SOLLIMS LESSONS LEARNED SAMPLER

Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace and Stability

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Stability Operations Lessons Learned & Information Management System
**FOREWORD**

Welcome to the 35th edition of the SOLLIMS Lessons Learned Sampler – Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace and Stability!

This lessons-learned compendium contains just a sample – thus the title ‘Sampler’ – of the observations, insights, and lessons related to Monitoring & Evaluation available in the SOLLIMS data repository. These lessons are worth sharing with military commanders and their staffs, as well as with civilian practitioners having a peacekeeping or stability operations related mission or function, such as those currently deployed on stability operations, those planning to deploy, the institutional Army, the Joint community, policymakers, and other international civilian and military leaders at the national and theater level.

If you have not registered in SOLLIMS, the links in the report will take you to the registration page. Take a brief moment to register for an account in order to take advantage of the many features of SOLLIMS and to access the stability operations related products referenced in the report, which can be accessed once logged in to SOLLIMS.

We encourage you to take the time to provide us with your perspective on any given lesson in this report or on the overall value of the Sampler as a reference for you and your unit/organization. By using the ‘Perspectives’ text entry box that is found at the end of each lesson in the SOLLIMS database – seen when you open the lesson in SOLLIMS – you can enter your own personal comments on the lesson. We welcome your input, and we encourage you to become a regular contributor.

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# Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace and Stability

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B. As part of the United States Government (USG)'s response to the Syrian conflict, Civil Affairs Soldiers from the 92nd CA Battalion formed a Knowledge Management Team to support the USG Syria Transition Assistance Response Team in Turkey. This team filled a critical gap in information sharing between the interagency and partner nations/organizations... [Read More ...]

C. Lack of recruitment of woman field specialists compromises the implementation of monitoring, evaluation, and research tools, namely, household surveys, and assessments conducted through Key Informant Interviews. In Syria, the sensitivity of the U.S. role in supporting anti-Regime entities requires a stringency that complicates the options for recruiting local field specialists and has meant that hiring women is especially challenging… [Read More ...]

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G. As part of a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded research grant, the non-governmental organization Mercy Corps implemented monitoring and evaluation in three of their programs in Uganda, Indonesia, and Ethiopia, in order to examine the relationship between economic development and stability… [Read More ...]

H. The independent Finnish organization Conflict Management Initiative utilizes an Internal Review as part of its M&E processes in order to create space for organizational reflection. This review process could be beneficial for any organization involved in conflict intervention because it cultivates self-awareness of how the organization affects the conflict system… [Read More ...]

I. An open-source knowledge platform was created by several international non-governmental organizations to provide thousands of practitioners with best practices and lessons learned on Design, Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace… [Read More ...]
1. INTRODUCTION


Conflicts are nested in complex, adaptive systems composed of myriad moving parts. In these changing environments, it can be extremely challenging to monitor and evaluate ongoing programs and initiatives, many of which are intended to help transform conflict and gain peace and stability.

Different U.S. Government (USG) agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in various types of conflict interventions have different approaches to evaluation, as well as different terms to describe their evaluative efforts. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) uses the concept of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AME) to describe its evaluative activities, with assessment primarily decentralized to the Services and combatant commands. According to U.S. military doctrine Joint Publication 5-0, assessment “is the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the current situation and progress of a joint operation toward mission accomplishment” (p. xxiv). The United Nations (UN) and many humanitarian agencies, however, use ‘assessment’ to refer to analysis prior to an intervention “to develop a shared understanding of a conflict or post-conflict situation” (UN Integrated Assessment and Planning Handbook, p. 15). For the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the term ‘assessment’ is used either “to examine country or sector context to inform project design” or to refer to an informal project review (USAID Terms). USAID, along with myriad NGOs, focuses on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as the term to describe overarching efforts to evaluate programs. USAID’s robust capacity for evaluation is defined as “the systematic collection and analysis of information to improve effectiveness and inform decisions about current and future programming” (USAID). Since this publication examines case studies from military, civilian, and international entities, ‘monitoring and evaluation’ will be utilized as the overall framework to provide overlap and avoid confusion stemming from multiple meanings of ‘assessment.’

Regardless of organization-specific frameworks and terms, evaluation seeks to address the basic inquiry of what works and what does not work. Organizations must determine what they want to know through an evaluation, how they will know this information (metrics, indicators, and standards), and how they can collect this data through monitoring. There are multiple methodologies for monitoring and evaluation, ranging from traditional summative evaluations (which measure results at the completion of a project) to developmental evaluations (which adapt continuously to volatile situations throughout program implementation).

This SOLLIMS Lessons Learned Sampler provides diverse examples of monitoring and evaluation from a variety of military and civilian initiatives in conflict environments across the globe. Lessons focus on managing information, monitoring in conflict environments, evaluating stability, and collaborating for peace, exploring various M&E topics including theories of change, indicator development, data collection, and organizational adaptation and self-reflection.

These lessons address two important questions:

❖ Why is M&E important for peace and stability?
❖ What are best practices for M&E in conflict environments?

Read the lessons for yourself to discover more!

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2. LESSONS

A. Information Management Systems for Monitoring Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) (Lesson #2502)

Observations:

Managing a large quantity of data is critical for successfully implementing and monitoring Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs. The DDR program established by the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) following the end of Liberia’s civil war in 2003, however, did not incorporate an information management system from the beginning, resulting in double registration of ex-combatants and violence in the capital.

Discussion:

Measuring the effectiveness of DDR programs is complex. When designing DDR programs and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to evaluate them, it is important first to identify what results the DDR program aims to achieve. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a “results chain” for DDR programs includes various components: the impact is the long-term effect of a DDR program on a population group (i.e. the degree to which the DDR of ex-combatants affects overall regional stability); outcomes are short/medium-term effects (for example, how many participants of DDR returned to their communities in economically viable ways); outputs are specific products/services delivered by the DDR program (such as the specific number male/female ex-combatants trained or weapons destroyed); activities are specific actions necessary to obtain outputs (such as enrolling ex-combatants in the program); and inputs are resources used in a DDR program (such as funds, equipment, and staff).

In order to evaluate a DDR process, this results chain must first be established. After that, it is possible to identify what needs to be monitored, develop a strategy, define indicators, agree on indicator baselines, form an overall M&E plan, and outline necessary capacities/conditions/budget. The results chain thus determines which questions need to be answered during an evaluation of a DDR program. The following step is to determine which data is needed to answer those questions and how it will be collected – whether from already existing data sources in the host nation (which would strengthen local capacity) or ongoing monitoring by the DDR program, or from both. Once these requirements are identified, an information system must be established to monitor results and risks throughout the DDR process.

DDR programs require an extensive capacity for managing large quantities of data collected via monitoring. As such, establishing an information system is integral. Such an information system typically consists of both software to record personal/family/socio-economic data of ex-combatants and benefits they receive as well as photographic and/or biometric equipment to identify DDR participants and thereby avoid double registration. This system can then monitor and track information such as how many female and male ex-combatants enter the reintegration process. The importance of data management is underlined in the UNDP M&E Guide for DDR – “Errors in information management of DDR programmes can have a serious impact on the DDR process, on the security of staff, and on the consolidation of peace” (p. 43).
While aspects of each part of the M&E process are important, the case of Liberia highlights the ways in which integrating an information system early into the process can be crucial to the actual results.

Fourteen years of violent conflict in Liberia officially ceased in August 2003 when former warring factions signed a peace agreement. In support of this agreement, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established in September 2003 to support a Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation (DDRR) process. A 2007 UN Secretary General report estimated that some 90,000 ex-combatants participated in the program, to include 63,000 in reintegration opportunities.

By the time the Liberia DDR program officially began in December 2003, the program had prepared a Disarmament (D1) form to collect personal combatant data and weapons information. However, according to the UNDP, the DDR program had not yet launched a Management Information System (MIS). Combatants who initially registered in the Liberia DDR program received yellow duplicate copies of the D1 form. These yellow copies were intended to be temporary receipts until distribution of official demobilization cards. However, many ex-combatants sold or gave away their yellow forms. Others with multiple weapons disarmed several times in order to collect multiple forms. Without a fully functional MIS, there was not enough biometric or photographic evidence to prevent such repeat registrations.

In addition to this lack of accountability, there were also unmet expectations. Each combatant who turned in his/her weapons was supposed to receive $300 in two installments, through a transitional safety-net allowance. However, many disarmed ex-combatants had expected to receive immediate cash for their weapons to spend on upcoming Christmas festivities. When they did not receive money immediately, these ex-combatants rioted in the capital city Monrovia, causing several deaths. After this incident, UNMIL agreed to an advanced payment of $75 per person, based on the yellow forms. This process may also have been abused since a MIS was not yet in place to provide accountability to verify the identity of DDR participants.

The MIS for the Liberia DDR program was finally launched by April 2004 (although it still did not have a biometric system). Once the MIS was in use, dollar disbursements were tracked and documented, providing more effective monitoring and accountability. Furthermore, no more riots occurred in the disarmament process.

Recommendation:

1. Ensure that DDR programs incorporate an information management system that can receive, store, and share relevant information as necessary. UNDP recommends that “the MIS must be planned for during the assessment phase and should be deployed and operational before the process starts” (p. 44).

2. Collect all secondary data through national sources as possible. “Rather than establishing parallel structures to collect data, it is better to rely on, and strengthen as needed, national systems that are already in place. This is also important in order to strengthen national capacities and promote sustainability of programme achievements after the programme itself has ended” (UNDP, p. 21).

3. Incorporate ethical considerations into the collection of primary data (i.e. personal combatant information, biometric data), and take into account which identity groups (such as female ex-combatants) may be less likely to participate in DDR due to the collection of this information. Protect all data collected from both male and female ex-combatants.
Implications:

According to the UNDP Guide, if an information system is incorporated into the monitoring and evaluation of DDR programs, then monitoring of DDR programs will be more effective. During program implementation, management and staff will have easier and quicker access to information, enhanced institutional memory, and speedy facilitation of response to questions from donors, media, etc. Furthermore, the information system will be an excellent resource for evaluation teams during the desktop review stage of their evaluation. // If a system for managing information is not incorporated and deployed before a DDR process begins, however, disbursements will not be tracked as effectively, and accountability may become an issue. Lack of appropriate information management could also produce security concerns: “For example, information on the payment of benefits for ex-combatants, if not delivered in a reliable and timely fashion, can translate into frustration or even riots” (UNDP, p. 43). If biometric data is collected and not handled appropriately, then some ex-combatants may be less likely to participate. If personal information of ex-combatants is not protected within a data management system, then registered ex-combatants could be threatened with reprisals if hostilities break out again. // If secondary data is collected through national sources instead of generated by a parallel process within the DDR program, then national capacities will be strengthened to promote sustainability after the program has ended.

“There are also ethical concerns and privacy issues associated with the collection and storage of politically highly sensitive data with names, detailed information, and biometric data of former members of armed groups. These ex-combatants are often under significant threat, because armed groups might seek revenge or, in other cases, the national government might be interested in obtaining their personal data. Therefore, safeguards need to be implemented to protect the privacy and identity of individuals who take part in DDR programmes” (Seethaler, p. 9).

Event Description:

This lesson is primarily based on UNDP’s “How to Guide: Monitoring and Evaluation for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes,” Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, (2009). See also the UNDP’s “Seven Steps for DDR Programme Planners for Integrating M&E into Programme Design.”

Other useful resources pertaining to M&E of DDR programs include:


For more information on M&E reports specifically pertaining to DDR in Liberia, see these resources:


Lesson Author: Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI
B. Civil Information Management for the U. S. Government’s Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (Lesson #2563)

Observation.

As part of the United States Government (USG)’s response to the Syrian conflict, Civil Affairs (CA) Soldiers from the 92nd CA Battalion formed a Knowledge Management Team (KMT) to support the USG Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) in Turkey. The KMT filled a critical gap in information sharing between the interagency and partner nations/organizations by providing management of civil information through a web-based data repository and consolidated products.

Discussion.

Since the eruption of Syria’s civil war in 2011 and the ensuing complex emergency crisis, the U.S. has been providing humanitarian assistance, development, and non-lethal support to Syrians in Turkey and in Jordan. This response was initially civilian-led with efforts by the Department of State (DOS) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) which were working with non-governmental organizations to accomplish humanitarian and political transition initiatives on the ground. This civilian assistance programming predated military involvement (from the Department of Defense (DOD)).

In order to synchronize these various assistance efforts across the USG, a Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) was established in Embassy Ankara in Turkey, since the U.S. no longer had formal diplomatic channels in Damascus, Syria. This interagency coordination mechanism hosted six offices from DOS and USAID, providing assistance primarily to northern Syria. A similar unit, the Southern Syria Assistance Plan (SSAP), was based in Embassy Amman in Jordan to coordinate assistance to southern Syria. These interagency teams were responsible to work alongside international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Governments of Turkey and Jordan, and Syrian people to coordinate U.S. assistance efforts to meet the needs of Syrian people in accordance with U.S. policy.

By 2013, START had already generated a variety of reports and updates, and the Ambassador to Turkey recognized the need for a knowledge management capability. To meet this need, the 92nd Civil Affairs Battalion supplied a Knowledge Management Team (KMT) of CA personnel to manage civil information for the START, since Civil Information Management (CIM) is a core task of Civil Affairs. “Civil information” includes data about civilian events, organizations, structures, capabilities, and networks. It is different than intelligence about terrorism, relating more specifically to reconstruction efforts, development, diplomacy, and national/international disaster response. This kind of information about civil society is often found in reports by USG agencies but is not always shared systematically in the interagency.

The KMT in the START was responsible for analyzing programmatic data and various reports containing such civil information from USAID and DOS. The team gathered information from several agencies, departments, contracted implementers, and international organizations. The types of civil information documents that were consolidated by the KMT included weekly/monthly/annual diplomatic cables, weekly summaries, field surveys, analytical papers, and records of cross-border deliveries and training/equipment provided. Much of the information...
specifically addressed START’s assistance efforts, including details about the distribution of aid to various populations. Programs in which DOS and USAID are involved include proprietary relationships with various stakeholders, and ensuring the security and privacy of their information was essential in the process.

In order to facilitate civil information sharing, the KMT created a universal data-sharing platform, known as the Protected Internet Exchange-Syria (PiX-Syria). This became the primary data repository for information from START reporting, containing either unclassified or sensitive but unclassified information. It was structured as a Wikipedia site: interactive, searchable, and open access with a login/pin, so that all users could access it from the internet without a common access card. In this way, various organizations/the interagency could update the information in real-time in a rapidly changing conflict environment.

Based on the broad range of information in the PiX-Syria, the KMT both consolidated data and data mined reports for specific information to form requested products. One of the main KMT products assembled was the Turkey/Syria Border Crossing Product. This product included information about who controlled border crossings, whether crossings were open or closed, and what type of traffic typically traversed each border. It also included satellite imagery and a historical timeline of significant events at that border. The information for creating this product came from START implementers and local NGOs on the ground in Syria/Turkey who utilize border crossings to deliver assistance. This product was widely disseminated across the interagency and updated based on changes to the collaborative PiX-Syria site. It was used by various agencies to plan cross-border activities, “showing that a complete civil information picture is a crucial resource that isn’t necessarily provided by the intelligence community” (Alexander, et. al, 2016, p. 77).

The KMT was also responsible for providing ad hoc products as requested by stakeholders such as the Ambassador. KMT CA personnel provided an initial consolidation of USG humanitarian/governance assistance activities in a geospatially-referenced document in order to develop a no-strike list for Northern Syria. Upon request, the KMT also created a combined Civil Defense Map for Northern Syria. Syrian Civil Defense Units are neutral, impartial, and humanitarian volunteers who provide relief work such as search/rescue and debris removal after bombings/attacks. Various governments and organizations provide funding for these impartial humanitarians, including the USG. The Civil Defense Map for Northern Syria created by the KMT showed the scope, location, and country providing support for all civil defense initiatives conducted by the USG, coalition partners, and NGOs for Syrian Civil Defense Units in northern Syria. Before this map was created, the USG and partners had little knowledge of each other’s respective civil defense initiatives. In essence, the map provided a common operational picture to facilitate discussion between stakeholders to better combine, leverage, or de-conflict efforts.

**Recommendation.**

1. Establish a team to manage civil information in future complex emergency crises. Ensure that appropriate care is taken to protect proprietary information, as well as any information that would compromise the neutrality/impartiality of a humanitarian effort if shared with the military.
2. For future crises, consider utilizing unclassified open access online data-sharing repositories that do not require a common access card (such as the PiX-Syria) to facilitate real-time information sharing that can be updated by a variety of stakeholders involved in the effort.

**Implications.**

If there is not a mechanism for civil information management (CIM), then efforts of various agencies/organizations may not be fully understood across the USG and partners, or they may be duplicated. In the case of humanitarian support to impartial actors such as the Syrian Civil Defense Units, partner nations’ efforts may conflict if they are not provided with adequate information about other simultaneous diplomatic, development, and humanitarian efforts in the same area.

**Event Description.**

This lesson was based on the article “Civil Information Sharing in the Gray Zone,” Major N. Alexander, Major A. Moore, and Captain A. Sogge, *Special Warfare*, (June 2016).

**Additional Comments.**

For further information on information-sharing between various organizations and agencies, read this resource: United States Institute of Peace (USIP)'s Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations, (2007).

This guide asserts that, "NGOs are sensitive about sharing information. They see their long-term success and physical security as dependent on good and open relationships with the indigenous population and are consequently wary of compromising the trust they have established by providing information to the military" (p. 123). Furthermore, the guide claims that, "In Afghanistan, some NGOs claimed the involvement of coalition military Civil Affairs teams in village improvement projects blurred the distinction between combatants and relief workers, endangering their personnel" (p. 104).

As such, for civil information-sharing projects in which CA personnel are involved, it is essential that such potential concerns of various NGOs are taken into account when deciding whether and how to utilize information from NGOs. It is important to consider 2nd and 3rd order effects (on various organizations and on the impartiality of humanitarian aid) of having uniformed military personnel being the ones coordinating the sharing of information.

**Lesson Author:** Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI
C. Remote Field Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research in Countering Violent Extremism Environments – Syria 2017 (Lesson #2622)

Observation.

Lack of recruitment of woman field specialists compromises the implementation of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research (MER) tools, namely, household surveys, and assessments conducted through Key Informant Interviews (KII) that inform analysis of the drivers of conflict and support a comprehensive picture of program performance in the recipient communities. In Syria, the sensitivity of the U.S. role in supporting anti-Regime entities requires a stringency that complicates the options for recruiting local field specialists and has meant that hiring women is especially challenging.

[Note: For the purposes of this lesson, 'local staff' refers to staff based in the HQ country of operations i.e. a base of operations outside of Syria, and 'local field staff' or 'field specialists' refers to MER staff inside Syria.]

Discussion.

The insight offered by civilian-conducted MER is a crucial complement to what can be accomplished by stakeholders in uniform. As the evolution of stability operations in light of ISIS's presence in already fragile, conflict-affected states has increased, so has the sensitivity of what the civilian/non-governmental organization (NGO) component of stability operations entails. Experts in the MER field have become adept at designing surveys that do not alienate respondents nor cause suspicion regarding the intentions of those conducting surveys and interviews. The problem arises with obtaining samplings that are representative of women. MER tools in the context of governance capacity building in the newly liberated areas (NLA) of Syria are designed to capture 'client' feedback on activities in their area, with the 'client' in this context being the local population. However, without female field specialists to enable access to women participants, this demographic is largely excluded from MER results.

MER in the CVE context requires both top-down and locally-driven solutions. However current practices and protocols preclude inclusion of women on field teams. The result has been marginalization of women from the MER process, without their insights as a material component of MER data. Contractual MER requirements include reporting against U.S. Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators as well as custom indicators. This menu of indicators, also known as the 'F-Indicators,' require most data to be disaggregated by gender, youth, and region; and where democracy and governance is involved, entity. In Syria, the program's Results Monitoring Plan (RMP), the go-to document for MER guidance, outlines a results framework of 5 Objectives each with a number of Sub-objectives, for a total of 26 related indicators (18 Standard, eight Custom). Of these, 13 are expected to have the data disaggregated by sex. An example indicator in the RMP is: "#/% of moderate opposition actors that are responsive to input from citizens and/or other stakeholders (which could include local councils, among others)… Disaggregated by sex, youth (15-24), entity type (local council, provisional council), and the region."

Without this disaggregation, which cannot occur without all parties represented, the options for trends analysis are limited.

In terms of top-down generated limitations, vetting and hiring requirements are a security issue as well as a more straightforward human resources challenge. The need to vet potential MER field specialists is an unfortunate reality in Syria. Vetting a selected candidate during my tenure with the
program took between 6-8 weeks; the exact procedure was above my pay-grade. By the end of my time with the program, my employer had pro-actively and successfully worked with the State Department to establish a more streamlined process, however delays still impact the operational tempo.

Vetting female candidates is complicated by the fact that many women have not previously had formal employment, therefore background information and evidence of formal skill sets are limited. On the other hand, women are less prone to have active affiliations with opposition factions that are not in line with U.S. foreign policy regarding cooperation through foreign assistance, even by several degrees of separation. Finally, the politics of Syria’s neighbors hosting programs involved in Syria has caused tensions regarding for instance, the current Administration’s policy to assist Kurdish-affiliated groups despite Turkey’s protests; and consternation over Iran and Russia’s roles in the ongoing conflict. Just as the Local Councils with whom an implementing partner works requires real-time, regularly updated information on affiliations applies not just to Known Terrorist Organizations (KTO), but involves insights regarding the kaleidoscope of interlinking relationships among other elements of the opposition. Vetting those employed using U.S. Government-funding requires similar caution so as not to jeopardize the safety of U.S. allies in Syria.

As of late 2016, of the four MER field specialists, only one was female. During the 2016 battle for Aleppo, she was forced to flee with her husband.[3] She was three months pregnant at the time. As she fled, she had the presence of mind to remove her hard drive from her laptop and leave the computer. She and her husband hid out for several days at his place of work which happened to be one of the last places during the siege that was not over-run. They then managed to make it over the border to the town where our program was headquartered. Her bravery and dedication is humbling. She was fully vetted, but due to host-country work license requirements, we were unable to keep her in our employment. By September 2017, the MER team had recruited an additional four field specialists, however of the total field team of eight, not one is a woman. This raises the question of ‘Duty of Care,’ “A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety or well-being of others” [4], particularly if women are to be informally involved in field monitoring. Already the inability of a USG-funded program with Syrian staff in the field to be actively involved in their physical protection provides a moral and ethical dilemma given that emergency evacuation of field staff is not an option. Field specialists are on their own. My employer learned over the course of 2017 that the internal politics of our host country were changing, as was the U.S. relationship with the government of our host. This resulted in office raids and detainments and in the case of other NGOs and companies performing work similar to ours, some deportations. There were no such incidents of detainment or deportation of our program staff; however that is in large part due to precautions taken by my employer, which included training on what to do and say if stopped by security forces; and the retainment of a host country lawyer and public security advisor. Meanwhile none of these resources are available to MER field specialists.

While the circumstances that led to the [operational] loss of the female Aleppo City field specialist were security and politically-driven, not gender-related and it was by chance that the field specialist who needed to flee was a woman, it highlights the question of implementing partners’ responsibility for the safety of their local field staff. We must consider the implications for informally 'employed' female field specialists. If their 'supervisors' are male relatives, they most likely will face situations in which they are not able to make their own judgment calls about their safety while implementing MER tools.
There is also the frustrating element of pressure in MER reporting in CVE environments. To what degree must we allow field specialists to make their own judgment calls? The program's MER team depends greatly on its field specialists however managers have (or should have) a moral obligation to place field staff safety above the urgency of delivering to the client. Based on my experience in Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and now most recently the Syria project, locally-employed field staff often place pressure on themselves to deliver, and perform in a way that meets the very demanding standards of the client, in these cases, the U.S. State Department. When Ambassador Khalilzad arrived in Iraq in June 2005, in an informal introductory speech to the State Department and the Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office (IRMO) [5] where I was part of the Information Management Unit that pulled together IRMO’s information that went up to the State Department in Washington D.C., the Ambassador promised he would "tame the information beast" in reference to various USG agencies. The reality is that with a new Ambassador at the helm (a 'change of command'), reporting requirements grow in what we hope will be a temporary data collection, analysis and reporting spike but actually ends up setting a new level of expectation for those involved in MER.

In Syria this is magnified by the fluidity of the situation on the ground. Requests for Information (RFI), and other 'Spot Reports' increased to being almost daily, on top of regular assessments, periodic reports (Daily, Weekly, Quarterly, Annual) and the basic MER activities, the last of which tend to suffer the most. These are all the responsibility of the MER team, albeit with the valuable support of the other departments. Under this kind of pressure to deliver and usually lacking the manpower sufficient to handle the MER level of effort (LOE), 'Duty of Care' concerns often take a back seat. As Senior MER Manager I could guide or quite frankly, be a buffer for the trickle-down of pressure to meet the reporting demands. However with informal, female field specialists, a manager's ability to monitor this aspect of field MER is limited if not impossible.

**Recommendation.**

The first three recommendations for improving MER in CVE environments require the consideration of the U.S. State Department and other U.S. agencies contracting implementing partners for activity, therefore 'top-down.' The fourth involves the initiative of the implementing partners themselves. These four recommendations would in turn enable further local solutions for more effective MER results.

1. Push down responsibility for 'vetting' to the local level namely, our MER field specialists. In the case of Syria, our program used our field specialists to vet hawala vendors, as in most cases it was our only means to pay our field staff and transfer other program-related payments.[6] Field specialists have the local knowledge of affiliations and are best-placed to determine possible connections to terrorist networks or opposition groups that are not in line with U.S. foreign policy. The same model could be applied to vetting female MER staff who for various reasons cannot go through our formal recruiting procedure. Also, if the women are family members of a vetted MER field specialist, it is unlikely that a woman's affiliation(s) would be in conflict with our policies.

2. Relax the 'standards'/parameters for vetting female applicants for field positions. Interviews should be weighted more heavily, and less emphasis put on CVs and formal documentation of past employment and education, particularly since the education of many potential staff has been interrupted by the conflict, yet much talent resides within the Syrian population in the NLA. Skype
was a very effective tool for conducting interviews between supervisory MER staff at the regional HQ, and candidates in the field.

3. Provide incentives for field specialists to assist with recruitment that emphasizes solicitation of female applicants. Setting quotas for field teams' gender composition is not realistic; however doing nothing is not a solution. Flexibility is.

4. The Syrian field specialists and second-country based Syrian MER staff themselves (all Syrian refugees) raised the issue of the need for more female field specialists to implement surveys and KII. Their suggestion was to allow officially employed field specialists to welcome the assistance of their female relatives to assist with MER implementation. While the matter of compensation could be something that family members agree upon amongst themselves. Issues remain and these necessitate top-down solutions (i.e. more flexible recruitment and vetting rules). In addition, implementation of surveys and interviews requires training. In Syria, local council (LC) trainings provided by the implementing partner for whom I was Senior MER Manager welcome guest participants, such as members of local NGOs and civil society organizations. The 'guest list' could be expanded to include informal members of the community, to allow women without an official affiliation to participate and eventually help facilitate the implementation of MER tools with a more representative sampling of participants.

[Based on field specialists’ feedback, the bias of MER sampling is the result of lack of access to women, not a product of the cultural environment where it is too often assumed by outside stakeholders that women face suppression regarding having a voice. Based on experience with Syria and feedback from Syrian community leaders, hesitation results more from women’s own comfort level and sense of propriety if they allow themselves to be interviewed by a male than prevention of their participation by male members of the household, although both occur.]

**Implications.**

Added risk to both field specialists and the sensitivity of the international community's activities in CVE environments. Compounding this concern is the potential risk posed to community members exposed by the association of field specialists with USG projects. An ethical dilemma remains regarding ‘Duty of Care,’ as exemplified by the plight of our field specialist caught up in the 2016 siege of Aleppo City. A heart-wrenching element of the dilemma of our female MER field specialist is that in her case, it meant two lives were at risk.

Modification/revision of the Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators/F-Indicators, a more flexible approach to the development of Custom Indicators, and most easily actionable in the short term, a more realistic approach to targets. Much MER feedback comes from trainings for which we do follow-up assessments. It takes time to launch a program and bring it to the level where conducting trainings is feasible, therefore early targets should be modest and subject to modification as conditions on the ground change. Because of the cycle it takes to revise the RMP, it may even be appropriate to forego numeric targets and instead rely more heavily on the degree of (percent) improvement from the indicator baselines. Measuring change from the baseline is more realistic in a volatile environment than percent progress towards set numeric milestones or targets.
Meanwhile, woman field specialists able to gather more input from female participants will produce the data needed for an inclusive sampling and therefore more comprehensive analysis of program performance and impact. Loosening some recruitment stringency and taking on ‘Duty of Care’ decisions on a case-by-case basis is our best solution – if we can live with it.

**Event Description.**

This lesson is based on personal experiences supporting MER in Syria in 2017. The program referenced works with Local Councils in the NLA to support the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) goal of “A negotiated political transition to a rights respecting, credible government that serves and respects all Syrians.”[7]

**Additional Comments.**

[1] For the master list, please see: Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators (U.S. Department of State). The list continues to be updated, for the FY2016 update, see: Updated Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure and Definitions and Master List of Indicators.

[2] A specific reference to the master F-Indicator list is not publicly available for this particular indicator. However its F-Indicator reference number is F-2.2-3.


[4] Oxford Dictionary definition. 'Duty of Care' in this context is a term specific to UK Home Office and other EU donor countries' humanitarian assistance lexicon. While working in the UK in 2015 for Itad, ‘Duty Of Care’ concerns were a major component of Itad's bid for the Conflict, Security and Stabilization Fund (CSSF), a new endeavor designed to facilitate better interagency coordination in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCAS). ‘Duty of Care’ refers to the implementing partners' responsibility for their staff's safety and security in the locations in which they are working. The extent to which this includes local field staff is specific to the company or organization's judgment, for which it is expected to incorporate a risk management company and/or internal risk management advisor. From my experience under USG contracts, this exists but even less formally.

[5] IRMO staff were 3161s and not career State Department.

[6] The 'hawala' system is a traditional means for money transfer. While it is currently associated with the transfer of money within and between terrorist networks, it was originally an innocuous mechanism for making payments. In the context of foreign assistance in Syria, it is used for security reasons, where freedom of movement across the borders between Syria and its neighbors is not feasible for field staff. Both these payments and foreign remittances are legitimate transfers. For more information on hawala, see: “Hawala…” Newsweek, (Moore, 2015).


The author has left certain information vague for the purposes of operational security.

**Lesson Author (Guest Contributor):** Sasha Kishinchand
D. Safety of Field Monitors in Insecure Environments (Lesson #2619)

Observation.

In areas of Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban, local nationals who work for foreign contractors and partners are often targeted for their association with a foreign entity. In particular, employees of U.S. Government (USG) contractors and partners are at especially high risk, even if the workers were born and raised in that locality.

Discussion.

My time in Afghanistan was spent solely on managing U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded projects through USAID contractors and partners. The USAID mission in Afghanistan is one of the largest missions. In 2016, USAID/Afghanistan spent $1 billion on development projects; partial data from 2017 shows that it’s not far behind at $977 million.\[1\] The mission focuses on key sectors: agriculture, economic growth, infrastructure, democracy and governance, health, education, and gender.

In recent years, USAID has funded a number of monitoring projects in Afghanistan. The objective of the projects is to supplement existing monitoring efforts by USAID/Afghanistan staff as a part of a multi-tiered approach to verifying and monitoring USAID projects in Afghanistan; this is done through the use of third-party monitors. The role of the field monitor is to travel out to an assigned location to verify that a project is on track by collecting data. The methodology includes interviewing beneficiaries, taking photos, and using other forms of documentation to verify ongoing activities funded by USAID. For example, if a field monitor is assigned to monitor an agricultural project, he/she will travel out to the farms that are receiving funding through the project, interview the farmers and workers, take pictures, and use satellite imaging of the farms.

As of September 26, 2017, the Long War Journal reported that 45% of districts in Afghanistan are controlled or contested by the Taliban. “The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), the congressionally-mandated oversight body on Afghanistan, reported 11 districts under insurgent control, 34 under insurgent influence, and 119 contested.”\[2\] This doesn’t include the growing presence of ISIS.

The Taliban has shown great disdain for foreigners. In July 2016, the Taliban leader, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, “called for an end to the foreign ‘occupation’ of Afghanistan as a first step to a settlement based on Islamic law that he said would bring unity to a country hit by decades of war.”\[3\] As a country that’s often been governed by foreign influence since 1838 with the arrival of the British and now experiencing the longest war in modern history, the Taliban and its followers are wary of foreign interventions, whether they are military or for statebuilding.

Official activities conducted by USG-funded contractors and partners greatly endanger their local staff who live, work, and travel outside of Kabul. During my time in Afghanistan, I have heard anecdotes from local colleagues, mostly field monitors, about getting stopped at checkpoints controlled by the Taliban and getting questioned at assignment locations. If the Taliban discovered that they were on a project funded by the US Government (USG), they could get killed. One colleague who worked in Kandahar was targeted for his work on multiple USAID-funded projects. Recognized for his
commitment and competency, he rose quickly within the ranks of his project offices. Although he was born and raised in Kandahar, he was targeted by the Taliban for being associated with the USG. Ultimately, he relocated his family to Kabul for personal security.

**Recommendation.**

1. The USG must continue to use security teams and intel to keep their local employees safe. The security teams should brief local staff on security threats and checkpoints, especially if the staff are traveling to high-risk provinces.

2. Have a backstory ready (i.e. information about oneself to show local ties). Local staff should have a backstory prepared along with a colleague or relative on standby over the phone to corroborate.

3. Do not carry any items with logos of USG entities, implementing partners, and contractors. This includes letterheads, business cards, pens, and brochures.

4. Women must travel with a “maharem” (chaperone). This is especially important for foreign women who are aiming to work and live “low profile” in Afghanistan.

5. Work closely with local authorities such as the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and National Directorate of Security (NDS) to monitor threats.

**Implications.**

If USG contractors and partners do not take great care in looking after their local staff who are required to enter highly insecure parts of Afghanistan, there are several ramifications. First, there’s a liability issue. Second, the instability in Afghanistan combined with limited economic opportunities have led to a significant brain drain; the lack of assurance of personal safety from employers would only contribute to the issue further. Third, the implications for local staff is very high as they are putting their lives at risk as well as their families’ welfare.

On a macro level, when employees of international organizations working in Afghanistan get injured, kidnapped, or killed, the public immediately look to the ANSF for answers. Public perception of the ANSF is very fragile in a country where explosions are routine daily occurrences. Amidst accusations of corruption and poor training, bodily harm to international workers and local staff only contribute to the low level of confidence. Hence, government relations and diplomacy are also at risk.

**Event Description.**

This lesson is based on personal experience working with USAID in Afghanistan and on these references:


**Lesson Author (Guest Contributor):** Amy Chase
E. “Success Reporting” by Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in Afghanistan
(Lesson #2430)

Observation.

Female Engagement Teams (FETs) were established by International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in 2009 to influence Afghan women as part of counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy. According to the report on which this lesson is based, written by a Cultural Advisor in Regional Command – South (RC-S), US Marine Corps (USMC) and British (UK) FETs in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan from 2010 to early 2012 reported many of their engagements as successes without culturally-appropriate indicators to evaluate whether or not there were substantive outcomes to their varied activities.

Discussion.

After the events of September 11th and the United States’ subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, the 2001 Bonn Conference established, for the provision of security, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, whose leadership was taken over by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2003. Initially, ISAF forces did not form gender-specific engagements or include female military personnel prominently in engagements due in part to cultural concerns of offending Afghan men. However, by 2010, ISAF had turned towards a COIN strategy which required a population-centric approach for the entire society. Afghan women thus became part of the strategic calculus of the international forces, seen as an untapped 50% of the population who could be won to influence their communities against the insurgency.

The first Female Engagement Teams (FETs) were initiated by the US Marine Corps (USMC) in 2009 as small teams of female Soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan to engage local Afghan women in light of this population-centric strategy. The concept was subsequently promoted by USMC Captain Matt Pottinger, who co-founded the first FET, until it was accepted at higher levels, and by summer 2010, ISAF HQ had issued orders that all Regional Commands (RC) launch FETs. USMC established a four month pre-deployment training for FET, ISAF required all deployed Brigade Combat Teams to send female candidates for FET training in theater, and FETs from the United Kingdom (UK) implemented short pre-deployment training as well. By 2012, however, only the Marines had full-time FET personnel.

From the ad hoc beginning of FETs, both commanders and FETs themselves experienced considerable confusion over these teams’ specific roles, due in part to a broad range of objectives and a lack of standardization of the teams. FETs ended up performing a broad variety of tasks that ranged from cordon and search operations to playing with children, teaching literacy, and providing medical handouts. FETs were tasked to improve situational awareness for military units while influencing Afghan women to perceive the ISAF forces as benevolent and to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) instead of the Taliban. Yet, some teams were discouraged from participating in ‘women’s rights’ discourse, which at times proved to be a contradiction. Furthermore, although some guidance stressed that FETs were not intelligence collection assets, due to possible danger this may bring to the Afghan women, not all commanders were trained in how to utilize FETs, and some hoped that FETs could in fact be used to yield actionable intelligence.
The confusion over FET roles compounded confusion over how to properly evaluate the teams. It was difficult for measures of performance, effectiveness, or accountability to be established and implemented for these teams. FETs from 2010 to early 2012 in southern Afghanistan were unable to obtain good baseline information, and FET reports showed a lack of “before and after” scenarios. Furthermore, the standards by which some FETs evaluated themselves showed a lack of cultural and contextual understanding. The FET program in RC-S did not always take into consideration how Afghan women’s quality of life (mobility, access to services) had evolved over the past decades or what knowledge had already been accumulated from prior humanitarian and development initiatives. For example, Afghan women expressing happiness and/or the perceived popularity of the FET was used as an ad hoc measure of impact on the communities. However, according to the article by Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam on which this lesson is based, “Evaluation of multiple aid programmes in Afghanistan has shown that Afghans will almost always say the programme implemented achieved its aims and was a success. […] Outbursts of emotion, blessings and prayers are very unreliable indicators of impact, and yet they consistently appear in FET reporting” (2014, p. 20).

This lack of appropriate metrics was exacerbated by the pervasive pressure the FETs were under to report everything as a success – known as “success reporting.” Each commander is required to show results within the short timeframe of six months or one year of his or her deployment, and his or her subordinates may feel that same pressure to succeed. For U.S. servicewomen, this was heightened by the ongoing debate about women in combat. Due to the Combat Exclusion Policy which was not lifted until 2013, U.S. servicewomen were not allowed to be directly assigned to ground combat units, but they could be “attached” to them, as some FETs were. Due to cultural resistance from some male military personnel of these female servicemembers being attached to ground combat units, many female servicemembers felt increased pressure to prove themselves and the women-centric FET program against the scrutiny of their male colleagues.

Throughout USMC and UK reporting from Helmand province in 2010-2012, according to Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, former advisor to the UK military command in southern Afghanistan, every engagement is described with great detail, often listing single conversations or enthusiasm by local women as critical events. Furthermore, sweeping results are claimed for entire communities even if engagements only involved a few individuals. This “success reporting” by FETs led to misrepresentation of Afghans, mistaking grandstanding as sincere intent, raising expectations by creating hand-out mentality, and overall inaccurate reporting that went unverified by consultation with Afghans or subject matter experts.

“Still struggling to be accepted and thought of as worthy in the military, [female Soldiers in FETs] tried to make an experimental concept based on erroneous assumptions succeed in a difficult and complex environment, at times with no interpreters, knowing that they would return to base empty-handed to face colleagues who were either cynical or had unrealistic expectations of results. The FET experiment was the sociological equivalent of sending troops out with malfunctioning weaponry,” (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014, p. 2).

**Recommendation.**

Female Engagement Teams should incorporate appropriate evaluation frameworks to prevent against “success reporting,” which may lead to inaccurate or misleading reports that may have unintended negative ramifications both for the local community and for the commanders’ decision-making. Future efforts should:
1. Clarify FET roles and narrow the scope of their assigned functions so that their roles are not contradictory; verify the reasoning for why FETs are assigned to certain roles for accuracy against the experience and cultural expertise of locals and aid/development workers in the local community. Examine whether FETs would endanger local women and do not use if so.

2. Craft measures of performance, effectiveness, and accountability for FET program design in consultation with those knowledgeable of the local community, including both locals and aid/development workers who have had years of experience forming such evaluation parameters.

3. Incorporate baselines, “before and after” scenarios, and improved reporting formats in FET evaluation reports which do not lend themselves as easily to “success reporting.”

Implications.

If measures of performance and effectiveness are not created for FETs in consultation with those knowledgeable of the local community and culture, then these measures may not be culturally appropriate. If measures of performance and effectiveness that are not culturally-sensitive are used to evaluate FETs, then FETs may misinterpret local community responses, mistaking grandstanding for sincere intent. If FETs misunderstand local community responses, they may misrepresent the locals, unintentionally providing misleading situational awareness/atmospherics to military leaders, which may cause military leaders to make decisions based on inaccurate information. If baselines, “before and after” scenarios, and measures of accountability are not created and implemented for FET, then FETs may remain unaware of unintended second- and third-order effects that their actions may have on local communities; if FETs are not aware of potential implications of their actions on the protection of civilians in the local community, then they may continue to engage local communities in ways that may be potentially harmful to the local people.

Event Description.

This lesson is primarily based on “Seeking out their Afghan Sisters: Female Engagement Teams in Afghanistan,” S. Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) Working Paper, (March 2014). The author of this Working Paper had extensive experience as Cultural Advisor to ISAF military commanders after sixteen years of experience in Afghanistan; she worked particularly in RC-S and RC-SW, and her working paper is based on her participant observation and analysis of US Marine Corps and UK FETs from early 2010 to early 2012 in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan. // For more information about U.S. military FETs, see the Joint Requirement Oversight Council Memorandum (JROCM) Task 12 FET Blueprint from PKSOI (prepared by K. Gehman).

Additional Comments:

It is vital for women to play meaningful roles not only in security but also in peace amidst conflict environments. “The empirical evidence is overwhelming: where women’s inclusion is prioritized, peace is more likely – particularly when women are in a position to influence decision making” (“Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peacebuilding Societies,” M. O’Reilly, Inclusive Security, (October 2015), p. 11).

Lesson Author: Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI
F. Lessons from the Use of the MPICE Metrics Framework in the Haiti Stabilization Initiative (Lesson #2503)

Observation.

The Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), in collaboration with the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), developed a metrics framework for Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE). While it has been used in Afghanistan, Sudan, and Kosovo, the first major use of the framework was in Haiti via the Haiti Stabilization Initiative in the slum Cité Soleil. For this initiative, the MPICE framework was effectively expanded to include additional data collection methodologies for trend analyses; however, its utility was negatively affected by several external environmental factors.

Discussion.

Cité Soleil is a poor and violent shantytown located in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. With a lack of basic infrastructure and essential services such as sewers or electricity, this densely-populated slum of 300,000 residents (primarily youth) is notorious for lawlessness and gang violence. By 2007, the unrest in Cité Soleil threatened to destabilize the Haitian national government, were it not for the presence of United Nations (UN) forces via the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Due to Cité Soleil’s instability, a U.S. Government interagency team, with assistance from the Department of State (DOS)’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, designed a two-year project to boost stability in that volatile zone. The goal of this Haiti Stabilization Initiative (HSI) was to improve security, local governance capacities/essential services, and economic opportunities, in the hopes that increased stability in this zone would leave the doors open for other U.S. and donor-funded programs to run the same assistance programs offered elsewhere in Haiti, without increased risk. The specific programs of HSI included police training/professionalization, sustainable employment programs, and strengthening local governance to render basic service provision.

HSI was funded with $20 million from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) under Section 1207 authority from the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act. HSI was the first of such initiatives funded under Section 1207. As such and for funding accountability, it was important to have a way to assess and monitor the program to see if it was reaching its goals. After the HSI had been running for 4-6 months, Logos Technologies joined under contract in order to measure the HSI’s progress. At this point, PKSOI, USIP and USACE had already been developing a metrics framework for Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE). This framework needed a site for a trial run to test the system. As such, a variant of the MPICE, co-developed by Logos Technologies, was used for monitoring and evaluating HSI.

The basic framework of the MPICE is to measure indicators of progress in conflict environments in five sectors (stable governance, safe environment, rule of law, sustainable economy, and social well-being) in order to assess overall stability. The assumption and theory of change implicit in the MPICE framework is that a reduction in drivers of conflict combined with an increase in local institutional capacity will lead to stability. This can be illustrated by the following graphic. The point at which the line of conflict driver reduction crosses the line of increasing institutional performance indicates the
“tipping point” of stability at which the designers of the MPICE framework envisioned that intervening forces would be less needed. The MPICE framework also provides suggestions of potential data collection methodologies to use to gather information on the indicators (i.e., surveys, expert knowledge, quantitative data, and content analysis). It is a flexible framework, with over 600 different measures that can be tailored to suit a particular environment, but broad enough to give a more complete picture than some programspecific metrics frameworks.

At the beginning of the use of MPICE in HSI, multiple agencies reviewed the goals and indicators, selecting and agreeing on measures. Some of the goals and indicators proposed in the MPICE framework were not appropriate for Cité Soleil and as such were adapted. In 2008, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team assessed an initial baseline for HSI; since the M&E process was integrated into the project after it had already been running for several months, however, the degree to which a true baseline could be measured was limited. However, the data from the first M&E phase was successful enough that a second phase of data collection was conducted. On 12 January 2010, the team was about to start a phase 3 assessment of HSI when the catastrophic 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti. This devastated many people in the environment and also delayed data collection for the project. HSI assessment sessions were still run after the earthquake, but in the earthquake aftermath, phase 3 reported downward trends.

This earthquake was not the only exogenous factor to interrupt HSI. During the same timeframe as the HSI program, there were national food riots in 2008, four tropical storms/hurricanes within a one-month timeframe in 2009, and over 1.3 million people displaced and 100,000s killed by the 2010 earthquake. The entire data set was literally thrown up in the air due to these events. It made it even more difficult to assign correlation or causality to any increase or decrease in stability from a particular program such as HSI, because so many other factors in Haiti affected overall stability in the nation, the capital, and the zone of Cité Soleil.

Beyond these environmental factors, variance in data collection methodologies also proved challenging. Surveying in Port-au-Prince was relatively feasible if hiring a local agency. However, obtaining national statistics such as crime rates was much more challenging, since many such reports were non-existent, and others did not report data for specific sections of the city such as the Cité Soleil zone.
There were also problems in establishing a “control” group by comparing areas with HSI to those without it, due to “ethical issues about repeatedly surveying a zone but not working in it,” (Becker et al., 2011, p. 153). As such, the M&E team turned primarily to expert knowledge and focus groups in order to assess local stakeholder perceptions of progress. This proved useful, especially with key groups such as women, youth at risk, and gang members. Since the bulk of data was perception-based and could not be aggregated into a number, these various types of data were used to triangulate trends.

In the end, Logos Technologies completed a trend analysis of conflict drivers and institutional performance, methodologies, and sectors over three phases of assessment. In the first two phases, the data showed improvement, but towards the end it took a downward turn – which may have been influenced by environmental factors such as the earthquake. It was difficult to know at what point “stability” was reached. A representative of Logos Technologies affirms that, “Looking back over the data, we were more successful at pushing down the drivers of conflict than we were at pushing up the strength of the institutions” (Becker et al., 2011, p. 155). Yet the collection of data still proved useful. Due in part to the depth of data for the HSI program from this evaluation, the program was later funded to work in another section of the city.

**Recommendation.**

1. Incorporate M&E from the very beginning of an intervention. Do not wait several months before conducting initial baseline surveys. Utilize the MPICE (or another metrics framework) as a starting point for conversations within the various agencies involved in a project, in order to get everyone on the same page for goals. Make sure to include local partners and advisors in this process.

   “Most importantly, a good monitoring and evaluation plan, in highlighting the theory of change in core assumptions in the stabilization program, can serve to concentrate the focus of many different organizations, clarify the strategy, set objectives, and guide tactics. This is valuable even before the evaluation results are in” (Becker et al., 2011, p. 158).

2. Tailor indicators and data collection methods to the local environment. Include locals through the use of participatory methods as much as possible.

3. Designate adequate funds/resources of a project/program budget to M&E (4-6% of project budget is recommended). This investment will pay off in time; reliable data showing good results from the project increases the likelihood of future funding to continue the project.

**Implications.**

If M&E is not incorporated from the beginning of projects, it will be more difficult to measure progress accurately. The contracting and deployment of the M&E team for HSI took a long time and did not happen at the beginning, which affected the M&E results. If data collection methods are tailored to the local environment, including locals through participatory methodologies, then data collected will be more nuanced and useful, and local people will have more of a say and a stake in the process. With more of a voice, locals will feel their dignity honored, which may positively impact the relationship of locals to the program.
If a budget for M&E is not designated, then there may not be enough funds for M&E; without M&E, there will be inadequate data to show if progress in the conflict environment is being made; without data indicating progress, funding for continued programming will be less likely.

**Event Description.**

This lesson is based primarily on the article: “Metrics for the Haiti Stabilization Initiative,” D. Becker and R. Grossman-Vermaas, Center for Complex Operations (CCO): Prism Vol. 2, No. 2, (March 2011). Information was also found from this recorded event: “Measuring Progress in Stabilizing War-Torn Societies,” R. Grossman-Vermaas, Logos-Technologies, (01:02:30). This event was hosted at USIP to release the MPICE Metrics Framework, (9 July 2010).

See also these resources:


**Lesson Author:** Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI

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**Port-au-Prince, Haiti, (24 January 2010)**

Brazilian peacekeepers from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) distribute water and food in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, following the earthquake. United Nations peacekeepers and United States Soldiers also distributed water and food in the slum of Cité Soleil.

(Photo Credit: UN Photo/Marco Dormino)
Observation.

As part of a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded research grant, the non-governmental organization Mercy Corps implemented monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in three of their programs in Uganda, Indonesia, and Ethiopia, in order to examine the relationship between economic development and stability.

Discussion.

Research over the past decades has indicated that countries with slow economic growth and low per capita income are more likely to experience political instability and violence. However, the exact causal mechanisms linking poverty and conflict have been less apparent. Many organizations have implemented economic programs in conflict and ‘post-conflict’ areas, assuming that such programs will both reduce poverty and contribute to conflict management. USAID decided to test this assumption in order to design more effective programming. So, as subcomponent of the QED-managed Knowledge Driven Microenterprise Development (KDMD) project, USAID offered research grants to five organizations in order to examine the relationship between economic development and stability.

As one of the chosen five organizations, Mercy Corps implemented the USAID research grant from July 2009 to December 2010 through their research project the “Evaluation and Assessment of Poverty and Conflict Interventions” (EAPC). The purpose of the EAPC project was to 1) explore the causal relationships between conflict and poverty in order to discover which interventions most effectively address this relationship, and 2) develop and test indicators and data collection tools that measure program impact. The EAPC research project was composed of three main stages: 1) articulating theories of change that informed Mercy Corps programming, 2) developing indicators and data collection tools, and 3) running field tests in Mercy Corps programs in three countries to examine the relationship between economic variables and stability.

Through the EAPC, Mercy Corps identified three main theories of change for their peacebuilding and economic development programming. (A theory of change is an “If – then –” statement that explicitly explains how intervention activities would bring about the type of change that a program aims to achieve.) Mercy Corps’ primary theories of change included (Vaughan, 2011, p.4):

“1. If we build economic relationships across lines of division, then we will promote stability by demonstrating tangible, concrete benefits to cooperation.

2. If we strengthen livelihoods opportunities in high-risk regions and/or for high-risk populations, then we will promote stability by reducing competition for scarce economic resources.

3. If we use a community mobilization approach to economic development, then we will promote stability by encouraging community self-reliance and by building productive relationships to local government.”
Once theories of change have been identified, program designers can begin to map the causal pathways that explain how program activities lead to incremental changes which will ultimately bring about the final desired outcome (i.e. stability in the region). Once these steps have been identified, then a research team can brainstorm potential indicators to measure each step of the causal chain. Once indicators are established, then data collection tools can be developed to measure the indicators.

For the EAPC research project, the Headquarters-based research team spent six months researching indicators from prior programs, other organizations, and the academic community, ultimately developing a range of indicators for both peace & stability and economics & conflict, the list of which can be found in Mercy Corps’ final report, “Conflict & Economics: Lessons Learned on Measuring Impact.” These indicators were then tested and revised with field staff. Below is a chart from this final report which shows which indicators could be developed based on the causal steps in a theory of change:


The EAPC research project utilized mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to measure their indicators: 1) surveys, 2) participatory assessment tools, and 3) monitoring forms. These various tools complemented each other, provided contextual information, and triangulated trends. Similar data was collected in different ways in order to figure out which method was most effective. Surveys were used in order to generate enough data to detect important patterns. Participatory assessment tools complemented the survey data by triangulating the data and by providing contextual information through open-ended facilitated discussion questions. Monitoring forms served to gather data on violent incidents as they occurred.

Mercy Corps chose three programs to pilot its research grant. Each chosen program had a specific goal of promoting peace through economic development. Programs chosen for the case studies included Building Bridges to Peace (BBP) in Uganda, Maluku Economic Recovery Program II (MERP II) in Indonesia, and Strengthening Institutions for Peace and Development (SIPED) in Ethiopia. The research activities were conducted during the course of regular M&E activities for these field programs, and data collection was managed by field staff. Initial surveys and participatory data collection tools were piloted in the SIPED program in Ethiopia and then utilized in the programs in Uganda and Indonesia; results from the EAPC research projects in these latter two countries were developed into separate reports, and these two case studies will be highlighted in this lesson.

Mercy Corps’ BBP program in northern Uganda was designed to engage agropastoralist communities in Karamoja, a poor region which has experienced pervasive violence especially in the form of cattle
raiding. The main goal of this program was “to strengthen livelihoods and encourage economic interaction between groups with a history of violence” through projects such as joint farming on lands previously inaccessible due to instability, building dams to increase water access, joint road/market rehabilitation, and training for local leaders in conflict management mechanisms (Vaughan, “Uganda,” 2011, p. 5). Survey data through the EAPC research project showed that “as [conflicting] communities share more resources, freedom of movement increases, the number of violent incidents decreases, and perceptions of security increase,” (Vaughan, “Uganda,” 2011, p. 9). Focus groups confirmed these findings, suggesting that as the frequency of economic interaction increases, frequency of ambushes and cattle raids decrease.

While the EAPC research project in Uganda indicated a positive relationship between economic variables and stability, the EAPC in Indonesia showed a more complex relationship between economic development and stability. The MERP II program in Maluku Province, Indonesia, was a two-year program designed to strengthen livelihoods and develop dispute resolution capacity in a region with lingering tensions from past conflicts. Preliminary findings from the EAPC research project in this region showed that “economic development, like any social change, can exacerbate underlying tensions,” (Graham, 2011, p. 3-4). Increasing economic interactions and strengthening livelihoods might not necessarily promote peace, as hypothesized, and improved livelihoods may in some cases actually lead to a decrease in trust. EAPC’s participatory focus group discussions provided contextual information about this finding, pointing to the role of jealousy when benefits and improved livelihoods are not distributed equally. Thus, “simply increasing economic interaction is not sufficient to rebuild trust and promote peace between previously adversarial communities,” (Graham, 2011, p. 7). However, findings also showed that community members recognized that there were economic benefits of peace and so did feel some incentive to maintain peace.

There were many challenges during data collection in both Uganda and Indonesia. The EAPC research project in Uganda polled 432 people via surveys, conducted 27 focus groups with participatory assessments, and implemented a violent incident reporting form among community-based monitoring teams. The participatory assessments took a long time to complete compared to the surveys (2-3 hours vs. 1 hour), and so a smaller sampler size was collected, which made it more difficult to generalize. Furthermore, the tools used complex and nuanced questions, which made it more difficult in the end to interpret the results. The questions were designed to be complex due in part to concerns about asking direct questions about sensitive issues, since community members may not feel comfortable speaking openly and honestly about conflict situations due to personal trauma or security concerns. However, in the end, simple, direct questions produced more reliable data than nuanced questions. Respondents in Indonesia also experienced survey fatigue, as the survey with 124 items was too time-consuming. Simplifying and pairing down tools to only essential questions is recommended for future data collection.

Despite these challenges, overall, the EAPC research project met Mercy Corps’ goal “to develop and test measures and tools that could start to capture relationships between economic variables and stability outcomes” (Vaughan, “Conflict,” p. 17).

**Recommendation.**

The following recommendations (for developing economic programming and evaluation methods) are from Mercy Corps’ final report from its EAPC research study, “Conflict & Economics: Lessons Learned on Measuring Impact” (p. 17-18).
Lessons learned about developing economic programs for peacebuilding:

- “Economic development interventions should be designed to promote mutually beneficial cooperation rather than increasing competition between adversarial groups.
- Economic development interventions designed to promote peace should specifically target the underlying economic causes of conflict (e.g., natural resource competition) rather than aiming to increase general economic interactions between adversarial groups.
- 'Deep' economic interactions (such as participation in economic associations or business partnerships) may build stronger relationships between adversarial groups and provide a stronger incentive for peace than 'thin' economic interactions (such as trading at a local market).
- Trust-building measures may need to be implemented alongside or prior to economic development interventions in order to develop the relationships necessary for business partnerships and trade.”

Lessons learned about measuring impact:

- “Focus on a limited number of more precise, less nuanced questions in both survey and focus group data to simplify data analysis and minimize ambiguous results.
- Simplify participatory tools and surveys so that they take less time to administer, more interviews can be conducted, and sample size can increase.
- Favor forced choice questions in the survey instrument.
- While the development of indicators and data collection tools are crucial first steps in impact evaluation, they are not sufficient alone. The ability to measure impact depends on the design of the research methodology and particularly the use of control groups.
- Better tools are needed to assess underlying tensions and risk of future conflict in locations where there is an absence of overt violence.”

Implications.

“In order to evaluate the impact of peacebuilding and poverty alleviation programs in complex, conflict-affected environments and, ultimately, improve their effectiveness, the field requires development of meaningful indicators and practical data collection methods. Without these tools, programs may be replicating ineffective and potentially harmful practices and failing to scale up or adopt interventions that do work” (Vaughan, “Conflict,” 2011, p. 5).

Event Description.

This lesson is based on these sources:

- See also: “Building Bridges to Peace: Final Evaluation Report,” Mercy Corps (with USAID support), (June 2011).

Lesson Author: Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI
H. Internal Reviews: Creating Space for Organizational Reflection (Lesson #2616)

**Observation:**

The Finnish organization Conflict Management Initiative (CMI) utilizes an Internal Review as part of its monitoring and evaluation processes in order to create space for organizational reflection. This review process could be beneficial for any organization involved in conflict intervention because it cultivates self-awareness of how the organization affects the conflict system, how initiatives can adapt to shifting contexts, and how personnel can improve management of internal issues.

**Discussion:**

CMI is “an independent Finnish organization that works to prevent and resolve violent conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation,” (cmi.fi). It was founded in 2000 by former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his leading role in conflict resolution, notably in Namibia, Indonesia, and Kosovo. CMI operates based on the belief that all conflicts can be resolved, and that achieving sustainable peace necessitates local ownership, creativity, long-term commitment, and involvement across society, including youth and women. CMI also affirms that it is crucial for organizations that intervene in conflict to be self-aware of their own identity so that they see how they affect the conflict system. CMI’s unique niche is to provide impartial, flexible non-governmental communication channels and technical capabilities to support formal and informal mediation processes. CMI currently has 15 long-term projects in complex contexts, including South Sudan and Libya.

CMI seeks five main types of results through its projects: increased trust, communication channels, capacities, inclusion, and solutions. These results are evaluated through CMI’s Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (PME) which seeks to enhance learning, management, and accountability. Violent conflicts are complex, with a multitude of stakeholders in rapidly-changing contexts. So, organizations must be sensitive to complexity, utilizing feedback loops to adapt to the context in real-time. Thus, the goal of CMI’s PME is to provide adaptive management for projects in these shifting contexts.

One such shifting context in which CMI has worked is Moldova. After Moldova gained independence in the early 1990s from the Soviet Union, an autonomous territorial unit was established to safeguard the rights of the Gagauz minority; however, a lack of legal guidance has resulted in myriad disagreements about how to administer the region. In 2015, CMI supported a working group and parliamentary dialogue to improve relations between Moldova and its autonomous region of Gagauzia, which has increased the capacity of both parties to reach consensus and solutions, de-escalating potential conflict. However, ongoing geopolitical tensions can make continued progress difficult. As such, CMI’s role includes “keeping the channels of communication open, and maintaining the ability to advance the peace process, once the international conditions for doing so improve” (“CMI Annual Report 2016,” p. 9). Given the kinds of ongoing tensions and political changes in Moldova and other contexts where CMI operates, it is important for CMI to be reflective in order to adapt and adjust its response as the context fluctuates.

Due to this need for adaptation, CMI recently adopted a new management approach known as Internal Reviews. These are stocktaking and planning exercises designed to shorten the feedback loop during project implementation in order to improve navigation of complex contexts. These reviews offer...
space for self-reflection and sharing lessons in a sensitive and transparent way within an organization. Since first piloted in 2012, almost 30 internal reviews have taken place within CMI’s organization through a systematic process/timetable. Approximately 5-6 reviews are now conducted annually, and each CMI project is studied about once every two years.

The general process/structure of an Internal Review includes 5 phases: 1) desk study of project documentation, 2) interviews, 3) participatory review workshop, 4) report drafting, and 5) meeting to discuss review findings. The Internal Review is planned by the CMI Programme Management Office (PMO) with the respective implementing team (project team). CMI’s PMO facilitates the interviews and workshops using methods to encourage open, divergent thinking. Participants in the review include the implementing team, managers, partners (when applicable), and colleagues from other teams to provide peer support, collegial reflection, and insights from other contexts.

The participatory review workshops focus overall on “Change” – what has changed in the environment and in the project, and what changes is CMI contributing to? This can be approached several ways – for example, through examining the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluating development assistance (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability), or via a theories of change approach, in which the chain of envisioned changes/assumptions are broken into smaller/conceivable steps. At the end of the project, a review report is produced and shared with CMI staff; management then can make adaptive decisions in projects based on the findings of the report.

Internal Reviews can be initiated by a variety of different internal actors, although CMI leadership determines priorities and sequencing. The reviews can be focused on individual projects or cross-cutting organizational development initiatives. The scope and methodology of each review is case-specific, either summative (reviewing what has happened), formative (looking towards the future), or cumulative (both). Thus, Internal Reviews can be useful at any project phase, from new design to mid-term assessment to project closure.

Thus far, CMI’s Internal Reviews have received overwhelmingly positive feedback. The Internal Review has proven to be a useful tool to contribute to a culture of critical reflection, to acknowledge and share lessons, and to navigate internal organization challenges such as roles/responsibilities, communication, and institutional memory gaps. In addition, it has proven useful for external evaluators (commissioned by donors and/or CMI to review the project) to understand the design thinking when formulating a results narrative.

Recommendations:

Organizations involved in conflict interventions should consider creating a regular space for reflection, potentially in the format of an Internal Review. This review process could be useful for a variety of different organizations (government, non-governmental organizations, peacebuilding, UN missions, security, etc.) involved in a variety of types of conflict interventions (mediation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, etc.).

- Internal reviews can be project-specific or cross-cutting. They can be conducted prior to, during, and after projects are performed, in order to make adaptations as necessary.
In these reviews, organizations should consider and reflect upon how they themselves affect the conflict system. How does their identity and activity affect the power structures of the conflict? What role in the conflict environment/system would be most appropriate for the organization to take or NOT to take?

These reviews could also include reflections from “critical friends,” such as other organizations in the field, to provide useful feedback about how the organization is functioning within the broader community towards the broader goals (of “peace writ large”).

**Implications:**

If organizations involved in conflict interventions do not create a regular space/time for internal reflection/review, then they might not adapt to complex and changing systems and events. If organizations do not reflect about how they affect conflict systems, then they may be unaware of how their presence changes the conflict system both positively and negatively – and they may create unintended consequences. If organizations do not allow other stakeholders in the field to provide feedback, then they may have blind spots about their work. However, if organizations involved in conflict interventions create space for reflection and feedback, then they will be more likely to respond to changing events in a flexible, relevant, and appropriate way, in support of the eventual realization of “peace writ large.”

**Event Description:**

This lesson is based on concept notes from the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) which were made available at the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) 2017 Annual Conference (Washington, D.C., 11-13 October 2017). These handouts include:

- “CMI’s Approach to Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation,” CMI (Martti Ahtisaari Centre), Distributed at AfP Conference, (13 October 2017).
- See also: Crisis Management Institute (CMI) website: cmi.fi.

This lesson also reflects discussion themes from a workshop at the conference, “Learning and Adaptive Management in Peacebuilding,” moderated by O. Eronen, Senior Manager of the Programme Management Office of CMI. Other panel members included the Senior Program Manager for the Institutional Learning Team at Search for Common Ground, an Independent Consultant with the University of Cambridge, and the Head of Organisational Development Unit at Saferworld.

**Additional Comments:**


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I. Collaboration via the Design, Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace Platform  
(Lesson #2620)

**Observation.**

Peacebuilding is characterized by seeking to reduce and transform violence in complex conflict systems. Given this complexity, it can be challenging to know how to evaluate peacebuilding programs for their overall impact on peace/stability. To mitigate this challenge, an open-source knowledge platform was created by several international non-governmental organizations to provide thousands of practitioners with best practices and lessons learned on Design, Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace.

**Discussion.**

Peacebuilding evaluation focuses not only on the outputs of a specific program but also on how a program contributes to greater peace and stability in the region (“peace writ large”). Peacebuilding projects are often funded by donors who expect to see certain results; organizations must report on their progress to ensure that they are using resources wisely and not doing harm. Yet, as evident in this systems map from the Alliance for Peacebuilding, there is often cultural resistance to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) due to a widely-held bias that “M&E is imposed judgment rather than opportunity to learn and grow at the project, program, and organizational level,” (SFCG, 2015, p. 16).

To address these challenges, several prominent international non-governmental peacebuilding organizations came together to form a Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium (PEC). The PEC is composed of the Alliance for Peacebuilding, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Mercy Corps, and Search for Common Ground (SFCG), with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The main goal of the PEC is to encourage shared learning, develop methodological rigor for peacebuilding evaluation, and promote the use of evidence in policy. In order to fulfill these goals, the PEC convenes a multitude of stakeholders, including evaluation experts, donors, academic scholars, policymakers, and local/international practitioners, to exchange ideas and build consensus through international networks.

One of the main activities of the PEC is the facilitation of a web-based community of practice known as Design, Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace (DME for Peace), a project of SFCG. This website (www.dmeforpeace.org) is a hub for evaluators, practitioners, and academics to share best practices about peacebuilding evaluation. It is set up as an open source website. All visitors can access resources without officially signing up for site membership; however, membership is required in order to share a resource. In addition to housing a resource repository of M&E materials, DME for Peace hosts bi-weekly webinar discussions on various evaluation topics, known as “M&E Thursday Talks.”

The main goal of the PEC through the DME for Peace platform was to improve the culture of evaluation in the peacebuilding field – making shared learning more accessible, integrated, and transparent. From 1 March 2013 to 31 March 2015, this platform was funded as part of the PEC grant from the Carnegie Corporation. To examine the relevance and effectiveness of this platform, a review of the project took place partly through this grant, evaluating information from Google Analytics (measuring numbers of documents uploaded, unique visitors to the site, etc.), focus group discussions, information self-reported in membership profiles, and an online survey sent to DME for Peace members. (The final report is linked below.)
Findings from the review indicated that, for the reporting period, users originated from 202 different countries, with 43% from the Global South (defined in this review as “all countries outside of the top-user countries of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Belgium, Australia, and the Netherlands” (SFCG, 2015, p. 4)). The self-reported occupations of registered users included: international development professionals (33%), M&E professionals (18%), program managers (22%), consultants (12%), students (9%), and academics (6%), with levels of expertise ranging from beginner (27%) and intermediate (47%) to advanced (26%). Over the two years of this grant, 1460 new members joined the platform, which does not include the number of passive visitors who used resources without signing up for an account. As of 31 December 2014, there were approximately 4,500 members registered on DME for Peace.

The results of the review showed that the DME for Peace platform was most utilized for its resource library and for its M&E Thursday Talks webinars. Another finding of the review was that intermediate or advanced users were more likely to actively contribute to the site (such as by adding a resource or commenting on a discussion). This finding suggested that the site was not as engaging for beginners as it was for more advanced practitioners. As such, the project team for DME for Peace concluded that they needed to provide more introductory guidance for beginners.

Today, the DME for Peace knowledge platform continues to provide resources for the peacebuilding M&E community. As of December 2017, the site has grown to over 5,500 registered users from 191 countries, with a resource library of over 1,000 resources. The M&E Thursday Talks continue unabated since their launch in spring 2014, with sessions in fall 2017 addressing topics such as developmental evaluation, gender assessment, and inter-faith peacebuilding. To address the lack of resources geared towards beginners, SFCG launched a series of educational videos on the Foundations of M&E, covering topics such as conflict sensitivity, mixed methods of evaluation, and data collection. DME for Peace has also housed the Online Field Guide to Peacebuilding Evaluation since summer 2015. This living document was drafted by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, and its resources are vetted by leaders in the field (from CDA and other PEC members). The site also currently boasts a global mentorship program through the PEC, Partnering to Educate and Coach Evaluators (The PEACE Project), which connects M&E beginners to evaluation experts. According to the Program Manager for DME for Peace, over the past three years, there have been 700 applicants to this program. Currently, 36 people are participating in an 8 week Foundations of M&E Course.

Through these various initiatives, DME for Peace has been shifting the culture around evaluation in the peacebuilding field, encouraging the open sharing of lessons learned. The PEC recently received a third grant from the Carnegie Corporation to continue its work to improve evaluation for peacebuilding, human rights, and development programming.

**Recommendation.**

1. Organizations involved in conflict prevention/intervention should consider sharing resources using an open-source knowledge platform like DME for Peace to improve their work and share lessons learned and best practices. The variety of stakeholders engaged by DME for Peace (including academics, practitioners, evaluators, etc. from across the globe) provides an opportunity to learn from various people’s experiences.
2. M&E practitioners should consider utilizing the resources on www.dmeforpeace.org – signing up for an account, listening to M&E Thursday Talks, and sharing their own evaluation resources, in order to improve and strengthen their practice.

3. Evaluators in the peace/stability arena (including military, government, etc. stakeholders) should not simply measure whether a task has been accomplished but also how that task has contributed to overall peace and stability in the region. If that has not been the focus previously, connecting with a platform like DME for Peace where the focus is evaluating for peace can help to provide the tools for this type of evaluation (such as ethical principles, theories of change, etc.).

**Implications.**

If evaluators do not share their evaluations openly, they may be less likely to learn from each other and might stay risk-averse. However, an active community of practice encourages a culture of learning and evaluation which makes evaluation more integrated in the peacebuilding community.

If government, military and non-governmental programs do not monitor and evaluate for peace and not just task accomplishment, then they could “win the battles but lose the war”; in other words, their actions may not be feeding into broader peace and/or stability and may precipitate unforeseen/unintended consequences. However, focusing on “peace writ large” enables a broader scope of evaluation, centering the results of the evaluation on what is best for and from the people of that region to bring peace and stability.

**Event Description.**

This lesson is based on these resources:

- “The Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, Learning and Doing with DME for Peace: Two Years of Sharing Knowledge and Best Practice,” E. Duncan, V. Corlazzoli, J. Miller, Search for Common Ground (SFCG), (31 March 2015).

**Lesson Author:** Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI
3. CONCLUSION

The lessons in this Sampler, spanning regions from West Africa to the Middle East and covering initiatives from Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration to Female Engagement Teams, reveal the critical need for Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace and Stability in conflict environments.

Why is M&E important for peace and stability?

- To provide accountability.
- To coordinate with various stakeholders.
- To avoid doing harm.
- To improve peace and stability outcomes.

What are best practices for M&E in conflict environments?

- **Perform a self-assessment of how you and your organization interact with the conflict system.** Consider using Internal Reviews to facilitate such self-reflection, as developed by Conflict Management Initiative to adapt its approach to complex political environments like Moldova.

- **Articulate and test theories of change**, as Mercy Corps accomplished in its USAID-funded research project to determine the relationship between economic development and stability. Testing assumptions about theories of change assures that future conflict interventions are based on evidence of what works. Evaluate interventions for “peace writ large,” not only for program goals accomplished.

- **Design culturally and contextually appropriate indicators in consultation with locals and development practitioners**, unlike some Female Engagement Teams in southern Afghanistan who used unreliable measures of impact, misinterpreting local people and likely reporting inaccurate findings.

- **Establish information management systems to house and ensure verification of data obtained via monitoring.** This prevents a lack of accountability such as when ex-combatants in Liberia registered multiple times in the disarmament process.

- **Design and utilize data collection methods which can adapt to unforeseen circumstances**, such as the earthquake which interrupted data collection for the MPICE evaluation of the Haiti Stabilization Initiative. Include locals (both men and women) through participatory data collection methods, and strengthen national sources of data. Ensure the safety of all local staff and field monitors.

- **Comprehensively analyze the data and aim to produce useful products for stakeholders.** A Civil Affairs knowledge management team provided consolidated products for interagency teams in Syria to use to improve their work, de-conflict civil defense efforts, and coordinate more closely with various stakeholders.

- **Share lessons learned with the broader community.** Open-access knowledge platforms such as DME for Peace increase the culture of learning and adaptive management in order to improve future peace and stability efforts.

**Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace and Stability** is essential and achievable.
Annex A. M&E-Related RESOURCES & REFERENCES
[Ensure you are logged in to SOLLIMS to access some of these items.]

U.S. Government Interagency Resources
- U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) – Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P))
- U.S. Department of State (DOS) – Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO)
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) – Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI); USAID Learning Lab
- Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)
- USAID – “Theories of Change and Indicator Development in Conflict Management and Mitigation”
- U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) & PKSOI – Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction
- PKSOI, USIP & U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)
- National Defense University (NDU) – Center for Complex Operations (CCO)

U.S. Military Lessons Learned/Guides/Doctrine
- Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS)
- Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL)
- Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) – “Assessment and Measures of Effectiveness in Stability Operations: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures” (CALL Handbook No. 10-41)
- U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) – Leader's Guide to After-Action Reviews (AAR)
- Joint Publications: Joint Operation Planning (JP 5-0); Stability (JP 3-07); Peace Ops (JP 3-07.3)
- Joint Staff: Commander's Handbook for Assessment Planning and Execution

United Nations Resources
- United Nations (UN) – Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)
- Challenges Forum - Designing Mandates and Capabilities for Future Peace Operations

Multinational Organization Evaluation Tools
- Organization for Economic Co-Operation & Development (OECD) – DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability)
- The World Bank

Non-Governmental Organization Evaluation Resources:
- International Crisis Group
- Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium
- Alliance for Peacebuilding
- CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
- Mercy Corps
- Search for Common Ground (SFCG)
- Design, Monitoring & Evaluation for Peace (DME for Peace)
- Online Field Guide to Peacebuilding Evaluation
- Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning (L. Schirch) (CAPP)
Additional Evaluation Reports

Security Cooperation


Peacekeeping Operations


Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)


Evaluation in Conflict Systems

✓ Further M&E resources are available through graduate studies at the Center for Justice & Peacebuilding (CJP) at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU).

For additional resources, visit the “Assessment Tools” Folder on SOLLIMS!

Contact PKSOI for JROCM Task 12 Blueprints and for the Stability Operations Biennial Assessment.
Annex B. Previously Published SOLLIMS Samplers
(Available in SOLLIMS Library)

2017
Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security
Leadership in Crisis and Complex Operations
Civil Affairs in Stability Operations

2016
Refugees & Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
Strategic Communication/Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations
Stabilization and Transition
Investing in Training for, and during, Peace and Stability Operations
Building Stable Governance
Shifts in United Nations Peacekeeping

2015
Foreign Humanitarian Assistance: Concepts, Principles and Applications
Foreign Humanitarian Assistance [Foreign Disaster Relief]
Cross-Cutting Guidelines for Stability Operations
Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students
Security Sector Reform

2014
Reconstruction and Development
Women, Peace and Security
Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students
Overcoming “Challenges & Spoilers” with “Unity & Resolve”
Improving Host Nation Security through Police Forces

2013
Key Enablers for Peacekeeping & Stability Operations
Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students
Multinational Operations
Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding/Engaging the People
Protection of Civilians

2012
Medical Assistance/Health Services
Reconciliation
Civ-Mil Cooperation
Building Capacity

2011
Ministerial Advising
Fighting Corruption
Economic Stabilization

2010
Transition to Local Governance
Rule of Law and Legitimacy
Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping