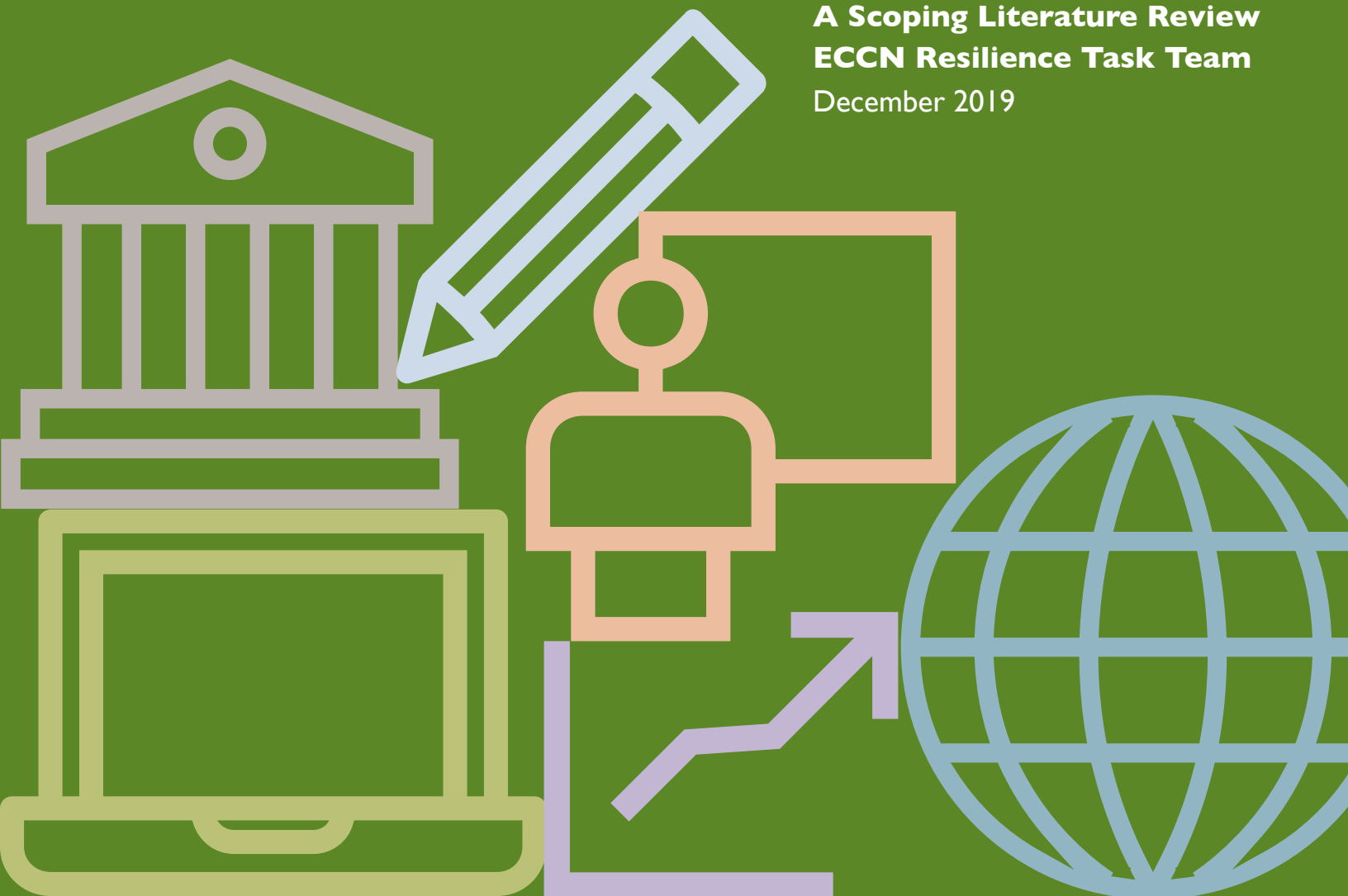


# CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: IN SUPPORT OF CONFLICT-SENSITIVE EDUCATION

**A Scoping Literature Review**  
**ECCN Resilience Task Team**  
December 2019





# KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Capacity development:** Capacity development is the process whereby individuals, groups, and organizations enhance their abilities to mobilize and use resources to achieve their objectives on a sustainable basis. Efforts to strengthen abilities of individuals, groups, and organizations can comprise a combination of (i) human skills development, (ii) changes in organizations and networks, and (iii) changes in governance/institutional context.<sup>1</sup>

**Conflict analysis:** A structured process of analysis to better understand a conflict, its context, issues, and actors.

**Conflict sensitive education:** An education delivery design based on the result of an analysis of the context and delivered, monitored, and evaluated to maximize peace and minimize conflict.

**Conflict sensitivity:** The ability to understand the context of an intervention, and the interaction between an intervention and the context, and to act upon the understanding of this interaction to avoid the negative impacts of such intervention.

**Context:** The operating environment; a place where intervention is to take place.

**Do no harm:** An approach that recognizes the presence of “dividers” and “connectors” in conflict and works toward strengthening connectors and weakening dividers.

**Institutionalization** can be defined as a “process which translates an organization’s mission, policies, visions, and strategic plans into action guidelines applicable to the daily activities of its employees. It aims at integrating fundamental values and objectives into the organization’s culture and structure.”<sup>2</sup>

**Mainstreaming:** Term used in describing the (re)organization, improvement, development, and evaluation of policy processes and operations, so that a new concept is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved in policymaking.<sup>3</sup>

**Organizational change:** Reviewing and modifying management structures and business processes.

**Peace and conflict impact assessment:** A process of assessing the unintended consequences of an intervention on the context, issues, and actors.

**Note on terminology:** *In the papers reviewed for this report, it became clear that terminology and concepts within this field are intrinsically linked, with often overlapping definitions. Reviews published under “organizational learning,” “organization change,” “capacity development,” and “mainstreaming” were interconnected with no clear separation of concepts.*

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<sup>1</sup> Essays, UK. (2018, November). The role of media in peace building. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/politics/the-role-of-media-in-peace-building-politics-essay.php>

<sup>2</sup> Handschin, S., Abitbol, E., & Alluri, R. (eds.). (2016). Conflict sensitivity: Taking it to the next level (Vol. 2). Berne, CH: Swiss Peace.

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe 1998: 15 What is gender mainstreaming? [https://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal\\_consolidated/data/document/gendermain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/gendermain_en.pdf)

# CONTENTS

<b>Key Terms and Definitions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
I.1 Review Aims	5
I.2 Report Structure	7
I.3 Background to Conflict Sensitivity	7
I.4 Evolution of Conflict-Sensitive Education	8
<b>II. Mainstreaming Attempts</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 What Has Been Done?	9
2.2 A Community of Specialists	10
2.3 Tools, Guidance, and Capacity Development	10
2.4 Advocacy	11
<b>III. Organizational Change</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Commitment and Motivation	13
3.2 Organizational Culture	14
3.3 Capacity Development	16
3.4 Accountability	17
3.5 Enabling External Environment	18
<b>IV. Conclusion</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix I – Methodology</b>	<b>21</b>
Methodology	21
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>23</b>
References for Key Review Documents	23
Additional References	25
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>27</b>

# I. INTRODUCTION



**This literature review was commissioned by ECCN as part of a larger research consultancy, undertaken in partnership with INEE, which aimed to better understand the process of building institutional capacity for conflict sensitive education (CSE) programming. Other components of the consultancy included:**

- Documentation and assessment of the process of CSE training (both a Training of Trainers workshop held in Amman Jordan in June 2017 and subsequent training in selected contexts);
- Analysis of the extent to which CSE concepts and approaches were adapted, internalized, and institutionalized into policy and practice of ToT organizations and government agencies;
- Identification of lessons learned and good practices on the implementation of CSE roll-out within particular contexts;
- Recommendations for future INEE capacity development work on CSE.

A detailed project report with research findings was submitted to INEE in 2019. A summary of research findings from the above components has been published by ECCN under the title *Conflict Sensitive Education Training and Institutionalization: Summary Findings from a 2017-18 Research Study on the Outcomes of an INEE CSE Training Workshop*.

The following literature review was led by Dr. Kelsey Shanks and includes contributions from her research team, as well as contributions from Julio Santos (University of Minho, Portugal) and Taro Komatsu (Sophia University, Japan) and their research teams.

## 1.1 Review Aims

Humanitarian aid and development assistance were long considered to be nonpolitical and solely concerned with saving and improving people's lives. Yet, in 1998, in the aftermath of the Rwanda genocide, findings began to emerge that showed that aid could have a negative impact in conflict-affected contexts. The influential works of Peter Uvin (1999) and Mary Anderson (1999) critically analyzed how international development and humanitarian actors unintentionally intensified conflict in Rwanda and Somalia and sparked the realization that aid interventions could no longer be considered independently of the contexts in which they are implemented. Within the education sector, the call to "Do No Harm" was further inspired by the seminal UNICEF-sponsored study the *Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* by Bush and Saltarelli (2000). The report highlighted education's potential to directly fuel conflict if mismanaged. In response to these realizations, the international community began to devote concerted attention to the issue. Scholars and practitioners developed methodologies, frameworks, and guidance for assessing the negative impacts of interventions in an attempt to circumvent them.

Collectively, these approaches evolved to encompass “conflict sensitivity,” a process that requires recognizing that interventions are not neutral, identifying possible problems, and acting to prevent them to ensure that the interventions themselves do not represent a threat to peace. Despite the widespread efforts to standardize the application of conflict-sensitive approaches within the humanitarian and development sectors over the last 20 years, many scholars (Paffenholz, 2005; Causton, 2009; Goddard, 2014) observe that the mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity has yet to be particularly effective. This review seeks to explore existing research on conflict sensitivity mainstreaming to highlight possible explanations for this failure and to synthesize the lessons learned for capacity development and institutional change in support of conflict-sensitive education (CSE). The following overarching question has driven the review: *What are the key factors that influence institutional change for conflict sensitive education within humanitarian and development organizations?*

**Due to the lack of research on the specific topic of CSE mainstreaming, the research team applied a multi-pronged search strategy, and literature searches were carried out across three key subject areas:**

**Level 1.** Research related to conflict sensitivity

**Level 2.** Research related to institutional change and capacity development in humanitarian and development organizations

**Level 3.** Research related to conflict sensitive education and education conflict-affected contexts.

This literature review combined purposive sampling with systematic review methods to develop a narrative synthesis on the institutionalization of conflict sensitivity within the humanitarian education sector. Due to the diverse and complex nature of the three streams of literature, a scoping review was deemed an appropriate alternative to a systematic review. A range of academic databases and



**The following report brings together the key findings from the three fields of research central to this study: organizational change, conflict sensitivity, and education in fragile contexts.**

practitioner websites were searched to identify relevant literature. A final 35 papers were identified. The methodology employed is further detailed in Appendix I. The following report brings together the key findings from the three fields of research central to this study: organizational change, conflict sensitivity, and education in fragile contexts. It aims to capture the latest thinking and provide an overview of research findings from the past 20 years from academic and grey literature. Due to the varied quantity of research in each subject area, findings are led by lessons taken from the global efforts to mainstream conflict sensitivity across sectors, with reflections on the implications for education drawn out where possible.

## 1.2 Report Structure

The first section will provide an overview of the evolution of conflict-sensitivity and CSE. This will be followed by a section that explores the most commonly employed activities to support conflict-sensitivity and CSE. Next, the report will highlight the main areas of change that research suggests is required to mainstream conflict sensitivity, noting recognized obstacles and reflecting on implications for CSE. The final section will draw conclusions and key lessons from the review.

## 1.3 Background to Conflict Sensitivity

There is a consensus among organizations that aid programs cannot be appropriately designed or successfully delivered without an understanding of their situation and context (Lange, 2004). Conflict sensitivity is therefore now a priority across all humanitarian and development sectors that strive to (a) understand the context in which it is operating, (b) understand the interaction between the intervention and that context, and (c) act upon that understanding in order to prevent possible negative consequences. While a conflict sensitive intervention must avoid causing harm and should contribute to peace where possible, it does not need to directly address causes or drivers of conflict and is therefore distinctly different from peacebuilding (Neji, 2016). In this sense, it is an approach that should apply to all interventions (Goldwyn & Chigas, 2013).

Lange notes that a central tenant of conflict sensitivity is to first obtain a common understanding of the “sources of tension and conflict that prompt different groups to use violence to promote and protect their interests” (Lange, 2004, p. 13). Therefore, conflict analysis is an essential initial step in achieving conflict sensitivity. Conflict analysis is a systematic study that strives to define conflict actors, their areas of influence, and the dynamics of conflict or fragility. Globally, Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) Guides and countless training manuals have been developed to aid this objective. Paffenholz notes that Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity training have “become a vibrant market” with “so many tools to address conflict sensitivity that it has become hard to choose between them” (Paffenholz, 2014 p. 2). Leonhardt (2003) suggests that among these resources, some lend themselves more to different actors, with donors using country-level strategic approaches and local implementing agencies using more detailed, context-specific analysis. Consequently, the quality of conflict analysis has improved greatly across organizational levels and project proposals and country programs commonly provide high-quality conflict analysis (Handschin, Abitol, & Alluri, 2016).

The second two elements of conflict sensitivity—understanding the interaction between the intervention and that context and acting upon that understanding in order to avoid negative impacts—



**The findings of the conflict analysis should inform all stages of a specific programming cycle: assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation stages of intervention.**

both require a more sector-specific knowledge to take the findings of the conflict analysis and unpack their significance within a certain stream of work. The findings of the conflict analysis should therefore inform all stages of a specific programming cycle: assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation stages of intervention. In this sense, conflict sensitivity calls for an explicit stage in the project design to analyze and reflect upon the findings of the conflict analysis in relation to the project. In other words, it requires space to consider “risks and opportunities linked to the conflict context, which are not necessarily linked to the project objectives” (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012, p. 9). To advance the space for such reflections, a host of thematic guidance tools have also been released in recent years for sectors, such as journalism, tourism, and resource management. These tools aim to contextualize conflict sensitivity within a certain sector, filling the space between conflict analysis and understanding the sector’s interaction with context. Work produced on CSE falls within this arena.

## 1.4 Evolution of Conflict-Sensitive Education

Education was once considered a neutral, technical activity; yet, over the past two decades, the international education agenda has shifted in line with the wider Do No Harm debate to recognize education’s potential influence over social dynamics and the spheres of security, governance, and economics. With one in three of the world’s 121 million out-of-school children living in fragile or conflict-affected situations (GPE, 2016), the relationship between education and conflict has received targeted efforts in recent years. Just as aid interventions are no longer viewed as impartial, there is increasing awareness that education systems are not unbiased and are usually designed by elite groups in society (Smith, 2010). CSE should, therefore, strive to ensure that education does not become a party to a conflict.

Smith (2011) points out that there are many entry points to examine the various levels of an education system, including critical analysis of the political ideology driving a system and its legislative, structural, and administrative features. It is now widely acknowledged that factors related to access to education, the structure of schooling, teacher recruitment and training, and curriculum content can all serve to influence conflict. This issue has become the focus of a growing body of research that has explored the negative influences of mismanaged education. At the heart of this field is the acknowledgement that education must be “conflict-sensitive” (For example, UNESCO, 2011; Mundy & Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Save the Children, 2007; Gaigals & Leonhardt, 2001; Novelli et al, 2017; Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012; Machel, 2001; Shanks, 2018; Bush & Saltarelli 2000; Smith, 2011). In this respect it must be acknowledged that the pursuit of CSE in fragile environments is a dual endeavor. Firstly, agencies must strive to ensure that their interventions are, in themselves, conflict sensitive. Secondly, education actors must work in close collaboration with the ministries of education and government actors to help influence the wider education delivery system in terms of its interaction with conflict sensitivity.

Yet, despite academic and practitioner attention to the nexus between education and conflict, few studies have focused on how to develop and deliver CSE-specific programs and policies (Neji, 2016; Sigsgaard, 2012), and there have been few efforts to train educationalists in the conflict analysis skills required to meaningfully engage in education’s interactions with conflict on a practical level. Smith (2011) notes that within the education sector the “systematic analysis of education systems from a conflict perspective is still an underdeveloped area.” While Reisman and Janke (2015) stress that conflict sensitivity still needs to be “better understood and adopted by all [education] partners, specifically by the education ministries, particularly at the planning stage.”



# II. MAINSTREAMING ATTEMPTS



## 2.1 What Has Been Done?

Attempts to include conflict sensitivity into strategic humanitarian policy frameworks have grown over the last 20 years. There are numerous predominant policy frameworks that adopt conflict sensitivity, such as the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States,” which stresses the need for periodic country-led fragility assessments in conflict-affected contexts, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD’s) “Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations,” (2007) which confirms the importance of context analysis and Do No Harm. Most bilateral and multilateral donor agencies now also require that their partners demonstrate a conflict-sensitive approach (Gaigals & Leonhardt, 2001). A review of conflict sensitive integration conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2016 noted that “many donors have a policy commitment to conflict sensitivity at both the strategy and program level, while implementing agencies tend to have policy commitments at the project level only” (Goldwyn, 2016, p. 6).

Paffenholz (2014) notes that broad efforts to achieve conflict sensitivity across all sectors have outpaced “traditional cross-cutting themes (such as gender or environment) in terms of budget and staffing capacity,” resulting in expansive interventions across the international governance system. Awareness raising and capacity development have been undertaken, and agency-specific methodologies and tools developed. Consequently, nearly all leading development and peacebuilding agencies have in some way engaged with “conflict sensitivity mainstreaming” (Lange, 2014), and implementing agencies now have a clear interest in conflict. Within these developments the need for CSE has correspondingly gained increased attention. Recent developments in the field of education in emergencies, including from the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait, have also shone a light on conflict-sensitive delivery in this respect. The Incheon Declaration states that education should respond to the “educational needs of children and adults in crisis situations and promote safety, resilience and social cohesion, with the aim of reducing the risks of conflict.”

Notable actors within CSE have included UNICEF, UNESCO IIEP, and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). In 2012, UNICEF received funding from the Government of the Netherlands to implement a program to examine whether social service delivery, in this case education, can be effectively utilized to promote peace. The aim of the three-year program was to “strengthen



### Mainstreaming definition:

Term used in describing the (re)organization, improvement, development, and evaluation of policy processes and operations, so that a new concept is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages of operation.

resilience, social cohesion and human security in 14 countries recovering from conflict or at risk of falling into conflict” (Novelli et al, 2015). Within its targeted outcomes, the program listed the need to “increase institutional capacities to supply CSE services” (Novelli et al, 2015). While the INEE and UNESCO IIEP have both developed various tools to integrate conflict sensitivity into education policy.

Efforts to mainstream conflict sensitivity in general have fallen under one of the following three headings: (1) building a community of specialists, (2) tool development and training, and (3) advocacy.

## 2.2 A Community of Specialists

The establishment of “conflict units” and “conflict advisors” within donors and aid agencies has resulted in a community of specialists that are seen to be advancing the mainstreaming of conflict understanding within all sectors. Such expertise is seen to offer an organizational hub to spread learning across an organization. The appointment of conflict sensitivity champions is also a common technique in promoting conflict sensitivity within organizations (Haider, 2014). Such champions are given a mandate to mainstream conflict sensitivity within their organization or country office, echoing the attempts to mainstream previous cross-cutting themes, such as gender and monitoring and evaluation. Conflict focused roles usually sit within the peacebuilding department or conflict team. However, Lange (2005) notes that it is important that the position is well connected to all the sectors of an organization. Such experts need to forge strong linkages with a variety of actors from headquarters and the field to avoid becoming marginalized within a “peacebuilding” domain (2005). Therefore in order for the appointment of conflict specialists to be effective within the education arena, they should be accompanied by simultaneous support for mechanisms that promote horizontal and vertical information exchange and learning between these sectors.

## 2.3 Tools, Guidance, and Capacity Development

Various guides and checklists have been published on how to tackle conflict sensitivity, and there are now numerous approaches to guide organizations on operationalization. Significant emphasis has been placed on conflict analysis tools, and there is currently considerable methodological choice. These tools have been welcomed as positive developments that have the potential to introduce new actors to conflict sensitivity and to improve practice within the field. A wider shift in recent years toward sector-defined conflict-sensitive practices has resulted in a variety of thematic tools and guidance to contextualize conflict sensitivity within certain sectors. Despite the role that education can play in creating conflict, it rarely featured as an element of general conflict analyses and assessment tools (UNICEF, 2013 Smith, 2011).

Consequently, there has been a significant push to develop education-focused resources in this space. USAID and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have designed education targeted conflict assessment tools drawing on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) methods to examine the impact of conflict and fragility on education and of education on conflict and fragility. The *Save the Children Education and Fragility Barometer* (2007) builds on this work to provide a more practical set of indicators for analyzing the role of education, offering an early warning tool designed to aid conflict prevention. The more recent USAID Checklist for Conflict Sensitivity in Education Programs (USAID, 2013) provides a practical framework through which to view the operational aspects of education programs during all stages: planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, the INEE has developed various tools that aim to aid the integration of conflict sensitivity

into education policy at a wider ministerial level, including a CSE pack composed of three key components: guiding principles, a reflection tool, and a guidance note, all with accompanying training modules. Meanwhile, UNESCO IIEP has produced a Guidance Note entitled *Integrating Conflict and Disaster Risk Reduction into Education Sector Planning* (UNESCO IIEP, 2011) that offers strategies to educational planners on how to mainstream conflict risk reduction measures in the education sector planning process. All these tools use recognizable technical language familiar to educationalists and are aimed at supporting the mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity into education policies and programs through the rollout of training programs in their use.

## 2.4 Advocacy

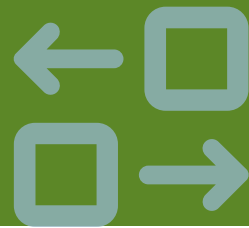
A considerable amount of awareness has been generated regarding the need for conflict sensitivity. Having politically aware individuals who can provide expertise and consistently advocate for conflict sensitivity has been highlighted by actors as far more important than guidance in ensuring that conflict sensitivity is integrated into country strategies (Goldwyn, 2016). Advocacy for education's capacity to build peace in post-conflict environments is present; significantly UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) and the INEE's push for conflict sensitivity are widely recognized in this respect. Yet the greatest impact of such programs is understood to be within the specific education and peacebuilding networks that already exist. There has yet to be a cascade effect beyond the specific peacebuilding-education community to the general education and peacebuilding arenas.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the importance of education in conflict narratives still isn't firmly embedded within wider sectors such as security or governance.

Yet, despite policy and investment in all these mainstreaming areas, Paffenholz (2005) and others (Causton, 2009; Goddard, 2014) observe that the attempts to mainstream conflict sensitivity have failed to be particularly effective, and significant challenges remain. Therefore, it is suggested in the literature that mainstreaming conflict sensitivity requires greater attention to understanding how to change organizational culture, thinking, and practice.

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<sup>4</sup> Interviews conducted for the UNICEF Peacebuilding Education Consortium, 2011

# III. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE



**Organizational change** requires reviewing and modifying management structures and operating processes. Burnes and Jackson (2011) note that there is substantial evidence to suggest that some 70 percent of all change initiatives fail.

Handschin (2016; 2) highlights that from an organizational change perspective, the current guidance provided on “mainstreaming” conflict sensitivity tends to be “random, lacking clarity on what needs to be achieved, and why and how change needs to be pursued, all within organizational environments that are fundamentally reluctant to change.” This has resulted in a failure to integrate conflict-sensitivity tools and methodologies in program cycles, documentation, and the sharing and learning of lessons (Lange, 2004; Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012).

To understand the concept of organizational change, it is necessary first to observe the concepts and theories behind the way in which institutions change and the reasons attributed to the change, which is commonly referred to as theory of change. This area of study examines the processes and structures that drive change in organizations and institutions and the people. Two prevalent frameworks exist in this respect. The first, which often prevails in the field of international development, is a linear understanding of capacity development initiatives. This theory asserts that the provision of inputs will result in better performance and ultimately achieve the stated development goals.

The second model, called “complex adaptive systems thinking,” accepts a broader view of change, recognizing that organizations are more complex and involve interrelated factors. Aragon, Macedo and Carlos (2010) in their review of systematic theories of change note that the linear understanding of the theory of change does not adequately take social complexity into account. They conclude that ongoing critical and strategic reflection is needed to reduce the reproduction of the cultural elements and power that are adverse to the changes (2010, p. 95).

Hanschin (2016) states that “fragile and conflict-affected contexts are unpredictable in their evolution. Organizations operating in such environments must be nimble enough to adjust to unpredictable contextual changes to ensure that interventions remain context-relevant, while mitigating the risk of negative effects on conflict dynamics and even contributing to a reduction of conflict.” Consequently parallels can be drawn with the private sector, and Leana and Barry (2000) observe similar trends in the corporate world: “In volatile market environments, organizations should assume organic structures and processes so that they can best adapt to ever-changing markets, customers and competitors; strategies of continued change may lead to a competitive advantage for a firm” (Leana & Barry, 2000, p. 754).

Therefore, attempts to increase conflict sensitivity need to be based on a theory of change that provides an “understanding of the institutional context and in particular the capacity for change” (Lange & Quinn, 2003, p. 3). Conflict sensitivity “requires integrating the appropriate attitudes, approaches, tools and expertise into an organization’s culture, systems, processes and work” (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2016, p. 3).

**Scholars working on the inclusion of conflict sensitivity (Lange, 2004; Lange, 2005; Barbolet, Goldwyn, Groenewald, & Sherrif, 2005; Goddard, 2014) have highlighted five key organizational components that require consideration in order to achieve this:**

1. Organizational commitment
2. An organizational culture that prioritizes communication and learning
3. Support for capacity development
4. Accountability, including internal systems to reinforce motivation for conflict sensitivity and external mechanisms to enforce responsibility toward local communities
5. An enabling external environment

The following section takes a more detailed look at each factor in relation to conflict-sensitivity education mainstreaming attempts and unpacks the literature surrounding these issues.

### 3.1 Commitment and Motivation

Establishing a commitment to organizational change in favor of conflict sensitivity is vital (Lange, 2016; Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2016). Lange (2015) notes that buy-in from top-management is important in this regard, but it also requires commitment and motivation from across an organization. Relying on change instigated from the top symbolizes a traditional view of change management guided by the assumption that change will trickle down automatically (Olson and Eoyong, 2001). This assumption is now strongly challenged by contemporary thinking. Barzelay, Watanabe, and Okumoto (2017, p. 27) review of company management structures highlights the importance of engaging all staff at all levels and positions if attempting to achieve organizational change. The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) echoes this finding and suggests that institutional commitment must be fostered through buy-in across all divisions of the organization, from field-level staff to decision-makers. In order to achieve this, dedicated policies, resources, and time must be devoted to reaching all staff and establishing their commitment to conflict sensitivity, and not just achieving management level buy-in and appointing specialists. Yet, the literature highlights a number of obstacles to achieving commitment and motivation for conflict sensitivity that appear to be too inherent to the humanitarian system:

**Timing:** Haider (2014, 5) suggests that the “pressures faced by implementing organizations to spend large amounts of donor money quickly can result in the failure to adopt time-consuming conflict sensitivity approaches.” Paffenholz (2014) concurs, suggesting that the humanitarian system is still mainly driven by urgency, which limits the commitment to taking time to develop a conflict-sensitive understanding of interventions. This is illustrated by Ahmed’s (2011) work on PCIA in Pakistan, which finds that in the majority of instances, organizations are rarely engaged in full conflict analysis, basing decisions more on the influence of headquarters. Segal (2016) suggests that “persuading a manager to hold back a program juggernaut to give time to mitigate these risks is unlikely to be successful if there is pressure to hit spending and results targets” (Segal, 2016, p. 40). For donors in particular, spending to target is often a key criterion for staff promotions—and so is a very important incentive system. These

existing incentive structures therefore run counter to conflict sensitivity, and the pressure to spend serves to undermine commitment to conflict sensitivity throughout an organization (Goldwyn, 2016).

**Measuring impact:** There is a long-established need to make a “business case” for conflict sensitivity, but no substantial advancement has been made in this area. No donor or implementing agency has successfully and systematically documented the benefits of conflict sensitivity by drawing on field-based evidence and/or organizational lessons and impacts (Goldwyn, 2016). Lange (2014) comments that it is inherently difficult to measure “impact” and organizational performance in relation to peace and conflict, which in turn hampers organizations’ commitment and motivation. Segal highlights that in Department for International Development (DFID), the results agenda “is king, and results are usually defined in numerical rather than qualitative terms” (Segal, 2016, p. 40). Education and conflict-sensitive impacts are only achieved over long-term timescales (often beyond the programs lifespan) and are predominantly qualitative. This means that they are particularly difficult to measure reliably. In this sense, the adage “what gets measured, gets done” works to the detriment of commitment to conflict-sensitivity education mainstreaming.

**Conflict-sensitive education and staff buy-in:** Commitment and motivation for CSE requires a significant shift in educational mind-sets as educationalists are required to engage directly with the political environment previously deemed outside their mandate. A divide between those working on social services provision and those in the peacebuilding community has created sectorial silos. These silos often prevent education actors from committing to conflict-sensitivity approaches. Traditionally trained educationalists are not provided with the skill set to apply a political conflict analysis lens to education, and peacebuilders do not have the knowledge of pedagogy or education management to fully engage with the subject’s potential. Experts in CSE are rare. Instead, there are peacebuilding professionals and education professionals attempting to work in each other’s theoretical spaces. As a consequence, the peacebuilding community is not always receptive to collaborations with the services sectors, and education practitioners can be closed to the possibilities of education as an enabler of peace (Haider, 2014). In this sense, achieving commitment requires a concerted effort to change staff mind-sets and understanding within the sector.

## 3.2 Organizational Culture

The influence of organizational culture has been acknowledged within organizational theory and management research, yet it is less understood within the nongovernmental sector and wider development studies research (Lewis, 2002). Lewis notes that simple definitions of organizational culture often refer to “the way we do things around here” or “the commonly held values and beliefs held within an organization” (Lewis, 2003). Clarke and Ramalingam (2008) present organizations as communities with distinct cultures, stressing the importance of viewing organizations as more complex, dynamic, and unpredictable than the traditional understanding allows. As such, organizational culture and norms influence an agency’s strategic choices and impact how an organization responds to change. For example, some organizations have very hierarchical structures while others are highly decentralized. Causton (2009) highlights that examination of NGO organizational culture has “remained largely absent from the discussion” over how to mainstream conflict sensitivity. This is primarily due to the fact that the vast diversity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) makes it problematic to discuss NGO culture in general terms. Yet, there is one unifying factor highlighted within the literature that can be explored further. The process of knowledge management is common across NGOs and is also a foundational aspect of conflict sensitivity.

**Knowledge management and learning:** Knowledge and information are central to conflict-sensitive principles, and understanding the contextual changes in an area of operation requires an ongoing process of learning and information gathering. Mainstreaming a conflict-sensitive approach therefore demands “open communication channels between all levels of the organization” to facilitate “the flow of knowledge and learning” (Lange, 2004). Organizational culture has a crucial influence over how organizations approach this learning process. It has been noted that many humanitarian and development organizations are driven by a culture that “values ‘doing’ over ‘understanding’ and do not allow room for mistakes” (Lange, 2004), thereby hampering meaningful integration of conflict-sensitive operating procedures. Ferguson, Mchombu, and Cummings (2008) summarize that the development sector does not yet fully value the importance of knowledge (2008, p. 8). This statement is illustrated further by Shanks (2019) who highlights that in the rush to provide education to displaced populations, organizations in one town in Iraq failed to consider the social-political context of the beneficiaries, resulting in high drop-out rates and a provision of education that created community tensions.

Edwards (1997) summarized some of the internal obstacles to general organizational learning inherent in NGO environments 20 years ago, which, despite greater understanding of the need for learning, appear to persist today:

- Weak incentives and rewards for learning, as part of a “risk-averse” culture, lead to defensiveness and a tendency to disguise and punish failures. Job insecurity and short-term contracts also make staff less amenable to learning.
- The inability to deal with learning that threatens consensus or short-term institutional interests is a problem common to all large bureaucracies.
- Project “tunnel vision” impedes learning and discourages experimentation. (Edwards, 1997)

Where knowledge strategies do exist in organizations, they have been criticized for being (a) “Western-oriented, and therefore limiting contributions from across organizations (Vathis, 2016), and (b) primarily focused on tools, good practice, and methodologies, rather than organizational processes for analysis and dissemination (Ferguson, Mchombu, & Cummings, 2008).

Furthermore, a culture of interorganizational information sharing should be championed within a conflict sensitivity strategy. Pooling shared resources and building on collective aims could create a more conducive environment for mainstreaming. Yet, while many agencies share some information on conflict indirectly through joint security sessions, few carry out joint conflict analyses. Interagency competition over scarce resources, concerns about sharing sensitive information, and competing views on who could legitimately facilitate such joint analysis serve as key barriers (Lange, 2004). However, Seybolt (2009) observes that organizations can share information on population needs without compromising their access to donor funds. Connectivity between multiple organizations promotes trust over time because it spreads values and norms among autonomous units. From a network perspective, these social mechanisms are far more effective and adaptive than reliance on authority, bureaucratic rules, standardization, or legal exchanges (Jones et al. 1997 as cited in Seybolt, 2009, p. 1049). In this sense, the humanitarian cluster system provides a clear strategic entry point for CSE mainstreaming that is often overlooked.

### 3.3 Capacity Development

When the necessary institutional commitment to mainstream conflict sensitivity is in place, including an obligation to adapting organizational culture, an organization needs to invest in both its human capacity and its organizational capacity for delivering conflict sensitivity (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2016, p. 5). The principal tool for building staff competencies in conflict sensitivity has been capacity development through training. Goddard (2014) suggests that “since 1998, thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people have been trained in the application of various conflict sensitivity frameworks.” Human capacity includes ensuring staff and partners have the analytical skills and contextual knowledge required to engage meaningfully with a conflict-sensitive approach, as well as having the tools and methodological developments they need.

However, despite the attention already paid to training, it appears that the quality and content of training is not always sufficient to achieve mainstreaming. Garred and Goddard (2010) illustrate this need when examining a Do No Harm training in Mindanao. The use of only one workshop and no follow-up or



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monitoring was heavily critiqued. Their consultations revealed that training programs often amount to “exposure” rather than providing sufficient understanding that enables sustained use of conflict analysis and work across sectors (2010, p. 14). Unfortunately, this finding is supported by wider literature that suggests that many people have received one-off conflict sensitivity trainings and returned to their jobs with little expectation from colleagues or superiors that they will use the concepts they have learned and no support to do so.

Training often focuses on key conceptual understandings, rather than practical implementation. In this sense, there is a lack of focus on how to develop mechanisms and procedures in support of conflict-sensitive programming or the required skills, such as “relationship-building skills, applied social science knowledge, contextualization to geographical context and the issues pertaining to it, and cultural sensitivity” (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2016, p. 5). As such, while training in key concepts is vital, it is insufficient without the similar efforts to unpack avenues for organizational capacity to support those trained in their daily operations.

**Organizational capacity** includes strengthening departments’ enabling processes for conducting ongoing conflict analysis and developing connecting mechanisms that provide space to engage in understanding the relationship between conflict analysis and relevant program sectors. Currently, capacity development efforts have been focused primarily on developing human capacity to understand conflict-sensitive principles; in this sense, organizational capacity has been markedly neglected. Building organizational capacity for conflict-sensitive analysis, participation, and coordination is vital. Mechanisms and procedures



that enable conflict sensitivity to inform an intervention at all stages of the programming cycle—assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation—are required.

Commentators have noted that the extensive focus on developing conflict analysis frameworks and introductory training has resulted in a failure to look beyond these initial steps toward how to operationalize the findings of conflict analysis (Woodrow & Chigas, 2009). Often the monitoring of impacts and the subsequent adjustments to programs are completely missing (Woodrow & Chigas, 2009). This neglected step is often illustrated within the education sector. For example, new education curricula are designed to be conflict sensitive. Yet, this intervention will not lead to CSE if teachers continue to rely on older conflict-insensitive curriculum resources or oppose changing their traditional teaching methods (UNICEF, 2013; UNESCO IIEP, 2011).

### 3.4 Accountability

It is necessary to have appropriate accountability systems incorporated into the organizational mainstreaming process. Clear and considered accountability systems should aim to provide appropriate rewards and disincentives that inspire staff to understand their operations through a conflict-sensitive lens. The systems reach should extend throughout a project cycle so that organizations “plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their actions and programs in those terms” (Lange, 2004). Accountability includes documenting and disseminating better practice and rewarding progress to create a positive energy for moving forward (Lange, 2004). However, it is important to note that such appraisal and incentives systems should balance individual accountability with the need for learning, avoiding the defensiveness, and a tendency to disguise and punish failures, which are highlighted by Edwards (1998).

An additional, and essential, element of organizational accountability is to ensure that the impact of interventions on targeted communities is understood. It is necessary to hold organizations to account for the negative consequences their programming may have if they are not conflict sensitive. The absence of such accountability mechanisms undermines mainstreaming attempts and removes the motivation to engage in conflict sensitivity. Writing in 2016, Goldwyn highlighted that donors seldom monitor for the use of conflict sensitivity or Do No Harm by implementing agencies and thus have little knowledge of whether it is adopted beyond the funding phase.

Goldwyn (2016) notes that monitoring for conflict sensitivity at the project level has since improved and is now more widespread, highlighting that “BMZ / GIZ, DFID, Dutch MFA all noted that project level conflict sensitivity monitoring occurs or that this was currently being ramped up, while recent EU guidance proposes such monitoring” (Goldwyn, 2016, p. 11). However, conflict-sensitivity assessments usually center on the “process and not outcome” (Goldwyn, 2016, p. 12), as it is “generally easier to ask people if they have undertaken specific processes (and sometimes to assess the quality of those processes) than to ask them to evaluate the impact of their interventions on conflict” (Goldwyn, 2016, p. 12). Consequently, donor policies rarely apply any consequences for failure to adopt conflict-sensitive programming, and activities that actually cause harm are not penalized (Woodrow & Chigas, 2009). CDA’s “Do No Harm” project has yet to register a donor that has taken punitive action, such as withdrawing funding or issuing a rebuke or warning of repercussions, to implementing agencies that have deliberately ignored the principles of conflict sensitivity.

### 3.5 Enabling External Environment

The fifth component emphasized by Lange and others is the external environment within which agencies operate. Organizational change requires an enabling environment (Vecchio, 1995), which is influenced by donors, partners, and communities. Conflict sensitivity cannot rely solely on interorganizational capacity development. Attention should also be paid to intraorganizational development and coordination. Interventions are more likely to be sustainable if they are based on broad dialogue and buy-in from diverse groups in society (Sigsgaard, 2012). Drawing from the findings of Krohwinkel-Karlsson (2007, p. 9), Ferguson, Mchombu, and Cummings realized that cross-organizational communities of practice will enhance development organizations, capacities to support knowledge, and learning processes (Ferguson, Mchombu, & Cummings, 2008, p. 15).

**Lange (2004) notes that “the up- and down-streaming of conflict sensitivity to other actors is necessary to strengthen the conflict sensitivity of the wider development and humanitarian response,” listing four key actor groups for consideration (as quoted below):**

1. Local partner organizations, which are often perceived mainly as project implementers. Established good-development practice, as well as conflict-sensitive programming principles, require INGOs to more actively facilitate the full participation in planning and evaluation of local partners who have a degree of legitimacy, work for peaceful resolution of conflict and are perceived as representative within the communities they work with;
2. Donors who contribute funds to the organization’s programs and influence program parameters and planning;
3. Strategic alliances and networks of organizations (often peers) with whom the organization interacts, who can support and strengthen mainstreaming processes and their impact on the ground; and
4. National and international constituencies, namely individuals supporting the organization and peer organizations and networks, who are crucial to the legitimacy basis of the organization’s analysis and actions.” (Lange, 2004; 29)

In this respect, it must be acknowledged that the pursuit of CSE in fragile environments is particularly dependent on the involvement of a variety of actors. Therefore agencies must not only strive to ensure that their interventions are conflict sensitive but also ensure that conflict-sensitive principles are upheld within the structures of implementing partners. Education interventions, unlike work in some other sectors, are generally positioned within the confines of state-defined systems, and as such, education actors must also work in close collaboration with ministries of education and government actors to influence the wider education delivery system in terms of its interaction with conflict sensitivity. UNICEF (2013) stresses that for education services to be conflict sensitive, “sustained commitment on behalf of country-level governments, donor partners and civil society” is required. Collaboration with government actors is vital to ensure the sustainability of CSE practices. However, it is often a difficult relationship to manage.

Denney (2017) notes that the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium’s (SLRC) work on building capacity draws conclusions from eight country contexts to highlight a list of challenges:

- “The limited toolkit of capacity development approaches as one respondent in Sierra Leone noted “training, training, training – how much training does one person need?”
- The focus on technical aspects of service delivery, neglecting how power and politics are at the root of many problems that appear to be about capacity
- The neglect of alternative capacities outside of the formal realm or what Western notions of “capacity” look like
- A focus on tangible “units” of a delivery systems (that is, individuals and organizations) and less on the system as a whole and how its parts interact” (Denney, 2017; 1)

A central criticism raised by this consortium was that the aid industry views the inherently political process of social and institutional change through a “project lens” (Denny, 2017; 1). In other words, there is a failure to acknowledge the power, incentives and interests that impact the process of organizational change in fragile environments. Instead interventions concentrate on resources, knowledge, and coordination.



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Conflict analysis is a political exercise that is aimed at underlining contentious issues and the causes of conflict. The process is therefore aimed at highlighting challenges to existing authority and resource allocations, structures, cultures, and norms (Lange & Quin, 2003). Consequently, when working in collaboration with local government structures and ministries, there may be pressure to underplay or omit controversial findings to make analysis more acceptable and thus more useable (De Renzio et al, 2005).

If a host government is unwilling or unable to tackle the power dynamics tied up in corruption, criminality, or conflict, they will not create an enabling environment for conflict-sensitive practices (Ballentine & Haufler, 2009). Assessments of the education sector can be particularly contentious in this respect. Examining the interaction between conflict and education often includes a critical analysis of the political ideology driving the educational system (Haider, 2014). Therefore analyses can be critical of governments and other key stakeholders. Smith states that the “most contentious challenge in terms of international development is to find a way of raising critical questions about the form and content of education and its implications for relations between peoples, groups and nations” (UNICEF 2011; 19). A reluctance to engage with sensitive issues has hampered the pursuit of CSE in many locations,<sup>5</sup> for example, in both Ethiopia and Pakistan, where hesitancy delayed the government’s decision to join UNICEF’s PBEA Program.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews conducted for the UNICEF Peacebuilding Education Consortium, 2016

# IV. CONCLUSION



This review has found that while the concept of conflict sensitivity has successfully permeated international education humanitarian and development communities, there are still distinct restrictions to its operationalization. Paffenholz (2014) and others (e.g., Causton, 2009; Goddard, 2014; Goldwyn, 2016) have observed that the attempts to mainstream conflict sensitivity have failed to be particularly effective, and significant challenges remain. While actors have accepted policies that protect the principle of conflict sensitivity and have provided tools for analysis and understanding, they have failed to provide practical guidance regarding how to integrate these practices into organizational structures. In addition, education actors face disciplinary-specific challenges due to the state-driven nature of the operating environment. Achieving CSE is not the technical endeavor that it is often presented, as it is deeply rooted in political power relations. Therefore, CSE requires a significant shift in educational mind-sets in order to effectively engage with the political environment previously deemed outside its mandate.

The literature demonstrates that the obstacles to the practical implementation of CSE are not unknown. The lessons learned presented in this review are not new; they have been documented and debated for two decades without solution. One reason for this lack of progress may be that many of the obstacles that have been highlighted can be seen to originate from the political economy of the aid industry itself. Quantitatively driven results, aversion to risk, short time frames, and an emphasis on technical rather than political and contextual skills and knowledge are all systemwide practices that cannot easily be tackled through a sector-specific lens. They require a rethinking of the aid industry in general. This raises the question of whether there is actually space to effectively implement conflict sensitivity within the current humanitarian system.

# APPENDIX I – METHODOLOGY

## Methodology

When the literature on a subject is vast and complex, a scoping review is an appropriate alternative to a systematic review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Grimshaw, 2008). It is considered the most effect approach to examine the three fields of research central to this study: organizational change, conflict sensitivity, and education in fragile contexts. For the purposes of this investigation a scoping review is defined as a type of research synthesis that aims to “map the literature on a particular topic or research area . . . and provide sources of evidence to inform practice, policymaking, and research” (Daudt, van Mossel, & Scott, 2011). A key difference between scoping reviews and systematic reviews is that a scoping review will have a broader “scope” than traditional systematic reviews with correspondingly more expansive inclusion criteria (Munn, Z., Moola, S., Lisy, K., Riitano, D., & Tufanaru, C., 2018). Therefore, this review allowed the inclusion of a variety of literature that would not be applicable to a systematic review, including existing theoretical and narrative reviews.

A range of academic databases and practitioner websites were searched to identify relevant gray literature, reviews, and qualitative and quantitative research for the scoping study. A final 35 papers were identified through the following means:

**1. A list of key words and phrases related to each of the themes was identified and refined by the research team.** As many of the search terms brought up unrelated information due to their broad nature, care was taken to choose terms that drew out useful and relevant information.

**2. Consultation with subject experts helped to identify relevant synonyms.** Key words for search criteria were determined according to three corresponding categories: (1) context (e.g., fragility, conflict etc.), (2) mainstreaming (e.g., institutionalization, organizational change), and (3) education in emergencies (e.g., PBE, CSE).

**3. Once the key word lists were finalized for each theme, Boolean operators were utilized to create a systematic combination of key words from each category,** which helped to broaden and narrow the results as required so that electronic and hand searches could be conducted of the following:

- Major academic journal repositories.
- The publication sites of development partners: Examples included the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), AusAID, DFID, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and Save the Children (STC).
- Key texts referenced within policy-oriented reviews undertaken by leading international organizations, as well as meta-reviews in the fields of study.

**4. The assembled references were then screened according to a strict set of inclusion criteria.** Those documents that were deemed most relevant were also hand searched to identify further key references (i.e., snowballing). To ensure the best materials, the initial bibliographies were circulated among a selection of external experts working in these areas who provided recommendations for possible missed grey literature that can be difficult to obtain online.

**5. The review of the papers was guided by the following questions:**

- What are the main areas of change required to institutionalize CS?
- What are the approaches/methods most commonly employed to achieve these aims?
- What are the obstacles that can prevent these changes taking place?
- What are the opportunities for achieving these changes?

**6. In total 35 papers were compiled for the final analysis:**

**Level 1.** 6 papers; research related to a combination of two or more of the key topics

**Level 2.** 11 papers; research related to conflict sensitivity

**Level 3.** 16 papers; research related to institutional change and capacity development in humanitarian and development organizations

**Level 4.** 2 papers; research related to conflict sensitive education and education conflict-affected contexts.

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# APPENDIX 3

## Points to Take Forward: Recommendations Taken from the Literature

<b>Organizational Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate conflict sensitivity into organizational strategic plans to encourage sustained commitment from the organization.</li> <li>Advocacy for organizational commitment should “highlight the possible synergies with other organizational priorities and how integrating conflict sensitivity can be achieved relatively simply by adapting existing policies, systems and procedures can help” (CSC, 2012).</li> <li>It is important to engage all levels of the organizational structure to get buy-in from the “whole organization” (Lange, 2003).</li> <li>The promotion of subject expertise should be viewed as a vital opportunity to support integration; a move away from educationalists interested in conflict and conflict specialists interested in education, toward specialists in conflict sensitive education. Clearly defined specialization provides an opportunity to address a number of the obstacles to conflict sensitivity, including knowledge gaps, gendered subject perceptions, and the academic grounding to address conceptual divides.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations require effective conflict-sensitivity knowledge management, documentation, and learning procedures. Ferguson, Mchombu, and Cummings suggest that the first step is for an organization to determine its “knowledge position,” identify the knowledge needs, and then design a “knowledge strategy” to match these needs (Ferguson, Mchombu, &amp; Cummings, 2008, p. 7).</li> <li>Britton (2005) suggests that once an approach for organizational learning is decided on, it should be built into structures, systems, procedures, and standards and allocate appropriate resources; organizations should examine their internal “motive, means and opportunities” to learn.</li> <li>The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium suggests that organizations create safe spaces where people can openly discuss areas they feel programming may have a negative impact. A culture of reflections should be promoted and supported, with time for thought and analysis. Reporting on “what is working and what is not working concerning conflict sensitivity” should be encouraged and incentivized (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012).</li> <li>Where possible, especially in multi-mandate organizations, it is useful to build links between emergency teams and teams involved in longer-term programming to develop a habit of regularly sharing analyses and assessments.</li> <li>Advocacy and promotion of information sharing are required throughout an organization.</li> </ul>

<b>Human Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize induction processes to reinforce an organization’s commitment to conflict-sensitive (CS) practice. Include not only CS concepts but also contextualization and briefings on local dynamics.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training should involve both headquarters and field staff, as well as local partners, to build on their perspectives and analytical insights (Goldwyn, 2016).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different forms of training are required to increase the practical nature of trainings, such as mentoring, simulation exercises, and learning on the job, to link training more directly to practice.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training should include contextual understanding, relationship building, and analytical skills (Lange, 2003).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations should develop a set of competencies for conflict sensitivity for staff for use in recruitment and professional development.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A conflict analysis can be integrated into broader types of situational analyses and needs assessments to prevent increased workloads. Agencies can integrate tools and methodologies within existing procedures such as needs and context assessments.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanisms for reviewing key project parameters against findings from the conflict analysis are required. The use of log frames are suggested. The risks and assumptions column of a log frame can provide a systematic place to identify areas where a project might interact with conflict. (Goldwyn, 2016)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time and space for reflection on conflict sensitivity issues also need to be embedded in the project work plan, for example, by being explicitly included on the agenda of regular project review meetings.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a feedback and review process on the project design involving other staff, partners, and community members.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring for conflict sensitivity throughout the program implementation includes reflecting on the interaction between the intervention and the context as part of the broader intervention monitoring plan. In the education context, this includes continuously monitoring the implementation of education to track any grievances and to meet the changing needs of different regions and social groups without discrimination.</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide incentives for more widespread adoption of conflict sensitive practices. Incentives could help to counter the problem of economic competition that undermines the willingness to adopt conflict sensitive approaches (Ballentine &amp; Haufler 2009). Reward staff and teams who incorporate conflict sensitivity in their daily practice (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2016).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create safe spaces for feedback and complaints from participants and non-participants. This could be achieved by creating time for community members to discuss project activities and their effect on the community. Where it is not possible, acceptable, or safe for people to speak openly about sensitive issues, anonymous mechanisms that are accessible to all need to be set up. Special consideration should be given to giving a voice to vulnerable or marginalized groups as part of that process.</li> </ul>

<b>Enabling Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy and awareness raising to strengthen the commitment to conflict-sensitive development and humanitarian action by local, national, regional, and international actors are vital factors in the overall impact of conflict-sensitivity mainstreaming.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint analysis with other international and national actors operating in the same, or adjacent, area (e.g., NGOs, donors, and national government actors) is crucial to the impact of conflict-sensitive programming (Lange, 2003). Utilize the education cluster system.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education actors can participate in peacebuilding coordination mechanisms to advocate for allocation of conflict-related funding to the education sector. In the best-case scenario, education is then seen by the population, the government, and other peacebuilding agencies as one of the benefits of peace (Neji, 2016).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to education actors, consider including those from the economic, security, and social spheres, such as the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Defense. It may be instructive to state here that coordination takes time, and education actors will need to prioritize from a wide variety of potential peacebuilding actors (government, non-government, United Nations, civil society, local actors, external actors, etc.).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain partners' perspectives on local power dynamics; agencies should take these into account when entering into partnerships and planning programs.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider if you need to build your partner's capacity in conflict sensitivity before signing a partnership agreement. It is important to include partners in any ongoing capacity building once an agreement is signed.</li> </ul>

## FIND OUT MORE

**Ensuring conflict sensitivity in education, particularly in crisis and conflict-affected environments, is essential.** But it also requires careful planning, design and monitoring. For more information about this important topic please consult the USAID Education Links website ([www.edu-links.org](http://www.edu-links.org)), and the [ECCN](#) and [INEE](#) websites.