UNIVERSITÄT BERN

CDE
CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Striving for fair and conflict-sensitive research

Framework, approaches, and tools

Guide Version 1 - February 2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 Relevance

A core objective of CDE's overall strategy is to conduct *Transformative Research* – research that aims to contribute to concrete sustainability transformations. CDE's research takes place in a multitude of different contexts. These contexts strongly influence our research, our outputs, and our proposed sustainability solutions.

Moreover, CDE is highly present in intercultural research settings and partly focuses on contexts in the Global South. A given context may be experiencing violent conflict. Or it may be in a post-war situation. But even if conflicts are non-violent or not obvious, research contexts are often marked by colonial and postcolonial history. This may mean that injustices of the past persist in their currently manifested societal and relational consequences.

Independently of their respective history, the sociopolitical and sociocultural configurations that characterize the contexts we work in are highly complex and unique: they may differ significantly from the assumptions, both explicit or implicit, on which a research endeavour is built. In addition, the research setting is likely to include a complex range of intercultural and interpersonal conflicts and challenges.

Without high conflict sensitivity and high reflexivity on power imbalances, project designs, and one's own cultural practices and norms, research may reproduce or even augment power differences and prejudices. It can thus unintentionally cause more harm than gain, where sustainability is concerned. This is why there is a need for constant reflection on our own actions and projects within a research context. We are therefore advocating for the design of research projects to be as fair and sensitive to the context as possible. Our endeavour is closely linked to the currently much-discussed topic of decolonizing research and education.

CDE has continuously reflected on these challenges, for example in its long-term research programme, the National Centre of Competence in Research North-South (NCCR North-South) or in cooperation with the Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE). This report aims at uniting this knowledge and experience and complementing it with external sources, tools, and examples. This will enable CDE to continue, deepen, and institutionalize this reflection and the practice of ensuring fair and conflict-sensitive research.

1.2 Aim of this Guide

This Guide takes a step towards establishing a conceptual basis to structure and understand requirements for fair and conflict-sensitive research. It identifies existing approaches and tools that can support efforts to strive for such fair and conflict-sensitive research, which is underpinned by respect, modesty, and reflexivity.

The Guide is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: Foundations of Fair and Conflict-Sensitive Research

Chapter 2 outlines our understanding of contexts of transboundary research endeavours. What is at stake? Where is special care needed in order to do no harm, to reach our transformation objectives, and to contribute to sustainability? We present five basic requirements that a research endeavour or institution in such contexts should fulfil.

Chapter 3: Comprehensive Approaches and Reflections

Chapter 3 highlights comprehensive approaches that already exist to promote fair and conflict-sensitive research. We call these approaches "comprehensive" because they reflect on more than one project step; sometimes on entire project cycles or general principles. We present an initial guide to the vast body of literature that already exists in this field, providing further information in the form of links to relevant documents (in green boxes). However, we make no claim to completeness, as our resources to develop this Guide are limited. Our main focus at this stage is on expanding two of the five requirements introduced in the previous chapter.

Chapter 4: Tools and Good Practices in Project Implementation

Chapter 4 provides specific tools that may help to design fairer and more conflict-sensitive research for sustainable development. As this is a guide through literature, we work with direct quotes and refer you to further, in-depth reading (green boxes).

Additional or new tools may be continuously added to this Guide, which is why it is, and will remain, "under construction" and this is version 1, as stated on the title page.

1.3 From Awareness to Implementation

> *(…) the dominant mainstreaming approach of the expert community has been to develop extra tool kits that practitioners may then find difficult to integrate in the field, as these represent an additional task in an already-overloaded work environment with competing requirements from headquarters. (Paffenholz, 2016, p. 8)*

This challenge was outlined by a publication reflecting – specifically – on 20 years of conflict sensitivity. It draws attention to a problem that applies beyond conflict-sensitivity.

We are aware that we are in danger of reproducing this situation through this Guide and its collection of approaches, tools, and guidelines. This is why institutional backing is key. A guide such as this can only unfold its full potential if institutions and funders make available the resources required to implement the relevant proposals. And in addition to the need for institutional backing, it is crucial to anchor this approach in attitudes, and to train it by encouraging continuous reflection that goes beyond just following a pre-defined, static checklist.

2 Foundations of Fair and Conflict-Sensitive Research

2.1 Conceptual Framework

In Figure 1, we present the understanding of "fair and conflict-sensitive research" that this report is based on. This conceptual framework characterizes and links research endeavours and relevant situational aspects and risks, deriving the following key requirements: research should be fair in collaboration and partnerships; research should be adapted to the context it's being carried out in; and research should be sensitive to conflicts and tensions. The blue boxes in the figure represent aspects that should be considered in any research endeavour. The red boxes point to risks that researchers should anticipate and be prepared for. Together, the aspects listed in these boxes form a non-comprehensive general checklist that can be used in planning and implementing research in specific contexts.

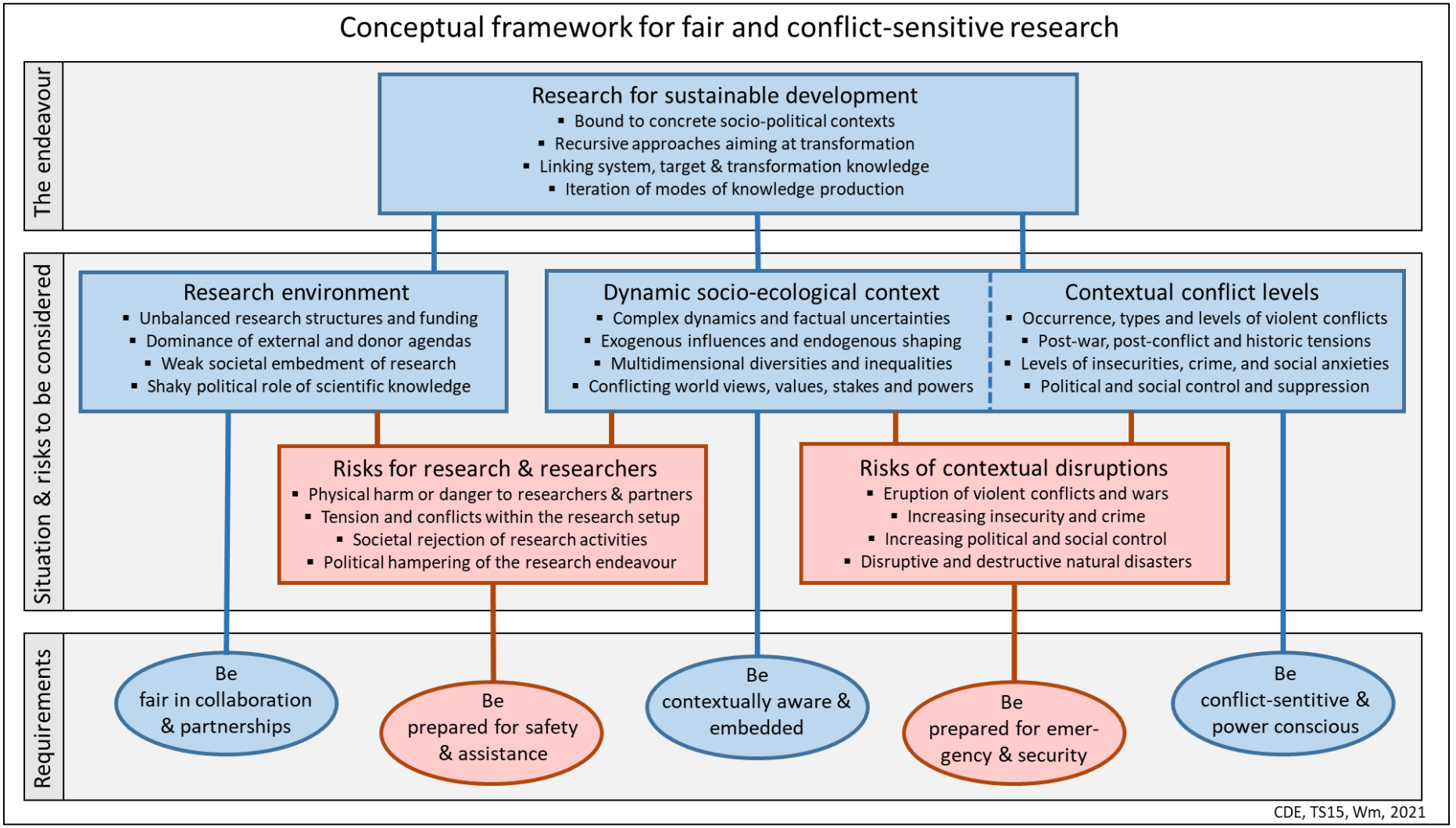

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for fair and conflict-sensitive research (Own figure, 2021)

The Endeavour of Research for Sustainable Development

Research for sustainable development is here understood in a broad sense. Respective endeavours may range from individual master's and PhD theses, or projects on a specific topic, to large and long-term research programmes. The common characteristic of these endeavours is that they deal with issues of sustainable development. This implies that by necessity, they are bound to the contexts in which the research is conducted and must – to varying degrees – relate to the normative dimension of sustainability. They therefore include a component of societal interaction.

Although individual studies may focus on one type of knowledge, such as systems knowledge, larger research for sustainable development endeavours typically include various types of knowledge (i.e. systems, transformation, and target knowledge). Research for sustainable development endeavours also vary their ways of producing knowledge during the research process, moving between disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches. This is related to the need for recursive approaches which dissolve the traditional sequences between problem definition and finding solutions, as well as between knowledge and action. This last point implies that research for sustainable development often includes – or rather has to include – transformative action. The term "research for sustainable development" as used in this Guide therefore includes components of knowledge production and of societally based transformative action. In other words, the term includes the traditional notions of "research" and "development" but disentangles the traditional sequence.

Considering the Contextual Situation

As mentioned, research for sustainable development is inextricably linked to the context in which it is conducted. "Context" in this sense is not understood merely in terms of geographical location, but refers to the socio-ecological system and the sociopolitical arena relevant to the sustainability issue being studied. The delineation of a context is therefore not fixed. Instead, it varies according to ecological, social, political, and economic processes and dynamics as well as to the degree of sociopolitical inclusion in defining and solving sustainability issues. Sustainability contexts are typically not homogeneous in most of their dimensions. Instead, they are exposed to a broad range of socio-ecological processes and dynamics and are characterized by varying degrees of sociocultural diversity, economic inequalities, power imbalances, and conflicting values and stakes.

Research for sustainable development has to develop a high context sensitivity that takes into account contextual complexity, to ensure that no-one is "left behind" and to avoid creating harm through its behaviour and actions.

An important component of context sensitivity is the need for a high sensitivity to current, past, or potential conflicts. Ignoring this component may not only jeopardize the sustainability effort but can also create significant harm. The conceptual framework in Figure 1 therefore separates the contextual conflict levels from the general contextual characteristics. Conflict levels may relate to violent conflicts, to post-war situations, to degrees of insecurities, and to social control or sociopolitical suppression.

Finally, the conceptual framework highlights the research setting, which also forms part of the context. Considering this research setting in a sensitive way is pivotal for successful

research endeavours, as it may be characterized by significant imbalances between the research-related actors and by a shaky societal embedment of science and research.

Being Prepared for Contextual Risks

Sensitive consideration of the socio-ecological context, the related conflict levels, as well as the research setting is key to successful research for sustainable development. However, even if sensitivity is high, contextual risks can occur during the research process, endangering the whole endeavour. The conceptual framework in Figure 1 differentiates between two types of risks. The first type refers to direct risks to research endeavours, researchers, and research partners that are a result of the context and the research setting. They include risks of physical harm and danger, conflicts within the research design, as well as societal rejection or political interference. The second type refers to the context itself, where violent conflicts, increased insecurity, political suppression, or natural disasters may occur. Changes or disruptions within the context also translate into risks and challenges for the research endeavours. Both types of risk require preparedness to ensure they can be counterbalanced, if they occur.

Key Requirements for Fair and Conflict-Sensitive Research

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 differentiates between five key requirements for fair and conflict-sensitive research for sustainable development. Three of the requirements relate to the need for high sensitivity and action. This concerns the research design on the one hand, and the socio-ecological context and related conflict levels (depicted in blue) on the other. The other two requirements refer to the need for preparedness and operational precaution in view of pertinent risks to research or to the context itself (depicted in red). These five requirements for research for sustainable development are at the core of fair and conflict-sensitive research.

Focus of this Version of the Guide and Overall Recommendation

In this – first – version of the Guide, not all five requirements are examined in the same depth. Instead, our main focus is on fairness in collaboration and partnership, as well as on conflict sensitivity and power consciousness (Figure 1, bottom left and right circles under requirements). However, in another component of this CDE Transformation Stream project, elements of preparedness for emergency and security were addressed in relation to CDE's recent experience in Myanmar.

Overall, we strongly recommend that the requirements indicated in Figure 1 are institutionalized, rooted in the culture of research teams, and systematically considered in any research endeavour on sustainable development and transformation. The current Guide aims at setting in motion such a process, and at initiating dialogue and mutual learning at all research and management levels. The Guide is designed to be further enhanced and deepened in potential follow-up projects.

2.2 Core Attitudes: Positionality and Reflexivity

Positionality is the awareness of our social position – in terms of, for example, social class, social status, gender, and ethnicity – and how it influences research, professional relationships, and work. Awareness of these issues is particularly important in contexts where strong power asymmetries may be expected, for example in working with minorities or vulnerable groups (England, 1994).

Reflexivity is the way that this awareness relates to and is applied in our work and our research.

> *If positionality refers to what we know and believe then reflexivity is about what we do with this knowledge. Reflexivity involves questioning one's own taken for granted assumptions. Essentially, it involves drawing attention to the researcher as opposed to 'brushing her or him under the carpet' and pretending that she or he did not have an impact or influence. (Hammond, 2017, para. 1)*

While it is standard to demand reflexivity in qualitative and activist social science, it is not as common nor as accepted in many other disciplines. Positionality and reflexivity are often discussed in connection with fieldwork, but we are convinced they are necessary in all research and project steps.

If you haven't yet given much thought to practising positionality and reflexivity, the following tool can help map where you stand. Of course, using a tool has its limits, as this tool's authors readily admit, but they believe applying it can be a helpful first step.

Jacobson, D., & Mustafa, N. (2019). Social Identity Map: A Reflexivity Tool for Practicing Explicit Positionality in Critical Qualitative Research. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919870075.

The literature review of Marks and Abdelhalim (2018) emphasizes the need for positionality in the context of ethnicity, gender, class, religion, and political background. The authors offer a collection of experiences from young researchers working in the Global South and dealing with positionalities, emotions, and the roles of insiders and outsiders. As ethics and positionalities are fluid, in most cases it is flexibility that makes research possible in risky circumstances. According to Marks and Abdelhalim (2018, p. 2), being able to "adapt to circumstances, shift research direction and engage relationally in non-conventional ways with research participants seem to take primacy over any need for certainty or age-old concerns about researcher objectivity".

The article focuses mainly on researchers from the Global South, employed by the North but working in their context of origin. Reflections on researchers' identity and positionality are crucial, as "researchers are often confronted with real struggles to determine to what extent they could find commonality with their research participants" (Marks & Abdelhalim, 2018, p. 4).

Marks, M., & Abdelhalim, J. (2018). Introduction: identity, jeopardy and moral dilemmas in conducting research in 'risky' environments.

https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2017.1388463.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/21582041.2017.1388463

Relationality is an approach that touches upon similar challenges but focuses on people's interactions rather than on their identities or positions. It asks, for example, how interactions reproduce inequality, as discussed in the following paper by White (2020).

White, S. C. (2020). A Space for Unlearning? A Relational Perspective on North–South Development Research. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-020-00278-9.

2.3 Transdisciplinary Research and Transformation Approach

Transdisciplinarity aims, on the one hand, to produce knowledge collaboratively with actors outside of science and to contribute to solving societal challenges. Typically, these actors include the people affected by the endeavour, practitioners, or stakeholders. On the other hand, an important element of transdisciplinarity is bridging disciplines. For CDE, it has long been crucial to base research for sustainable development on transdisciplinarity.

The Network for Transdisciplinary Research, td-net, proposes 7 principles for co-producing knowledge:

1. *Orientation to societal challenges*
2. *Grasping the complexity of problems*
3. *Develop knowledge and practices that promote what is perceived as common good*
4. *Integrating different perspectives*
5. *Producing systems, target, and transformation knowledge*
6. *Science as part of a social learning process*
7. *Linking abstract and case-specific knowledge*

(td-net, n.d.)

These principles and more can be found on the td-net website:

td-net. (n.d.). Goals and principles. https://transdisciplinarity.ch/en/transdisciplinarity/was-ist-td/goals-and-principles/.

Tools, e.g. for co-defining project goals, jointly evaluating impacts, etc. are available in the td-toolbox:

td-net. (n.d.) Methods and Tools for Co-Producing Knowledge. scnat knowledge. https://naturalsciences.ch/co-producing-knowledge-explained/methods/td-net_toolbox.

2.4 Key Documents

At CDE, three main documents are considered key to fair and conflict-sensitive research:

First, KFPE's "A Guide For Transboundary Research Partnerships", which in this document we'll refer to as "the KFPE Guide*":*

Stöckli, B., Wiesmann, U., & Lys J.-A. (2018) A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships. Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE),. https://scnat.ch/en/uuid/i/13beb0f7-4780-5967-a257-bd6cc3d5e424-A_Guide_for_Transboundary_Research_Partnerships_3rd_edition_-_2018.

Second, the "Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research":

Bentele, U. (2020). Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3601000.

And third, CDE's "Safety in the field" documents, CDE staff finds country specific information in the intranet under the headings "organization" and then "safety in the field". There is also a document of general advice, which is accessible for everyone:

Universität Bern (2022). Verhalten bei Krisen- und Notfällen. Universität Bern, Reiseplattform. https://www.reiseplattform.unibe.ch/reisevorbereitungen/verhalten_bei_krisen__und_notfaellen/index_ger.html.

3 Comprehensive Approaches and Reflections

In the following chapters we provide links to approaches that may be helpful in working on the above-mentioned challenges and requirements. In this chapter, we focus on comprehensive approaches. We call them comprehensive as they might include several project steps, entire project cycles, or general principles. We focus on two of the elements in particular: *fairness in collaboration and partnership* and *conflict sensitivity and power consciousness.* Due to the limited scope and resources of this project, we place less emphasis on the other three elements (*preparedness for security and emergency*, *preparedness for safety and assistance,* and *contextual awareness and embeddedness*) for the moment, hoping to develop this further in future. Each chapter provides a brief explanation of the relevant principle, followed by green boxes containing references with links for further reading on the topic. This enables you to select the elements that are relevant to you by looking at the Table of Contents at the beginning of the document. Much of the literature is cited directly: we recommend that from here on, you read the document like an annotated bibliography.

3.1 The Principle of Doing No Harm

The Do No Harm concept is applied in various disciplines and in different ways. It is common in terms of doing no harm to study participants, for example in medical research. Our focus, however, is wider, including the implications of research projects for society, a discussion led by the development community and the political violence community. In this discussion, there is substantial overlap with the discussion on conflict sensitivity. However, we present the literature in two separate chapters, as we believe it is crucial to be aware that our projects may cause unintended harm in a more general sense, and not just amid conflict. The Do No Harm principle is a simple but crucial starting point for all research.

The US-based Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) has been developing the "do no harm" approach since 1994 (see e.g. Zupan, 2005). It covers many important elements of doing no harm in development cooperation, such as hiring staff, choosing partners, and conflict analysis based on "Connectors" and "Dividers".

Anderson, M.B. (2000). Options For Aid in Conflict - Lessons from Field Experience. https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Options-for-Aid-in-Conflict-Lessons-from-Field-Experience.pdf.

Walovitch, J. (2018). Do No Harm: A Brief Introduction from CDA. https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Do-No-Harm-A-Brief-Introduction-from-CDA.pdf.

The concept of Dividers and Connectors is used to understand the relations in a context. "Dividers are factors that create division or tension. Connectors are factors that pull groups together, or help them to coexist in constructive ways" (Walovitch, 2018, p. 1)

The Do no harm tool applies the following 7 steps:

> *1. Understand the **Context** of Conflict.*
>
> *2. Analyze **Dividers** and sources of tension in the Context.*
>
> *3. Analyze **Connectors** and local capacities for peace in the context.*
>
> *4. Understand the critical details of the **Intervention**.*
>
> *5. Analyze the intervention's impact on Dividers and Connectors via Resource Transfers and **Behaviors and Implicit Ethical Messages.***
>
> *6. Generate programming **Options**.*
>
> *7. Test options and **Redesign** the intervention*
>
> *(Goddard & Lempke, 2013, p. 4)*

The whole tool, explaining concepts, indicating detailed questions, analysis tools, and templates may be accessed in the following document:

Goddard, N., & Lempke, M. (2013). Do no Harm in Land Tenure and Property Rights. https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Do-No-Harm-In-Land-Tenure-and-Property-Rights-Designing-and-Implementing-Conflict-Sensitive-Land-Programs.pdf.

Step by step description of the do no harm approach: pp. 25–44

Further rapid appraisal instruments which work with the Do No Harm concept but focus on land and conflict can be found here:

Galudra, G., Sirait, M., Pasya, G., Fay, C., Suyanto, van Noordwijk a, M., & Pradhan, U. (2010). RaTa: A rapid land tenure assessment manual for identifying the nature of land tenure conflicts. http://apps.worldagroforestry.org/downloads/Publications/PDFS/B16650.pdf

USAID (2004). Land and Conflict. A Toolkit for Intervention. https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/USAID_Land_Tenure_Conflict_Toolkit_2004.pdf

UN Habitat (2009). Land and Conflict. A Handbook for Humanitarians. https://postconflict.unep.ch/humanitarianaction/documents/02_03-04_03-08.pdf

3.2 Being Fair in Research Partnerships

> *One of the main criticisms of activities to build research capacity in the Global South is that they are driven and funded by governments, international agencies and research institutes that are based in the Global North (Idris, 2019, p. 19)*

This leads to power imbalances and a situation in which priorities set by the North carry more weight: Southern researchers have little voice and cannot shape research agendas, and issues that are relevant to Southern actors are not included (Idris, 2019, p. 19).

There is an important body of literature on how to design North-South partnerships in a fairer way. Much is already covered in the aforementioned KFPE Guide (Chapter 1.5, Three Key Documents). Creating and maintaining fair partnerships involves considering many different elements. Within the scope of this document we tackle only a few (see Chapter 4.2, Joint Agenda Setting). Our focus, instead, is on presenting a careful selection of documents that provide overarching approaches.

The UK Collaborative on Development Science has issued a report called "Building Partnerships of Equals", which contains an overview of a number of partnership guidelines (including the KFPE Guide) and a table showing benefits and challenges of fair partnerships:

Dodson, J., (2017). Building Partnerships of Equals. https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Building-Partnerships-of-Equals_-REPORT-2.pdf.

Table with benefits and challenges:	pp. 3–4
Overview of guidelines:	p. 38

The Geneva-based Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) focuses on fair partnerships and has developed tools that range from global learning to reporting. It identifies three areas of focus: fairness of opportunity, fair process, fair sharing of benefits, costs, and outcomes:

Research Fairness Initiative. (2021). Home | Research Fairness Initiative | Cohred RFI. https://rfi.cohred.org/.

For a summary of RFI's approach:

IJsselmuiden, C., Botti, L., Lazdins, J., & Klipp K. (n.d.). Research Fairness Initiative Summary Guide. https://rfi.cohred.org/wp-content/uploads/RFI_Summary_Guide_1.pdf

Research partnerships are crucial also in fragile contexts (Idris, 2019). An overview of the relevant literature can be found in Chapter 5 of the following literature review.

Idris, I. (2019). Doing research in fragile contexts. https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Doing-Research-in-Fragile-Contexts-Idris-2019.pdf

For an overview of the relevant literature: p. 19

In the above mentioned literature review, Idris (2019, pp. 20–21) summarizes principles from a report of the rethink research collaborative (Fransman et al., 2018, pp. 9–12). While the first principle would have to be adapted for CDE, particularly principles 2–8 are of interest:

> *1. **Put poverty first**. Constantly question how research is addressing the end goal of reducing poverty through better design and evaluation of responsive pathways to development impact.*
>
> *2. **Critically engage with context(s).** Consider the global representativeness of partnerships and governance systems and commit to strengthening research ecosystems in the global South.*
>
> *3. **Redress evidence hierarchies**. Incentivise intellectual leadership by Southern-based academics and civil society practitioners and engage communities throughout.*
>
> *4. **Adapt and respond**. Take an adaptive approach that is responsive to context.*
>
> *5. **Respect diversity of knowledge and skills**. Take time to explore the knowledge, skills and experience that each partner brings and consider different ways of representing research.*
>
> *6. **Commit to transparency**. Put in place a code of conduct or memorandum of understanding that commits to transparency in all aspects of the project administration and budgeting.*
>
> *7. **Invest in relationships**. Create spaces and commit funded time to establish, nurture and sustain relationships at the individual and institutional level.*
>
> *8. **Keep learning.** Reflect critically within and beyond the partnership*
>
> *(Fransman et al., 2018; summarized by Idris, 2019, pp. 20–21)*

For the full principles, see:

Fransman, J., Hall, B., Hayman, R., Narayanan P., Newman, Kate., & Tandon, R. (2018) Promoting fair and equitable research partnerships to respond to global challenges. Rethinking Research Collaborative, https://oro.open.ac.uk/57134/

Good practice examples of fair North-South research partnerships can be found on the following websites:

ReBUILD Consortium: https://www.rebuildconsortium.com/

IDRC (International Development Research Centre). Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA): https://www.cariaa.net/

Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER): https://www.usaid.gov/research/peer

The aforementioned long-term research programme based at CDE, the NCCR North-South, used a transdisciplinary approach to ensure that partnerships were fair and took into account local and endogenous knowledge. The following volume is based on ten years of experience in projects of the NCCR North-South. It looks back and reflects on lessons on partnerships and more.

Wiesmann, U., Hurni, H., NCCR North-South (Program), & Universität Bern, eds. (2011) Research for Sustainable Development: Foundations, Experiences, and Perspectives.

Transdisciplinarity and Partnership:	p. 43
Partnership and Capacity Development:	p. 73
Collaborative Knowledge Production:	p. 91
Endogenous Knowledge:	p. 119

Another NCCR North-South publication comprises a comprehensive reflection on partnerships and connected successes and challenges. It discusses many elements, such as how the NCCR North-South dealt with power asymmetries (Upreti et al., 2012, pp. 67, 110). The KFPE Guide was an important point of reference in the development of the publication.

Upreti, B. R., Zimmermann A. B., Berhanu, D., & Cissé G. (2012). Partnerships in Development-Oriented Research: Lessons Learnt and Challenges Ahead. https://doi.org/10.7892/BORIS.17584.

3.3 Being Sensitive to Conflict

What is "Conflict Sensitivity"?

Compared to the vast body of literature on fair research and ethical challenges in the general context of research, there is less scholarship on what is known as "conflict sensitivity". The available literature on conflict sensitivity often comes from one particular community – that of peacebuilding and development cooperation – and is therefore more narrowly defined.

Conflict is a normal feature of life. It is not problematic when handled constructively – otherwise, if not dealt with constructively, it can escalate and lead to violence (Paffenholz, 2005, p. 64).

In theory, there are three options for action in a conflict-affected setting:

1. *Working around conflict: conflict is seen as a negative risk factor that is to be avoided.*
2. *Working in conflict: actors have a certain awareness that development can influence conflict and try to avoid negative effects on the conflict situation (Do no harm).*
3. *Working on conflict: actors are also aware that all cooperation work can contribute to peacebuilding. They apply peace and conflict sensitive approaches to development, including pro-active peacebuilding work.*

(Paffenholz, 2005, p. 70)

It is probably obvious from having read this far in the Guide that in a fair and conflict-sensitive mode of operation, Option 1 is neither constructive nor sustainable. Conflicts should be actively addressed and included when designing or conducting research, which is why conflict sensitivity is needed in the first place. The aim of conflict sensitivity is:

> *Peace and conflict sensitivity in international cooperation is integrating the peace and conflict dimension into the policies and programs of international cooperation. It starts out from the premise that conflict itself (…) is not just an aberration but a normal and inescapable fact of life and development. Thus the goal of 'peace and conflict sensitivity' in international cooperation is to help prevent slides (back) into violent conflict and not to try to prevent conflict altogether, which is an illusory ambition (Wood 2001). In applying a peace and conflict sensitive lens to international cooperation, donors and agencies want to (a) reduce the risk that aid unintentionally contributes to conflict escalation (Do no harm) and (b) contribute directly or indirectly to peacebuilding. (Paffenholz, 2005, p. 64)*

A comprehensive guide to conflict sensitivity has been published by GSDRC, a partnership of research institutes, think-tanks, and consultancy organisations that is based at the University of Birmingham in the UK:

Haider, H., (2014). Conflict Sensitivity: Topic Guide. https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/GSDRC_CS_topic_guide.pdf

Key for research are the aforementioned "Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research" For convenience, we repeat the link here:

Bentele, U. (2020). Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3601000.

The Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub (CSC Hub) is a community of practice and a global network of organizations and individuals working on conflict-sensitive approaches in their field. Useful resources can be found on their website:

Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub: https://www.conflictsensitivityhub.net/

Furthermore, the Swiss platform for peacebuilding, KOFF, which is facilitated by swisspeace, has compiled a highly useful summary in the form of a fact sheet on conflict sensitivity:

swisspeace. (n.d.). Fact Sheet Conflict Sensitivity. https://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/KOFF/KOFF_Documents/KOFF_Factsheet_Conflictsensitivity.pdf

Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management

The Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM) approach developed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) builds on the Do No Harm concept. It takes a comprehensive and more recent approach in addressing programme management, also at the managerial level.

Similarly to the Do No Harm framework, the CSPM approach includes an analysis of connectors and dividers, but in many respects it goes beyond this. It presents three different steps for three different levels of conflict: First, if conflict is not obvious at first glance it is still crucial to do no harm; second, if a conflict is latent or tangible, but not in the core of your project, it is important to work with the CSPM Basic Approach; and finally, if you intend to directly work on the conflict, the CSPM Comprehensive Approach should be used:

> *The difference between Do No Harm and CSPM Basic and CSPM Comprehensive is best demonstrated by the minimum requirements of each approach:*
>
> - *The minimum requirement of the Do No Harm approach is to literally 'do no harm', i.e. to not support dividers throughout all sectors and activities.*
> - *The minimum requirement of the CSPM Basic approach is to not support dividers but also to support existing connectors as part of a 'normal programme' working in a context with symptoms of societal tensions on increase.*
> - *The CSPM Comprehensive approach goes beyond these minimal requirements, and seeks to actively promote or advocate connectors in the framework of crisis intervention and conflict transformation. (SDC, 2006, p. 19)*

Do No Harm was presented above (Chapter 3.1.). We specially recommend to take a closer look at the CSPM Basic:

> ***CSPM Basic:*** *The programme or individual projects are involved in conflict situations; this corresponds to working in conflict (see chapter one). The open or hidden conflict must therefore be observed as it concerns the programme; the programme attempts to reduce active conflict-relevant risks and to avoid negative conflict-aggravating effects. The programme indirectly supports existing connectors for example by encouraging the non-violent, peaceful resolution of political, social, economic or gender-specific conflicts which could possibly appear or become aggravated through the influence of the*

programme. The CSPM Basic approach does not seek to actively transform a conflict through new initiatives (= transversal aspects of violence prevention).(SDC, 2006, p. 6)

SDC. (2006). Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management CPSM. https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/fragile-kontexte/159292-cspm_EN.pdf.

A collection of documents and tools for CSPM may be found here:

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA. Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management CSPM: https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/fragile-contexts-and-prevention/preventing-recurrent-cycles-violent-conflicts/conflict-sensitive-programme-management.html.

See Chapter 4.4 for links to tools on how to analyse a conflict.

3.4 Being Prepared for Risks

Our conceptual framework in Figure 1 indicates that research endeavours may face risks of two types. Both types require preparedness and the appropriate attitudes, approaches, management tools, and financial resources.

The first type of risk refers to events that have a direct negative effect on researchers and their work. Examples are accidents, illness, internal conflicts, rejection by target groups, interference by influential actors, or restrictive policies. To help counterbalance this type of risk, management tools and precautionary measures must be incorporated into project plans and implementation.

The second type of risk refers to contextual disruptions, whether they are social (e.g. conflict) or environmental (e.g. natural hazards). In other words, changes within the research context with negative implications for the implementation of research and transformation plans. Examples are, on the one hand, violent conflicts, uprisings and riots, increased insecurity and crime, or a change in the political regime that results in suppression and control – and, on the other, natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, or pandemics. This second type of risk requires emergency plans to safeguard researchers, research infrastructure, data and research results, as well as collaborative networks. It also requires visions and plans to proceed, adapt, or halt the ongoing research endeavour. The two risk types are analytically independent of each other. However, Risk Type 2 (contextual disruptions) may increase the probability and impact of Risk Type 1 (direct risks to research and researchers).

This version of the Guide does not contain documents pertaining to the aspect of preparedness. A systematic evaluation will be conducted in a potential follow-up of this project and reflected in a later version of the Guide. Nonetheless, some important good-practice considerations and tools are presented in **Chapters 4.3** and **4.7.**

4 Tools and Good Practices in Project Implementation

This Chapter provides links to tools and good practices which give indications how you can approach some elements of the challenges and requirements presented in Chapter 2. In contrast to the previous chapter (Chapter 3), the focus lies on isolated tasks or project steps and not on comprehensive approaches or entire project cycles. As before, you'll find references/links in the green boxes.

A Word of Caution and the Need to Think Beyond Tools:

As mentioned, tools, which often represent condensed and summarized knowledge, may be extremely helpful. However, having the time and resources to apply these tools is crucial (Paffenholz, 2016). In addition, while tools and toolboxes can seem technical and neutral, they are usually not. They often belong to a specific (Western) epistemic tradition and are applied in a political context. Decisions on where to provide research and development cooperation are often political and should be viewed as such. If funding is provided for a certain region, it may be linked to conditions, benchmarks, or profit/cost considerations of development cooperation – meaning that funds are only provided to certain countries if they comply with defined conditions or measurements (see e.g. Paffenholz 2005, 68–69). It is crucial to be aware of these elements and the power dynamics they contain. Tools are useful if they are implemented in a reflective way.

4.1 Funding

As mentioned in the introduction, having sufficient funding is crucial in order to ensure that research is fair and conflict-sensitive. Funders should invest in and allow for a comprehensive planning process (Paffenholz, 2005, p. 78), including joint agenda setting (see Chapter 4.2) Additionally, funders and implementing organizations need to invest in training in order to support fairer and more conflict sensitive research – both in the Global North and the Global South (Paffenholz, 2005, p. 79).

The SCNAT's "Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research" have a section dedicated to funding. On the one hand, the guidelines specify how funding institutions can support conflict-sensitive research; on the other, they indicate important elements to consider when applying for funding. They may serve as a point of reference to include project steps for conflict sensitivity (e.g. a conflict analysis) and asking for funding for these steps. We have compiled selected recommendations as follows:

- *Require research partners to jointly set the agenda and allow for fair and equitable partnerships.*
- *Support (financially and through coaching) the creation of accompanying measures and structures for conflict sensitivity if the need arises.*

- *Allow for flexible funding in case the situation changes (e.g. change of methodology or case studies, no-cost extensions).*
- *Check funding procedures as they may vary depending on the partners and their anti-corruption regulations.*

(Bentele, 2020, p. 7)

Bentele, U. (2020). Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3601000.

Funding pp. 5–7

4.2 Joint Agenda Setting

> *Determining research questions, research approaches, and research methods jointly is a first important step towards more equity in cooperation, shared ownership and mutual trust. (Stöckli et al., 2018, sec. Principle 1)*

The process of agenda setting is crucial in building a partnership that strives to place the partners on an equal footing. Research can be effective in addressing societal challenges and in reducing power imbalances only if a project addresses issues that have a high priority for everyone involved. Key to this is providing a seat at the table for all relevant actors.

So how can we best achieve this? And who should be involved, besides the direct partners? The KFPE Guide's Principle 1 ("Set the Agenda Together"), Principle 2, ("Interact with Stakeholders"), and Question 5 ("Who to Involve) provide answers:

Stöckli, B., Wiesmann, U., & Lys, J.-A. (2018). A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships.https://scnat.ch/en/uuid/i/13beb0f7-4780-5967-a257-bd6cc3d5e424-A_Guide_for_Transboundary_Research_Partnerships_3rd_edition_-_2018.

Tools: td-net, the Network for Transdisciplinary Research, provides many useful tools on co-producing an agenda and on identifying relevant actors. Please find below a link to a list of tools structured according to project steps:

td-net. Methods and Tools for Co-Producing Knowledge: Search by Phases. https://naturalsciences.ch/co-producing-knowledge-explained/methods/phases.

A few selected examples: Nomadic concept and soft system methodology to bridge concepts, disciplinary differences, and world views:

Rossini, M. (2020) Nomadic Concepts. td-net toolbox profile (13). https://naturalsciences.ch/en/id/Bj4Ms.

Pohl, C. (2020). Soft Systems Methodology. td-net toolbox profile (7). https://naturalsciences.ch/en/id/N4EEZ.

Actor constellation and functional-dynamic stakeholder involvement to identify and shape the collaboration with stakeholders:

Pohl, C. (2020). Actor Constellation. td-net toolbox profile (2). https://naturalsciences.ch/en/id/hNrWs.

Krütli, P. (2021). Functional-Dynamic Stakeholder Involvement. td-net toolbox profile (18). https://naturalsciences.ch/en/id/dViAf.

Good practice example: Kok et al., (2017) analyse the Ghanaian–Dutch Health Research for Development Programme (HRDP) and present it as a good example for a fair, demand-driven North-South research collaboration:

Kok, M. O., Gyapong, J. O., Wolffers, I., Ofori-Adjei, O.-A., & Ruitenberg, E. J. (2017). Towards Fair and Effective North–South Collaboration: Realising a Programme for Demand-Driven and Locally Led Research. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-017-0251-3.

> *the effects of capacity strengthening tend to be constrained by a lack of funding for demand-driven research [6, 18–20]. In most low-income countries, the research funding provided by the government is barely sufficient for maintaining a basic research infrastructure and paying the salaries of local researchers. Meanwhile, international research funders continue to push their own priorities, instead of aligning with national research agendas [6, 18, 21]. Given these challenges, the approach of the HRDP provides a promising alternative. Instead of focusing on individuals, institutions or systems, the Ghanaian-Dutch Health Research for Development Programme (HRDP) set out to realise an actual programme for demand-driven and locally led research, embedded in a low-income country and supported by a North–South partnership. (Kok et al., 2017)*

The following table provides a summary of the main elements of joint agenda setting within the HRDP:

The programme was designed as an ongoing cyclical process consisting of six elements:

Setting research priorities

The agenda setting was to proceed in three steps: 1) reviewing existing research and information, 2) consulting the health sector, policy makers and NGOs about research needs, 3) interviewing community members and 4) holding a workshop to prioritise issues based on: existence of a problem, relevance, urgency, whether research was needed to solve the problem. After the first year, the agenda setting workshop would be repeated annually to review the agenda and add new themes.

Generating research proposals that fit the research priorities

The research agenda was widely disseminated and public and private research institutes, NGOs and other interested groups were invited to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) that fell within the research priorities. The funding limit was 20,000 US dollars, excluding the salaries of the researchers.

Selecting research proposals

The best LOI were selected and research teams invited to submit a full proposal (FP). An external, Ghanaian-Dutch scientific review committee reviewed the FP for scientific merit, societal relevance/utility of the research, feasibility within time, budgetary and methodological framework and ethical considerations. The final selection of proposals was done by the Joint Programme Committee based on the comments of the reviewers.

Figure: 2 Programme cycle for the Ghanaian–Dutch Health Research for Development Programme (Kok et al., 2017, p. 7)

4.3 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments include all potential risks to the research endeavour, with conflict assessments representing just one sub-element. Generally, most risk assessments include the likelihood of a risk occurring and the extent of the impact if the risk occurs. These factors are usually displayed in a matrix (Timinger, 2017, pp. 126–128).

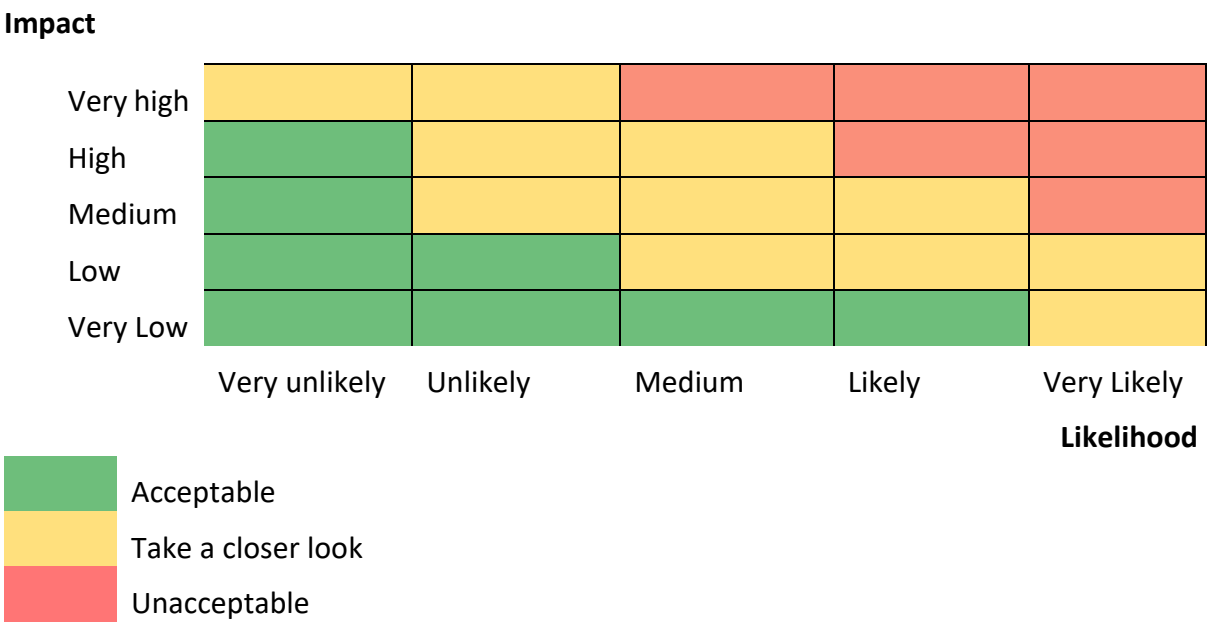

Figure 3: Risk matrix (inspired by Timinger, 2017, pp. 130–131)

Risks may be avoided, transferred, reduced, or accepted; the accepted and non-identified risks combined build the residual risk (Timinger, 2017, p. 130) It is advisable for projects to include a "contingency reserve" to address known risks, should they manifest, and a "management reserve" to address unknown risks; unacceptable risks should generally be avoided (Timinger, 2017, pp. 130–131).

In transboundary contexts, North–South contexts, and conflict-affected contexts there is a real danger of "risk dumping". It is crucial to think in terms of risk distribution – who carries what risk and why? (E.g. senior researchers often carry less risk than junior, local researchers are forgotten, PhD researchers have few resources to avoid risk etc.) (Linda Johnson & Rodrigo Mena, 2021).

The following blog provides some reflections on these issues:

> Johnson, L., & Mena, R. (2021). Risk Dumping in Field Research: Some Researchers Are Safer than Others. http://www.developmentresearch.eu/?p=1041.

The following document is to some extent based on UK law, but it provides some useful hints on risk assessment or travel and fieldwork for western researchers. However, it does not at all take into account local staff or researchers:

> Prior-Jones, M., Pinnion, J., Millet, M.-A., Bagshaw, E., Fagereng, A., & Ballinger, R. (2020). An Inclusive Risk Assessment Tool for Travel and Fieldwork. https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu2020-7678.

4.4 Analysing Conflict

A crucial element of each conflict-sensitive approach described in the literature is an analysis of the context in which the research is taking place.

A number of conflict analysis tools have been developed, most of which examine "historical background, questions regarding political, economic and social structures and processes, as well as the different positions of the conflict parties concerned. Conflict dynamics and stages, structural causes and core problems are also examined." (Zupan, 2005, p. 50).

Herbert (2017, p. 12) presents a slightly different approach in her "Conflict Analysis Topic Guide". She points out that in general, analysis takes into account five elements: actors, causes, dynamics, triggers, and scenarios.

It is important to be aware that all social contexts change very quickly; a previously "stable" and safe environment can rapidly turn into a place of conflict and insecurity, both in the Global North and in the Global South (Marks & Abdelhalim, 2018).

Numerous **toolkits** to analyse a conflict are available. The document below provides an overview of various conflict analysis tools; while some of them are aimed towards peacebuilding staff, others are intended for development agencies and their staff.

Herbert, S. (2017). Conflict Analysis: Topic Guide. https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ConflictAnalysis.pdf

Approaches and tools: pp. 12–21

A number of tools are presented in the following two documents:

Mason, S. A., & Rychard, S. (2005). Conflict Analysis Tools. https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/Conflict-Analysis-Tools.pdf.

Abozaglo, P. (2011). Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit - A Resource for Trócaire Staff. https://cafod.azurewebsites.net/ConflictSensitivityToolkit.pdf.

Methods and Examples: pp. 22–38 and Annexes pp. 42–53

A step-by-step analysis using a systems perspective including various tools can be found here:

CDA. (2016). Designing Strategic Initiatives to Impact Conflict Systems: Systems Approaches to Peacebuilding. A Resource Manual. https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Designing-Strategic-Initiatives-to-Impact-Conflict-Systems-Systems-Approaches-to-Peacebuilding-Final.pdf

Systemic Conflict Analysis: p. 19–34

SDC's Fragility, Conflict and Human Rights Unit, FCHR Net, has developed a useful toolbox for CSPM:

Fragility, Conflict and Human Rights Network. (2023). Toolbox: Conflict sensitive programme management CSPM. https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/FCHR/Pages/Toolbox/Conflict-sensitive-programme-management-CSPM.aspx

More on peace and conflict impact assessment can be found here:

Bush, K. (2009). “Aid for Peace”. A Handbook for Applying Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment. http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/pdfs/Handbook-Aid_for_Peace-2009_Dec.pdf

Steps, tools & examples: pp. 18–50

SDC has developed a comprehensive toolkit for gender and psychosocial conflicts, such as post-war trauma:

Becker, D., & Weyermann, B. (2006). Gender, Conflict Transformation & The Psychosocial Approach. SDC. https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/gender/91135-arbeitshilfe-gender-konflikttrans-psychosoz-ansatz_EN.pdf

4.5 Communication and Transparency

The aforementioned Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research point out that constant communication is crucial, meaning “before, during and after” (Bentele, 2020, p. 20). This is important in all research endeavours, but particularly so in sensitive and conflict-affected contexts. For convenience, we repeat the link here:

Bentele, U. (2020). Guidelines to Conflict Sensitive Research. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3601000.

Communication: pp. 20–21

However, researchers should bear in mind that depending on the context – and especially in the event of political violence – they must be very careful in terms of what data is communicated. Some reflections on this issue can be found in the following paper:

Parkinson, S. E. (2015). Transparency in Intensive Research on Violence: Ethical Dilemmas and Unforeseen Consequences. https://zenodo.org/record/893081

Good practice example: A study by Bastida et al. (2010) presents six principles of ethics in community-based participatory research. These principles were built on a case study of disadvantaged communities in health disparities research. However, we would argue that they apply to many other disciplines. Their focus is broad and they strongly emphasize constant communication, transparency, and accountability:

Bastida, E. M., Tseng, T.-S., McKeever, C., & Jack, L. (2010). Ethics and Community-Based Participatory Research: Perspectives from the Field. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839909352841.

See principles 2–6: pp. 4–5

4.6 Ethics in Fieldwork

CDE researcher Patrick Illien (2022) developed hints and tips for fieldwork within the FATE project, including useful elements on informed consent, research participants, safety, and basic data protection. If you need or wish to protect your data, for example if you are doing research in an autocratic state, please contact CDE's IT department, which can provide professional support.

Illien, P. (2022). Research Ethics and Safety Handout. Annex 8 to PhD Thesis. Bern, https://boris-portal.unibe.ch/handle/20.500.12422/81

The following article by is a useful and very readable introduction into research ethics with research participants. It discusses dilemmas that can arise and contains examples from different researchers:

Fujii, L. A. (2012). Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096512000819.

Cronin-Furman and Lake (2018) have created a checklist for individual researchers to consider before heading to the field, in the field, and when coming home. They focus on more ethical and responsible research practices in fragile contexts (Idris, 2019).

Cronin-Furman, K., & Lake, M. (2018). Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts. https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/1D3AA6FCCB5C50F502A99C4B317048F4/S1049096518000379a.pdf/iv-class-title-ethics-abroad-fieldwork-in-fragile-and-violent-contexts-div.pdf

Table 1

Questions for Consideration by Scholars Embarking on Field Research

Before Heading to the Field	☐ Have you done your homework? How well do you understand the political context you'll be working in? Have you reached out to others who have worked in your research site to ask about the ethical challenges they faced? How would you handle the challenges they faced if you encountered them in your own work? ☐ If your research involves vulnerable human subjects, have you thought through how necessary their firsthand testimony is for your research design? And if others have worked on similar questions, are you confident that your project adds something valuable to offset the potential harm? ☐ Who will you reach out to if you need to discuss ethical issues that arise during your fieldwork? What will you do if you feel your research is endangering someone in ways that you didn't anticipate? What ethics issues are you concerned about that were not raised in your human-subjects review? How will you deal with these? ☐ Have you decided how you will handle requests for financial or other assistance from research subjects? What types of researcher–subject relationships are you comfortable with? How will you weigh your perceived objectivity as a researcher against your ability to provide sometimes life-saving support to someone in need? Are you comfortable with the data security measures that are necessary for your project? Have you created a data security and backup plan?
In the Field	☐ Would all of the practices you are employing be considered ethical in your home country? ☐ Would you be comfortable with someone treating you or your loved ones the way you are interacting with your research subjects and partners? ☐ Are you confident that you're really getting informed consent from your participants? Have you encountered difficulties in explaining your project or your role to your research subjects? Do you need to rethink your description of your project to ensure that participants understand the information they are getting about who you are and what your research is for? ☐ Have any of your research participants asked you for medical, material, or professional assistance? Do you think these requests influenced their willingness to talk to you? Does this alter your recruitment strategy in the future or how you approach research participants going forward? Should it affect how you interpret your data? ☐ If you are working with a partner organization, are you aware of how (and what) they are communicating with research participants about your project? Do staff members appear to be more attentive to meeting your research needs than they are to the well-being of research subjects? ☐ If you are employing local staff, what factors did you consider when negotiating a rate? What are your research assistants and collaborators contributing to the project? If a colleague at your home institution were performing this role, would they deserve an author credit? If not, how else can you appropriately and adequately compensate your local colleagues' time and labor?
After Coming Home	☐ Have you ensured that your research subjects and partners are comfortable with the ways in which they are attributed and acknowledged in your work? Have you given credit where credit is due? And have you thought beyond the requirements of your IRB to consider whether additional confidentiality measures might be necessary? For example, where appropriate, have you removed dates and place names, as well as other identifiers, to ensure that individuals cannot be linked to a particular interview or sentiment? ☐ Have you made a plan to ensure that your research results are disseminated back to the affected community in ways that are meaningful or valuable to them? What would a valuable dissemination strategy look like in the context in which you are working?

Figure 4: A checklist for researchers (Cronin-Furman & Lake, 2018)

Even if fieldwork is well-prepared, there will still be aspects that are decided in the field. This is exemplified in the following quote:

> *A variety of technologies or tools will be crafted in the field. These range from dressing in ways that are acceptable; to finding the more hidden and material value in things; to having local experts on speed dial; to listening rather than interrogating; and to exiting the field when personal discomfort becomes too compromising (Marks & Abdelhalim, 2018, p. 15)*

The following book includes case studies and experiences in various contexts, mainly in Latin America but also a few from elsewhere in the world. The contexts cover a wide spectrum, ranging from sensitive urban contexts to state violence, war, and post-war settings:

Rodgers, D., Koonings, K., & Kruijt, D. (Eds). (2019). Ethnography as Risky Business: Field Research in Violent and Sensitive Contexts.

4.7 Safety

We cannot give comprehensive safety and security indications as this would go beyond the scope of this document. In Switzerland, the employer has a duty of care to ensure the safety of its staff[1]:

> *Under the Swiss legal framework an employer is obliged to take all necessary and feasible measures to safeguard the health, safety and integrity of his employees (Art. 328 OR). This includes 4 overarching duties:*
> • *Duty of Information*
> • *Duty of Prevention*
> • *Duty of Monitoring*
> • *Duty of Intervention*
>
> *(EISF & cinfo, n.d.)*

A module for employers to assess their maturity in providing safety and security risk management processes has been jointly developed by the Swiss Security Network, the Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF, formerly EISF), and the Swiss Centre of Competence for International Cooperation (cinfo).

cinfo. (2019). Duty of Care under Swiss Law. https://www.cinfo.ch/en/duty-of-care.

A tool for assessment:

Cinfo. (n.d.) Duty of Care Maturity Model. http://dutyofcare.cinfo.ch/.

Reports:

Fairbanks, A., Swiss Security Network, cinfo, & EISF. (2018). Duty of Care under Swiss Law - How to Improve Your Safety and Security Risk Management Processes. https://www.cinfo.ch/sites/default/files/documents/2018_doc_study.pdf

EADI, the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes, runs a blog entitled “Debating Development Research”. The following article stresses the importance of

1. *Safety guidelines*
2. *Safety training*
3. *Strong safety and security support structures*
4. *Good insurance cover*

(Linda Johnson & Rodrigo Mena, 2021)

[1] While the study cinfo bases its duty of care model on (Fairbanks et al., 2018) mainly refers to the OR and therefore private law, Chavanne (2012, pp. 8, 11) notes that they very similar duties apply under public law

Johnson, L., & Mena, R. (2021, September 20). Risk Dumping in Field Research: Some Researchers Are Safer than Others. http://www.developmentresearch.eu/?p=1041.

The International Institute of Social Studies, an international graduate school based in The Hague, has developed security guidelines covering many relevant elements. It provides an overview of what to consider, but obviously it would need to be adapted to the specific contexts of a research institute and it is no substitute for points 2 to 4 mentioned above:

Hilhorst, D., Hodgson, L., Jansen, B, & Mena, R. (2016) . Security Guidelines for Field Researchers in Complex, Remote and Hazardous Places. Erasmus University Rotterdam. https://ihsa.info/content/uploads/2019/04/Security-Guidelines-English-version.pdf.

4.8 Publishing and Dissemination

Researchers must publish and disseminate their findings in forms that enable potential users to find them, to understand them, and to use them. As the KPFE Guide (Stöckli et al., 2018) states, this is

> *not an easy task, in particular not for transdisciplinary and transboundary research which generally interacts with numerous different target groups: research findings must first be translated into different 'formats and languages' appropriate to the respective target audience, and secondly, they must be directed towards effective communication channels. This requires careful selection of journals, media, conferences, and platforms, and, if need be, support from facilitators or brokers. (Stöckli et al., 2018, sec. Principle 8)*

The KFPE Guide lists three main challenges that researchers need to address while disseminating their findings:

- *To counter the prevailing view that recognition in an international journal is the main or even only way to disseminate results.*
- *To resist output pressure in the short term and to insist on disseminating results beyond Northern libraries.*
- *To translate results into formats and languages that are appropriate to the different target audiences.*

(Stöckli et al., 2018, sec. Principle 8)

Other important considerations that need to be made before and while disseminating findings concern:

> ***Sharing data and networks***
>
> *(…) Practical experience shows that in North-South partnerships, as a rule, knowledge and information are not distributed one-sidedly: both sides have information and relationships that are crucial for the success of their joint research project. Negotiating the «give and take» can lead to a win-win situation. A system of incentives is needed in*

support of the following formula: those who provide transparency and share information receive more in return. (Stöckli et al., 2018, sec. Principle 7)

Credit where credit is due

After a collaboration is done (or maybe even when it hasn't worked out) you have acquired knowledge, insights, perhaps new ideas. You contacted those scientists to learn from them, so if you use their research, cite them to ensure they get the credit. Look thoroughly for research conducted in the country and cite it even (or especially) in global synthetic, trend-forecasting papers: do the courtesy of acknowledging the pioneers. Bottom-up approaches and local knowledge solve real problems. (Armenteras, 2021, p. 1194)

The KFPE Guide recommends that you clarify as much as possible in advance, "assess potential profits and merits of research activities and agree in advance on a fair allocation to all partners (e.g. authorship, publications, patent rights)" and "determine property-rights holders in publicly funded research projects" (Stöckli et al., 2018, sec. Principle 9)

Applying results

Ideally, research results are implemented. This means they have to be prepared such that the people the results are meant to benefit can actually access them – and, just as importantly – understand them. This may mean working with partners, brokers, institutions, and facilitators, preferably involving them early on in the process.

This means that the phase of disseminating scientific results must be followed by a phase of implementation and application […]. A newly-bred crop variety, for example, has to find its way to producers and be accepted by them […]. In any case, effective implementation of research results means speaking the language of the users and presenting the results in such a way that they have a 'meaning' for users. (Stöckli et al., 2018, sec. Principle 10)

Stöckli, B., Wiesmann, U., & Lys, J.-A. (2018). A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships. Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE). https://scnat.ch/en/uuid/i/13beb0f7-4780-5967-a257-bd6cc3d5e424-A_Guide_for_Transboundary_Research_Partnerships_3rd_edition_-_2018

See Principles 7–10

Armenteras, D. (2021). Guidelines for healthy global scientific collaborations. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-021-01496-y

Reflecting on what has worked well in a programme and what has not, is crucial. This might seem obvious. But it isn't always straightforward, especially in fragile contexts.

Many of the challenges faced in conducting programme evaluation in fragile contexts are similar to the challenges of doing research in such contexts. There are therefore considerable overlaps in the approaches to conducting research and carrying out programme evaluation.

The following document by Idris (2019) summarizes what the literature delivers in terms of monitoring and evaluation in fragile contexts. It places an emphasis on data collection and monitoring.

Idris, I. (2019). Doing research in fragile contexts. https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Doing-Research-in-Fragile-Contexts-Idris-2019.pdf

Data collection and monitoring: pp. 13–18

Idris cites the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which points out that monitoring and evaluation in dangerous environments presents specific challenges, and therefore…

> *…conducting sound M&E means locating 'good enough' data so that it is possible to draw useful conclusions about programme impact. Where travel is constrained, other options may be available for data collection, including drawing on secondary sources, changing the geographical sample for monitoring purposes, or identifying proxies (e.g. representatives able to speak for minority groups in conflict-affected areas, parents of child soldiers. (DFID, 2010, p. 10)*

DFID. (March 2010). Working Effectively in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Situations: Briefing Paper I: Monitoring and Evaluation. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67695/building-peaceful-states-I.pdf.

As an example, Idris gives the Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (HMEP) which was described as

> *an ambitious attempt to apply an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework to all development and stabilisation interventions in Helmand [Afghanistan] to assess whether the international community is successfully boosting the capacity and legitimacy of the Afghanistan Government and undermining insurgents (DFID, 2012; cited by Idris, 2019, p. 17)*

Reference List

Armenteras, D. (2021). Guidelines for healthy global scientific collaborations. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, *5*(9), Article 9. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-021-01496-y

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