



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# SUPPORTING PEACE PROCESSES



A TOOLKIT FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

*Key Issues*

*Lessons Learned*

*Program Options*

*Resources*





COVER PHOTO: USAID/CMM/LISA CHANDONNET-BEDOYA  
A MURAL FROM VALLEDUPAR, COLUMBIA

PHOTO ON INSIDE FRONT AND BACK COVER: AP/DAVID GUTTENFELDER  
VOTERS IN FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE WAIT IN LINE AT A SCHOOL  
COMPOUND TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS DURING THE MAY 2002  
ELECTIONS. THE FIRST AFTER A DECADE-LONG CIVIL WAR. HOSTILITIES  
ENDED AND A NEW GOVERNMENT WAS ESTABLISHED AS THE RESULT  
OF AN INTERNATIONALLY-SUPPORTED PEACE PROCESS THAT LASTED  
FROM 1995-2001.





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Conflict is an inherent and legitimate part of social and political life, but in many places, conflict turns violent, inflicting grave costs in terms of lost lives, degraded governance, and destroyed livelihood. The costs and consequences of conflict, crisis, and state failure have become unacceptably high. Violent conflict dramatically disrupts traditional development, and it can spill over borders and reduce growth and prosperity across entire regions. Recent research reveals, however, that the growing international attention to national and international peace processes and their successful implementation has led to a discernible drop in the intensity and length of those violent conflicts that get started. Peace processes often involve an outside diplomatic and/or donor component, yet their successful support involves a deep understanding of the underlying conflict dynamics present in the society and recognition of both the opportunities and limits of support from outside the process.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

This toolkit is grounded in a comprehensive survey of USAID peace process activities to compile lessons about program success or failure. It is intended to help USAID staff and their implementing partners understand how to support various forms of peace processes. This document (1) examines key issues related to development assistance support for peace processes, (2) discusses lessons learned in developing such programs, (3) provides options for programming based on past USAID experiences, and (4) identifies resources for USAID personnel. Together, the elements of this toolkit are designed to help raise awareness about the linkages between peace processes, development aid, and conflict.

As Director of CMM, I am pleased to introduce this document on development assistance support to peace processes. The Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was established to provide technical leadership on conflict to USAID Missions and our Washington-based regional and pillar bureaus. I hope that readers will find the information contained herein thoughtful, innovative, and useful. We consider these toolkits to be "living documents" and would welcome your comments and observations to help us improve future iterations.



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SUPPORTING PEACE PROCESSES:  
A TOOLKIT FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

This toolkit is part of a series that explores how development assistance can address key issues associated with violent conflict. A challenge for development personnel is how to support peace processes, negotiations between adversaries that assist a transformation of in the society's conflict dynamics. USAID's support for peace processes requires strategies for constructively interacting with conflict dynamics within the wider ecology of local, interagency, and international actors.

The challenges are formidable. The motivations behind violent conflict are often longstanding and complex; the means to engage in violence are often entrenched in a society's structure. Antagonistic parties may take years to reach a peace agreement, only to see violence resume in the following months.

This toolkit is grounded in a comprehensive survey of USAID peace process activities to compile lessons about program success or failure. It is neither a programming plan nor a policy document, but instead guidance intended to help USAID staff and their implementing partners understand how to support various forms of peace processes. This document (1) examines key issues related to development assistance support for peace processes, (2) discusses lessons learned in developing such programs, (3) provides options for programming based on past USAID experiences, and (4) identifies resources for USAID personnel. In addition, CMM has established a companion resource page on its intranet site that provides additional documentation, updates, and links for those who seek greater details. Together, this toolkit and the resource page are designed to help raise awareness about the linkages between peace processes, development aid, and conflict.

The toolkits in this series are designed to complement and build upon conflict assessments. Conflict assessments provide a broad overview of destabilizing (and stablizing) patterns and trends in a society. Using a Conflict Assessment Framework, they sift through the many potential sources of conflict that exist and zero in on those that are most likely to lead to violence (or renewed violence) in a particular context. These toolkits are intended to fill the gap between risk forecasts and potential interventions, helping Missions to gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding violence and to develop strategic, focused programs.

This document was drafted by Gus Fahey of USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM), drawing significantly from earlier studies authored by Hannes Siebert and Elisabeth Roesch, as well as the work of Zachary Rothschild. Extensive feedback was provided by practitioners in the field and USAID staff, particularly S.Tjip Walker of CMM and Konrad Huber of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Natasha Greenberg of the Office of Women in Development readied the document for publication. Comments, questions, and requests for additional information should be directed to the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (conflict@usaid.gov).

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# KEY ISSUES



***Peace processes should assist a transformation in a society's conflict dynamics so that political, social, and economic improvements can take place in a stable and just environment.***

Peace processes are defined here as negotiation activities to resolve violent conflict, including the surrounding activities of pre-negotiation and agreement implementation. Peace processes should assist a transformation in a society's conflict dynamics so that political, social, and economic improvements can take place in a stable and just environment.

While the Department of State normally leads US Government peace process initiatives at an official level, USAID is often well-positioned to play a variety of programmatic, informational, and policy roles that support these efforts. Development support to peace processes can incorporate a range of activities, from providing official negotiations with logistical assistance to strengthening pro-peace constituencies to supporting grassroots reconciliation.

Key issues are organized here into three categories: *processes*, *people*, and *principles*. Programs that support a peace process should clearly delineate what the process is, who it is targeting, and what principles guide it. Understanding these issues and the comparative advantage of USAID addressing them can help development staff clarify the scope and direction of their efforts along with their anticipated outcomes.

## PROCESSES

### STAGES OF CONFLICT

While official negotiations generally come to mind when considering peace process activities, it is also important to consider programs that precede negotiations or assist agreement implementation. See Figure 1 for a sample of activities that development actors have engaged in at different stages of peace processes.

Engagement in the **pre-negotiation phase** is intended to enhance the conditions or skills needed for successful negotiations between adversarial polities. Parties may have limited capacity to formulate or carry out agreements or may need to gain consensus, even within their own communities, about what issues are in dispute. Institutions, agencies, or processes may need to be established or enhanced to facilitate fair negotiations. Preparing a political environment for official negotiations might include establishing dialogue at unofficial levels, assisting civil society voices, or removing barriers to peace talks.

**Negotiations** are considered formal talks between duly authorized leaders of adversarial parties. Official negotiations are normally facilitated through diplomatic channels, supported by development programs in a variety of ways. Development actors often play a stronger leadership role in dialogue efforts aimed at grassroots or civil society levels. Negotiations can benefit from wider programs that enlarge pro-peace constituencies, enrich agendas with noncombatant concerns, or help manage public perceptions during talks.

**Post-agreement implementation** activities are designed to insure that successful negotiations bear fruit. Development aid may be used to quickly establish technical committees that provide logistical support, monitoring, and institutional mechanisms for implementing and sustaining new cooperative

relationships. Timely support for agreement implementation can help reassure uncertain parties, build trust, and show results of peace. These activities may include their own processes for addressing disputes associated with implementing negotiated changes.

### INTERAGENCY ROLES

Programs that support peace processes require strong coordination with other foreign policy actors. The Department of State normally coordinates US Government efforts in peace processes with USAID providing a variety of supporting roles depending on the circumstances.

USAID plays a programmatic role, providing expertise and funding to fulfill policy objectives determined by the State Department. For instance, when the Ambassador to Kenya and Somalia decided to support Somalia's National Reconciliation Conference, USAID contributed funds and personnel to assist in the conference's logistics. USAID also plays an information role, utilizing its program experience, "on the ground" analyses, and relationships with actors, from the grassroots to the official level, to inform policy decisions. USAID can play a policy role in situations where specific decisions about program design and implementation can prove crucial to a country or region's conflict dynamics. USAID was instrumental in the design and participation of the high-level Congolese peace processes of Sun-City and Lusaka. In some circumstances, particularly on the grassroots level, USAID may be the only US entity engaged.

Peace negotiations themselves can be a collaborative interagency undertaking. While diplomatic officers can exert influence to bring together disparate parties, development staff can arrange for specific experts, such as mediators, to support the actual negotiating process. High-level diplomatic engagement may enlist

### FIGURE 1. PEACE PROCESS STAGES & SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

#### *Pre-Negotiation*

- Establish Processes/ Structures
- Train Participants
- Build Negotiation Capacity
- Enrich Negotiation Agendas
- Promote Constructive Media

#### *Negotiation*

- Convene Stakeholders
- Provide Logistics
- Sponsor Non-combatant Participation
- Coordinate Technical Assistance/Expertise
- Administer Surveys

#### *Post-Agreement Implementation*

- Support Implementation Committees
- Improve Public Awareness
- Reintegrate Ex-Combatants
- Foster Reconciliation
- Monitor Agreements

**Photo opposite page: To end a war in Nepal that raged for more than 10 years and killed thousands, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala (left) and the guerilla leader known as Prachanda signed a peace deal in 2006. The agreement was the result of months of negotiations that received USAID-funded facilitation and technical support**

## FIGURE 2. SAMPLE OF INTERNATIONAL ACTORS INVOLVED IN SUDAN'S 2005 COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT

### Department of State:

- Special Envoy for Peace
- US Ambassador to Kenya
- Sudan Programs Group

### USAID:

- Special Humanitarian Coordinator
- Bureau of Democracy, Conflict & Humanitarian Assistance Assistant Administrator (DCHA/AA)
- Office of Transition Initiatives (DCHA/OTI)
- Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (DCHA/OFDA)
- Office of Food for Peace (DCHA/FFP)
- Sudan Mission
- Sudan Task Force (Washington)

### Foreign Governments:

- UK
- Norway
- Italy

### Multi-Lateral Institutions:

- United Nations (UNICEF, OCHA, UNDP)
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa (IGAD)

foreign government participation in peace processes, while development programs can bring essential civil society voices – like those from women's groups – from the periphery into the center of high-level discussions.

Although USAID has typically directed its peace process efforts at the grass-roots level, lasting gains of these programs are often predicated on top-level leaders who have significant sway over the conflict dynamics. Engagement with the various parties included in peace processes requires judicious coordination among interagency actors with responsibility for those relationships.

### TIMING

Several observers have noted that parties resolve conflicts only when they are ready to do so. If outside actors push toward negotiation in advance of the conflicting parties' own recognition of that need, negotiations can fail or be dependent on external parties in a way that is unsustainable.

Openings for a peaceful settlement can arise when conditions create an environment conducive to a negotiated settlement, frequently referred to as a "ripe moment" for peace. Some scholars point to the importance of a mutually hurting stalemate as a precondition for negotiations as parties exhaust their military or financial resources. Others note that outside incentives or pressure may convince warring parties that negotiations would serve their interests better than violence.

High-level changes in leadership or foreign sponsorship can provide opportune times for peace process programs. A humanitarian catastrophe, such as the powerful South Asian tsunami in 2004, may serve to exacerbate underlying conditions (as in Sri Lanka) or provide a new opening for cooperation (as in Aceh, Indonesia).

Ripe moments may also be subjective, perceptual events that alter combatants' willingness to engage diplomatically

with one another. Development actors can influence these perceptions by offering new perspectives, realistic assessments, or assurances about participation in a peace process. Other opportune, conflict-sensitive programs that address underlying conditions can help to develop an environment more amenable to negotiations.

## PEOPLE

### LEVELS OF SOCIETY

USAID supports peace processes along three different tracks - Tracks I, II, and III - that target three different levels of social actors. Often different peace processes are needed at multiple levels of society simultaneously to address the different manifestations and implications of violent conflict. Formal links between the tracks can facilitate constructive two-way communication, feedback, and collaboration.

**Track I** processes engage top-level decision-makers: the highest government or opposition leaders at the core of struggles for political, economic, and military power. These actors hold leverage over key social resources that provide them the financial and organizational means to wage or deter violent conflict. Diplomatic actors normally take the lead role in Track I activities, with USAID providing logistics, advice, and technical assistance. Discussions involving influential public or quasi-public officials are often referred to as Track I ½.

**Track II** processes target influential actors within civil society, including business, institutional, academic, and religious leaders. These actors are positioned to provide advice to government officials, as well as to amplify concerns of grassroots communities. Track II processes often provide feedback on proposals, suggest agenda items overlooked by political leaders, or test innovative approaches before they are introduced at the Track I level. When official negotiations stall, organizations with vertical and

*Ripe moments may also be subjective, perceptual events that alter combatants' willingness to engage diplomatically with one another. Development actors can influence these perceptions by offering new perspectives, realistic assessments, or providing assurances about participation in a peace process.*



horizontal reach into society – such as women's groups, religious networks, and business associations – may continue with dialogues so that the momentum for peace can move forward.

**Track III** processes engage locally influential grassroots actors or the public at large. People involved in these processes typically have the greatest direct exposure to the opposing party in a conflict, the largest involvement with the military (as both combatants and civilians), and the least access to policymakers. Track III engagement is often needed for the long-term success of peace processes, as public acceptance of an agreement is crucial for its on-the-ground implementation.

The divisions between the three tracks are not always clear nor mutually exclusive. Actors may participate in different tracks during the course of a conflict, such as grassroots opposition leaders who take on official roles in negotiation or governance. Parties who can communicate across societal lines can connect discussions occurring at various tracks. Supporting these “cross-track” discussions is often an effective use of development resources.

## LEGITIMACY

Since negotiations require representation of groups by individuals, it is important to include the right people in the process. Parties involved in negotiating agreements should be considered legitimate representatives of their respective communities, widely acknowledged for their leadership roles and understanding of community concerns. USAID field staff are often in a position to know the popular perception of local and national actors (both armed and civilian), information that is needed for both policy and program effectiveness.

## NARRATIVES

Parties in conflict usually have different narratives to explain their worldview, history, actions, and aspirations. Development professionals need

to understand the role of culture in varying conflict discourses and the implications of using certain language. Use of particular words may inadvertently signal partisanship, a designation that may be difficult to lose.

A challenge for outside parties is to present a convincing interpretation of the conflict that by itself opens up a narrative possibility for a resolution. This process of reframing can help parties develop constructive approaches to issues, acknowledge difficult realities, and identify avenues for collaboration. Since people commonly interpret conflicts as a zero-sum game (where one party must lose in order for another to gain), shifting from a competitive to a collaborative outlook can often help parties work together for mutual gain.

## IDENTITY

The role of identity – a core sense of belonging that people feel towards a group – can influence narratives regarding conflict. When a group perceives itself to be threatened, humiliated, or denied legitimacy, individuals may defend group identity as if it were a tangible resource like land or water. Peace processes that address ethnic, religious, and racial conflicts often must take into account identity concerns.

## DIASPORA

Diaspora populations are often key stakeholders in a conflict, with strong combinations of resources and relationships that can serve to sustain or resolve a conflict. Their approaches and attitudes vary considerably: some contribute a helpful worldly perspective in a language easily understood by the parties, while others have an elitist attitude toward their compatriots or a militancy that exceeds that of the local population who has to live with the violence. While diaspora often have connections with policymakers, lobbying governments in both their home and

*In Colombia, lack of consultation with victims' families in the peace process presented a major obstacle for later reintegration of demobilized paramilitaries.*

*Many Acholi in northern Uganda reject the high-level negotiating efforts of Acholi diaspora, who they consider illegitimate representatives after living out of the country for more than 20 years.*

*Trusted relationships between parties are essential to creating effective institutions, addressing new issues as they arise, and minimizing continued reliance on outsiders to secure peace.*

adopted countries, in-country Missions may face difficulties in engaging them.<sup>1</sup>

## **TRUST**

Lack of trust between conflicting parties may present significant obstacles to securing and fulfilling a negotiated agreement. Violent conflict can polarize communities, breaking personal and institutional relationships that can otherwise act as social connectors and provide a basis for social resilience. Trusted relationships between parties are essential to creating effective institutions, addressing new issues as they arise, and minimizing continued reliance on outsiders to secure peace. In conflict areas where individuals hold more power than the institutional positions they occupy, trust may require personal relationships that take years to develop and significant emotional investment.

## **INTRA-PARTY DYNAMICS**

Often parties have internal dynamics that are not conducive to cooperation or generating consensus. This dysfunction can hamper external negotiations with other parties, and inhibit the implementation of an eventual agreement. Efforts to improve coordination within and between disparate groupings of allies are often needed before any negotiation begins.

Groups may need training to improve their collaborative capacity, towards strategies that fulfill common interests and away from adversarial bargaining that can reinforce the unhelpful dynamics of the conflict. Marginalized groups in particular are often ill-prepared to participate in a peace process. Parties should demonstrate some capacity – both in their organization and approach – to implement an agreement before a negotiation starts.

## **GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS**

It is not uncommon for certain

<sup>1</sup> In recognition of the importance of diaspora communities and the challenges of engaging them, CMM has commissioned additional work on this topic available on CMM's intranet site.

parties in violent conflicts to be subject to sanctions imposed by international organizations, like the UN, or by national governments. Of particular concern to USAID staff and our implementing partners are the Secretary of State's designations of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) and the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). Furnishing material support or resources to FTOs or engaging with SDGT groups may subject USAID staff and its implementing partners to criminal and/or civil penalties.

However, FTOs and SDGTs are sometimes regarded by local populations as legitimate representatives of their grievances and, in certain cases, participation of an FTO or SDGT in a peace process may be crucial to its success. Where a program may contemplate the provision of some support to such groups or their supporters, implementing bureaus and offices should consult with the Office of General Counsel or Regional Legal Advisor for guidance about these restrictions and potentially available mechanisms, such as OFAC's licensing regime.

## **PRINCIPLES**

### **DO NO HARM**

Like other development assistance activities, programs that provide support for peace processes must take care not to put those living in violent contexts at greater risk. Peace processes may have a profound affect on the relationships, dynamics, and structure of a community, and could provoke backlash from parties perceived to be losing prestige or control. Development professionals should be aware that coercive techniques to move peace processes forward may carry risks to those that are perceived as collaborating with outsiders. Lives may depend on the way that USAID engages communities.

TRANSPARENCY

Development officers should understand the perception of their roles in local conflict dynamics and aim to be transparent about USAID’s motives, processes, and objectives. While no outside actor can be truly neutral about a conflict outcome, outsiders regarded as open and impartial can better bridge an atmosphere of distrust between parties, deliver hard truths, and support agreement implementations.

Transparency is particularly important in conflict contexts when the US Government is not a neutral presence. Parties may not regard the US as an ally and still accept forums sponsored by US assistance as the best or only option for a negotiated settlement. When addressing intransigent parties or asymmetries of power, sometimes a partisan outsider has the incentives or leverage to push its friends toward a constructive peace process outcome. Indeed, change in foreign support to one of the parties is often an important determinant in ending civil conflict.

Parties to the conflict may interpret peace processes themselves as pre-serving the structure and workings of status quo institutions that they deem corrupt or unfair. Particularly since development agencies require host government approval of their activity, USAID should conduct its work in a transparent and reliable manner to assuage distrustful parties who oppose government rule.

COMPREHENSIVENESS

There is typically a range of factors that impact violent conflict. Peace process programs may be ineffective when they address behaviors and attitudes but ignore the social structures that generate grievances and marginalize certain parties from full participation in a negotiation. Likewise, fixing inequities

enshrined in laws, institutions, and traditions may fail to change individual motivations for violence. Peace process activities should be explicit about their focus, and identify gaps in programming that could inhibit progress.

Mary Anderson and Lara Olson’s framework<sup>2</sup> emerging from their research on peace practices provides a useful way to classify the focus of peace process efforts (see Figure 3). One dimension of the matrix sorts interventions between those that focus on changing *attitudes* of the parties in conflict or on changing *institutions*— the rules, procedures, and practices— that give rise to their grievances. The other dimension of the matrix identifies whether the intervention is directed at *key people* whose roles are critical to the conflict dynamics or at *large numbers of people* who can provide broad-based support for peace processes.

Peace process interventions can be sorted into one of the four cells in the matrix. For example, peace messaging

FIGURE 3. PEACE PRACTICE MATRIX

	More People	Key People
Attitudinal		
Institutional		

Adapted from Anderson and Olson, 2003

2 Anderson, M. & Olson, L. *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*. Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, Collaborative for Development Action, Cambridge, MA: 2003. [http://www.cdainc.com/publications/rpp/confronting\\_war\\_critical\\_lessons\\_for\\_peace\\_practitioners.php](http://www.cdainc.com/publications/rpp/confronting_war_critical_lessons_for_peace_practitioners.php)



broadcast by radio or television is an example of an intervention targeting the attitudes of large numbers of people while facilitating negotiation of a power-sharing arrangement between the leaders of two warring parties is an example of support to key people engaged in initiating institutional change.

An important lesson from Anderson and Olson's extensive research is that peace processes were much more

successful in cases where interventions targeted each of the four cells. Interventions can, and often do, begin with a focus on attitudes, but successful processes eventually address all quadrants. Successful interventions did not need to proceed in a set sequence nor was it necessary for them to be undertaken by the same organization. It was the comprehensiveness of the aggregate efforts that mattered.

### ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF USAID SUPPORT TO PEACE PROCESSES<sup>3</sup>

- In **Sierra Leone**, USAID provided technical assistance to international efforts to add transparency and accountability to the country's diamond trade (known later as the Kimberly Process) that funded illicit arms sales.
- In **Kosovo** and **Serbia**, USAID commissioned the Knowledge-Attitudes-Practice Survey to demonstrate to parties involved in the Vienna talks that there was strong public support for negotiations as the fairest way to resolve Kosovo's future status.
- In **Macedonia**, USAID funded the Confidence Building Initiative that mitigated persistent political and ethnic tensions following the Framework Agreement that ended the civil conflict.
- In **Peru** and **Ecuador**, USAID supported efforts by both countries to improve the living standards of those in the once-disputed border area by promoting the accords that ended the dispute, policy dialogues, and cross-border initiatives.
- In **Sudan**, high-level diplomatic and development in-country presence used an unprecedented amount of leverage on both the Government of Sudan and the Southern People's Liberation Movement / Army to sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
- USAID's Access Project convened government officials from **East Africa** to discuss their respective land conflicts. The representatives found they could more clearly see solutions to their neighbor's problems, generating new perspectives, ideas, and approaches for their own conflicts.
- In **Guatemala**, the Mission convened a diverse group of individuals with very different perspectives on the civil war and compiled their personal stories together into a single book that was widely distributed throughout the country.

<sup>3</sup> These examples are a few of the more than 40 examples of USAID-funded support to peace processes. Summaries of each project may be found on CMM's Peace Process resource web page.

# LESSONS LEARNED



PHOTO: USAID/BURUNDI

**An example of using media to raise issues arising from the implementation of a peace agreement, a journalist from USAID-supported Studio Ijambo in Burundi moderates a discussion between a representative of the Ministry of Repatriation and a returnee on the challenges of repatriating and reintegrating orphans.**

Special concerns arise when outside parties try to create the mechanisms, relationships, and space for peace processes in ways that parties internal to the conflict cannot. Development practitioners should seek to understand USAID's role in supporting peace processes within the wider ecology of political, economic, military, and social actors. The following lessons for effective support of peace processes are based on experiences from practitioners in the field.

## CONDUCT A CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Development professionals should first conduct a conflict analysis to better understand the parties and dynamics surrounding peace processes. For USAID, a combined Mission and Washington-based team should conduct an assessment using the Conflict Assessment Framework developed by the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation to analyze conflict motives, means, and opportunities. Such an assessment is designed to surface the Key Issues described in the previous section.

## 2 COORDINATE WITH LARGER POLICY & DONOR COMMUNITIES

A conflict advisor can prepare a conflict mapping that lists parties and their relationships, including those in the international community. This mapping should underscore USAID's role in relation to other outside actors, recognize gaps in the peace process (see Figure 3 above), and identify any comparative advantage of USAID providing programming, advice, or direction.

Monitoring and evaluation plans should be developed before peace process programs begin. Research techniques that measure attitudinal change, developed originally for USAID's health and gender programs, may be useful for evaluating certain peace process activities. Development professionals should note outside factors beyond the scope of the project that ultimately influence the project outcome and look to identify unintended consequences, positive and negative, to help to discern success and provide insights about future activities.

Peace process programs require a significant amount of harmonization with other actors and efforts in the diplomatic, development, and sometimes, security communities. Working in tandem with civil society organizations, other governments, and international organizations may help to cover gaps in programming as identified by the conflict analysis and encourage transparency and impartiality that can lend more legitimacy to the process. As Anderson and Olson's research has shown, within this joint effort it can be important to ensure that there is a coordinated effort to create programming focused on all four quadrants of their matrix (see Figure 3), alternatively involving select groups or larger portions of the population to focus on either attitudinal or institutional change.

### CASE STUDY: Support for Burundi's Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement

After the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (APRA), a team from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) traveled to Burundi to identify specific ways that OTI could support the agreement and the new transitional institutions it engendered. While the team noted demonstrable progress in implementing the APRA provisions dealing with the political settlement, challenges existed in transitional governing and negotiating a cease-fire between the Burundian army and the two rebel movements.

In other environments, OTI had been successful in supporting agreement implementations. Using those experiences, it determined that its programs should focus on (1) funding activities that would help maintain the momentum the transitional government had established and (2) identifying potential disruptions of the implementation process. Since it was difficult to envision a direct USAID role in the cease-fire negotiations, OTI decided to encourage the cease-fire indirectly by supporting activities that responded to issues the cease-fire was likely to face.

In the short term, OTI undertook media campaigns to increase public support and understanding of APRA as a way of both pressuring the political elite and informing rebels that many of their demands were indeed met through negotiation. OTI also worked to promote peace and justice in a variety of specific ways, by improving the legal framework singled out under APRA for attention, constituting a Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and attending to political prisoner issues.

OTI supported existing NGOs and processes (including *bashingantahe*, a local conflict mediation mechanism) that promoted peace and reconciliation, particularly among rural communities. Grants from the Transition Grant Fund were used to combine local conflict resolution capabilities with community-initiated projects to rehabilitate social infrastructure. The grants were focused on those provinces that had the highest volume of returning refugees, building conflict management skills and processes in those areas most likely to face land tenure conflicts that could threaten the accord.



USAID is often well positioned to interact with peace processes by virtue of its on-the-ground presence and relationships within the local, interagency, and international organizations communities.

Since peace processes often need to engage Tracks I, II, and III simultaneously, USAID should coordinate with other donors to develop integrated strategies and contribute to shared understandings of best practices in the field. Communication between tracks should be formalized, not only to give grassroots and civil society representatives direct access to policy-makers, but also to provide opportunities for donors to coordinate.

Coordinating with other interagency partners is crucial to synchronizing US policy and programs. USAID staff should be aware of information needed for diplomatic decisions— from field, public, and classified sources— and maintain channels for up and down communication. Where USAID is funding more than one project in a conflict zone, coordination may include established meetings among Chiefs of Parties, shared work plans, and common trainings across different sectors.

Some development actors, particularly non-government organizations (NGOs), by virtue of their experience, access, or reputation, can leverage relationships with conflict actors that are vital for peace process success. For example, USAID turned over funding of the “One-Text” initiative in Sri Lanka to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation after the inclusion of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a separatist group considered legitimate by local constituencies but a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the State Department.

### 3 EMBED SECURITY SECTOR REFORM INTO AGREEMENTS

Negotiations should include security sector reform on the agenda early in

the peace process, as people in a violent conflict context often rate safety and security as their top priorities. Warring parties are unlikely to agree to peace until they feel satisfied with the security, livelihood, and justice arrangements in a post-conflict setting. Programs should identify strategic entry points, and be flexible in their support of local drivers of reform as they emerge.

Civilian control of armed forces is often needed to structure and enforce a long-term agreement. To re-establish rule of law, justice services can often be enhanced by empowering non-state actors on a local level.

### 4 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE LONG-TERM

Lasting trust between parties typically needs to be re-established on multiple levels of society for agreements to be successfully negotiated and implemented. Grassroots or civil society actors, operating outside the media spotlight, may have more opportunity to build the needed personal relationships across conflict lines. In highly polarized societies, programs that facilitate exchanges should acknowledge and respond to the social, political, and economic inequities between parties. Women’s organizations have been particularly effective at bridging divides, as women are often perceived to be more trustworthy and less corruptible and to have more collaborative negotiating styles.

Although official negotiations may provide opportunities for Track I actors to build relationships, the dynamics of these forums often compel parties to represent the antagonistic positions of their respective constituencies. Programs should take advantage of back-channel, small-scale, or personal settings for opposing Track I actors (or their staff) to meet, away from their official capacities.

When parties are distrustful or disillusioned with the peace process,

*In Uganda, USAID’s weekly meetings with the Embassy’s Chief of Political Economic Affairs about conflict mitigation issues facilitated much-needed information sharing.*

*In Burundi, a series of leadership trainings were used to build cross-cutting relationships and awareness of destructive conflict dynamics. The trainings utilized conflict scenarios that allowed participants to directly experience fulfillment of their own interests through collaboration with their adversaries.*

*In Sierra Leone, USAID funded travel for civil society representatives to participate in the Lome peace talks between the Government and rebels.*

incremental steps toward withdrawing hostilities or implementing agreements can serve as confidence-building measures. Local organizations that span social and political boundaries can help to monitor these ongoing developments. Strong working relationships are needed between the outside parties and those internal to the conflicts. Since these relationships often take a long time to develop, USAID should engage in multi-year programs involving local NGOs that have long-term personal commitments to a conflict zone. These connections are particularly important if international actors want to move quickly to take advantage of a “ripe moment” for negotiations when they arise.

## 5 ENSURE LOCAL BUY-IN

There needs to be a genuine acceptance and support of peace processes by local parties in order for them to succeed. Outside parties should remember that the conflict is not “theirs,” and that the parties will live with the repercussions of any peace process long after donors have returned home. Programs that facilitate participatory decision-making rather than prescribed solutions for the parties are more likely to produce collaborative, suitable, and realistic arrangements. However, USAID personnel should recognize the tension that may exist between local “ownership” of a peace process and USAID’s own accountability to its planning, funding, and evaluation responsibilities.

Development personnel are often well-positioned to improve grassroots and civil society participation in a peace process. Before negotiations, staff can identify local conflict resolution experts, engage communities in dialogues to set or influence a negotiation agenda, and reduce barriers to participation. During negotiations, USAID can handle logistics to ensure that important noncombatant

voices are included in the dialogue. After negotiations are completed, programs can widely disseminate agreement texts and support civil society’s capacity to implement agreements.

Linking local efforts to larger national change generates additional motivation and buy-in on the grassroots and civil society level. Programs should support established local practices that are consistent with program goals as existing practices may hold subtle cultural and social meanings crucial for self-sustaining program success. Organizations as varied as village councils, social service organizations, or business groups can be supported with new features that foster regular exchanges, inclusive policies, or self-funding mechanisms.

## 6 INSTITUTIONALIZE CHANGES

In conflict zones, the most influential institutions often serve the interests of those propagating the violence. Anderson and Olson’s research shows that programs focused on attitudinal change are often the entry points for intervention in peace-building, but it is critical to partner these programs with ones focused on broader institutional change. Peace processes should seek to improve social and governing institutions, so they are more responsive to local expectations and more resistant to conflict entrepreneurs. By institutionalizing participation of marginalized groups in peace processes, programs can better address grievance-generating social structures.

The Office of Democracy and Governance (DCHA/DG) can provide technical assistance in designing mechanisms to improve governance and civil society. In conducting activities in conflict zones, USAID should model the transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability it hopes to reflect in a negotiated agreement.

## 7 USE MEDIA RESOURCES

Print, radio, and television media can play significant roles in conflict dynamics, as dramatically illustrated in Rwanda by the broadcasts of Radio RTLM that fanned the flames of ethnic hatred and contributed to the 1994 genocide. Journalists often become inadvertent mouthpieces for a conflict, defining it in unconstructive terms for the public. For example, in Nigeria, when the media frames a conflict as a Christian-Muslim clash, the claim itself can be self-fulfilling, as the description attracts new parties of co-religionists to the conflict.

In the pre-negotiation phase of peace processes, development assistance can be used to train journalists to be sensitive to conflict dynamics. Programs can utilize media to offer more balanced, reliable, and in-depth accounts of events, emphasize positive community relations, and bridge gaps between communities by building empathy and a sense of interdependence.

During negotiations, media may be the only mechanism of communication between adversarial parties or with the public. Media programs need to take care to balance transparency with confidentiality, as a media spotlight can inhibit the exploration of preliminary ideas that presage a settlement. Radio programming is especially useful in non-permissive environments, as it can be transmitted from safer areas.

Following a settlement, media can be used to distribute information about the terms of a deal, provide reliable updates on the security or humanitarian situation, and set the tone for a new relationship between former adversaries.

## 8 EXPAND PROGRAMMING REACH

A survey of USAID's peace process activities shows a concentration of programs directed at the interpersonal level, working to change individual attitudes, perceptions, or circumstances. These programs have primarily targeted grassroots leaders, rather than the top-level leaders who often drive and sustain conflict (the upper right cell in Figure 3).

To achieve larger impacts on peace, individual programs should be coordinated—internally, within the interagency, and with other donors—to engage the range of stakeholders in a conflict and to address both attitudinal and institutional problems. USAID should look for opportunities to support peace earlier in the process (before official negotiations begin) to empower peace constituencies and initiate processes that can be expanded upon in later phases.

Program consistency, in terms of both funding levels and policy direction, is needed to insure both program success and legitimacy with the affected community. Where possible, multi-year funding strategies should be considered to improve program stability and ensure sustained impact. Dramatically altering past commitments to peace processes can impact all development programming, and efforts should be made to inform new diplomatic or development personnel of that.

While consistency in commitment is important, supporting peace processes may require program adjustments as conflict dynamics change over time. Program managers should design programs that allow enough flexibility to respond to local priorities, unexpected opportunities, or sudden changes in security. Including small grant capacity into programs can help implementers to successfully adapt activities to rapidly changing environments, while retaining an overarching program focus.

*The Talking Drum Studio in Liberia produced a series of radio dramas that explained the contents of the peace accords and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.*

*A light and flexible management structure was employed by USAID programming in Kosovo to anticipate changing developments on the ground.*



# PROGRAM OPTIONS



PHOTO: USAID/EAST AFRICA

**Dekha Ibrahim Abdi (standing) facilitates formation of a 2006 agreement between representatives of the Mander and Gedo ethnic groups on managing their inter-group conflicts. These negotiations were a component of a broader USAID-funded initiative to reduce conflict across the Kenyan/Somali border.**

The following program case studies demonstrate how development assistance can support peace processes in violent contexts. While these interventions can represent starting points for developing new programs, each initiative should be tailored to the country's specific conflict dynamics. The Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation is ready to work with Missions to develop effective ways to support peace processes. In addition, it is important to consult early with the Office of General Counsel to determine whether available funds are appropriate for the intervention and whether any country or other legal restrictions need to be addressed.

## PEACE STRUCTURES

In Sri Lanka, the "One-Text" initiative brought together politicians, representatives of peace secretariats, and civil society stakeholders to develop common language for Track I negotiations between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The Mission funded researchers and technicians to help various parties along Tracks I, II, and III to clarify areas of broad agreement and issues requiring further negotiation. Joint standing committees on human rights, cease-fire monitoring, and citizen participation enabled stakeholders and their

researchers to focus on key challenges. The Mission, in partnership with four local NGOs, also created People's Fora in 21 (of 25) districts to facilitate community participation in the consultation process. These fora established an integrated structure with horizontal links between "One Text" (a Track I ½ process), Track II, and Track III, and intra-track links connecting People's Fora at the district and provincial levels. The "One Text" initiative helped leaders of the two largest Muslim political parties to develop a consensual position on the conflict on behalf of their community, providing a consistent, coherent voice for an often fractured and marginalized minority.

In northern Uganda, USAID supported a network of Peace Forums that linked participants at the parish, district, and regional levels. This effort has resulted in the creation of the Northern Uganda Peace Forum, which acts as a liaison between the grassroots level in northern Uganda and the national government on peace and reconciliation issues.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO NEGOTIATIONS

In Casamance, Senegal, the Mission supported Ambassador-led efforts to broker peace between the Government of Senegal and the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC). USAID provided workshops for senior central government officials with Casamance responsibilities (including ministers of trade, fishing, and education), local elected officials in the Casamance, and representatives of the political wing of the MFDC, building their appreciation for the underlying needs and interests of other parties to the conflict and preparing them for interest-based negotiations (rather than positional bargaining). USAID funded forums to assist the various political and military factions within the MFDC to agree upon a shared, interest-based negotiation strategy, and linked these discussions with active engagement of the Casamance public at large. The Mission also worked with various civil society organizations to identify ways they could support pre-negotiations and peace talks between the government and MFDC while also engaging in community advocacy.

In Tajikistan, the Mission supported the Ambassador's commitment to the UN Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT) by providing timely funding for the Joint Commission for National Reconciliation to cover preparation costs for peace negotiations between the Government and the United Tajik Opposition.

## PRO-PEACE CONSTITUENCIES

In Mindanao, the Philippines, the Mission addressed external challenges to the negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), including political pressure on the parties and the lack of public information on the peace process. Working with a range of key stakeholders from the Government, MILF, Christian and Muslim communities, private sector, civil society, and media, the program engaged groups opposed to the peace process to enhance dialogue, explore options, and distribute accurate information about the peace process. Activities strengthened the capacity and influence of pro-peace constituencies and local institutions charged with managing development and relief assistance in conflict affected regions.

In Sudan, USAID's support to local-level peace and reconciliation processes and improvements to early warning and response mechanisms greatly assisted the January 2005 peace agreement. A national peace and civic education network widely distributed the Naivasha Protocols. A conference in southern Sudan for over 350 chiefs and traditional leaders resulted in unanimous endorsement of the six protocols that preceded the final agreement.

*In northern Uganda, USAID supported a network of Peace Forums that linked participants at the parish, district, and regional levels.*

## MEDIA

In Guatemala, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, along with the UN Development Program, EU, and others, supported the reintegration of 3,000 ex-combatants with a social communication campaign that explained the peace accords and the rights of returning ex-combatants. The program's success was attributed to the Mission's early involvement in the transitional effort.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives helped local partners shape media messages to counteract hardline nationalist attitudes that persisted after the Dayton Peace Accords. Information campaigns promoted respect for human rights and basic freedoms, and delivered objective information in volatile areas to help minimize violence against minorities. Follow-up activities funded by the Mission promoted reconciliation, community collaboration, and independent media.



**After a series of USAID-funded confidence-building roundtables, workshops, and trainings, Sunni and Shia leaders commemorate the removal of a wall separating the formerly violent Al-Fadhil and Abu Sayfayn neighborhoods of Baghdad, Iraq.**



## RESOURCES

### **USAID offices that are in a position to support peace processes:**

#### **Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (DCHA/CMM)**

CMM leads USAID's efforts to identify and analyze sources of conflict and fragility; supports early responses to address the causes and consequences of violent conflict; and seeks to integrate conflict mitigation and management into USAID's analysis, strategies, and programs. The Instability, Crisis, and Recovery Program (ICRP) provides Missions a mechanism for securing contractors who have demonstrated abilities to support peace processes. [http://www.usaid.gov/business/business\\_opportunities/iqc/iqc\\_cmm.html](http://www.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/iqc/iqc_cmm.html)

#### **Office of Transition Initiatives (DCHA/OTI)**

OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible, short-term (typically two to three years) assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs. It looks to lay foundations for long-term development in conflict-prone countries by promoting reconciliation, jump-starting local economies, supporting nascent independent media, and fostering peace and democracy through innovative programming. OTI uses the Support Which Implements Fast Transitions (SWIFT) contract mechanism to rapidly establish offices, hire staff, and disburse small grants to local organizations.

#### **Office of Democracy and Governance (DCHA/DG)**

The DG office can provide technical assistance on certain key issues of a negotiation, including security sector reform, decentralization, civil society strengthening, and transparent and accountable government institutions.

The **Regional Bureaus** support initiatives in individual countries, grouped into five categories: Africa (AFR), Asia (A), Middle East (ME), Europe and Eurasia (E&E), and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

The **Department of State** develops the overall policy framework in which development assistance is delivered. USAID staff should coordinate with their State country desk counterparts through the appropriate regional bureaus at USAID.

#### **Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS)**

S/CRS leads, coordinates, and institutionalizes US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations.

#### **United States Institute of Peace (USIP)**

USIP is a quasi-government, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. USIP works to prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase peace-building capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide. USIP sponsors research fellows as well as directly engaging in peace-building efforts around the globe.









