Conflict and violence are main obstacles to development. Violent conflicts both create enormous human suffering, revert development gains and make it more difficult for women, men, girls and boys to escape poverty. While considerable progress in poverty reduction has been made, people living in poverty and extreme poverty are now increasingly concentrated to countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence. Sida's framework for multi-dimensional poverty[1] integrates a conflict perspective both by recognizing lack of human security as one of four dimensions of poverty and the peace and security context as major cause of poverty.

The purpose of this brief is to describe how human security and the peace and conflict context interplay with the other dimensions of poverty in Sida's conceptual framework and how to integrate a conflict perspective into the multidimensional poverty analysis (MDPA).
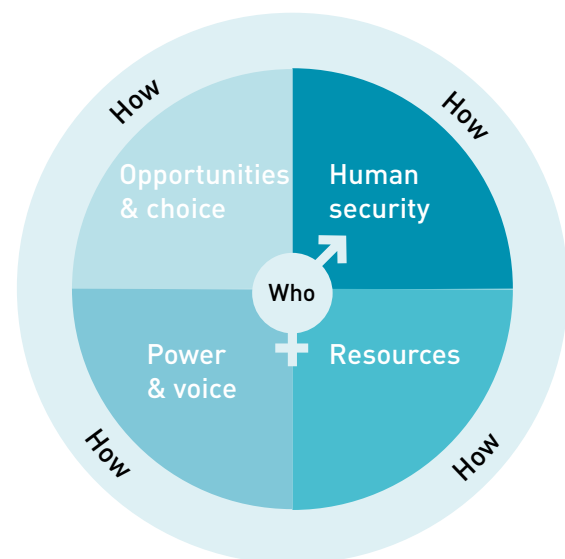
THE CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

Building on good knowledge about the development or humanitarian context, **applying a conflict perspective** is essentially about taking into account how conflicts or tensions in the context may affect the implementation of a development program, and how a development program intentionally or unintentionally affects ongoing and submerged conflicts/tensions. Opportunities to minimize the negative impact and maximize the positive contribution to peace are identified and influence portfolio and program design and implementation.

CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND POVERTY

Increasingly, development practitioners begin to grasp the complexity and bumpiness of the road that is development. While extreme poverty has seen an unprecedented decline during the past decades, the number and complexity of violent conflicts as well

as the fatalities and human costs of conflicts and violence have increased considerably during the last ten years. 68.5 million people were forcibly displaced in 2017, mainly because of conflict and violence, the highest number since the end of the Second World War.[2] The gap between humanitarian needs and humanitarian funds available has never been larger. People already living in poverty are the ones most vulnerable to conflict and violence.

Armed conflicts both create enormous human costs and loss in GDP. Somalia's per capita income has dropped by more than 40% since the 1970s and Afghanistan's has remained at its 1970s level, because of continued violent conflict.[3]

Sida acknowledges that poverty manifests itself in different dimensions and each of these dimensions have intrinsic and instrumental value. To alleviate poverty in other dimensions, we need to understand the linkages between the different dimensions of deprivation as faced by people living in poverty.

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1   Sida (2017) *Dimensions of Poverty – Sida's conceptual framework*.

2   UNHCR 2018
3   United Nations and World Bank 2018. "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict." p. VI

Five perspectives shall be integrated in all Sida's development cooperation: i) the poor people's perspective, ii) the rights perspective iii) the gender perspective, iv) the climate & environment perspective and v) an integrated conflict perspective. These perspectives have also guided the development of the MDPA. While the conflict perspective is clearly integrated in the conceptual framework through the human security dimension of the inner circle and the peace and conflict context of the outer circle, there may be a need to clarify how these dimensions interplay with the other dimensions of the model.

The aim of this brief is to give guidance on how the conflict perspective relates to multi-dimensional poverty. The brief can be used Sida's appraisal of proposals or to guide the evaluation of an intervention. The brief can also be helpful when digging deeper into the conflict aspects in a country analysis, a portfolio analysis or in policy dialogue.

THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY:

Being poor in terms of **resources** means not having access to or power over resources that can be used to sustain a decent living standard and improve one's life. Resources can be both material and nonmaterial – e.g. a decent income, capital, being educated or trained, professional skills, being healthy.

Being poor in terms of **opportunities and choice** concerns what possibility you have to develop and/ or use your resources so as to move out of poverty. Access to e.g. social services, to infrastructure, to capital, to land, or to natural resources affects the opportunities and choices.

Being poor through lack of **power and voice** relates to the ability of people to articulate their concerns, needs and rights in an informed way, and to take part in decision-making that relate to these concerns. Power is a relational concept that allows us to better understand socio-cultural hierarchies and relations of which gender is one, others include age, caste, class, religion, ethnicity and sexual identity. Reinforcing forms of discrimination based on such socio-cultural relations may increase an individual's poverty in this sense.

Being poor in terms of **human security** implies that violence and insecurity are constraints to different groups' and individuals' possibilities to exercise their human rights and to find paths out of poverty.

RESOURCES – DESTRUCTION, LOSS AND REDUCED ACCESS

Resources

Conflict and violence have negative impact both on women's, men's, boys' and girls' access to resources and on their ability to make full use of the resources they access. Conflict and violence have severe economic impacts on affected populations, both on societal and individual level. Families fall into poverty as jobs and income opportunities are

destroyed. Material damage and loss of assets such as house, land and other belongings are obvious consequences of conflict. For the poorest this can also result in reduced access to food. After a long decline in food insecurity, the number of chronically undernourished people in the world increased in 2016 compared to 2015, violent conflicts in combination with droughts or floods being the main driver of this development.[4]

Serious long-term investors and corporations are generally more hesitant to invest in conflict-affected areas, as the risks are much higher. It is also more difficult for poor women and men to access credits that potentially would have allowed them to develop economic activities and businesses. Situations of conflict and fragility tend to attract more risk-prone economic actors, and lack of rule of law which often prevails in these contexts allow for unsustainable use and an exploitation of natural resources which often provide little return for local populations.

Contestations around natural resources (land, water, extractive industries) often fuel violent conflicts; but the causal relation between use of natural resources and conflict is in general indirect. The effects of climate change, population growth and urbanization are expected to increase conflict risks relating to the exploitation related to natural resources.[5]

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICE – DISTORTION AND INCREASED INEQUALITIES

Opportunities & choice

Conflicts and violence dramatically affect the available opportunities and choice of affected individuals. Persons that already live in poverty and different forms of marginalisation (for example elder, children, persons with disabilities) are generally more vulnerable to the consequences of violent conflicts. Opportunities to migrate may for example be more accessible to some groups than others. Opportunities and choice may dramatically differ between different groups, whether you are a woman or a man, a boy or a girl, whether living in a more or less conflict-affected area of the country, whether belonging to a minority group or the majority population.

4   FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2017. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017. Building resilience for peace and food security. Rome, FAO.
5   United Nations and World Bank 2018."Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict." p. IX

Conflict and violence have severe consequences on access to non-material resources such as education and health service. This can be caused by actual destruction of infrastructure or protracted refugee situations. Schools and hospital are often direct targets for warring parties, leading to enormous consequences for the access to education and health services. Five years into the conflict in Syria around half of the medical facilities and the school buildings in the country had been damaged.[6] Children might also be forced to refrain from going to school due to insecurity including forced recruitment to armed groups as child soldiers.

Moreover, even individuals that possess material resources such as fertile land and real estate or immaterial resources such as an higher education degree, may have a difficulty to make full use of them because of limited access to markets, employment and security.

Women's and girls' opportunities and choice are disproportionately negatively affected by norms on femininity, as well as by gender-based and sexual violence, which is generally higher in conflict and post-conflict situations, but also a huge problem in peace time. Trafficking of girl for sexual slavery or forced marriage is also more wide-spread during conflicts.[7] Gender norms also limit the opportunities and choices of men and boys. Certain norms on masculinity has also proven to generate violence and conflict-fuelling behaviours.[8]

However, opportunities may also shift for different groups in situations of conflict. There are numerous examples of women having had to become bread-winners and heads-of-household in the absence of men who have been recruited by armed groups. In that sense, certain gains for gender equality can be made even in situations of conflict, although they mostly refer to behaviour change rather than attitude change. These situations are therefore generally reverted at the end of an armed conflicts, when men are returning to the labour market and resume their civilian places in society.

POWER AND VOICE – REDISTRIBUTION OR STATUS QUO OF POWER?

Power & voice

Competition over power is a key characteristic and source of violent conflicts. When the distribution of economic, social and political power is divided unequally between different groups (for example ethnic, religious, or other identity groups), the risk for tensions and violence increases. Redistribution of power and voice is therefore an important element in all peace negotiations and included in most peace agreements.

However, evidence shows that it is not always the most marginalised groups that take up arms; rather the perception of injustice can be used to mobilize and incentivise for violence in groups that may be marginalised, but still not the most resource poor, for example in peripheral areas or among youth groups. Also, many elites that perceive their power as threatened have a tendency to use violence to maintain power.

There is a well-established co-relation between more gender equality – more equal power relations between men and women – and more peaceful societies.[9] In certain societies, however, increased power for women and girls is perceived as a threat to the authority of traditional elites, and thus something causing considerable tensions.

There is a close causal and mutually reinforcing link between violent conflict and corruption.[10] Wide-spread corruption within public institutions may create grievances in the population, damage legitimacy of the state and weaken the social contract. Popular discontent with corruption levels may lead to increasing tensions which may erupt in violence. Furthermore, situations of conflict, fragility and violence and weak rule of law create fertile ground for increased corruption and illegal enrichment.

In situations of conflict and violence, lack of transparency is often a serious problem, and the patterns of power and influence may require more thorough analysis and proove more politically sensitive to do than in more democratically stable countries. Global and regional power dynamics also play into national and local contexts.

6   2017 The World Bank: The toll of war – the economic and social consequences of the conflict in Syria
7   United Nations and World Bank 2018. "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict." p.31
8   See for example Bjarnegård, Brounéus, Melander: "Honor and political violence, Micro-level findings from a survey in Thailand"

9   See for example Institute for Economics and Peace: Pillars of Peace: Understanding Key Attitudes and institutions that underpin peaceful societies, p. 31
10 See for example Transparency International "The Fifth Column – Understanding the relationship between corruption and conflict"

HUMAN SECURITY – DIFFERENTIATED IMPACT

Armed conflicts and violence have a devastating impact on human security for women, men, girls and boys worldwide. However, the impact can vary depending on context and among groups. It may depend on which sex you belong to, which part of a country you live in, which ethnic group you associate with, what your sexual identity is. For example, living openly as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer) may in certain countries imply as severe threats to your human security as it does for others to live in a war zone. Sexual and gender-based violence makes home the most dangerous place for women, also for those that do not live in war zones. While a general tendency is that human rights activists are increasingly under threat, the risk level for environmental human rights activist may vary dramatically depending on context.

The wide proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as the contamination from land mines and improvised explosive devices constitute major threats to human security both during and after violent conflicts.
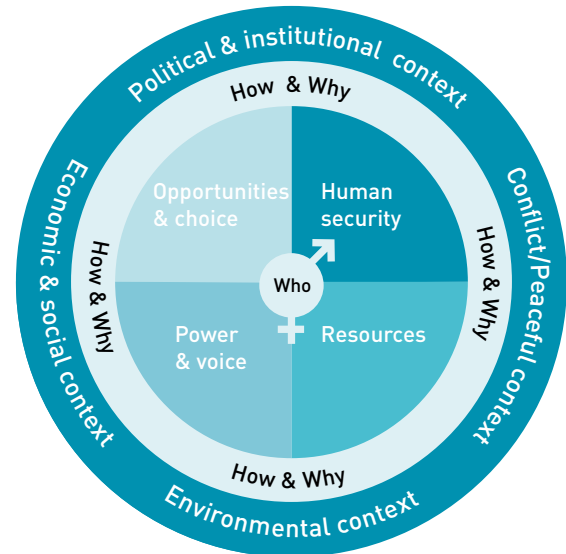
In situations of armed conflict, women and men may be vulnerable in different ways. Men continue to constitute the majority of fatalities in conflict, but women are exposed to other security risk such as gender-based and sexual violence.

All in all, conflicts and violence have a tremendous impact on the human security of women, men, girls and boys. Not only does violence cause physical damage, it also creates fear and life-long negative impact in terms of psychological damage.

ANALYSING CONFLICT IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Sida's model for multidimensional poverty analysis (MDPA) helps us to understand **who** is poor (target group), **how** the poverty is experienced in the above-mentioned four dimensions, and **why** this situation has come about.

Conflict analysis is one of the underlying pillars of a comprehensive multidimensional poverty analysis. To answer the question of who is poor, the poverty analysis through a conflict lens takes its starting point from people both as victims of and actors in a conflict.

Most people strive to improve the living conditions for their family or group, and may as such both become victim and become part of a conflict. A conflict analysis may identify grievances in certain groups, that may be potential drivers of conflict. Different groups in a country may experience very different grievances, and, it is not necessarily the poorest that are most likely to take up weapons. Thus, a conflict perspective calls for striking a balance between the imperative of not leaving anyone behind and addressing grievances that may feed violent conflict. Again, it is important to remind ourselves that different groups are affected in different ways by armed conflict.

When analysing who is poor it is very important to take into consideration both peripheral areas of a country, refugee populations and host populations. It is also important to consider that poverty is dynamic, and that people move in and out of poverty.

How armed conflict and violence influences the different dimensions of poverty has been discussed in the previous section. Moving further from an analysis of root causes of poverty, one needs to analyse the development context to understand **why** some people are poor. The peace and conflict dynamics in relation to the context analysis will be further explored in the following section.

Analysing the prevailing *economic and social context* helps us to understand the access to and distribution of incomes and other resources, the availability, quality of and access to social services such as health and education. In many contexts of armed conflict, vertical

and horizontal inequalities in the above mentioned areas is a serious concern.

While there is no direct link between poverty, high unemployment rates, lack of access to social service nor malfunctioning economic development with armed conflict, there are evidence that suggest that horizontal inequalities result in heightened risk for conflict. Analysing the economic and social context may also help us to understand under-lying power structures, the quality of the social contract, both between citizens and citizens and the state.

In many countries, not least in Africa, the majority of the population is now under 30. Managing young people's expectation on life, including on education and employment in order to avoid new grievances is a critical challenge for many societies. Minimizing incentives for joining violent extremist groups or other criminal groups will be key for conflict prevention.

The *political and institutional context* is probably the area most intimately linked with the peace and security context. A conflict analysis shares many traits with a power analysis. A reported increase in human rights abuses in a country is usually one of the most important early warning-signals of the eruption of armed violence. Having experienced or seen human rights abuses was claimed as one of the main reasons for joining violent extremist groups, according to a UNDP study.[11]

While there may be indirect links between the occurrence of conflict and several grievances in the area of economy, social services and environment, in no area is the link as direct as between the political system and violent conflict. Lack of rule of law may be one reason, corruption, political oppression, institutions and elections that are perceived as unfair other.

The *environmental context* – There is no direct and linear relationship between climate change and violent conflict, but under certain circumstances climate-related change can influence factors that fuel conflicts. Reduced access to water and extreme weather events may negatively affect food security and undermine the livelihoods of vulnerable households and communities. Growing natural resource scarcity may then lead to local competition which becomes unmanageable in the absence of institutions for conflict resolution. Fragile states and communities with a history of conflict are the most vulnerable.[12]

TOOLS FOR INTEGRATING CONFLICT ANALYSIS INTO THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY ANALYSIS

Analysing conflict aspects is an integral part of the multidimensional poverty analysis that aims to identify constraints for people living in poverty and their path out of poverty. However, in situations where the MDPA identifies armed conflict as a key factor in the context, there may be a need to carry out a more thorough conflict analysis. Depending on the context, the need may be very different. One important thing to have in mind is that conflict contexts are very dynamic and that it is never enough to do a one-off conflict analysis; instead it is an analysis that needs regular up-dating.

Some supplementary guidance for integrating a conflict perspective in development cooperation:

• Sida's toolbox for poverty analysis, including Guiding Questions and a Menu of Indicators provides practical advice and access to data sources on economic development and poverty.
• Sida's Peace and Conflict toolbox

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11 UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa 2017: Journey to Extremism in Africa

12 GREEN TOOL BOX/PEACE AND SECURITY TOOL BOX: WORKING PAPER, 2017 The relationship between climate change and violent conflict