





GUIDANCE FOR PDNA IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS



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This guide on how to conduct a **PDNA in Conflict Situations** is a joint initiative of the European Union, the World Bank and the United Nations, led by the United Nations Development Programme, in response to the need to conduct disaster assessments in conflict contexts. This initiative is carried out within the scope of the 2008 Joint Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning, which commits the three institutions to harmonizing and coordinating post-crisis response and support recovery in countries. The guide will add to the set of guidelines that the three institutions have developed to support post-disaster needs assessments and recovery planning.

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Box 1: Key conflict sensitivity questions related to governance

Box 2: Key conflict sensitivity questions related to gender

Box 3: Key conflict sensitivity questions related to disaster risk reduction

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Tool 1 (see annex A): Dividers and Connectors Analysis

Tool 2 (see annex B): Summary of the step-by-step process to integrate conflict sensitivity into a PDNA

Tool 3 (see annex C): Checklist for a conflict-sensitive PDNA



INTRODUCTION

Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) guidelines have been developed to support practitioners who plan and conduct PDNAs. These guidelines consist of two volumes: Volume A provides a general overview of the PDNA concepts, process and procedures, while Volume B contains a set of guidelines for the different sectors and crosscutting issues that can potentially be covered by a PDNA, depending on the context and the scale of the disaster.

Volume A outlines conflict sensitivity as one of the core principles of the PDNA: "adopt a conflict-sensitive approach and ensure that the assessment does not exacerbate existing tensions, and that the recovery strategy takes into account the potential disaster-related conflicts."

A conflict-sensitive approach adapts the PDNA to conflict-affected contexts and responds to the growing awareness of the linkages between conflicts and disasters. It helps ground the PDNA and its resulting recovery strategy in the local context and consider existing tensions or conflict issues. Recent renewed attention for the importance of conflict prevention emphasizes the need to address tensions, divisions and inequality in societies before they escalate into violent conflicts – making conflict sensitivity important for all PDNAs, not just those that are conducted in conflict-affected areas.

As conflict sensitivity is a lens that must be applied throughout the PDNA process, this conflict sensitivity guidance provides the national and international experts who conduct PDNAs with practical advice on how to integrate a conflict-sensitive approach into the five key steps of the PDNA. These experts need to understand that the PDNA should be aware of underlying social tensions and conflict issues and that a recovery programme should mitigate these issues.

Context

When disasters occur in a situation where resources are scarce, there is the potential for conflict. These conflicts could arise over assets or livelihood opportunities, such as the lands lost or degraded by a disaster. The PDNA may indicate the potential conflict situations in different sectors.

When disasters happen in a country with an existing conflict, the situation may be aggravated by tensions over disaster relief and recovery. Certain groups or communities may seek greater access to relief from Government and other sources, which could lead to perceived exclusion or discrimination. The PDNA therefore needs to consider the possibility of a conflict worsening in the aftermath of a disaster.

In drought situations, for example, there is considerable pressure on access to water and food. Access to natural resources becomes highly contested, which can lead to conflicts. The PDNA should be informed of social tensions arising from competing claims over these resources. In certain situations, where food security is being assessed, it is important to find out how people access these resources.

The PDNA needs to be sensitive to any pre-existing social, ethnic or religious divisions within the society and suggest policies and measures that mitigate their effects through recovery, rather than aggravating them. The distribution of humanitarian assistance to people affected by a disaster is generally a significant source of conflict, with certain groups often feeling excluded along the lines of religion, sect, caste and tribe. The PDNA should therefore look at the immediate response and identify any issues related to the distribution of relief assistance.

Recovery provides an opportunity for disaster-affected people to access resources, and a recovery policy that does not discriminate between different groups or communities is an essential condition of conflict sensitivity. Recovery assistance should be provided to people based on their recovery needs, without any bias or discrimination. The PDNA could ensure this by emphasizing a fair, equitable assistance policy.

While the PDNA needs to consider any divisive issues in communities, it should not become an exercise in conflict analysis, or present solutions for resolving conflicts: such an exercise would be beyond its scope. It should be concerned with only those issues that can aggravate conflicts and should recommend feasible options for their mitigation.

Nor should PDNAs suggest a recovery strategy that calls for radical solutions or restructuring. Such a PDNA could evoke social or political opposition, and its immediate purpose could be undermined. Instead, PDNAs should provide feasible solutions that government agencies could implement on the ground within a reasonable time-frame.

PDNAs must strike the right balance between inclusion, equity and fairness on the one hand and a feasible recovery strategy on the other. Although they should not gloss over social tensions, they should not be a case of social or political overreach.

Structure of the guide

Section 1 of this guide explains the basics of the concept of conflict sensitivity, and how to develop a conflict sensitivity lens. Section 2 sets out key conflict sensitivity considerations for the Terms of Reference that are drawn up for each PDNA. Sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 systematically cover the basic PDNA steps (baseline assessment; assessment of disaster effects; assessment of disaster impact; identification of recovery needs and the recovery strategy) to outline key conflict sensitivity considerations with examples. Meanwhile, section 7 highlights the key sectors and crosscutting issues that constitute a high risk from a conflict sensitivity perspective. This document also sets out a series of key questions to consider for each of these sectors.

The annexes include a set of practical tools to further assist PDNA practitioners with integrating conflict sensitivity: tool 1 (annex A) sets out a Dividers/Connectors Analysis as the recommended analytical methodology for a conflict sensitivity lens; tool 2 (annex B) summarizes the step-by-step process for integrating conflict sensitivity into the PDNA; tool 3 (annex C) lists key questions to check whether conflict sensitivity has been integrated. Annex D sets out further methodologies that can help develop a conflict sensitivity lens. Annexes E and F contain the bibliography and a list of the people that were interviewed to develop this guidance.

1. CONFLICT-SENSITIVE POST-DISASTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Conflict sensitivity is about the *unintended* and *indirect* potential impacts of interventions upon conflict dynamics. It is based on the understanding, grounded in research,¹ that all interventions become part of the context in which they operate. Interventions do not just impact as intended through their programming objectives, but also through the ways in which they work: from how beneficiaries are selected to their procurement practices, for example. *Unintended impacts* can have negative effects on already fragile social cohesion, yet with conflict-sensitive insights, interventions can help strengthen peace processes and social cohesion more broadly.

The term 'conflict sensitivity' often leads to confusion. To many practitioners, it sounds like they are being asked to address conflict issues. This leads to misunderstandings that conflict sensitivity only matters in (post-) conflict contexts and it is asking everyone to start 'doing something' about conflict. In fact, conflict sensitivity is applicable in all contexts and does not require all interventions to directly address drivers or causes of conflict.

Conflict sensitivity involves the following steps:

- 1. Understanding existing tensions/conflict in the context
- 2. Understanding the (potential) intended and unintended impacts of the intervention upon tensions/conflict
- 3. Recommendations and adjustments to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts

Although it has been developed for conflict-affected contexts, conflict sensitivity is also an important part of the drive to work on broader conflict-prevention goals. In some contexts, latent tensions manifest in discrimination and inequality. Resilience and social cohesion and a focus on inclusivity and equality are important capacities for peace everywhere. How to avoid exacerbating inequality and exclusion, and enhance social cohesion and resilience, is important in all contexts, including post-disaster ones. Conflict sensitivity contributes towards making planned interventions more effective by giving them a more robust contextual grounding. A conflict sensitivity lens highlights risks and opportunities to help make the PDNA process, the assessment itself and the resulting recovery strategy more effective by being better adapted to the local context.

A conflict-sensitive approach results in the identification of risk and opportunities to ensure intervention strategies do not worsen existing (latent) tensions, but rather help strengthen social cohesion if possible. Peacebuilding interventions go one step further by aiming to address drivers of conflict. Table A further illustrates this distinction between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding.

Table A: The difference between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding – a continuum of intent²

Not conflict-sensitive	Conflict-sensitive	Peacebuilding
No (intentional) engagement based on understanding of tensions/conflict	Indirect engagement with tensions/conflict, based on deeper contextual understanding	Direct, pro-active engagement to address drivers of conflict
Risk of unintentionally exacerbating tensions or drivers of conflict	Understand the context, and the interaction (intended and unintended) of the intervention and the context, seeking to	Actively seek to design interventions to promote peace and reduce the risk of conflict

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