

Conflict Sensitive Approaches

- *‘Any development project set in a conflict-prone region will inevitably have an impact on the peace and conflict environment—positive or negative, direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional.’ [1]*



[1] Kenneth Bush (1998)

Introduction to Conflict Sensitive Approaches

- A politician is meeting with elders to get their blessings in vying for governorship in county X (traditional way of vetting)
- The elders gave him their blessing and assured him of triumph
- He went further to address the rally to share his party manifesto and tell the crowd that he has been blessed by the county elders!



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Cont'



- A politician vying for governorship addresses the gathering (using the information given to him by the elders) without considering the real needs of the youth who are the largest voting block in county X (Lack of understanding the area/issues)

Cont'

- The message given by the politician did not go well with the youth
- The rally turned rowdy with youth vowing to cause conflict and oust the politician & his elders
- The message given by the politician only made the tension between the youth and the elders worse (trigger & divider)



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Cont'

- This made the DPC (who understand the area and the existing tension) to call for Baraza to inform the politician why his message flared up the situation (*Minimizing negative effects –role of connector*)
- The politician conceded the fact that his actions/implicit messages made the already tense situation worse (*maximizing positive effects*)



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- Now that he understood the situation (**context analysis**), the politician held separate meetings with different groups of voters with a view to understand their situation/needs and map out how to address their problems (**interaction between his action/speech which increased and decreased tension**)
- Both youth and elders were brought together to iron out their differences and elders were cautioned from misleading politician (**re-design his plan**)



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Ideal situation!

*He could have avoided this whole process by understanding the **context/County X** and conduct his rallies and pass on messages in such a way that conflict is avoided (**conflict sensitivity**)*

Globally agreed definition of Conflict sensitive

In essence, being conflict-sensitive is

- ***About organizations understanding the issues that divide the societies in which they work,***
- ***And the power relations underpinning these divisions,***
- ***so that they can target their work to promote peace.***

Cont' of definition

Conflict sensitivity means the ability of an organization to:

- 1 Understand the area in which they operate.
- 2 Understand the interaction between themselves, their activities and this area.
- 3 Act upon their understanding of this interaction so as to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive ones

Buzz group/discussion-

Key conflict sensitive issues for discussion

- *Implication of Lack/understanding of the area*
- *Minimizing of Negative impact/Strengthening of Connectors*
- *Maximizing of positive impact/weakening of Dividers*
- *Interaction between your action/Intervention/program and where you work*
- *Re-designing process of your action/project*
- *Show-case conflict sensitive practice Human interest case studies (by all)*