



Photo: Bawku, Ghana, Thorkil Nielsen

# INCLUSIVE PEACEBUILDING

OXFAM IBIS' THEMATIC PROFILE

APRIL 2019

In 2016 the Oxfam IBIS Board decided to add 'Inclusive Peacebuilding' as a fourth area of thematic programming work. This thematic profile reflects a refined approach to Oxfam IBIS' work in this thematic area, with a stronger focus on supporting country and regional level programming and engaging through Oxfam's Rights in Crisis campaign to promote the Women, Peace, and Security, and Youth, Peace, and Security agendas.

Oxfam IBIS' work on Inclusive Peacebuilding takes its point of departure from the fact that inequality and poverty are increasingly tied to conflict and fragility. More than two billion people live in fragile and conflict affected contexts. OECD's recent "State of Fragility" report suggests that more than 80 percent of the world's poorest could be living in fragile and conflict-affected countries by 2030.

Growing inequality is both a cause and a consequence of violent conflict. The global population of forcibly displaced people is at a record and the significant majority of these persons are displaced as a direct result of conflict – and in fact the 10 same conflicts. 60 percent of food crises are driven by conflict. At least 80 percent of humanitarian crises and 60 percent of acute hunger crises are related to conflicts.

Recent trends in violent conflicts and its consequences have elicited a major refocusing of development and humanitarian assistance to fragile and conflict affected states. More than 50% of all ODA funding is targeting fragile and conflict affected states. Despite this emphasis, fragile and conflict affected states were far behind non-fragile states in the implementation of the MDGs. The question therefore remains: what is causing this failure; not only in promoting development in fragile and conflict affected contexts, but also in supporting sustainable peace?



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According to its new Development and Humanitarian Strategy 2017, Denmark will invest in peace, stability and protection and increased resilience in developing countries. Denmark will contribute to a coordinated effort for peace and stability. The Danish Development and Humanitarian Strategy 2017 has SDG Goal 16 on peace, justice and institutional development at the center. From Oxfam IBIS' perspective, it is critical that such efforts are geared towards addressing the structural causes of such instability, and not merely seeking to achieve the absence of violence.

## CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY MATTER FOR OXFAM

The global fight to address the structural inequality causing poverty and insecurity around the world is at the heart of our agenda in Oxfam. The focus on fragile and conflict-affected contexts in Oxfam International has increased over the years, both in terms of addressing the consequences of violent conflict through humanitarian interventions and in terms of addressing the causes of violent conflict through development and peacebuilding efforts. A particular emphasis on the role of women in peacebuilding and gender justice and, the role of youth in peacebuilding and 'Rights in Crisis' are at the forefront, but also new ways of engaging with business and their role in peacebuilding are developed. For all of Oxfam's multiple mandates - as a humanitarian responder, as a development organization, as an advocacy organization and as a civil society actor seeking to enable and empower civil society movements - engaging in fragile and conflict-affected contexts will not only determine the organization's effectiveness in and ability to support change, but will play a key role in shaping the organization's identity and relevance going forward.

In order to do so, Oxfam must go beyond 'band aid' solutions and tackle the root causes of conflict. Oxfam IBIS' Inclusive Peacebuilding portfolio links to Oxfam's Rights in Crisis Campaign: we help the people affected by conflict, insecurity and disaster get the assistance they need and the protection that is their right, but we want governments and the international community to address - and ultimately remedy - the political root causes of these people's vulnerability. An organization like Oxfam is already well positioned to leverage multiple entry points across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in ways that can both meet humanitarian needs while also addressing root causes of violent conflict. Oxfam IBIS has since its establishment in 1966 worked in fragile and conflict affected contexts. It was originally engaged in supporting the liberation movements of Southern Africa and their struggle against Apartheid and colonial rule.

Part of this support was undertaken through education and empowerment that generated new ideas and ways to move the countries forward after independence. Already at this time inequality and lack of access to education were identified as key causes of violent conflict and if addressed would serve as drivers for peaceful change. Today the documentation of these causal relations is only more prevalent. Thus, in and of itself the efforts of Oxfam IBIS to enhance equal access to quality education and economic justice in fragile and conflict-affected contexts contribute to sustainable peace.

## WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

Through the Confederation's humanitarian and development work, as well as the Confederation's advocacy profile, Oxfam is present in a number of fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The Confederation's focus on inequality, gender justice, aid effectiveness, and supporting civil society actors to play a leading role in their societies' own sustainable development, all point to the need to have a greater focus, coherence, and capacity geared towards addressing the root causes of violent conflict in order to ultimately end poverty.

Oxfam's systems approach to programming and advocacy means we have to analyze the political-economy, as well as gendered, social and security related drivers of the conflict contexts in which we work and use that analysis to ensure we support local capacities for peace (i.e. to eliminate violent

conflict), and magnifying the voices of marginalized groups such as women and youth. It should also be stated up front that, fundamentally, working on inclusive peace needn't be at the cost of the humanitarian or development work Oxfam does. Peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian assistance are not mutually exclusive, they can be mutually reinforcing if a holistic framework is in place.

## OXFAM IBIS' APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING

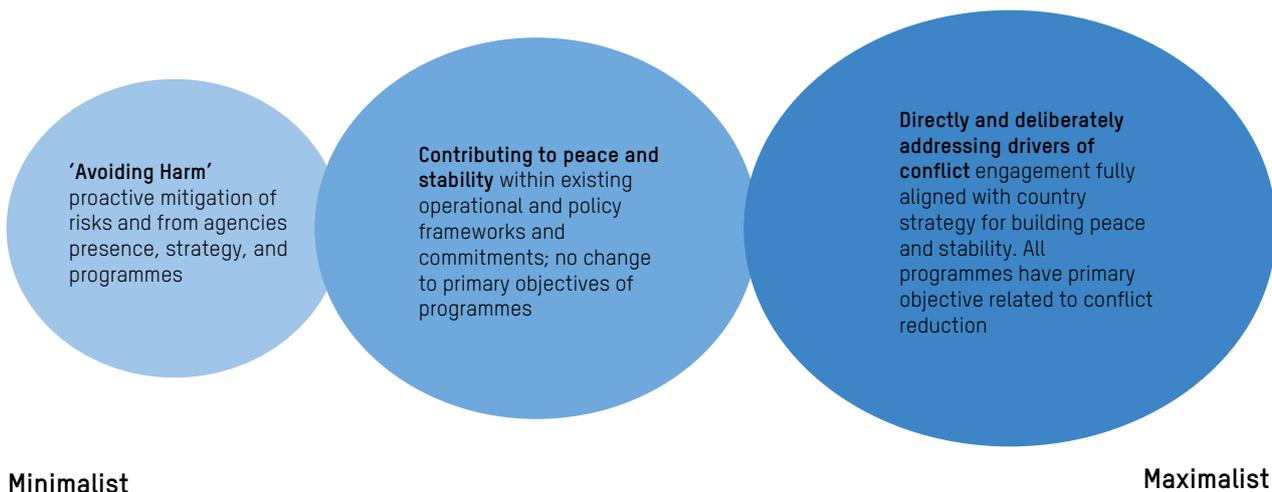
Recognizing that entry points to support specific peacebuilding initiatives may not always be present (or may take time for entry points to develop) in the contexts Oxfam engages in, Oxfam IBIS pursues a 'two track' approach to engaging on peacebuilding and conflict issues across Oxfam's humanitarian and development programming. The first track involves support to specific peacebuilding initiatives, which can take place at local, sub-national, national, or regional/ cross-border level. The second track involves engaging across humanitarian and development programming to support efforts towards conflict-sensitivity.

Peacebuilding is a long-term process to achieve sustainable peace in a society. It involves addressing causes of conflict, developing effective mechanisms to deal with destructive conflict, and creating capacities/mechanisms in society to resist processes of escalation of violence and polarization. Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organization to understand the context in which it is operating in and to understand the interaction between its intervention and that context. There are three elements to conflict-sensitivity, all of which Oxfam IBIS actively seeks to develop and support in each of the country programmes we are engaged in. The elements include: i) understanding the context they operate in, especially the conflict dynamics; ii) understanding the nature of their engagement and how this affects the conflict context, and vice-versa; and iii) acting on this understanding to avoid reinforcing conflict dynamics and to capitalise on opportunities.

### SPECTRUM OF AMBITION

Minimum standard as required by OECD DAC Fragile States Principles

Aspiration outlined in SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions - and New Deal



As stated in Oxfam IBIS strategy for 2019 to 2021, we will address causes of conflict in fragile and conflict affected contexts and promote right and inclusion of particularly women and youth. Oxfam IBIS will hence focus primarily on the two target groups in its work on addressing root causes of conflict and support sustainable peace.

### WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Conflict is inextricably linked to gender (in)equality in a variety of ways. A high level of gender equality gives a lower propensity for conflict. On the contrary, inequality and gender-based violence in societies affect vulnerability to civil and interstate war. A gender perspective on peacebuilding can help overcome the security narrative and allows for the focus to, besides being on the military aspects of conflict, also include a civilian aspect. Women and children constitute 80% of refugees and those internally displaced by violence.

In terms of women's participation in formal peace processes, it is proven that women's involvement as mediators increases the probability that the peace agreement will last at least 15 years with 35%. Their inclusion in peace processes makes humanitarian assistance more effective, strengthens the efforts of peacekeepers, prevents radicalization and the spread of extremism, and accelerates the economic recovery of conflict-affected communities. Therefore, conflicts can also be a chance to trigger positive change for gender equality and offers a unique opportunity to increase women's rights and empowerment. For example, evidence suggests that violent conflict can trigger unexpectedly positive civic and political behaviors by women and other groups in the population who are largely excluded from participating in civic and political life during peacetime. In recent years, the international community has increasingly recognized the importance of these connections. This is reflected in an increase in DAC members' Official Development Assistance (ODA) in support of gender equality in fragile contexts.

Oxfam IBIS' Inclusive Peacebuilding portfolio places an emphasis on the meaningful involvement of women in peace negotiations and broader peacebuilding processes with programmatic initiatives at both country and regional level. At country level, Oxfam IBIS supports 1325-related activities in South Sudan, Yemen, and in the Sahel. In South Sudan, this involved supporting women activists engage directly in the peace process, and since the peace agreement was signed this has shifted to advocacy and support to civil society monitoring and engagement in implementation of the peace deal.

### YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

More than 600 million youth live in fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories. More than half of the world's 25.4 million refugees are under the age of 18. Only a third of secondary school ages refugees are enrolled in school, and less than 1 percent of refugee youth have access to post-secondary education. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts a young person's opportunities to access education and prospect for livelihoods and engagement across social, political, cultural, and economic life are drastically reduced. Youth in fragile and conflict-affected contexts experience many types of marginalization and inequalities.

On the contrary, societies with youth participation in politics and economics tend to experience less violent conflicts. A country's vulnerability to violent conflicts highly depends on that country's ability to include youth in economic, social, and political life. Participation of young people is therefore important in order to build inclusive and sustainable peace, as the participation and inclusion of young people strengthen a country's capacity to manage and avert conflict.

## WORKING ACROSS OXFAM

The approach to working with these target groups and themes will take place at programmatic level in specific country contexts, at regional level in collaboration with organizations like WANEP in West Africa, as well as at policy level, for example in relation to policy discussions and agendas on UN-SCR 1325 and UN-SCR 2250, UN Global Compact, and the SDG agenda.

Oxfam IBIS actively engages in the Rights in Crisis campaign and works closely with a number of affiliates across the Oxfam family, particularly those who also have thematic work relating to conflict and fragility (including Oxfam Great Britain and Oxfam Novib). This work ranges from shaping the strategic

priorities of the Oxfam Confederation towards a greater emphasis on inclusive peacebuilding, to providing joint technical support to Oxfam Country Offices and partners. Through Oxfam's Rights in Crisis campaign, Oxfam IBIS actively promotes greater attention on issues related to women's rights in crisis, which covers the thematic work relating to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, where Oxfam IBIS is keen to ensure more coherence and linkages between Oxfam's advocacy work and the programmatic efforts at country level.

## FURTHER DOCUMENTATION AND REFERENCES

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