



Capacity Building Approach

Introduction

This is a dynamic document which can be treated as “open source” and used by organizations that may find its contents useful. Comments, suggestions, and adaptations are highly appreciated and can be sent to info@fewer-international.org

FEWER Africa takes a two-step approach to capacity building. Firstly, we focus on the partner organisation globally, to ensure that the mechanisms and structures within the institution are sufficiently in place to enable them to carry out the programming needs of the project, as well as to engage on an institutional level with the communities an organisation represents, policy-makers and donors. Secondly, we provide training in the FEWER Africa conflict analysis methodology.

Institutional support

FEWER Africa’s approach to institutional capacity building is based on experience of working with local civil society and community based organisations in the Great Lakes region. Experience has taught that programming outcomes are only achieved where the institution is in place to back up the individuals responsible for analysis, and that programming outcomes are only sustainable beyond the lifespan of the project where the structures and mechanisms of the organisation itself have been developed. In order to be legitimate, we must reinforce the capacity of these organisations to deliver and be credible vis-à-vis donors and individuals.

Capacity building of institutions is a participatory process. In concrete terms, it involves sitting down with organisation staff and working on the issues they have identified. This can cover the following aspects, and more:

1. Communication reflex

NGOs in the region are not used to communicating. Hence, it is important to identify the reasons for this lack of communication and to work with them both collectively as well as individually to reinforce a reflex of communication. This is done by

- Evaluating communication systems within the organisation

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- Do they take minutes of meetings?
- Does the board consult staff on key decisions?
- Evaluating communication systems outside the organisation
 - Are decisions made public?
 - How do they communicate their activities to the population they are supposed to represent?
 - How do they communicate their activities to policy-makers and donors?
 - Do they have access to email?
 - Do they have a website?

2. Institutional & decision-making processes

- How are decisions made in terms of
 - project priorities
 - resource allocation
 - human and financial resource management?
- What organisational rules and guidelines exist?
- Is there a multi-annual plan for the organisation?
- What is the command structure/hierarchy of the organisation?
- How are budgets handled – do organisations have audited accounts?
- How do organisations choose which actors to work with?
- How do organisations ensure they are representative?

3. Information

- How do they collect, collate, use and store information?
- Do they have a quality assurance system?
- Do they have a dissemination strategy?
- Who are the main targets of their reports?
- What are the security considerations to be taken into account in terms of disseminating information?

4. Activities

- What are the organisation's main activities?
- How does regular conflict analysis feed into the organisation's existing project activities?
- How does conflict analysis correspond to their mandate as an organisation e.g. what effect will peace and conflict indicators have on their ongoing activities?

Approach

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In order to be effective, capacity building must take a participatory approach and respond to needs identified by the organisation itself. It provides a forum for the staff of the organisation to communicate their needs to a third person, who can also provide them a valuable external appreciation of their activities and organisational set-up. The structure of capacity building is thus defined by the organisation itself, with the points above acting as a guide. As such, tools such as question and answers sessions; lessons learned from within the organisation; past experiences; group work; plenary debates etc. are all used. The facilitator provides a report summarising discussions and recommendations emanating from this process.

Second stage

Once the project team is satisfied that the organisation in question will be able to provide the support, follow-up and outreach for analytical activities, the relevant individual(s) within the organisation are trained on FEWER Africa's conflict analysis methodology:

Conflict Analysis Methodology Training

An understanding of conflict as well as peace generating factors is critical for early warning analysis. Further, it is now clear that a factual approach to early warning is flawed. Different indicators could be interpreted in a number of ways by people in conflict affected areas. Perceptions, therefore, are as important as facts. The value of FEWER Africa's emphasis on locally led and managed early warning networks has been underscored.

Three directions can be seen in the practice of early warning: (i) unstructured qualitative and context specific situation assessments; (ii) generic indicator-based analyses; and (iii) quantitative model-based studies. All three directions have value, and inform the approach which FEWER Africa member organisations take in their early warning efforts. This overview provides perspectives on the types of indicators to draw on for qualitative, generic and quantitative analyses of conflicts in the region.

Some gaps in the early warning field, however, have become visible through the preparation of this resource document. First, indicators need to be measured in quantitative terms, be policy relevant, and have associated information sources. The indicators listed below do not necessarily meet these criteria. Secondly, we need to find ways of ensuring that we adequately understand the perceptual

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nature of indicators used for analysis. This part of our work remains underdeveloped. Thirdly, conflict early warning has by and large focused on “conflict indicators”. However, an analytical approach to peace, the other side of the coin, remains elusive. Hence, the peace indicators listed below are not as many as the conflict indicators. Fourthly, early warning has emerged from the international relations discipline. However, both conflict and peace take on a broader meaning for people than what can be contained within a given discipline. Gender perspectives on early warning can provide a useful insight to our understanding of conflict/peace indicators, but is only now beginning to be applied.

FEWER Africa members will continue to re-assess and draw lessons from their practice of early warning. Hence, this document should be viewed as a dynamic product. It will be revised and change as we continue to learn how to engage in early warning more effectively.

FRAMEWORK

The objective of this framework is to provide the analytical and action framework needed to plan preliminary responses to early warning. Through an assessment of conflict and peace indicators, as well as stakeholders, preliminary trends and scenarios can be drawn, and entry points for action identified.

The analytical assumption is that: (a) conflict trends – (b) peace trends +/- (c) stakeholder trends = overall trends. On this basis, responses to conflict and peace developments, as well as stakeholder actions can be defined.

1. Conflict Indicators

Here we try to understand what are the key factors that fuel a conflict. Different aspects need to be considered, particularly the root and proximate causes of conflict, as well as its actual or potential triggers.

Description:

- *Root causes.* Structural or underlying causes of conflict. Examples may be poverty, poor governance, etc.
- *Proximate causes.* Factors that accentuate and make more severe the underlying causes of conflict? Examples may be poor personal security, availability of weapons, etc.

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- *Triggers*. Events that led (or may lead) to the violent escalation of the conflict. Examples may be the arrest of a key political figure, an especially violent cattle rustling episode, etc.

	Political/security indicators	Economic indicators	Socio-cultural indicators
Root causes			
Proximate causes			
Triggers			
Indicator trends	What conflict indicators (root, proximate, triggers) reinforce each other?		
Possible scenarios	1. Best case scenario 2. Status-quo scenario 3. Worst case scenario		

Please consider the following five questions during the indicator analysis:

1. Have you considered indicators at all levels (local, national, international)?
2. Have you considered both the relative importance of historic, present and future indicators?
3. Are your indicators reflective only of the current phase of the conflict (pre-conflict, actual conflict, post-conflict)? If so, please consider whether other phases are relevant.
4. Are the indicators you selected important both in terms of facts and perceptions?
5. Do the indicators selected reflect the concerns of different sectors of the population (women, elderly, poor, rich, etc.)?

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2. PEACE INDICATORS

Conflicts are complex. We need to understand not only what may fuel a conflict, but also what prevents its outbreak. As such, here we try to understand what are the key factors that sustain peace in society. Different aspects need to be considered, particularly peace systems, processes, and tools.

Description:

- *Systemic.* The system that upholds peace or “conflict carrying capacity” of society. How strong is it? Examples may be rules governing relations between villages and groups, a culture of tolerance, etc.
- *Processes.* The processes that are in place for dealing with conflict and that sustain peace. Examples may be inter-village meetings, a process where elders meet, etc.
- *Tools.* The tools or instruments available for dealing with conflict. Examples may be traditional courts, truth commissions, etc.

Please refer to Appendix 1 on sample peace indicators.

	Political/security indicators	Economic indicators	Socio-cultural indicators
Systemic			
Processes			
Tools			
Indicator trends	What peace indicators (systemic, processes, tools) reinforce each other?		
Possible scenarios	1. Best case scenario 2. Status-quo scenario 3. Worst case scenario		

Please consider the following five questions during the indicator analysis:

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2. Have you considered both the relative importance of historic, present and future indicators?
3. Are your indicators reflective only of the current phase of the conflict (pre-conflict, actual conflict, post-conflict)? If so, please consider whether other phases are relevant.
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5. Do the indicators selected reflect the concerns of different sectors of the population (women, elderly, poor, rich, etc.)?

3. STAKEHOLDERS

Conflicts involve people and interests. It is critical to understand the potential and actual motivations of different stakeholders and what actions they take to further their respective interests. As such, we need to consider the agendas/power, needs, and actions of different groups.

Definitions/description:

- *Agendas/power.* The agendas of key stakeholders for conflict and for peace. What is the cumulative power of stakeholders promoting peace or conflict? Examples include labour unions wanting a change in government, allied with student groups who have the same agenda. Their combined power for strikes and demonstrations may be significant.
- *Needs.* The needs of different stakeholders may include access to land for pastoralist groups, or the need medical supplies for guerillas (e.g. Burundi). Critically, what needs are opposing and overlapping among different stakeholders?
- *Actions.* What actions are the different stakeholders undertaking to promote peace or conflict? What is the cumulative power of actions for peace or conflict? For example, local NGOs and women’s groups may be advocating for justice and key donors may seek to fund the special courts (e.g. Sierra Leone). Their may be “irreconcilable” armed groups (e.g. Chechnya) driven by a wish for personal power and profit that may seek to undermine any overtures to peace.

	Political/security stakeholders	Economic stakeholders	Socio-cultural stakeholders
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Agendas/power			
Needs			
Actions			
Stakeholder trends	What stakeholder agendas, needs, actions reinforce each other?		
Possible scenarios	1. Best case scenario 2. Status-quo scenario 3. Worst case scenario		

Please consider the following five questions during the indicator analysis:

1. Have you considered stakeholders at all levels (local, national, international)?
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4. Are the stakeholders selected important both in terms of facts and perceptions?
5. Do the stakeholders selected reflect the concerns of different sectors of the population (women, elderly, poor, rich, etc.)?

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4. SUMMARY ANALYSIS

(a) Conflict Indicators	(b) Peace Indicators	(c) Stakeholders	Summary conclusion
<i>Trends summary</i>	<i>Trends summary</i>	Trends summary	(a) – (b) +/- (c)
Overall scenarios: 1. Best case scenario 2. Status-quo scenario 3. Worst case scenario			

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5. ENTRY POINTS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

To define potential programmatic entry-points, please consider the following questions:

1. What are the critical conflict indicators (root causes, proximate, triggers) that can be mitigated programmatically?
2. What are the critical peace indicators (systemic, processes, tools) that can be supported programmatically?
3. What are the key stakeholder groups and their agendas/power, needs, actions that should be addressed?
4. What plans should be made to support a best case scenario and counter-act a worst case scenario?

Once the entry points has been defined, each have to be looked at in terms of:

- (a) the facets of the problem and related issues;
- (b) the objective for the response;
- (c) envisaged measures and activities at different levels; and
- (d) who should be involved.

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