

Link to Full Report

REVIEW OF THE UK GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING AND SYNTHESIS OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM UK GOVERNMENT FUNDED PEACEBUILDING PROJECTS 1997-2001

CONTRIBUTION TO THE JOINT UTSTEIN STUDY OF PEACEBUILDING

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.....a joint study to assess current government approaches to peacebuilding, which centres on challenges presented in defining policy terms, articulating goals, key concepts and vocabulary in peacebuilding. A crucial finding is that a major strategic deficit exists between the articulation of policy and efforts to translate this into practice.

1. Summary Findings and Key Lessons

The Strategic Deficit

The Joint Utstein Study on Peacebuilding identified a major strategic deficit in peacebuilding, as reflected in conceptual confusions and inexact terminology, and the frequent lack of linkage between the Utstein countries' project activities and any broader peacebuilding strategy. Removing the strategic deficit in peacebuilding will not happen unless a political decision is taken to do so. Some security and socio-economic projects were seen to be 'strategy resistant', seemingly needing no clear strategy because their worth was taken as self-evident. The joint study also found that:

- Conflict analysis is not undertaken consistently

- Insufficient attention is given to the capacity of countries to absorb peacebuilding aid
- Impact assessment would be better at the strategic level, as evaluation of impact of peacebuilding projects is problematic.

Key Peacebuilding Interventions

Key peacebuilding interventions are in Governance, Security Sector Reform, Peace Processes and capacity building of multilateral institutions. Since September 11th 2001, UK funding has emphasised security in countries representing a risk to UK interests. Humanitarian assistance, once seen as neutral and independent of peacebuilding, is now seen as a route to stabilisation through, for example, Quick Impact Projects.

Key Lessons from UK Study

- There is a need for a proper and regularly updated understanding of the origins and dynamics of individual conflicts, including a knowledge of the motivation of key protagonists
- Working in conflict frequently requires engagement with the international and local political and economic context, as well as the indigenous social and cultural context
- The choice and capacity of partners determines the success of peacebuilding initiatives
- Networks and coalitions are increasingly seen as important
- Donors and other external agencies need to be far better coordinated at the policy level and in national and local implementation
- Managing peacebuilding initiatives from a distance has limitations – local presence is an advantage
- Peacebuilding and development need to be more directly linked
- Building trust requires relationship-building over the medium to long term (5-10 years)
- A long-term perspective is required for the healing of societies damaged by conflict
- The development of local ownership is vital for sustainability

2. Joint Study Synthesis

Getting Their Act Together

The PRIO synthesis paper ‘Getting Their Act Together – Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding¹’ was presented to an international conference in Oslo in December 2003, along with the four country studies from this joint exercise: Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK. From these country studies the synthesis drew on a total of 336 peacebuilding project summaries, as well as wider literature on conflict and peacebuilding.

The study concluded that peacebuilding comprises a varied palette of activities which can be combined to achieve one or more of four main goals – to build security, socio-economic foundations, and political frameworks for long-term peace, and to generate reconciliation. A sustainable peace strategy requires sustained effort over a decade or more, with multi-layered cooperation between government departments and multiple relationships between governments, local and international NGOs.

Utstein Partners: Strategic Approaches to Peacebuilding?

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|-------------|--|
| UK | No peacebuilding strategy as such. Until 1999, peacebuilding was regarded as a post-conflict activity but now comes under the rubric of Conflict Prevention, covering pre, during and post-conflict initiatives. From 2001, thematic and geographical conflict prevention strategies have been developed, including peacebuilding elements. |
| Norway | Has a draft peacebuilding strategy, which addresses the question of long-term causes of armed conflict. Emphasizes the need to find a common international platform for peacebuilding and the desirability that donors should develop a division of labour based on comparative advantage. |
| Netherlands | No singular strategy on peacebuilding but has regional strategy papers on Southeast Asia (1999), Great Lakes (2001) and the western Balkans (2001/2002). Dutch White Paper (2001) aims for a well-coordinated international approach to conflict prevention and seeks a Dutch role within that, rather than a specific national policy. Developed a Strategic Assessment Framework (SAF) to assist with the development and management of such strategies. |
| Germany | Launched a Comprehensive Concept on Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in 2000. Not a strategy as such but highlights a wide definition of security and multiple instruments and methodologies to address peacebuilding. A National Action Plan on Crisis Prevention is currently being drafted. |

¹Dan Smith, Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), November 2003

Do we need a formal Utstein framework for a peacebuilding strategy?

The joint study proposed the development of a formal framework for a peacebuilding strategy for the Utstein countries, comprising statements of principles and goals, preferred peacebuilding techniques, and each government's approach to strengthening its own peacebuilding capacities. The framework would lead to the development of peacebuilding intervention strategies, including:

- a strategic planning mechanism
- an agreed conflict analysis framework
- cooperative relationships with NGOs
- the division of labour between donor countries
- criteria for selection of activities and
- a mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and assessment

The proposed framework would include the following recommendations

- A standing committee for improved strategic coordination
- A study team for conflict analysis in likely conflict affected countries
- A mechanism for quick recruitment of study teams for intervention assessment
- A centre for strategic assessment of peacebuilding activities

3. The UK Government's Approach to Peacebuilding

3.1 Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

For the UK government, many peacebuilding activities fall under the heading of Conflict Prevention, the two concepts being seen as more or less synonymous. Before 2000, peacebuilding was regarded as a post-conflict activity but is now seen to cover aspects of pre, during and post conflict initiatives. Key steps in the development of UK conflict prevention strategies include the publication of 1997 and 2000 White Papers *Eliminating World Poverty*, the 1998 MOD Strategic Defence Review, This Modernising Government agenda led to the establishment of the Africa and Global Conflict Prevention Pools in 2001, a mechanism which seems to have increased cooperation and consistency in strategy between DFID, FCO and MOD², and improved vertical consistency between country strategy and in-country programming³.

A major challenge for the operation of the Conflict Prevention Pools is the coordination of the conflict prevention work of three government departments with three different goals: The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is DFID's main goal, with conflict prevention as a means to this end. The FCO has 'a secure UK within a safer and more peaceful world' as its key aim – human rights and good governance being key themes. Security is the MOD's key concern, with defence diplomacy as one of eight missions. The departments are guided to focus on a common objective to reach the UK Government's Public Service Agreement Goal 'Improved effectiveness of the UK contribution to conflict prevention and management as demonstrated by a reduction in the number of people whose lives are affected by violent conflict and a reduction in potential sources of future conflict where the UK can make a significant contribution'.

Basic Principles of the UK Approach to Conflict Prevention

- There is a negative correlation between violent conflict and sustainable development
- Personal safety is a precursor to development
- Conflict prevention needs democratic systems of government and a rights-based society
- Coordinated interventions are required at multiple levels and depend on partnership with a variety of institutions, including United Nations agencies.

Strategies

UK interventions in conflict prevention are governed by a limited set of strategies, including

- Governance, seen as an overarching issue
- Security Sector Reform including: Demobilisation, Disarmament and Rehabilitation; Defence Diplomacy; Small Arms and Light Weapons; and Humanitarian Mine Action
- Tracks I, II and III peace processes
- Other priorities include: the establishment of independent media; making the international system more effective in resolving conflicts; improving the role of international business and

²The Conflict Prevention Pools have recently been the subject of an interim evaluation.

³The Conflict Prevention Pools came into operation in 2001, so covering only one year of the study period

international financial institutions; and addressing wars of abundance fuelled by the illegal exploitation of natural resources, for example so-called Conflict Diamonds.

Mechanisms

The UK has developed a number of mechanisms to support and mainstream Conflict Prevention, including:

- The Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department
- The recruitment of conflict advisers into DFID departments and programmes
- The Conflict Prevention Unit in the FCO
- The inter-ministerial Defence Advisory Team providing advice and training to foreign governments and military
- The Global Facilitation Network, a research on policy development resource for global Security Sector Reform initiatives

3.2 International Coordination

The UK seeks to catalyse international coordination to peacebuilding via, for example, the OECD Development Assistance Committee and has made major investments in multilateral organisations, especially the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the UN Mine Action Service and NATO. The emphasis on partnership and international coordination of conflict prevention efforts, and the way in which the UK is consistently deploying its funds in conflict-affected countries through multilateral and coordinated channels as far as possible, indicates that the UK is achieving a degree of horizontal consistency in its peacebuilding efforts.

3.3 Peacebuilding: Missing Links?

Spending on Peacebuilding

According to Chakrabarti,⁴ DFID official statistics for 2001 show that only 3 per cent of expenditure was categorised as Conflict Handling (a DFID 'Policy Information Marker' used in classifying PRISM data). Many UK funded programmes cannot be attributed to peacebuilding, even if they were conceived as such at some stage in the planning process. As Chakrabarti also

found, 'In most cases, such (development) efforts are being undertaken without any direct relation to conflict, thereby giving the impression that only a small proportion of development assistance is spent on conflict related activities'.⁵

DFID Country Strategy Papers and Peacebuilding

In setting the strategy context, CSPs often make reference to armed conflict as profoundly damaging to infrastructure and livelihoods (c.f. CSPs for Bosnia, Cambodia and Mozambique) and then move on directly to a development agenda, in particular how the Millennium Development Goals are to be met. The papers read as if the job of peacebuilding is either over or no longer relevant for the UK

Building Conditions for Peace or Peacebuilding?

UK strategies seem to be aimed at creating the conditions in which peace, and hence development, can take root. The strategies reviewed in this study are focused on creating a secure and stable environment for peace, and less on the making of peace. This may seem like a fine distinction but has implications for achieving the end goals of security and sustainable development. As a DFID Governance department document on post-conflict reconstruction reflected, 'Perhaps the UK government analysis is far better on creating the conditions in which peace can flourish than on building peace?'⁶

Moving Forward: Linking Strategies to Peacebuilding

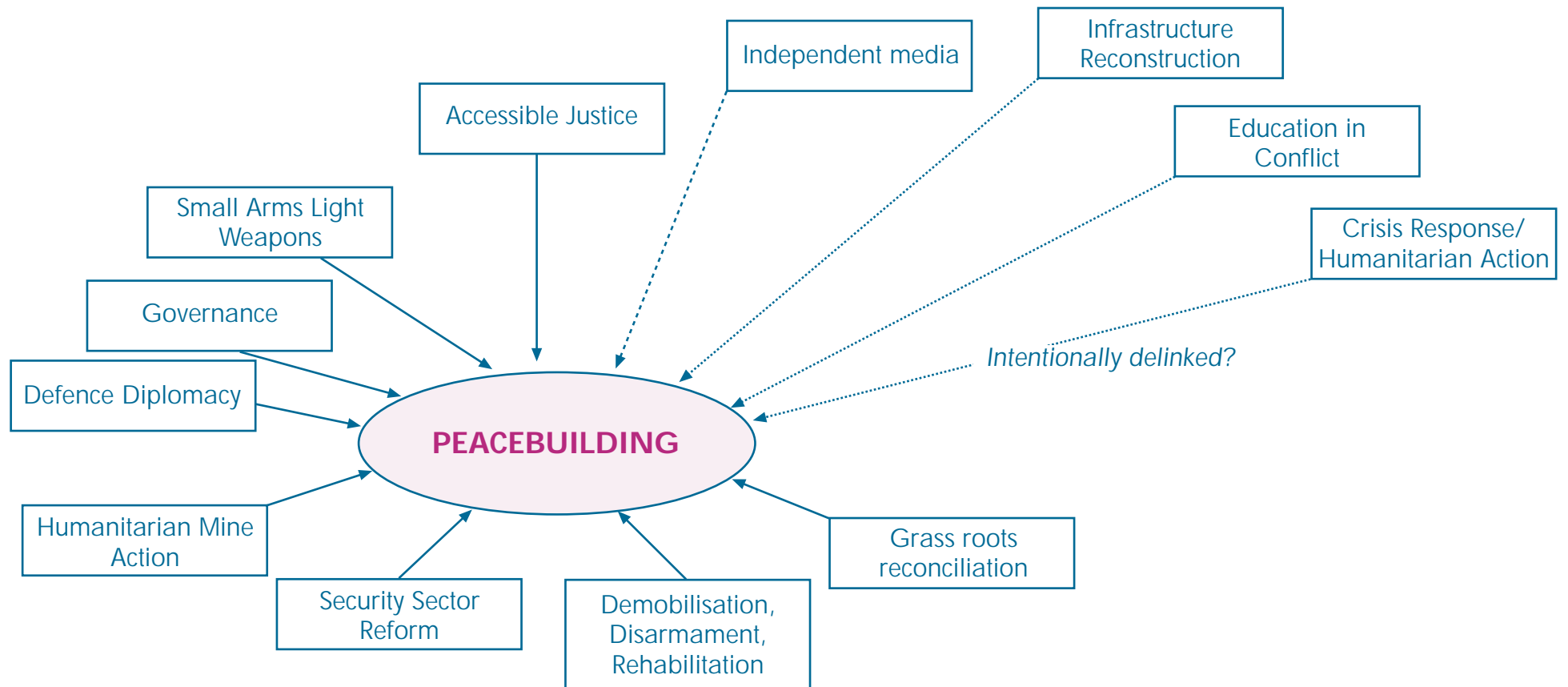
UK government conflict prevention strategies (whether predating, inside and outside Global Pool funding) have more or less well-articulated links to peacebuilding. Figure 1 is based on the author's assessment of how well these links seem to have been made. This is not an assessment of how effective any one strategy might be in building peace. Rather, it is offered as a way of stimulating debate about how to improve strategy development and express the linkages between strategy and activity.

⁴ Indranil Chakrabarti, *Compiling Lessons about Conflict Prevention and Peace Building*, Discussion paper, Evaluation Department, DFID, 2002

⁵ Chakrabarti, *ibid.*

⁶ From *Post Conflict Reconstruction: Key Issues in Governance*, Preliminary Discussion Paper, DFID Governance Department, April 2002

Figure 1
Clarity of the Link between Peacebuilding and current UK main conflict reduction/prevention themes
(shown by the proximity of the topic box to peacebuilding)



4. Internet Links

Reports available at the following addresses

PRIO synthesis paper: 'Getting Their Act Together – Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding, Dan Smith.

http://www.prio.no/files/file44563_getting_their_act_together.pdf

UK study: Review of the UK Government Approach to Peacebuilding, Simon Lawry-White:

http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/total_utstein.pdf

Germany: Dr Uwe Kievelitz, Gabriele Kruk and Norbert Frieters

<http://www.gtz.de/crisisprevention/download/utstein.pdf>

Netherlands: Georg Frerks, Koenraad van Brabant and Marcel Scholten

<http://www.euforic.org/iob/en/index.html>

Norway: Wenche Hauge

http://www.prio.no/files/file44564_norwegian_nationalpaper.pdf

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department for International Development.

DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the UK government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The government first elected in 1997 has increased its commitment to development by strengthening the department and increasing its budget.

The central focus of the government's policy, set out in the 1997 White Paper on International Development, is a commitment to the internationally agreed target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, together with the associated targets including basic health care provision and universal access to primary education by the same date. The second White Paper on International Development, published in December 2000, reaffirmed this commitment, while focusing specifically on how to manage the process of globalisation to benefit poor people.

DFID seeks to work in partnership with governments which are committed to the international targets, and seeks to work with business, civil society and the research community to this end. We also work with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Community.

The bulk of our assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. We are also contributing to poverty elimination and sustainable development in middle income countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and elsewhere. DFID is also helping the transition countries in central and eastern Europe to try to ensure that the process of change brings benefits to all people and particularly to the poorest.

As well as its headquarters in London and East Kilbride, DFID has offices in many developing countries. In others, DFID works through staff based in British embassies and high commissions.

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