The Do No Harm Framework

The Do No Harm Framework: A Brief Description of Seven Steps

The DO NO HARM "Analytical Framework" was developed from the programming experience of

many assistance workers. It provides a tool for mapping the interactions of assistance and conflict and can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate both humanitarian and development assistance programmes.

The Framework is NOT prescriptive. It is a descriptive tool that:

1) identifies the categories of information that have been found through experience to be important for understanding how assistance affects conflict;

2) Organizes these categories in a visual lay-out that highlights their actual and potential relationships;

3) Helps us predict the impacts of different programming decisions.

Step 1: Understanding the Context of Conflict

Step one involves identifying which conflicts are dangerous in terms of their destructiveness or violence. Every society has groups with different interests and identities that contend with other groups.

However, many—even most—of these differences do not erupt into violence and, therefore, are not relevant for DO NO HARM analysis.

DO NO HARM is useful for understanding the impacts of assistance programmes on the Socio/political schisms that cause, or have the potential to cause, destruction or violence between groups.

Step 2: Analyzing DIVIDERS and TENSIONS

Once the important schisms in society have been identified, the next step is to analyze what divides the groups. Some DIVIDERS or sources of TENSION between groups may be rooted in deep-seated, historical injustice (root causes) while others may be recent, short-lived or manipulated by subgroup leaders (proximate causes). They may arise from many sources including economic relations, geog raphy, demography, politics or religion. Some may be entirely internal to a society; others may be promoted by outside powers. Understanding what divides people is critical to understanding, subse quently, how our assistance programmes feed into, or lessen, these forces.

Step 3: Analyzing CONNECTORS and LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE

The third step is analysis of how people, although they are divided by conflict, remain also con nected across sub-group lines. The DO NO HARM PROJECT (DNH) found that in every society in conflict, people who are divided by some things remain connected by others. Markets, infrastructure, common experiences, historical events, symbols, shared attitudes, formal and informal associations; all of these continue to provide continuity with non-war life and with former colleagues and coworkers now alienated through conflict. Similarly, DNH found that all societies have individuals and institutions whose task it is to maintain intergroup peace. These include justice systems (when they work!), police forces, elders groups, school teachers or clergy and other respected and trusted fig ures. In warfare, these “LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE” are not adequate to prevent violence. Yet, in conflict-prone, active conflict and post-conflict situations they continue to exist and offer one ave-The Do No Harm Framework: A Brief Description of Seven Steps, The Do No Harm Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict 2nue for rebuilding non-war relations. To assess the impacts of assistance programmes on conflict, it is important to identify and understand CONNECTORS and LCPs.

Step 4: Analyzing the Assistance Programme

Step four of the DO NO HARM Framework involves a thorough review of all aspects of the assistance programme. Where and why is assistance offered, who are the staff (external and internal), how were they hired, who are the intended recipients of assistance, by what criteria are they included, what is provided, who decides, how is assistance delivered, warehoused, distributed?

Step 5: Analyzing the Assistance Programme's Impact on DIVIDERS and CONNECTORS (using the concepts of RESOURCE TRANSFERS and IMPLICIT ETHICAL MESSAGES)

Step five is analysis of the interactions of each aspect of the assistance programme with the existing

DIVIDERS/TENSIONS and CONNECTORS/LCPs.

We ask: Who gains and who loses (or who does not gain) from our assistance? Do these groups

overlap with the DIVISIONS we identified as potentially or actually destructive? Are we supporting military activities or civilian structures? Are we missing or ignoring opportunities to reinforce CON NECTORS? Are we inadvertently undermining or weakening LCPs?

We ask: What resources are we bringing into the conflict? What impact are our RESOURCE TRANS FERS having?

We ask: What messages are we giving through the way in which we work? What impact are we

having through our IMPLICIT ETHICAL MESSAGES?

Each aspect of programming should be reviewed for its actual and potential impacts on D/Ts and C/LCPs.

Step 6: Considering (and Generating) Programming Options

Finally, if our analysis of 1) the context of conflict; 2) DIVIDERS and TENSIONS; 3) CONNECTORS and LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE; and 4) our assistance programme shows that our assistance exacer bates intergroup DIVIDERS, then we must think about how to provide the same programme in a way that eliminates its negative, conflict-worsening impacts. If we find that we have overlooked local peace capacities or CONNECTORS, then we should redesign our programming not to miss this oppor tunity to support peace.

Step 7: Test Programming Options and Redesign Project

Once we have selected a better programming option is crucially important to re-check the impacts of our new approach on the DIVIDERS and CONNECTORS.

Outline of a Seven Step Approach to Assistance Programming in the Context of Violent Conflict

The Do No Harm Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict 3 Outline of a Seven Step Approach to Assistance Programming in the Context of Violent Conflict

STEP 1 Understanding the context of conflict

• identify the appropriate "arena"—the geographic and social space which is relevant to your assistance programme

• identify which inter-group conflicts have caused violence or are dangerous and may escalate into violence?

• how does the assistance project relate to that context of conflict?

STEP 2 Analyze (identify and unpack) dividers and sources of tension

STEP 3 Analyze (identify and unpack) connectors and LCPs

STEP 4 Analyze - identify and unpack - the assistance project

analyze the details of the assistance programme. Remember: it is never an entire

programme that goes wrong. It is the details that determine impact.

STEP 5 Analyze the assistance programme's impact on the context of conflict

through Resource Transfers (RTs) and Implicit Ethical Messages (IEMs)

• how do the programme's RTs and IEMs impact on dividers and sources of

tension?

• how do the programme's RTs and IEMs impact on connectors and LCPs?

STEP 6 Generate programming options

IF an element of the assistance programme has a negative impact on dividers – strengthening / reinforcing dividers, feeding into sources of tension or IF an element of the programme has a negative impact on connectors weakening / undermining connectors and LCPs

THEN generate as many options as possible how to do what you intend to do in such a way as to weaken dividers and strengthen connectors

STEP 7 Test options and redesign programme

Test the options generated using your / your colleagues experience:

• What is the probable / potential impact on dividers / sources of tension?

• What is the probable / potential impact on connectors / LCPs?

Æ Use the best / optimal options to redesign project.