none of the definitions given the positive side of conflicts as common experience of social interaction was mentioned. Definitions given:

'It is a situation where a social, economic, political problem can not be solved under a win-win concept'

'Overt behaviour resulting from disagreement'

'It is a disagreement between the project and its environment, between persons or between social, political, economic factors'

'Disagreement between two or more individuals/parties'

'Misunderstanding and confusion'

'Two or more different thinkings or ideas in a group or a community'

'Domination upon others for own benefit'

'Struggling with superstitious belief'

² Mehler, Andreas/Ribaux, Claude: Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management in Technical Cooperation. An overview of the National and International Debate. Schriftenreihe der GTZ, Nr. 270. Wiesbaden 2000. page 34

3 Conflict mapping –the A3 Method

Conflict mapping is a technique which allows to view and analyse a conflict from different angles: the geographical area (**Arena**), the various conflict parties and outsiders (**Actors**) and the topic and interest of the actors (**Agenda**).

The A 3 method is commonly applied for diagnosis and analysis of a conflict between external actors. The method is often used to bring two or more conflict parties or groups together. Their different viewpoints are used to 'map' their situations and to learn about individual and preferably common experiences and perceptions. The visualisation of the analysis aims to objectify views and facilitate understanding of the different/conflicting positions.

The three main areas of conflict analysis look at the following aspects:

Arena	Space, boundaries, geo-strategies, power fields (force fields), frontiers
Actors	Parties, power, relations, influences, conflict lines
Aspects	Causes, goals, interest, canals, catalysts, triggering, reasons

The different areas are approached in three steps. The participants of the analysis have to agree on the geographical scope of the conflict they intend to discuss:
Step 1: Participants draw the geography of the conflict by indicating power fields of main actors (e.g. electorates, constituencies), boundaries, strategies (e.g. expansion policy of one party) and important characteristics of the region (main roads, resources etc.).
Step 2: Participants brainstorm on the main regional actors involved ; they determine the relationship (weak, good, problematic, destroyed etc.) among the conflict parties.

Step 3: Analysis of two or more main actors by identifying their goals, interests, felt needs and reasons. The course of the conflict (catalysts) and the mode, of how the conflict is expressed ('canals') would allow the discussion of triggering reasons leading to a deteriorating situation and increased violence.

The A 3 method was selected for the analysis within IFSP Trincomalee since it would enable the analysts to view the conflict from different angles. In addition, this method facilitates to narrow the analytical view to specific conflicts between selected actors and thus allowing a more detailed analysis.

4 Summary of group work

Two groups of the IFSP staff worked on different regions within Trincomalee district with a focus on different organisations and communities: i) Non-government organisations (NGO) and village communities in the Kuchchaveli DS Division and ii) Tamils and Muslims in the DS Division of Muthur.

Relation between NGOs and villagers in Kuchchaveli DS Division

The DS Division Kuchchaveli (coastal strip in the north-west of Trincomalee district) was identified as geographical scope for the discussion. The participants identified NGOs and villagers as potential conflict parties. The nature of the conflict between these two parties was described as a conflict of different approaches towards development. With regard to their views and interest, both parties appear to have similar interests: welfare and development for the communities. It was stated that conflicts can and do emerge if villagers have the impression that NGOs do not meet their expectations and are biased in the selection of beneficiaries and in the way projects are implemented.. From the view point of the NGOs, reasons for conflicts with villagers may be the delay of work activities, the demands of non-beneficiaries, the inability (of the NGO) to meet the demands of the villagers and the changes of social structures in the village. A deterioration of the relations between both groups was the termination of the cooperation. If no compromise was found and both groups were not willing and struggling to modify their positions attacks against NGO staff by villagers was common. This would result in the withdrawal of the assistance of the particular NGO from the village.

This particular conflict analysis was chosen because of previous experiences. Participants were of the opinion that this example could perhaps be symptomatic for the relationship between village communities and external organisations (including IFSP). However, the reasons described are considered more of a general nature.

IFSP staff had experienced that different approaches towards village development had resulted in arguments of biased selection of beneficiaries and projects. Apparently, village communities feel that they are more or less collectively empowered and war affected which would from their point of view would call for equally addressing their needs.

Tamils and Muslims in Muthur

The second group had selected the DS Division of Muthur as geographical area of analysis (southern coastal area of Trincomalee district) with the main population and conflict parties being Tamils and Muslims. It was mentioned by the workshop participants that despite of different causes and effects the conflict between Tamils and Muslims in Muthur is somehow an ethnic and religious conflict. Participants discussed that the main reason is that Tamils feel threatened by Muslims. The assurance of civic

rights and life of the Tamils by the Muslim community was thought very important. The main perceived by Tamils were stressed as food security, peaceful living conditions and the prevention of Muslims penetrating Tamil villages. Underlying reasons for these feelings were considered the prevalence of unemployment, security restrictions and in the perception of threats. According to the views of the participants, the Muslim community aims to continuously extend their geographical area and seeks domination in trade. Their aims are related their goals to preserve cultural and religious identity and to materialise greater political influence and power (e.g. through their members of parliament). Reasons for the specific interest of the Muslim community in Muthur may in turn be their search for employment, threats perceived vis-a-vis the Tamil community through violence and hence the felt need for protection. Taxation (by LTTE), denial of access to land, killing, destruction and assault were considered possible triggers for an escalation of the conflict. Triggers for a possible deterioration of relations vis-a-vis the Tamil community were seen in the involvement of Muslims as home guards, looting, assault, destruction, killing and rape.

Obviously, the perceptions of the participants of the potential for escalation were more or less equally addressed for the other community. Here, the contradiction of working in mixed teams of Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims and the perceptions of the other community requires further analysis.

5 Discussion and findings

Though war and conflict shape the everyday life in Trincomalee, the perception of various conflict levels and the interaction within and between the communities has not yet been analysed in detail by IFSP: So far no broader monitoring exists on changes of the pattern of conflict in locations where IFSP is active. The question whether IFSP has a rather mitigating or a more aggravating effect has yet to be answered.

Methodological aspects

Before starting with the conflict analysis the workshop participants should have a clear view about the dimension of the conflict in question. Though no conflict is easily to describe, the more specified information on the nature of the conflict is available and the more structured a conflict is presented, the easier and clearer would be the analysis. Some categories of the A 3 method (step 3) were unclear to the IFSP staff participants and could not be applied properly. Especially the categories 'canals' and 'catalysts' were considered difficult to distinguish and to define.

The visualisation helped much to show the main areas of ethnic clusters and the power fields (political aspects, security). During the analysis for 'arena' and 'agenda' (steps 2 and 3) it was helpful to view map to clarify the spatial composition of the conflict parties.

The participants concluded that the A 3 method provides a good analysis. However, no clear guidelines to manage the conflict were provided or obvious as a result. Further discussion and interpretation of results would be needed to better understand the own

role and what a project like IFSP could contribute to arrive at the project's goal which focus on '... promoting peaceful coexistence ...'.

Findings from the Kuchchaveli example

The conflict example between NGOs and villagers could to a certain extent also be applied for IFSP. Different approaches towards development, the selection of beneficiaries, mobilisation of communities and strategies for project implementation are determining the relations between the village communities and IFSP staff. Staff has to be aware of potential conflicts, which for the example mainly derive from expectations that remained unanswered and from approaches that appeared to be inadequate. Preventing such conflicts calls for intensive dialogue: awareness for the particular approach and strategies adopted, anticipation of possible areas of conflict and address them in a sensitive way. Differences in opinion and perception need to be highlighted. The IFSP civil engineers and community mobilisers have to facilitate their tasks in an adequate manner, e.g. addressing internal conflicts that arouse, trying to discuss them in a harmonising way and helping the community in mediating different positions. To be able to meet this tasks IFSP staff would require further training and regular coaching.

In a different workshop on unintended consequences of development aid, IFSP community mobilisers and civil engineers voiced their opinion that villagers may regard them as being more interested in career development than in developing the village. This reflection which calls for a sensitive approach towards addressing the needs of the communities would call to question time and again the own role within the development process. Apart from a well presented approach of e.g. participatory needs assessment, contribution of villagers and link to service providers, behavioural pattern of IFSP staff may be the crucial factor for cooperation.

Subjectivity

In the working group on conflicts between Tamils and Muslims in Muthur, it was observed that IFSP staff identified strongly with their own ethnic group. The discussion showed that in such kind of discussion, individuals do not argue from a neutral position (IFSP perceives itself as impartial) but from a rather subjective and personal point of view.

Positions raised by one community were quite straight towards perceived interests and goals of other parties and lacked empathetic feelings. This indirectly showed that the broader dimension of the conflict is not an abstract category but is very much reflected at the level of the individual member of a community. Roles and identities of ethnic groups seem to be quite static among the communities.

The danger of subjective views lead to further hardening positions. It would be essential to include different opinions and feelings. It would further be important to incorporate thoughts and ideas about aspects of promoting win-win situations. Finally, the personal level need to be addressed. Had the discussion been undertaken with members from the Muslim community, the discussion could have opened and positions could have been reflected in a broader way.

Ideally, a conflict analysis would be approached by a group composing of different parties to allow to share perceptions and facilitate better understanding.

Implications for IFSP

Since the IFSP staff belongs to different ethnic groups openness and neutrality towards the member of the other community would be an essential condition for cooperation. The experience of day-to-day work might have a positive implication on the view towards the other community. However, this may not be possible and could perhaps not be expected to result in overall short-term changes of attitudes. To conclude, if the community/ethnic identification is strong this influences perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. Consequently, positions are taken and messages are conveyed. It would be important to further observe how far ethnic identities and attitudes are reflected in the daily work and the approach of IFSP and towards implementing the work programme. It would be worthwhile to encourage IFSP staff to monitor their own ethnic position:

How is the opinion about the relationship between Muslims and Tamils reflected in the daily work? How is the relationship among the staff and towards other group members?

The future: challenging own positions?

The two examples, the conflict between villagers and NGOs in the Kuchchaveli DS Division and the conflict between Muslims and Tamils in the Muthur DS Division showed that IFSP is indirectly or directly involved. The first example (Kuchchaveli) showed that IFSP could face a similar situation as described. The suggested monitoring of own roles, attitudes and positions vis-a-vis the village community is essential. Instruments such as the open discussion of the results of the village data sheets for identifying community and poverty projects as well as modes of cooperation are recommended. PNA and further training and coaching of IFSP staff on modes of cooperation with the village communities (as well as with service providers and partner organisations) should be promoted. Each staff of IFSP belongs to one of the ethnic communities in Trincomalee, either Tamil, Sinhalese, Muslim or Burgher. The ethnic communities associate themselves and are associated with specific positions, roles, interests and alliances in the broader political context. Within the IFSP core team of about 35 professionals and support staff those identities are felt and hence influence the relationship among the staff. The identities also shape the perceptions and opinions of IFSP staff towards the project environment. It would be beneficial to question the individual perceptions on the other community. This could be a step towards better understanding and inter-community peace building.

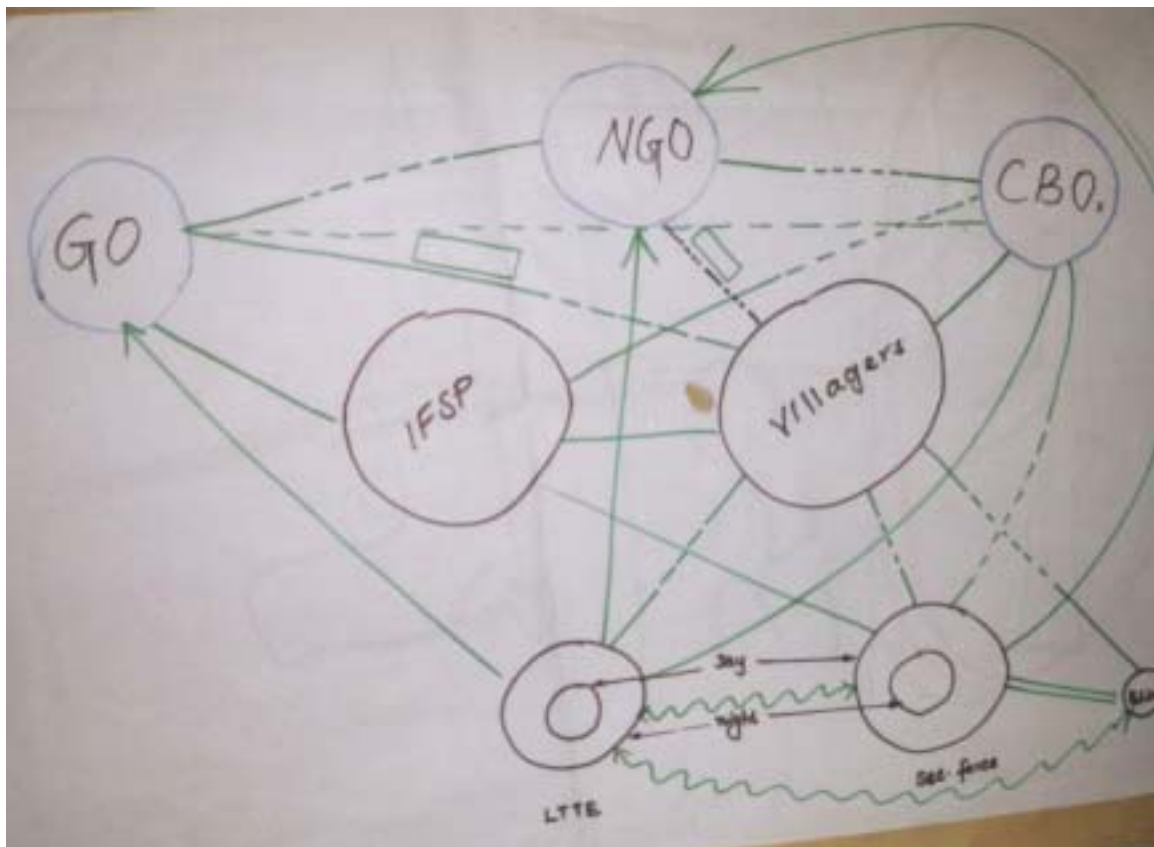
A3 method: Result working group 1:
NGOs and Villagers in Kuchchaveli

Step 1: Arena analysis: Kuchchaveli



A3 method: Result working group 1:
NGOs and Villagers in Kuchchaveli

Step 2: Actors analysis: Kuchchaveli



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**A3 method: Result working group 1:
NGOs and Villagers in Kuchchaveli**

Step 3: Agenda analysis: NGOs and Villagers in Kuchchaveli

	NGOs	Villagers
Goals	To improve living standard	Welfare and development
Interest	Relief, development activities and welfare	Improvement of their living standard
Felt needs	Assistance to conflict areas	Satisfaction of their requirements
Reason	delay in work activities non-beneficiaries higher expectations of villagers, breaking of social set up	Not fulfilling their expectations, Bias in project implementation/beneficiary selection.
Canals	Village development	Village development (differing approaches with NGOs),
Catalyst	Ignorance	Ignorance in NGO activities,
Trigger	Non-cooperation	Non-cooperation
Deterioration	Withdrawal from the village	Attacks against officers

A3 method: Result working group 2:
 Tamils and Muslims in Muthur

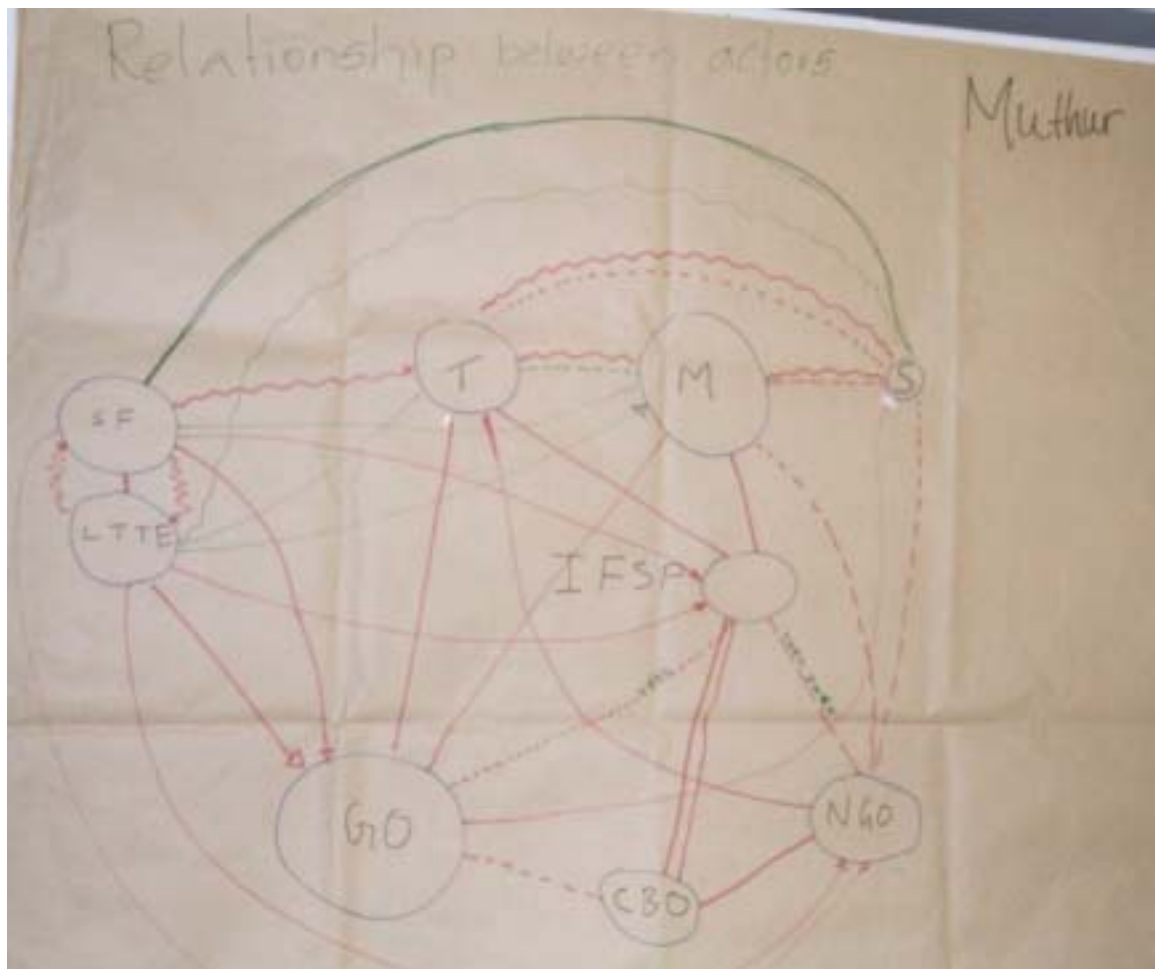
Step 1: Arena analysis: Muthur



Annex 2

A3 method: Result working group 2:
Tamils and Muslims in Muthur

Step 2: Actors analysis: Muthur



Annex 2

**A3 method: Result working group 2:
Tamil and Muslims in Muthur**

Step 3: Agenda analysis: Tamils and Muslims in Muthur

	Muslim	Tamil
<i>Interest</i>	Establishing a communally continuous geographical region To be dominant in trade	Living peacefully in the native villages Prevent penetration of Muslims into Tamil villages
<i>Goals</i>	To preserve cultural, religious identity Greater political power	Life assurance from violent Muslims (home guards etc.)
<i>Felt needs</i>	Protection (physical	Food Security
<i>Reasons</i>	Search for employment Fund for development Feeling threatened	Life threat (from forces and home guards) Security restrictions of food Unemployment
<i>Canals</i>	Ethnicity/Religion	
<i>Catalysts</i>		
<i>Trigger</i>	Taxation, denial of access to land, killing, destruction, assault	Home guard activities, looting, assault, destruction, killing, rape etc.

Agenda

Workshop, conflict analysis

IFSP Office, 3 and 18 May 2001

Welcome

Introduction

- Presentation on conflict analysis (G. Swamy)

- Discussion on conflict analysis (Plenary)

Conflict definitions

- Brainstorming on conflict definitions (working groups)

- Discussion on conflict definitions (plenary)

Conflict analysis

- Presentation of A 3 method (G. Swamy)

- Conflict analysis: Working groups using the A 3 method (working groups)

- Presentation and discussion of results (plenary)

Participants: Community mobilisers, engineers, IFSP management

Facilitator: Gita Swamy

Background paper on the workshops “Conflict analysis” and “Do no harm”

Conflict Analysis

Conflicts are part of human life and society. Conflicts as such are not negative. In most cases it is the way conflicts are dealt with that makes them destructive and negative.

Development projects often take place in conflict situations. Development projects can also create conflicts by mobilising for change and supporting marginalised groups. However, conflict as one aspect of development projects and as one component of frame conditions has not yet been incorporated into development concepts and planning. Development interventions often still take place without fully incorporating broader conflict set up or potential conflicts. The systematic analysis of conflict in the context of development project can be seen as one step towards a better incorporation of conflict issues.

On a conceptual level, discussions are going on to what extent a development project can actually contribute to the peaceful management of a conflict. This is particularly relevant for projects who work in the midst of social-economic or ethnic conflicts and whose target groups or partners are more or less involved in the conflict. As some observations have shown, the possibilities of IFSP to actively contribute to the management of the makro-conflict in Sri Lanka are limited (see article from Bigdon et.al). However, some suggestions are made regarding the role of community mobilisation, participation and capacity building. To think of possible positive impacts of development activities on the way a conflict is executed, the conflict has to be analysed first. A well-thought through analysis will allow better planning and impact monitoring.

A wide range of different instruments exists to analyse conflicts and to deal with conflicts. One instrument, which is thought to be easily applicable, is the so-called A3 method. It analyses a conflict along the lines of its Arena, Actors and their Agendas. It gives the participants a good insight into the causes and manifestations of a conflict and allows them to develop strategies to deal with it.

“Do no harm” or “unintended consequences of aid”

The “do no harm” approach seeks to design project interventions in such a way, that they do not lead to unintended negative consequences. Every outside intervention in a community will automatically have impacts. And each intervention aims at certain impacts. To plan impacts of project interventions is often very difficult since the actual impact depends on a variety of factors and frame conditions that might not be foreseeable or expected. Some interventions might also have impacts that have not been intended and which are also not wanted.

Intervening in a war-affected environment is even more sensitive than “normal” projects environment. The war itself shapes the environment and is perceived as dividing communities, marginalising certain groups and favouring others. Outside activities in such an environment can lead to effects or perceived effects that increase existent inequalities or create new conflicts.

In order to avoid that, conflicts have to constantly ask themselves about its impact in the social-economic and conflict environment.

There have been a number of instruments developed for projects

- to systematically ask about a projects (perceived) unintended consequences (Checklist on unintended consequences of aid) and

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- to analyse whether a project is supporting “dividing” elements in a community or “connecting” elements.

Ideas for IFSP

It is suggested to introduce conflict analysis and the approach of “unintended consequences of aid” to IFSP. This could be done in a two-step approach:

- conduct a conflict analysis workshop (half day) by applying a conflict mapping approach (so called A3 method: Analysis of Arena, Actors and Agenda)
- analyse unintended consequences of aid by applying the checklist of unintended consequences together (half a day).

It is suggested to do these two analyses with the community mobilisers, since they constitute one group within IFSP. It could also be done at the IFSP management level, but due to time constraint in the next weeks this is thought to be difficult.

The aim of these analyses is to

- sensitise the community mobilisers on the issues of conflict analysis and possible ways of dealing better with conflicts in the district (conflict as it concerns the local set up)
- sensitise community mobilisers on unintended consequences of projects – as part of their impact monitoring
- provide systematic instruments for both analysis

Workshop facilitation and documentation
Gita Swamy,

Trincomalee, April 2001