

Tool Connectors & Dividers

Background

In order to conduct a thorough conflict-sensitive context analysis, operational colleagues in the SDC Cooperation Offices / Swiss Representations abroad can use 3 complementary tools from the [CSPM Tool Box](#) in a modular way: (a) Fragility Assessment; (b) Actors Mapping and the 4A's; (c) Connectors & Dividers. Each of these tools provide guidance on specific analysis steps and questions to ask.

Objective of Connectors & Dividers Tool

First step: analyse the actors/factors (**including a gender perspective**) that contribute to tensions (dividers) and the actors/factors that contribute to positive/constructive relationships (connectors) in relation to a specific issue, sector of intervention or territory of relevance for the Swiss international cooperation mandate,.

Second step: discuss possible measures to enhance the power / position / number of connectors (left column below) while decreasing the power / position / number of dividers (right column below). In dialogue with the implementing partners, these actions can be later strategically integrated as outputs or outcomes, into the results framework of an SDC-funded programme/project, alongside with the corresponding theory of change.

Process

A Connectors & Dividers Analysis can be realized at the beginning of any new programme / project or any new phase, in a modular way (alongside with the Fragility Assessment and the Actors' Mapping and the 4A's Tool). It is recommended that such exercise be realised jointly with SDC's representatives, alongside with current/new implementing partners, other funding partners and the civil society (whenever relevant). Given the potential political sensitivity of the results of such analyses, it is recommended to clarify, with all members of the analysis exercise, which (parts of such) analyses will remain internal only. The relevance and benefits of using the tool "Connectors & Dividers" in moments of high polarization of conflicts needs to be carefully assessed, as well as who should be included the circle of participants, keeping in mind the importance for SDC to remain neutral and impartial.

(1) Starting point for the analysis (first step):

An SDC-funded programme/project should support connectors and weaken dividers. Included in the dividers are all those actors who deliberately use factors and means in order to maintain the existing polarization of the parties to the conflict. Amongst those factors are corruption, impunity from punishment, unequal access to resources, services and employment, language barriers, the manipulation of ethnic differences, reinforcement of gender polarization, the militarization of society, the loss of faith in state institutions, the declining authority of mediators (clergy, teachers, elders), or groups of persons which push with singular insistence for delimitation and exclusion. Included in the connectors are all those actors who deliberately use factors and means in order to connect people and contribute to a feeling of belonging and of sharing responsibility (inclusiveness). In internal conflicts, these could be a common language, connecting infrastructure (phone, roads and public transport), common memories, common religious or national festivals, or particularly integrative groups of people, who build bridges over the frontiers of conflicts.

Questions to ask as a first step:

- What are the (potentially) relevant dividing and connecting factors in a specific area of engagement?
- What effects will the programme have on these dividing and connecting factors? And in turn, how will potential dividers and connectors affect the programme?
- Does the programme support connectors and thereby create new alliances for peace and room for dialogue – and if yes, in which way?
- Does the programme enhance any (potential) dividers, and thereby lead to an intensification of (potential) tension between groups – and if yes, in which way?

(2) Possible measures to address the power / position of connectors and dividers (second step):

After identifying the connecting / dividing actors and factors, jointly discuss the possible measures to enhance the power / position / number of connectors (left column) while decreasing the power / position / number of dividers (right column). In dialogue with the implementing partners, these actions can later strategically be integrated, as outputs or outcomes, into the results framework of an SDC-funded programme / project, alongside with the corresponding theory of change.

CONNECTORS / SUPPORTERS	DIVIDERS / OPPONENTS
Enhance power of supporters: • Create a coalition of supporters • Enhance legitimacy • Increase access to political leaders • Increase organisational skills and competencies • Enhance awareness and capacity on human rights / gender equality	Decrease the power of opponents: • Exploit communication opportunities for persuading the opposition of the reform goals (communication concept) • Question and check the degree of truth of oppositions' arguments • Enhance accountability for and capacity to meet human rights/gender related duties
Strengthen the position of supporters: • Persuade supporters to change • Publicise supporters' positions • Add additional policy elements • Add more benefits, remove objections • Seek common human rights based goals	Weaken the position of opponents: • Compensate opponents • Seek common human rights-based goals • Add additional policy elements
Increase the number of supporters: • Create new alliances (! might not be the ideal remedy in any context; key is that new organisation does not contribute to more fractured society) • Persuade non-mobilised groups • Attract political leadership • Adjust decision-making processes	Decrease the number of opponents: • Find persuasive mediator • Change decision making process • Negotiate on other issues • Increase public support