Building peace. Strengthening resilience.

The contribution of transitional development assistance to peaceful and inclusive communities.

The goal of transitional development assistance is to strengthen the resilience of people and local structures to the impacts and consequences of crises. This requires a multi-sectoral approach spanning the four fields of action of food and nutrition security, rebuilding basic infrastructure and services, disaster risk management and peaceful and inclusive communities.

Why, how and through which measures does the field of action peaceful and inclusive communities contribute to this overarching goal? The purpose of this factsheet is to support the implementation partners of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to plan and implement projects of the funding line crisis management, reconstruction, infrastructure and to provide information for a wider specialist readership.

Peace is a process that begins with the absence of organised, physical violence. It is only sustainable and considered positive peace, if the capacity of a society to coexist in peace is strengthened and the causes of violent conflict are addressed.

Peaceful and inclusive communities are characterised by social cohesion. They can be found wherever societies show respect for people's inalienable rights to determine their own life regardless of their origin, sex, age, physical or mental condition, socioeconomic status, ethnicity or religion.

Social cohesion is characterised by close social relations between and within groups (horizontal), a sense of belonging to the community, a strong focus on the common good as well as legitimate and positive state-society relations (vertical). Social cohesion strengthens the resilience of groups to the escalation of violent conflicts while also reducing violence and promoting reconciliation. Social cohesion between groups is reflected in patterns of behaviour, attitudes and social norms in the dimensions of trust, a sense of belonging, willingness to participate and acceptance of diversity.

Why are peaceful and inclusive communities an important element of crisis management?

Transitional development assistance projects are implemented in contexts of protracted, recurring and complex crises, for example extreme natural events such as floods, droughts, epidemics (including the COVID-19 pandemic) and violent conflicts, all of which can lead to forced displacement. Such events can jeopardise previous development gains, exacerbate existing inequalities and trigger or act as a catalyst for further violent conflict.

Crises have multidimensional causes and therefore require multi-sectoral approaches. In many crisis contexts, it is simply not enough to ensure conflict-sensitivity. To address the **structural causes and drivers** of conflict, concrete approaches are needed. Accordingly, the objective of interventions in the field of action peaceful and inclusive communities is to strengthen the capacity of people and local structures to **resolve conflicts peacefully at the local level and close to the target group.** This is to prevent situations that could (re) ignite violent conflict and to establish the right conditions for **sustainable peace** according to the Sustainable Development Goal 16.

Through this new field of action, transitional development assistance measures add to the implementation of the German Federal Government's guidelines on 'Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace'. As part of the BMZ 2030 reform process, it contributes to the core area of peaceful and inclusive societies and the corresponding area of intervention peacebuilding and conflict prevention. As an instrument for crisis management, transitional development assistance is primarily (but not exclusively) deployed in BMZ's nexus and peace partner countries, where it strengthens resilience and promotes civil conflict transformation and peace-building. By promoting peaceful and inclusive communities, transitional development assistance also reinforces the peace pillar of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus (HDP-nexus). With the strong link between peacebuilding and reconstruction, transitional development assistance draws on the recommendations of the World Bank report 'Building for Peace'. It combines the twin goals peacebuilding and food and nutrition security to support breaking the vicious circle of hunger and conflict and addresses the relationship between disaster and conflict by aiming to create effective disaster risk management systems.

How do transitional development assistance projects strengthen local potential for peace?

Projects in this field of action are designed not only in a conflict-sensitive manner, but also to build peace. Targeted measures strengthen societies' potential for peacebuilding. They address the underlying causes of conflict and violence and therefore go beyond the do no harm principle. Reflecting the understanding of peace as a process, this can range from non-violent stabilisation to conflict transformation and structural society-wide change at local level.

The starting point is a peace and conflict analysis (PCA). This involves conducting ongoing analysis of the main lines of conflict, identifying **needs and potentials for peace**, analysing risks for project implementation as well as applying a peace- and context-sensitive approach and a results-based monitoring system. The results of the PCA are incorporated into a resilience analysis and provide the basis for a theory of change as well as relevant indicators and **peacebuilding measures**. When selecting the most appropriate measures, it is important to consider the available evidence (e.g. 'Strengthening intergroup social cohesion in fragile situations'). As part of a multi-sectoral approach and in collaboration with local partners, these steps can help to promote peaceful and inclusive communities and build greater resilience.

Peacebuilding must be sustainable. During periods of drought, for example, competition for natural resources frequently cause tension and violence in a society. Improving access to water can alleviate the conflict. But what happens when the another conflict or drought occurs? Projects in this field of action can only contribute to peacebuilding if they strengthen the capacity of a society to transform conflicts triggered by renewed drought without recourse to violence (**prevention**). This must be taken into account when planning a project, by exploring whether and how sustainable peace can be established in the local sphere of influence by combining multi-sectoral and peacebuilding measures. Each project is given a peace and security 1 or 2 marker depending on whether peacebuilding is a primary or secondary objective.

What does transitional development assistance promote?

Measures in the field of action peaceful and inclusive communities strengthen the resilience capacities of societies and thus enable them to transform conflicts themselves and peacefully, both during and after a crisis.

Transformation capacity

Activities that strengthen the **transformation capacity** aim at transforming conflicts in a sustainable manner and strengthening social cohesion. This might be achieved through training in non-violent conflict transformation, school-based peace education, the use of media for peace interventions, measures to promote collaborative contact (e.g. sports and theatre) or greater opportunities for participation in e.g. local intergroup dialogues and peacebuilding processes. Activities that strengthen the transformation capacity promote a feeling of solidarity and positive attitudes between groups.

Acceptance

At the same time, measures to strengthen peaceful coexistence and mutual **acceptance**[1] create conditions in which groups can live together peacefully while attitudes may stay neutral. This can be achieved, for example, by establishing systems for reporting grievances at the local community level, raising men's awareness of gender-based violence and promoting greater acceptance of vulnerable groups, possibly through information campaigns that help internally displaced youth to build a more positive self-image and to understand their own contribution to the community as a whole.

Stabilisation capacity

At the end of an acute crisis, one of the initial priorities may be to prevent open violence. Activities that reduce violence, for example the establishment of safe spaces and houses for those groups most at risk or local mediation mechanisms, strengthen the **stabilisation capacity**. The aim should be to combine these measures with measeures of the other capacities in order to have positive effects on sustainable peace.

The following transitional development assistance projects show possible measures in the field of action peaceful and inclusive communities.

Peace and food security in Chad

The Lake Chad and Kanem regions are badly affected by drought, desertification and water shortages. Armed conflict between the Boko Haram militia and government forces has led to forced displacement, economic instability and is a threat to peaceful coexistence.

Through transitional development assistance, the German Caritas Association works with local partners to strengthen the resilience of roughly 19,000 people, predominantly internally displced persons, refugees and members of host communities. Caritas' peacebuilding activities include setting up committees for non-violent conflict transformation with equal female representation. They also organise dialogue forums – to date reaching around 10,000 people – in order to raise awareness of gender-based violence.

As part of a multi-sectoral approach, these peacebuilding activities are combined with measures to improve food and nutrition security – setting up community granaries, for example. In this way, Caritas does not only strengthen the resilience against future food and nutrition crises but also promotes social cohesion.

Peacebuilding and reconstruction in northern Iraq

Large parts of Iraq have been destroyed by the so-called Islamic State. There is a lack of schools, health centres, houses and opportunities for a better life. The conflict fuelled a deep-rooted sense of mistrust between different ethnic and religious groups. For this reason, many people do not return to their home towns and villages.

1   The term acceptance relates to the adaptation capacity of the resilience concept (see BMZ transitional development assistance' fact sheet on resilience). In the context of peacebuilding, it means accepting the different characteristics, behaviours and attitudes of other groups without necessarily sharing them. The goal is not to adapt to a conflict or to create a homogeneous society.

Learning together: strengthening social cohesion in Iraq through training for young people

Through its support for local peace agreements and training in non-violent conflict transformation and mediation, the project supports up to 200,000 people to live together peacefully. 120 young people from different religious groups are being trained to run campaigns promoting social cohesion in their own communities. The training equips them with peacebuilding communication skills and shows them how to deal with false rumours. This can have a transformative impact and help to strengthen relations and create empathy between the participants.

Partnership for resilience and social cohesion in Niger

The transitional development assistance project being jointly implemented in Diffa by the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) and the Children's Fund (UNICEF) together with local partners strengthens the resilience of vulnerable groups and local institutions and promotes social cohesion.

Attacks by the Boko Haram militia, weak state institutions and intensifying conflicts over natural resources are causing hunger, insecurity and forced displacement. Violence, extreme poverty and human rights violations have damaged or destroyed social ties within families and between generations and ethnic groups.

The project creates opportunities for vulnerable groups to be involved in community planning processes. It supports the efforts of around 10,000 young people to establish an intergenerational and peacebuilding dialogue. Alongside these activities, the project also improves access to basic services such as clean water.