Assessment of Lessons Learned from Sida Support to Conflict Management and Peace Building

Final Report

**SIPU International AB, Stockholm
Centre for Development Research, Copenhagen
International Peace Research Institute, Oslo**

**Department for Cooperation
with Non-Governmental
Organisations and
Humanitarian Assistance**

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This report is part of *Sida Evaluation*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

FOREWORD

Sida has given support to an increasing number of peace building initatives during the last decade. During the last three years Sida has contributed approximately 150 MSEK per year to initiatives directly related to peace building, distributed between some 125 initiatives per year.

In the spring of 2000, Sida commissioned an evaluation with the purpose of identifying lessons learned and draw conclusions for future initiatives in the sector of conflict management and peace building. The objective of the study was to collect and analyse lessons learned from peace building, to give guidance to Sida in developing policies and methodology and to promote institutional learning in the field of peace building.

The evaluation has been carried out by SIPU International AB, Sweden, in conjunction with the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Norway and the Centre for Development Research (CDR), Denmark. The evaluation report includes a State of the Art/Annotated Bibliography which is a synthesis of existing evaluations and lessons learned on the international arena.

The Executive Summary, Final Report, State of the Art/Annotated Bibliography and Cases Studies are presented as below.

00/37   **Assessment of Lessons Learned from Sida Support to Conflict Management and Peace Building: Final Report**

00/37:1   State of the Art/Annotated Bibliography

00/37:2   Annex 1–5: Case Studies

The views, conclusions and recommendations presented in the report are those of the authors and not necessarily fully shared by Sida.

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List of Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance
CDR	Centre for Development Research, Copenhagen
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CR	Conciliation Resources
DESA	Division for Democratic Governance, Sida
ETSG	East Timor Study Group
FM	Frequency Modulation
GoL	Government of Liberia
HR	Hirondelle Foundation
IFES	International Foundation of Election Systems
IPCRI	Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
LWI	Liberian Women Initiative
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSEK	Million Swedish Crowns
NEDA	Dutch Development Agency
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OPC	Olof Palme´s International Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRIO	International Peace Research Institute, Oslo
PCR	Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SEK	Swedish Crown, Monetary Unit
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPU	Swedish Institute for Public Administration
UMAC	Urban Monitoring Awareness Committee
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Executive summary

Background

Sida has commissioned an *Assessment of Lessons Learned from Sida Support to Conflict Management and Peace Building* to serve as an input for devising new strategies to support efforts and projects in peace building and conflict management. The study was conducted by a consortium of SIPU International AB, Sweden, the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Norway, and the Centre for Development Research (CDR), Denmark

Sida's support to conflict resolution activities is guided by the *Strategy for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding* (1999). Other strategies play a major role for Sida in determining its support for this category, such as the various country strategies and the *Action Programme for Peacebuilding, Democracy, and Human Rights* (1998). Sida uses 'conflict management' as a generic term for aid financed projects implemented during armed conflicts. 'Conflict prevention' covers activities whose main objective is to prevent violence. 'Peace building' refers to projects with the aim of influencing the parties involved in armed conflicts. Sida support is to give special consideration to promotion of dialogue and peace.

Implementation of the Task

The project consortium has prepared a report reflecting on Sida support to conflict management and peacebuilding, offering some assessments of activities and approach, and making recommendations. The object of the consortium's study is Sida itself.

To prepare the report, the consortium conducted a bibliographic survey of the state of the art in peacebuilding project evaluation, and five case studies of Sida-supported peacebuilding projects. These are not full project evaluations, but building blocks in the overall study of Sida's policy and activities in this field. The case studies are as follows:

- Support given to Israel/Palestine centre for Research and Information.
- Projects in the West Balkans managed through the Olof Palme International Centre.
- Support to a Conciliation Resources project on women's empowerment (Bridges for Peace) and the Star Radio project, both in Liberia.
- Support to seven projects through Diakonia in South Africa.
- Support to the East Timor dialogue project of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

In addition to these five case studies, the consortium also drew on a separate report on the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa.

The bibliographical survey and the analysis of these Sida-supported activities formed the basis for drawing general conclusions about Sida's work in this field and for recommendations.

Methodology and criteria

With the exception of the East Timor project, the case studies are based on a combination of reviews of available documentation, short field visits, and interviews with participating organisations. The East Timor project was a desk study.

The criteria used in the five case studies, and also in the separate report on the ISS in South Africa, are based the criteria developed by the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance (ALNAP). They are as follows:

1. *Appropriateness*: Was the proposed activity appropriate to the circumstances? Important issues are knowledge and understanding of the local situation.
2. *Coherence:* Is the activity internally coherent in the light of organisational strategy? Is it externally coherent with other activities in the same area?
3. *Connectedness:* How does the activity relate to long-term development considerations?
4. *Gender Equality:* This has particular relevance in the conflict context.
5. *Flexibility:* Was the activity adapted to meet changing circumstances? Important qualities are the dialogue and speed of communication and response between the project partners.
6. *Location(s) of responsibility:* Was the division of labour clear and viable?
7. *Pressure for success/possibility of failure:* Can the project partners accept and elarn from failure or is there overmuch pressure for success?
8. *Institutional competence/staff base:* How does the activity contribute to developing an organisation's competence? Are learning integrated in the project?

Outline of the final report

In the Final report, the *Introduction* (§1) provides the general background to the study and the perspectives of the consortium chosen to carry it out. It sets out the general conceptual framework, explores the terminology and definitions of the problems, explains how and why the case studies were chosen, and lays out the methodology and the criteria used in the assessment. A key element of the argument in the Introduction is that what we present here is not a series of evaluations of projects in the ordinary sense, but rather an assessment of Sida. The point is elaborated and emphasised in the full report.

The *Bibliographical Survey* (§2) shows the state of the art in evaluation of peace building projects and connects the findings from a wide selection of recent projects and interventions with the criteria used in this report. The *Case study summaries* (§3) provide an overview of the projects to give the reader a sufficient base to read and comprehend the following part, namely the *Analysis and Assessment* (§4) of each project in relation to the adopted criteria. This part is primarily focussed on lessons learned. It discusses each project individually, then all as a group, in the light of each of the ALNAP criteria.

The *Conclusions and Recommendations* (§5) are based on the analysis in §4, and the bibliographical survey in §2 and derive conclusions. Sida's performance in relation to the criteria is assessed in §5.2, which also includes an assessment of the criteria themselves and proposals for refining them. The general conclusions of this study §5.3 are presented in §5.3 and the recommendations based on these conclusions in §5.4.

The bibliographical survey and the five case studies are all presented in full in appendices to the Final report.

Key concepts & general approach

The object of study in this project is Sida itself and the activities it has undertaken in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and the case studies are not project evaluations in the ordinary sense. Sida's activities of interest here are those aimed at preventing, alleviating or resolving violent social and political conflict.

The field of conflict management and peacebuilding is full of competing definitions and uncertain terminology. This reflects a field in which theory and practice have not been brought together very successfully, and in which a range of different kinds of intervention are made in political landscapes characterised by a complex layering of power and perceptions. Within both research and practice in this field, there has been a conscious attempt to base the work on nuanced study of local conditions, rather than on over-arching templates and models. There is a widespread rejection of models based on linear stages of conflict formation and resolution.

The field's relative newness, richness and complexity, the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of violent conflict, the engagement in conflicts of people's fears, hopes, dreams and faith: these factors make it naïve or arrogant to presume that one or two projects with a duration of a few years could intervene and decisively influence the outcome.

Accordingly, even though a given project may be driven and shaped by the intention to prevent violent conflict, it cannot necessarily be judged a failure because violent conflict erupts. A project of dialogue that aims to promote mutual understanding cannot necessarily be regarded as a waste if people seem to keep on misunderstanding each other. Such efforts are – or may be – contributions towards the avoidance of lethal violence. They should be assessed as such, rather than expected to solve the problem by themselves. In other words, *the concept of 'success' cannot be used as a measure of the performance of a given project*. Rather, the concept that must be used is 'impact' or 'influence.'

The overall goal of influencing or having an impact on a given situation cannot be established or evaluated by any quantitative measure. This is one way in which activities in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding require a mind-set that is different from traditional development approaches. To argue that peacebuilding impact can be measured quantitatively is to misunderstand both the nature of armed conflict as a political, social and cultural phenomenon, and the nature of conflict resolution as an effort to intervene in that complex reality. Nonetheless, project sub-goals can usefully be specified in quantitative terms. These sub-goals should be related to the overall goals of any project, but measuring them should not be thought of as a way of fulfilling the need for assessing how much the overall goals are being achieved.

Conclusions

In as much as the bibliographical survey and the case studies are presented in the Final Report in summary form, it seems appropriate for the Executive Summary to cut straight to the conclusions of the assessment of Sida's activity and policy in the field of peacebuilding and conflict management, and to the recommendations that follow from them.

The first group of conclusions (§5.2) present an overall assessment of the activities in the case studies in the light of the eight ALNAP criteria. The judgements contained here are all provisional, in that there was little time to conduct the studies, which do not amount to project evaluations in the normal sense.

- *Appropriateness*: The overall conclusion is positive. However, some concerns were expressed in the studies that appropriateness was not always explicitly included in project proposals and reports. The documentation often contains no argument that logically links the proposed or reported activities to the conflict situation. There were also some queries as to how knowledgeable Sida desk officers were about the local conflict situation and the conditions in which the projects operated. As this does not always seem to be a problem for the project itself, this gave rise to some open-ended and unresolved discussion about how well informed Sida desk officers need to be.

- *Coherence*: Again the overall conclusion is positive, though with some reservations. Recommendations concerning planning frameworks and the need to state aims explicitly arise partly from reflecting on the criterion of coherence, partly out of the appropriateness discussion.

- *Connectedness*: In relation to this criterion, the overall conclusion is more positive than negative. The projects studied have considerable strengths in terms of local ownership and local partnership, and some significant weaknesses as regards sustainability. However, since connectedness is an inherently long-term concept and our case studies were of a short period in the projects' life-cycle, these findings come with many reservations.

- *Gender equality*: The record is mixed. Without being decisively negative, it makes clear that there is work to be done on this issue. It is equally clear that the work must be taken on sensitively, winning project partners and participants to a positive response to this crucial theme in Sida's work and in peacebuilding.

- *Flexibility*: Sida emerges from our study as a flexible funder of projects in which flexibility has been not only allowed but, on occasion, positively encouraged. Indeed, the issue that arises here is whether Sida may not be permitting too much flexibility in certain cases. Flexibility should be balanced by clear strategic frameworks.

- *Location of responsibility*: There is noteworthy clarity in the division of labour between Sida and grant recipients.

- *Pressure for success*: Sida does not appear to place too much pressure upon its grant recipients, but there are questions about how to gauge the impact and influence of projects. This issue is taken up below.

- *Institutional competence*: Here the picture is very patchy and at its worst, among some of the local organisations, the picture is very bleak. Several of our recommendations address the need to pay attention to securing institutional competence.

The second group of conclusions (also in §5.2) concerns the ALNAP criteria. These are useful tools, but there are some areas in which further refinement of the criteria would be worthwhile:

- *Connectedness*: This is simply too big a concept, containing too many disparate elements. It is the least useful of the criteria because it is unwieldy. It would therefore be worth breaking it down into its component parts.

- *Flexibility*: Some of the studies in this assessment indicate that this criterion may be too one-sided. While donor agencies should not apply rigid templates and categories, we conclude that the criterion of flexibility should be balanced by attention to strategic frameworks.

- *Impact*: The ALNAP criteria lack a means of judging impact, and thus one key element of an assessment – and even more so of a full-scale project evaluation – is missing. There is a need to respond to the challenge to find means of assessing impact that are non-quantitative and thus able to respond to the messy reality of conflict situations and the particular demands of peace-building activities.

- *Relationships of trust*: The bibliographical survey and the East Timor project both indicate the importance of trust in building dialogue. This is backed by experience with good governance projects in public sector development. It suggests that building stable relationships is a precondition for success in some peacebuilding activities. It can therefore be considered as a separate performance criterion.

- *Quantitative sub-goals*: In most cases, project sub-goals can and should be expressed in numerical form. This would make some aspects of the discussion of *appropriateness* and *coherence* more straightforward, and would contribute to the strategic framework required to balance *flexibility*. We emphasise that using quantitative sub-goals does not substitute for a proper means of assessing impact.

We will summarise our general conclusions (§5.3) in the following terms:

1. The programmes under discussion are working relatively well. In all the projects we studied, there are strengths and weaknesses. We reviewed their activities over a relatively short span, and worked under significant time constraints to do so. Thus, assessments offered in this report about the individual projects are provisional. Firmer judgements require more exhaustive analyses of both the local context and the specific role of the projects and groups under review. Although we have raised areas of concern in some of the projects, none may be regarded as an outright failure.

2. As a general assessment of whether the projects studied are effective, the following views are given, with reservations because of the short time this study spent on looking at these projects. The support to the Balkan projects of OPC and the South African work of Diakonia is for long term peacebuilding work. The impact of both will be hard to measure but, despite detailed reservations, both appear to make a positive contribution to the difficult social circumstances in which they function. The support to the process in East Timor has facilitated an important aspect of a search for solutions and has strengthened the debate in East Timor and in Indonesia about peaceful development. Despite the hiccoughs experienced with the Liberia projects, they both appear to make a positive contribution and to warrant continued support. Through support to IPCRI in the Middle East (and likewise with the ISS in South Africa), Sida has facilitated work that has many strong points, yet which would also benefit from a fuller evaluation.

3. There is a growing body of theories and concepts on the underlying causes of conflict and their symptoms, and there is also a considerable literature on conflict resolution, as well as a growing amount of experience. However, there remains a gap between theory and practice. This is confirmed by the bibliographical survey, which also confirms that Sida and Ministry of Foreign Affairs thinking on peacebuilding and conflict resolution is generally in line with mainstream thinking on these issues.

4. The state of current knowledge implies that it would be counter-productive to attempt to generate a template for Sida peacebuilding activities. There is no formula of conflict resolution and peacebuilding waiting to be applied.

5. However, Sida could aim to develop a house style, or a palette of styles, a range of approaches in which it sets out to develop competence. These would form Sida's niche in international peacebuilding and be an aid to prioritisation and strategic planning.

6. When it comes to the activities we have studied, we have not found a high level or extensive degree of strategic planning.

7. As well as lack of strategic planning, we find a lack of self-awareness in some projects. One factor that emerged was that those involved in some projects were not aware that the projects were in whole or in part regarded as peace building and conflict resolution projects. It is a problem if the links between plans, desired impact and perceivable outcomes cannot be traced.

8. In a conflict situation, it is very often easier to recognise that something must be done than to identify precisely what will be the most successful activity. What should Sida then do? The question applies whenever the number of unknowns or unpredictable variables is high and their impact potentially profound. It is, therefore, a question for every potentially important project of conflict resolution and peace building. Such projects are stable and predictable only if they are unnecessary.

9. This being the case, the fundamental choice is a political one: is Sweden to contribute to making peace and diminishing violent conflict in certain parts of the world? Is Sweden prepared to do this when impact is difficult to measure and where the risk factors are high? If so, and if Sida is to be the bearer of a significant part of that policy, the challenge for Sida is to accustom itself to this new operating environment.

10. Having conducted this study, we regard the challenge as less intimidating than might at first seem to be the case. In general, projects that Sida has supported are playing a role in helping to diminish the potential for violent conflict in their societies. It can be concluded from the study that Sida is rather well equipped to carry the weight of a further enhanced Swedish strategy for contributing to peaceful relations in conflict-prone countries.

11. For example, Sida has shown the willingness to provide project support in a variety of organisational modes. This is an important precondition for Sida's further work.

12. One clear, general weakness found in this study is the lack of strong and viable local institutions. Local ownership does not automatically create viable and sustainable local institutions that will exist and expand should the support decrease. We believe that more can and should be done to strengthen local organisations.

13. Within Sida, we found uncertainty about whether conflict resolution and peacebuilding projects should be bracketed with primarily humanitarian and therefore short-term projects, or with democracy-building and therefore long-term work. We advise against classifying peacebuilding and conflict resolution as necessarily fitting in short-, medium- or long-term perspectives.

14. There is a cultural clash between the general field of development cooperation and the field of peace and conflict. This is reflected in a variety of ways that are relevant to Sida's further work in the field of peace and conflict.

15. The inexactitude of peacebuilding and conflict management projects has an impact on what the donor agency can expect from its project partners, its role and the degree of control it can expect. Templates for project activities are precluded, so each project has to be originally designed. If Sida seeks significant control over projects, it will have to restrict the range of its activities, but could then find itself forced outside those restrictions by political considerations. It would be better to accept that Sida must have very limited degrees of influence over the unfolding course of the projects it supports. This would allow it to operate with a wider palette of different styles. It would also increase the requirements for external project assessments and evaluations.

16. Peacebuilding projects require detailed knowledge about strategies, concepts and local conditions. It is an open question as to whether this knowledge should be lodged in Sida. Compared to most areas of development co-operation, Sida will to high degree rely on the MFA for analysis of conflict situations and trusted outside experts for knowledge of conflict resolution. In making the choice about what level of knowledge is required, co-ordination in the field and sharing knowledge and experience with other donor agencies may be particularly important.

17. In order for reconciliation efforts to attain sustainable effects, there is at least as great a need as in other development areas for co-ordination between international donors so that pertinent areas, causes of conflict and important actors are not ignored in planning and implementing activities. In addition, as observed in the conclusions of the bibliographical survey, peace-building activities necessarily have to deal with all parties to the conflict in an even-handed way. Bilateral donors are likely to be better suited to these challenges than multilateral agencies, because the former can be more flexible and focussed, less bureaucratic and with better access to pertinent decision-makers. A specific country – like the Scandinavian countries – may also be regarded as more neutral or more trusted in a specific conflict context, and its role is therefore more likely to be accepted.

18. The cultural clash between the fields of development and of peace and conflict is also reflected when it comes to assessing projects. The consistent tendency in the development field is to go for criteria of success and failure and means of measurement that are considerably tighter than those that make sense in the field of peace and conflict interventions. The bibliographical survey reveals that evaluation techniques in the field of peace and conflict are relatively undeveloped. A means of gauging impact is yet to be developed. Until there is greater certainty about how to gauge the results, project sub-goals can be specified as deliverables. But it should be understood that the avoidance of violent conflict is not a deliverable for any individual project or programme.

19. There is an inescapable, indeed a necessary and productive inexactitude in the work of both designing and assessing peaceful interventions. A project that opens some lines of communication and understanding should not be regarded as a failure simply because war erupted. It is hard to know exactly what seeds are being sown and when or how the harvest will come. To refuse to act because success is not certain or crisply defined would be self-defeating, given the impulse to try to contribute to peaceful development.

20. Projects in this field are highly political and often involve diplomatic relationships. Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is likely to have a more active role than in development cooperation projects. Attention to the full political ramifications of a project must be given at some place within the project planning process. It is a challenge for Sida, the MFA and major project partners to consider how best that can be done.

21. One conclusion of this study is that Sida's strategic thinking – as well as MFA´s strategic thinking as far as we can see from the documents studied – is in line with current thinking. However, we have our doubts about how widespread this knowledge is within Sida.

22. Projects striving to build peace and prevent conflicts are fairly new for Sida. Even so, we regard the record so far as respectable. Where Sida's routines clash with the messy reality of violent conflict and of efforts to intervene in conflict to peaceable ends, it is the routines that should give way. Proper strategic planning (balancing *flexibility* with a strategic framework) protects against any difficulties that can arise from willingness to be administratively flexible. We recognise this may cause some uncertainty within Sida, but Sida has already shown in ad hoc ways that it has the capacity to adjust. Now the adjustment must be systematic.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are divided into two main groups. Section 5.4.1 has a project focus, which means recommendations that are connected to the actual projects or programmes in the field. Section 5.4.2 focuses on internal Sida issues, which means recommendations that have to do with Sida management of projects and programmes.

Project focus

1. With reference to *appropriateness* and *coherence*, it is essential that project aims are made explicit at the outset. Changing aims in response to changing circumstances can be accepted, but should also be explained.

2. Equally with reference to *appropriateness* and *coherence*, progress towards fulfilment of a project's overall goals should be reported in qualitative terms, while sub-goals can be quantitative. The expectation should be that project proposals, reports, assessments and evaluation can all refer to quantitative sub-goals; departures from the norm should be accepted, but should also be explained.

3. *External coherence* will be enhanced by contact with other donor agencies operating in the same field and with similar focus. This will increase knowledge input and improve co-ordination.

4. Within the complex concept of *connectedness*, the issue of financial sustainability should be addressed from a very early stage of projects. There are two imperatives. On the one hand, local implementing organisations should be encouraged to develop a strategy for a diversified funding base. On the other hand, they must not be asked to achieve a sustainability that is beyond local economic possibilities. The financial situation of each project should normally be monitored as a regular part of the reporting system.

5. The effort to address *gender issues* should be encouraged in all instances, keeping in mind local cultural and social attitudes and contexts. Those involved in conflict resolution and peace building projects among grant recipients including, where possible, local implementing agencies, should be strongly encouraged to go in for training workshops in gender issues.

6. Project *flexibility* should be balanced by explicit strategic frameworks for all projects, up-dated as necessary (i.e., when the conditions in the conflict situation change). The strategic framework should state the project's goals and justify them in terms of an assessment of the conflict situation in its relevant geographical context (regional, national, sub-national). The relevance of the project methodology to the goals should be explained and the suitability of the partner organisation(s) to the methodology should be argued. The project's activities should be specified, with sub-goals and deliverables. Attention to this basic strategic framework will also enhance *appropriateness* and *connectedness*.

7. In cases where there is local sensitivity to foreign-funded projects and activities, Sida should strive to have the *location of responsibility* for the activities resting within the local organisation, to avoid accusations of outside interference.

8. Assisting partner organisations in realistic strategic planning will also help them to avoid over/ambitious goals and, consequently, unacceptable degrees of internally generated *pressure for success*.

9. More attention should be given to the development of local *institutional competence*. This can take several forms. Based on the projects studied here, we highlight the following: making management advice available; assisting in the development of a strategic plan; offering access to training courses as part of the support granted; ensuring that the scale of financial support is adequate, so as to avoid the false economies that can lead to overstretch among key staff; targeting core budget support to the core activities of the grant recipient.

Internal Sida focus

10. Sida should insist on strategic clarity in all projects, as indicated in #6 above.

11. Sida needs to consider its own requirements for expert knowledge about conflicts and conflict resolution techniques. There is a variety of possible choices. We do not recommend one option over others, and limit ourselves to asserting the need for a choice to be made.

12. Routines for sharing knowledge and interpretations of events should be introduced as part of the partnership involved in a project. Resource groups with members from Sida, grant recipients and the MFA are one way to go about this. Effective reporting and report processing are essential. Informal channels, such as oral communication in the resource group meeting, should also be encouraged.

13. Sida's approach must explicitly recognise that conflict situations are volatile, and that political priorities may emerge that place urgency on a project that falls outside its current framework or procedures. Sida cannot afford to have internal routines that require non-reality on the ground.

14. Sida's work would benefit if it were to develop its own capacity for facilitating institutional learning on the local implementing level. Alternatively, Sida could achieve almost the same effect by contracting the task out.

15. Sida should be willing to sponsor research into the methodologies of types of project in which it has little knowledge or experience. Task forces could help Sida consider how best it can evaluate proposals on areas and projects in which it has little experience. These should involve members from within and outside Sida.

16. Sida should establish, possibly in co-operation with other donor agencies, a database of expertise on different kinds of projects within the general field of conflict resolution and peace building. Organising this database both by kind of project and by region would give Sida (and other agencies) quick access to expert judgement of project proposals. As a consolidated source of relevant expertise, the database could be a useful instrument in strategic planning, thus contributing to project *appropriateness* and both *internal* and *external coherence*.

17. Sida should encourage self-reflection by project teams. It is important to accept that mistakes are made and emphasize that by honest self-reflection, organizations can learn and build on the lessons from their mistakes. This would help develop an organisational maturity that could avoid over-competitiveness and overstretch among local organisations.

18. Sida should establish routines that maintain its own internal coherence by encouraging continuity both in staffing of projects and in project documentation.

19. Sida should consider undertaking a systematic evaluation of the scope, content and quantity of its internal resources with regard to projects for conflict management and peacebuilding. It would be valuable to include the MFA in this assessment, if the MFA requires participation in project design.

20. The relationship of the MFA and Sida in some particularly sensitive projects needs further discussion. A dialogue with the MFA should be initiated to clarify lines of responsibility and the relationship between project accountability and political responsibility.

21. Sida can enhance its flexibility by introducing a budget line for relatively small projects, with requirements for proposals and for reporting that are less demanding than normal. This would allow speedy design of projects that require a quick response to fast changing conditions. It would also allow innovative projects that are not overly costly to be launched quickly.

22. We recommend that Sida undertake full-scale evaluations of its support to IPCRI and ISS, using the criteria indicated in #25 below.

23. If short-term project evaluations are required for any reason, they should not be expected to evaluate issues such as connectedness that can only be assessed over the long-term through longitudinal studies. Short-term assessments can provide guidelines and suggestions for long-term projects.

24. Sida should initiate a process of discussion and research to identify means of gauging the impact and influence of the different types of peacebuilding project.

25. As well as using those means as criteria, once they are identified and operationalised, Sida should encourage assessment and evaluation teams to use the following criteria, expanding and elaborating upon the ALNAP criteria:

Appropriateness;
Coherence, both internal and external;
Ownership and partnership;
Sustainability, of both the project and the local organisation(s).
Gender equality;
Flexibility within the overall strategic vision of the project;
Location of responsibility;
Pressure for success and acceptance of the possibility of failure;
Institutional competence, with special focus on the local organisation(s).
Relationships of trust with partners and stakeholders.
Quantitative sub-goals.

This is a longer list than the ALNAP criteria, amounting to 12 criteria if the issue of impact and influence is solved. However, it contains useful elements the ALNAP criteria miss out, and succeeds in unpacking the connectedness criterion.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the study

Like many other development and humanitarian agencies, Sida is placing increasing emphasis on the importance of peace building and conflict prevention. In the late 1990s, Sida developed an action programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights. The concept of peace promotion has been further developed in its strategy for Conflict Management and Peace Building.

The Swedish government has asked Sida to develop further the strategies for support for Peace Building and Conflict Prevention. As part of this work, a consortium composed of SIPU International AB, Sweden, PRIO of Norway and CDR of Denmark was commissioned by Sida to study its activities for peace building and prevention of conflict escalation. The aim of the study is to assess projects and derive lessons from them, so as to give recommendations to Sida that can enhance the agency's understanding of complex processes and improve the efficiency of operations. The study is but one contribution among several made by Sida to enhance the quality of its strategies in these areas.

The Terms of Reference state the purpose of the study as follows:

- To promote institutional learning in the field of peace building. In particular, lessons learned from Sida support to peace building initiatives should be collected and analysed within the framework of Sida's action programmes and strategy for conflict management;
- To guide Sida in developing policies and methodology in the area of conflict management, within Sida and in international forums;
- To facilitate Sida's assessment and analysis of decision making.

To this end the study was to include:

- An annotated bibliography reflecting the state of the art in evaluations of peace building projects by humanitarian and other relevant agencies based on field studies;
- A review and an analysis of lessons learned from Sida-supported peace building projects during 1998 and 1999;
- Recommendations to Sida based on the analysis on how to improve assessment and decision making in relation to conflict resolution and peace building;
- A seminar at Sida to present findings of the study.

It should be noted that peace building and conflict prevention is a fairly recent specific area of activity for Sida. The projects in this study, therefore, were not in general originally conceived, designed and categorized as outright peace building projects. If this study had been intended to be a project evaluation in the normal sense, it would accordingly have encountered significant difficulties, because project design did not always include key performance indicators for success or failure in building peace. The study, however, was not designed as a project evaluation in the normal sense, and therefore did not set out to judge the success of the projects in terms of compliance with pre-set objectives. Rather, the study focused on a number of general criteria, using these as a way of interrogating the projects, to ascertain if and how they contributed to enhance peace and to the reduction of conflicts.

1.2 Outline of the report

This Final Report presents conclusions and recommendation about Sida's peacebuilding activities. It includes a summarised bibliographical survey of the state of the art in evaluations of peace building and conflict resolution and a summary of case studies of Sida-supported projects. As annexes to this Final Report the bibliographical survey and the case studies are presented in full.

The *Introduction* (§1) provides the general background to why this study has been commissioned and the perspectives of the consortium chosen to carry it out. In §1.3 the study's general conceptual framework is set out. This part also discusses the terminology and definitions with regard to peace building and conflict resolution. It attempts to discuss the core problem of finding performance indicators for specific projects, especially in terms of effects and impact. In §1.4 the consortium's general approach and understanding to the object of study is explained. The rest of the Introduction deals with the composition of the team, the reason for selection of various projects and especially the rationale for using the selected methodology and the criteria, as well as the interpretation of the criteria.

The *Bibliographical Survey* (§2) shows the state of the art in evaluation of peace building projects. It summarises findings from a wide selection of recent projects and interventions and it attempts to connect these findings to the selection criteria from the specific case studies in this report.

The *Case study summaries* (§3) provide an overview of the projects to give the reader a sufficient basis for reading and comprehending the following part, the *Analysis and Assessment* (§4) of each project in relation to the adopted criteria. This part is primarily focussed on lessons learned, both with regard to the criteria and in relation to the objectives of this study. It is meant as a contribution to Sida with regard to how the projects have functioned in respect of:

- Appropriateness
- Coherence
- Connectedness
- Gender Equality
- Flexibility
- Location of Responsibility
- Pressure for Success/Possibility of Failure
- Institutional Competence

The *Conclusions and Recommendations* (§5) reflect on the analysis in §4 and the results of the bibliographical survey in §2 and derive conclusions. Sida's performance in relation to the criteria is assessed in §5.2, which also includes an assessment of the criteria themselves and proposals for refining them. The general conclusions in §5.3 discuss what has been brought to light by this study and what issues are raised for Sida to decide and, in some cases, explore further. The recommendations in §5.4 are divided into two groups, the first having a focus on project management in the field, and the second being internally focused on Sida itself.

1.3 The problem & the enquiry

During the 1990s, there has been a general shift in the focus of security policies in numerous governments towards a relatively new field of activity variously referred to as conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict prevention and peace building. Most of today's armed conflicts are

predominantly internal – that is, though there are still conflicts between states, most conflicts are within states, though often with external participation by other state and non-state actors.

Both the timing and the causes of this shift can be traced to the end of the Cold War. With the end of that long confrontation, the tendency to interpret armed conflicts as outcrops of the central East-West rivalry diminished. The terminology of the Cold War could not apply to the causes of armed conflicts that persisted when the Cold War was over. Moreover, with the violent disintegration of the USSR and of SFR Yugoslavia, new wars emerged as the Cold War receded.

Simultaneously, then, major war returned to Europe, and wars in the Third World that had previously been more or less invisible to the public eye in western countries became highly visible. At the same time, the end of the Cold War meant the end of veto-induced paralysis in the UN Security Council. Due in part to the pressure of public opinion, it ceased to be the job only of the large non-governmental organisations to race to the relief of the victims of humanitarian disasters induced by armed conflict. As well as the NGOs, governments were also called upon to act, and humanitarianism became a state responsibility. With that, humanitarianism became political.

While major powers have, inevitably, been major external actors in many of the major conflicts of the 1990s, smaller powers – Sweden and Norway not least among them – have found that complex conflicts have provided a political arena worth entering, as well as a humanitarian imperative it is impossible to evade.

Many NGO professionals and volunteers have long felt the dilemma of humanitarianism, the problem of only ever attending to a problem after it has reached critical proportions, and then of only attempting to moderate the consequences rather than seek solutions. Governments do not face such limits – or, it might be better said, tend not to recognise them. Faced by the complexities of humanitarian intervention, interventionist governments are likely to expand their agenda rather than narrow it. Thus, the practical exigencies of ameliorating human suffering caused by complex conflicts tend to encourage western governments towards political intervention. Accordingly, the felt need to better understand the local causes and conditions of complex political crises that unfold within the global context has increased dramatically. New frameworks for conflict resolution and peace building have come to be increasingly driven by the need for practical solutions to both social violence and institutional failure. The central question in many diverse settings is how adversarial relations can be transformed and reconciled.

Study of the causes of contemporary armed conflicts has accelerated and deepened along with the growing political and public interest in them. Sources of information and data collection are greatly improved compared to a decade ago. Theoretical frameworks and the breadth and depth of studies have all advanced significantly. In the current state of knowledge, emphasis falls on internal economic and political factors – the fundamental issues of the distribution of wealth and power – as the most significant determinants of armed conflict. The economic factors are internal in the sense that it is the strength or weakness of the domestic economy that is important. However, that strength or weakness is itself in part a function of the domestic economy's place in the world economy. The social and political institutions in many poor countries are critically vulnerable to relatively short-term shifts in the terms of trade, or to changes in the world price of key primary commodities. Countries with heavily indebted governments have also long been vulnerable to shifts in foreign exchange rates and interest rates, though in the 1990s more attention has been focused on the situation of heavily indebted countries than before, thanks to persistent public campaigns. Ethnic difference is a rather poor indicator of armed conflict, despite the many armed conflicts in today's world that wear an ethnic mask. Indeed, there is some evidence that high ethnic diversity is associ-

ated with a relatively low propensity for armed conflict. The problem is that when politics invades ethnicity and ethnicity dominates politics, the result is not only to fuel conflict, but to embed hatred in popular consciousness. Current research indicates that political systems that sit in a grey zone between democratic and authoritarian, and systems in transition from authoritarian to democratic, are particularly vulnerable to violent conflict. Additional factors such as the international trade in small arms and in key commodities capable of generating large cash income with to purchase weaponry – such as narcotics, timber and diamonds – enter the picture as means by which armed conflicts become protracted. In such cases, the leaders of one or both conflict parties become effectively immune both to international pressure and to fluctuating fortunes on the battlefield.

Attempts to deal with problems thrown up by these dimensions of social instability are known by a variety of terms, notably conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict prevention and peace building.

Sida's definition of these terms makes 'conflict management' a generic term for aid-financed projects implemented during ongoing armed conflicts, partly for victims and partly for peace building. 'Conflict prevention' covers activities whose main objective to prevent outbreaks of violence, the escalation or return to violence. It is thus not necessarily about the stage of conflict before violence erupts but is, in the Sida usage, equally applicable also to activities during and after the armed phase of a conflict. 'Peacebuilding' refers to projects with the aim of influencing the parties involved in armed conflicts.

Sida's definitions are far from the only ones available. However, practitioners in this field tend to regard all of these terms as misleading in one way or another. The efforts are generally not designed to resolve conflicts, and could well be of dubious merit if they were designed for that end, in that conflict is a necessary element of dynamic and progressive societies. Conflict prevention is an unhelpful term for similar reasons, while conflict management is too technocratic and, like peace building, is a term that misses the dynamism and fluidity of the processes in which these projects engage and which they try to influence. What is actually at stake in all these projects is the attempt to facilitate the avoidance of lethal violence. It is not conflict but armed conflict that is the problem.

This terminological uncertainty reflects a field in which, while there is some theory and a significant amount of practice, the two have not been brought together very successfully. In this study, and in general, the activities of interest are ones with the purpose of preventing, alleviating or resolving social and political conflict that is actually or potentially violent. The terminological confusion also reflects the richness of the field in question, in which a range of different kinds of intervention are made in political landscapes characterised by a complex layering of power and perceptions.

Within both research and practice in this field, there has been a conscious attempt to base the work on nuanced study of local conditions, rather than on over-arching templates and models. In particular, there is a widespread rejection of models based on linear stages of conflict formation and resolution. These may be counterproductive in terms of policy interventions and practices and are rarely based on serious empirical research. They are often, in fact, based on templates imported from other kinds of conflict, on the assumption that all conflicts behave in more or less the same way, whatever their cultural context. Despite this effort to ensure that both study and practice reflect local realities, the literature and evaluations reflect the predominantly Western character of the debate. Until very recently, with very few exceptions, perceptions of the various local actors in conflict-ridden areas have not been included. This points toward an important new field to be developed and supported. It also adds to the complexity of the issues under review in this study and the efforts that are undertaken to resolve conflicts and build peace.

These considerations give rise to an issue of fundamental importance. The field of conflict resolution and peace building is relatively new and key terms are disputed and uncertain. Violent conflicts themselves are dynamic, involving the interplay of major socio-economic factors, many of them largely uncontrollable by actors in and around the conflict, together with people's prejudices, dreams, fears, suffering, hopes and faith. It would be naïve or arrogant to presume that one or two projects with a duration of a few years could intervene in such a context and decisively influence the outcome.

Thus there arises what may seem to be a paradox: even though a given project may be driven and shaped by the intention to prevent violent conflict, it cannot necessarily be judged a failure because violent conflict erupts. A project of dialogue that aims to promote mutual understanding cannot necessarily be regarded as a waste if people seem to keep on misunderstanding each other. Such efforts are – or may be – contributions towards the avoidance of lethal violence. They should be assessed as contributions, rather than evaluated as if they could be expected to solve the problem by themselves.

This point is of such fundamental importance that it bears repeating and elaborating. It affects the analysis at many points throughout the case studies and this report. The concept of 'success' cannot be used as a measure of the performance of a given project. Rather, the concept that must be used is 'impact' or 'influence.'

This leads to a further methodological point that is of equal importance. The overall goal of influencing or having an impact on a given situation – reducing the likelihood of violent escalation, facilitating the search for viable solutions – cannot be established nor can progress towards it be judged by any quantitative measure. To argue that it can be measured quantitatively is to misunderstand both the nature of armed conflict as a political, social and cultural phenomenon, and the nature of conflict resolution as an effort to intervene in that complex reality.

That said, we recognise that this is a field in which the difficulty of finding adequate performance criteria makes all sorts of abuses and disillusionment possible. We do not by this mean to refer to specific activities studied in the course of preparing this report. Rather, we are referring to our wider experience and knowledge of the field and of the variety of actors within it. Accordingly, we do not wish to be interpreted as opposing performance criteria, or as denying that quantitative measures can have a place. Where and when used, however, quantitative measures are most appropriately addressed towards sub-goals (numbers of meetings, workshops, publications, copies, participants, women, representatives of different ethnic groups or political parties, indicators of institutional development, etc). These sub-goals should be related to the overall goals of any project, but measuring them should not be thought of as a way of fulfilling the need for assessing how much the overall goals are being achieved. Moreover, the quantitative elements of planning and evaluating performance should not be allowed to take priority over the need for analysing the conflict situation and figuring out the best mode of contributing to avoiding or reducing violence.

In sum, quantitative performance measures can do one of two things, one negative and counterproductive, the other limited but valuable:

- One possibility is that quantitative measures of the performance of conflict resolution and peacebuilding projects simply get in the way of a proper analysis of those projects. The possibility is that quantitative measures substitute for actually attempting to understand what has been done and with what effect. At best, in this negative scenario, quantitative measures act as a surrogate for a proper analysis. Even at best, this is artificial and counter-productive.

- The other possibility is that quantitative measures are directed towards judging the fulfilment of project sub-goals. This is a limited use of quantitative measures, yet valuable as a means of helping ensure that project partners are serious and committed about strategic planning.

If this means that some of the ways of thinking about criteria of success and failure must be changed from those that an agency such as Sida is used to from its experience in the field of development, that change is a necessary consequence of Sida's entry into the field of prevention of violent conflict.

1.4 The project's general approach & object of study

The corner stone of the assessment consists of five case studies of Sida-supported projects and activities in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding together with a bibliographical survey designed to reflect the current state of the art of peacebuilding project evaluations. Four of these are desk and field studies, one is purely a desk study. All were conducted under extreme time constraints. The basis on which the case studies were selected is described in the following section, and the methodology in section 1.5. As far as possible, we have systematized findings of the case studies into lessons learned. These reflections on each project, when compared with each other and set against the broad conclusions of the bibliographical survey, form the basis first of our analysis of Sida's activity in this field, and thereafter of the conclusions and recommendations in the closing section of this report. In addition, we have drawn on a separate case study that is not integrated into this report, but referred to in the sections offering analysis, conclusions and recommendations. The case studies and the bibliographical survey were conducted separately from each other on the basis of consistent criteria (see section 1.5). They are presented as appendices to this report, into which summaries of the case studies and the bibliographical survey have been integrated.

Here we wish to emphasise three key points about the general approach we have taken. Each can be found in our initial tender, in the inception report, and in our discussions with Sida officials:

1. *The object of study in this project is Sida itself and the activities it has undertaken in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.* In other words, the projects and activities dealt with in the case studies are not our primary interest. We understand this focus on Sida rather than the projects to have been from the outset Sida's intention with this project. The case studies, selected in close consultation with Sida officials, are regarded as representative of Sida activities in the field. To confirm that they are representative, of course, we would have had to look at a much wider range of projects funded by Sida. It is therefore possible that some aspects of Sida's activities in this field are not covered by our analysis, conclusions and recommendations. It is equally possible that some aspects are, so to speak, covered too much. These limitations, if real, are in the nature of the framing of this project.

2. *The case studies are not project evaluations in the normally understood sense.* This is not only because some elements of methodology for evaluating peacebuilding projects are yet to be developed and consolidated (see the bibliographical study), but also because of the time element. Extended field visits were not possible and there was restricted time available, within the framework of the study as a whole, for interviews with Sida officials and for document reviews. In addition, many of the projects are not comprehensive peace building and conflict resolution projects and the projects may also include a number of activities that are also not democracy or human rights oriented. This is especially the case with regard to the Diakonia managed projects in South Africa. Those activities were intentionally not included in the study. Therefore, a reader of this study will not get a full overview of the organisations studied. The case studies and the criteria

we used to ask questions of the Sida-supported projects chosen for study do reveal issues of concern in some cases. There are several points in the case studies that indicate that a fuller study would be worthwhile and even essential. We have not hesitated to point out these areas of concern, and we have drawn conclusions and made recommendations about the projects under study, as we have found appropriate. However, we do not regard these studies as full evaluations and would not wish Sida to regard them as such either. Problems that have been identified should be studied further before firm judgements are made.

3. *Activities in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding involve donors and recipients in unpredictable and uncontrollable events, and thus require a mind-set that is different from the traditional development approaches.* We regard this as in many ways the fundamental challenge for Sida in taking on this field over recent years and in the near future. Several times in the analysis of projects and activities, and equally in the conclusions, we highlight this point and its implications. It is in part through discussions with Sida officials that we have come to perceive a clash of cultures between development and peacebuilding, focusing not least on how to establish project goals and evaluate progress in fulfilling them.

1.5 Case Studies: Selection criteria

The cases have a thematic spread, covering three types of Sida-supported projects:

- Track II diplomacy (see above, section 1.2);
- A locally based peace process;
- An institutional capacity building effort.

Among Sida's projects, several cross the dividing lines between these categories. This is not surprising since the categories themselves are not crisp For example, Sida's Terms of Reference for this project defined Track II interventions as ones in which the grant recipient was external to the country in question. However, Track II activities can be conducted by organisations from within the country in question, if they have adequate degrees of non-partisanship and trust from all parties. In general, the term Track I refers to activities not only sponsored but also conducted by governments and their representatives. By contrast, Track II refers to more or less unofficial activities, towards which different governments have different attitudes ranging from welcoming, through manipulative to hostile.

Accordingly, the choice of case studies covers these three thematic areas, but not by selecting Sida-supported projects that neatly fit one category each.

The case studies also have a geographic spread, distributed as they are in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, West Africa and Southern Africa.

Additional criteria in the selection of case studies were as follows:

- *Type of conflict*: the team opted for component studies on projects related to conflicts that have been high profile, complex and extended.
- *Contemporaneity*: the team opted to look at projects related to conflicts active in the 1990s.

Both these decisions were based on the view that, given the necessity for choice among a wide range of projects, these elements helped make the studies more relevant to Sida's needs and interests. While contemporaneity is straightforwardly given by the need for relevance to the concerns of today and tomorrow, the decision about high profile conflicts relates specifically to the concept of

coherence, derived from the ANALP methodology. *Coherence* has both an internal and an external aspect; the latter means the relationship with the activities of other agencies, governments, NGOs, etc. Low profile conflicts do not attract such widespread interest and provide a different and particular operating environment. On a future occasion, comparing activities in low profile and high profile conflict contexts could be a worthwhile exercise. For this study, given the constraints and stated objectives, the project team found it most logical and interesting to focus on the high profile cases.

- *Grant recipient*: the project team made conscious decisions to exclude various projects because of the grant recipient. In the case of International Alert, for example, there has been relatively recently a major international evaluation with far-reaching repercussions for the organization. This makes it both an unnecessary and a difficult subject of such studies now. In some cases, some team members have had close connections with involved organizations.
- *Availability of researchers*: as noted in the tender and the inception report, availability of the appropriate researchers to conduct a study within the given timeframe was an unavoidable criterion in case selection.

Taking all these factors into account, the project team proposed the following five component studies (see tender for outline information on each researcher named):

- In the Middle East, the support given to the Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information. Researcher: Hilde Henriksen Waage, PRIO (field and desk study).
- In the West Balkans, a group of local projects, each relatively small scale, funded and managed through the Olof Palme International Centre. Researcher: Ivar Evensmo, PRIO (field and desk study).
- In Liberia, support to Conciliation Resources' work on women's empowerment and to the Hirondelle Foundation's Star Radio project. Researcher: Joakim Gundel, CDR (field and desk study).
- In South Africa, Sida's support for a group of seven projects through Diakonia. Researchers: Bjorn Bengtson, SIPU International, & Jennifer Schirmer, PRIO (field and desk study).
- In East Timor, support for the dialogue project of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University. Researchers: Barbro Rönnmo, SIPU International, & Dan Smith, PRIO (desk study).

Taken together, these component studies meet our core criteria of thematic and geographic variety in projects related to high profile, complex and extended conflicts that were active during the 1990s. There is a basis for comparing the approaches towards partner organisations in the differences between the IPCRI project in Israel and the West Bank (working with a major local partner), the Olof Palme International Centre projects in the Balkans (where a deliberate decision was taken to work on a networking basis) and the Diakonia projects in South Africa (where an NGO takes on the responsibility of establishing local presence and partnerships).

In addition, the study refers to a separate and independent report that studies the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa using the same methodology and criteria, as described in the next section.

1.6 Methodology

The methodology of the case studies was developed on the basis of the Terms of Reference and the document *Sida's Evaluation Policy*, and drawing on the consortium members' experience in evaluation and in operational projects. In broad terms the methodology combines:

- A review of the available documentation, especially initial project proposals and the reports, both interim and final, of the project organisation;
- Field visits, contacts with as wide as possible (bearing in mind the time constraints) a group of local people with knowledge of the local situation both before and after the activity under review;
- Intensive interviews with representatives of all participant organisations, and representatives of identifiable stakeholder organisations.

It was decided by Sida and the consortium that if key individuals were not available for interview, that would not be allowed to affect the deadline for completion of the study. It was recognised that, in general, the amount of information that can be generated in a limited time is finite.

Sida's Terms of Reference recommended use of the criteria for evaluations developed by the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance (ALNAP). The consortium team absorbed the key ALNAP criteria into a broader framework. In order to develop a consistency of analysis and reporting the team framed their case studies and assessments on the basis of eight criteria, each with associated questions. These categories are briefly summarized in section 4 and are explained in detail in the inception report. The categories are as follows:

1. *Appropriateness*: The key question is whether and how Sida and the grant recipient explored how appropriate the proposed activity was to the circumstances. This criterion emphasises emphasises knowledge and understanding of the conflict dynamics and local situation.

2. *Coherence:* The issue is both external coherence (overlap, linkage, duplication, contradiction with other activities in the same regional context) and internal coherence (between overall policies, strategies, project goals and detailed activities).

3. *Connectedness:* This relates to sustainability of the project and the question whether a short-term activity complies with long-term development considerations.

4. *Gender Equality:* It is important both as an issue of principle and because of its particular relevance in the conflict context.

5. *Flexibility:* The capacity to adapt to changing circumstances is reflected in the willingness to alter major sub-goals, to add and delete activities as necessary. Important qualities are the speed of communication and response between the partners, and the existence of continuing dialogue between them.

6. *Location(s) of responsibility:* A clear and viable division of labour is a necessary element.

7. *Pressure for success/possibility of failure:* It is important to have realistic levels of ambition and to be willing to accept failure and learn from it. Thus, an important issue for assessment is the institutional attitudes to success and failure.

8. *Institutional competence/staff base:* Experience in support projects should contribute to the development of institutional competence in this area of activity. Learning processes should be a part of project work.

2. Bibliographical survey: 'The state of the art'

The consortium has produced a bibliography showing the state of the art in the evaluation of peacebuilding projects. What follows is a summary of this document.

Greater public awareness of armed conflict in many parts of the world has meant that conflict management, peacebuilding and related security issues have been forced into the consciousness of those parts of the international community that are concerned with development or humanitarian action. Arguably, conflict management and peacebuilding are on their way to being 'mainstreamed' in development policy and practice. The bulk of reports and evaluations forming the basis of this State of the Art/Annotated Bibliography are proof of this.

Sida's strategy appears to be in line with the current international thinking in the field, where conflict and human security is moving towards centre stage. The Sida strategy states that the over-arching aims of Swedish development cooperation – peace and justice, human rights and democratisation, poverty reduction, environment and gender equality – should be related to humanitarian aid. On the other hand, peacebuilding is becoming a concern for development as well as humanitarian assistance, which in some ways questions the traditional distinction between the two. By stating a will to take risks in the context of armed conflicts and to undertake longer term engagements, Sida also accepts the basic conditions of getting involved in efforts to prevent conflict escalation and in peacebuilding.

This bibliography is an input to Sida's strategy work. It focuses on evaluations and lessons learned from recent peacebuilding interventions and attempts to discern the main contours of the debate. The literature contributing to this debate includes evaluations, syntheses of peacebuilding policy and practice, existing State of the Art reports, and academic writings: these contributions often cross-cut each other. The material covers themes ranging from the local causes of complex political emergencies to the global context within which conflicts unfold, and from the overall aim of activities and instruments applied by agencies to the assumptions on which various activities and interventions are based.

Evaluation methodologies are still at a formative stage, but two main frameworks or sets of criteria are commonly used in current evaluations of conflict management and peacebuilding activities. The first might be characterised as a 'mainstream' approach, exemplified by the criteria set out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The second approach might be characterised as 'humanitarian', since it seeks to refine the more orthodox mainstream framework by injecting consideration of the human impact of interventions. This approach is exemplified by the criteria developed by the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance (ALNAP). These criteria are used in the bibliography, as in the case studies and overall assessment. The bibliography synthesizes the lessons learned according to the ALNAP criteria and provides illustrations for the discussion of these criteria and their applicability in evaluations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as for the refinement of more appropriate evaluation frameworks.

We take a broad view of 'peacebuilding', including not only interventions which have an explicit peace building objective, but also conventional development aid that is for the purpose of changing conditions and dynamics of conflict, or which may otherwise be informed by a peacebuilding perspective. The bibliographical survey summarizes recent evaluations and reports with an eye to the most important lessons learned, and reads across these in order to synthesize and systematize

the findings. While the bibliography aims to represent the main content of and differences between specific evaluations, the synthesis of the lessons learned aims at assessing critically the content of peacebuilding interventions in a broader perspective.

Four themes are frequently brought up in the evaluations with a bearing on the question of **appropriateness:** *Knowledge and understanding*; *local partners and channels of funding*; *timing*; and appropriate *methods*.

In regard to *knowledge and understanding*, the appropriateness of projects and programmes depends to a large degree on the ability to draw upon and analyse local and up-to-date knowledge, in particular about political conditions. This is essential for the choice of channels, instruments and methods. Besides, the flow of information is central for the ability to take advantage of 'windows of opportunity', and for essential contingency planning, which means frequent revision of programmes and the calculation of possible alternatives. Some studies find that there is a wealth of information (although often inconsistent), while other studies indicate that projects and programmes do not provide consistent information and documentation

While the identification of *local partners and channels of funding* is central to the appropriateness of projects, the question is which to choose, how to identify them, and what kind of interaction is the most appropriate for a given situation. 'Local ownership' of peacebuilding appears from the evaluations to be a precondition (and even a policy) for the appropriateness and possible impact of the support, be it at the community or the national level. When choosing partners, it is necessary to assess their capacity since many have proved to be too weak to undertake the tasks. The history and current position of the partners in specific settings should also be considered since trust is crucial for the appropriateness of peacebuilding projects. In addition, evaluations point to the problems national and local NGOs have had in adjusting to peace, coming from an armed conflict setting.

The use of humanitarian aid to promote a political agenda is not appropriate; there are other means for that end. However, the literature confirms that humanitarian aid agencies have a role to play in the promotion of local level peacebuilding, but also that humanitarian actions have an impact on conflict dynamics under all circumstances. This puts extra demands on their capacity to undertake conflict analysis and to be clear on the possible effects of their actions on peacebuilding.

The question of whether or not to support governments and engage in state-to-state cooperation in specific cases comes up several times, but the evaluations we studied disagree on the issue. There is much to gain from an early involvement and presence of donors and agencies. The lack of diplomatic representation may reduce the possible effects of overall support from a given donor country. However, the combination of different channels for different, complementary purposes, may well be the most appropriate way for supporting peacebuilding.

While the right *timing* is essential for the appropriateness of specific peacebuilding initiatives, the effort to get the timing right is complicated if the conflict parties have rigid political agendas. Donors have to be realistic in their expectations. In particular, experience from protracted and complex emergencies, which move back and forth between negotiations and resumption of hostilities, has to be taken into account when planning peacebuilding projects. Such complexities place strong demands on donors for flexible funding mechanisms and decision-making, and on their will to take risks. While risk-taking is essential, the literature emphasises the worth of attempts to develop means of managing the risk, such as joint funding by donors.

With regard to *methods*, a recurring observation is that since the all-encompassing politicisation of everyday-life is part of the nature of armed conflict, one technique in peacebuilding is to have

parties focus on technical and practical problem-solving (food, water, logistics). If successful, such projects may draw participants away from political rivalry. However, such projects can also be exploited opportunistically by conflict parties with no fundamental change of attitude towards each other. Another general point is that peacebuilding activities necessarily have to deal with all parties to the conflict in an even-handed way. In this respect some evaluations have pointed to the importance of analysing local power relations, identifying groups who are often marginalized from political process, such as women, youth, and displaced populations. Inclusion of local voices is important for evaluating peacebuilding effects and reconciliation, but this is often beyond the scope of evaluations. Few evaluations consider and analyse the gender aspects of peacebuilding efforts.

Some projects and programmes emphasize the importance of supporting particular groups of victims, or groups who have been politically excluded previously. While these projects in general are evaluated positively, donors and operating agencies have to deal with the risk of contributing to secondary conflicts. The evaluation literature indicates that the methods used in direct peacebuilding projects are often random, without theoretical foundation, barely standardized, and not subjected to systematic monitoring.

The demands on *coordination* are high in situations of armed conflict where many actors with different agendas and modes of operation are brought together in a short time. *Coherence* in general is low, and reports for donor-governments suggest that they have to establish a coherent policy and strategy which include development aid, humanitarian aid, and other means of peacebuilding, under the direction of one Ministry.

Several evaluations call for the elaboration of strategic frameworks. The huge number of agencies often operating in these situations complicates coordination and attempts at generating coherence. Coordination is a time-consuming and complicated task.

'Peace' is taken by some communal leaders to mean being heard and having means of securing their survival. This suggests the need to establish coherent policy, including economic measures in the finance and trade sectors. The lack of economic options is a huge problem for the reintegration of displaced persons and demobilised soldiers.

With regard to the criterion of *connectedness,* the general thrust of the evaluations is that some kind of involvement of government and national level actors is necessary for activities to have a positive long-term effect. It is considered an advantage if NGOs have a scope and a constituency that permit them to operate at community and national levels at the same time which enables them to bring issues and queries to national fora and actors. Inclusiveness is regarded a precondition for the long-term sustainability of peacebuilding.

Rigid relief/development and short/long-term distinctions should be overcome, and diplomatic representation and coordination by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is seen to enhance connectedness.

The concept of *coverage* may be ill-suited for the specific purpose of evaluating peacebuilding efforts since these are often dealing with strategic political issues. The question of coverage may be related to timeliness: when one donor or agency take a risk and invests in a peacebuilding project, other donors are likely to follow, thus magnifying the coverage of a given project. Coverage may be enhanced by looking into simple means can that extend the reach of programmes related to peace building. A legal reform programme may choose to focus on how informal or customary practices in the countryside can be incorporated, rather than focussing on the formal, legal system operating in the larger cities.

With regard to *effectiveness* and *efficiency,* the literature makes clear that the usual benchmarks employed in evaluating development projects do not apply to peacebuilding. Sometimes, efficiency has to be traded for peace and stability.

The most important *impact* of direct peacebuilding measures seems to be their ability to provide a space, a language, and a channel of communication, which is not engulfed in the polarized political agendas of the armed conflict. It is important to recognize that all aid at all times has an impact on peacebuilding, and the main question is how to manage these impacts. An important finding is that conditionality usually does not work. Peacebuilding projects may have unintended and even negative impacts, including the generation of 'secondary conflicts' between recipients and non-recipients. The single most important role for NGOs is to create spaces for dialogue and to assist in the development of local peace constituencies through transfer of skills, knowledge and resources.

Finally, there is a serious linkage between conflict management and peace building on one hand and the promotion of democracy on the other; each can have an impact on the other. There is scope for more explicit linkage in this arena.

The evaluations reviewed in the present study cover vast ground, but some issues have received surprisingly little attention. One such question is extent to which external factors that sustain armed conflicts. While confidence in sanctions as a means to bend conflicting parties towards peace processes is on the wane, an interest in developing instruments for the control of conflict-sustaining transnational networks seems to be emerging among donor governments. Sida has also stated this interest, which is of relevance for Swedish foreign policy in general.

Another arena that appears inadequately covered is the relationship between peacebuilding initiatives and the promotion of democracy. This arena is addressed implicitly in some projects – through promotion of human rights, for example – but is seldom dealt with head on.

A third issue that is absent from these evaluations is the consequence of *not* acting upon signs of emerging conflicts. Of relevance for the evaluation of current practices is the question of the consequences of not applying specific instruments in certain circumstances. Systematic comparative studies of similar situations with and without the application of a particular instrument are rare. There are still many untested assumptions behind interventions in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and with few exceptions, evaluations reproduce current norms and assumptions.

Finally, the evaluations studied here do not go much into the relationship between the specific contexts and dynamics of conflict on one hand, and the opportunities and effects of different types of peacebuilding instruments on the other. A typology of armed conflict and their different phases might be combined with a list of instruments that apply in the different situations, to produce what is often called a 'tool kit' of approaches and instruments. This is a controversial argument, however. Several evaluations emphasize that such a 'blueprint' approach is neither feasible nor desirable. They stress the differences between conflict, and argue for the importance of processes and mechanisms for obtaining knowledge, for undertaking conflict analysis, for strategic planning and for prioritisation.

3. Case study summaries

What follows is a brief precis of each of the five case studies. The complete studies are delivered as separate documents.

3.1 The Western Balkans: The Olof Palme Center

The peace process in the Balkans is a very complex one that over the years has involved a large number of initiatives, actors and channels in different parts of the region. It reflects the internal dynamics of the disintegration of Former Yugoslavia that has resulted in one crisis after another.

Sida started to support initiatives for working with human rights and democracy through the Swedish NGO channel in 1993/1994. Since 1997, an action programme for peace democracy and human rights has given direction to this support. The Olof Palme's International Centre (OPC) also has received funding for the Westen Balkan programme since 1997. The aims and objectives were to support civil society, provide input for training in conflict transformation, reconciliation and refugee return, improve the respect for human rights, support a free and independent press and the ideals of multicultural co-existence. This meant developing relationships with organizations working for such goals, in particular to those that were involved in gender and trade union matters, youth and networks working for peace, democracy and regional co-existence.

OPC has a financial frame agreement with Sida, a three-year revolving arrangement, indicating that every year OPC will receive approximately 7 million SEK in project support after sending an annual application. The funding is not specific to any particular project or organization, but based upon the package presented in the proposal from OPC.

The Sida support to democratic forces in the Balkans is quite impressive if the efforts of OPC are added together with what other Swedish NGOs, such as the Swedish Helsinki Committee and "Kvinna till Kvinna" have done with funds from the same source. Local partners generally seem to agree that the support has empowered them because it has been based on an authentic dialogue. However, there are also major problems with this Sida programme. It lacks clearly defined objectives and priorities. It suffers from random interpretations of the direction it should hold and follow and lacks fixed standards and norms for how the implementation should be measured. A question to ask is, how do we know if the programme meets the requirements when there is no real analysis of the needs in the given context and vague parameters for achievements. In addition when there is no real definition of "civil society", it is also hard to know what to expect form the organizations that operate within the context.

As the situation in the Balkans moves from conflict to post-conflict, the aid system is also changing. This is reflected in the growing presence of Sida personnel, either in separate offices or as integrated staff in the Swedish embassies, which strengthens the quality in of Swedish involvement in the area. A warning, however, should be sent to embassy personnel to the effect that they should not take over the contacts with the civil society and associated organizations from Swedish volunteer organizations. The possible synergy of merging so-called Track I and Track II activities is better served by letting voluntary organizations of OPC's type – carved out of their own historical struggle for social justice and with the necessary political skills developed from participating in their own political arena – operate independently. Such organizations are in a better position than professional diplomats and aid technocrats to create the trust and confidence to local implementing partners vital in the "peace business" at local level. The best results seem to appear when the three profes-

sions mentioned above act out of their own special competence and come together on their own instead of being forced to merge by arguments for better co-ordination and more professional project management.

OPC appears to have a good conceptual understanding of "civil society" and of the ways that it in practice can contribute to creating peace and reconciliation in the Western Balkans. It is however a weakness that this understanding is by large intuitively perceived by individuals in the organization, implicit in project documents but not analyzed in all OPC's main policy papers. So a study of the organizational documents might leave a strong impression that there was a gap between the lofty rhetoric on support for democracy and peace and actual activities. The combination of document study with field visits, however, provide ample evidence of the quality of the practical work.

The long term perspective of OPC work cannot be emphasized enough, nor the political nature of its work. However, improvement in the internal working methodology is needed. Part of the problem today is the workload resulting form dealing with so many partners. More networking is recommended. In Western Balkans, the partners of OPC have largely unexplored potential for interesting joint projects. Also, OPC member basis in Sweden is a resource that hardly is seen from the partner perspective.

3.2 Israel and the West Bank: The Israeli/Palestine Centre for Research and Information (IPCRI)

The Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) was founded in August 1989, prior to the time when working on Israeli-Palestinian peace became fashionable through the Madrid Conference and the Oslo Peace Process of 1993. In the aftermath of the two latter events, Sida became involved in various confidence building projects involving both the Israelis and the Palestinians. One can say that IPCRI was not born out of the Oslo peace process, but rather out of the *intifada*. This longer perspective and the fact that it was already established and active made it all the more interesting for Sida. Furthermore, IPCRI was a joint Israeli-Palestinian project from the outset and has managed to keep that structure.

The center is still managed by two directors – one Israeli and one Palestinian – and the entire organization is formally structured around this power-sharing principle. However, it remains uncertain whether this formal structure is reflected in a joint partnership in reality as well.

Apart from fitting into Sida's general framework, the IPCRI did also fulfill the formal criteria. IPCRI was *contemporary* and met Sida's requirement of *Track II interventions*, *a locally based peace process* and *an institutional capacity building effort.*

In 1998 and 1999, Sida provided core support, MSEK 2, to the IPCRI. Moreover, Sida had provided core support to IPCRI ever since 1991 although with smaller amounts. Starting with SEK 150 000 in 1991 the amounts gradually increased and reached MSEK 2 per year for 1998–1999, after a withholding of money in 1997 due to lack of reporting. The same amount will be granted for 2000–2001, which is equal to about 20 percent of IPCRI's total budget.

During the period, the IPCRI contained five core activities; the Strategic Unit, the Peace Building Unit, Pathways into Reconciliation, the Law and Development Unit, and the Water and Environment. Except for a few programme directors, most of the staff was hired on project-by-project basis. The financing is similarly on a project-by-project basis, leaving Sida as the only core budget support thereby making it extremely important to IPCRI's continued existence. From the very beginning, there has been a close dialogue between Sida and the IPCRI, ensuring the granting of money, the increasing of the sum as well although grants were withheld in 1997.

Being a project-based institution, the IPCRI has a tendency to become unfocused and diffuse. Moreover, it tends to initiate many projects without having them financially secured. This is a means to survival but ought to be limited to the center's basic competence areas, especially when moving into new fields with huge projects. Because of this, Sida's funds work like risk capital for IPCRI. This is problematic. It is, on the one hand, necessary to allow new initiatives and to move the institution into new fields. On the other hand, there are considerable risks involvedwhen one increases overhead costs and uses the money to secure both the institution as well as move into new arenas of action. It is unclear if this has been discussed between IPCRI and Sida.

The quality and sustainability of IPCRI's work is very difficult to assess. As long as the work is centered on the crucial issues in the final status talks and is reflected on the negotiating principle, one can assume it has a qualitative as well as a sustainable impact. But again, this is difficult to assess without doing an extensive evaluation of IPCRI's research and information. Perhaps the most interesting aspect here is whether IPCRI is economically sustainable, i.e. would would it survive without the grants from Sida? Along the same lines, would the work improve qualitatively if the grants from Sida were to be increased? At present, one can easily assume that IPCRI is far too dependent on the grants from Sida. Again, an improved financial situation could also ensure more room for maneuver and improve the center's research and general competence by concentrating more strictly on core areas of competence.

The relations between IPCRI and Sida are close and characterized by an open, continuing and fruitful dialogue accompanied with a flexible approach. The question is not whether the two parties can cooperate, but rather the opposite, i.e. if sufficient distance is held. There is a danger of complacency between Sida, IPCRI and the Swedish Consulate. IPCRI fits the Swedish goal for development to the West Bank and Gaza, and it gives a feeling of giving direct support to the peace process. But how locally based and how much local support does an institution like IPCRI in fact have? In short, what kind of legitimacy does IPCRI have locally and regionally? In addition, one part of Sida and the Swedish Consulate seems to be lacking, namely, a critical approach both to how IPCRI runs its business and to the quality and originality of its work. This may not be a problem at the end of the day, but it ought to be put on the agenda and examined further.

One can also ask the question on what criteria Sida chose and continues to support IPCRI and not one of the other NGOs in the region. Is IPCRI's work more important than the work done by the others? These critical questions are beyond the scope of this study but they ought to be looked into and put into a comparative perspective in an extensive evaluation of all Sweden's support to the region.

3.3 Liberia: STAR Radio and Bridges for Peace

3.3.1 STAR Radio
Sida was not involved in the STAR Radio project at its inception in 1997. The Swiss-based NGO, Hirondelle Foundation (HF) was asked to evaluate the need for setting up an independent radio station in Liberia in March 1997 by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), an American NGO and beneficiary of USAID grants for assisting the transition to democracy. Thus, the original purpose of Star Radio was to cover the period up to the elections in order to support the democracy building process. However, it only came on air 2 days before the elections, and had no impact on it. But, afterwards, under the circumstances, the short-term perspective was expanded to support the democracy building process in general with a serious unbiased news-broadcasting station. The initial funding came from USAID through IFES, and USAID was the prime donor until 1998. Consequently, in February 1999, Sida accepted to co-fund the Star Radio together with

USAID and the Dutch Development Agency (NEDA). Sida accepted the project description at "face value", based on the written proposal, and did not seek to influence or alter it.

The STAR Radio programme was based on news and features produced by a team of 38 Liberian journalists and "language announcers" broadcasting in 14 vernacular languages as well as in English, Liberian English and French. The FM coverage area ranged well into the rural areas where thousands of internally displaced were settled. According to an audience survey conducted by the local professional consultancy firm, Subah-Belleh Associates, STAR Radio was highly valued by most of the Liberians that it reached. But, the GoL felt challenged by STAR Radio and therefore took advantage of the funding structure of the station (based on foreign grants and a lack of clarity in its ownership) to close down the station for one month in January 1998. Star Radio has now been closed since another governmental shutdown of the station in March 2000. Today it is only Sida that has released funds, while USAID and NEDA are withholding theirs until the station is eventually reopened.

The overall objectives were connected to a longer term vision of the project from its inception in 1997 and beyond the fiscal year of 1999. The goal was to address an imbalance of biased and partisan media services through a national and regional service of factual and objective information.

The need for a station such as Star Radio in the Liberian situation is evident, and there is no doubt over the appropriateness of the project. However, the importance of local ownership of projects is emphasised by the Star Radio project. Sustainability of Star Radio could have been achieved by establishing connections with the GoL, which simultaneously might have secured the station from closure. On the other hand, such connections would undermine the rationale of the station (providing people with unbiased information and news and a level playing field during political elections). While the actions of the GoL by closing the station were self-fulfilling, because it delayed the transfer of ownership of Star Radio, it also illustrated the problematic side of donor ownership: assets of a project belong to the donor as long as the project is funded by that donor. This raises another point, namely that in a case where there are several donors involved in a project, it becomes more difficult for donors to address problems. The result is often that donors seldom are "reaching-out" to projects, but instead, their support to projects takes on the character of an "a-la-carte menu" from which the preferred ones can be supported. Sida's principled support by valuing freedom of speech in Liberia over bureaucratic regulations regardless of whether the contract is fulfilled or not, has contributed to the survival of Star Radio—thus far.I

3.3.2 Bridges to Peace

Three leading members of the Liberian Women's Initiative conceived of the "Bridges to Peace" project during the April 1996 crisis. They found that if women could be strengthened to intervene in family, local and community level conflict, much confusion and escalation of conflict may be prevented. By providing women with skills to deal with traumas from the civil war and to enable reconciliation between local people who had been pitted against each other due to the war, they can become a vital force in rehabilitating local communities into again becoming well-functioning societies. Thus, the idea was to go out to the communities in order to identify potential women participants for the peace and reconciliation workshops. UNHCR supported the first Bridges to Peace pilot project from September 1997 until February 1998. Later, together with Conciliation Resources, LWI wrote a proposal for the extension and continuance of the pilot project, which led to Sida funding the Bridges to Peace programme in the fiscal year of 1998. Unfortunately, problems within the LWI put a halt to the project. With the discrete intervention of CR, incorrect use of funds was stopped, and funding came to a halt until LWI had sorted out their internal problems. LWI held a convention and elected new leadership, which eventually solved the problem. The

project could then re-commence in June 1999. The Bridges to Peace project was rescheduled to end in August 2000.

The need for reconciliation and peace building in Liberia was evident, and the idea to focus on the role of women in this connection was very relevant. But the focus on a micro-credit scheme, which was not funded, did raise the issue of what was more important: the workshops or aiding women with traditional developmental schemes? While the economic burdens of women are real, Sida made what can be viewed as the right decision in not supporting the micro-credit scheme because of several factors. First, the capacity of LWI to administrate a scheme like that was doubtful, and the interests in it may have had nothing to do with reconciliation because of the recruitment and legitimisation effects at the local level.

LWI realised that the generation of a sense of local ownership of projects is crucial to their success. To achieve this, LWI first had to deal with war-trauma and relief-dependency- related lack of initiative. Furthermore, LWI were very conscious about ensuring that the participants took owner-ship of the workshops. It is also important to note that projects such as Bridges to Peace are only relevant if they can build on the existing capacities of women. It should be emphasised that in terms of connectedness, Star Radio was a donor-initiated project while LWI's Bridges to Peace project originated from LWI themselves. Projects such as Bridges to Peace do rely too much on the capacity of intermediary grant recipient international NGOs such as CR. It is CR that has the capacity to write proposals and maintain contact with the donors. The inability of local partners to raise funds is an inhibition to long-term sustainability.

The flexibility of Sida as well as CR during the crisis of LWI ensured the continuation of the project, through their discrete intervention. By not cancelling the grant, but withholding it until LWI had solved its problems, they encouraged the women to find a solution and not give up. The division of labour (Sida is the donor and CR is the grant recipient and thus responsible to Sida) proved to work during the internal crisis of LWI, where Sida entrusted CR to work out a solution, resulting in the withholding of funds until LWI themselves had solved their crisis.

3.4 South Africa: Diakonia

Since the end of apartheid and the signing of the National Peace Accord in September 1991, and throughout the 1990s, the political conditions in South Africa have meant that NGOs and donor agencies have had to shift their priorities from those based primarily on human rights violations under apartheid to contending with a more socially-motivated violence of institutional failure.

It is easy, but not helpful, to be critical in retrospect of the priorities of the international donor community, including Sida, and of whether the funded projects were sufficiently analysed and focused. At the birth of the new South Africa, no one could count on that the vision of a rainbow nation would be able to handle all possible conflicts. Violent action could not be ruled out, on regional and local level.

Co-operation with Diakonia-South Africa is based on Sida's policy to work and channel support through major Swedish organisations with a long history of working on human rights and democra-cy issues in South Africa, with an emphasis on dialogue and mutual understanding. This pro-gramme combines a long-term development perspective with a conflict perspective, taking into account that new democratic processes are highly sensitive and can fail and escalate into armed conflicts. Through their Programme for Democracy, Peace building, Democratization, and Respect for Human Rights share a place in the interplay between the state and the civil society.

Diakonia supports a wide range of projects under the umbrella "Conflict Transformation", expanding its portfolio of partner organizations by including a number of previously directly Sida-funded projects. The projects studied were:

1. Victory Sonqoba Theatre Company, Alexandria
2. Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg
3. Diakonia Council of Churches, Durban
4. Network of Independent Monitors, Durban
5. Project for Conflict Resolution, Port Elisabeth
6. Centre for Conflict Resolution; Saamspaan project, Cape Town
7. UMAC; RDP project, Cape Town

These projects are funded under the Sida/DESA support to Democracy and Human Rights. The basis for selecting these projects was that they would represent a broad spectre of different organizational structures, approaches and methodologies. Our study of Diakonia in South Africa did not indicate that other or more projects should be studied. In aggregate, the projects represent a sufficient and typical base of projects containing elements of support to peace building and conflict resolution. The projects strive to alleviate tension in South Africa, they are mostly community based and they connect to the general transformation objectives of South Africa. In the new South Africa, the legitimate government has taken over tasks previously assigned to and driven by NGO's. The role of the NGO's as well as the scope and content of their work is under constant change, exacerbated by the fact the their competent human resources – mostly from the previously disadvantaged groups – have left for greener pastures in government. NGO's use increasing internal resources for funding purposes and they naturally adapt to the changes priorities of the donors. All of the projects claim that they are working with peace building and conflict resolution interventions. True and important as it may be, the projects studied address violence and conflict primarily on the community level within the context of South Africa being a violent nation; the projects focus on decreasing crime and the abuse of women and children using a variety of methods like dialogues, creating meeting places between racial groups, income generating projects and training of trainers. The rationale for this approach is that anger and violence is caused by unequal distribution of resources and abuse of people.

This scale of Sida support to NGOs is impressive, and many of the local partners agree that support from Diakonia is essential for their work. There are a number of issues, however, with the Sida strategy and funding. In order for Sida to play a more active role on conflict resolution in South Africa, a more structured dialogue with Diakonia is recommended in order to help steer the process in the desired direction, and for mutual capacity building between the two organizations. More frequent networking with its partner organisations is also recommended.

Additionally, Sida should seek to define and analyze the present strategies of conflict management and peace building in conjunction with the action programme for democracy/human rights in a South African context and inform the partner organizations. This would allow Sida to play a more active role in the process. The role of the donors can extend beyond the provisioning of financial support for projects. Donors can provide an extra impulse in the peace building process by stimulating conferences, agenda setting and developing directories. In the same vein, Sida could work as a link between its partner organizations and other international donors by promoting international exchange between the actors operating in a region.

While Diakonia has had to narrow its focus to specific geographic areas of conflict resolution, for both restructuring as well as financial reasons, in order to play a more active role in the process and gain the necessary competence to analyze the situation, there is a problem with this. The focus should continue to be on the most violent province, KwaZulu Natal, as previously recommended, but the dynamic of violence as a cross-regional flow of arms and jobs between Johannesburg hostels and KwaZulu Natal needs to be seriously included in order to provide a better understanding of causes and prevention of violent conflict. The recent shift by Sida – and other donors – towards Kwazulu Natal is not well understood by NGOs that are working in other regions with peace building and conflict resolution oriented programmes. They claim that they are doing exactly what is required for long term and sustainable peace in the society, by working on community level, with people and through people.

3.5 East Timor: Dialogue Activities of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University

The Department of Peace & Conflict Research, Uppsala University (PCR) has received funds from Sida for activities from 1997 into 2000 to help foster dialogue between contending groups in the conflict over East Timor and the struggle for independence from Indonesia. The involvement of PCR began with an invitation from the East Timor Study Group (ETSG), an independent group focused on democracy-building, human rights and peaceful conflict resolution in East Timor. The aim was to hold seminars at which the participants would elucidate different forms of self-government. The working group consisted of persons from a wide range of professions and communities including scholarly, parliamentary, clerical, student activists, the media, and the military.

During 1997 and 1998, PCR facilitated the seminars in collaboration with Australian National University in Canberra and the American University in Washington. The UN was represented at all seminars, without playing an active role in the process. The last seminar in this series was held in Jakarta 1999. Shortly thereafter President Habibie declared that East Timor should have the opportunity to choose between independence and autonomy. At this point, it was impossible to continue the seminars.

Following the deployment of the UN force in East Timor in September 1999, the dialogue process was re-started with a meeting in Singapore in November 1999. Further meetings were held in December 1999 (Tokyo), January 2000 (Singapore) and August 2000 (Washington, DC). These meetings brought together representatives of all sides in the conflict, including the Indonesian military and the armed forces of the pro-independence movement. Discussions at the meetings have contributed directly to formal negotiations.

In 1998-1999, Sida made grants totalling SEK 1.7 million to support the dialogue workshops, followed by a grant of SEK 2 million for the project for 2000 and 2001. Other funders for the workshops are the United States Institute for Peace, the Ford Foundation and the Australian Agency for International Development.

The value of dialogue projects lies in their capacity to address how people think and interact. Whether conducted with elite and leadership groups or with grass roots NGO activists, dialogue projects can lead over a period to new ideas, insights and the possibility of creative solutions to intractable problems. However, dialogue projects do not easily fit the organisational norms of Sida. Identifying and measuring success are different tasks in dialogue projects, which are basically concerned with people's consciousness, than in emergency and development aid projects. The analysis of the project reveals several difficulties that did not hamper this project, but should be taken seriously when considering how to undertake such projects in the future.

4. Analysis and Assessment

The following is an analysis and assessment of the lessons learned from the five case studies of Sida supported projects, following the criteria used in the case studies. We make brief reference to the findings of the separate report on the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa under the heading of each criterion.

4.1 Appropriateness

The key question identified under this criterion is whether and how Sida and the grant recipient explored how appropriate the proposed activities were to the circumstances. It depends to a large degree on the ability to draw upon and analyze local and up-to date information, in particular about the political conditions. The *knowledge and understanding* of a particular situation is thus not only a key element in establishing the prospects of the project having an impact. They can also come to play a major role in the relationship between the donor agency and the grant recipient before and under the project.

4.1.1 Lessons learned from the case studies

A. Balkans
In the Balkans, the Olof Palme Centre (OPC) can draw on a wide network of contacts. This interface is the combined result of political party connections, international labour networks and personal contacts from frequent travels by leading individuals in the OPC. All this connects OPC to an NGO community that is a complex mix of different organizations working for different purposes with different approaches. Drawing on this, OPC has a good knowledge and conceptual understanding of civil society and of the ways that it can in practice contribute to building peace and reconciliation in the Western Balkans. This basis for the appropriateness of its activities, however, is only implicit in OPC documents. It is not analyzed in OPC's main policy paper. There are some indications that the understanding of civil society that underpins OPC's work is intuitive among the key individuals involved. If so, it would be hard to pass on, and hard for the institution to learn from it. This comment does not detract from our conclusion that the OPC programme appears most appropriate to the conditions in which it operates and which it is trying to alter.

B. Israel and the West Bank
Sida's support to Israeli/Palestine Centre for Research and Information (IPCRI) was initially completely in line with the terms and objectives set out by Sida. As time has passed, however, and as events in the region have fluctuated between war and something approximating peace, IPCRI seems to have become less focused and more diffuse in its activities. There is no lack of knowledge of the political situation in Israel and the Palestinian areas, neither among the IPCRI leadership nor in Sida. And through its representatives in the region, Sida was also aware of the evolution of IPCRI's work as it happened and opted to continue to support IPCRI. In broad terms, the organisation's programme and activities remain important and appropriate, and Sida's continued core budget support is important given that most other donors focus on project support.

C. Liberia
In Liberia it is difficult to measure appropriateness given the situation in the country. Support to the *Star Radio* was geared towards strengthening the democracy building process prior to the elections, but made no or little impact on this process as the radio came on air 2 days before the election.

Sida had faith in the project and did not seek to influence or alter it; it applied a discrete and principled approach toward the project. The non-interventionist approach was regarded positively by the grant recipient and the implementing organization, but after the government closed the station, it is worth asking the retrospective question as to whether it would have been wise to move more quickly towards local ownership of the project.

In the case of *Bridges to Peace*, the important role of women in reconciliation and peace building in Liberia motivated the funding for the Bridges to Peace project. There was a high level of confidence in the Conciliation Resources analysis of the situation and need for assessment, and Sida did not intervene in the process. As for the project itself, internal crises within the Liberian Women Initiative (LWI), and not the appropriateness of the programme made it difficult to carry out the project, but after the re-construction in 1999 of the Initiative the capacity increased.

D. South Africa: Diakonia

In general, the projects supported through Diakonia are appropriate in light of the circumstances in South Africa. The projects have focused on alleviating tension and defusing conflict on local and community level. The basic planning premises were was based on addressing probable sources of conflict, in an analysis shared by many donors and the government.

For Diakonia in South Africa, the problem is how to balance the viability of its projects in a volatile and changing local set of circumstances with the demands and focus set by funders such as Sida. What is of note in the South African case is that both Sida and Diakonia would have been helped by a more structured dialogue to help steer the process locally. A more active role of Sida in the analysis and strategy development would have added an extra impulse to the peace building process. More structured, but quiet 'interventions' would help the local organisation to more narrowly focus its operations and to gain greater competence through its local activities and its interactions with Sida.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)

The stated intentions and goals of ISS appear to be appropriate in the situation in South Africa and in southern Africa more generally. However, there is some uncertainty about whether stated aims are fulfilled, and about whether ISS seeks a monitoring role or aims for direct impact in preventing conflict escalation.

F. East Timor

The original purpose of funding the East Timor project was to support the dialogue established among the East Timorese parties and create an environment for discussions facilitated by the participation of the Department of Peace & Conflict Resolution, Uppsala University (PCR). After the UN force entered, the project became a political dialogue project contributing directly to Track I negotiations. The source of this transformation lay in the views and wishes of the participants themselves. PCR had enough knowledge to satisfy the criterion of appropriateness, though we note that the criterion was less demanding in 1997 when PCR's engagement in the project began, than it was later, by which time PCR's own competence had increased. Largely, Sida has relied on PCR and trusted in its established relationship with PCR.

The project in East Timor raises another important issue. The value of dialogue projects lies in their capacity to address how people think and interact and can lead over a period to new ideas, insights and the possibility of creative solutions to intractable problems. Such a project, though, does not fit easily into the organisational norms of Sida because it is difficult to measure success

even where it may well be appropriate. The question such a project raises in regard to appropriateness is how knowledgeable does the funder need to be to support such a project and should it limit its funding only to those projects about which it is expert?

4.1.2 General reflections.

The criterion asks us to consider the extent to which the project's implementing agency is in tune with local conditions, and the degree to which Sida can inform itself about local conditions and find a productive role that fits its strategic perspectives and preferences. Critical issues then are not only the capacity of project leaders to analyse local conditions and calibrate the project to them, but also the extent to which local organizations are able to balance local circumstances with the demands of funders. Sida can play a critical role here in showing the flexibility to recognise and respond to local conditions. To this end, it would be worth Sida considering what it could do to help to build greater competence within local organizations, as well as within Sida itself, to remain both informed and responsive.

Taking the case studies overall, the projects appear appropriate to the circumstances in the country or region, and to the level of knowledge of the donor agency at the time of funding. A factor that complicates an assessment of appropriateness is that some of the projects were not originally launched as peace building or conflict resolution projects. Rather, they were launched as democracy and human rights projects. Some of the projects – like some of the Diakonia projects in South Africa – have for various reasons added more typical conflict resolution components as they have evolved. Some have changed focus, sometimes dramatically, during the period under consideration. Though our brief case studies elicited some uncertainties in the case of IPCRI, we can say that even as the projects have evolved and conditions have shifted, none of the projects looked at has become inappropriate.

OPC and Diakonia acted as intermediary organizations and took on Sida's role with regard to judging the projects in terms of appropriateness. There are numerous advantages to all sides in this practice of "subcontracting." There could also be a problem, however, in terms of the intermediary organizations' ability to make judgements objectively – or at least, disinterestedly – as to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of project activities. In our case studies, however, we would regard this as a potential problem, one of which Sida should be aware, but not one requiring current remedial action.

Sida assesses appropriateness on the basis of project proposals before making decisions about funding. Nevertheless, the level of knowledge and understanding of local conditions among the different desk officers at Sida varies considerably. A high degree of trust on the part of Sida and its partners provides the grant recipient with quite a lot of latitude in which to analyse the situation and decide on appropriate interventions For instance, in the East Timor case the lack of specific knowledge about the process and region and the lack of previous involvement was counterbalanced by Sida's confidence in PCR. This trust contributed to a less restrictive practice within Sida, which was clearly justified by the outcome, and allowed Sida to support activities where its own institutional knowledge as to the appropriateness of the project was weak. In the case of "Bridges to Peace", however, more involvement by Sida in the assessment of the LWI would have detected the potential mishandling of the project sooner.

There appears to be a deficit among desk officers in general when it comes to understanding of the achievements and impacts of projects. This may be because reports from the grant recipients are often vague and unsatisfactory, and do not follow the requested structure of reporting. This might indicate a need to change the reporting system to make it applicable to all Sida-funded organiza-

tions. Or it may be because the inherently unpredictable and often uncontrollable nature of conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities is not properly addressed by prevailing concepts, general project experience and staff competence within Sida. This could indicate a need to explore staff training programmes and institutional development. We would also place emphasise a different factor: the very volatile character of conflict management and peace building, reflecting the shifting political landscape, requires that desk officers be constantly updated on what is happening both in the project and in the wider context, in order to be able to respond efficiently to proposals and reports.

4.2 Coherence

Coherence is a key element in the strategic development of projects and of the policies by which support for projects is granted or denied. Coherence is analyzed under two dimensions; external (overlap, linkage, duplication, contradiction with other activities in the same regional context) and internal (between the overall policies, strategy, project goals and detailed activities.) It relates to the demands of co-ordination of activities within the donor agency and between the various actors operating on the arena.

4.1.1 Lessons learned from the case studies

A. Balkans.
In the Balkans, it was unclear whether there are links between the activity in question and others in the same context. What is clear is that an informal network has emerged between some of the OPC partners across the territory of Former Yugoslavia although not in Kosovo. OPC is conscious about the needs to create links and avoid overlap with other activities. There seems to be good consistency between Sida's overall policy, OPCs general goals, pre-feasibility studies, project goals, and implementing strategy.

B. Israel and the West Bank
There are a number of institutions, programmes and projects in Israel and the West Bank with similar general aims and objectives to IPCRI's – i.e., to support the peace process. Many of these organizations appeared in the aftermath of the Oslo accord in 1993, but IPCRI was established much earlier and as a consequence of the *Intifada*. Thus, IPCRI is not regarded as part of the opportunistic peace industry in Israel and the West Bank. It seems beyond doubt that IPCRI's goal of supporting the peace process has been fulfilled and there exists a strong internal coherence between Sida's own goals and its support of IPCRI. Externally, there also seems to be a strong coherence between the activities of IPCRI and other agencies, governments, NGOs, etc. Sida's core support to IPCRI matches and complements the project-based support of other governments and agencies

C. Liberia
In Liberia, *Star Radio* evolved from being an externally run organization in the "building up" phase to gradually delegating responsibility, competencies and decision-making to the Liberian board, direction and staff. The project appears in every way coherent with the strategies of Sida, and in relation to other activities in the areas. There is high external coherency as the project itself was build upon the idea of partnership with NGOs and civil society associations. The programmes of the station were intended to reinforce their activities.

The LWI projects in general incorporate a high level of external coherence where relevant. They have drawn on the experience and expertise of other international and local NGOs for both train-

ing and facilitation of workshops. The Bridges to Peace programme is closely connected with the other LWI activities. Since the re-start of the project in 1999, LWI managed to maintain level a high degree of both internal and external coherence.

D. South Africa: Diakonia

The support to all projects within the Diakonia framework appears to fit Sida's goals and strategies at the time of funding. The portfolios of activities within the selected organizations and in aggregate are not always strategically mixed. Other donors with diverging priorities often fund the organizations. Discussions within the organizations and dialogue with Sida have brought this to the surface. Sida and Diakonia have tried to identify specific and discernable activities or groups of activities that fit Sida's priorities

There was a lack of reflection about the creation of the Democracy Programme and its implications for co-operation between Diakonia and the partner organisations. It was noted that Sida detected a lack of correspondence and mutual understanding about the agreement between Diakonia and Sida.

There is a problem when trying to measure the coherence of projects in South Africa, as there is such a multiplicity of actors operating in the field. Given this complexity, it is advisable to establish a more structured and consistent level of communication, which allows for discussions and input by both organisations between the project proposal and the implementation phase. Moreover, there is a need to develop a set of guidelines to measure coherence when deciding upon project proposals; this, too, requires a closer relationship with the international donor community.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)

Good communication with the Swedish MFA forms a solid basis for internal coherence, especially in view of ISS' focus on policy issues, and ISS's stated goals and intentions fit well with the MFA's strategic approach. However, problems for internal coherence arise in view of ISS's openly stated high level of ambitions and apparently project-driven nature, leading to a weakness when it comes to strategic planning.

F. East Timor

When it comes to external coherence in the East Timor dialogue project, PCR and Sida appear to have begun by relying on their awareness that the workshop participants were knowledgeable and would not go in for unnecessary activities. As to internal coherence, this was lacking within the structures and procedures at Sida. The project is of an unusual type for the agency. While this did not cause problems for this project, it is an issue to address for the future and for other such projects. If Sida is to make space for projects that fall outside its normal frameworks and do not fit its normal procedures, those framework and operating procedures will have to adjust.

4.2.2 General reflections

Owing to the different nature of the projects under review, coherence has different meanings and applications. The circumstances of operation differ widely: the South African projects have operated in a relatively peaceful environment compared with those in East Timor, Liberia and the Balkans. Because of the great variety of projects and project approaches, as well as relationships between Sida and the local-funded group or project, it would be difficult and probably misleading to attempt to measure coherence or judge it against strict, pre-set benchmarks. What the case studies make clear is the need for Sida and its local counterparts to develop criteria for coherence between themselves and in relation to the particular local circumstances in which a project team finds itself and to which it is responding.

With regard to external coherence, Sida generally relies on the awareness and knowledge of the grant recipient that the projects and activities are not duplicated or contradictory to other valuable efforts. This is most evident in the cases where the grant recipient is not the implementing organization, but has the role of a facilitator and intermediary. In this case the extent of communication between Sida and the grant recipient becomes crucial, in regard to the reporting, financial statements and meetings and other correspondence, in order to draw upon the specific knowledge of each institution.

An important condition for accomplishing external coherence is networking and co-operation among the different actors. This is especially important in regard to larger organizations that administrate and facilitate several different projects under the same heading, as is the case with Diakonia in South Africa. The grant recipient should accordingly act as an integral link between different organizations, setting agendas for meetings and workshops, where the considerations, objectives and goals defined by Sida are discussed.

With regard to internal coherence, the question is whether the project and the accomplishments are coherent with the strategies, goals, and objectives of Sida. Apart from areas where the projects are ploughing new ground for Swedish development assistance, the projects are generally highly coherent with the present strategies of conflict resolution and peace building. But, with regard to other policies, such as the action programme for gender, there seems to be rather little coherence. The issue is also whether the accomplishments follow the expectations and presumed project goals set out in the proposals. This depends upon the impact and effect of these projects, which are especially difficult to measure in regard to conflict management and peace building.

In the case of the East Timor dialogue project, the project did not fall under Sida's current framework or procedures. The case study found no evidence that this damaged the project, and was in general supportive of Sida's decision to support the project despite the lack of internal coherence. However, lack of internal coherence could mean a lack of potential for institutional learning by Sida. Each dialogue project it supported would then mean a process of learning from scratch, when for at least some elements it should be possible to learn from the archives. In the immediate context, a lack of internal coherence is not a problem; in the longer term it may be. However, Sida must be careful to ensure that it does not achieve internal coherence by distorting the fluid essence of dialogue projects.

4.3 Connectedness

The issue of connectedness relates to the sustainability of the project and the question of whether a short-term activity is compatible with long-term development considerations. It raises the question both of the project impact and the terms in which local partnership is considered.

4.3.1 Lessons learned from the case studies:

A. Balkans
In the Balkans, OPC partners vary considerably in terms of their emphasis on internal participatory decision-making and leadership style. With a historical legacy of authoritarian organisational behaviour, anything else would have been highly surprising. Thus, the yardstick used to evaluate connectedness in the short term has been the degree of ownership over the activities and the empowerment of those involved. Only a longitudinal study can document such changes over time. Without a diacronic perception we can only say that giving support on local premises and showing trust in the implementing partner has earned OPC a high reputation as a real partner, and not only as a donor.

The local organisations are all dependent on foreign funding, but not exclusively on Swedish funding. Sustainability would be more easily and more stably achieved if there were a fully rounded process of normalisation linked to general economic improvements in the society, coupled with the restoration of government institutions able to collect taxes and to redistribute funds to altruistic activities. This, however, is almost to say that the projects will be sustainable when they are no longer necessary.

B. Israel and the West Bank

As long as IPCRI's research and overall activities are related to crucial issues in the final status talks, such as the future of Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees, and as long as they include important figures on both sides, it may be assumed that they also will continue to have an impact on the discussions connected to finding a peaceful solution. However, this is only an assumption. If such an impact is to be evaluated, IPCRI's research and information must first be looked into in order to check the quality and originality of the output. Second, there must be some consideration of whether IPCRI's research and information is reflected at the negotiating table. The quality of IPCRI's work is a difficult one to assess, taking the limits of this assessment into account. An extensive evaluation and assessment of IPCRI's research, programmes and meetings is a task that needs to be carried out.

However, IPCRI's *economic sustainability* seems to be the most crucial question at stake here. If IPCRI is not able to find some new financial sources, the institution may be bankrupt in the near future. So, despite positive judgements on aspects such as relevance, importance and an assumed impact on the peace process, the aspect of economic sustainability is the crucial issue for IPCRI. It may be that Sida could do help by directing a proportion of its grant aid towards IPCRI's core – professional competence and administrative infrastructure – with less of it being used as risk capital for new projects in which other donors are not very interested.

C. Liberia

The key issue in Liberia is the extent to which *STAR Radio* could be made Liberian owned. The objective of making STAR Radio sustainable is outlined in the transition plans towards Liberian ownership. The inclusion of such plans in the project outline is in itself a positive feature of Star Radio. If it were not for the closure, these plans would have moved the station much further into Liberian control by now. Concerning legal ownership, it is stated in the contracts that the donated assets are controlled by the donor until the end of the project and are turned over to local institutions. This gave the government of Liberia an excuse to close down the station in March 2000 claiming that it was not a Liberian-owned radio station.

The *Bridges to Peace* is barely sustainable in any serious sense. The LWI and the project in question rely too much on the capacity of intermediary grant recipient international NGOs like CR (Conciliation Resources) that has the capacity to write proposals and maintain contacts with the donors. LWI has been very conscious of the fact that "local ownership" of projects is crucial to their success. LWI has therefore made a point of not "taking over" the workshops from the participants. Instead the LWI facilitators task has been to make the participants themselves open up and take ownership of the workshops. Projects such as Bridges to Peace are only relevant if they can build on the existing capacities of women.

D. South Africa: Diakonia.

Diakonia has defined capacity building as a priority area and independent goal with its partner organisations. In this respect it is important to define what is capacity building for Diakonia, and

whether this is the most effective way to develop connectedness. It is critical for Diakonia to address how they can increase "local capacity building" to create sustainable projects and gain necessary competence to change according to the political and social environment they are operating in. But they also must consider whether to strengthen ongoing programmes or to continue to expand and thus lose focus. One factor inhibiting answers to these questions is a lack of institutional learning from failed projects.

The organisations visited are aware that the donors require that the impact be somehow measured, especially in terms of effectiveness and outcomes. The quality of such assessments using predefined performance indicators leaves much to be desired. It is irreducibly difficult to measure changes in attitudes and values and to connect such changes, if any, to specific programmes and interventions.

The organisations try to involve the community and to support local initiatives. The increase in local ownership is measured primarily as an increase of community involvement. The prevailing poverty however reduces the possibility that they can drive the process themselves.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)
As a think tank, ISS relates well to policy-making and opinion-forming circles in South Africa and in the wider region, meeting the criterion of connectedness. Its sustainability is dependent on grants it receives, and in this respect it has also done well to establish a quite wide and diversified funding base both within and outside South Africa.

F. East Timor
In the East Timor case, the very character of a dialogue project makes it difficult to measure connectedness in terms of a long-term effect and development. The East Timor project has, however, shown connectedness and durability in the way it was able to adjust to the political environment in the region. A key element in this appears to have been that PCR won the trust of the participants. Partly, this was due to PCR's ability to function in a non-threatening way with regard both to the individual participants and to the national authorities. Unlike other actors in the region, PCR had the advantage of not being politicised. PCR also won trust because PCR did not try to take control of the project. PCR did not try to force seminars or put pressure on the participants, but rather facilitated meetings at the request of the parties. This underlines the importance of Sida's non-interventionist approach. It meant PCR was under no pressure to perform differently and helped ensure there was no hindrance to local ownership.

4.3.2 General reflections
As the case studies make clear, connectedness is a most difficult category to assess and one that presents a significant conundrum for this assessment of Sida's work. In some instances, the connectedness of the project is a function of its relationship to outside funding. But this poses a significant problem for funders as to when to provide support and when to end it. Moreover, it is not clear as a general rule, that projects' connectedness should be regarded as a function of their main organisers' ability to generate funds. At the very least, there should be other factors in the equation. What makes this more complicated is that connectedness is really most useful as a long- (or at least medium-) term category. Almost by definition, therefore, a short-term assessment of connectedness is out of the question. On the other hand, knowing how many years make up a reasonable definition of medium- or long-term is itself probably an art rather than a science. The number of years in which it would be reasonable to ask a project to generate its own funds from activities and supporters, rather than having to rely on donors, especially foreign ones, presumably varies from one conflict context to another. In any case, organisations implementing projects cannot be expected to

overcome the poverty of the societies in which they operate. When to use the criterion of connectedness to assess funding is thus problematic, and giving the criterion a numerical basis even more difficult.

In most instances, connectedness is probably best measured by assessing local contexts over a longer period than most project evaluation teams have, although short-term assessments that provide critical suggestions for making projects more connected are possible and useful. It is important in this regard to look at short-term issues in relation to potential long-term needs and goals. The issue of connectedness relates to the sustainability of the projects – financial sustainability (as in the case study in Israel and the West Bank) and administrative sustainability (relying on intermediate grant recipients). It also is a measure of whether a short-term activity is carried out with long-term considerations in mind. Several critical factors are important to address: to what extent local ownership is present, at what level capacity building has been developed (both financial and administrative), to what degree local networking has been encouraged and how vulnerable these factors are to changes in the political landscape.

All the projects in the case studies could be vulnerable to criticisms based on lack of sustainability, but such criticisms might themselves be vulnerable to being criticised for taking a short-term view. Local ownership does not always happen overnight. It is both a question of trust and confidence on the part of the donor and grant recipient vis-à-vis the implementing partners, and a question of whether the implementing partners have real possibilities to work and develop their skills.

4.4 Gender Equality

Gender equality is part of Sida's four action programmes, and may be regarded as particularly relevant in the conflict context. Images of self-identity, modes of communicating, models of organisation, and traditions of participation may all be decisively affected by gender inequality, and may all be part of the problem with which peace building and dialogue work must deal.

4.4.1 Lessons learned from the case studies:

A. Balkans
In the Balkans, gender equality activities are particularly relevant in the conflict context, given the use of rape and sexual torture as weapons of war and the prevalence in politics of a particularly domineering form of male behaviour. In Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, people said that important changes in gender equality were noticeable, both in the number of female activists being active in NGO activities and in women's organisations. Among OPC's partners are both those that target activities directly towards women and others that have gender as a cross-cutting issue in all activities. However, much is still dependent on the attitudes of individuals. OPC's policy is "low key", e.g. to keep up the pressure against traditional male attitudes and support such changes wherever possible, but not to force gender activities on partners.

B. Israel and the West Bank
IPCRI exists between two pressures, one working against it taking up gender issues, the other pushing in the opposite direction. The first pressure is the way assumptions drawn from an intellectual and political milieu influence institutions, policies and actions. The world of high politics, towards which IPCRI works, is extremely male-dominated, and not only in the Middle East. On the other hand, in both Israeli and Palestinian societies, there are relatively high proportions of well educated and competent women. On both sides, there is a large number of women's organisation and mixed gender organisations working on gender issues. In this, both Israeli and Palestinian

societies are far ahead of other states in the Middle East. However, IPCRI does not show any signs of being at the forefront of this trend, although there is consciousness of the issue as something to work on in the near future.

C. Liberia

In Liberia gender equality was not considered a relevant issue in the case of *Star Radio* because the objectives of the project required qualified personnel regardless of their gender. As to *Bridges to Peace*, LWI is an entirely female-run organisation. Men have been involved when necessary in terms of applying qualified experience and as a precondition for allowing the workshops to take place. The reason for targeting women specifically is that when the women (mothers) benefit, then the rest of the family does so as well, and that is conducive to domestic as well as community level peace.

D. South Africa: Diakonia

All organisations are conscious of the demand for gender equality on the part of the donors and also as an expressed strategy within South Africa. The case study did not detect any conscious attempt to exclude women within the organisation nor in the target groups. The leadership in the organisations studied is still predominantly male, but with an increasing number of women on project management and implementation level. With regard to the target groups, the organisations try to show in what ways gender balance is achieved in terms of involvement of women in the activities.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)

There is a high presence of women at all levels in the ISS organisation. It is committed to non-discriminatory practises and directs a number of its projects and programmes towards specific study of the plight of women, such as the gender impact of violent conflict and the problem of violence against women.

F. East Timor

For East Timor, there was a systematic inability to raise gender issues in the dialogues. The participants reacted to gender equality as an attempt to impose an external agenda in them.

4.4.2 General reflections

Women have been mostly absent from formal peace negotiations and policy-making processes on war and peace issues. There is however a growing understanding of the role of women in conflict resolution and the specific skills and abilities they bring to the decision making process.

Gender is not only one of Sida's four actions programmes for mainstreaming but may also be regarded as particularly relevant in the conflict context. It is, however, hardly surprising and somewhat dispiriting that some of the projects under study have not found any way to address the issue of gender equality.

It has generally been difficult to mainstream gender issues in conflict resolution. The starting point has been an unpromising, male-dominated environment. This has especially been the case outside the NGO community. The UN has long genuflected to gender issues, and is often associated with a rhetoric in which women as mothers and homemakers have a special affinity for peace. The Platform for Action in the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference (1995) agreed to ensure women equal opportunities to participate in peace activities, but little progress has been made on the demanding agenda of change that results from such a commitment.

There has, indeed, been much uncertainty, confusion and hesitation about the actual mainstreaming of gender – as distinct from the fine intentions. It can therefore be seen as rather a positive sign that, of the cases studied here, the projects in the Balkans, the work of both Diakonia' and ISS in South Africa and the "Bridges to Peace" project in Liberia all explicitly address gender issues.

There is no point in refusing to recognise the resistance of project participants in some conflict countries to any suggestion that they should address the topic. Pressing them against their stated reluctance is often interpreted as an external imposition, an attempt to control, creating obstacles to trust and local ownership. It may well be that some of the ways in which gender issues are brought to the participants are too straightforwardly alienating, displaying too little knowledge of the local cultural context, and too little willingness to win the participants' consent. We would caution against making across-the-board definitions of how gender issues should be addressed. In some cases, it is advisable to focus on the male role within the framework of conflict prevention and resolution. In other cases, it may be best to consider special measures focussing on men and women, e.g. how to recover from, or at least cope with, the social trauma of mass rape. In some cases, work might focus on the schoolroom and on educational curricula. In other cases, the media might be highlighted.

This all suggests that the commitment to mainstreaming gender must be accompanied by a commitment to thinking creatively and tactically about how to do so. There is more than one way to encourage men to think about their own stake in a change in the terms of gender relationships. But there may be relatively limited awareness among practitioners in the field of conflict resolution and peace building about current interactive learning techniques in gender issues in terms of training, methodology development and capacity building.

There is a case here for integrating training programmes at least for the intermediary organisations (OPC, Diakonia, PRC) into the conditions of project grants and contracts and allocating resources for this. These organisations should in turn train the local organisations they are managing. It is important to start the dialogue on gender from the perspective of the country's own goals and commitment – they have usually signed the Beijing documents and the CEDAW-conventions.

4.5 Flexibility

The willingness of project managers and funders to adapt to changing circumstances can be critically important for success or failure, as well as for sustainability and institutional learning. The conditions for flexibility include the willingness to alter major sub-goals, to add and delete activities as necessary, the speed of communication and response between the donor and the grant recipient, and the existence of a continuing dialogue between them. It is a complaint often made against donor agencies that they have inflexible routines, implemented by staff who are far from the action in the field. However, NGOs are equally capable of having rigid procedures and routines. Inflexibility can be damaging, whichever organisation displays it.

4.5.1 Lessons learned from the case studies:

A. Balkans
One of the strongest positive qualities of OPC mentioned in the interviews was flexibility. Through the framework agreement between Sida and OPC the latter has been given a certain degree of autonomy in project management. Only major changes need to be authorized by Sida. This seems to work very well and gives a fast and smooth communication between OPC and its partners. The transparency of the Swedish aid bureaucracy and the accessibility of the Sida decision-makers paired with clearly delegated mandates for the decision makers, is the backbone of this well-functioning system.

B. Israel and the West Bank
IPCRI shows great flexibility. Not only has IPCRI managed to shift its focus from conflict-related to post-conflict related issues, but also to adapt to new demands and requirements from the environment in which it operates. Examples are the new emphasis on environmental issues and peace education. The negative side of this flexibility is that it is trying to pursue a large number of new projects and ideas. As flexibility flourishes, focus may fade. Unfortunately, ICPRI does not display great administrative flexibility and ability to meet demands for reporting and financial statements.

C. Liberia
In the case of the projects in Liberia, Sida has been very flexible in all phases. Communication has been informally channelled through the Swedish embassy in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Sida has been very understanding about the situation regarding the closure of the station. While the primary objective of the station is on hold because of the closure, the secondary role of promoting the institution of freedom of speech in Liberia is recognized by Sida. For *Bridges to Peace*, the flexibility of both Sida and CR during the crisis of LWI in 1999 ensured the continuation of the project. CR intervened discreetly by sending out consultants and Sida withheld funds until the crisis was solved inside LWI itself. Sida also sent a person from Sida Headquarters to Monrovia. This intervention by Sida was seen as positive and constructive.

D. South Africa: Diakonia
The speed of communication, response and quality of dialogue between Sida, Diakonia and the recipient organizations have generally been good. The organisations feel that it is mainly Sida that is changing direction and the focus of funding, leaving some of the organizations behind with no alternative success for alternative funding. The organizations at the same time acknowledge that they have been informed of new and changing directions.

However, the number of organizations and programmes under the Diakonia rubric make it difficult to assess whether the issue of flexibility is one of organizational strength or one of a broad and at times somewhat unfocused organizational mandate. Moreover, the issue of flexibility may have as much to do with the particular organizational structure of Diakonia and its various associations with other groups with which it is associated.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)
The flexibility of the ISS has been demonstrated by its capacity to adapt to the changing situation in South Africa and the region. It is on constant alert for new projects and has enhanced its flexibility structuring its portfolio according to its own preferences. One may even ask whether ISS is too flexible and apt to take on new projects regardless of strategic perspective.

F. East Timor
The East Timor dialogue project is in many ways a model of flexibility. This is illustrated by the way it was possible to interrupt the project in January 1999, resume it after September 1999, convene an initial meeting before the end of November and another three weeks later. The handling of the meetings was also sensitive and flexible. It is not clear, however, how easily Sida took to this flexibility.

4.5.2 General reflections
In general, all the projects in the case studies were judged to have displayed considerable flexibility at various points in their evolution. This applies both to Sida and the recipients, and reflects well all around on Sida.

However, it is not entirely uncomplicated to be so flexible. Where problems arose, it is not only or mostly in the projects, but also within Sida and in Sida's relationship to the projects. If this does not seem too paradoxical, we found an institutional flexibility that enabled effective project management, yet this was combined with a procedural inflexibility, especially in relation to smaller projects, which would be unsatisfactory for both parties.

The volatile character of most conflict management and peace building projects makes it difficult for the desk officers to follow up and assess how the projects are doing. Outside observers obviously have the same difficulty. It is therefore difficult, for example, to detect the real impact of a project in relation to the goals and objectives set out in the proposals when the political environment is changing rapidly. More important, however, it may not be possible to assess whether a project is actually attempting to fulfil its stated goals and objectives if they keep changing. Extreme flexibility may rule out the most simple forms of accountability.

The solution to this problem is twofold. Donor and recipient have to maintain a high quality and sustained dialogue, requiring that sufficient resources and time be set aside. It is also advisable as far as possible to ensure continuity in project staffing in both the donor and recipient organisation.

4.6 Location of Responsibility

An important condition for a successful project is a clear division of labour and responsibilities. The project can become unclear and confusing if there are many actors involved in the various stages, such as the decision-making, implementation, and reporting.

4.6.1 Lessons learned from the case studies:

A. Balkans
In their co-operation in the Balkans, there is an explicit division of labour between Sida and OPC and between OPC and co-operating partners. Usually these lines are well respected. Where they are not, OPC has taken corrective action against partners after monitoring has reached a certain point and no correction has been noticed. OPC has then acted in full openness and has informed everybody involved, including other donors, about the reasons for terminating the support.

B. Israel and the West Bank
IPCRI's joint partnership implies that in every activity, both Palestinians and Israelis are equally represented. The joint partnership and overall goal of IPCRI are in themselves a proof of a clear division of responsibility. As for the internal division of labour and responsibility, it seems that a rather clear division is present, perhaps with some bias for centralized decision-making. The division of responsibility between Sida, the Swedish Consulate General in Jerusalem and IPCRI is clear and consistent.

C. Liberia
According to the agreement between Sida and the Hirondelle Foundation (HF) on *STAR Radio*, the responsibility of implementing the project rests solely with HF. Furthermore, HF is responsible for reporting to, and contacting Sida about any changes in the project. It is also responsible for addressing any crises that may occur with the project. However, there is no mention of the local partner's responsibilities in the agreement. In this way, there is no doubt about where the final responsibility lies and about what the donor is concerned. Unfortunately, this may have been contributing to the suspicions of the Government of Liberia about *STAR Radio* being owned and controlled by foreign powers. In the case of *Bridges to Peace*, the division of labour between the parties is clear. Sida is the

donor, while CR is the grant recipient and holds responsibilities towards Sida. CR is responsible for reporting to Sida and assists LWI with evaluation reports etc. LWI is entirely responsible for implementing their projects.

D. South Africa: Diakonia
In the case of Diakonia, there were clear lines regarding the roles and responsibilities of Sida, Diakonia and the leadership of the recipient organizations as well as for the responsibility over funding. However, a shift in Sida's policy and a demand that Diakonia focus its funding led to disagreements and some tensions as Diakonia was not able to continue to work with and fund programmes that they had previously supported. Clarity of lines of responsibility thus did not guarantee efficiency or consistency of funded programmes.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)
ISS manages to pursue its work without intrusions by its donors. There is no doubting that responsibility for defining ISS's agenda lies with ISS itself as it should.

F. East Timor
In the East Timor dialogue project, there was a clear division of labour between PCR and Sida and between PCR and the participants. The division of labour appears to have been rather less clear between Sida and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

4.6.2 General reflections
Overall there is a noteworthy clarity in the location of responsibility between the local organizations, grant recipients and Sida. Areas that may generate some concern involve the local political situation and the relationship between Sida and the MFA in some cases. In the first instance, Sida may, given the increasing local sensitivity to foreign influence or interventions, try to find ways to locate responsibility that provides local partners for foreign support in the cases where foreign influence is viewed with suspicion. In the latter case, clearer lines of responsibility and authority would help to clarify the relations between Sida and the MFA. It may be worth stressing, however, that simply clarifying lines of responsibility in a formal sense does not necessarily clarify the division of labour in a real sense. In projects in which the MFA is going to have continuing involvement, because of the political profile and stakes of the conflict in question, or because of the lack of specific regional expertise in Sida, it would be important to have a formal mechanism for incorporating communication and consultation with the MFA.

4.7 Pressure for Success/Possibility of Failure

A refusal to accept failure could mean unwillingness to act, or misleading reports by the implementing agency. In order to prevent such an outcome a realistic ambition level established along with appropriate institutional attitudes to success and failure is important.

4.7.1 Lessons learned from the case studies:

A. Balkans
OPC's basic philosophy is to have trust in their partners. This value basis is communicated openly when new partnerships are established. Once a decision is made, the partner is entrusted with wide powers over how the support should be spent and progress/lack of progress on implementation reported back. However, one can never completely avoid that individuals may misuse this trust. This acceptance seems well integrated into OPCs organizational culture. Risks are frequently talked

about and the organizational attitude is focused on learning from previous mistakes. Expectations for results set in project proposals, contracts and reports look realistic.

B. Israel and the West Bank

Pressure for success is high on IPCRI, as in all similar institutions in Israel. IPCRI keeps a high profile by initiating a stream of new projects and programmes. In financial terms, this is a dangerous road, as too many projects are under-financed. Lack of activity is not the issue; rather the opposite. The question is whether IPCRI's high ambitions and drive for success might become a route to failure, mainly for financial reasons.

C. Liberia

In Liberia, the goals and objectives for *STAR Radio* appeared realistic at the time of writing, although unforeseeable political circumstances changed the preconditions. The long-term goal was to address an imbalance of biased and partisan media services through a national and regional service of factual and objective information. The assumption involved a precondition, namely that the success was contingent on the political situation in Liberia. Star radio failed its immediate goal of contributing to a level playing field up to the elections of 1997. But, until its closure by the Government of Liberia in March 2000 it did become the most popular independent radio station in Liberia, and contributed to the creation of a balanced news media.

In the case of *Bridges to Peace*, LWI succeeded in its transformation, which otherwise would have caused the ultimate failure of the projects and of LWI itself. The lesson learnt is that the donor (Sida) and the immediate grant recipient (CR) should have paid attention to and assessed the organizational capacity of LWI to be a project implementing organization from the beginning.

D. South Africa: Diakonia

In the case of Diakonia and the activities and organisations supported through it, it is difficult to detect whether pressure for success or possibilities of failure have had an impact. The agreement with Sida and Diakonia in relation to the Democracy Programme in 1997 added substantially to the existent portfolio and Diakonia struggled in this period to find a structure to manage the relationship with its new partner organisations. It might be that the new portfolio put increased pressure on the desk officers at Diakonia and made it difficult to carry out the proposed activities.

A high level of trust is given to the partner organisations, but Diakonia aims to focus on capacity building within the organisations and to create networks to increase both the individual capacities and the organisational learning between the organisations. There is a strong sense among many of the project leaders of their problems and the lessons learned from failures. Using what they have learned, they have been able to move on to new projects with those lessons very much in mind.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)

Interviews with ISS staff for the separate study revealed an institutional culture that includes an intense pressure and ambitious claims for success. This appears to be linked to ISS's competitive aura. ISS may find it hard to set appropriate levels of ambition. This is worth investigating further and, if borne out, could lead to Sida encouraging ISS to work with reasonable benchmarks.

F. East Timor

In the East Timor dialogue project, there is no evidence of any inappropriate pressure to succeed, or any sense of unrealistically huge ambitions. However, Sida seems to have lacked a concept of what success or failure in such a project would entail. In this project, this has not caused a real problem but it could raise difficulties in the future.

4.7.2 General reflections

In most instances, project teams and Sida were clear about the objectives and goals and there was little or no pressure to succeed beyond reasonable expectations. In some instances, though, where project teams are developing new responses to circumstances, it is not clear whether Sida has developed its own criteria for success or failure when conventional criteria are inapplicable. What is of note is that, as in the case of some of the projects supported through Diakonia in South Africa, it may be important to accept that mistakes are made and that by honest self-reflection one can learn and build on the lessons from these mistakes. One important caveat to keep in mind is that the demand from the donor and within the institution itself may put pressure on the institution to pay more attention to quick success rather than to sustainable results. This demand can easily lead to failure. Sida can contribute to lasting results and long-term success by helping the institutions concerned focus on producing realistic plans and budgets, and by encouraging them to go for means of assessment that are suitable to the nature of the project. This point emerges with equal clarity from the case studies and the bibliographical survey.

4.8 Institutional Competence

This criterion addresses the level of institutional competence within the implementing organization and the donor agency, the capacity for institutional learning, and the ability to sustain new competence for future projects.

4.8.1 Lessons learned from the case studies:

A. Balkans
OPC's focus in Western Balkans has been on strengthening the level of activities and dialogue rather than on developing strong organizations. The OPC desk has been overstretched but was strengthened recently. In the long run it is only a wider linkage with peace activities in other geographical areas, including support for policy, personnel and information that can ensure institutional competence building.

B. Israel and the West Bank
The institutional competence in IPCRI is to a great extent based upon the management of the institution and on part time researchers. On the one hand, IPCRI is dominated by two Directors who, if not possessing absolute power, have most to say about the organization, although just how they share their authority is unclear. On the other hand, IPCRI's small staff of eleven people is not permanent, but hired on a project by project basis. The Board of IPCRI does not play an active role and does not provide any substantial input to the research and other activities of IPCRI. On the donor's side, Sida's officers and the Consulate's staff are skilled and knowledgeable and provide professional support to IPCRI. This makes IPCRI vulnerable in terms of institutional learning and institutional memory and does not further in-depth learning by the staff. It is therefore difficult to establish the real level of competence within IPCRI and its ability to develop and sustain competence for future projects. Overall, Sida could consider ways to help IPCRI develop firmer foundations, by allocating core budget support to core activities rather than to investment in projects that may not be implemented.

C. Liberia
The training of staff and journalists has been a central activity since the start of the radio station. The training was not only aimed at making news but also in general programme management. The crisis in LWI forced a political and organizational re-structuring exercise. Training of the project leaders and participants was carried out and was crucial for the ability of LWI to carry out the

projects. Thus, some institutional competence was created which was not there before. The institutional competence is related to the sense of ownership as well as the economic burden factor. While the Training of Trainers courses and the workshops did provide the participants with new skills, they are not useful if the circumstances of life prevent them to ever make use of them.

D. South Africa: Diakonia

There has recently been some turnover of staff on the Sida side working on the projects in South Africa, but this has not appeared to affect the continuity of the Diakonia programme. The Diakonia staff is highly committed and has generally gained a broader consciousness after the evaluation of the organization. It has begun to institute what it learned about administration, its own capacities and level of integration. A South African with long experience with local NGO's has been added to the staff, but because of the range of smaller groups associated with Diakonia, it is difficult to assess the experiences in each group. Although high levels of commitment exist at all levels, Diakonia can play a stronger role in integrating programmes and creating greater co-operation.

With regard to the institutions receiving support, many had made attempts to spread the competence, mainly learning by doing. In a South African affirmative action scenario, more could be done to involve a larger part of the previously disadvantaged groups in the programmes, on all levels. This is however often more easily said than done; recovery from apartheid is complex.

The general picture the interviewed organizations wish to depict is that they are extremely hard working, lacking all kind of resources to attain their goals. They also admit that not sufficient time is given for competence development and reflection. There are however clear examples of activities geared towards comprehensive and all-inclusive planning sessions with an ambition to seriously evaluate all aspects of institution building within their organizations.

E. South Africa: Institute of Security Studies (ISS)

Many of the projects and activities of ISS appear to depend on the competence and knowledge of one or two people. On the other hand, ISS does involve staff of all levels in demanding tasks, providing excellent opportunities for learning by doing, for developing competence in the course of the work.

F. East Timor

In East Timor PCR has gained institutional competence from this project, as has Sida, though to a lesser extent and less systematically.

4.8.2 General reflections

Institution-building involves more than staff training and organizational development. It encompasses the creation of missions and strategic plans, stating what the organization is supposed to achieve, together with plans of operation that specify how an organization strives to attain its overall and specific objectives. It entails the creation of staff development plans, the supply of competent personnel who have demonstrated the capacity to fulfil the goals and the plans. It means preparing budgets that provide a basis for informed decision making regarding how the organisation can finance its objectives and how the resources are best used to maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Institutional competence is one of the most complicated areas in development co-operation projects. High staff turnover, inconsistent funding causing temporary halts in the implementation of projects, lack of internal information and communication and hierarchical structures all contribute to problems in developing institutional competence. On the donor's side, transfer of staff experi-

enced in a particular subject or geographical area is likewise a problem in terms of institutional competence and institutional learning. These problems can be eased if not completely solved by having solid and easily accessible documentation of projects and programmes, together with a list of reference persons who have been involved and who can be contacted and interviewed regardless of their present position and location.

Institutional learning is one of the main objectives of this study. Sida is one target for institutional learning based on the central question: what can effectively be done by way of desk officers to foster conflict resolution and build peace? Such skills enhancement for Sida is probably achievable. The same can be said of Swedish and other international NGOs that are supporting Sida in managing projects. The weaknesses tend to be found among the implementing agencies at the local level. To put the situation in the bleakest terms, there are some organizations among those we studied that are hardly sustainable without consistent donor support; some are not very informed about the medium and long-term impact of their activities; and some are themselves not clear on what is expected of them in terms of peace building and conflict prevention. To make matters worse, these organisations mostly depend on the enthusiasm and presence of a few, often quite charismatic leaders. To the degree that Sida is committed to institutional learning among the local implementing agencies, it has to include that element into its own planning and make the resources and time available for the intermediary and recipient organisations.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Introductory remarks

The object of our study is Sida. The projects in the case studies were chosen in discussions with Sida and have been examined for the light they can throw on Sida's activities and approach in the general field of peacebuilding. To the degree that the projects are representative of the agency's effort as a whole, and making due allowance for the effects of the extreme time constraints within which the study was conducted, we believe that relevant conclusions can be drawn, upon which recommendations can be based.

The question is, How well is Sida doing with its peacebuilding projects? As we argued in section 1.2, the dynamics of armed conflicts and the nature of the field dictate that this question cannot be translated into an evaluation of success and failure. The issue, rather, is whether Sida-supported efforts are having an impact, whether they are, taken in broad, having a positive influence for peace and contributing to a reduced likelihood of escalation of violent conflict.

In the Terms of Reference, Sida recommended that the ALNAP criteria be adopted. With some modification in the light of experience in the field and in other assessments, the project consortium adopted these criteria. They have been used as the framework for the case studies, providing a consistent basis for interrogating the experience in the six projects selected. We have viewed this procedure both as a useful methodology in its own right and as something of an experiment with the ALNAP criteria themselves. We therefore open our conclusions by applying the ALNAP criteria to Sida, taking as our starting point the criterion-by-criterion analyses of the case studies in section 4 above. The discussion of Sida in the light of the modified ALNAP criteria in section 5.2 below is followed by a brief consideration of the ALNAP themselves criteria on the basis of having used them in this assessment.

Thereafter, section 5.3 states the more general conclusions we have drawn about Sida's peacebuilding activities and strategy, while section 5.4 offers recommendations.

5.2 The ALNAP criteria

The consortium for this study somewhat modified the ALNAP criteria. Each case study interrogated the project(s) under review in the light of eight criteria. We now assemble an overall assessment out of the components analysed in section 4 above. Recommendations derived from this are presented in section 5.4.

♦ *Appropriateness*: The overall conclusion is positive. However, some concerns were expressed in the studies that appropriateness was not always explicitly included in project proposals and reports. This is not an ex post criticism. It is not the absence of the word that we comment upon, but the absence of an argument that logically links the proposed or reported activities to the conflict situation. There were also some queries as to how knowledgeable Sida desk officers were about the local conflict situation and the conditions in which the projects operated. As this does not always seem to be a problem for the project itself, this gave rise to some open-ended and unresolved discussion about how well informed Sida desk officers need to be. In section 5.4, recommendations arising from this concern planning frameworks, the need for explicit statement of aims, and the need for Sida to choose what level of expert knowledge it requires for peacebuilding.

♦ *Coherence*: Again the overall conclusion is positive. Reservations arise in relation to ISS and to East Timor, but in the later case the assessment is that any problem in this regard had no effect on the quality of the project. Recommendations concerning planning frameworks and the need to state aims explicitly arise partly from reflecting on the criterion of coherence, partly out of the appropriateness discussion.

♦ *Connectedness*: In relation to this criterion, the overall conclusion is more positive than negative. The projects studied have considerable strengths in terms of local ownership and local partnership, and some significant weaknesses as regards sustainability. However, since connectedness is an inherently long-term concept and our case studies were of a short period in the projects' life-cycle, these findings comes with many reservations. In addition, this is a difficult and complex concept containing too many disparate elements. This concern leads to recommendations below about evaluations.

♦ *Gender equality*: The record is mixed. Without being decisively negative, it makes clear that there is work to be done on this issue. It is equally clear that the work must be taken on sensitively, winning project partners and participants to a positive response to this crucial theme in Sida's work and in peacebuilding.

♦ *Flexibility*: Sida emerges from our study as a flexible funder of projects in which flexibility has been not only allowed but, on occasion, positively encouraged. Indeed, the issue that arises here is whether Sida may not be permitting too much flexibility in certain cases. In section 5.4, this concern leads to a recommendation on strategic frameworks.

♦ *Location of responsibility*: There is noteworthy clarity in the division of labour between Sida and grant recipients. A question has arisen in relation to the East Timor project about the understanding of the division of labour between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This question is taken up in the recommendations.

♦ *Pressure for success*: Sida does not appear to place too much pressure upon its grant recipients, but there are questions about how to gauge the impact and influence of projects. This issue is taken up below.

♦ *Institutional competence*: Here the picture is very patchy and at its worst, among some of the local organisations, the picture is very bleak. Several recommendations in section 5.4 address the need to pay attention to securing institutional competence.

Taken overall, the modified ALNAP criteria prove to be useful tools. They have facilitated our interrogation of experience in the projects and programmes we have looked at, at the level of implementing organisations, intermediaries and Sida itself. However, there are some evident areas in which further refinement of the criteria would be worthwhile:

• *Connectedness*: This is simply too big a concept, containing too many disparate elements. It is the least useful of the criteria because it is unwieldy. It would therefore be worth breaking it down into its component parts.

• *Flexibility*: Some of the studies in this assessment indicate that this criterion may be too one-sided. While donor agencies should not apply rigid templates and categories, we conclude that the criterion of flexibility should be balanced by attention to strategic frameworks.

• *Impact*: The ALNAP criteria lack a means of judging impact, and thus one key element of an assessment – and even more so of a full-scale project evaluation – is missing. There is a need to respond to the challenge to find means of assessing impact that are non-quantitative and thus able to respond to the messy reality of conflict situations and the particular demands of peacebuilding activities.

- *Relationships of trust*: The bibliographical survey and the East Timor project both indicate the importance of trust in building dialogue. This is backed by experience with good governance projects in public sector development. It suggests that building stable relationships is a precondition for success in some peacebuilding activities. It can therefore be considered as a separate performance criterion.

- *Quantitative sub-goals*: In most cases, project sub-goals can and should be expressed in numerical form. This would make some aspects of the discussion of *appropriateness* and *coherence* more straightforward, and would contribute to the strategic framework required to balance *flexibility*. We emphasise that using quantitative sub-goals does not substitute for a proper means of assessing impact.

5.3 General conclusions

1. This review of a selection of Sida's conflict resolution and peace building programmes suggests generally that the programmes under discussion are working relatively well. In all the projects we studied, there are strengths and weaknesses. We reviewed their activities over a relatively short span, and worked under significant time constraints to do so. Thus, assessments offered in this report about the individual projects are provisional. Firmer judgements require more exhaustive analyses of both the local context and the specific role of the projects and groups under review. Overall, however, we regard the combination of strengths and weaknesses as almost inevitable. The reasons for this lie both in the nature of the projects and in the nature of the conflicts they seek to address. And although we have raised areas of concern in some of the projects, none may be regarded as an outright failure.

2. As a general assessment of whether the projects studied are effective, the following views are given, with our now familiar reservation about the short time this study spent on looking at these projects. The support to the Balkan projects of OPC and the South African work of Diakonia is for long term peacebuilding work. The impact of both will be hard to measure but, despite detailed reservations, both appear to make a positive contribution to the difficult social circumstances in which they function. The support to the process in East Timor has facilitated an important aspect of a search for solutions and has strengthened the debate in East Timor and in Indonesia about peaceful development. Despite the hiccoughs experienced with the Liberia projects, they both appear to make a positive contribution and to warrant continued support. Through support to IPCRI in the Middle East (and likewise with the ISS in South Africa), Sida has facilitated work that has many strong points, yet which would also benefit from a fuller evaluation.

3. There is a growing body of theories and concepts on the underlying causes of conflict and their symptoms, and there is also a considerable literature on conflict resolution, as well as a growing amount of experience. However, there remains a gap between theory and practice. Much of what is done in the field is designed on the basis of untested assumptions. There is little academic work that helps identify on-the-ground activities that can help to transform and reconcile adversarial relations. Many studies of peacebuilding lack operational conclusions and many of their recommendations are excessively broad and difficult to translate into practical action. This is confirmed by the bibliographical survey, which also confirms that Sida and Ministry of Foreign Affairs thinking on peacebuilding and conflict resolution is generally in line with mainstream thinking on these issues.

4. The state of current knowledge implies that it would be counter-productive to attempt to generate a template for Sida peacebuilding activities. There is no formula of conflict resolution and peacebuilding waiting to be applied.

5. However, it is worth asking whether Sida should aim to develop a house style, or a palette of styles, a range of approaches in which it sets out to develop competence. These would form Sida's niche in international peacebuilding. One of the attractions of this is that Sweden obviously faces political, financial and other restrictions as to what projects and activities can reasonably be supported. Accordingly, there is a need to prioritise, which is the same as saying there is a need for further development of strategy in this field, which is of course the exercise Sida is now involved in.

6. When it comes to the activities we have studied, we have not found a high level or extensive degree of strategic planning. We do find it worth flagging strategic planning as an important issue for consideration in relation to IPCRI in the Middle East. The same issue arises in the separate study of ISS in South Africa. We have encountered project documents in this study that for other types of development cooperation projects would not be accepted in terms of expected results. Sympathetic though we are to the case for inspired improvisation, and important though flexibility and quick footwork can be in this kind of project, we believe this strategic lack is a serious deficit.

7. As well as lack of strategic planning, we find a lack of self-awareness in some projects. One factor that emerged from some of the case studies was that those involved in the projects were often not aware that the projects were in whole or in part regarded as peace building and conflict resolution projects. The most common classification was democracy and human rights. While this raises a problem of coherence, in itself it need not be construed as problematic. In many instances, efforts at promoting human rights and building democracy as well as support for economic development are central to efforts to reduce conflicts and to build peace. It is, however, a problem – not least for the donor – if the links between plans, desired impact and perceivable outcomes cannot be traced.

8. In studying the projects, we have the benefit of hindsight. At the time, it is very often easier to recognise that something must be done than to identify precisely what will be the most successful activity. In these circumstances, what should Sida do? This question does not only apply to a case such as the East Timor dialogue project, which Sida went in for virtually blind, relying on a trusted organisation to do a valuable job at not very high cost. The question applies to every case in which the number of unknowns or unpredictable variables is high and their impact potentially profound. It is, therefore, a question that applies to every potentially important project of conflict resolution and peace building. Such projects are stable and predictable only if they are unnecessary.

9. This being the case, the fundamental choice is a political one: is Sweden to contribute to making peace and diminishing violent conflict in certain parts of the world? Is Sweden prepared to do this when impact is difficult to measure and where the risk factors are high? If so, and if Sida is to be the bearer of a significant part of that policy, the challenge for Sida is to accustom itself to this new operating environment.

10. Having conducted this study, we regard the challenge as less intimidating than might at first seem to be the case. In general, projects that Sida has supported are playing a role in helping to diminish the potential for violent conflict in their societies. Even where they are not directly framed in terms of conflict resolution and peace building, many of the projects nonetheless play that role to some extent. It can be concluded from the study that Sida is rather well equipped to carry the weight of a further enhanced Swedish strategy for contributing to peaceful relations in conflict-prone countries.

11. For example, Sida has done well to recognise that many of the projects benefit from an intermediary organization like Diakonia, Conciliation Resources and OPC, while others require direct support to organisations in the field such as IPCRI and ISS, while another may need the direct field engagement of a Swedish organisation, as in the East Timor case with PCR. This willingness to provide project support in a variety of organisational modes is an important precondition for Sida's further work.

12. One clear, general weakness found in this study is the lack of strong and viable local institutions. Local ownership does not automatically create viable and sustainable local institutions that will exist and expand should the support decrease. The think tank IPCRI is the best example of a local organisation with a permanent presence, though that presence is wholly dependent on external support. ISS, another think tank supported by Sida, has been rather more successful than IPCRI in developing both local funding sources and a diversified funding base. We believe that more can and should be done to strengthen local organisations.

13. Within Sida, we found some uncertainty about whether conflict resolution and peacebuilding projects should be bracketed with primarily humanitarian and therefore short-term projects, or with democracy-building and therefore long-term work. We would advise against classifying peacebuilding and conflict resolution as necessarily fitting in short-, medium- or long-term perspectives. This is simply due to the variety of kinds of projects that fit under the general heading of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. A dialogue project, for example, might last as little as a year, while a package of projects such as OPC's in the Balkans might continue for as long as a decade.

14. There is a cultural clash between the general field of development cooperation and the field of peace and conflict. This is reflected in a variety of ways that are relevant to Sida's further work in the field of peace and conflict.

15. The inexactitude of peacebuilding and conflict management projects has an impact on what the donor agency can expect from its project partners, the degree of control it can expect to have, and the role it can take in relation to the projects. We have already commented that templates for project activities are precluded. This means that every single project has to be originally designed, using a wide basket of theories, concepts and possible approaches. If Sida seeks significant control over the projects it supports, it will have to restrict the number and variety of initiatives it supports. If Sida followed that line, we suspect that, as in the example of the East Timor project, there would be occasions when Sida would be forced outside those restrictions by political considerations. Rather than pile up exceptions to a rule that cannot really be implemented, Sida might do better to accept that it must have very limited degrees of influence over the unfolding course of the projects it supports. This would allow it to operate with a wider palette of different styles. If this were the path followed, we suggest the requirements for external project assessments and evaluations might increase.

16. On a similar theme, peacebuilding projects require detailed knowledge about strategies, concepts and local conditions. It is an open question as to whether this knowledge should be lodged in Sida. It might be more productive to aim for a combination of regional-level knowledge in Sida than country-level, and for knowledge of the conflict resolution field in general rather than deep expertise in each specific approach and technique. As required by specific project proposals, this expertise could be the basis for calling in additional advice. Compared to most areas of development co-operation, Sida will to high degree rely on the MFA for analysis of conflict situations and trusted outside experts for knowledge of conflict resolution. In making the choice about what level of knowledge is required, co-ordination in the field and sharing knowledge and experience with other donor agencies may be particularly important.

17. In order for reconciliation efforts to attain sustainable effects, there is at least as great a need as in other development areas, for co-ordination between international donors so that pertinent areas, causes of conflict and important actors are not ignored in planning and implementing activities. In addition, as observed in the conclusions of the bibliographical survey, peacebuilding activities necessarily have to deal with all parties to the conflict in an even-handed way. The observations made under the headings of *appropriateness* and *external coherence* also underline this need. The need for holistic approaches to conflicts does not mean a preference for multilateral donors and organisations, because there is a multitude of other factors that favour bilateral donors. These may be more flexible, focussed, less bureaucratic and with better access to pertinent decision-makers or actors. A specific country – like the Scandinavian countries – may also be regarded as more neutral or more trusted in a specific conflict context, and is therefore more likely to be accepted as a partner and a mediator.

18. The cultural clash between the field of development and of peace and conflict is also reflected when it comes to assessing projects. The consistent tendency in the development field is to go for criteria of success and failure and means of measurement that are considerably tighter than those that make sense in the field of peace and conflict interventions. The bibliographical survey reveals that evaluation techniques in the field of peace and conflict are relatively undeveloped. A means of gauging impact is yet to be developed. Until there is greater certainty about how to gauge the results, project sub-goals can be specified as deliverables (numbers of meetings, political variety of participants, capacity building, competence development, etc). Thus, donor agencies do not need to write a blank cheque for either intermediary organisations or local implementing agencies. But it should be understood that the avoidance of violent conflict is not a deliverable for any individual project or programme.

19. There is an inescapable, indeed a necessary and productive inexactitude in the work of both designing and assessing peaceful interventions. A project that does some good, that brings some people together, that opens some lines of communication and understanding, should not be regarded as a failure simply because war erupted even so. It is hard to know exactly what seeds are being sown and when or how the harvest will come. To refuse to act because success is not certain or crisply defined would be self-defeating, given the impulse to try to contribute to peaceful development.

20. The very nature of projects in this field is highly political and projects often involve forging or strengthening diplomatic relationships. Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is likely to have a more active role than in development cooperation projects, and is often present within the project. This may result in confusion at a variety of levels. If the involvement of the MFA indicates that the project is political, that concept alone may be pejorative and enough for some political forces in the target country to damn the project. Attention to the full political ramifica-

tions of a project must be given at some place within the project planning process. It is a challenge for Sida, the MFA and major project partners to consider how best that can be done.

21. One conclusion of this study is that Sida's strategic thinking – as well as MFA's strategic thinking as far as we can see from the documents studied – is in line with current thinking. However, we have our doubts about how widespread this knowledge is within Sida. Since the MFA and Sida seem set to consider increasing support to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the issue of institutional learning and capacity is critical.

22. Projects striving to build peace and prevent conflicts are fairly new for Sida. Even so, we regard the record so far as respectable. The recommendations that follow are designed to try to bring together Sida's established ways of operating with the requirements of projects in the field of conflict resolution and peace building. It has been our working assumption throughout, occasionally stated explicitly, that where Sida's routines clash with the messy reality of violent conflict and of efforts to intervene in conflict to peaceable ends, it is the routines that should give way. Proper strategic planning (balancing *flexibility* with a strategic framework) protects against any difficulties that can arise from willingness to be administratively flexible. We recognise this may cause some uncertainty within Sida, but we suggest that the decision about whether or not to confront and surmount that uncertainty is ultimately a political decision. Our view is that, if the basic political decision is that Sweden will continue with such projects, then Sida has already shown in ad hoc ways that it has the capacity to adjust. Now the adjustment must be systematic.

5.4 Recommendations

Our recommendations are divided into two main groups. Section 5.4.1 has a project focus, which means recommendations that are connected to the actual projects or programmes in the field. Section 5.4.2 focuses on internal Sida issues, which means recommendations that have to do with Sida management of projects and programmes.

5.4.1 Project focus

1. With reference to *appropriateness* and *coherence*, it is essential that project aims are made explicit at the outset. Changing aims in response to changing circumstances can be accepted, but should also be explained.

2. Equally with reference to *appropriateness* and *coherence*, progress towards fulfilment of a project's overall goals should be reported in qualitative terms, while sub-goals can be quantitative. The expectation should be that project proposals, reports, assessments and evaluation can all refer to quantitative sub-goals; departures from the norm should be accepted, but should also be explained.

3. *External coherence* will be enhanced by contact with other donor agencies operating in the same field and with similar focus. This will increase knowledge input and improve co-ordination.

4. Within the complex concept of *connectedness*, the issue of financial sustainability should be addressed from a very early stage of projects. There are two imperatives. On the one hand, local implementing organisations should be encouraged to develop a strategy for a diversified funding base. On the other hand, they must not be asked to achieve a sustainability that is beyond local economic possibilities. The financial situation of each project should normally be monitored as a regular part of the reporting system.

5. The effort to address *gender issues* should be encouraged in all instances, keeping in mind local cultural and social attitudes and contexts. Those involved in conflict resolution and peace building projects among grant recipients including, where possible, local implementing agencies, should be strongly encouraged to go in for training workshops in gender issues.

6. Project *flexibility* should be balanced by explicit strategic frameworks for all projects, up-dated as necessary (i.e., when the conditions in the conflict situation change). The strategic framework should state the project's goals and justify them in terms of an assessment of the conflict situation in its relevant geographical context (regional, national, sub-national). The relevance of the project methodology to the goals should be explained and the suitability of the partner organisation(s) to the methodology should be argued. The project's activities should be specified, with sub-goals and deliverables. Attention to this basic strategic framework will also enhance *appropriateness* and *connectedness*.

7. In cases where there is local sensitivity to foreign-funded projects and activities, Sida should strive to have the *location of responsibility* for the activities resting within the local organisation, to avoid accusations of outside interference.

8. Assisting partner organisations in realistic strategic planning will also help them to avoid over/ambitious goals and, consequently, unacceptable degrees of internally generated *pressure for success*.

9. More attention should be given to the development of local *institutional competence*. This can take several forms. Based on the projects studied here, we highlight the following: making management advice available; assisting in the development of a strategic plan; offering access to training courses as part of the support granted; ensuring that the scale of financial support is adequate, so as to avoid the false economies that can lead to overstretch among key staff; targeting core budget support to the core activities of the grant recipient.

5.4.2 Internal Sida focus
The first cluster of recommendations about Sida's internal development is aimed at contributing to the *appropriateness, coherence* and *flexibility* of projects.

10. Sida should insist on strategic clarity in all projects, as indicated in #6 above.

11. Sida needs to consider its own requirements for expert knowledge about conflicts and conflict resolution techniques. There is a variety of possible choices. We do not recommend one option over others, and limit ourselves to asserting the need for a choice to be made.

12. Unless Sida chooses a minimalist model for its requirements for expertise, routines for sharing knowledge and interpretations of events should be introduced as part of the partnership involved in a project. Resource groups with members from Sida, grant recipients and the MFA are one way to go about this. Effective reporting and report processing are essential. Informal channels, such as oral communication in the resource group meeting, should also be encouraged.

13. Sida's approach must explicitly recognise that conflict situations are volatile, and that political priorities may emerge that place urgency on a project that falls outside its current framework or procedures. Sida cannot afford to have internal routines that require non-reality on the ground.

The second cluster of internal recommendations focuses on *institutional competence, location of responsibility* and *flexibility*.

14. Sida's work would benefit if it were to develop its own capacity for facilitating institutional learning on the local implementing level. Alternatively, Sida could achieve almost the same effect by contracting the task out.

15. Sida should be willing to sponsor research into the methodologies of types of project in which it has little knowledge or experience. Task forces could help Sida consider how best it can evaluate proposals on areas and projects in which it has little experience. These should involve members from within and outside Sida.

16. Sida should establish, possibly in co-operation with other donor agencies, a database of expertise on different kinds of projects within the general field of conflict resolution and peace building. Organising this database both by kind of project and by region would give Sida (and other agencies) quick access to expert judgement of project proposals. As a consolidated source of relevant expertise, the database could be a useful instrument in strategic planning, thus contributing to project *appropriateness* and both *internal* and *external coherence*.

17. Sida should encourage self-reflection by project teams. It is important to accept that mistakes are made and emphasize that by honest self-reflection, organizations can learn and build on the lessons from their mistakes. This would help develop an organisational maturity that could avoid over-competitiveness and overstretch among local organisations.

18. Sida should establish routines that maintain its own internal coherence by encouraging continuity both in staffing of projects and in project documentation.

19. Sida should consider undertaking a systematic evaluation of the scope, content and quantity of its internal resources with regard to projects for conflict management and peacebuilding. It would be valuable to include the MFA in this assessment, if the MFA requires participation in project design.

20. The relationship of the MFA and Sida in some particularly sensitive projects needs further discussion. A dialogue with the MFA should be initiated to clarify lines of responsibility and the relationship between project accountability and political responsibility.

21. Sida can enhance its flexibility by introducing a budget line for relatively small projects, with requirements for proposals and for reporting that are less demanding than normal. This would allow speedy design of projects that require a quick response to fast changing conditions. It would also allow innovative projects that are not overly costly to be launched quickly.

Finally, we offer some recommendations on assessments and evaluations.

22. Specifically, we recommend that Sida undertake full-scale evaluations of its support to IPCRI and ISS, using the criteria indicated in #25 below.

23. If short-term project evaluations are required for any reason, they should not be expected to evaluate issues such as connectedness that can only be assessed over the long-term through longitudinal studies. Short-term assessments can provide guidelines and suggestions for long-term projects.

24. Sida should initiate a process of discussion and research to identify means of gauging the impact and influence of the different types of peacebuilding project.

25. As well as using those means as criteria, once they are identified and operationalised, Sida should encourage assessment and evaluation teams to use the following criteria, expanding and elaborating upon the ALNAP criteria:

Appropriateness: emphasising knowledge and assessment of the conflict dynamics and the local situation.

Coherence: both internal (strategic framework) and external (whether it takes account of other activities on the same issue).

Ownership and partnership: who is in control, how do the partners work together?

Sustainability: of the project and of the local organisation(s).

Gender equality: in terms of both the theme of the work and the participants, with due regard to the sensitivity of the question in many contexts.

Flexibility: ability to adapt to changing circumstances while remaining true to the overall strategic vision of the project.

Location of responsibility: a viable and clear division of labour.

Pressure for success and acceptance of the possibility of failure.

Institutional competence: with special focus on the local organisation(s).

Relationships of trust: the project's record in gaining trust among partners and stakeholders.

Quantitative sub-goals: for deliverables such as publications, reports, meetings, competence development, numbers of participants etc.

This is a longer list than the ALNAP criteria, amounting to 12 criteria if the issue of impact and influence is solved. We conclude, however, that it contains useful elements the ALNAP criteria miss out, and succeeds in unpacking the connectedness criterion.

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference
for an Assessment of Lessons Learned from Sida Support to
Conflict Management and Peace Building Interventions

A. Background

Peace building has become a field of increasing interest and importance for development and humanitarian actors. Armed conflict causes suffering and is a hinderance to the development of societies. Sweden considers conflict prevention and peace building to be of outmost importance not only within the framework of humanitarian assistance but also in development cooperation.

The Sida Action Programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights (Jan 1998) includes the notion of the peace promotion function, which, in turn, has been further developed in Sida's Strategy for Conflict Management and Peace Building (May 1999). This strategy deals mostly with situations where armed conflicts are ongoing and takes its point of departure in humanitarian assistance. The strategy underlines that conflict management can not be dealt with without an analysis of political and security aspects of crisis and understanding of the dynamics of intra-state conflicts. There is a need for a problem-oriented assessment of programmes for humanitarian assistance and their possible effects on conflict.

As a matter of operational definitions Sida views the term "conflict management" as a generic term for aid-financed projects implemented during ongoing armed conflicts, partly for the victims of the conflict and partly for peace building. "Conflict prevention" covers interventions which have as their main objective to prevent outbreaks of violence, the escalation or return to violence, i.e all the three phases of an armed conflict: before, during and after. "Peace building" refers to projects with the aim of influencing the parties involved in armed conflicts. Sida support shall give special consideration to promotion of dialogue and security.

Since 1998, Sida has given support to a number of peace building initiatives. In the letter of appropriation for 2000, the Government has asked Sida to follow up on experiences gained from the work within the area of conflict prevention and resolution.

An important part of the Sida follow-up will be a study to be commissioned to describe interventions and identify lessons learned from Sida support to peace building interventions in 1998–99.

B. Objective

The objective of the study is to collect and analyse lessons learned from peace building interventions by humanitarian and conflict transformation agencies and to give recommendations to Sida on how experiences gained can be used to promote the understanding of complex processes and improv efficiency of interventions. Different areas of learning are to be considered by the study, such as linkages between the initative itself and other activities or ongoing processes in the setting, sustainability, impact, timing and performance of implementing agencies and Sida.

More specifically, in particular with regards to peace building interventions, the purpose of the study is

1. to promote institutional learning in the field of peace building. In particular, lessons learned from Sida support to peace buidling initiatives should be collected and analysed within the framework of Sida's action programmes and strategy for conflict management.

2. to guide Sida in developing policies and methodology in the area of conflict management, within Sida and in international fora

3. to facilitate Sida's assessment and analysis in decision making.

C. Scope of the study

The study shall include

(i)   a State of the Art/Annotated Bibliography of evaluations and lessons learned from peace building interventions by humanitarian and other relevant agencies based on field studies

(ii) a review and analysis of lessons learned from Sida support during 1998–99 to peace building interventions by humanitarian and other relevant agencies

(iii) recommendations to Sida based on the analysis on how to improve assessment and decisionmaking within management and peace building

(iv) a seminar at Sida to present findings of the study

The scope of interventions shall be based upon the Sida inventory of interventions available, "Sammanställning av konfliktförebyggande och fredsbyggande insatser på Sida, 1998–1999" (SEKA/HUM, Working Paper). The study design and selection of interventions shall be decided in connection with the preparation of the commissioned consultant's inception report to Sida.

D. Study design and methodology

1. Conceptual approach

Sida recommends the Consultant to develop indicators for progress on the basis of the criteria that ALNAP has developed attempting in order to address the special circumstances of humanitarian activities and the subsequent evaluation process. These critera are appropriateness, coherence, connectedness, cost-effectiveness, coverage and impact.

The review and analysis of the study shall thus mainly be guided by the below discussed conceptual framework. Particular importance shall be given to the areas of appropriatedness, coherence and coordination and connectedness. In addition Sida gives importance to local capacities and the roles of various stakeholders involved and their consciousness of institutional learning. The key questions as indicated below serve to illustrate the understanding of each entry.

1.1 Appropriateness and timeliness
Was the intervention appropriate considering the circumstances? Was it well-timed? Ill-timed?Has the agency made an appropriate analysis regarding the local contexts and the conflict situation?

Is the analysis generally accepted?

1.2 Coherence and coordination
Considering that an intervention should not be carried out in isolation and the fact that peacebuilding is a comprehensive concept based on the need to build lasting institutional and socio-economic structures for peace, the issues of coherence and coordination are particularly pertinent. Coherence concerns whether an activity links with the overall international response.

Has the intervention been carried out in isolation? Does the activity of the intervention link with overall international response or other ongoing processes?

Is the intervention being supported by simultaneous political, military, diplomatic or other peace propmoting inititiative?

What are the comparative advantage/s of the agency (or Sida) to intervene?

1.3 Connectedness
Connectedness deals with how, if at all, the intervention pays attention to supporting the peace process in the short run or how, if at all, it links to long-term considerations for sustaining peace in the long run.

If the interventions occurs in a Sida development cooperation country, does it respond to policies with Sida country strategy or other support in that country?

Has there been a build up of local capacities? In which way has the intervention given support to local capacities for peace and/or local ownership of the peace process?

Has the intervention succeeded in linking short-term and long-term activities?

1.4 Cost-Effectiveness
It is difficult to evaluate cost-effectiveness in the area of peace building. Guiding principles and evaluation methods are hard to find. Suffice in this study to observe how cost-concious the agency has been, if at all.

1.5 The roles of different stakeholders
The acceptance and perception of humanitarian/development actors involved in peace building has importance for the success of the intervention.

How is the development/humanitarian agency, or Sida, being perceived by others? (eg independent, impartial, transparent)

How does the agency look upon itself, which role does it perceive to have?

Which overall objective does the humanitarian agency have? What are the links between the intervention and the overall objective of the agency?

What comparative advantage, if any, does the agency have for intervention?

What are the guiding forces for the selection of peace building intervention that the agency has made?

What is Sida's role? What could Sida have done to improve the programming of the intervention?

1.6 Lessons learned and conciousness of the learning process
What is the perception of the agency of lessons learned? What could have been made better? Is the agency interested in institutional learning from experiences gained?

What is the view of the consultant of this study regarding the perception of the agency, its performance work and role?

What is the view of the consultant regarding Sida's performance?

2. *Methodology*
2.1 The study shall be *based on a)* a review of existing documentation relevant to the purpose and scope of the study, b) field visits to selected sites of intervention and c) on interviews with organisations and stakeholders.

2.2 Sida considers the implementation of the proposed study to be part of a learning process for Sida as well as cooperating partners involved. In particular, Sida looks positively on increased involvement and institutional build up of competence in Sweden in this field of work. Cooperation with Scandinavian resources is welcome.

3. Reporting and timing

The structure and sequence of reporting shall be a) Inception report; b) State of the Art/Annotated Bibliography; c) First draft of final report; d) Sida's comments on first draft of final report; e) Final report; f) Presentation seminar at Sida of findings of the study. d) Sida's comments on first draft of final report; 5) Final report; 6) Presentation seminar at Sida of findings of the study.

3.1 The Consultant shall begin the assignment by preparing an *inception report* elaborating on the proposal for basic design and plan for the study indicated in para E.1. (iii). After discussion with and approval by Sida/SEKA/HUM, the Consultant shall begin to carry out the study as soon as possible.

3.2 The Consultant shall produce and give to Sida a *State of the Art/Annotated Bibliography (para* C. (i)) not later than three (3) weeks after Consultant assignment has been approved by Sida.

3.3 A *first draft* of the final report shall be given to Sida not later than 30 *september.* Sida will give the Consultant comments on this draft within two weeks after receipt of the draft. The *final report* shall be given to Sida not later than *30 October.* A presentation seminar of the findings of the study shall be given at Sida not later than *20 November.*

3.4 The final report shall be written in English, not exceed 50 pages, excluding any annexes and executive summary. Format of the report as follows: follow guidelines of Sida 'Evaluation Report – a Standardised Format'. The final report shall be typed on a word processor in a Word 97 format. A separate Newsletter Summary in the format adapted to the guidelines in 'Sida Evaluations Newsletter-Guidelines for Evaluation Managers and Consultants' shall be given together with the final report.

E. Qualifications that shall be met by the Tenderer

1. As stated in the Tender Invitation, submitted tenders must include the following four elements, and will be judged against these in the following order of priority:

(i) the Consultant's *interpretation* of the assignment, based on the above background, purpose and scope;

(ii) a presentation of the professional qualifications of the proposed *study team*

(iii) a proposal for basic *design and methodology* for how the Consultant intends to carry out the study, in accordance with the Scope of the Study as described in para C. above, including proposals on how many country studies that should be included, identification and numbers of type of interventions needed to allow general assessment; concerning field studies to be undertaken three cases should be represented, out of which preferrably one track II intervention with clear political linkages (eg Uppsala University in East Timor), one locally based peace process and one institutional capacity building effort

(iv) total estimated time needed and a *timeplan* for the assignment

(v) total estimated cost to carry out the assignment

2. Study team and qualifications

2.1 The team assigned to carry out the study shall have knowledge and experience appropriate to the purpose and scope of the study, including

(i) good knowledge of conflict management and peace building and familiarity with relevant Sida and Swedish strategies within the sector

(ii) familiarity with humanitarian assistance and/or development cooperation from countries in crisis

(iii) the study team shall have very good knowledge in written and spoken Swedish and English.

2.2 The Tenderer shall specify the qualifications for each member of the study team and attach CVs for each member. Each concerned member shall with signature certify that her/his CV is a correct one.

2.3 The Tenderer shall give information regarding earlier experience from similar assignments that have been carried out during the three previous years. Reference material related to these assignments shall be given as well as the names and telephone number to at least two persons related to these assignments and who have accepted to give references.

3. Other issues

The Tenderer shall state and specify any minor reservations against the draft contract, Sida's "Allmänna kommersiella villkor för tjänsteuppdrag" and Sida's "Standard Conditions" and propose alternative wording. The proposed changes shall not imply significant changes in the existing draft contract or commercial/standard conditions.

F. Requirements that should be met by the Tenderer

1. Tenders should be based on a need for the Consultant of maximum twelve (12) person weeks including the time required to prepare the inception report, including time for completing the report and for preparation and presentation of seminar (D.3.3).

2. Tenders should specify and justify the basic study design and methodology, including a discussion on determinants of evaluation related to impact of peace building initatives.

3. Other staff categories or study team skills or competence than indicated in E.2 above that the Tenderer can offer should be included in the tender.

4. Contract with Sida should be entered by 8 June 2000.

5. The starting date of assignment implementation should be 8 June 2000.

6. The Tenderer should give an estimated time needed and a time plan for the implementation of the assignment indicating the time of start and completion.

7. The Tenderer should give a total estimated cost and specification of fees in SEK per hour (exl moms) for each study member, discounts, if applicable, and other costs.

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