



WHAT Conflict Sensitivity?

This Action Guide seeks to guide DCA staff and partners on how to work in conflict-affected contexts. Conflict Sensitivity is based on the Do No Harm concept, borrowed from the medical profession (e.g. Hippocratic oath) and applied by aid actors since the 1990s. In DCA Conflict Sensitivity as a term is currently used interchangeably with 'Do No Harm'.

DCA's overall definition of Conflict Sensitivity is the following:

Conflict Sensitivity is understood by DCA as a process which strives to improve how to operate in conflict-affected contexts so that we can 'Do No Harm', maximise positive impact ('Do Some Good'), and where possible support durable peacebuilding.

Conflict Sensitivity functions to increase effectiveness by informing and guiding the provision of assistance or resources in conflict-prone settings. It does this primarily by identifying opportunities to improve assistance, as well as highlight unintended consequences that may contribute to violence.

Key characteristics and link to the SDGs:

Conflict Sensitivity & Do No Harm has evolved to include the following characteristics:

- Conflict Sensitivity & Do No Harm are often used interchangeably.
- Gender is integral. Consequently Conflict Sensitivity is also referred to as Gender and Conflict Sensitivity and is inclusive of a wider gender, age and diversity approach.
- Conflict Sensitivity is applicable to all conflict-prone settings irrespective of the severity or frequency of violence. This includes contexts experiencing underlying tensions (e.g. latent conflict), cultural violence (e.g. linguistic, cultural), structural violence (e.g. socio-economic, political, legal, apartheid, discrimination) and/or direct violence (e.g. extra judicial killings, use of lethal force, torture).
- Conflict Sensitivity is applicable to all DCA activities in conflict-prone settings. This includes all DCA and partner organisational structures such as human resources, ProLog, legal, finance, media/communications, advocacy, projects and programmes.
- Conflict Sensitivity is considered international good practice and is a recognised by donors, international institutions, International Non-Governmental Organisations, Local Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations, Inter- Governmental Organisations, diplomatic missions, state bodies, local authorities, and the private sector.



According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Knowledge Platform (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>), Conflict Sensitivity is encouraged in conflict-affected settings and is applicable to all SDGs.

WHY do DCA and partners use Conflict Sensitivity?

We operate in a complex, fragile and ever-changing world where armed conflicts, violent confrontations, climate related disasters, poverty and extreme inequality continue to cause human suffering. Crisis situations can understandably trigger a high demand for rapid response and immediate assistance. However, the possibility of substantial harm increases when interventions fail to identify and address the detrimental effects of otherwise well-intended actions. Conflict Sensitivity is based on the premise that the provision of assistance (or resources) is not always considered neutral especially when applied to areas affected by violence. With an improved understanding of the context, Conflict Sensitivity seeks to identify opportunities to improve assistance, as well as highlight unintended consequences that may contribute to violence. It then uses this information to act, to 'Do No Harm', maximise positive impact ('Do Some Good') and, where possible, support durable peace.

The main reasons that DCA and partners engage in Conflict Sensitivity is:

- To Do No Harm.
- To identify opportunities to improve assistance and to act to avoid initiatives from inadvertently fuelling violence.
- To reinforce opportunities to promote durable peace where possible.

Link to DCA strategy and policies:

According to DCA's international strategy 2019 – 2022, strategic interventions should act with due diligence to Do No Harm. Conflict Sensitivity applies to all three of DCA's Global Strategic Goals of Saving Lives, Building Resilient Communities and Fighting Extreme Inequality. It further cuts across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. Conflict Sensitivity is also closely associated with the PANEL principles of **P**articipation, **A**ccountability, **N**on-discrimination, **E**quality and **L**inking to Human Rights frameworks.

HOW

can DCA
be more
Conflict
Sensitive?

There are three main steps to Conflict Sensitivity that should be considered. These include the ability to:

- Understand the context.
- Understand the two-way interaction between activities and the context.
- Adjust activities to avert harmful outcomes ('Do No Harm'), reinforce opportunities to maximise positive impact ('Do Some Good') and where possible support durable peacebuilding.

Conflict Sensitivity is grounded in analysis that can be used for programme management and strategic planning (e.g. PPM processes and Theories of Change). Analysis is only valuable when it is context-specific and includes gender, age and diversity dimensions as well as other relevant self-identified social groupings (e.g. cultural, ethnic, religious, communal). Since Conflict Sensitivity concerns everything related to the provision of assistance/resources, analysis can provide useful input that informs not just a specific initiative, but wider operations and activities. Conflict Sensitivity is best viewed as an extension, rather than constrained to a tick-box action.

To integrate Conflict Sensitivity in your work, you may wish to consider:

- A planning and budgeting review to ensure that Conflict Sensitivity is incorporated and sufficiently resourced so as to be included in core aspects of a DCA operations.
- Conducting a dedicated study of the local conflict dynamics and how they impact the DCA's provision of assistance/resources.
- Providing Conflict Sensitivity training/support to all DCA staff and partners..

Should you require additional technical assistance on Conflict Sensitivity, support is available in the following areas:

- Inclusion of Conflict Sensitivity in proposals.
- Provision of Conflict Sensitivity training to staff, partners and, where relevant, community members/leaders.
- Addition of Conflict Sensitivity in job descriptions and terms of reference.
- Quality improvement of Conflict Sensitive assessments and donor reports.
- Advice on conflict sensitive programme design and implementation.
- Guidance and feedback on Conflict Prevention & Peacebuilding initiatives.

Contact HRMA advisor, **Sunra Lambert-Baj**, at sulb@dca.dk for more information on any of the issues relating to conflict sensitivity and do no harm

Resources:

Should you want to learn more about conflict sensitivity, please check out the resources below:

DCA FABO site Introduction to Conflict Sensitivity. See link <http://www.fabo.org/course/conflictsensitivity>.

DCA FABO site Gender and GBV in CVA - Essential tools for developing gender-sensitive and gender-responsive programmes. See <https://fabo.org/course/CashGBV>.

Mary B Anderson 'Do No Harm - How aid can support Peace or war.' See link <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/do-no-harm-how-aid-can-support-peace-or-war/>.

Saferworld. Gender Analysis of Conflict Toolkit. See https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1284-gender-sensitive-conflict-analysis-a-facilitation-guide?utm_source=smartmail&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=November+E-news

Saferworld, International Alert et al. How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity. See link <https://www.international-alert.org/publications/how-guide-conflict-sensitivity>.

UN System Staff College Conflict Sensitivity Course. See link <http://portals.unssc.org/enrol/index.php?id=16>

Fionnuala Ni Aolain et al. The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict. See https://books.google.dk/books/about/The_Oxford_Handbook_of_Gender_and_Confli.html?id=BAgEDwAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y.

CARE/CDA Monitoring & Evaluating Conflict Sensitivity- methodological challenges & practical solutions. See link https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/Monitoring_and_evaluating_conflict_sensitivity_challenges_and_solutions_vfinal.pdf.

Saferworld et al. Conflict Sensitivity Consortium Benchmarking paper. See link <http://conflictsensitivity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/CSA-Benchmarking-paper-full.pdf>.

Saferworld. Conflict Sensitivity. See link <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/914-conflict-sensitivity-saferworldsquoos-approach>.

GSDRC. Conflict Sensitivity Topic Guide. See link http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/gsdrc_cs_topic_guide.pdf