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Ensuring a double bottom line for development and humanitarian action in transitional settings

While it is important to identify new sources of financing, we should continue to pay attention to the complementary approach of ensuring that existing funding for humanitarian and development action is deployed in such a way as to support – or at worst not work against – the commitment to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies and sustaining peace.

On a recent trip to Beirut, I was astonished to learn from donor, UN and NGO actors how little of the humanitarian and development work related to Syria had been designed to be conflict sensitive, or was being evaluated according to its contribution to building peace.

Such ‘double-bottom line’ programming in the development and humanitarian space should be a no-brainer at this stage of the game. All development and humanitarian programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts by host governments, donors, UN actors, the business sector and NGOs should be at a minimum designed to be conflict sensitive, and at best actively restorative. Doing this is in line with the 2030 Agenda and the WHS outcomes, and would have a profound impact on implementing sustainable peace. By leveraging existing funding, such an approach requires relatively little in additional resources, but needs strengthened partnerships with development and humanitarian actors, as well as sustained political support.

Making peacebuilding funding more effective

As we consider funding for peacebuilding, another concern is that we also focus on making all funding for peace more effective – in particular that we align our funding approaches with the nature of the problems that we are trying to solve. Examples of this include more effective approaches to the term and scale of funding, and ensuring inclusion.

Term: the 2011 World Development Report confirmed for us that the transition from fragility to stability takes at least a generation. If we are to address change processes operating at these time-scales, we need to diversify from project funding that only lasts for one or two years. We need a commitment to allocating at least part of our resources to longer term projects. Our sister organization, the American Friends Service Committee, that does peacebuilding work in 15 conflict affected countries worldwide, is experimenting with ten-year project cycles, but very few donors are willing to consider funding for a ten-year term. The UN Peacebuilding Fund has proved to be an effective catalytic funder for short term projects – maybe we need a complementary mechanism to pilot funding for longer-term approaches.

Scale: many peacebuilding projects have been designed and implemented at a small scale. While we have learned a great deal from small-scale community level peacebuilding work, we need to build on that success by piloting projects that can have an impact on a regional or national level. While this is

not a new problem – QUNO and Peace Direct provided a number of examples in their 2010 publication “[Ripples into waves: locally led peacebuilding on a national scale](#)” – this is an area that deserves new focus as countries begin the process of designing plans for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly for the commitments to peace, justice and inclusion, including Goal 16.

Inclusion: as we have heard, exclusion is often a significant root cause of violent conflict, and many societies in transition are characterized by exclusion. It is particularly important, then, for peacebuilding, development and humanitarian projects in transitional contexts to be designed and implemented with inclusion at their heart. This is true not only at the local and national level, ensuring priorities are responsive to the needs and aspirations of those most affected, but also at an international level. We heard earlier of the PBC’s role in coordinating the setting of peacebuilding priorities – it remains vital that any such discussions at the PBC level are informed by civil society perspectives (see “[Filling the Gap: How civil society engagement can help the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture meet its purpose](#)”)

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