



Practitioner's Guide:

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment - PCIA



Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit
(GTZ) GmbH



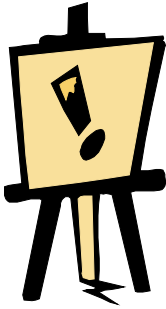
Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
und Entwicklung



FRCS
Food Security, Regional
Cooperation & Security
(Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan)

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment - PCIA

Brief Description



Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has been confronted with a number of ongoing conflict situations. From the beginning of the 1990s to the end of 1999, there were 118 armed conflicts worldwide, resulting in the death of approximately six million people. Most of these conflicts take place in the partner countries participating in developmental cooperation. The civilian population, the primary target group for developmental interventions, is increasingly involved in, and affected by, conflict dynamics.

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) is a method to anticipate, observe or evaluate the impact of planned, ongoing or completed interventions in the structures and processes that decrease the likelihood of violent conflict and improve the chances for peaceful co-existence.

The objectives of applying a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment in a development policy context are:

- ▶ To assess the risk of programmes exacerbating conflicts.
- ▶ To assess opportunities to improve the effectiveness of development interventions in contributing to crisis prevention and conflict reduction.

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) is an overarching term that can be used, prior to the programming of aid (Macro level) and project planning (Micro level), for the ongoing impact monitoring during the implementation of interventions, or for post programme and project evaluation.

At the country level, the national implications of the conflict and attempts to develop long-term political strategies of conflict management are examined. Information about possible and necessary country portfolio adjustments is gathered.

At the project and individual intervention level, the primary focus is on defining the local dimensions of the main factors causing, triggering or aggravating tensions, and to devise strategies for interventions that enable them to respond sensitively to conflict. These guidelines concentrate on conflict impact assessment on the project intervention level.

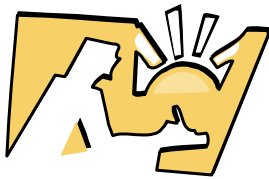
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Proposed Main Users

Development organisations and partners,
Non-Governmental Organisations, Private
Sector.



Purpose of the Method



The worldwide increase of intrastate violent conflict, as well as the repercussions of recent incidents of genocide and ethnic cleansing, has created a need for developmental policy to pay more attention to the issue of conflict transformation. The risks of political instability and violence call for an in-depth understanding of the local situation and demands great care with the way in which development projects are steered.

Developmental cooperation (DC) can never be neutral or non-partisan. It has to be assumed that the activities implemented by a project do affect conflict dynamics. Conflict situations at the beginning of the 1990s (Somalia and Rwanda) showed that the impact of the work of development actors is not neutral. It can aggravate or reduce conflict. The challenge for DC is therefore to find out how contributions to development can be made in ways that help to reduce tensions, and thus the likelihood of an outbreak of violence, rather than feeding into or aggravating conflict.

As developmental cooperation strives to “do no harm”, systematic monitoring of impact is indispensable. The attempts made so far have resulted in frameworks for peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) that are often not specific and do not offer convincing practical approaches. As the ongoing methodological discourse on peace and conflict impact assessment shows, PCIA is still far from being a useful tool, as the gap between the conceptual design and actual practice has not been closed (Feyen & Gsänger, 2001). Despite its inefficiencies, the PCIA framework is attempting to help projects obtain a more in-depth understanding about the interaction between project activities and environments marked by conflict.

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Advantages



- ▶ The application of PCIA in the context of developmental cooperation supports a shift from **'working around the conflict'** (Ignoring the conflict), to **'work within the conflict'** (Being aware of the conflict and not influencing conflict dynamics negatively), and finally to **'work on the conflict'** (Having a positive influence on the conflict).
- ▶ PCIA encourages projects to continuously **reflect on the interaction** between their own activities and the dynamics of the conflict.
- ▶ Making explicit attempts to "integrate a conflict lens" into a project usually results in **assuming common good practices**, such as participation, transparency and subsidiarity.
- ▶ Understanding and observing the cultural, political and socio-economic impacts and side effects of a project **decreases the likelihood of unintended negative impacts of project work**, and makes early re-orientation possible.
- ▶ **Maximises opportunities to improve the effectiveness** of interventions that contribute to conflict prevention and reduction.

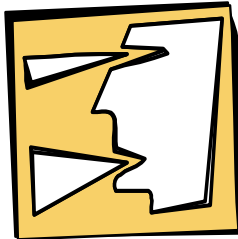
Limitations



- ▶ **PCIA is not an exact science** and it never will be. The main outcomes of a PCIA are merely hypotheses; they must continually be adjusted.
- ▶ No PCIA can measure and observe **all unintentional impacts**.
- ▶ Not everybody likes PCIA. A systematic observation of conflict-related impacts **provokes various forms of opposition** from within and from outside.
- ▶ It cannot be applied until a certain **relationship of trust** has been established with project partners and staff.
- ▶ In the process of conducting conflict analysis, underlying and unresolved issues are brought to the surface. This risks **'adding fuel to the fire'**. Potential risks have to be carefully weighed against potential benefits.
- ▶ In areas where free articulation of opinion might entail personal security risks for staff, **first-hand information cannot be obtained**. Stakeholders directly involved in, or affected by, conflict may not be able to clarify their positions and interests sufficiently.
- ▶ The **quality of PCIA depends on the local capacity** for professionally conducted conflict analyses and impact assessments.

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Stages of PCIA

There are a number of different steps and processes suggested by various sources, depending on the specific purpose a PCIA is designed to serve. The following four stages are common to most PCIA processes.

The four key stages of PCIA are:

- 1. Introduction and sensitisation to PCIA:** Clarify the purpose of the conflict impact assessment, what needs to be monitored, handling of information, participants and follow-up.
- 2. Conflict analysis and conflict relevance assessment:** Collect, structure and systemise information available about the conflict; preliminarily assess the relevance of different kinds of interventions on the conflict.
- 3. Project organisation and impact analysis:** Assess conflict related risks and the impact of the project on the conflict.
- 4. Evaluation and adaptation:** Examine whether specific actions should be taken, or whether the program should be re-designed.

Stage 1: Introduction and Sensitisation to PCIA.

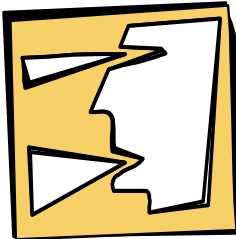
Clarify purpose: A PCIA is best understood as an on-project learning and steering instrument, which is best carried out by the project team. If carried out as an external assessment, involvement of the project team and gaining their support is a must. Some members of the team carrying out the assessment should be familiar with the conflict, with the project, and with PCIA methodology.

Ownership of information: The project team should also clarify, at an early stage, how the results should and can be dealt with.

Role of the project in conflict: The expectations of people taking part in the assessment should be clarified. The project has to develop a common understanding of the role that it is meant to play in the conflict. There must be a readiness to draw the appropriate conclusions if problematic project impacts become evident. Therefore it should be discussed what can realistically be achieved within the given time frame, resources, capacity, political mandate, etc.

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Stage 2: Conflict Analysis and Conflict Relevance Assessment.

PCIA is only effective when based on sound conflict analysis. Conflict analysis studies its structures, actors and dynamics.

Step 1: Structural Analysis:

- ▶ Define conflict for the purpose of the analysis.
- ▶ Compile a broad contextual analysis.
- ▶ Weigh - in terms of relative importance – sources of tension and conflict.
- ▶ Identify connections and linkages between sources of conflict.
- ▶ Develop an initial decision on what are the key sources of conflict.

Step 2: Actor Analysis:

- ▶ Map out conflict actors.
- ▶ Analyse the interests, relations, capacities, peace agendas, and incentives of each actor.

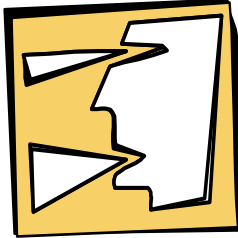
Step 3: Analysis of Conflict Dynamics:

- ▶ Analyse longer term trends.
- ▶ Assess the likely shorter term triggers.
- ▶ Assess which factors are likely to accelerate or slow down conflict dynamics.
- ▶ Think through a range of potential future conflict scenarios.

Apart from describing the conflict, it is necessary to preliminarily assess the relevance that components of the intervention have for the conflict. The objective of a conflict relevance assessment is to judge whether the overall direction of an intervention (Objectives, main activity lines, project area, etc.) has an influence on the critical factors identified in the conflict analysis.

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Stage 3: Project Organisation and Impact Analysis.

Project or organisation appraisal involves establishing a connection between one's own organisation and its social and political setting. The way in which a development organisation presents itself in the field, the partner(s) it co-operates with, which target groups it supports, and how staff members are recruited - all of these are political statements.

The organisation must therefore regularly examine itself or be examined with regard to:

- ▶ Objectives: What does the project hope to achieve? Are all parties to the conflict involved in the design and planning of the project? How are clashes of interests dealt with?
- ▶ Partner structure: What is the role of the partner in the conflict? In most cases the government is also a party to the conflict.
- ▶ Target groups: Who is benefiting and who is excluded from the project? Selecting target groups often leads to the provision of one-sided support to certain social groups. Who wins and who loses?
- ▶ Resource flows: Are decisions about resource flows transparent and inclusive? Developmental co-operation brings resources, services, technical and organisational capacity into a country or a region. Developmental organisations therefore constantly have to take decisions on how these inputs are to be distributed. Different actors in the political and social "arena of struggle" compete for developmental aid as an important resource.
- ▶ Recruitment practices: Are there criteria that automatically exclude certain groups?
- ▶ Security: Security of staff depends heavily on the standing of the organisation, and on the personal relationships that they have been able to establish.

This step relates the results of the conflict analysis to the results of the organisational analysis. Tracing the actual impact of a development intervention on conflicts is certainly the most challenging step in a PCIA. It is based on uncertain predictions about which course the conflict will take in the future.

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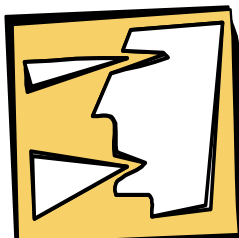


Table 1: Grouping / categorisation of impact hypotheses

Impacts	Intended	Unintended
Positive	intended positive impacts	unintended positive impacts
negative	intended negative impacts	unintended negative impacts

The attribution of certain changes in the conflict situation to the project is problematic. Developmental cooperation usually has a relatively limited sphere of action, whereas conflicts are complex processes determined by multiple factors. Thus, scientific precision can not be achieved. The approach is at best about identifying plausible possibilities.

To deal with the challenges described above, explanatory information on impacts is needed. It is therefore recommended to combine various methods, of which each offers a different perspective on the conflict situation and the work of the project (Triangulation).

Possible methods are:

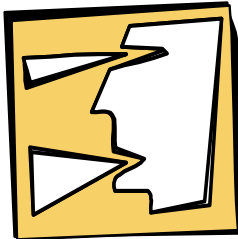
- ▶ Case studies.
- ▶ Impact hypothesis.
- ▶ Participatory Impact Assessment.
- ▶ Conflict Monitoring.

Case Studies.

Case studies do not claim to be generally applicable, but they can provide insights into the complex make-up of cause and effect at the local level and can point out new, previously unexpected impacts. In doing so, they break down barriers of perception, which are structurally inherent in conventional short-term studies. Case studies should be led by specialists on the subject area in question. They always require spending a lengthy period of time in the field. It can be useful to recruit "insiders" (Project workers) and "outsiders" (External specialists) to the survey team in order to complement the external view and the project view of events.

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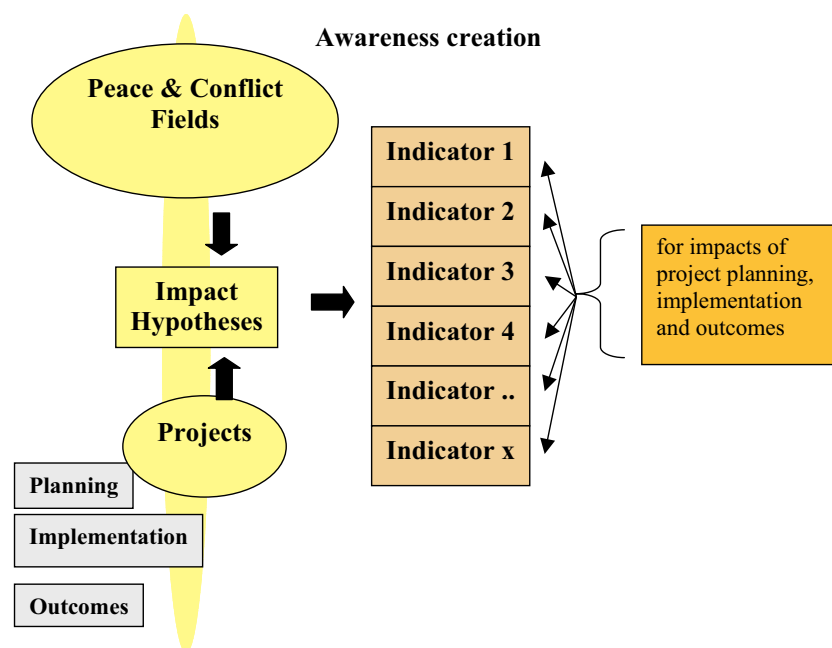
Participatory Impact Assessment.

In participatory impact assessment, the point of departure is the subjective view of the target groups. Target groups and other people affected by, or involved in, the project are asked to identify the conflict-related impacts of the project inputs that they know of and judge them according to their own criteria. The idea behind this approach is to add the target groups' "view from below" to the "view from above" established as a result of the impact hypotheses or case studies. Participatory impact assessment emphasises the experience of individuals living in a conflict situation. It has to do with values, feelings, relationships and adjustment strategies. In addition, the method offers the opportunity to recognise unintentional and as yet unknown impacts.

Conflict Monitoring.

Conflict monitoring consists of observing the actual changes in the conflict situation over a certain period of time, and of examining to what extent a connection can be made between these changes and the work of the project. It focuses on actual, observable changes without claiming that the project has actually influenced the conflict. As a rule, developmental projects are not influential enough to achieve this. The question is rather to what extent the project is working in an economical, geographical, social or cultural area, which has proved to be critical for the future developments of the conflict.

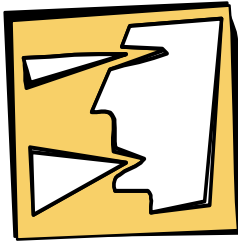
Figure 1: PCIA systems approach



Adapted from Seminar fuer laendliche Entwicklung, Berlin 2003

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Impact Hypotheses.

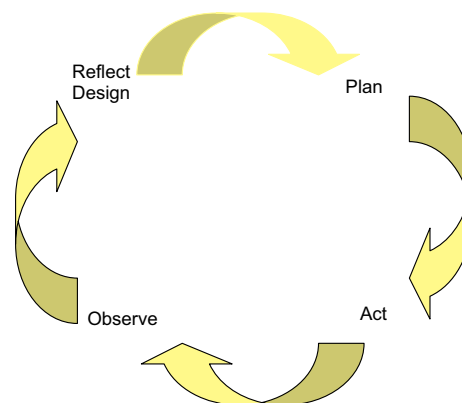
Impact hypotheses demonstrate why we think that a certain activity will lead to a certain change. Impact hypothesis involves examining the progress that the project has made in bringing about the changes in the conflict situation that it hoped to achieve. The objectives of the project are the point of departure for this. The idea is to establish a direct causal relationship between an individual project activity and the expected or actually observed changes. Impact chains are hypotheses; whether the impact actually materialises or not must be the subject of an empirical investigation. To help in this, indicators for each individual step are drawn up, which enable monitoring of whether certain changes have indeed been achieved.

Stage 4: Evaluation and Adaptation.

At the end of each monitoring phase, the project team summarises the results of the risk appraisal and impact assessment, and examines them for possible needs for action.

- ▶ Transforming conflict-related information into specific recommendations for action can be either done through the Do No Harm tool (See method description), or by drawing up a simple table that lists the conflict-related opportunities and risks - and which actions are required - for each project activity.
- ▶ Incorporation of identified questions and issues of PCIA into regular project monitoring. Developmental projects that are being implemented in regions with a moderate or high risk of conflict should incorporate the identified questions and issues of PCIA into regular project monitoring as soon as possible. Continuous monitoring is important because conflict situations take place in highly dynamic environments where flexibility of response is required. The frequency, with which questions relating to conflict should be raised, depends on the intensity of the conflict.

Figure 2: The process of action science



(c) Seminar fuer laendliche Entwicklung, Berlin 2003

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