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DISSERTATION

Developing Stability

Community-Driven Development and Reconstruction in Conflict-Affected Settings

Brooke Stearns Lawson

This document was submitted as a dissertation in September 2011 in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the doctoral degree in public policy analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. The faculty committee that supervised and approved the dissertation consisted of Nora Bensahel (Chair), Terrence Kelly, and Adam Grissom.



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SUMMARY

At the start of this century, the United States acknowledged that now it is "threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones" (The White House, 2002, p. 1). Thus, the United States has a strategic interest in promoting stability in conflict-affected countries, particularly those plagued by ineffective governance and thus categorized as "weak states" such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Somalia, and Sudan.

The evident relationship between under-development and instability has led to a shift from the previous focus on narrowly defined security interests and a view of development solely as an economic or humanitarian tool to the current increased focus on the role of development and reconstruction in promoting national security. As the U.S. government and other international actors strive to address the poverty, poor governance, and insecurity that plague many places around the globe, critical questions regarding the appropriate approach to do so arise.

Aid workers regularly find themselves in countries that are prone to, experiencing, or emerging from violent conflict. At the same time, security actors find themselves operating in contexts where a lack of development significantly contributes to the insecurity they seek to address. Aid workers are criticized for their inability to access insecure environments, and security actors are criticized for poor quality of their development efforts. This raises the question of whether "sound" development and reconstruction is feasible in conflict-affected settings.

This dissertation tests the hypothesis that development and reconstruction actors (including the government, civil society and aid workers) can feasibly implement sound development and reconstruction across a relatively wide spectrum of conflict, but the conflict context can affect its delivery.

METHODS

The reviewed literature - including journal articles and grey literature from the development and reconstruction communities - suggests that community-driven development and reconstruction (CDD/R) may be particularly well-suited for addressing the specific physical, social and governance characteristics of conflict-affected environments. As such, the dissertation compares three cases of CDD/R programs. Table S.1 identifies the three case studies, which cover the conflict spectrum and provide regional variation.

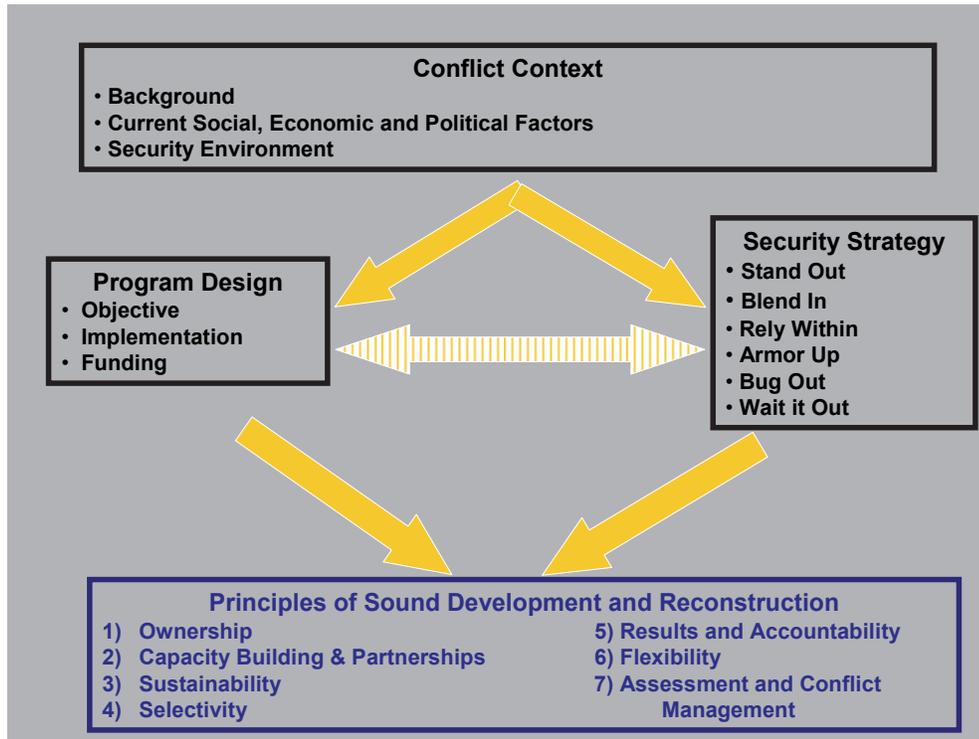
Table S.1 - Selected Case Countries and Conflict Categories

Case Study Country	Conflict Category	Conflict Category Definition
Afghanistan	War	> 1,000 battle-related deaths
Democratic Republic of Congo	Minor Conflict	25 - 1,000 battle-related deaths/year
Haiti	Post-Conflict	< 25 battle-related deaths/year, but experienced war or minor conflict in the past five years

Given that CDD/R operates at the local level, this research focused on CDD/R efforts in sub-national areas for the case studies in larger countries: Nangarhar, Afghanistan, and the Kivus, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Given Haiti's relatively small geographic size, the case context is national. The case study selected for each country is a primary - if not the only - CDD/R program operating in the area. The three selected CDD/R programs are: (1) National Solidarity Program in Nangarhar, Afghanistan; (2) Tuungane in the Kivus, the DRC; and (3) *Projet de Développement Communautaire Participatif en Milieu Rural* (PRODEP) and *Projet de Développement Communautaire Participatif en Milieu Urbaine* (PROEDPUR) in Haiti.

To effectively answer the research question, this dissertation develops and applies an analytic framework that defines "sound" development and reconstruction and identifies three key factors that affect this "soundness." Figure S.1 below depicts the analytic framework employed for the case study comparison.

Figure S.1 - Analytic Framework



The three key factors in the analytic framework are: (1) conflict context, (2) program design; and (3) security strategy. First, the conflict context helps to set the stage to understand a given environment. The conflict context consists of three areas:

- **Background.** The background provides critical information about the drivers of conflict and key considerations for designing and implementing development and reconstruction activities. The four primary components of background are: general history, regional issues, internal geography, and culture and ethnicity.
- **Current social, economic and political factors.** These current factors can contribute to the conflict and must be taken into consideration in efforts to address it. Social factors may directly motivate fighting or they may be exploited by armed actors to generate popular support and attract members. Economic factors may provide something worth fighting for or about, finance armed actors, and create dissatisfaction during periods of poor economic

performance. Political factors can create grievances among the population.

- Security environment. The security risks associated with operating in a conflict setting are often considerable, and may require modification of normal ways of "doing business" for development and reconstruction. To understand these risks, analysis of the security environment must take into consideration the nature of general insecurity, the level of general insecurity, and the security environment specifically for development and reconstruction actors.

Second, the program design may also affect adherence to the principles of sound development and reconstruction. Program design considers the objectives, the implementation approach and funding for a given program. As the three cases are all CDD/R programs, they have similar program designs. Variations do occur at the margins, however. These variations largely relate to the roles played by the three key actors: the indigenous government,¹ civil society, and aid workers.

Third, development and reconstruction actors employ a range of security strategies to adapt to the conflict context and protect themselves from existing security threats. Table S.2 describes six security strategies based on Stewart M. Patrick's four security strategies.

¹ Unless otherwise specified, the discussion of indigenous governments considers the varying levels of government from local to central government.

Table S.2 - Six Security Strategies

Strategy	Description
1. Stand Out	Clearly identify oneself as a neutral aid worker
2. Blend In	Minimize factors that identify oneself as an aid worker
3. Rely Within	Reduce the risk of attack by relying on a community's ability to protect its own population and activities
4. Armor Up	Use armed security actors to provide protection
5. Bug Out	Not operating in insecure environments
6. Wait It Out	Temporarily suspending operations during periods of heightened insecurity

As depicted in the analytic framework, these three key factors and their interactions may affect the principles of sound development and reconstruction. This dissertation uses seven principles based on former USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios' principles of reconstruction and development and the conflict management literature as described in Table S.3 below.

Table S.3 - Seven Principles of Sound Development and Reconstruction

Principle	Description
1. Ownership	Build on the leadership, participation, and commitment of a country and its people
2. Capacity Building and Partnership	Strengthen local institutions, transfer technical skills, and promote appropriate policies; and collaborate closely with governments, communities, donors, non-profit organizations, the private sector, international organizations, and universities
3. Sustainability	Design programs to ensure their impact endures
4. Selectivity	Allocate resources based on need, local commitment, and foreign policy interests
5. Assessment and Results	Design accountability and transparency into systems and build effective checks and balances to guard against corruption and direct resources to achieve clearly defined, measurable, and strategically focused objectives
6. Flexibility	Adjust to changing conditions, take advantage of opportunities, and maximize efficiency
7. Accountability and Conflict Management	Conduct careful research, adapt best practices, and design for local conditions and

This dissertation employs a comparative case study analysis using relevant literature and project documents, semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders and academics, and direct observation empirical analysis to test this hypothesis. Each case study chapter describes the three factors of the analytic framework - the conflict context, the program design, and the security strategy - as well as the

interactions among these components and their effects on adherence to the seven principles of sound development and reconstruction. Table S.4 summarizes the methodology used to code the extent to which the role of each actor contributes to (or detracts from) adherence to each of the seven principles.

Table S.4 - Coding Actors' Adherence to Principles of Sound Development and Reconstruction

Coding	Description
High (5)	Actor's role significantly contributes to adherence
Medium - High (4)	Actor's role contributes but faces some limitations to adherence
Medium (3)	Actor's role contributes but with significant limitations to adherence
Low - Medium (2)	Actor's role does not contribute to or slightly detracts from adherence
Low (1)	Actor's role significantly detracts from adherence

The individual scores for each actors' adherence to each of the seven principles can be combined to provide greater insights in three ways:

- Provide an overall score for contribution to each principle by averaging the scores for the three actors for each principle,
- Provide an overall score for each actors' overall contribution to the principles by averaging the scores each actor received for the seven independent principles, and
- Provide an overall score for each case study of the extent to which the role of the three actors together contribute to the overall principles of sound development and reconstruction by averaging the scores for each actor for each principle.

Table S.5 describes the coding for the overall scores.

Table S.5 - Coding Overall Adherence to Principles of Sound Development and Reconstruction

Coding	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
High	4.5	5
Medium-High	3.5	4.4
Medium	2.5	3.4
Low-Medium	1.5	2.4
Low	1	1.4

COMPARING THE CASE STUDIES

In all three case studies, the central government has historically lacked legitimacy, effectiveness, and reach; however, the reactions to fill this void differ amongst the cases. In Nangarhar, traditional governance filled the void. In Haiti, a relatively strong civil society did so. In the Kivus, the DRC, this governance void instrumentalized ethnic tensions, with shifting support to and alliance with various groups as a means of garnering support. These various historical responses to the lack of government legitimacy, effectiveness, and reach contributed to different current social, economic and political factors for each of the three cases as depicted in Table S.6.

Table S.6 - Summary of Key Current Social, Economic and Political Factors for the Three Cases

	NSP - Nangarhar	Tuongane - The Kivus	PRODEP/PROEDPUR-Haiti
Social	Relatively strong social cohesion	Heavily displaced population	Densely populated urban areas with high unemployment
Economic	Relatively good economic opportunities	Dire socio-economic conditions	Dire socio-economic conditions
Political	New, internationally supported government at the beginning of the NSP	Persistent lack of legitimacy, effectiveness and reach of government	Installation of a legitimate but not yet effective government

These social, economic and political factors influence the program design. Most notably, the political differences in the three cases drive the differences in the roles of the key actors and specifically the level of government involvement in program management. The installation of a legitimate central government in Afghanistan at the beginning of the NSP created an opportunity for significant Afghan

government involvement. In Haiti, increased government engagement in PRODEP/PRODEPUR corresponded to improved government legitimacy. In the Kivus, the persistent lack of legitimacy, effectiveness, and reach of the central government results in a relatively limited government role in Tuungane.

By design, the level of violence varies amongst the three cases; however, the nature of violence also varies. The nature of violence seems to drive the security strategy more than the level of violence. Nangarhar's high level of relatively predictable violence results in a primarily "blend in" security strategy for aid workers. The medium level of insecurity in the Kivus is marked by periods of heightened risk and relative unpredictability. As such, the "wait it out" security strategy dominates the Tuungane operations in South Kivu and the "bug out" strategy in North Kivu. In Haiti, the low level of violence with periods of heightened political violence largely in urban areas leads to a combined "rely within" and "wait it out" security strategy.

These differences in the three key factors do affect adherence to the principles of sound development and reconstruction; however, overall, the three case studies show that CDD/R can contribute with varying levels of limitations to adherence to the principles of sound development and reconstruction.

The case study with a relatively low level of conflict (PRODEP/PRODEPUR in Haiti) contributed significantly to overall adherence to the seven principles of sound development and reconstruction. The case study with relatively high levels of violence - the NSP in Nangarhar, Afghanistan - significantly contributed to adherence to the principles of sound development and reconstruction with some limitations. The case study with a medium level of violence - Tuungane in the Kivus, the DRC - contributed but with significant limitations to the principles of sound development and reconstruction.

This indicates that development and reconstruction actors can feasibly implement sound development and reconstruction conflict-affected settings; however, the conflict context itself limits to adherence to these principles.

KEY FINDINGS

Several key findings emerged on how the conflict context affects adherence to the principles of sound development and reconstruction:

- Although the conflict context may limit adherence to the principles of development and reconstruction, this relationship is not as simple as the higher the level of violence, the greater the limitations. The nature of the violence appears more significant than the level of violence as demonstrated by the greater adherence in the case of the highest level of violence than the case of the middle level of violence.
- The conflict context does not necessarily dictate a specific security strategy. Aid workers and donors may select different strategies in similar contexts based on differing policies and strategic considerations.
- The nature of conflict largely explain the variations in the extent of the contributions made by aid workers to adherence to the principles of sound development and reconstruction.
- The central role of civil society in project management serves as a critical cornerstone to CDD/R programming that minimally varied across the three cases and significantly contributed to adherence to the principles of sound development and reconstruction. The lack of an existing civil society does, however, limit adherence.
- The variation in the roles of key actors stemmed to a large degree from the current political differences in the three cases and the potential role for the government.
- Extremely minimal government involvement largely explains the greatest limitations faced by Tuungane, and its overall lowest coding for adherence to each of the principles of sound development and reconstruction except flexibility.
- Some limitations stem more from program design than from the conflict context. This includes limitations related to the CDD/R approach and those not explained by the approach.

- A common limitation across the three cases not resulting from the conflict context or inherent to the CDD/R approach is inadequate assessment and conflict management. This principle should receive greater attention.