

Helpdesk Research Report

Evidence on programmes' effectiveness on horizontal political inclusion

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Question

What evidence exists on the effectiveness of development programmes designed directly or indirectly to address group- or identity-based political exclusion in fragile states, to make political settlements horizontally more inclusive?

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1. Overview

There is very little evidence on what role donors can play in making political settlements more horizontally inclusive. The state of research on this area remains theoretical and not empirical, although there is a clear normative consensus that international actors need to consider inclusivity in political settlements.

In this report, political settlements are defined as the broad based understanding: "Political settlements constitute a common understanding or agreement on the balance and distribution of power, resources and wealth" (Rocha Menocal, 2015: 2). This includes both formal and informal institutions. Political settlements define who does and does not have power in a political system. 'Inclusion' in a political settlement refers not only to inclusion in the process of bargaining and negotiation, but inclusion in rights and entitlements in the society (Di John & Putzel, 2009). Pluralist bargaining does not guarantee an inclusive settlement (Di John & Putzel, 2009). The term 'horizontal inclusion' refers to the inclusion of various elites, civil society, and identity-based groups, as opposed to 'vertical inclusion' which refers to the inclusion of the broader population (or their interests) as well as elites (Castillejo, 2014). The assumption is that a more horizontally inclusive settlement will underpin a more stable and legitimate state.

The three areas of inquiry in this report (political settlements in FCAS; horizontal inclusion; donor roles) have an extremely small overlap, with **hardly any literature** examining this nexus. In the literature on inclusive political settlements in FCAS more broadly, there is little evidence of any role that international actors can play. The literature which does identify examples of donor roles does not then describe horizontal inclusion as one of the objectives or outcomes.

Few successful inclusive political settlements in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) had clear donor influence. The literature as it currently stands suggests that donors **and international actors have not had key roles** to play. National ownership and national motivation have by far been the more important factors for creating inclusivity, in cases such as Nepal, Kenya, and South Africa.

In cases where international actors have had some influence, a few commonalities can be found:

- Assistance tends to take the form of **supporting existing groups** and facilitating them to put forward their voices.
- **National ownership** of inclusivity projects is important. Broad-based coalitions of local support help create conditions for success.
- A **coordinated approach** between donors has proved helpful.

Experts suggest that the way to make the political settlement more inclusive is to provide support to marginalised groups – programmes which are designed to address horizontal inequalities more generally will also automatically make the political settlement more inclusive (Expert comments: Frances Stewart). However, the literature on social inclusion does not usually frame impacts in terms of increased inclusion in the political settlement. This is a conceptual gap which has yet to be bridged.

2. Evidence and programmes

This section seeks to identify evidence on donor-supported interventions which reduce horizontal political exclusion. There is hardly any literature examining this area, and almost none providing empirical evidence.

State of the evidence

The literature on horizontal political inclusion is currently focused at the theoretical and policy level, and in donor guidance notes. There is a strong body of literature on the need for inclusive political settlements, and some guidance notes on how to achieve this, but **analysis is lacking on case studies** of interventions. There is little evidence on how donors can and do influence political settlements, and even less on whether their interventions are considered ‘effective’ (Castillejo, 2014). Most examples of successful inclusive settlements have national governments and civil society as the key actors, with hardly any literature on the role of donors. Elgin-Cossart, Jones, and Esberg (2012) suggest that regional actors may be more important and influential than international (Western) actors, and that within government, foreign and defence ministries may be the most important.

A recent evidence review for DFID summarises the evidence on inclusive political settlements (Rocha Menocal, 2015, forthcoming). The review concludes that there is extremely sparse empirical evidence on both whether peace processes can make political settlements more inclusive, and whether more inclusive settlements are more sustainable. Historical examples include Ghana’s and Mexico’s emphasis on social cohesion and shared national identity, and Rwanda’s downplaying ethnic identities in favour of a sense of nation. Elgin-Cossart, Jones and Esberg (2012) highlight that while there are examples in the literature,

there is no systematic review of their effectiveness. Thus, lessons cannot yet be drawn on the impact of these kind of programmes on inclusivity.

Donors' role is contested in the literature. Little of this literature examines the role that donors can play (Castillejo, 2014), and most examples of success do not include an assessment of donor influence. The literature emphasises that political settlement processes are endogenous and need to remain led by local actors (Castillejo, 2014). Some analysts suggest that donors should not be involved, while others suggest that international influence is a reality and should be used productively (Castillejo, 2014). Parks and Cole (2010) note that many political settlements in FCAS are directly dependent on international assistance, and that directly or indirectly, international actors have been influencing political settlements for decades. Parks and Cole (2010) suggest that most donor action usually strengthens the status quo settlement, intentionally or unintentionally.

Donors tend to focus on promoting **inclusion in processes, rather than outcomes**. Donors tend to support inclusion in the bargaining and negotiation elements of political settlements, such as constitution drafting, excluded groups' attendance at meetings, and public consultation (Castillejo, 2014). This is based on the assumption that inclusive processes will lead to inclusive outcomes. This does not always work in practice (Castillejo, 2014). While this is important, it neglects aspects which promote inclusive outcomes (Castillejo, 2014).

Case studies

The case study of **Nepal** shows some instances of where donor intervention had positive effects. The grassroots Maoist insurgency had exclusion as a central political agenda. Donors were able to capitalise on this local movement to create a window of opportunity for a dialogue about exclusion more broadly (Castillejo, 2014).

Donors helped provide research into excluded groups in Nepal at a national scale, and provided empowerment and capacity-building programmes to them (Call & Kugel, 2012). They also provided training to government members on exclusion and marginalisation (Call & Kugel, 2012). There are mixed results on whether the changing political situation has improved inclusion outcomes. The Constituent Assembly's composition changed to include more marginalised group representatives, although the Cabinet composition has not changed significantly (Call & Kugel, 2012). Marginalised groups are now also better represented in the police, military and civil service. Social inequality and poverty measures remain roughly in the same proportions as in the 1990s – higher caste and privileged ethnicities remain privileged (Call & Kugel, 2012). Gender inequality has decreased, and the most impoverished areas have benefited most in human development indicators (Call & Kugel, 2012).

Some traditional elites see donor support as a western imposed agenda, and close powerful countries like India have had more impact on Nepal's political direction than western actors (Castillejo, 2014). Elgin-Cossart, Jones and Esberg (2012) highlight that donors' capacity building support to excluded groups appears to have been successful, but that the local Maoist rebellion was more important in changing the political settlement.

The political settlement created after **Kenya's** election violence in 2007-8 is considered an example of good practice and engagement by donors (Keating, 2012). On the topic of inclusion, donors provided direct funding and support to some civil society groups during the mediation process (Kanyinga & Walker, 2013). However, the political settlement is largely considered an elite pact between political parties, and does not

push for wider inclusion (Keating, 2012). The literature also argues that international actors' roles were much less significant than economic concerns, regional positioning and domestic politics.

Zartman (2008) provides an overview of the peace negotiations in **Tajikistan** in the 1990s, which indicates that international aid facilitated an opening of democratic space. Many sectors of society were excluded from formal peace talks, which occurred mainly to establish a settlement between the two main armed factions recognised by the UN. However, a parallel process called the Inter-Tajik Dialogue was sponsored by a team of Russians and Americans, which convened independently and contributed alternative ideas into the formal process. This provided a bridge between civil society and the official process. The Dialogue inspired several new associations focusing on promoting coexistence, tolerance and social welfare programmes. Discussion forums and roundtables were organised, which gave citizens the opportunity to voice concerns and problem-solve. The idea of 'peacebuilding' was disseminated into a greater part of the population than was reached by the official process. Significant reliance on aid allowed the development of organisations promoting cultural tolerance and inclusion.

There are a few negative examples in the literature. Donor support to **Rwanda's** power-sharing agreement has potentially entrenched its exclusionary tendencies (Castillejo, 2014). The RPF-dominated political settlement has become increasingly exclusionary, and donors' unconditional support to the government has potentially supported this (Castillejo, 2014). In **Guatemala**, donor support to inclusionary processes has had little impact as this has had no support from domestic political elites (Castillejo, 2014). Castillejo (2014) considers this an example of where donor support to formal institutional change has failed to create real change.

Women

There is a large literature on including women in politics, and some literature on including women in peace processes and statebuilding. However, literature on political settlements tends to be gender-blind (Rocha Menocal, 2015). Women have been increasingly included in peace negotiations and settlement processes, but there is less evidence on what difference this has made (Rocha Menocal, 2015). Women's presence alone is not a sufficient condition for changing gendered power relations (Rocha Menocal, 2015). This reflects the distinction drawn by Castillejo (2014) between inclusive processes and inclusive outcomes – women may be participating in politics, but not achieving changes in outcomes for women. As above, there is little empirical evidence drawing on concrete examples of programming.

3. Success factors

This section seeks to identify evidence on which factors make programmes successful in terms of inclusivity. As noted above, while there are examples in the literature, there is no systematic review of their effectiveness. Thus, lessons cannot yet be drawn on the impact of these kind of programmes on inclusivity.

The literature seems to agree that most programmes work best when they are **nationally owned**. The Kenyan post-2008 power sharing agreement drew strongly on existing Kenyan reform agendas, while being facilitated by external donors (Keating, 2012). Donors appear to have played an important role in the Nepal peace process, but it is uncertain how much impact they have had on social inclusion (Call & Kugel, 2012). The Maoist movement was probably the most important actor. Donors were successful in creating windows of opportunity for local and national actors, and helping build capacity of marginalised groups, and used their international position to legitimise the new settlement and build support for it. Call and Kugel (2012) summarise these as the key lessons for donors: donors can lay the groundwork for shifts in

the political settlement by initiatives such as creating discourse on inclusion; and can support or accelerate local actors who then shift the political settlement.

The political settlement created after Kenya's election violence in 2007-8 is considered an example of good practice and engagement by donors (Keating, 2012). This was successful because of a **unified and coordinated approach** from multiple international actors, led by the African Union. Donors routed financing and technical support through the AU, supported the One Mediation process in informal and formal forums, issued joint statements and formed coordinating groups (Keating, 2012). This coordinated and joined-up approach helped the process work well.

Evidence from women's inclusion suggests that programmes are most successful when there is a **broad-based coalition of support** for women's issues (Rocha Menocal, 2015). Alliances with key strategic actors, such as powerful elites, civil society and policy-makers, increase the likelihood of success.

Providing capacity-building to civil society seems to help create the conditions and impetus for inclusion. In Nepal, training provided to marginalised communities has helped them to participate effectively in the new formal political processes (Call & Kugel, 2012). This appears to have had a strong impact on skills and capacities (Call & Kugel, 2012).

In Nepal, Burma and Sierra Leone, donors provided support to identity-based NGOs and pro-democracy institutions (Elgin-Cossart, Jones & Esberg, 2012). It is unclear what kind of impact this has had – most of the shift in inclusivity norms has been driven by domestic actors, and while there is credibility in the idea that donors have helped open political space, this is un-evidenced (Elgin-Cossart, Jones & Esberg, 2012).

External conditions

Elgin-Cossart, Jones and Esberg (2012) analysed international actors' influence on political settlements in fragile and conflict-affected states. They conclude that there are three major factors mediating influence:

- **Elite attitudes:** the interests and incentives of elites within the existing settlement have a key role in whether a change in the settlement is possible.
- **External leverage:** the extent and types of leverage international actors have. This tends to be higher where the state is dependent on external aid or military support.
- **External coherence:** a shared or similar agenda between donors can have more influence than divided strategies.

In mediation and peace negotiation processes, Elgin-Cossart, Jones and Esberg (2012) highlight that success mainly rested on the quality and coherence of the national process and mechanisms, rather than the influence of international actors. Coherence, unity and complementarity of all involved actors is also considered key to success. However, there is little to no rigorous evaluation of peace mediation efforts, so conclusions are difficult to draw (Elgin-Cossart, Jones & Esberg, 2012).

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Key websites

- Political Settlements Research Programme: <http://www.politicalsettlements.org/welcome/>
- Developmental Leadership Program: <http://www.dlprog.org/theme/elites-and-political-settlements.php>

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