

Sharing Studies and Conflict-Related Initiatives on Sri Lanka
Project

**Sharing Studies
on Development and Conflict in Sri Lanka**

Synthesis of Eight Studies

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Preface

Since the 1990s there has been increasing attention on the position of donors and international organizations in conflict areas. The recognition that different kinds of assistance and diplomatic initiatives may either contribute to peace or exacerbate conflict has yielded numerous discussions, and these issues are also relevant to the case of Sri Lanka. Against the background of these discussions, a number of donors and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) have initiated studies to acquire a deeper understanding of the issues and processes involved.

The danger looming, however, is that these studies are neither sufficiently shared, nor locally owned. Against this background, the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, has requested the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations ‘Clingendael’ to address this issue by organizing a ‘sharing studies’ seminar. On 19 April 2002 Sri Lankans as well as non-Sri Lankans were invited to discuss a number of topics related to the role and capacity of donors and international organizations with regard to the Sri Lankan conflict. The seminar also intended to identify possible follow-up steps together with interested parties in Sri Lanka.

This paper provided food for thought for the seminar by synthesizing eight recent studies on development and conflict in Sri Lanka. The views expressed in this paper are not those of the Clingendael Institute or the Royal Netherlands Embassy. They reflect the author’s interpretation of the publications studied. Comments on earlier drafts were gratefully received from Peter Bowling, Kenneth Bush, Jonathan Goodhand, Georg Frerks and Jeroen de Zeeuw.

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List of Abbreviations

'3-R' Framework	Framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CHA	Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies
CPE	Complex Political Emergency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EPRLF	Eelam's People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ICES	International Centre for Ethnic Studies
(I)NGO	(International) Non-Governmental Organization
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JVP	Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NPC	National Peace Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
SSA	Social Scientist Association
SEDEC	Social and Economic Development Centre
TNA	Tamil National Army
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

This paper assesses eight international studies that review the position of the international community in the Sri Lankan conflict. The authors of the selected studies regard the conflict as a dynamic process, with multiple compounding factors. Ethnic differences, for example, play a role, but it is generally agreed that the main conflict between the predominantly Sinhalese government and Tamil groups was set off by ethnicization (manipulation of ethnic differences) and political failure to manage these differences. The role of external actors has also been highlighted. However, apart from India's open and covert interventions, the response of the international community to the mounting problems in Sri Lanka has been relatively inconspicuous. Finally, there is growing recognition of the view that development - and development cooperation for that matter - can exacerbate or even spark conflict, although this awareness has hardly led to different practice (yet).

In view of the (politically) unstable climate in Sri Lanka, some studies wonder whether the mandate of development cooperation should include peace-building and other conflict-related issues. While some argue that development assistance should go 'back to basics', there is a tendency among the donors to envisage some role for development cooperation as a peace-building instrument.

Whatever the mandate, a politically and process-informed approach is required. An adequate understanding of the political context and conflict dynamics, actors involved, and impact assessment of development activities are essential to the performance of aid in Sri Lanka. It is generally acknowledged, however, that donors and INGOs do not engage sufficiently in conflict and situational analysis. This may be because of certain structural problems within the development sector such as high staff turnover, lack of institutional memory, compartmentalization of programming, tensions between development policy and foreign policy, as well as due to bureaucratic rigidities within development organizations such as inappropriate monitoring and reporting requirements, micro-management, and the privileging of product over process. Apart from these findings, which show that analysis is not considered a high-ranking priority for development agencies, poor analysis is also caused by lack of appropriate analytical tools and methodologies for conflict analysis. Analysis is not only required for 'conflict mapping' and impact assessment, but is also instrumental for gaining better insight into the functioning of the Sri Lankan government and civil society, both of which consist of a peace-oriented group of actors and actors who have an interest in sustaining the conflict.

Given the wide variety of actors and issues, coordination and policy coherence are complex topics of debate. Several studies feel that policy complementarity may be a more feasible aim than policy integration. This discussion tends to remain relatively abstract, with practical mechanisms largely unaddressed. In this light, the '3-R' Framework is mentioned as an important contribution towards enhanced coordination and coherence.

Overall, the studies reviewed advocate a comprehensive approach that lifts the barriers between politics, ethnicity and conflict, between relief and mainstream development cooperation, and between

foreign policy and development cooperation. A comprehensive, inclusive view is also pushed forward in dealing with the Sri Lankan government and civil society. This requires better analysis and more communication between the relevant stakeholders regarding mandates, coordination and coherence. The challenge for future development cooperation with Sri Lanka consists of translating this comprehensive approach into concrete policy and practice.

1 Introduction

General

Development processes entail structural changes in the socio-economic and political environment of a society. Such changes may imply positive long-term effects, but could equally jeopardize existing social relationships and lead to political grievances or feelings of exclusion. Supporting governmental and non-governmental organizations in addressing these grievances has become an important aspect of development cooperation.

Already difficult under ‘normal’ circumstances, this becomes even more complex in war-torn situations. Recognizing the impact of development assistance in general and becoming increasingly aware about the detrimental effects that their activities can have on peace and conflict dynamics, international development agencies are struggling to define their role and responsibility in such conflict-prone situations.

A number of studies have appeared in this connection in recent years that specifically address this conflict-development nexus.¹ This paper focuses on eight selected publications that analyse the activities and role of bilateral, multilateral and (international) non-governmental organizations in the multi-dimensional conflict in Sri Lanka.² The studies draw from a large number of interviews with a wide variety of relevant actors. The views put forward are those of the authors themselves, without necessarily representing institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or Japan, the three main donors to Sri Lanka.

Outline of the Report

This report brings the findings of the different publications together and identifies their commonalities and differences. It does not pretend to replace the original documents, but offers a critical assessment of how different authors view the role of international development actors in Sri Lanka’s conflict and development. This is achieved by analysing the studies selected through five key questions regarding development and conflict in Sri Lanka.

What are the causes of conflict?

¹ For a comprehensive overview of publications on development and conflict in Sri Lanka see Zunzer (2002).

² Annexe 1 provides abstracts of the publications used. The annexe also explains the criteria used to select the particular studies as well as providing abstracts of these studies.

In order to map the context in which development actors are working, conflict analysis seems to be of primary importance. This report, however, will not present an exhaustive list of all factors that contributed to the causation of the Sri Lankan conflict, but will identify a number of salient points that should be kept in mind when working in the Sri Lankan context. Chapter 2 will therefore discuss the main causes identified in the studies, including ethnicization, politics and governance and the international (regional) dimension.

Which of these causes could / should the international community tackle?

Having identified the range of factors contributing to the conflict, the question arises as to which factors development cooperation could focus on? The studies reviewed explore a number of peace-related issues to which international assistance could contribute. In addition, the question arises as to what extent such activities fit the mandate of development actors. These questions are addressed in chapter 3.

What approach does this require from the international community?

Chapter 4 deals with the necessary ingredients for more effective action from the international development community. Here, the question arises of what approach is to be taken in practice? The studies argue for a more politically informed approach, and that flexible planning and increased analysis are indispensable if development activities are to have a positive impact on the conflict-development nexus.

What does that imply for relations with the Sri Lankan government and civil society?

Emphasizing the political core of the conflict and stressing the need for a politically informed approach puts the relationship between the international community and the Sri Lankan government as well as non-governmental actors at centre stage. Along side the government, the role of civil society - comprising a broad range of non-governmental organizations, unions and religious groups, etc. - is recognized as being instrumental in peace-building. Chapter 5 asks how the international development world can foster a constructive dialogue with Sri Lankan actors.

What are the implications for coherence and coordination?

Chapter 5 also presents the various ways and levels of coordination that follow from the studies reviewed. Distinguishing between *inter alia* operational, strategic and policy coordination, the difficulties of the coordination debate are demonstrated. Moreover, the topic of policy coherence is touched upon, as some authors consider it central to the current debate about conflict and development.

The final chapter will sum up the main conclusions.

2 Conflict Perspectives

Introduction

Prior to analysis of the international community's position in the Sri Lankan conflict, the conflict itself requires some attention.³ It is not intended to give an in-depth analysis of the conflict here; rather, views on and analysis of the conflict, as put forward in the studies under review, will be briefly discussed.

Most authors present a brief historical background to the conflict, with Klingebiel (1999), Goodhand and Atkinson (2001) and Philipson (1999)⁴ providing only limited conflict analysis. There is relative consensus among the authors on the causes and dynamics of the conflict. The studies (explicitly or implicitly) refer to the multi-causal nature of the conflict and the failure to resolve the Sri Lankan conflict peacefully. The studies conclude that the conflict cannot be pinned down to one event, one issue or one process. This is illustrated most clearly by Frerks and Van Leeuwen (2000) who state that 'antagonism between the Tamils and the Sinhalese, violent insurrections by the radical Sinhalese and nationalist JVP, a struggle for political power between two major political parties and the intervention of India in internal affairs make a straightforward, simple explanation of the conflict and its dynamics impossible'.⁵

Development and Conflict

There is a general agreement that conflict cannot be regarded as a temporary aberration in an otherwise peaceful, linear development process. Instead, conflict is an integral part of development. In this connection, Bush (2001) states that the assumption that 'development equals peace' is most problematic. Social, economic and political changes inevitably involve conflicts. Bush explains that the process of development exacerbates real and perceived socio-economic inequalities, privileges certain groups over others, increases the stakes for political control and challenges structures and institutions.⁶ Development assistance obviously stimulates such change and might thereby induce conflict, but conflict does not inevitably have to lead to violence. Failure to address grievances over these changes and institutional incapacity to resolve them, however, can lead to violent conflict and

³ The term 'Sri Lankan conflict' is used here to refer primarily to the war between the government and the LTTE. It will be pointed out, however, that these hostilities are related to other conflicts on the island.

⁴ Philipson refers to the Accord Issue on Sri Lanka War and Peace Processes for an analysis of the conflict and explains that her study is solely focused on the analysis of (the failure of) negotiations.

⁵ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 87.

⁶ Bush (2001), p. 4.

may therefore pose an obstacle to future development. Klingebiel's study shares the same conclusion: 'Conflicts are necessary components of societies; they should not therefore be prevented per se. The aim is rather to contribute to their peaceful and constructive resolution and to help prevent them from being resolved by violent means'.⁷

Ethnicization

Given the ethnic differences involved in the Sri Lankan conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), resentments between Tamils and Sinhalese are an obvious starting point for any study on Sri Lanka. All studies acknowledge the differences between the two ethnicities and some mention that historical events and grievances along ethnic lines regarding land colonization, employment, and representation in government jobs (including the armed forces) have contributed to rising tensions.⁸

However, acknowledging the ethnic dimensions of a conflict and labelling it an 'ethnic conflict' are two different matters. There is a general consensus that ethnicity as such is not a cause of the conflict. Even though ethnicity is a major issue in the conflict, it is *ethnicization*, not ethnicity, that caused the war. This term refers to the process by which ethnicity is manipulated to become an explosive issue. According to most of the studies, this has been the case in much of Sri Lanka's political (and social-economic) sphere. Bush speaks of 'ethnic entrepreneurs' politicizing ethnicity, as 'political parties increasingly mobilized support by pandering to ethnic sentiment'.⁹ In other words, it is not identity that mobilizes people; it is people mobilizing identity.¹⁰

As a result of ethnicization, ethnicity has become a more salient and determining aspect of society and positions have become defensive. Most authors mention the so-called 'double minority' perception, referring to the fact that both the Sinhalese and the Tamils feel threatened as a minority - in the south of the subcontinent and within Sri Lanka respectively. Moreover, ethnicization also affected the findings of reports and studies, as Bush adds that perceptions and studies of the past have also been reshaped along ethnic lines as a result of the conflict.¹¹

Politics

Although the social and economic dimensions of the conflict are taken into consideration, most studies emphasize the political dimension. They conclude that the ethnic issue was manipulated most clearly in the political realm, and that it was politics that failed to resolve the antagonism between Tamil and Sinhalese movements. Frerks and Van Leeuwen suggest that 'the "ethnic" nature of the conflict has to

⁷ Klingebiel (1999), p. I.

⁸ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), pp. 19-21.

⁹ Bush (1999), p. 17.

¹⁰ Bush observes both the 'politicization of ethnicity' and the 'ethnicization of politics'. 'The "politicization of ethnicity" refers to the process by which anthropological details of individual and group identities become politically salient dividing lines between groups. Often, this is a process which is facilitated by favouritism (real and perceived) in the allocation of "public" resources by the government as well as by international actors. The "ethnicization of politics" refers to the ways in which the formal political process comes to be structured according to ethnic identities, e.g., the appearance of political parties based on ethnicity or calls for ethnic quotas' (Bush (2001), p. 4 in footnote).

¹¹ Bush (2001), p. 9.

be seen as a result of political manipulation and ill-designed government policies'.¹² Consequently, Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme and Frerks and van Leeuwen label the conflict a 'complex political emergency' (CPE). Even though the other authors do not use a specific term to label the conflict, they agree that the conflict is essentially a political conflict.¹³

Frerks and van Leeuwen point out that 'Sri Lanka's centralized state had no structure allowing for political power-sharing between ethnic groups. Various checks and balances [balanced distribution of seats in parliament, clauses in the constitution preventing privileges to the majority] adopted after independence to safeguard the rights of minorities in the strongly centralized state have slowly eroded and turned ineffective'.¹⁴ In fact, as the authors point out, these checks and balances were actively carved out. Moreover, prior to the war and during the past twenty years, dual-party politics have proven to be an obstruction to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. 'There will be no resolution of the war between the LTTE and the SLA until there is a resolution of war [sic] between the UNP and PA', as one study commented.¹⁵ Bush adds that the 1983 riots are generally accepted as the event that set off the conflict, but these can in fact be attributed to a considerable extent to 'the factions and power dynamics within the ruling UNP'.¹⁶ Agreeing with Frerks and van Leeuwen, he asserts in an earlier document that 'the success of ethnically-based political parties in manipulating the formal political rules of the game in ways that excluded the participation of the Tamil minority should also be viewed as the failure of existing political institutions to protect minority rights'.¹⁷

Regarding the political dimensions of the Sri Lankan conflict, most authors refer to Bastian's views on the failure of state formation in Sri Lanka.¹⁸ They agree that even though a democratic structure has been in place in Sri Lanka, the state has failed to adapt to the multi-ethnic identity of the country, which has contributed to the escalation of violence. In effect, 'the state has failed to create strong defences against ethnic exclusivity in politics'.¹⁹

The anomalous nature of Sri Lanka comes to the fore here.²⁰ Fifty years of well-functioning Sri Lankan democracy are difficult to reconcile with the continuing cruel war, electoral violence and a deteriorating human rights record on both the LTTE and government sides. In order to solve this paradox, a distinction should be made between state collapse and state failure. Even though the state is still in place as a functioning democracy, it has failed to function properly, manifested in human rights abuses, the persistent nature of repetitive electoral violence and the institutional failure to manage properly the many ethnicized problems within the country.

The International Dimension

The regional dimension (the 'India factor') has been critical in the conflict. According to Philipson, India has been both a protagonist and a mediator in the conflict.²¹ Frerks and van Leeuwen as well as Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme briefly describe the history of Indian involvement. However, the studies

¹² Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 87.

¹³ Bush (1999), p. 17; Philipson (1999), p. 9.

¹⁴ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 21.

¹⁵ Bush (2001), p. 19, quoting a government agent.

¹⁶ Bush (2001), p. 45.

¹⁷ Bush (1999), p. 17.

¹⁸ See Bastian (1999).

¹⁹ Uyangoda (1999), cited in Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 14.

²⁰ Bush (1999), p. 12.

²¹ Philipson (1999), p. 37.

remain mostly descriptive rather than analytical on this issue. They offer few in-depth insights into India's interest, the rationale behind its interventions or the implications of its actions on the conflict.

Bush's study (1999) indicates that India's (open and covert) interventions have fuelled the conflict and will inhibit a post war settlement.²² The withdrawal of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1989 is imputed with having left a power vacuum that provided an incentive to the re-escalation of violence. Currently, covert Indian support to Tamil militias such as the Eelam's People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and the Tamil National Army (TNA) is viewed as especially troublesome.

Another international aspect that is incidentally mentioned involves the Tamil diaspora across the globe. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme note the lack of research into the role of transnational networks in financing (and thus fuelling) the war.

There may also be a potential role for the international (extra-regional) community in the Sri Lankan conflict. Philipson argues that international initiatives may include 'conciliation, facilitation, arbitration, mediation, power mediation, and then guarantor or resource and development input'.²³ Furthermore, she argues that a change in international diplomatic attitudes or policy changes by foreign governments may catalyse 'the transforming of a tacit acceptance of a no-win situation into a resolve that there is nothing to be gained by going further'.²⁴

In general, the studies seem to indicate that there has been a lack of international political action with regard to the conflict. 'The conflict in Sri Lanka stands out in the absence of a concerted international political response or intervention'. Kumaratunga's 'war for peace', for example, 'has apparently been accepted by the donor community'²⁵ or at least has not been rejected explicitly for one reason or the other. One reason for the lack of political response is that the political and diplomatic instruments of foreign policy are not primarily guided by the desire to stimulate a resolution of the conflict. In this connection, Frerks and van Leeuwen as well as Philipson note that donor countries have declared Sri Lanka 'safe' in order to diminish the influx of Sri Lankan refugees.²⁶ Also, 'the consequent lack of critical mass lessens the political pressure on donors to respond in concert in an attempt to affect the cost-benefit calculations and behaviour of political decision-makers in Sri Lanka'.²⁷ In addition, opportunistic reference to diplomatic traditions of non-interference and sovereignty, the minor geopolitical relevance of the Sri Lankan conflict and the explicit viewpoint of the government to label the conflict 'an internal affair' have contributed to the absence of international response. Philipson notes that 'governments operating on the traditional diplomatic basis of non-intervention and neutrality, combined with the non-strategic position of Sri Lanka and its excellent record of economic growth despite the war, have resulted in the international community largely leaving the warring parties to their own devices'.²⁸

In addition to diplomatic and political instruments, donors have a range of development cooperation instruments at their resort. These instruments form the core of this paper and will be discussed separately in the following paragraphs.

²² Bush (1999), pp. 21-22.

²³ Philipson (1999), p. 36.

²⁴ Philipson (1999), pp. 21-22.

²⁵ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 64 and p. 49.

²⁶ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 50; Philipson (1999), p. 26.

²⁷ Bush (1999), p. 5.

²⁸ Philipson (1999), p. 25.

Conflict-related Processes

The studies reviewed seem to indicate that ethnicization and political failure should be seen as the major processes rather than root causes of conflict. All the authors acknowledge the dynamic nature of the conflict and some believe that the historical process of the conflict is perhaps more important than its original causes or the final outcome. This process encompasses a number of elements that are *created* by the conflict on the one hand and also *determine* it on the other. Ethnicization and political failure are evidently two such elements. The studies also describe other elements that are elaborated upon below.

Firstly, the military component of the war has become increasingly self-perpetuating. Terrorism, anti-terrorism and the abuse of power have reinforced each other²⁹ in a ‘spiral of violence’.³⁰ Bush emphasizes the ‘connections / disconnections between different manifestations and types of violence’ on Sri Lanka.³¹ Most authors state that the JVP rebellion in southern Sri Lanka should not be analysed separately from the Eelam wars. They should be viewed as interrelated symptoms of the same cause. In this respect, Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme note that the brutal suppression of the JVP rebellion was an important precedent to the Eelam wars, for it showed southern Sri Lanka that peace could be established by military victory. Moreover, they argue that violence has become an endemic feature of Sri Lankan society,³² and that consequently even election violence, violent crime and domestic violence could be taken into account when analysing the conflict. Bush also points to the intra-Tamil conflicts and simmering plantation-sector violence, inter-political party violence and corruption.³³ Although the different layers of conflict in Sri Lankan society are mentioned by most authors, proper in-depth analysis of their interrelationship has so far been lacking.

The studies also mention the social aspects of the war. The education system, for example, has ultimately reinforced ethnic language differences. Intimidation by warring parties and the resulting fear, together with the general suffering and displacement of large groups of people, are also direct results of the war. At the same time, these results have again exacerbated tensions. ‘Propaganda and violence have been used to nurture an emotional economy based on a currency of fear, victimhood and a sense of grievance’.³⁴

Economic issues are included in some of the studies. Bush points out that the liberalization of the economy in the 1970s and 1980s was a ‘notoriously destabilizing and conflict-inducing process’.³⁵ The economy is often argued to have widened regional income disparities and increased rural frustration. In addition, the ‘conflict has created new opportunities and one could argue that increasingly the driving force for the conflict has shifted from grievance to greed’. Given the (para-) military’s control by terror and fear, an economy of scarcity has emerged,³⁶ and this situation has reinforced the conflict process. Bush points to the fact that an increasing proportion of the rural population is dependent on remittances from army recruitment.³⁷ The ‘war remittances economy’ and

²⁹ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), pp. 38-39.

³⁰ Bush (2001), p. 18.

³¹ Bush (2001), p. 7.

³² Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 14.

³³ Bush (1999), p. 20; Bush (2001), p. 7.

³⁴ Goodhand (2000), p. 25.

³⁵ Bush (2001), p. 40.

³⁶ Goodhand (2000), pp. 24-25, quoting Rajasingham-Senanayake (1999).

³⁷ Bush (2001), p. 41, drawing on the work by Dunham and Jayasuriya (1998).

the corresponding large number of people who are under arms contribute considerably to the dynamics of the war.

Apart from the conflict process itself, the process of failing to resolve the conflict also matters. Although Philipson does not provide an analysis of the causes of conflict and only marginally addresses the dynamics of the conflict, she focuses on the failure of attempts to resolve the conflict. According to her, the inattention - by the government, the LTTE and the international community - to the *process* of resolution and negotiation, as opposed to the contents of a potential settlement, has contributed to the failure to resolve the Sri Lankan conflict.³⁸

Conclusions

Regarding the different dimensions of the Sri Lankan conflict, the studies under review come to the following conclusions:

- Conflict is a multi-causal dynamic process;
- Political failure and conscious ethnicization of competing interests are crucial factors in explaining the escalation of the conflict;
- There is more than one Sri Lanka conflict, including (interrelated) conflicts comprising intra-Tamil and intra-Sinhalese violence;
- There is scant analysis on the international dimension of the Sri Lankan conflict, including the role of the Tamil diaspora and India;
- There has been a relative lack of international political action with regard to the conflict in Sri Lanka and the process of resolution and negotiation.

³⁸ Philipson (1999), p. 14.

3 The Influence and Mandate of Development Cooperation

Introduction

Drawing from the previous paragraph, the Sri Lankan conflict is viewed as a multi-faceted process with a political core. Even though development cooperation has traditionally focused on relief, poverty alleviation and structural development, the very existence of the studies indicates that there is a growing awareness that these activities can no longer be viewed in isolation from the conflict.³⁹ Hence, the question remains which of the conflict-related processes identified in the previous chapter *can* development cooperation address. In addition, this section will pay attention to the question of whether development cooperation *should* broaden its mandate towards peace-building.

Development Cooperation and Conflict-related Processes

The publications studied in general include neither a substantive analysis of relevant factors potentially contributing to conflict transformation, nor link this to the activities of donors and INGOs. Most studies confine themselves to a description of the conflict and the (recommended) activities of donors and INGOs, while the analytical link between the two is often implicit or based on assumptions. Bush attempts to work out concretely the ‘incentives’ and ‘disincentives’ of development cooperation for influencing conflict dynamics. He states that drawing from these concepts ‘we are compelled to consider any and all *development* initiatives that affect the calculations and behaviour of actors in ways that have a direct *impact* on the dynamics of peace and conflict in violence-prone environments – *whether this is intentional or unintentional*’.⁴⁰ As an example, he puts forward a project in a border area that fosters a common or shared inter-group interest. He emphasizes that this same project may be counterproductive if it ends up fuelling competition and tensions. The exact functioning of the determining checks and balances in the project, however, remains unclear, indicating the difficulty of establishing an effective approach on how development cooperation can best tackle certain problems. As a result, it is not possible to come up with a comprehensive overview of relevant factors that influence the effectiveness of development cooperation in conflict situations. However, the authors’ views on a number of issues in relation to the potential of development cooperation will be outlined below.

³⁹ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 58.

⁴⁰ Bush (1999), p. 10.

Philipson states that conflict transformation is a process of returning the conflict to ‘the regulated processes of constitutional politics’.⁴¹ According to her, ‘much work is now being done on post-conflict reconstruction. This should not only be the reconstruction of the visible fabric of the towns and countryside, or even the reconciliation of peoples, it should also include the construction of new robust inclusive political structures’.⁴² Goodhand agrees by stating that ‘long-term structural stability in Sri Lanka depends on fundamental reforms of the state and the institutionalization of democratic politics’.⁴³

Bush points out that there is more to peace than the development and functioning of appropriate political structures. Corresponding with his observation that the different conflicts in Sri Lanka cannot be viewed in isolation, he states that ‘if international initiatives are to stand a chance of having a constructive impact on the structures and process of peace, they will need to be applied at both the inter-group (Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim) level, but at intra-group level as well’.⁴⁴ In a later publication he adds that no area and hence no project in Sri Lanka can be considered unrelated to conflict,⁴⁵ effectively implying that any new activity may have a peace- or conflict-related impact.

Under the banner of ‘peace and conflict impact assessment’, Bush’s study on Swedish development cooperation provides a wide range of relevant subjects to which development cooperation may contribute, including institutional capacity to manage conflicts, security, political and economic structures, as well as social reconstruction and empowerment.⁴⁶ The operationalization of these subjects into development practice, however, remains problematic. One of the issues that Bush discusses in more detail is resettlement. The number of people displaced by the Mahaweli development project was extremely high and unequally distributed across certain areas. Given the ethnic dimensions of the conflict, it was remarkable that donors did not take into account the highly political and conflict-related nature of this resettlement programme.⁴⁷ The same applies to a proposed project concerning controversial Sinhala resettlement in Weli Oya, which was traditionally populated by Tamils. Such interventions are unlikely to contribute to peace and stability.

The study by Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme tends to focus more on micro-level issues. Assessing the work of INGOs, they include the community-level component of ethnicization. They offer a wide range of (I)NGO initiatives that potentially have contributed to peace. They classify inter-ethnic exchange of people and the financing of grass roots organizations working on peace as conflict-resolution activities. The assumption here is that inter-ethnic exchange and grass roots peace work counters ethnicization and hence contributes to conflict resolution. However, given the impossibility of establishing causal relations the authors nuance their view. They note that the best phrase to use is probably a contribution to the increase of *probabilities* of peace.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Philipson (1999), p. 9.

⁴² Philipson (1999), p. 80.

⁴³ Goodhand (2000), p. 22.

⁴⁴ Bush (1999), p. 6.

⁴⁵ Bush (2001), p. 18.

⁴⁶ Bush (2001), p. 5.

⁴⁷ Bush (2001), p. 11 and pp. 22-23.

⁴⁸ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 50.

The Influence of Development Cooperation

Although the linkages between development cooperation and the conflict are not entirely clear, there seems to be consensus that there are numerous aspects of the conflict that can be influenced by development cooperation. Frerks and van Leeuwen, for example, observe that '[...] development is frequently seen as a "window of opportunity" not only to affect the consequences of conflict, but also to address at least some of its root causes and aggravating factors'.⁴⁹

The question is, however, to what extent development cooperation can have a positive or negative influence. How can it, for example, change the political structure of the country? The studies acknowledge the relevance of donors and INGOs to the conflict, but have reservations about their potential impact. There is agreement that development cooperation can never be a determining factor in the conflict. 'Ultimately the dysfunctional social and political processes of Sri Lanka can only be changed by Sri Lankans themselves'.⁵⁰

Bush points out, however, that development cooperation may stimulate the government and the LTTE to engage in a political resolution of the conflict. The Jaffna Reconstruction and Development Plan, which included huge financial input from donors and which could not be provided locally, showed that the promise of financial input can stimulate the warring parties towards the negotiation table.⁵¹

Goodhand, on the other hand, notes that 'one should not overstate the impacts of aid on the dynamics of conflict', as '(...) aid is a blunt instrument with a limited leverage'.⁵² Together with Lewer and Hulme, he notes that the impact of INGOs on peace-building is minor.⁵³ Meanwhile, Philipson states that (I)NGOs often do not realize their potential.

In his report on German development cooperation, Klingebiel acknowledges that it is methodologically difficult to identify aspects of the conflict that assistance may influence, but he sums up some general possible impacts. Positive impacts of development cooperation may include: tackling the grievances that gave rise to the conflict; stabilization through reconstruction; stimulating political participation and transparency; enhancing security through international presence; and removing opportunities for self-enrichment through structural adjustment. Possible negative impacts are, among others: support to a government that is a party to the conflict; facilitating opportunities for corruption; implicit approval of government policies; increased regional imbalances; and easing of the pressure on the government to deal with the causes of the conflict.⁵⁴

Moreover, Bush indicates that the current mechanisms of development cooperation are not equipped to address peace and conflict. 'Because it is only recently that peace and conflict-specific dimensions of development programming have come to be recognized, we are at a phase where there is a gap between the programme language of donors - with specific reference to such goals as conflict mitigation, conflict reduction and so on - and their ability to systematically incorporate them into programmes'.⁵⁵ In his view there is a '[...] mismatch between mechanisms of development assistance

⁴⁹ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 65.

⁵⁰ Philipson (1999), p. 10.

⁵¹ Bush (2001), p. 40.

⁵² Goodhand (2000), p. 10 and p. 64.

⁵³ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 63.

⁵⁴ Klingebiel (1999), pp. 22-25.

⁵⁵ Bush (1999), p. 5.

and the types of challenges they are ostensibly meant to address'. In this connection, he adds that 'the conventional developmental logic of effectiveness, product-over-process, linearity, "results-based management", Northern control are at odds with what seems to be required for sustainable, effective, humanitarian / developmental / peace-building initiatives, e.g. approaches that are organic, process-oriented, community-controlled, responsive and non-linear'.⁵⁶

The Mandate of Development Cooperation

Having concluded that development cooperation has the potential somehow to influence peace- and conflict-related processes, it remains an issue of debate whether development cooperation *should* broaden its mandate to include conflict-related interventions.⁵⁷ In this respect, Goodhand distinguishes between donors working *around conflict* (ignoring the conflict and withdrawing from conflict areas), *in conflict* (working in the context of conflict, but not consciously aiming to address it) or *on conflict* (consciously undertaking conflict- and peace-related activities). He argues that they should be more conflict sensitive and open to opportunities to work *on* conflict.⁵⁸

All authors of the selected studies argue for an integrated approach in formulating their mandate: Frerks and van Leeuwen, for example, note the fragmented and diversified nature of relief and rehabilitation activities;⁵⁹ Bush observes that 'the international community is only just starting to realize the futility of conceptually separating development and humanitarian actors in conflict zones';⁶⁰ and, in line with this view, Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme state that 'perhaps the relief-development synergy is another holy grail for NGOs'.⁶¹ Acknowledging the potential clash between relief, development and peace-building activities and the risk of a 'mandate creep', the authors argue that the three should be viewed as interrelated goals.

Moving beyond the integration of relief, rehabilitation and regular development activities, the integration of peace-building activities into regular development cooperation raises the question of whether broadening the mandate of development cooperation towards peace-building or even conflict resolution is desirable.⁶² Within this debate Goodhand and Atkinson distinguish humanitarian maximalists and minimalists: the latter group pleads for the return of the mandate of humanitarian aid to the basics, in order to underline the impartial position required to support people facing emergency optimally; while the maximalists suggest broadening the mandate to address not only the suffering, but

⁵⁶ Bush (1999), p. 9.

⁵⁷ Broadening mandates can be viewed from two angles. One could either argue that it must be recognized that development cooperation affects the conflict process whatever the official mandate, and consequently that broadening the official mandate will enhance the capacity of the agency concerned to tackle the related issues. Alternatively, one could argue that broadening the mandate is something desirable, rather than inevitable, because it is preferable to tackle the root causes of suffering instead of alleviating the suffering itself.

⁵⁸ Goodhand (2000), pp. 43-46.

⁵⁹ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 56.

⁶⁰ Bush (1999), p. 9.

⁶¹ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 47.

⁶² Strictly taken, much of this debate focuses solely on the mandate of humanitarian aid, which is only one segment of development cooperation. Given the fact that the distinction between relief and development is a topic for debate and that a number of issues regarding humanitarian aid also apply to other segments of development cooperation, the issues involved are discussed integrally here.

its underlying causes as well.⁶³ Macrae and Leader state that ‘incorporating humanitarian action into the framework of “liberal peace” is both ineffective as a means of managing conflict at the periphery, and diminishes the ability of humanitarian action to reduce suffering in conflict areas’.⁶⁴ Philipson on the other hand argues that too tight an interpretation of mandates may result in missed opportunities for peace-building.⁶⁵ Bush’s study seems to agree with this view, by arguing that ‘donors should not “ghetto-ize” or “compartmentalize” their peace-building initiatives from their considerable accumulated experience and expertise in “traditional” development assistance. To do so risks *lessening* rather than increasing the likelihood of having an overall positive impact on the structures and processes of peace’, because it would reduce the political profile, hamper relations with government partners and neglect expertise and donor networks.⁶⁶

None of the authors could be categorized as humanitarian minimalists. All the studies call for a more nuanced approach to the debate. Goodhand and Atkinson argue that the debate is unnecessarily polarized⁶⁷ and that there may be a fruitful middle ground. Arguably, the exploration of such a middle ground requires an understanding of the political context of aid and the process of war, and the following paragraphs will address these issues in more detail.

Conclusions

- The studies offer a broad range of relevant issues, often loosely related to political issues or concepts like ethnicization, which development cooperation might tackle. However, a solid theoretical framework linking development cooperation and the Sri Lankan conflict is lacking;
- The studies acknowledge the relevance of donors and INGOs to the conflict, but they are reserved about the capacity of development cooperation to tackle conflict-related issues adequately;
- All studies argue for an integrated approach to relief and development;
- There is a debate about whether the mandate of development cooperation should include peace-building. Most of the studies under review seem to agree that development cooperation could at least play some role in peace-building.

⁶³ Goodhand with Atkinson (2000).

⁶⁴ Macrae and Leader (2000), p. 5.

⁶⁵ Philipson (1999), p. 45.

⁶⁶ Bush (2001), pp. 38-39.

⁶⁷ The authors mentioned refer to Jackson and Walker (1999) to substantiate this conclusion.

4 Analysis of the Political Context and Conflict-related Processes

Introduction

Reflecting the awareness that the Sri Lankan conflict is a complex and dynamic process, the studies reviewed acknowledge the importance of analysing the political context in which development cooperation activities take place, and stress the need for focusing on processes instead of projects.

Politically Informed Approach

‘Development cooperation is political, serves interests [...] and is therefore never neutral’.⁶⁸ Operating within the Sri Lankan context therefore involves political costs and benefits for the actors concerned.⁶⁹ Philipson adds that ‘the LTTE wants the international community to cease aid and military assistance to Sri Lanka in order to force the government to negotiate on their terms’.⁷⁰

All these quotes show that politics are at the base of the conflict. For international development actors to be more effective and their approach more conflict-sensitive, a better understanding of the political ‘costs and benefits’ involved is required. Most studies agree that this starts with the proper understanding of the Sri Lankan political context. ‘Donors should place a strong emphasis on undertaking political analysis to better understand the working of the political systems and incentives of political actors’.⁷¹ Klingebiel argues that ‘the institutions involved should be encouraged to engage in “more political” thinking, which will help to make for better recognition and assessment of the risks and strengths of [German] development cooperation in countries affected by conflicts at macro level’.⁷² Bush adds that politics need to be viewed from a historical perspective as well: ‘to understand the contemporary impact of ODA on ethnicity, conflict and governance in Sri Lanka, we have to appreciate the degree to which the social, economic and political infrastructure continues to bear the burden of the past’.⁷³ In this connection, Goodhand and Atkinson note that ‘policy response to the Sri Lankan conflict [...] would be very different if it was understood as essentially a crisis of the state

⁶⁸ Klingebiel (1999), p. 40.

⁶⁹ Goodhand (2000), p. 65.

⁷⁰ Philipson (1999), p. 55.

⁷¹ Goodhand (2000), p. 65.

⁷² Klingebiel (1999), p. 40.

⁷³ Bush (2001), p. 14.

rather than as an ethnic conflict'. They note that the different dimensions and levels of the conflict need to be taken into account in an integrated way. 'Analysts increasingly use terms like "networked" war or "cooperative conflicts" to highlight the shifting patterns of relationships that develop within complex political emergencies'. They point out that an understanding of both the political economy of conflict and the political economy of aid are essential for adequate assistance.⁷⁴

Philipson sheds light on the position of the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. She underlines the importance of timing when approaching them: with regard to the government it is important to be aware of elections, for example; and with regard to the LTTE it is important to realize, for example, that they rely on the commitment of their fighters, and because commitment partially depends on military activity, there is a finite amount of time that they can be militarily inactive.⁷⁵ Another insight that she offers concerns the media, saying that it is crucial that a 'negotiation process manages the media, and not the other way around'.⁷⁶ Emphasizing the relevance of political history and current political actors is consistent with, or perhaps even a response to, Sri Lankan criticism about donors. After all, a number of Sri Lankan academics⁷⁷ have argued that donors have taken too simplistic an approach and failed to appreciate the unique local historical and political context.

Process and Planning

A politically informed approach not only involves an understanding of the main Sri Lankan actors, but involves an understanding of *processes* as well. This point is central to Philipson's study. Understanding the importance of the process 'assumes a move away from the short-term responses based on immediate political advantage and investment in longer-term, more stable policy-making'.⁷⁸ Philipson discerns six overlapping phases in the process of de-escalating the (Sri Lankan) conflict: (1) the total breakdown of relations; (2) developing confidence in negotiation as an alternative to armed battle; (3) establishing an environment for negotiations; (4) pre-negotiations; (5) formal negotiations; and (6) implementation.⁷⁹

The suggested sequence may be problematic in practice, and there also seems to be a paradox in this view. After all, it seems that a process-based approach - which implies adequate flexibility - may be contrary to longer-term commitment and stable policy-making. Philipson argues, however, that an understanding of the resolution process within the Sri Lankan context is consistent with longer-term commitment and the resistance to short-term politically driven interests. A process-based approach does not necessarily imply opportunistic *ad hoc* reactions to changing circumstances. Rather, it is the understanding of the (lengthy) resolution process that guides longer-term goals and places shorter-term interventions in perspective.

Timing is obviously of crucial importance in this context. Proper timing may create opportunities that are otherwise overlooked. Philipson explains that 'ripe moments [for a peace initiative] are composed of a structural element, a party element and potential alternative outcome - that is, a mutually hurting stalemate, the presence of a valid spokesperson, and a formula for a way out'.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Goodhand with Atkinson (2001), p. 6 and pp. 30-31.

⁷⁵ Philipson (1999), p. 75.

⁷⁶ Philipson (1999), p. 61.

⁷⁷ For example Bastian (1999).

⁷⁸ Philipson (1999), p. 80.

⁷⁹ Philipson (1999), pp. 12-14.

⁸⁰ Philipson (1999), p. 21, quoted from Zartman (1995), p. 18.

Furthermore, ‘talking at the wrong time or without adequate preparation and analysis may only achieve a further spin downwards in the spiral of violence and mistrust’.⁸¹ She adds that ‘the opportunity afforded by “soft stalemates” has to be very carefully handled. It must not be lost but the temptation to push for a ceasefire and rush the parties to the negotiation table must be resisted [...]’.⁸² It is not only a matter of timing interventions; timing of issues is relevant as well. ‘Barriers to a settlement are not necessarily barriers to negotiation and the pre-negotiation process is not the time to begin tackling these. That is for the negotiation process itself and for implementation through political processes and institutions agreed in negotiations’.⁸³

Although Philipson’s analysis mainly focuses on diplomatic initiatives, her argument that different phases of the conflict (de-)escalation process require different interventions and involve different issues includes relevant lessons for development cooperation as well. However, from a feasibility point of view some questions can be raised. Frerks and van Leeuwen point out that ‘in the execution of the programme it is not always easy to establish whether one is in a conflict phase, moving towards a transition, or in a post-conflict period. Boundaries are vague and continuously changing due to the dynamics of the conflict’.⁸⁴ In this respect, also Klingebiel indicates that flexibility and risks are keywords.⁸⁵ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme agree with Frerks and van Leeuwen that planning is difficult given the ‘contingent, unpredictable nature of the environment’. Hence, they suggest an ‘alternative planning method, which recognizes uncertainty, like scenario building’.⁸⁶

The studies do agree, however, on the need for a long-term commitment. ‘In conflict zones local capacity building needs long time frames, a consistency of engagement - to develop relationships instead of simply projects - and careful timing to make sure that opportunities can be seized and then built on’.⁸⁷ This has implications for funding by INGOs. Goodhand pleads for ‘more flexible but long-term modalities, particularly for transitional forms of assistance that do not fall under “pure” relief or “pure” development budget lines’.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme suggest an enhancement of donor analysis and more adequate procedures to improve donor funding to INGOs.

Even though the authors’ views are in disagreement at some minor points, a consensus can be seen in their call for a process-informed, flexible approach that is driven by a long-term commitment.

Strengthening Analysis

Both a politically informed approach as well as a process-informed approach require an excellent understanding of the (dynamics of the) Sri Lankan situation. Bush notes that ‘the ability to systematically map peace-building capacities in conflict-prone areas is an essential requirement for moving beyond *ad hoc*, reactive measures’.⁸⁹ However, all the studies reviewed share the conclusion that there is a lack of appropriate analysis. This observation applies both to policy-making (*ex ante*

⁸¹ Philipson (1999), pp. 26-27.

⁸² Philipson (1999), p. 22.

⁸³ Philipson (1999), p. 53.

⁸⁴ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 53.

⁸⁵ Klingebiel (1999), p. 39.

⁸⁶ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 56.

⁸⁷ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 65.

⁸⁸ Goodhand (2000), p. 71.

⁸⁹ Bush (1999), p. 7.

conflict analysis) and to impact assessment (*ex post* analysis). The publications highlight a number of interrelated shortcomings regarding analysis.

Firstly, there is a lack of effort. Frerks and van Leeuwen state that ‘in many cases there is no attempt to measure the specific impact of the projects on peace-building through monitoring and evaluation’.⁹⁰ Some studies also mention institutional problems within donor organizations, including lack of institutional memory, compartmentalization of programming, etc. This lack of effort may partially be explained by the second limitation.

It is a generally shared concern that there is a lack of means for analysis. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme state that ‘examining the impact of NGO activity on peace and conflict is fraught with difficulties. [...] the tools to measure impact are in their infancy’.⁹¹ Goodhand recommends the development of ‘a means of assessing the political and conflict-related impacts of interventions’.⁹²

These observations are in line with a broader consensus: existing means are inadequate. Anderson, famous for her initiation of the term ‘Do No Harm’, states for example that ‘there are two troublesome aspects to assessment and evaluation. These are: (1) identifying appropriate, accurate and useful indicators of impacts; and (2) tracing the causation between programme activities and these outcomes’.⁹³ Obviously, these difficulties do not only apply to impact assessment, but to *ex ante* analysis as well. The studies give some suggestions for these difficulties. ‘For NGOs working in and on conflict a reliable and robust analysis [...] would include (1) an analysis at the micro level of how communities have been affected and responded to conflict, and (2) at the macro level an analysis of the structural factors that drive the war’.⁹⁴ According to these authors that would require close contact with the communities supported, a change in ‘incentive system, so that learning and analysis are rewarded’⁹⁵ and adequate recruitment of staff. Also, in order to avoid a drain of knowledge, NGOs are recommended to do the analysis themselves instead of hiring consultants. Without further explanation, the studies suggest participatory impact assessment and peace auditing.⁹⁶ At the macro level they observe that the analysis of Colombo-based organizations such as the Social Scientist Association (SSA), International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) and National Peace Council (NPC) is much better than the analysis of field organizations.⁹⁷

There have recently been some developments with regard to analytical tools. Bush uses so-called Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA) to map relevant issues and processes. He emphasizes, though, that PCIA is not a matter of applying a new tool to old practices; it requires ‘the construction of the conceptual and evaluation tools that may be applied *to the full range of development activities in conflict-prone regions*’.⁹⁸ He acknowledges that the current development of PCIA remains a challenging process. ‘Despite rhetorical support for the need to “mainstream” PCIA, efforts are hampered by conceptual confusion and bureaucratic resistance to internal and operational changes. More worryingly, Southern voices have been almost wholly excluded from an increasingly donor-

⁹⁰ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 59.

⁹¹ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 50.

⁹² Goodhand (2000), p. 66.

⁹³ Anderson (2000), p. 8.

⁹⁴ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 57.

⁹⁵ Goodhand (2000), p. 15.

⁹⁶ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 67.

⁹⁷ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 57.

⁹⁸ Bush (2001), p. 3.

driven exercise'.⁹⁹ Given the hampered operationalization of PCIA, its utility is therefore still an issue of debate.

Goodhand notes that despite the difficulty of analysis and the lack of effort, 'there is already high-quality analysis at different points and levels within the international community, but there is often a compartmentalization of knowledge'.¹⁰⁰ Hence, another point to be made is the sharing of knowledge. He argues that adequate political analysis requires 'systematic information-sharing and joint analysis'.¹⁰¹ Bush adds that research cooperation between Sri Lankan academics, foreign academics and donors can have important catalytic effects on peace-building. In this respect, it is important to recognize institutions from both southern and north-eastern Sri Lanka.¹⁰² This should lead to inclusion of the local dimension of the conflict. The studies reviewed are no exception here, as few have focused on the local dimensions, requiring extensive fieldwork in rural areas.

Conclusions

- The studies recommend a politically and process-informed approach;
- Such an approach would have to be flexible, but it needs to be driven by a long-term commitment;
- The studies indicate a lack of analysis by donors and INGOs regarding the Sri Lankan situation in general and an assessment of their impact on it;
- There is a lack of appropriate methodological tools to analyse the process of conflict and the impact of donor and INGO activities. The elaboration of PCIA's may prove helpful.

Despite these limitations of development assistance, some studies note that it remains worthwhile trying to support Sri Lanka in its peace process. Raising donor awareness of the local political context and developing a flexible, strategic approach can contribute to more effective development cooperation that benefits Sri Lanka. Goodhand argues that Sri Lanka has exceptional opportunities for peace that deserve a comprehensive and inclusive approach. 'Although there are a number of building blocks for a peace process that are commonly lacking in complex political emergencies elsewhere - for example draft constitution, regional and international support for peace talks, wider desire for peace and a dynamic civil society sector - the lack of strategic linkages and an inclusive process limit their impact'.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Bush (2001), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰⁰ Goodhand (2000), pp. 14-15.

¹⁰¹ Goodhand (2000), p. 66.

¹⁰² Bush (2001), p. 31.

¹⁰³ Goodhand (2000), p. 66.

5 Implications for Future Donor Assistance

Introduction

Following a concise analysis of the conflict, the role and mandate of development cooperation and the recognition for better analysis, this chapter will deal with two questions relating to development assistance in the years to come: (1) what are the implications for future relations with the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and Sri Lankan civil society?;¹⁰⁴ and (2) what are the implications for the future structure of donor assistance regarding Sri Lanka?

Government of Sri Lanka

The studies unanimously agree that Peace cannot be brought to Sri Lanka; the Sri Lankans themselves have to make it. All donors and INGOs acknowledge the role of the government as the primary actor responsible for development, welfare and relief in the country, and the democratic status of the Sri Lankan government yields internationally accepted legitimacy. The position of the government is complicated, however, by the fact that it is also a party to the conflict¹⁰⁵ and is not always appreciated internationally for its human rights record.

Bilateral and multilateral assistance have traditionally focused on the government, as it was believed that the provision of assistance provided leverage over the government. In order to influence the government's policy and practice, donors often attached conditionalities to their assistance. However, the effectiveness of these conditions remains an issue of debate: 'It is difficult to say how far conditionality of aid is an effective measure to affect change'.¹⁰⁶ For a variety of reasons conditionalities put to the Sri Lankan government have not yielded a significant change in the policies or practice of the government. Bush notes that results can be reached only at a micro level, given that the conditions are specifically targeted and verifiable by indicators.¹⁰⁷ These findings are in line with conclusions in other studies. On the other hand Philipson states that 'continued bilateral and multilateral aid to the government of Sri Lanka, without any conditionality regarding human rights abuses or negotiations, enables the government to utilize a greater percentage of its GDP on the

¹⁰⁴ The position of the LTTE in relation to donors and INGOs might also be mentioned as a component of the issues discussed here. This is, however, hardly mentioned in the publications studied.

¹⁰⁵ Klingebiel (1999), p. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 64.

¹⁰⁷ Bush (1999), p. 7.

pursuit of war than might otherwise be the case'.¹⁰⁸ It seems, however, that a rigid frame of conditions may be difficult to match with her plea for a process-based approach described earlier.

Whatever the pressure of donors on the government, its influence is expected to rise as donors increasingly take a common stance. Bush notes that the changing position of Japan - more in line with the smaller donors - 'and the general irritation expressed by the donor community in Paris concerning the "disconnect" between the stated intentions of the [government] and the realities on the ground, suggest the development of a greater consolidation of the donor community's position towards the [government]. Such a common front is a necessary (but not necessarily sufficient) condition for getting the [government] to develop specific plans of action and to set time tables with regard to monitorable targets and indicators'.¹⁰⁹

Among the studies reviewed, there seems to be relative consensus that a constructive dialogue between donors and the government is more effective than imposing conditions on aid.¹¹⁰ The current move towards framework approaches seems to be in line with this consensus. The framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation - the so-called '3-R' Framework - is in particular widely encouraged by all studies. Frerks and van Leeuwen describe it as a 'constituency and consensus building endeavour, involving a broad array of stakeholders throughout the country and across party-, ethnic- and sector-lines'.¹¹¹ Bush describes the framework as a process that 'may serve to create an environment within which "non-political" actors (researchers, community workers, NGOs, the business sector, and so on) are able to interact with government officials on a more equal basis. Perhaps more importantly, this may have a catalytic effect on the peace-building and reconstruction initiatives of participants both inside and outside the formal political arena'.¹¹² However, Frerks and van Leeuwen observe a number of challenges regarding the implementation of the framework: ambitious planning, the ambiguous position of the government, lack of cooperation from the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence and the fact that the LTTE is not a part of the process are mentioned as critical weaknesses.¹¹³

Clearly, there is a link between the politically informed approach advocated above and the '3-R' Framework. After all, optimal use of the framework requires an understanding of the actors involved. The studies emphasize the need to recognize the interest of some actors in continuing the war. 'It is not only politicians who have gained power as a result of fighting who can be a problem. Those politicians for whom a change in the overall political terrain may be threatening can also be an obstacle'.¹¹⁴ Frerks and van Leeuwen argue that some groups are also benefiting from the war.¹¹⁵ In

¹⁰⁸ Philipson (1999), pp. 25-26. This point is also mentioned by Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 51, under the banner of fungibility. They conclude that war is 'affordable' for the government of Sri Lanka (Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 49).

¹⁰⁹ Bush (2001), p. 10.

¹¹⁰ Klingebiel (1999), pp. 17-18, forms an exception here. He describes conditionalities as a component of policy dialogue between the donor government (Germany) and the government of Sri Lanka. He also argues that when conditions are posed they should be more explicit and specific.

¹¹¹ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 57.

¹¹² Bush (2001), p. 30.

¹¹³ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 57.

¹¹⁴ Philipson (1999), p. 52.

¹¹⁵ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 49.

addition, the role of the military and actors with an economic interest in the war must be acknowledged.¹¹⁶

Like the donors, INGOs conventionally attempt to push a government in a certain direction. Unlike the donors, however, they have little financial leverage, although their advocacy may take different forms. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme illustrate, however, that the position of INGOs (and the UN and ICRC) in north-eastern Sri Lanka is generally too weak for solid advocacy.¹¹⁷ In order to function in the context of war, they are partially dependent on the government (and the LTTE). Even though these organizations are the eyes of the international community in the war-torn areas, their position is too fragile for strong advocacy towards the government. Bush also mentions that an international presence ‘is a means of monitoring the peace environment’.¹¹⁸ Philipson agrees with him,¹¹⁹ but Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme show their reservations, by stating that there is a ‘lack of communication between the humanitarian organizations and the policy and advocacy groups based in Colombo’.¹²⁰

Civil Society

The relevance of civil society to the quest for peace in Sri Lanka is undisputed among the authors studied. Frerks and van Leeuwen note that ‘many have come to regard such [civil society] organizations as the “best entry” to have lasting impact in the field of conflict resolution and conflict prevention’.¹²¹ Goodhand underlines the importance of ‘strategic support for institutions that can play a role in encouraging power sharing, mitigating transition processes and managing conflict in a non-violent way’.¹²² Referring to the ‘3-R’ Framework, Philipson argues ‘the wider the domestic base of those involved in and committed to the settlement the harder it is to overturn and the more viable it is to sustain’.¹²³

International support to civil society in Sri Lanka has always been closely related to the role of the state. Frerks and van Leeuwen indicate that in the early 1990s Canada and Norway channelled a large part of their assistance towards civil society because of their critical stance towards the government: ‘Direct government-to-government aid would only be reconsidered in case of substantive changes in the human rights situation and overall governance’.¹²⁴ The authors point out, however, that these policy changes were confined to the smaller donors. Donors such as the World Bank, ADB, Japan and the EU have consistently channelled their aid directly to the government.

Different authors indicate that there is reason for caution with regard to supporting civil society as a vehicle for peace-building. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme argue that civil society incorporates peaceful as well as warlike components. Frerks and van Leeuwen observe that many civil society organizations were founded as a reaction to mainstream politics.¹²⁵ Drawing from Bastian,¹²⁶ they

¹¹⁶ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 66.

¹¹⁷ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 49.

¹¹⁸ Bush (1999), p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Philipson (1999), p. 44.

¹²⁰ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 49.

¹²¹ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 60.

¹²² Goodhand (2000), pp. 65-66.

¹²³ Philipson (1999), p. 49.

¹²⁴ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 47.

¹²⁵ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 61.

¹²⁶ Bastian (1999), p. 36.

summarize the limitations of civil society organizations to address peace properly under three headings: civil society organizations are (1) organized along ethnic lines; (2) still politically centralized; and (3) they encompass a contradiction between peace-making and addressing structural causes.¹²⁷ Hence, the need for a politically informed approach is once again highlighted. Bush argues that if external actors 'are to facilitate and support peace-building initiatives within Sri Lanka, [they] must first know what partnership opportunities exist. Thus it would be useful to develop the means of identifying and mapping those peace-building potentials, opportunities and resources within a society that might be supported externally'.¹²⁸

Goodhand makes a start with mapping these potentials. 'As connectors and constituencies for peace within the civil society', he mentions 'lobbying organizations like the National Alliance for Peace and National Peace Council, think tanks like ICES working at a macro level and NGOs like SEDEC working on community-based reconciliation. There are also a range of civil society groups such as women's organizations and church-based groups which cut across social and ethnic cleavages'.¹²⁹

Coordination

The importance of coordination is highlighted in every study. Klingebiel states that the 'success of conflict-related development cooperation very much depends on satisfactory donor coordination'.¹³⁰ However, some have argued that 'coordination is a notoriously difficult aspect of humanitarian action. (...) everyone wants coordination, but no one wants to be coordinated'.¹³¹

Coordination is a broad and complex term that encompasses a wide variety of issues. The studies distinguish different levels of coordination: operational, strategic, political, programmatic and policy coordination. In addition, coordination may encompass information sharing, joint programming or a homogenization of policy.

Operational (field level) coordination applies to INGOs, and the UN and ICRC in particular. The authors studied make few references with regard to this level. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme briefly address the issue by noting that 'while virtually all NGOs espouse the advantages of NGO coordination, its practice is commonly problematic'.¹³² Goodhand argues that 'coordination mechanisms tend to reinforce rather than overcome divisions between the north-east and the south'.¹³³ Therefore, he suggests a more strategic and island-wide approach. Quoting a report by the OECD (1997), he argues that there is a need 'to overcome the functional distinctions of the various agencies involved and to integrate, rather than merely coordinate, relief, rehabilitation and development objectives within the framework of a long-term strategy'.¹³⁴ This argument is in line with the advocated synergy of relief and development that was discussed in chapter 3. It is evident, however, that this kind of coordination - let alone integration - will be challenging in practice.

¹²⁷ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), pp. 62-63.

¹²⁸ Bush (1999), p. 7.

¹²⁹ Goodhand (2000), pp. 60-61.

¹³⁰ Klingebiel (1999), p. 37.

¹³¹ Van Brabant (1997), p. 5.

¹³² Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 62.

¹³³ Goodhand (2000), p. 67.

¹³⁴ Goodhand (2000), p. 53.

The studies underline the importance of strategic and political coordination. Goodhand states that 'if aid is to be used more effectively to influence incentives and build peace, improved coordination at the strategic and political level is a necessary precondition'.¹³⁵ Here, the relationship between bilateral agencies and INGOs comes to the fore. One of the issues involved here is funding.¹³⁶ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme argue for an adjustment of donor policy with regard to financing INGOs.¹³⁷ They recommend bilateral agencies to create longer time frames, increase coherence, enhance their analysis of NGOs and civil society and install adequate formal procedures. From the donors' perspective to funding, Bush notes that the 'lack of coordination among donors [...] decreases their ability to systematically employ or manipulate incentives and disincentives effectively and collectively, because of the scope it allows recipients to "donor shop"'.¹³⁸

Coordination is a comprehensive activity, however, that requires more than just adequate funding. Bush draws from an OECD document to sketch out the broad building blocks for effective cooperation: '(1) A common strategic framework for assistance; (2) timely access to resources allowing for flexible implementation; (3) leadership among international actors; (4) mechanisms for field level; and (5) the availability of resources specifically embarked for coordination purposes'.¹³⁹ He observes that these building blocks have not been developed sufficiently in Sri Lanka.

With regard to the issue of the 'lead agency', Klingebiel suggests that a multilateral institution could play a special role in donor coordination.¹⁴⁰ Both Klingebiel and Bush¹⁴¹ argue that there is a need to establish a division of labour, according to which coordination could proceed. It is also noted, however, that such a division and inter-agency coordination has been elusive until now.¹⁴² 'Few [donors] are prepared to subordinate priority interest to common goals'.¹⁴³

Policy Coherence

By broadening development cooperation with peace-building, including diplomatic and political initiatives, the debate shifts from coordination to the topical issue of policy coherence. This discussion emanates from the fact that peace-building covers more than one specific policy instrument of the international community. All these instruments (development cooperation, diplomatic relations and general foreign policy) have a certain influence on the conflict in Sri Lanka. However, that does not imply that the goals, interests and practices of all these instruments are necessarily coherent. The central question in the policy coherence debate is whether coherence is desirable and how it can be achieved. Although not all the studies reviewed present an overview of this discussion, they all mention some of the issues involved.

¹³⁵ Goodhand (2000), p.54.

¹³⁶ Internationally, the traditional division of labour between INGOs (operational) and bilateral agencies (funding) seems to be changing. Macrae and Leader (2000), p. 5, observe a bilateralization of humanitarian assistance, which means closer and more extensive involvement by bilateral agencies. As a result, the independence and space of humanitarian assistance by INGOs is compromised.

¹³⁷ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 68.

¹³⁸ Bush (1999), p. 8.

¹³⁹ Bush (1999), p. 37.

¹⁴⁰ Klingebiel (1999), p. 37.

¹⁴¹ Bush (1999), p. 36.

¹⁴² Bush (1999), p. 36.

¹⁴³ Goodhand (2000), p. 54.

Frerks and van Leeuwen point out that determining one's position on *ad hoc* circumstances and deliberations may create 'the impression of a level of incoherence and inconsistency'. This 'shows how difficult it is to use development aid as an instrument for political leverage, at least as long as one would like to carry out development aid in a consistent way and avoid arbitrary changes originating from external considerations'.¹⁴⁴

Philipson provides one example of contrariety that may hamper coherence. 'Ceasefires give immediate satisfaction for humanitarian concerns and are therefore a desirable first objective. However, [given the process of de-escalation] they may not be an advisable first objective'.¹⁴⁵ And Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme indicate that some donors provide military and political support to the government that is not coherent with their support for peace-building and human rights initiatives.¹⁴⁶

It was observed earlier that the mandate of development cooperation increasingly includes peace- and conflict-related issues, and chapter 2 observed that there is a lack of political action regarding these issues. Combining these two observations, there is a risk that in the case of Sri Lanka coherence may imply that aid will substitute political action. 'Most donors in Sri Lanka have learnt the lesson that development programmes might stimulate both initiatives for peace, as well as contribute to war. Nevertheless, the international community has to take care not to entrust all its confidence in development assistance, as it cannot bring peace on its own. The currently so very topical issue of policy coherence is here at stake'.¹⁴⁷ Another study comes to the same conclusion, by arguing that 'to the extent that humanitarian or developmental resources are deployed by the political-diplomatic actors *at the expense of* political interventions, then at best ODA may treat the symptoms but not the causes of violent conflict; at worst, it may be counter-productive to the extent that it subsidizes the warring capacity of both government and anti-government groups'.¹⁴⁸

Instead of choosing the difficult path of integrating all relevant policy instruments, some studies look for different ways to improve policy coherence. Macrae and Leader suggest 'that rather than pursuing closer *integration* between humanitarian and political action, the emphasis should be on increasing their *complementarity*. [This] requires acknowledging that there may be legitimate conflict of interest between humanitarian and political objectives'.¹⁴⁹ Drawing from this view, Goodhand and Atkinson argue that humanitarian assistance needs to be kept distinct from, but complementary to other policy instruments and help reinforce a peace settlement. Philipson adds that 'successful peace-building requires an appreciation of the different roles that others can and may play in order to build up the different tracks towards the settlement process'.¹⁵⁰ Klingebiel notes that 'above all, the interaction of the various instruments within the overall development framework must be assessed'.¹⁵¹

Goodhand emphasizes that transparency is a crucial part of enhancing the required complementarity. 'Donor governments should focus on developing greater complementarity between different policy instruments. They should be more transparent in how they arrive at and weigh different policy goals such as trade, immigration and development concerns'.¹⁵² Bush agrees that

¹⁴⁴ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 92.

¹⁴⁵ Philipson (1999), p. 51.

¹⁴⁶ Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000), p. 68.

¹⁴⁷ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 65.

¹⁴⁸ Bush (1999), p. 46.

¹⁴⁹ Macrae and Leader (2000), p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Philipson (1999), p. 48.

¹⁵¹ Klingebiel (1999), p. I.

¹⁵² Goodhand (2000), p. 66.

transparency is a keyword: ‘The weighing of trade-offs, and the balancing of short-term and long-term objectives - development and peace-specific - need to be explicit in the planning and monitoring of donors and operational actors’.¹⁵³

Coordination Mechanisms

Although most studies seem to agree on the need for a comprehensive approach to coordination and policy complementarity, it is unclear what the practical implications are. Few authors explicitly discuss the existing coordination mechanisms.¹⁵⁴ Bush praises the role of CHA and UNDP in coordinating humanitarian action, rehabilitation and resettlement respectively. The CHA’s information service is particularly emphasized as being useful, while UNDP’s activities focus on relations among the government, bilateral and multilateral donors as well as NGOs. Bush adds that informal coordination also plays an important role.¹⁵⁵

Some studies mention the Sri Lanka Development Forum,¹⁵⁶ where all major donors and the Sri Lankan government have annual discussions on the current situation and their (financial) contribution. The main conclusion here is that donors have not (yet) succeeded in significantly influencing the Sri Lankan government. The authors argue that this can be contributed to some extent to the lack of consensus and coordination among the donor community.¹⁵⁷ Thus, this forum is seen both as a coordination mechanism for donors and the government as well as a potential instrument for donors to put pressure on the government - which, in turn, requires coordination among donors. Given the above-mentioned problems, it is hardly surprising that results for both goals - ‘coordination’ and ‘pressure’ - are limited.

Despite all practical problems, the studies generally advocate a comprehensive approach towards development cooperation with Sri Lanka, including a variety of levels, issues and actors. Correspondingly, Frerks and van Leeuwen observe that ‘in view of the fragmented and diversified nature of relief and rehabilitation activities and the large number of actors involved, the need has been identified both in government and in donor circles to formulate a comprehensive framework for coordinating the national and international aid efforts’.¹⁵⁸ The ‘3-R’ Framework is regarded as a first step in this direction. With regard to both coordination among donors and maintaining relations with the Sri Lankan government and civil society, many authors underline the importance of the ‘3-R’ Framework. In addition, it is lauded for its inclusive set-up. Philipson notes that ‘the media, religious groups, academia, professional organizations, peace activists, NGOs and the diplomatic community are frequently cited in addition to politicians and political leaders’¹⁵⁹ as parties that can make a contribution to peace-building. The Framework is, however, not in the first place a mechanism; rather it may be seen as a process. In this connection, Bush emphasizes the need for interaction between

¹⁵³ Bush (1999), p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ For further analysis of coordination mechanisms in Sri Lanka, readers may be referred to a study by van Brabant (1997).

¹⁵⁵ Bush (1999), p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ also referred to as the Donor Consortium or the Consultative Group.

¹⁵⁷ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 50.

¹⁵⁸ Frerks and van Leeuwen (2000), p. 56.

¹⁵⁹ Philipson (1999), p. 48.

practice and policy. This requires a process that is ‘interactive; sharing policy direction, and testing and gathering feedback on the ground from experts and practitioners’.¹⁶⁰

Conclusions

Regarding future implications for development and donor agencies with Sri Lankan actors, the studies agree that:

- Leverage over the Sri Lankan government by means of imposing conditionalities has proven to be limited - and only tried on a minor scale. Instead, a (critical) policy dialogue should be encouraged. The authors mention the ‘3-R’ Framework as a positive example in this regard;
- The (advocacy) role of INGOs has been mainly limited to presence and observation in war-torn areas;
- Civil society is a crucial component of a conflict-sensitive strategy by donors (and INGOs). Given their diverse nature, better understanding of the limitations of civil society organizations and the political climate in which they operate is essential for adequate support;
- Coordination among donor agencies is generally insufficient and sometimes complicated by overlapping mandates;
- The studies discern a tendency towards a more comprehensive approach of development cooperation, including different goals (relief, development, peace-building), multiple levels and various actors (bilateral, multilateral, NGO);
- Enhanced complementarity - instead of integration - between different policy instruments may be a middle ground between humanitarian minimalists and maximalists in the policy coherence debate;
- There is little empirical analysis of coordination mechanisms and few recommendations to be made regarding coordination and policy coherence in practice. However, most studies mention the ‘3-R’ Framework as an important contribution in the process towards improving coordination and dialogue.

¹⁶⁰ Bush (1999), p. 37.

6 Conclusions

With regard to the conflict, it may be noted that the distinctions between conflict and development, between politics, economics, ethnicity and violence are fading. The authors view the conflict as a multi-causal dynamic process that involves all these aspects, but where political failure and ethnicization stand out as major issues. In dealing with the multi-faceted nature of the conflict, the distinctions between relief and mainstream development cooperation and between foreign policy and development cooperation are also becoming blurred. The knowledge base of the international community is weak, showing several serious omissions.

Donor practices and actions to resolve or negotiate *vis-à-vis* the conflict have also been few and far between. Consequently, the current position of the international community seems to show lack of insight in the conflict. There is a level of doubt among the authors as to what aspects of the conflict could be taken on by the donor community and whether the required capacity and methodological tools are available. Some of the authors advocate a politically and process-informed approach on the basis of long-term involvement. Others focus on the viewpoint that impact and policy can no longer be viewed on the basis of a narrow mandate. Instead, a broad range of complex interrelated issues needs to be taken into account, arguing for an integrated approach for relief and development. There is, for example, a need to enhance the capacity to analyse the impact of development activities on conflict.

Another range of issues deals with the Sri Lankan government and civil society. Taking a comprehensive approach assumes the inclusion of a wider range of actors and relations that encompass a wider range of themes. In line with this view, support to civil society organizations and strategic frameworks like the '3-R' Framework are advocated.

As a result of the comprehensive approach of mandates, issues and actors, coordination and policy coherence are inevitable discussion topics. Conditionalities imposed on the government are generally not regarded as effective. Strategic frameworks offer a way of including a broad range of actors with growing mandates to discuss a wide range of themes, although the relative strengths and weaknesses should be better understood both at governmental and non-governmental levels. Donor practice should also be subjected to closer scrutiny, among other things regarding its impact. Although some of the selected publications offer findings on the impact of development cooperation, it is not possible to draw solid conclusions from only their observations. Likewise, regarding coordination mechanisms and policy coherence among donors, fairly little is known. One of the remaining questions is whether a comprehensive approach is operationally feasible. Talking about complementarity is just one way of nuancing ambitions. Additional nuances are possibly required to employ a comprehensive approach. Experiences from elsewhere indicate the need to pay attention to these aspects as otherwise well-intended international peace-building efforts may have little impact or may even do harm.

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Annexe 1 Selected Publications

Selection Criteria

There are a vast number of publications on Sri Lanka providing insights into specific aspects of the conflict. However, only a limited number of publications specifically address the position of donors and INGOs in the Sri Lankan conflict. This paper focuses on recent studies that fulfil the following criteria:

1. The publications focus on conflict-related development interventions by the international community in the Sri Lankan conflict. This may entail an analysis of bilateral or multilateral assistance, the activities of INGOs or a combination thereof. The selected publications focus primarily on the potential impact of development assistance on the processes of peace and conflict in Sri Lanka;
2. The publications reflect empirical research and more general analysis focusing on development cooperation. In practice, this implies that the publications are the result of a study focusing on a specific donor, group of donors or INGOs. Publications with a purely theoretical approach as well as publications with a purely programmatic approach (without further analysis) were excluded;
3. The publications yield practical conclusions and recommendations;
4. The publications were published recently. Because the situation in Sri Lanka as well as the views of donors and NGOs are very amenable to change, only publications published since 1997 have been included.

Publications

This set of criteria (and extensive documentary research) yielded the following list of publications:

- Bush, K. (1999), *The Scope and Limits for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations: Case Study: Sri Lanka*. OECD Development Assistance Committee, Informal Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation. Paris: OECD.
- Bush, K. (2001), *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Swedish Development Cooperation with Sri Lanka*. Stockholm/Colombo: SIDA.
- Frerks, G. and M. van Leeuwen (2000), *The Netherlands and Sri Lanka: Dutch Policies and Interventions with regard to the Conflict in Sri Lanka*. The Hague: Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute.

- Goodhand, J. (2000), *Aid, Conflict and Peace-building in Sri Lanka*. London: DFID.
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- Philipson, L. (1999), *Breaking Recurring Themes in the Cycles of War and Peace in Sri Lanka*. Research Paper 3. London: Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics.

Abstracts

Bush, K. (1999), *The Scope and Limits for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations: Case Study: Sri Lanka*. OECD Development Assistance Committee, Informal Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation. Paris: OECD.

This OECD study draws from an extensive number of interviews with multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and Sri Lankan leaders. It offers general and more concrete conclusions, covering a wide range of issues. Concepts such as participation, conditionality and coordination are critically examined. There are, however, a very limited number of field-level recommendations.

Bush observes that assistance may provide incentives and disincentives for the conflict. Instead of reducing international assistance, he advocates a more conflict-sensitive approach. The report concludes that conditionality is hardly effective at a macro level. Moreover, it is necessary to employ integrated, island-wide programming of development projects. International presence (in the field and in Colombo) and the exploration of partnership opportunities are crucial in this context. A larger awareness of and support to indigenous resources and capacities for peace-building is required.

At a more general level, Bush concludes that ODA alone will not bring peace to Sri Lanka. There is a need for developing analytical tools to measure both the development impact of ODA and its specific impact on the dynamics of peace and conflict. Also, there is a mismatch between the mechanisms and the challenges of development assistance. The report therefore recommends an integrated approach towards relief and development.

Bush, K. (2001), *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Swedish Development Cooperation with Sri Lanka*. Stockholm/Colombo: SIDA.

This SIDA study is the only publication reviewed that includes an analysis of specific projects in addition to a general overview of issues. It starts with a general discussion on peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA), and notes that PCIA is insufficiently operationalized actually to assess the impact of SIDA's activities. Also, given the fact that this is largely a desk-study (drawing mainly from SIDA documents), the data required for impact assessment are lacking. However, the study suggests

¹⁶¹ This publication is a synthesis report. The specific case study report on Sri Lanka probably provides more detail on the conflict. Unfortunately this publication is an internal working document of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and could not be included in the study.

that PCIA may be used as a rough programme-making and monitoring tool, indicating possibly relevant issues.

Moreover, it is argued that peace-building should be seen as an impact, rather than an activity. Not all interventions aimed at peace-building may actually contribute to peace, while some non-peace-building activities may in fact yield effects contributing to peace. Consequently, Bush argues for a comprehensive approach. Conflict reduction and peace-building should therefore not be seen separately; neither should development and peace-related activities. An 'add PCIA and stir' approach should be avoided; instead the author advocates integration. He argues that SIDA should not set up new activities, but integrate peace-related components into its current practice.

The core of this paper consists of an overview of five projects. In line with Bush's comprehensive approach, the projects include a variety of activities across the entire island: (1) an electrification project; (2) agricultural and fisheries inputs for resettled farmers and fishermen; (3) integrated rural development in the plantation sector; (4) research cooperation; and (5) education for peace and democracy. Bush acknowledges that given the limited amount of field analysis and interviews, his analysis is confined to an indicative scan of potentially relevant issues.

Bush underlines the importance of taking the historical background of the conflict into account. In addition, he argues that research cooperation is essential in the field of peace and development. Improved academic relations between SIDA, SIDA's academic think tank and Sri Lankan academics might enhance "problemization", i.e. the questioning of unquestioned ideas, policy and practice.

Frerks, G. and M. van Leeuwen (2000), *The Netherlands and Sri Lanka: Dutch Policies and Interventions with regard to the Conflict in Sri Lanka*. The Hague: Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute.

This Clingendael study was commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to analyse the Netherlands' general policy and concrete interventions with regard to the conflict in Sri Lanka. The study is based on interviews with key informants and has a macro-level, bilateral focus.

Against the background of the conflict and an overview of the international response, the study concludes that Dutch interventions regarding Sri Lanka can generally be described as inconspicuous, reactive and slow. The Dutch accepted the different views of Sri Lankan governments unquestioningly, although from the 1990s onwards, the deteriorating human rights record was taken into account. Programme assistance decreased and a larger focus on relief and rehabilitation emerged.

The general international response to the conflict was not conspicuous either, given the conflict's limited strategic consequences. The study also underlines that more proactive policies towards parties in the conflict are difficult. Stronger forms of political persuasion in the form of resolutions, conditionalities, or cuts in development aid have had no or only limited effects. The international donor community seems to lack an explicit strategy for dealing with the conflict and its parties.

Goodhand, J. (2000), *Aid, Conflict and Peace-building in Sri Lanka*. London: DFID.

This DFID-funded study focuses on multilateral and bilateral donors. Separate sections map out the conflict and assistance to Sri Lanka, the linkages among them and suggestions for future (development) relationships. Goodhand emphasizes the need for an understanding of the linkages among development, poverty and conflict. In line with this view, he states that violence has become an endemic feature of Sri Lankan society. Politics is at the heart of the conflict and a resolution process would have to include the 'deep politics' of society and the 'high politics' of the state.

Goodhand observes a multitude of concerns for foreign donors in Sri Lanka. He underlines (1) the discussion regarding the mandate of assistance with regard to conflict resolution; (2) the view that development cooperation should not be a substitute for political action; and (3) the fact that policy objectives frequently clash in reality.

Although development cooperation is seen as a blunt instrument with limited leverage with regards to the conflict, Goodhand observes a need for the agencies concerned to take into account their impact on the conflict. Goodhand notes that the main aid actors (the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and Japan) have tried to work *around* the conflict, instead of working *in* it or *on* it. The main challenge is to integrate conflict sensitivity into mainstream development cooperation. Development cooperation needs to take a system-wide (coordinated, coherent) and conflict-sensitive (politically informed and supportive to local capacities) approach. In addition, enhancement of analysis and modalities is recommended.

Goodhand, J. and P. Atkinson (2001), *Conflict and Aid: Enhancing the Peace-building Impact of International Engagement: A Synthesis of Findings from Afghanistan, Liberia and Sri Lanka*. London: International Alert.

This International Alert paper encompasses a synthesis of three cases, including Sri Lanka. It provides an introduction to the ongoing debate on the broadening of the humanitarian mandate towards peace-building and distinguishes between humanitarian maximalists – ‘new wars require a response that addresses the underlying causes of conflict’ - and minimalists - ‘back to basics, use another instrument to address underlying causes’. The authors argue that the bipolarized nature of the debate is unhelpful and propose seeking a middle ground. Under the banner of enlightened humanitarianism they argue that humanitarian assistance needs to be kept distinct, but complementary, to other policy instruments and help reinforce a peace settlement.

Drawing from the three studies, Goodhand and Atkinson highlight the need for careful analysis. For an adequate understanding, it is crucial to take into account the historical background and the process of state formation, acknowledging the dynamic, ‘networked’ nature of (contemporary) conflicts. The authors also stress the importance of understanding the political economy of conflict and the political economy of aid.

Summarizing the case of Sri Lanka, Goodhand and Atkinson state that the main challenges of humanitarian assistance are related to how the relevant agencies deal with the state. Despite the functioning democracy and the strong social development indicators, the Sri Lankan state is also party to the conflict. The importance of civil society and the need to look beyond peace accords are underlined.

In conclusion, Goodhand and Atkinson offer a list of detailed recommendations under three headings: (1) supporting an enabling environment for conflict prevention and peace-building; (2) increasing conflict sensitivity from donors; and (3) enhancing the peace-building potential of humanitarian assistance.

Goodhand, J., N. Lewer and D. Hulme (2000), *NGOs and Peace-building: Sri Lanka Study*. Manchester: Institute for Development, Policy and Management, University of Manchester.

This DFID-funded study encompasses case studies of four villages on the east coast of Sri Lanka and three NGOs working in the north and east of the country (EHED, OXFAM and SCF).

By means of introduction, the authors provide a rough analysis of the conflict, which resembles the views expressed in Goodhand’s other publications. Although NGOs cannot be of determining influence in the conflict, the study provides an exploratory overview of ways in which NGOs could

contribute to the probability of peace. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme conclude that the impact of the NGOs studied did not significantly contribute to peace-building, nor did they fuel the conflict. It is important for NGOs to strike the right balance of heart and mind. This means that NGOs must clarify their mandate, goals and values (heart), and improve their analysis of the conflict and their understanding of their position in it (mind).

The NGOs studied are engaged in relief, development and peace-building. Although there may be considerable tensions among these three goals, the authors conclude that this wide programming offers comparative advantages. The activities of NGOs may range from direct interventions, capacity-building to advocacy. Given the sensitive nature of the conflict and the fragile position of NGOs working in conflict-affected areas, explicit advocacy is, however, extremely difficult.

The authors claim that timing is important and that a decentralized, flexible approach is essential. On the other hand, long-term planning and engagement - and thus funding - are also necessary. In order to contribute significantly to relief, development and peace-building, as well as for establishing significant relations with local beneficiaries and organizations, NGOs must be able to rely on longer-term funding.

The study observes that Sri Lankan civil society is crucial, given the political nature of the conflict. That does not mean, however, that Sri Lankan NGOs are necessarily contributing to peace. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme conclude that it is essential for NGOs to coordinate their activities and maintain close contacts with other NGOs focusing on peace, politics, human rights or related issues.

Klingebiel, S. (1999), *The Impact of Development Cooperation in Conflict Situations: Cross-Section Report on Evaluations of German Development Cooperation in Six Countries*. Berlin: German Development Institute.

This synthesis study was written for the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It provides an overview of the impact of German (bilateral) assistance on six (potential, post or current) conflict situations, including Sri Lanka. It encompasses both macro- and micro-level issues and offers concrete as well as general recommendations and conclusions.

The study states that little attention was paid to the impact of German assistance on conflict dynamics. It is observed that the agencies involved in German assistance currently employ a combination of trying to work independently of the conflict as well as deliberately trying to contribute to its resolution. However, one conclusion is that in general the influence of (German) aid on conflicts has been very limited.

The conceptual framework of German assistance needs to be further adjusted to take conflict prevention and resolution into account. It is suggested that the German Ministry requires a separate organizational unit that focuses on 'crisis prevention and conflict resolution in development cooperation'. Furthermore, there is a need to improve impact assessment measures and integrate their use. Also, the institutions involved (within the German Ministry) should undertake more 'political thinking'.

The report sees a large role for NGOs and civil society in Sri Lanka, especially because of their access to uncleared areas. Hence, opportunities for partnerships must be clarified. A policy dialogue with the government of Sri Lanka and other countries is viewed as an important instrument. Rather than voicing criticism, this instrument should be used to impose explicit and specific conditions. In

cases where the government is involved in the conflict - as in Sri Lanka - development cooperation should perhaps be terminated or different instruments should be employed.¹⁶²

Problem areas identified include the flow of adequate information within the German structure and the lack of coordination with other agencies. German development cooperation should seek a division of labour with multilateral institutions regarding conflict prevention and resolution. As a rule, foreign policy plays a coordinating role with regard to the different German instruments. Procedures must also be adjusted and flexibility increased. A greater willingness to take responsibility and accept risks is required, and adequate training opportunities for staff need to be made available.

Philipson, L. (2000), *Breaking Recurring Themes in the Cycles of War and Peace in Sri Lanka*. Research Paper 3. London: Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics.

Combining an academic, NGO and political background, Liz Philipson explores the (past, potential and actual) process of conflict resolution in Sri Lanka. Her work primarily has a diplomatic focus, but touches on issues regarding development cooperation as well. It offers an analysis of the conflict dynamics and the shortcomings of past - foreign and domestic - initiatives aimed at facilitating peace.

Drawing from concrete examples, Philipson argues that the *process* of de-escalation and negotiation has received insufficient attention. She acknowledges the importance of the contents of a settlement, but argues that the way in which such a settlement is reached is equally important. An understanding of the dynamics of the conflict and local politics, combined with an understanding of de-escalation processes are essential to the chances of success of a foreign peace initiative. She indicates in detail which interventions and issues are at stake in each particular phase of the resolution process.

The study does not provide a general background to the conflict and its causes. Neither does it discuss the potential of development assistance to influence the conflict. Although the analysis is confined mainly to the political (diplomatic) aspects of the conflict, it also offers insights that are relevant to development cooperation.

¹⁶² This view is taken from the executive summary of the report, where Klingebiel suggests that more thought should be given to the termination of aid to governments that are a party to a conflict. In the actual text the views presented are much more nuanced.