

A QUICK GUIDE

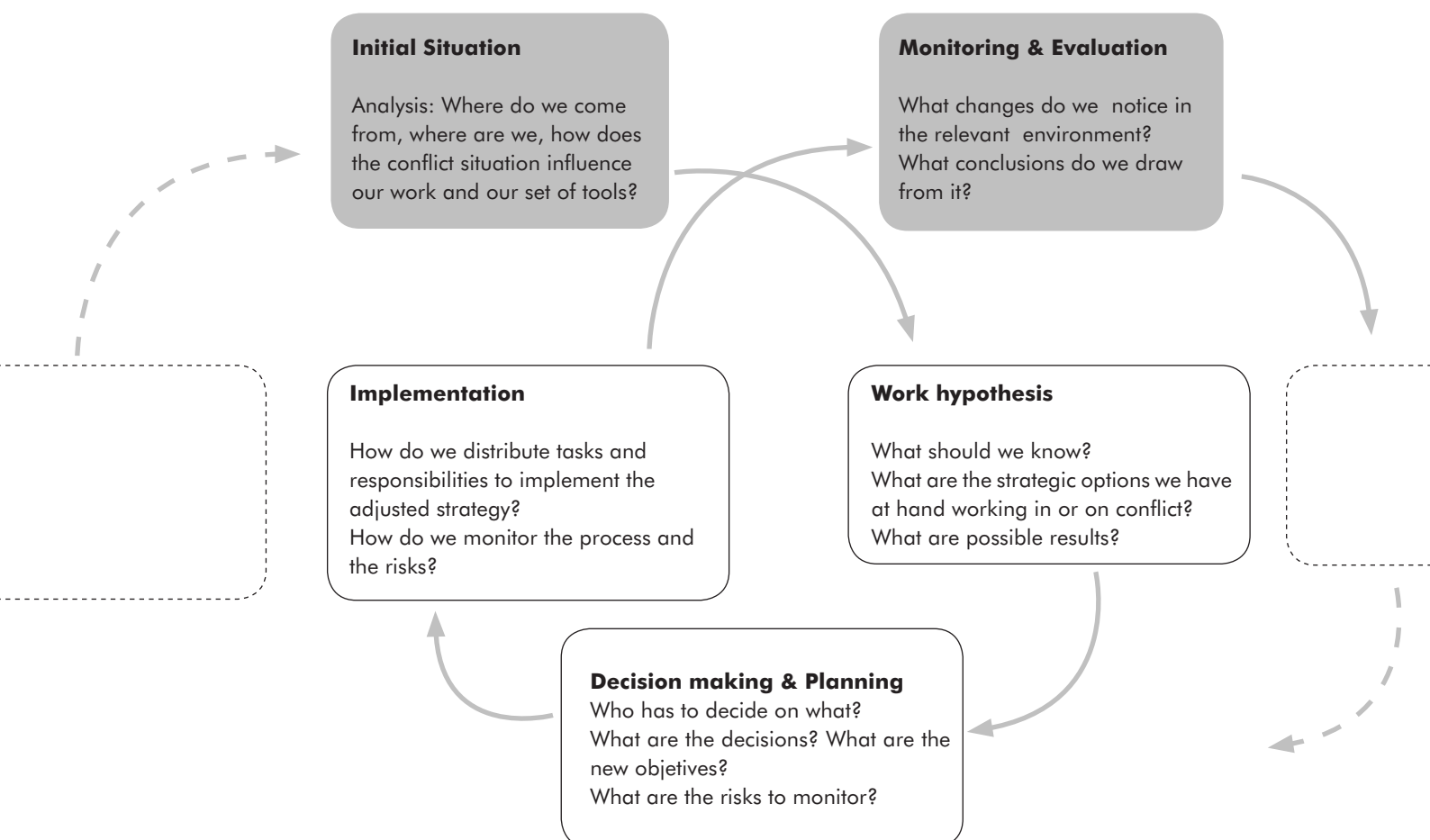
This is a quick guide to the adaptation of country strategies/programmes to the situations of political tensions or during and after violent conflict

Conflict Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM) is a management approach that addresses values, procedures, tools and communications for steering development and humanitarian programmes and their projects in a context of political tensions, prior, during or after violent conflict. This quick CSPM guide for the strategy and programme level provides an overview of the process of strategy/programme adaptation for management staff in Cooperation Offices (COOFs) and at headquarters.

The relevance and appropriateness of CSPM has been clearly illustrated in the case of Nepal where,

faced with escalating violence, the SDC chose to stay engaged and adapt its development programme to the difficult context. This has led to the instauration of a Joint Swiss Programme for Nepal, a programme which combines Swiss development and diplomatic peace and human rights efforts as a comprehensive response to the situation.

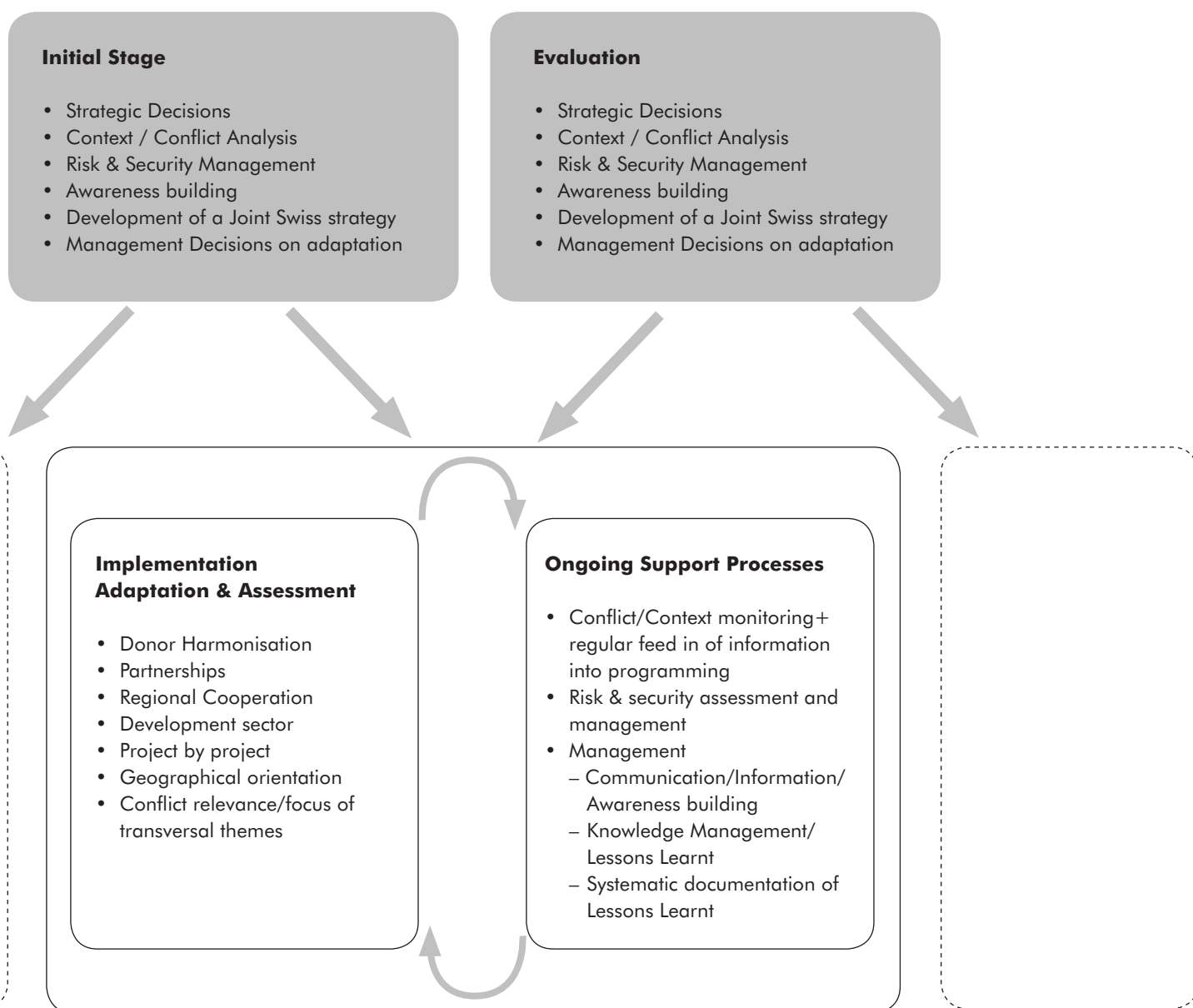
A process of decision making – be it on a policy level, a programme level or within a project – basically always follows the four steps illustrated in the figure below: Firstly, an initial stage with an analysis of the current situation; secondly, the brainstorming of ideas of what could be done and narrowing down the choice to what should be done (hypothesis building); thirdly, the decision stated and the planning for the next step; and fourthly, actually doing “it”, the implementation of the decision. The process comes



back after the implementation to “Evaluation”, in a sense a new “Initial State”, starting the circle for a new round with a new knowledge base.

The main steps of conflict-sensitive programme/strategy adaptation: The overall adaptation process fol-

lows the four steps described above. Within the “Implementation” the 4-step scheme is repeated for the specific activities, e.g., for “Donor harmonisation”. The same is valid for the “Ongoing Support Processes”, where each activity, as for example “Risk & Security Assessment” and management, follows again the four steps. The arrows indicate that the activities are linked amongst each other. Creating and managing a constructive interchange is the challenge of conflict sensitive management.



The following section gives a basic overview of what the introduction of CSPM means and entails. Programme/strategy adaptation steps will be complemented with examples. Although the above major process steps represent an ideal process they can take place in parallel and/or in different order depending on the specific context in question. Often a move towards adapting elements of a country strategy or certain activities to conflict situations already takes place prior to an official decision to adapt the entire country strategy/plan and programmes to the conflict situation.

I. INITIAL STAGE

Strategic Decision

A CSPM programme/strategy adaptation process is initiated with a **strategic decision**.

For example, in Nepal SDC decided to stay engaged with a development programme as did most other donors and agencies and consequently decided to adapt the country strategy to the situation of armed conflict as part of a 'whole of government' approach. In the case of Sri Lanka the strategic decision to adapt the SDC humanitarian and development programmes to the conflict situation was jointly taken with the Political Division IV. It was decided to develop a joint Swiss plan and adapt the humanitarian and the development programmes to the situation of armed conflict.

Analysis: Initial and ongoing

A decision to stay engaged with a development programme or implement a humanitarian programme in a situation marked by violent conflict requires a thorough understanding of the context. This is obtained through initial **context/conflict analysis** that can be commissioned by SDC or/and PDIV, or could also be a joint effort of a number of donors.

An in-depth analysis forms the basis for strategy development as well as ongoing conflict monitoring and programme as well as project adaptation.

The following procedure can be used for analysis: an initial analysis can be part of joint donor effort or can be conducted with support of SDC/COPRET, or externally commissioned by SDC or/and PDIV. It is crucial that the initial conflict analysis report is the start up of an ongoing conflict monitoring that forms the basis for frequent programme/project adaptation.

Gender and governance have to be part of the analysis.

The following **conflict monitoring** tools can be used:

SDC has developed an internal monitoring instrument (MERV). The way the MERV has been developed and structured in the case of Nepal can serve as a model (see annex to Nepal, T. Paffenholz 2006).

Embassy reports are another tool for conflict analysis. In Sri Lanka, SDC and the Embassy have decided to join hands and merge the Embassy and the MERV reports.

SDC Nepal has developed an additional tool: Regular local risk assessments (LRA) are conducted in areas where the Swiss programme is implemented. Results are fed into the MERV.

External tools can be used to complement and check the internal analysis. Useful qualitative reports are provided by the International Crisis Group (ICG), the quantitative FAST reports can be additionally used as well as other donor and agency reports. In Nepal, SDC COOF commissioned regular situation updates to a local journalist.

In Sri Lanka all donors join hands and commission quarterly conflict analysis reports to a local research centre. The results of the reports are regularly discussed within the 'Donor Peace Support Group'.

In Palestine, SDC with a number of other bi- and multilateral donors commissioned bi-annual public perception reports on the living conditions, including the humanitarian and socio-political context of the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West bank.

Risk & security assessment and management

In conflict contexts the security of staff, partners and beneficiaries is at risk. Installing security and risk management procedures becomes a prerequisite for work in the field. In the case of Nepal, the COOF engaged in close monitoring of the conflict situation with the help of MERV and local risk assessments (LRAs). Quarterly programme and project planning exercises were introduced as a means to flexibly adapt the programme to the changing situation. In addition, the post of a full time security office was created within the COOF.

A coherent joint Swiss strategy ('Whole of government approach')

As a means to making effective and more coherent use of all foreign policy instruments, the OECD DAC recommends applying a 'whole of government' approach. In response to this recommendation, it is now common to develop a joint Swiss Programme. All relevant Swiss government actors, also from different departments, should be consulted in preparation of this process.

In the case of conflict countries, this 'whole of government' approach can combine development and humanitarian with human rights and peacebuilding or military and other strategies in a comprehensive way. Here often SDC and PDIV are often at the centre of these efforts. In 'non-conflict' countries often SDC and SECO (see Swiss country programme in Eastern Europe, for India or Mozambique) are often the core Swiss actors collaborating.

The joint Swiss strategy contributes to development effectiveness because donor harmonization is not possible when the single donors do not have an effective strategy oriented towards the central goals of development in the respective country. In the case of conflict countries, the end of armed conflict is a crucial condition for development. The joint strategy takes this into consideration in making use of all different kinds of development and diplomatic policy and operational strategies at hand. Furthermore, humanitarian programmes profit from integration into a joint Swiss strategy that makes its unified activities more effective through the orientation towards joint goals and the merging of management instruments.

Joint Swiss strategies so far exist in Nepal and Sri Lanka. In both cases these strategies or plans have been developed during a facilitated workshop in the respective country attended by involved staff from headquarters (PD, SDC D/H/COPRET/Multilateral, etc.) and field (Embassy and the COOF)

Management Decisions on adaptation of entire strategy /programme

After these important strategic decisions, management decisions are required on how to adapt the country strategy/ programme on the basis of the conflict analysis and the joint Swiss strategy or plan, i.e. an implementation strategy is needed. This strategy too, is best developed also as part of a facilitated workshop and involves a number of crucial elements described below. In the case of Sri Lanka, for example, a first workshop was conducted to decide on the joint Swiss strategy/plan and a second workshop followed at a later stage to discuss and agree on the detailed implementation steps.

The implementation of the comprehensive/coherent strategy encounters the usual management challenges of organisations at headquarters and in the field; e.g., management of resources (financial, capacity, knowledge, partners, experts, clarification of decision making. Management has to be flexible, open to change, and have a good knowledge of the political context.

CSPM introduces a new or different way of looking at programmes and projects. People and the organisation are confronted with a need to change and to adapt. CSPM therefore calls for strategic **management** that includes, but is not limited to, leadership commitment and the empowerment of local COOF and project staff. To support the strategic decision and its corresponding objectives, the management encounters further challenges.

The implementation should be accompanied and re-enforced by ongoing parallel activities, which are listed below. Defining those activities helps to plan and implement concrete steps, to be aware of what might be neglected, and to further ideas of how to deal with obstacles. This makes it easier to create an overall picture, avoid blind spots, and get clarification about where you stand during the process.

It is helpful to be willing to go into the field and conduct dialogue with conflict parties, as well as oversee operational requirements such as risk and security management. Adequate staff policies, such as the recruitment of minorities, are necessary in order to maintain coherence in action, as in speech. Furthermore, management of resources, e.g. flexibility in budget allocation and *re-organisation* such as the introduction of peace-building or human rights advisors provide strong support.

Before implementation can start, awareness of adaptation and the willingness to do so must be created.

Communication/Information/Awareness

Visions, strategic decisions, objectives, knowledge, perspectives, results, lessons learnt etc. need to be shared. Communication (by different types of meetings and work shops, reporting, visualisations, dialoguing, etc.) among the people in the core team, partners, beneficiaries and others involved in or implicated by the programme supports implementation strongly through enhanced sensitivity and learning processes.

Coordination between field offices and headquarters, as well as between the various units at headquarters, is essential.

Interaction of people (psycho-social processes):

Countries experiencing political tensions, armed conflict, or countries which are in the aftermath of an armed conflict offer a framework which strongly affects people and their interactions. On one hand, it puts stress on staff and partners on a personal level as well as on a work level. Offering *psycho-social care* in order to deal with the insecurities, fear and possible trauma caused by armed activities is often necessary. On the other hand, selection of partners, driving forces, group cohesion, and conflict management within the group(s) and with partners gains importance as this directly influences the implementation of the strategy.

Knowledge Management

Since implementation is not a linear process, straight forward but rather a dynamic process where obstacles are overcome, insecurities are dealt with, and flexible adaptation is mandatory (e.g., triggered by the results of monitoring) a lot of knowledge is created to deal with these factors. This should be used and fed back to improve the implementation and to stimulate learning processes.

Systematic documentation of lessons learnt on all levels

Systematic documentation allows for the maintenance of transparency and facilitates programme evaluation processes.

In addition, all lessons learnt should be systematically documented for further dissemination through internal and external communication of this information. Documentation prepared by COOF teams and partners in the field, as well as that prepared by Headquarters, Political Divisions and the Embassy should be communicated to all those concerned for further discussion and analysis.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

To implement Conflict Sensitive Programme Management, there are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration and elaborated.

Donor Harmonisation

Donor harmonisation has also been defined by the OECD/DAC as a crucial condition for development effectiveness. This is also true for conflict situations.

In the case of Sri Lanka and Nepal, Switzerland held the chair of important donor forums. In Nepal, it also worked towards donor harmonisation through ongoing advocacy for joint donor responses, and implemented joint projects with development banks as a means to facilitate their understanding of the situation through development dialogue, even intervening on the Board level of the Development Banks in Washington (World Bank) and Manila (ADB). In addition, the combined Swiss efforts in Nepal and Switzerland, vis-à-vis the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, have substantially contributed to the establishment of the largest existing Human Rights Monitoring Mission in the world.

However it also has to be recognised that donor harmonisation, especially in conflict situations, might be difficult. This is often due to global policies like the 'war against terror' or different understandings of the situations between different donors. It is thus sometimes not possible to achieve full donor harmonisation, but at least cooperation with like-minded countries should be achieved.

Assessing partnerships

The establishment and assessment of partnerships plays an important role in implementing a coherent strategy in a conflict-ridden country as traditional partners, such as national or local governments might have become conflict parties. Similarly, NGO partners may be biased towards a certain sector within the conflict.

The government, which traditionally plays a main role in development, becomes a party to the conflict and can no longer be considered as an actor for development. Alternatives should be considered. We often see a need to shift work with the government to a more people-centred development and humanitarian operation.

Care has to be taken (Do No Harm) with the selection of partners in a conflict situation because interactions between conflicting parties can be influenced and one's own position and role in the conflict (in particular, in the eyes of other actors) is bound to change. Ownership remains, however, key also in conflict situations.

In the case of Nepal, it became difficult to work with the local governments as these had almost no access to the conflict-affected areas of the country. New partnerships with NGOs were thus combined with people-centred development efforts, i.e. working directly with user groups. It was important to support a conflict sensitive composition of user groups, i.e. groups with a fair representation of disadvantaged groups.

Regional cooperation

Conflicts often have a regional dimension. Therefore it is also important to assess existing or potential Swiss cooperation agreements addressing the entire region.

Development sector adaptation

Another adaptation step is the systematic assessment of the linkage between a particular development sector and the conflict situation. Development sector policies have to be adapted to the conflict situation and often new sectors are introduced such as peacebuilding or human rights, the latter often in cooperation with PDIV.

Special attention has to be given to the short and long term sector objectives and their impacts on development as well as conflict/peace. In addition, partnerships have to be assessed (see point above), and the causes of conflict have to be looked at and matched with the sector needs (e.g. have all beneficiaries profited in a just and fair manner?).

In the case of the SDC's Rwanda programme, the entire health sector had been adapted to the conflict context.

Project by project adaptation including setting priorities

Development projects need to be adapted in response to the often fast-changing priorities created by an armed conflict. This usually goes hand in hand with awareness building of project staff through training, 'Do no harm,' or other tools such as Peace and Conflict assessments of single projects followed by respective adaptation processes. Please see 'Conflict Sensitive **Project** Management' Sheet in this folder as well as many examples of PCIA reports of single projects (examples can be provided by COPRET).

In the case of Sri Lanka, project adaptation started with training for project staff in conflict sensitivity and 'Do no harm'. In Bolivia, project by project adaptation was supported by COPRET after a general adaptation of the country programme. In the case of Nepal, the projects themselves together with the national programme officers within COOF took the lead in the adaptation process.

For project by project adaptation, it is important to find a common, context specific understanding of conflict sensitivity. In the case of Nepal, ensuring pro-poor development and including disadvantaged groups (DAGs) such as women, Dalits or ethnic groups as well as disadvantaged geographical regions, into all development activities has been the prevailing understanding of conflict sensitive development on the project level.

Assessing geographic orientation

Armed conflict may result in some geographical areas being harder, or even impossible, to reach and exclusion of certain geographical areas might be part of causes of conflict. Therefore the choice of where a programme is to implement activities, might lead to perceptions of bias towards one or the other party to conflict. Thus an assessment of the geographical orientation of a programme is part of a conflict sensitive programme adaptation.

Assessing the conflict relevance/focus of transversal themes

The conflict relevance of gender, governance and other transversal themes also has to be assessed. It is thereby important to

- clarify the specific meaning of present SDC cross cutting issues – gender and governance – in the context in question. In some contexts, the insufficient participation of women in decision making is a major problem, while in other cases it is the high level of rape and other sexual abuses against women that has to be primarily addressed. The same process is required for governance. Distinct strategies must be defined when the problem is linked to reduced capacity and/or legitimacy of public authorities, whenever human rights is an issue or in cases where citizen's participation in public decision making appears to be a bottleneck.
- identify those additional cross-cutting themes that are relevant in the given context (for example in many semi-arid areas, environmental degradation and lack of natural resources can be a source of conflict and has consequently to be considered as a cross cutting theme)

Additional resources

T. Paffenholz, Nepal: staying engaged in conflict, 2006

www.deza.admin.ch/de/Home/Conflict_prevention_and_transformation/violence_prevention/resources/resource_en_150717.pdf