itad

Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts

Understanding what works and why in insecure environments

Results in development

Overview

Itad believes that efforts to improve the lives of those living in conflict need to be underpinned by more robust evidence of what works, for whom and why.

To address this, we design and deliver independent evaluations and monitoring systems to measure and strengthen results for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Global poverty is becoming increasingly concentrated in fragile states, where conflict, crisis and fragility ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable in these places lag behind the rest of the world in achieving development outcomes. Development cooperation in fragile states needs to be based on an understanding of what works and why, however this is often hampered by data scarcity, insecurity and a lack of investment in evidence.

Itad has been working in challenging environments for nearly 30 years. Our specialism in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) enables us to work with donor agencies to help address these challenges through:

> generating more robust data and evidence-based findings and recommendations for use by programmes and decision-makers;

> using a range of evaluation methodologies to understand which programmes have an impact, and for whom

> capturing the voices and needs of vulnerable populations;

> ensuring that programming does not exacerbate conflict or inadvertently do harm.

We work in conflict-affected and post-conflict environments globally, in particular Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. We monitor and evaluate programmes dealing with conflict prevention, peace building and state building, security and justice, disaster risk reduction and resilience building, and humanitarian assistance. Our work is currently focused on the following three core areas:

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Evaluation

We conduct independent evaluations of programmes, strategies and organisations in fragile contexts. We use a wide range of evaluation designs and methods – process, theory-based, realist synthesis and (quasi-) experimental – to answer questions about effectiveness, impact, contribution, attribution, coordination, accountability and value for money.

Monitoring systems

We design and deliver monitoring and learning systems for programmes working in conflict, working closely with programme managers to develop practical approaches to measuring results, maximising value for money, and generating robust evidence to drive programme decisions.

Training

We deliver external training and seminars on the challenges of measuring results and conducting evaluations in fragile states, with a particular focus on conflict and peacebuilding. We also provide capacity building support to organisations and programme delivery teams in M&E system design, value for money assessment and strategy development.

OUR PROJECTS

Supporting implementation of Finland's Fragile States Guidelines

Through a range of case studies covering Afghanistan, Palestinian Territories, Ethiopia and Western Balkans, we assessed how Finnish development cooperation in fragile states supports the drivers of peace and development, and contributes to peace and development outcomes for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Our evaluation focused on understanding the theory behind Finland's engagement in each context, which we tested as part of the fieldwork through a contribution analysis approach. Our findings led to a number of recommendations to support the implementation of Finland's new fragile states guidelines. These include the need for Finland to develop conflict-sensitive strategies through more consistent use of conflict and political economy analysis; to use theories of change to underpin country strategy development; and to develop remote management strategies for working in deteriorating security environments.

> To find out more about this project visit:
> **www.itad.com/reports/evaluation-of-peace-and-development-in-finlands-development-cooperation**

We believe that efforts to improve the lives of those living in conflict need to be underpinned by more robust evidence of what works, for whom and why

Learning lessons to improve Denmark's approach to humanitarian assistance

Denmark's Strategy for Humanitarian Action focuses on six strategic directions, including addressing vulnerability, mitigating the impact of climate-related disasters, and protecting conflict-affected populations. Itad conducted an evaluation of the Strategy with the purpose of documenting results and learning lessons of Denmark's approach to inform the development of a new strategy.

Our work focused on a number of critical questions, including: the relevance of the strategy in light of the changing humanitarian context; the results and lessons learnt from Denmark's approach of relying on partnerships as the key implementation modality; and the learning derived from attempts to link humanitarian and development objectives in specific contexts. We answered these questions through two in-depth case studies of the Danish response to the crises in Syria and South Sudan, as well as a desk-based study of the response in Afghanistan. The findings were brought together in a synthesis report, which set out recommendations for the new strategy.

Our evaluation was based on a participatory design. This enabled stakeholders and decision-makers in Danida to engage with the evaluation team throughout the process and contribute to the evaluation design and proposed areas of enquiry. It also ensured a strong sense of ownership of the evaluation's findings and recommendations thus maximizing the utility of the final report to Danida and its partners.

> To find out more about this project visit:
> **www.itad.com/projects/evaluation-of-the-strategy-for-danish-humanitarian-action-2010-2015**

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Independent Monitoring of DFID programmes in Yemen (Ta'zeez)

We are working with British Council and Interaction (Yemen) to undertake independent monitoring and verification of DFID's programmes in Yemen. The purpose of our work is to independently verify the implementation and outputs of DFID-funded projects across the four pillars of humanitarian assistance, governance, wealth creation and PHV (poverty, hunger and vulnerability). We are doing this through observation, interviews with programme staff and focus group discussions with beneficiary communities. We are also undertaking a number of in-depth research studies on areas where there are major gaps in evidence, including a comparative study of approaches to cash transfers, and a comparative assessment of Government and NGO service delivery mechanisms.

> To find out more about this project visit:
> **www.itad.com/projects/independent-monitoring-of-dfid-programmes-in-yemen-tazeez**

Evaluating DFID's Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme

In response to the recent Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR), DFID is making major investments in improving the evidence base for humanitarian interventions. Four areas for investment have been prioritised: providing better information about risk; identifying which humanitarian interventions work best; building national capacity to respond to disasters; and ensuring that evidence is available and informs decision-making.

Itad is conducting an evaluation to assess the delivery of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy and to find out the extent to which DFID has fulfilled the Government's commitment in the HERR response. It is also aimed at helping DFID to understand the outcome and impact of the strategy on its own practice, as well as policy and practice in the humanitarian sector more broadly. Our evaluation design is centred on a theory of change that sets out how DFID believes, through its investment in generating research evidence in the humanitarian sector, it can support better evidence-based decisions at country level, as well as wider changes in the humanitarian system. We are testing this theory of change through eight impact-oriented case studies where we are assessing the extent to which these projects have contributed to change.

> To find out more about this project visit:
> **www.itad.com/projects/dfid-evaluation-of-the-humanitarian-innovation-evidence-strategy**

Evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities in Southern Sudan

In January 2011 citizens of Southern Sudan voted in an historic referendum which saw the creation of the world's newest independent state. Itad conducted an evaluation in the lead up to the referendum and examined the international community's efforts to support conflict mitigation and peacebuilding, as well as to provide immediate peace dividends to the Southern Sudanese people in the period following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005.

By assessing the extent of progress made and pointing out the factors driving success or failure, the evaluation aimed to provide an input into ongoing discussions, future policies and strategies on how to possibly improve the relevance, effectiveness and impact of international engagement in peacebuilding processes in Southern Sudan.

Using methods tried and tested in fragile environments, we specialise in designing and delivering independent evaluations and monitoring systems to measure and strengthen results for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Our evaluation approach

The evaluation covered the main donor programmes in the country, as well as a broad spectrum of activities in governance, justice and local peacebuilding – all of which were designed to have an influence in reducing violence as well as strengthening the cultural and institutional resilience necessary for managing conflict without violence.

Our evaluation design was based on an initial conflict analysis, which was used to assess the linkages between the different drivers and dynamics of conflict and peace; as well as a policy analysis to explore the extent to which conflict-sensitive approaches had been adopted by donors. This was followed by extensive field-level data collection across seven states in Southern Sudan.

Our findings

Our evaluation concluded that donor contributions to conflict prevention and peacebuilding were only partially successful. This was largely because donor policies and strategies did not fully take into account the key drivers of violence. This led to an overemphasis of basic services and a relative neglect of security, policing and the rule of law, all of which are essential in state formation. We also found that several of the pooled funds had been highly inefficient. By contrast, some bilateral interventions had provided the most effective support towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding, based on frequent monitoring and, most importantly, a sufficient number and continuity of staff on the ground.

> To find out more about this project visit:
> **www.itad.com/reports/aiding-the-peace-a-multi-donor-evaluation-of-support-to-con%ef%ac%82ict-prevention-and-peacebuilding-activities-in-southern-sudan-2005-2010**

Image © Jon Bennett

Other projects

> Evaluation of DFID's humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

> Independent evaluation of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH)

> Impact evaluation of a DFID peace and community safety project in Somalia and Somaliland

> Evaluation of the EU country strategy in Yemen

> Evaluation of Norway's Training for Peace Programme (TfP)

> Design and implementation of DFID South Sudan's Access to Justice Programme (ATJP)

> M&E support to strengthening civil society in Afghanistan – DFID's Tawanmandi programme

> M&E support to the Somaliland Business Fund

> Synthesis evaluation of DFID country programmes in fragile states

> Technical support to the 2009 and 2011 Fragile States Principles surveys

> Technical assistance to the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

> Evaluation of Danish engagement in Somalia

> Pilot-testing the OECD-DAC guidelines for evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities within DFID country programmes

> Annual seminar at PRDU, University of York: The challenges of monitoring and evaluating in fragile states