Working in Fragile States:

Lessons for Policy and Practice

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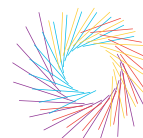Palladium
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About the CDR

The Centre for Development Results (CDR) is an organisation that supports companies that deliver UK aid funded programmes and have a shared aspiration to improve impact, value for money and accountability in their work.

We work to build partnerships with DfID, cross-government funds and other UK aid and development sector stakeholders to raise awareness of the role and impact companies have and to help shape UK development policy.

Working in Fragile States:
Lessons for Policy and Practice

Foreword

It truly is a disgrace that, as we approach the end of the second decade of the 21st century, so many children across the world continue to live in extreme poverty, are unable to attend school, live in fear of avoidable health conditions or violence, or find their lives regularly torn apart by severe environmental events that we now have the knowledge and technology to mitigate.

The UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development give us a framework in which to tackle these long standing challenges in a more comprehensive and ambitious way than ever before. At their heart is a commitment to leave no one behind. But the truth is that those who are most likely to be left behind, and those who are furthest behind at the moment, are living in conflict affected and fragile states. Development in those states must be significantly improved and increased, and more sustainable in the long term. Otherwise, the gap between those living in conflict zones and politically fragile countries where economies and services are unable to meet the needs of the people, and everyone else, will widen even further.

The Global Goals give us a direction and a framework for improving development in these most difficult of environments. Economic growth, good governance and an end to discrimination: building domestic revenue and resilience to extreme weather events; developing strong but inclusive and independent institutions; enhancing the capacity of local partners, civic society and national government. All of these are complex and those involved – the governments and communities in the countries concerned, the donors and international organisations, the NGOs and companies and local partners delivering development, need to be able to learn lessons from past mistakes and current successes.

This collection by the Centre for Development Results helps build that base of experience and knowledge and, given the urgency of the task in front of us, I hope it provokes discussion, debate and, of course, more sustainable peaceful development.

Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale

Introduction

Global trends are concentrating extreme poverty in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). By 2030, more than 60% of extreme poverty will be in fragile states – both middle- and low-income countries with the vast majority in sub-saharan Africa. From politically fragile countries like Nigeria and Pakistan to the protracted conflicts in Sudan and Somalia, the need to develop solutions that address the diverse and underlying drivers of fragility in these countries has become more pressing than ever.

As the need for development interventions in FCAS grows, donor agencies must adapt their strategies and programmes to reflect this new global reality. Over the next decade we will need to see a significant shift in focus from stable low-income countries to low- and middle-income fragile countries – balancing with it the political and media pressures of justifying spend in these insecure environment to taxpayers at home. The UK government has already made some steps towards signalling its intent to increasing its work in FCAS, including a commitment to allocating 50% of DFID's budget in fragile states and regions. The growth of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) recognises the often fluid nature between security, stability and conflict programming and the need to involve a variety of actors in building stability in these countries. The government has also recognised the crucial importance of addressing conflict and stability – through its support for Goal 16 of the UN's sustainability development goals on peace and stability.

Alongside this shift in donor focus, development practitioners must play a leading role in sharing lessons learned and expertise gained from delivering programmes in FCAS. This will help strengthen understanding of what works and partnerships to deliver impactful development outcomes.

The Centre for Development Results (CDR) supports and represents companies that deliver UK aid funded programmes. Our shared aspiration is to improve impact, value for money and accountability in all DFID's work and play a proactive role in raising industry standards.

This collection of short essays aims to contribute to DFID's knowledge sharing agenda and raise awareness of the role and impact that companies have in delivering UK aid funded programmes. The essays cover a range of topics and geographical areas, in both emergency situations and long-term fragile contexts. All of them demonstrate the knowledge and expertise that our members have acquired. Some focus on the practicalities of managing and implementing programmes while others consider more specialised topics, such as effective delivery of essential services, monitoring and evaluation or promoting economic development. All of them seek to improve future policy and programme delivery.

While the essays acknowledge that work in FCAS is highly context specific and often politicised, a number of common themes emerge. Many of the essays highlight the importance of preparedness and investing in long-term approaches, embedding sustainability in programme design. Many also highlight the need for flexibility and adaptability in the face of rapid change, allowing for programmes to overcome difficulties such as accessing remote areas and navigating complex political environments, including those in which both formal and informal institutions are influential. Most of the essays praise local partners for the essential value they provide in designing and delivering programmes, and highlight the importance of building capacity of these local partners to enable them to respond to changes on the ground. Finally, the collection explores the potential of innovative approaches such as using new technologies and methodologies to empower citizens for delivering better and more sustainable outcomes.

By compiling the expertise and lessons from our members, this publication aims to contribute to the increasingly important debate around effective programming in FCAS. It also supports the drive within the development sector to achieve the UN Sustainable Development goals by driving better outcomes and leaving no-one behind, no matter where in the world they live.

Jessica Toale
Executive Director
Centre for Development Results
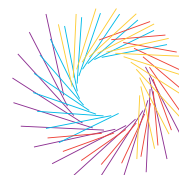
Evaluating the sustainability of complex interventions: the case of police reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

DANIELLE STEIN, RESEARCH, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING CONSULTANT, PALLADIUM

The issue of how best to evaluate the sustainability of change processes has become increasingly relevant against the rising pressure from donors for programmes to achieve and demonstrate results. Though 'sustainability' is a core component of OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance, issues of 'effectiveness', 'efficiency', and 'impact' are often prioritised in evaluations – particularly, in fragile contexts which are often data poor, where timelines are short, and donor priorities can change quickly. However, the highly political and potentially volatile nature of work in these contexts requires specific attention to issues of sustainability.

This essay examines these challenges by evaluating a police reform programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), funded by UK aid from the UK government. The programme intended to assist the DRC government lay the foundations for the re-establishment of the rule of law by supporting the creation of accountable and service-oriented security and justice institutions, which are able to improve safety, security and access to justice for citizens. Palladium completed the original impact evaluation in 2015 and highlighted a number of significant programme achievements. However, because the evaluation was completed just after the end of programme implementation, evaluators also noted that the sustainability of these achievements would merit further investigation.

In line with this observation, the Department for International Development (DFID) commissioned Palladium to carry out an additional analysis, two years after programme completion, between February and June 2017 through the Evidence, Analysis and Coordination Programme (EACP). An explicit political economy analysis approach was used to address the question of sustainability – investigating the motivations of key actors related to police reform processes, the relationships between these actors and their relative importance in the reform process. Drawing on a mix of primary and secondary data, the study focused on understanding both the formal and informal institutions governing these actors, and the extent to which the programme had succeeded in either navigating or shifting the conditions that had impeded progress in the past.

Study findings revealed that though the programme led to improvements in the public perceptions of safety and security, its overreliance on technical approaches to problems with deeply embedded political roots reduced the long-term sustainability of these achievements. For instance, a lack of Congolese state budgetary allocation to police reform processes was identified as a challenge in continuing reform processes at the national level. Although the budget line items suggested a commitment to reform, the inability of key ministries to execute these allocations is symptomatic of broader weaknesses in public financial management, which has serious implications for a range of national institutions, including the police.

These weaknesses may also highlight strong, informal incentives against taking concrete steps toward meaningful reforms, that might threaten the status-quo. These incentives are compounded by highly centralised decision-making and particularly low-budget transparency. Though the programme did seek to support macro-level reforms, the difficulty in addressing political factors ultimately reduced overall programme sustainability.

The study identified similar dynamics that challenged the sustainability of change within the police at the local level. Most significant among these was the issue of salaries. Though police officers generally expected to receive salaries of $100/month, many officers reportedly had not received any 'official payments' for multiple months, despite

Programme designers should assess practical barriers to long-lasting institutional reform at the outset, including availability of funds and macro-level public financial management processes.

the introduction of electronic payments during the programme period. This practical challenge was compounded by obligations commonly referred to as 'rapportage', requiring junior officers to provide funds to senior officers. Failure to make these payments could reportedly result in officers being locked away for a period of days or receiving less desirable roles or transfers. These real financial pressures incentivised a return to the corrupt behavior police officers exhibited before participating in training and other activities implemented by the programme.

Similarly, findings suggested that a significant proportion of police cadres trained in community policing by the programme were being transferred and no longer worked in those roles. This attrition highlighted a lack of support by police superiors for the approach, as well as the real need for trained officers elsewhere in the police. Desertions also played a role, where trained officers sought more lucrative roles in other police cadres or private security forces.

These findings provide a number of lessons for those seeking to evaluate and design security and justice programming. Most crucially, summative evaluations which aim to answer questions of sustainability must widen their evaluative lens. This means not only assessing the programme's intended and unintended results upon completion, but also including a consideration of the political economy aspects of change as a key indicator of the likelihood of sustainability.

From a programme design perspective, the findings suggest that it would be useful to incorporate a political orientation that examines a programme's winners and losers, major successes and bottlenecks, and the broader institutional context as an integral component of a larger technocratic approach. This may contribute to better achieving results within the programme timeframe which are likely to be sustained by local actors after programme closure. This is particularly important in fragile contexts, where 'rules of the game' tend to be informal and where the technical and political often become blurred.

Doing so requires an understanding of the formal and informal institutions that relate to the change process, as well as how these institutions impact key actors in a programme and its broader change process. Though understanding informal institutions is particularly important in fragile contexts, tracing the flow of funds, at a micro and macro level, can provide a concrete insight into practical factors that likely shape motivations.

Finally, programme designers should assess practical barriers to long-lasting institutional reform at the outset, including availability of funds and macro-level public financial management processes. They should work to achieve strong partner government buy-in at the highest level from programme outset through implementation. Concrete commitments from local stakeholders, both financial and non-financial, will further support change processes and ensure programme objectives remain in line with the priorities of key stakeholders.

A health systems approach to emergency response: laboratory strengthening during the Ebola epidemic

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INTRODUCTION

The Ebola outbreak laid bare the fragility of the health system in Sierra Leone, resulting in more than 4,000 deaths between May 2014 and January 2016[1], and 3,600 indirect deaths among mothers and babies[2]. The epidemic exacerbated chronic weaknesses in the health and laboratory system[3], which was not sufficiently equipped or skilled to diagnose Ebola. This resulted in cases remaining undiagnosed for long periods and sub-optimal isolation of patients, which hindered control of the epidemic. More broadly, the availability of services was reduced, thus contributing to increased mortality[4], as health workers were concerned about the risk of exposure to the virus, and many laboratories were unable to provide routine basic diagnostic services as staff were diverted to the epidemic response.

CONTEXT

The announcement of the Ebola outbreak on 23rd March 2014 by the World Health Organisation (WHO) brought about a large international response with many new organisations working in the country. Mobile molecular 'Ebola laboratories' and systems for transporting and testing blood and biological samples were established by international agencies. Insufficient coordination and planning in the initial stages resulted in a duplication of efforts. As a result, some laboratories were unable to cope with the volume of samples, whereas others were operating below capacity. Ebola test results were sometimes taking several days to be completed and communicated to the attending clinicians and health facilities. This resulted in delays in diagnosing patients, thus preventing the timely isolation of those that contracted Ebola and contributing to wastage of scarce resources in Emergency Treatment Centres. This led to a quick increase in the number of cases and an increased threat to both national and international health security.

The epidemic brought renewed attention to the need to strengthen laboratory systems, an essential yet often overlooked component of International Health Regulations and health systems strengthening initiatives. The Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) took strategic steps to ensure timely diagnosis of Ebola, while contributing to building a more resilient laboratory system through a project implemented by Options.

INTERVENTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

To ensure that Ebola test results were communicated on time, a key intervention was the placement of Laboratory Liaison Officers (LLOs) at each Ebola laboratory. The LLOs recorded the movement of Ebola samples and communicated test results immediately and directly to the clinicians at health facilities, ensuring timely isolation and management of patients. The LLOs also facilitated direct communication with the specimen transport system and burial teams. The availability of data from Ebola testing laboratories enabled better partner coordination, joined-up problem solving and evidence-informed public health decision-making by MoHS and its partners. It also provided the foundation for the development of a laboratory information system. These interventions reduced the turnaround time for Ebola sample testing from more than 48 hours to below 24 hours within two months.

In June 2015, a nationwide capacity assessment of the laboratory system was commissioned by the MoHS. The assessment confirmed the major weaknesses of the laboratory system and identified priorities for addressing these. The assessment showed how laboratory workers were performing tasks without standardised training or qualifications, shortages of consumables and equipment and inconsistent supply of water and electricity. Only 13% of the 184 laboratories were able to deliver eight basic tests that were identified as essential[5]. The

In Sierra Leone, DFID supported interventions were vital in reducing the turnaround time for Ebola sample testing from more than 48 hours to below 24 hours within two months.

assessment also costed priority activities required to strengthen the laboratory system and advised MoHS on priorities for improving laboratory services that would help early detection of disease, mitigating the threat of potential future epidemics.

To prioritise and track progress made by the laboratory strengthening efforts that followed, laboratory score cards were established which measured laboratory capacity on a quarterly basis using colour coding to indicate the capacity status at laboratories in district hospitals. The scorecard data showed that between October 2015 and December 2016, laboratory capacity improved at eleven out of a total of fourteen laboratory hospitals.

LESSONS

The high number of deaths and morbidity from Ebola calls for building more resilient health systems that are able to contain the shocks from widespread epidemics. Emergency preparedness procedures must be established to ensure the supply of essential resources and services during times of crises. DFID and Options implemented this emergency laboratory intervention whilst planning for strengthening health systems in parallel.

This project demonstrated the crucial need to invest in reliable health data systems for timely problem solving and public health decision-making. This is crucial to maintaining a fully functional and responsive health system.

The challenges in the response highlight the importance of joined-up and well-coordinated approaches to crises. Emergency responses may inadvertently overlook and therefore further weaken national health systems. A sudden influx of new organisations could lead to the weakening of the stewardship role of the MoHS. Partners with country experience can help 'new' implementing partners or responders to navigate national systems and actors to ensure that approaches are responding to the local context and dynamics of the health system[6]. DFID and Options were uniquely placed to do this, primarily due to the long-standing working relationships built over several years.

CONCLUSIONS

The West African Ebola crisis had the potential to be a global pandemic. Countries with weak health systems require support to achieve international health regulations for global health security. The UK government played an important role in mitigating the Ebola threat and highlighting lessons for controlling future epidemics through its support to Sierra Leone's MoHS. It is critical that laboratory systems are strengthened with adequate resources and manpower and that they are an integral component of health systems approaches to emergencies that build on and strengthen existing foundations for sustainable national response.

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[2] Sochas L, Channon AR. & Nam SL. (2017): Counting indirect crisis-related deaths in the context of a low-resilience health system: the case of maternal and neonatal health during the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone. Health Policy and Planning, Volume 32, Issue suppl_3, 1 November 2017, Pages iii32–iii39, https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czx108, accessed 08 December 2017

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[6] K Blanchet ; SL Nam; B Ramalingam; F Pozo-Martin (2017) Governance and Capacity to Manage Resilience of Health Systems: Towards a New Conceptual Framework. International Journal of Health Policy and Management. Article 2, Volume 6, Issue 8, August 2017, Page 431-435

Effective delivery of education programmes in South Sudan

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PATRICIA SCHWERZEL, PROJECT DIRECTOR, GESS**

M M

**CAMBRIDGE
EDUCATION**

LOCALISED AND FLEXIBLE IS THE FORMULA FOR RESILIENCE

In South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, over half of the 12-million population live beneath the poverty line. The country faces huge practical challenges in rebuilding, following decades of civil war and renewed conflict in recent years. The DFID-funded Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) and EU-funded IMPACT programmes were set up to support education and to counter the impact of economic crisis, with the aim of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

The programmes have successfully improved the level and breadth of education in South Sudan, despite the recent resumption of conflict. Landmark achievements since 2013 include putting cash directly in the hands of more than 200,000 girls; the near real-time monitoring system based on mobile phone technology; school grants that have raised the quality of learning environment; and the radio shows to address cultural taboos against girls' education, including outreach support in remote villages.

However, these headline innovations would have proved impossible without the right structure beneath them and the right people powering them. Put simply, if the programmes had chosen a rigid, centralised approach that failed to work closely with the Ministry of Education, they never would have made such progress.

From the start, the designers for both projects recognised the benefits of recruiting 'State Anchors', a network of organisations, charities and agencies that had been in South Sudan during the civil war and will be there for future years. These actors provided a ready modus operandi for making things happen. They employ staff from local communities who know the language, understand the context and are trusted. For example, if there are queries about

the eligibility of a particular girl for a cash transfer, they will know of the families and easily provide verification. For an outsider from Juba, for example, that's not a given.

In times of displacement – which is now such a common part of life in conflict-affected South Sudan – the State Anchors are already embedded within communities and can move with them. When school communities are displaced, the programme's staff can assist with setting up temporary learning centres, help schools qualify for grants and enable girls to continue their education – something which is usually of low priority during emergencies. Girls can immediately qualify for cash transfers. This provides continuity for both schools and pupils and financial support for families.

State Anchors also implement the programmes' wider work in empowering parents, school management councils and community decision-makers to take ownership of their children's education. They are also able to inform, monitor and evaluate progress, allowing the programmes to effectively adapt to the challenges of the conflict. Their involvement is already proving sustainable. Although 30% of the population is displaced, the number of girls in school is still increasing.

TOP DOWN, AS WELL AS GRASSROOTS

Cambridge Education, with its parent company Mott MacDonald, has been involved in South Sudan for more than 50 years and was one of the first organisations on the ground following the ceasefire in 2007. Its people have built up long-standing working relationships with the Ministry of Education, both at national and state levels. The Ministry's ownership of the programmes is high, with officials chairing monthly technical meetings. At local levels, the support of government officials for programme

The final lesson is that change rarely happens without good people leading it. They are the glue on programmes like these.

activities has provided a degree of protection for staff and school communities.

The school grants were a good example of how partnership can work. The Ministry paid for the primary schools, while the programme paid for secondary schools. GESS's people worked hand in hand with officials to develop policies and procedures, with both parties sharing challenges, targets and objectives, such as how to get money to schools and how to make them accountable.

The results in South Sudan have been remarkable, especially given the level of conflict. DFID, as donor for GESS, deserves credit for being willing to listen and take recommendations on how to adapt the programme as the situation evolved. There was clearly a need for emergency relief, but also a shared belief that support for long-term education development needed to continue at the same time.

The original designs for both programmes were conflict-sensitive and allowed for flexibility, which has proved critical. For example, GESS was able to waive a sub-qualification for school grants that said recipients must have a bank account. When it became apparent that many schools in conflict-affected areas didn't have bank accounts, the State Anchors stepped in. They were able to deliver money in hand and guarantee its accountability.

Scenario planning and the design of responsive interim strategies have also allowed the GESS programme to continue operating throughout the crisis. This has included brief periods of remote management from Kampala and Nairobi, when the December 2013 and the July 2016 outbreak of conflict led to some staff being relocated.

The final lesson is that change rarely happens without good people leading it. They are the glue

on programmes like these. The GESS network, for example, comprises over 200 committed and resilient South Sudanese, ably led by Akuja de Garang, who was recognised for her efforts to promote girls' education in her country of birth with an MBE in 2017. There is a genuine thirst for education to turn the situation round in South Sudan, and a shared determination to maximise the return from available resources.

THE PROGRAMMES IN NUMBERS

- Over 200,000 girls in upper primary and secondary schools have received cash payments

- Over 650,000 girls and 850,000 boys have benefitted from the programme's school grants and quality education improvements

- 2 million adults (15+) have been reached with girls' education radio outputs

- 3,400 schools have received capitation grants and are being supported with community-based school improvement

- 30,000 teachers are receiving an incentive to help them to continue working in the schools, despite the country's economic struggles and challenges around distributing cash

Lessons learned in supporting local peacebuilding with small scale infrastructure

JASON MATUS, SENIOR SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN COORDINATOR, AECOM

In the heavily militarized and contested borderland between Sudan and South Sudan, local infrastructure can support a variety of humanitarian, social, economic, political, and peacebuilding functions.

There is a history of cyclical violence between Sudanese and South Sudanese communities along the border, and a long tradition of annual meetings between community leaders to agree on arrangements for grazing livestock, trading basic household goods, and compensating losses from any violent conflicts occurring in the previous year. Though the local leadership is experienced at negotiating agreements, these arrangements are fragile beyond the short term. Success is often affected by the residual impacts of decades of civil war, which has left behind a heavily armed and traumatized society. Climatic changes, which have reduced pasture in Sudan and extended the dry season in South Sudan, have exacerbated competition for land and water and added to the challenges community leaders face in annual negotiations.

Beyond the technical challenges of working in an area with extreme variations in seasonal rainfall, in one of the poorest, least developed and most insecure communities in the world, infrastructure programs must be sensitive to this complex and changing context. AECOM has been contracted by USAID in Sudan and South Sudan since 2007 and has learned crucial lessons in supporting locally led peace building, including through local infrastructure projects.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

At the outset of any program, it is important to understand the context: the actors, their interests, the spillover effects of localized conflicts, and the potential implications of program interventions. The Sudan and South Sudan borderlands comprise an area where local conflict easily escalates to violence with national and international implications, drawing in forces already positioned along both sides of the contested border.

DEFINING SUCCESS

It is also important to define success and the factors that support or hinder progress. Success links and reinforces the benefits of peace with tangible and felt results. These benefits address the mutual needs of various communities, including access to land and water for livestock grazing or to services and infrastructure to conduct trade.

IDENTIFYING THE RISKS

Implementation of peace and migration agreements can also lead to conflict. Along the contested border, there is a particular risk relating to territorial integrity and identity, issues which have the potential to escalate nationally. While anticipating triggers to violence is a challenge, they have typically been linked to local disputes over water and land with political or economic actors often exploiting and manipulating these local disputes. For example, nomadic communities require constant access to pasture and water. Violence could escalate if communities fear their rights to graze across the international border are threatened. However, violence can be mitigated by supporting and building upon the strong capacity and traditional mechanisms for negotiation that already exist in these communities.

USING EXTERNAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Balancing the feasible against the risk of failure is a constant consideration when working to resolve conflict. Funding a peacebuilding dialogue with no resources to implement the recommendations or constructing a water point that cannot function undermines the broader aims of such interventions, doing more harm than good. A well-suited approach adds value and reduces risks in providing social and economic support that consolidates a locally led peace process.

Designing, building and managing small-scale infrastructure in a complex, fluid, and conflict-prone environment requires a deep understanding of the context and the implications of program interventions. Success is achieved by incentivizing peace and assisting with political transition.
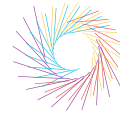
In addition, internationally mediated arrangements, such as the Cooperation Agreement between Sudan and South Sudan provide a solid framework for interventions. A UN peacekeeping mechanism is helping provide security. These agreements help frame and coordinate efforts at peacebuilding.

SUPPORTING LOCALLY-LED PROCESSES

In the Northern Bahr el Ghazal region of South Sudan that borders Sudan, AECOM through its implementation of USAID's Viable Support to Transition and Stability (VISTAS) program, has provided a range of support to annual community negotiations, including crucial infrastructure. Ahead of seasonal migration to South Sudan community leaders meet. The program has supported broad-based community consultations to inform and strengthen the meeting. When the two communities get together, the program helped bring and accommodate more people, which expanded representation of women and young people in the talks. VISTAS also provided third-party facilitation and an improved venue when needed.

Once the communities agreed on the rules governing migration and trade, the USAID-funded VISTAS program helped the community leaders share those agreements with people in remote settlements and cattle camps, as well as consulting with these communities on the outcomes. It also helped strengthen the mechanisms to govern the agreements by providing a high-frequency radio network along the border for better communications and early warningof conflict risks , as well as building, equipping and training local government offices and traditional courts to respond quickly and fairly.

When communities made joint recommendations on establishing key infrastructure interventions – such as establishing a cold chain and joint vaccination campaign for livestock, creating joint water points,

building a chamber of commerce and creating an electrical grid in markets – the program reinforced these economic and physical benefits with more social interaction, including joint sports and cultural events and media activities. To protect these local arrangements from external interference, the program brought national-level civil leaders to visit the areas where agreements have been successful, enhancing the leaders' awareness and support of these agreements.

The program has also worked with national-level mediators and multilateral bodies including the African Union to utilize these local arrangements to inform the agreements and policies between Sudan and South Sudan.

Today, AECOM / VISTAS is exploring the impact of trauma on communities and how it fuels their sense of victimization and desire for revenge. The VISTAS trauma awareness program is being integrated with support for peace and migration dialogues to help communities break the cycle of violence and to promote healing and reconciliation.

THE LESSONS

Designing, building and managing small-scale infrastructure in a complex, fluid, and conflict-prone environment requires a deep understanding of the context and the implications of program interventions. Success is achieved by incentivizing peace and assisting with political transition. This means linking and supporting local peace actors to better represent their constituents, strengthening dialogue and negotiation capacities, supporting the mechanisms that govern agreements, and providing tangible physical and social benefits for peace.

Expanding financial services in fragile markets[1]

AMALIA JOHNSSON, HEAD OF FINANCIAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT, NATHAN ASSOCIATES

BUDDHIKA SAMARASINGHE, DIRECTOR, NATHAN ASSOCIATES

NATHAN

Trusted for Excellence

Global poverty has been significantly reduced over the past two decades, but extreme poverty is alarmingly prevalent in fragile states. The 50 countries on the OECD's fragile states list are home to 43% of the global population and by 2030 it is estimated that over half of the world's poor will be living in these states. Investment in the creation of jobs is essential to spur economic growth, rebuild infrastructure and create a sense of hope. The financial sector is key to this investment, but often it is in these states where the financial sector is chronically under-developed and experiences significant failures. This not only hinders the financial sector's ability to ensure income in times of crisis or shock, but also significantly weakens its ability to assist people out of poverty in the longer term.

The paradox is that it is in fragile states – where having a safe place to save or a reliable remittance procedure is crucial – that populations struggle the most to access even basic financial services. In fragile states in Africa only 14% of adults have access to a bank account, compared to 23% in other states across the continent (World Bank, 2013). Furthermore, women in these states are 32% less likely than their male counterparts to have a formal bank account, compared to 19% in other developing economies.

The drivers of fragility - political conflict, violence, economic crises, climate change - vary considerably, however a common challenge in these contexts is that of 'thin' or missing markets. To effectively address issues around financial inclusion both within and between fragile states, we must first understand how best to expand financial services given this constraint. Supply and demand are often dominated by a few actors, infrastructure is limited, and regulatory frameworks are either immature, overly restrictive, or often both. For financial services, these underlying challenges often manifest themselves

through cash shortages, extreme credit rationing, damaged financial infrastructure and large gaps in access to basic consumer data. Nathan has built a portfolio of strategies to address these challenges, focusing on key barriers to growth and applying a set of overarching principles to support the successful expansion of financial services in fragile contexts.

Programme design should be based on that which already exists and we know that as fragility increases, individuals and enterprises become more reliant on social and business networks for financing, due to greater trust, proximity and lower administrative requirements. Building on this principle, Nathan is currently supporting a large, multinational bank in Zimbabwe to down-scale lending to women and youth-led micro small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs). Operating in a declining economy with long-running political risk, persistent cash shortages and most recently a regime change, means that the limited new lending that has taken place has gone to "safer" and larger corporates. By leveraging the corporates' position, often at the end of a long agribusiness value chain, Nathan has designed a corporate-centric value chain financing model which uses risk guarantees and targeted technical assistance to enable potential MSME suppliers to receive much needed working and investment capital without compromising the risk processes of the bank.

Innovation is a key enabler in thin markets. Risk-sharing mechanisms such as challenge funds can offer affordable products in contexts where macroeconomic indicators or the financial infrastructure are unfavourable. By leveraging the principles of the challenge fund instrument it is possible to test and scale locally driven business models to expand the supply of financial products in the market. In Bangladesh, Nathan is testing a pilot model which embeds private insurance with a

The drivers of fragility - political conflict, violence, economic crises, climate change - vary considerably, however a common challenge in these contexts is that of 'thin' or missing markets.

package of inputs for over 10,000 poorer producers working in flood-prone areas of the country. By introducing this package farmers graduate to more commercial activities, driving incomes and productivity.

Assisting the facilitation of agent banking networks and low cost mobile money tools to reach consumers in rural areas is also integral when faced with underdeveloped delivery channels. A World Bank study (2014) found that 11% of adults in fragile contexts report having used a mobile phone to pay bills or send/receive money in the past 12 months, compared with 4% in the rest of the developing world. Leveraging this, Nathan has supported two major banks to enter the rural Bangladeshi market and paired it with both education and a robust customer awareness programme to ensure that 15,000 previously unbanked MSMEs and consumers can benefit from banking services and access working capital loans.

As fragility increases, long-term solutions are essential. In these contexts, financial institutions become excessively risk-averse and as a result, long-term financial transactions are replaced by short-term credit, relationship-based finance and cash transactions. In Nigeria, Nathan supported the up-scaling of traditional microfinance previously focused on survival loans to serve the needs of the enterprising poor, as well as the downscaling of commercial banks' services to improve access to finance for MSMEs. This resulted in the creation of four commercially independent micro-finance banks which delivered USD $20 million of longer term loans to over 30,000 MSME businesses.

Facilitating change in environments where trust in institutions (financial and governmental) is low, takes time and programme timelines should reflect this.

The preconditions for expanding financial services in fragile markets are often inadequate, and a certain level of failure must be built into a programme to allow for transformative ideas and processes to take root. In volatile markets which are continuously evolving, the development of these ideas takes time and traditional 3-5 year timeframes can be insufficient. An evaluation of the access to finance component of Nathan's MSME Nigeria project highlighted that its 5-year lifespan was too short to allow the viability of new business models to be fully tested and it recommended a 7-year lifespan for similar projects.

Financial inclusion has expanded considerably over the last decade. The next ten years will test this rate of progress, as the gap between the financially included and excluded widens, and as services are extended to increasingly vulnerable groups. Facilitating locally driven innovation will be crucial in this environment, as will the introduction of new business models and products that are better tailored to instability. Programmes aimed specifically at supporting financial systems in fragile contexts will need to effectively mitigate uncertainty and addresses a variety of structural barriers if they are to support households and small businesses to access the services they need to build resilience and secure income, and ultimately invest for growth.

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[1] Whilst there is no set definition for fragility in this paper, fragile markets are characterised by poor governance, weak capacity and institutions, high risk of conflict and insecurity, and 'thin' or missing markets for services.

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Market-driven cash-for-work programmes show promise in Somalia—and beyond?

JAMES NAUGHTON, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, DAI

The Somali peninsula suffered a devastating drought in the first half of 2017, leading to widespread crop failures and livestock losses that have compromised food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates livestock losses at 30 percent of the national stock. In the Somali context, losing crops and livestock means losing livelihood assets. Rural people struggling to sustain their livelihoods are more vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups and are increasingly moving to the cities, exerting growing pressure on limited urban infrastructure.

Typically, the response to this crisis would consist of humanitarian measures such as cash transfers or commodity supplies, but a DFID and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) programme is bringing a market lens to the challenge that may be applicable to fragile environments beyond Somalia.

The Promoting Inclusive Markets in Somalia (PIMS) programme works in all three Somali regions. PIMS is a market development programme using the 'making markets work for the poor' approach (M4P), combined with a cash-for-work (CfW) component to address infrastructure constraints. To limit the danger that many Somalis face from the drought, PIMS has dramatically scaled up its CfW workstream.

Fundamental to PIMS' CfW programming is its long-term focus. CfW programmes, traditionally viewed as a way of providing assistance to an emergency-affected population, have typically paid little attention to sustainability. PIMS, by contrast, puts sustainability at the heart of CfW programming, selecting interventions based on their sustainability, impact, and response (SIR).

Analysing a situation through the SIR framework, we determine whether a proposed intervention offers: sustainability, meaning the programming will deliver lasting infrastructure improvements that can be managed by the community; impact, meaning it will generate significant economic benefit for that community; and response, meaning it provides an appropriate emergency response for the population under duress. Without this focus on sustainability, CfW programming is inherently limited in its impact.

PIMS' M4P analysts determined that canal rehabilitation would, in Somalia's case, be the most promising means of delivering sustainable impact with immediate benefits for the community. Although it had never been a priority for the programme, canal renovation became a focal point as PIMS adapted to the deteriorating conditions. Concentrated in the Shabelle Valley, it has opened up additional land for production of sesame and other crops by improving irrigation during a vital growing season. At the same time, participants learned how to repair basic infrastructure and earned cash.

All CfW programming was community-led in the planning stage. PIMS also established community-led local management committees and provided training on sustainability, conflict management, and the proper use and management of canals, so that the community can maintain its new assets after PIMS exits. As of November 2017, these productive assets amounted to 87 kilometers of canals.

Feedback from beneficiaries and lead firms indicates they have contributed to substantially increased local crop yields and improved food security, and a large-scale survey is underway to complement these anecdotal reports with quantitative data.

A 2014 study in Somalia showed the main driver for individuals joining Al-Shabaab was economic – 50 percent of interviewees were unemployed, 49 percent employed, and 1 percent students.

Unlike responses that provide services for free, PIMS' adaptive CfW initiative will minimize market distortion and allow market development after the intervention has ended.

Through November, the canal rehab had generated 198,500 CfW days, with US$595,500 earned by CfW participants. The programme has designed three more projects that will see an additional 131 km of canals rehabilitated—plus 27 culverts and 26 water intake gates—entailing 140,000 workdays and injecting US$750,000 into the local economy. Notably, PIMS required all participating workers to register for mobile money, thereby introducing many of these rural people to modern financial services for the first time.

PIMS' injection of liquidity came at a moment of critically constrained cash flow in the local economy and helped minimise price fluctuations at a time of worsening food insecurity. Delivering on future canal projects offers a form of "pre-insurance" against future droughts. Given the increasing likelihood of a 'La Niña' event and the associated climate variation in East Africa, such pre-emptive measures hold added importance.

CfW is not a traditional method of drought response. However, unlike cash transfer programmes, it can deliver rapid liquidity to stricken communities, medium-term local revenue generation, and long-term economic growth and infrastructure assets. CfW projects therefore have potential in resilience programming more broadly.

Generalisation is always problematic, but in certain FCAS, economic growth has shown to be more crucial than political reform in preventing conflict recurrence. A 2014 study in Somalia[1] showed the

main driver for individuals joining Al-Shabaab was economic – 50 percent of interviewees were unemployed, 49 percent employed, and 1 percent students. Among the employed, earnings ranged from US$150-$500 per month, with limited prospects for wage growth. Given the lack of household surveys in Somalia, national data is scarce, but recent estimates put the unemployment rate at 47 percent overall, and 67 percent among young people[2].

The unemployment crisis—and hence the potential for radicalization—may be even worse in urban Somalia. Mogadishu, for example, had a 66 percent unemployment rate in 2015[3]. In this context, it bears reiterating that recurrent drought is a key driver of migration, as seen in 2017. Internal migration has placed significant pressure on Somalia's urban centers. People who have lost their rural livelihoods are traveling to cities in search of jobs, but with limited opportunities available and a growing influx of job-seekers, these individuals may find themselves even more vulnerable, especially if they are young. To prevent urban migration in times of rural uncertainty, rapid responses are needed.

Particularly in fragile states like Somalia, humanitarian and economic development programmes are converging in DFID's thinking, and implementers should be addressing these dual objectives with mutually supportive methods. In reflecting on PIMS' combination of resilience programming with a market systems methodology—the SIR framework informed by M4P analysis—we hope to be part of the debate on how CfW initiatives can tackle emergency issues while also delivering economic growth and social stability.

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[3] Fragile Cities, Igarape institute, http://fragilecities.igarape.org.br/

ICF working in fragile states - challenges and solutions around managing a multiple themed monitoring and evaluation portfolio in Iraq

NORA LONCSAR, SENIOR CONSULTANT, ICF
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THE PROJECT

Since 2011, ICF has monitored and evaluated the European Union's development co-operation project portfolio in Iraq. The projects cover a wide range of thematic areas, including: human rights, governance, education, economic development, rule of law and assistance to refugees.

The purpose is to provide independent assessment of the European Commission's assistance to Iraq. The service provides accountability and supports continual improvement of current projects and future programming.

Over the last six years, the operating context in Iraq has changed significantly, becoming more complex and challenging. ICF commenced the project in relatively stable and improving security conditions in 2011, which deteriorated considerably in June 2014 with the rise of Daesh[1]. More recently, the country has been experiencing political instability following the Kurdish referendum.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Geographical Access

Gaining access to some locations is difficult. The security challenges in Iraq are considerable and there are additional obstacles including obtaining permission from local governors for travel.

Monitoring and evaluation require different approaches to address these particular challenges. For monitoring, we work with a strong local partner that has an extended network of national consultants, many of whom are resident in remote locations. We chose to have groups of field monitors working within the geographical areas they are familiar with, instead of having them travel over large areas. Data from the field monitors is then compiled by dedicated monitoring coordinators working remotely.

For evaluations, we incorporate international experts as well as locals and so have more stringent security arrangements. Working with a reliable security advisory firm with networks in Iraq is absolutely critical. Each project site is vetted by our advisors early in the preparatory stage and their advice informs the sampling methodology. In Baghdad, where visits to the Red Zone are restricted to 2-3 people per mission, stakeholders are asked to meet the team in the International Zone. The cost of their escort within the International Zone is built into the mission budget. The team also supplement visits with phone interviews and surveys to consult with additional stakeholders.

ACCESS TO DATA AND STAKEHOLDERS

In areas with limited access, very little official data has been or could have been collected during the height of conflict. Additionally, ICF found that the monitoring capacity of local implementing organisations was often weak. Even where data does exist, it can be difficult to get access to stakeholders.

For monitoring, ICF and our partners have invested in nurturing strong relationships with implementing partners and beneficiaries, being open and transparent about what the information is for and how it will be used.

When evaluating, we design the methodology with the assumption that data is limited. This means that we typically choose less ambitious and academic methodologies than in more stable environments. However, they are more grounded in the operational realities of Iraq.

MANAGING UNPREDICTABILITY

Unpredictable timings and changes in access to some locations give rise to significant challenges while working in Iraq. Unknown timeframes for visas and volatile political and security conditions make work planning demanding. For example, a recent evaluation mission was postponed by several months as a consequence of the Kurdish referendum.

Build a long-term relationship with a good security advisory firm, who can get to know your operational needs, and ensure your budget for security is based on real costs.

ICF has learned to plan for unpredictability. Our mission planning frameworks have been extended from three months to six. During team recruitment, we are candid about the potential for delays and we have standardised protocols for logistics which we can deploy at short notice. We mobilise teams rapidly once all the permissions are in place.

When working in high or very high risk locations, the evaluation team is accompanied by a trauma medic or Close Protection Officer from our corporate security advisory firm. This person is also responsible for liaison with the local security providers and monitoring the mission budget allocated for security.

REMOTE MANAGEMENT

ICF works through partners and has no permanent presence in Iraq. Finding the right partner is the main solution to this challenge, supplemented by clarity over roles and responsibilities. Building on local partner strengths and showing how working together adds value is a critical part of our relationship. This includes solid communications systems and feedback mechanisms and a strong quality assurance system, incorporating editing in London and further feedback locally, with a deeper review of evaluation reports. Overall, we have built a strong and consistent reporting style, which is critical for the client.

ADAPTING TO CHANGING CLIENT NEEDS

Client needs and personnel change over time. Over the course of this contract, new trends and thinking around technical approaches emerged. One specific challenge was moving from an activity-based monitoring framework to a results-based approach.

ICF embraced the opportunity to adapt. We revised the monitoring framework and reporting templates

and invested in enhanced training for local monitoring teams. This involved working closely with our local partner to open up to new ways of working and required us to provide increased support and mentoring in the early days of the transition.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 'Stay local' and contract as much locally as possible. Make the most of local knowledge and capacities and maximise the opportunity to build capacity in local firms.

- Invest in your team. Find people who can invest in the contract long-term, who are comfortable with ambiguity and complexity and are experienced working in fragile states.

- Build a long-term relationship with a good security advisory firm, who can get to know your operational needs, and ensure your budget for security is based on real costs.

- Build appropriate evaluation designs and manage expectations. We found that light-touch evaluations are better suited to FCAS than complex, academic exercises.

- Ensure continuity within the management team to help build a good relationship with local partners and keep in touch with an ever-changing context.

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Adaptive programming in South Sudan

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NATALIE FORCIER, FOUNDER, FORCIER CONSULTING

'Adaptive programming offers a real opportunity for those involved in delivering development interventions to fine-tune them or scale them up based on timely feedback on what works. The challenge will be to do that rigorously, based on evidence we have confidence in and thereby move away from relying on hunches.' - Richard Edwards

'Particularly in an environment like South Sudan, adaptive management is not optional. It's the required way of working.' - Natalie Forcier

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South Sudan suffers development challenges left by decades of war. The internal conflict, which broke out in 2013, has resulted in famine, claims of ethnic cleansing, widespread violence and attacks on aid workers.

The 2014-2020 UK aid-funded Humanitarian and Resilience Programme in South Sudan (HARISS) is providing food, shelter and access to water and health services to millions. To encourage learning from HARISS, the UK government also launched the Evidence and Learning Facility in South Sudan (ELFSS), which assesses the impact of UK humanitarian support and helps DFID South Sudan and its implementing partners improve aid delivery. ELFSS is implemented by a team of partners led by IMC Worldwide.

AN ADAPTIVE APPROACH: VITAL FOR CHANGING CONTEXTS LIKE SOUTH SUDAN

Contexts like South Sudan can change unpredictably and quickly, so aid programming can be heavily affected by external influences. Cookie-cutter and 'business as usual' linear approaches struggle. Increasingly, donors such as DFID and USAID are adopting more responsive approaches to aid implementation that prioritise learning, adaptation

and ongoing improvement. What is known as adaptive management is not new or confined to aid programming, but it is increasingly seen as a valuable approach to development challenges that are often highly complex and rapidly evolving.

The ELFSS programme has identified key learning and evaluation questions to explore over the remainder of the HARISS programme. These include the benefits of flexible funding mechanisms instead of more traditional humanitarian and resilience funding. HARISS implementing partners, including UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations, have the possibility to plan further ahead with flexible multi-year grants and to shift programming quickly to respond to changing contexts, such as a sudden declaration of famine in an area they may not have been working in previously. This innovative approach seems successful to date, but ELFSS will further explore the complexities involved.

More adaptive approaches are characterised by ongoing response to monitoring and feedback loops that enable better long-term understanding and impact. Primary features are rapid testing of ideas that can be reflected and improved upon and systematised iterative decision-making. It emphasises data, evidence, analysis and corresponding adjustments of direction to lead to better outcomes. This adaptation is particularly important in unstable environments.

VALUE OF THE RIGHT TEAM

As adaptive programming emphasises testing, learning and adaptation, the workflow is different to more traditional programming, so team members must share willingness to collaborate differently. One of IMC's frequent collaborators and current ELFSS partner is Forcier Consulting, a research, monitoring and evaluation firm operating across Africa and the Middle East. They are responsible for much of ELFSS

Genuine adaptive programming creates a system that accelerates reflection and learning and strengthens what people do during implementation.

data collection. To Forcier, adaptive management is not optional in South Sudan. It is the way of working. They share this belief with IMC Worldwide and legitimately enjoy the shared adaptable approach to very challenging contexts.

CULTURE OF TESTING IDEAS AND ACCELERATING CHANGE

For some, adaptive programming is seen primarily as good monitoring, evaluation and review processes that allow teams to adjust to new knowledge. But it goes further than producing the periodic evaluation report. Genuine adaptive programming creates a system that accelerates reflection and learning and strengthens what people do during implementation. ELFSS carries out regular third-party monitoring and commissions independent evaluations. However, its real strength lies in the focus on learning and supporting partners who work in challenging environments to adapt, as they deliver HARISS over three years. ELFSS will commission studies to provide evidence on specific thematic areas identified by HARISS implementers and provide support to project implementation following best international practice, where possible in an active conflict and humanitarian crisis setting.

Teams like ELFSS, which act as evidence and learning components for a larger programme, can generally achieve better long-term impact when closely communicating with implementers. Close proximity of the ELFSS team to the HARISS programme has helped to embed a culture of testing ideas, looking for evidence and learning from it.

IMPORTANCE OF TECH, DATA AND UP-TO-DATE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

A challenge for evaluation and learning is to produce accurate findings that can support adaptation within the timescale of a programme. However, increasing opportunities presented

by technology, as well as corresponding new information and knowledge management methods, are enabling teams to gather data and learn from it faster.

The ELFSS team is piloting an online knowledge management platform, which will act as a data repository, as well as facilitate data analysis and graphic representation. Its aim is to give DFID and HARISS implementers access to all programme data. While electronic data collection is not always possible in South Sudan for security reasons, HARISS implementers are working to improve the quality of the data they collect and strengthen their monitoring systems. The ELFSS online platform should simplify this and allow data to be more readily accessible for decision-making purposes.

Ultimately, teams need partners who can gather this data, use up-to-date technology where possible, analyse it and convert it to useful learning opportunities, so that it can shape practices and policies. ELFSS uses a range of partners with diverse skills to gather data, conduct research and produce knowledge.

TO 2020

We have seen a distinct shift towards more adaptive approaches where donors value research, data, evaluation and learning. But there is still a long way to go.

More adaptive approaches to development challenges, in which evidence and learning are a regular part of the discussion, helps to foster an environment in which donors and implementers can talk more openly, not just about what is working, but what is not working. That environment helps all of us to learn and adapt, so that we can help more people faster and more responsively.

Adaptive programming in Afghanistan: a technological solution

RITOBAAN ROY, SENIOR EVALUATION MANAGER AND CARD-F INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW PROJECT DIRECTOR

For most Afghan farmers, poppy cultivation is the only livelihood available. Lack of agricultural value chain skills and poor links to markets make it difficult for these farmers to switch to cultivating something other than poppy.

To create incentives that encourage farmers to stop growing poppy, and as part of a rural livelihoods strategy, DFID is working with multiple Afghan ministries to implement the Comprehensive Agricultural and Rural Development Facility (CARD-F). This programme supports Afghan farmers to earn an income through legal agricultural value chains without growing poppy.

In 2016, DFID appointed Coffey as the Independent Technical Reviewer (ITR) for CARD-F. With security worsening in the country, DFID needed expert eyes on the ground to assess whether the UK aid being channelled through the programme is delivering results.

The resources that programmes like CARD-F bring to impoverished and sometimes inaccessible communities in Afghanistan can affect the political dynamics within the agencies that deliver the programme and its recipients. The need for clear and transparent evidence of what is and isn't working therefore assumes an urgency that is perhaps unlike any other country in which DFID operates. It is not enough to just monitor the supply chain. It is also important to collect evidence in an impartial and clear way so that the facts speak for themselves in aid decision-making.

To add to this challenge, Coffey staff are unable to travel beyond Kabul due to security restrictions, and local enumerator teams have to track down a beneficiary population that is highly mobile – moving from location to location to survive a harsh economic environment that is aggravated by conflict. This means that unlike other countries, where Coffey's experts travel to project locations for verification, in CARD-F, Coffey teams need to depend on Afghan teams for data and information on the programme and work 'blind' from the data that is available.

Technology is used to address these obstacles. We deploy the Coffey Spatial Mobile Solution (Cosmos) to run monthly surveys of programme grantees across all provinces in the country. Cosmos was developed by Coffey's European IT team, following demand from evaluation specialists working in challenging and conflict-affected environments around the world for an agile, reliable and secure platform through which they could gather and analyse their information. Enumerators are given smartphones with the Cosmos app installed and equipped to work in areas with low or no internet connectivity. Every data point, be it a response to a survey question or a photograph of a greenhouse, is tagged with GIS metadata. When enumerators get back to a regional field office, they synchronise their phones online and data is uploaded to Coffey's servers.

At Coffey, teams then plot the data on an online map to both monitor progress of the survey and analyse the grantee data that comes in from enumerators. GPS-tracked data allows real-time monitoring of survey quality. Coffey home office staff can track whether enumerator teams are meeting their verification targets or not, are actually travelling to their assigned locations, and are taking the time to record complete responses to every question in the survey questionnaire. Business

Technology today enables monitoring and verification data from the field to be presented to donors and counterpart government officials almost immediately.

Intelligence (BI) software is used to analyse survey data and identify patterns and trends. This data is then fed directly into a web-based Performance Monitoring Dashboard, which communicates results to government and CARD-F donors, as well as agriculture sector ministries, in real time.

As well as analysing programme progress, Cosmos helps to ensure the quality of local survey sub-contractors, specifically the quality of the information collected and monitoring the time it takes to conduct interviews, and helps DFID to achieve value for money.

Cosmos allows Coffey to deploy teams on the ground in different ways to suit the project context. For CARD-F, Coffey splits enumerators into three teams, with one team 'sweeping' survey sample locations with a slight lag to verify whether surveys have been completed and whether grantees were correctly identified in the original survey. As each team generates its own GPS coordinates and can take geo-tagged photographs of each grantee or their nearest family member, it is possible to match and compare across these datasets to verify individuals' identity. Coupled with information from neighbours and other community residents picked up by the enumerators as they do their rounds, this is a powerful means of identity verification and helps DFID ensure that programme grants are delivered to the right people.

Photographs provide clear evidence of progress as well. Coffey's work on CARD-F includes monitoring the quality and progress of construction of shared rural assets such as canals, rural 'feeder' roads and reservoirs. By sending in field engineers with Cosmos-enabled phones, Coffey has built a

database of geo-tagged photographs of every infrastructure asset funded by CARD-F. Coupled with technical assessments of the quality of construction, Coffey developed a traffic light system to grade these projects, which has helped DFID talk to the relevant Afghan ministries, highlight areas that need their attention and enable them to follow up on remedial action.

Technology today enables monitoring and verification data from the field to be presented to donors and counterpart government officials almost immediately. As an Independent Technical Reviewer of CARD-F, our data is used as the basis of discussions in monthly programme board meetings, which involve representatives not only from donors like DFID and DANIDA, but also all programme implementing agencies and contractors. Where urgent issues are identified, the programme board uses this data to directly contact and address the matter with the concerned Minister.

Many programmes like CARD-F rest on a complex web of factors relating to conflict, politics, local government capacity, tribe and ethnic affiliation. While technology cannot 'solve' the development puzzle, it can bring the complexity to light and aid better decision making.

Development unchained:
The future of peer-to-peer systems
in international development

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VIRGINIA ALONZO-NAVARRO, CONSULTANT, AKTEK

"The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed" - W Gibson

Development actors acknowledge the need to innovate in response to the complex challenges that beset a state in conflict, to improve governance and seed trust between citizen and state[1]. However, we struggle to leverage and scale new technologies when designing stabilisation and development programmes, projects and tools.

Enter decentralised Peer-to-Peer (P2P) systems: an unprecedented innovation at a global scale. P2P systems can create new markets and governance models that are more transparent, inclusive and resilient. These technologies are already being tested by innovators, but their potential is untapped and the impact and risks are poorly understood. P2P technologies can fundamentally disrupt the way entire generations come out of poverty and conflict.

In this essay, we explore early efforts to test P2P systems that address the causes and human impact of conflict. In the context of an ostensible trend towards hyper-local political identities, we argue that these technologies can either bolster, or be the death knell of fledgling Westphalian state systems riven by poor governance and weak institutions. We urge donors to support their early adoption in FCAS to avoid the further breakdown of state systems.

P2P systems are decentralised networks, which allow two actors to exchange information, data or value, without third-party mediation. Transactions are governed by users through smart contracts, where the rules of exchange are written directly into lines of code. These are secured and made transparent by a series of mathematical proofs, which remove need for 'trust' between users. Networks can be powered by the internet with global implications, or exist locally, allowing localised groups to exchange goods and services. These systems place users squarely in control of data they wish to keep and who might access data[2].

Blockchain is an in vogue technology which follows P2P protocols. Once information is entered in the blockchain, it is immutable, and it can always be retrieved, thus increasing transparency.

While the causes of conflict are complex, structural or deliberate mismanagement leave citizens vulnerable to a range of shocks. P2P technologies are being tested to reduce the impact of instability and conflict by enabling access to financial and other services, such as proof of identity and documentation services such as land registration, voting and file storage[3].

In 2016 ID2020 was pioneered by the UN as a public-private partnership to provide refugees and individuals without documents with a legal identity[4], retrievable with only a password and an internet connection. If successful, ID2020 will help millions prove who they are and where they are from. The project is enabled through a software tool that takes in biometric data and combines it with the blockchain to create a permanent personal identity[5].

In Zimbabwe, Nigeria, South Africa and Venezuela, Bitcoin – the flagship decentralised blockchain-based currency – has become an alternative to unstable financial markets[6]. In Venezuela, Bitcoin's popularity followed hyperinflation, and enabled citizens to afford basic services such as food, sanitation and electricity[7].

MIT and ten major utility companies are now involved in an initiative to provide energy to populations across Africa through blockchain-enabled solar micro-grid solutions[8]. They envisage creating a local energy market, where households that generate excess energy through renewables can sell it to peers through a bidding system that encourages more competitive prices than its main-grid alternative. This benefits rural areas without access to electricity and allows those affected by structural violence in conflict states to access resources directly, unmediated by the state.

P2P technology removes the state as the arbiter between citizen and public services, which

Governments need to engage with emerging technologies to carry their systems into the future. If they do not, they may be forced to step aside and give way to modernising currents, wherever they sit on the political spectrum.
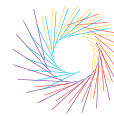
circumvents broken or weak state service structures. However, emerging technologies will pose a particular threat to already-weak and conflict-affected governments. This threat is reinforced by a pull towards hyper-local identities in conflict states, including decentralisation (i.e. Iraq, Somalia) and state fracture (i.e. Syria). In the former, technologies can be used by non-state groups to sidestep or undermine central government or set up parallel systems. In the latter, parallel systems may proliferate due to the multiplicity of local actors involved.

Unless governments engage with these technologies, they will be threatened by them[9]. The Bitcoin revolution in Argentina sparked the creation of DemocracyOS[10], a platform for voting and political debate, which was then taken up by Tunisian citizens to vote on their constitution[11]. In October 2017, when the Spanish government attempted to halt Catalonia's independence referendum by blocking information systems on the very day of the vote[12], its authorities turned to IPFS. IPFS is a P2P-based file sharing protocol, able to store and retrieve files in a way that is permanent by design. It cannot be altered or accessed by a third-party and the IPFS client can be downloaded and decrypted by relevant individuals. The success was partial. The authors encrypted the data, but they did not take precautions to remain anonymous. Therefore, Spain has since identified and pressed charges against at least ten individuals who were involved[13].

As understanding and usage of these technologies matures, so will the strength of the systems. In the future, networks will improve the use of P2P systems to challenge the status-quo when it fails to deliver. Nascent political entities will be able to run P2P technologies to effectively provide services traditionally provided by government including running elections, managing land records, and decentralising currencies. In some countries, this may benefit the public by spurring competition among low-legitimate authorities to provide more attractive, cheaper and more effective services than their central government[14]. However, it may also add impetus to the fragmentation of states and incite conflict between central and provincial authorities.

Governments need to engage with emerging technologies to carry their systems into the future. If they do not, they may be forced to step aside and give way to modernising currents, wherever they sit on the political spectrum. In a context where the most highly advanced western states struggle to understand, scale and mainstream these technologies, less developed countries have an even poorer chance against more organised, maverick networks. Donors will therefore need to proactively engage with governments to encourage them to leverage technologies to create an infrastructure that is more efficient, transparent and equitable as a means to improve governance in FCAS.

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