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Report

Database for the Reconstruction Working Group of the Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law

M. Lankhorst

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Executive Summary

Early in 2013 members of the Reconstruction Tender working group set up an MS Access-based database for storage of information on the 29 projects that make up the Reconstruction Program. The majority of these organizations submitted the requested information. Subsequently, the working group determined that the database should serve as a basis for coordination and networking between members of the group; identifying underlying assumptions and theories of change on which the projects are based; and identifying best practices in terms of monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The database that was initially developed therefore needed to be critically examined from both a structure and content perspective to ensure that it will enable the working group to achieve these goals. This work was entrusted to The Hague Institute and in the present document we report on the results.

*Work done to restructure the database*

To better enable the group to identify theories of change, the database was expanded so as to be able to capture information related to outputs and output indicators. The bulk of the work in terms of restructuring the database went into the creation of a series of reports that summarize specific elements of the stored data and facilitate access to and analysis of the database. An overview of these 42 reports is given in a table.

*Remaining shortcomings in the structure of the database*

First, in its current form, e-mail forms are used to collect data from grant recipients. This has advantages in the sense that once completed forms are sent to the database manager, they are automatically processed and stored in the database. Still, successfully completing and sending forms proved difficult for a number of organizations and caused significant delays. Second, if the database is to facilitate coordination, networking, and learning, it should be easily accessible to the members of the working group. For this purpose the database should be migrated to and made accessible though the Knowledge Platform website.

*Work done to collect additional data and remaining gaps in the data*

Complete data was collected regarding 21 projects, partial information was collected regarding a further 3 projects (first round only), and no information was obtained regarding 5 projects. The data regarding 2 projects (from amongst the 21) could not be analyzed because all outcome and output data had been grouped together in single boxes. In effect, therefore, the analysis was based on the data regarding 19 projects.

*Identifying theories of change: purpose*

The Terms of Reference for this assignment do define the objectives of comparing and clustering theories of change. In the context of this report it is assumed that there are four such objectives:

* To allow grant recipients to understand and learn from how they analyze the problems of conflict, stability, peacebuilding, and development that they deal with in their work;
* To allow grant recipients to understand and learn from the interventions they have designed in order to address these problems;
* To allow grant recipients to assess possible complementarities in terms of approaches to problem analysis and intervention strategies;
* To allow grant recipients and the MFA to learn about the relative effectiveness of similar or related intervention strategies.

*Identifying theories of change for individual projects*

Without insight in the analysis of the precise context within which these projects are intended to operate and effectuate change, it is difficult to formulate adequate individual theories of change. Theories of change for individual projects are best formulated by or in collaboration with the organizations concerned. It is recommended that the working group discusses whether this is worth the necessary time and resources. It is difficult to see, however, how the four objectives listed above can be met without a deeper understanding of individual projects. If indeed the working group decides to develop theories of change for some or all projects, a definition and approach should be agreed upon.

*Two overarching theories of change*

The projects in the Reconstruction Program must be situated in a general context of fragility. They focus on countries and regions affected by (protracted) conflict or recovering from conflict, countries and regions that are characterized by strong ethnic or social divisions, recurrent instability, and often deep poverty. Within these contexts, the projects (at impact level) aim to foster peace and stability, increase human security, and enable development and reconstruction. Among the 29 projects, 2 broad clusters of theories of change can be tentatively identified.

*Cluster 1: Improving state-society interaction to build peace and increase security*

A first cluster of theories of change that emerges from the data centers on the interaction between the state and society or civil society. In terms of outputs, projects in this cluster seek to build state, non-state, and hybrid institutions, to reshape existing institutional architecture, and to build capacities. The 15 projects within this cluster appear to strive for two general types of intermediate result (outcome level):

* To create the conditions for peaceful and constructive dialogue about the past and peaceful and constructive decision making about the present and the future, notably by ensuring voice (inclusiveness, participation) and accountability (responsiveness);
* To increase the security of individual members of the population and the respect for their human rights.

*Building peace and security through development and reconstruction*

A second cluster of projects that emerges from the database focus on enabling or igniting development and reconstruction as a way to build peace and prevent and resolve conflict. These projects involve some form of agricultural development, non-agricultural alternative development, or financial or other support to business.

*Identifying best practices in terms of M&E*

At the moment, the database does not provide sufficient information to give useful overview of the M&E processes and frameworks relied on by the various organizations in the context of their projects. Answers given by many respondents to questions concerning M&E processes are sketchy or simply missing. More importantly, though, several additional questions would have to addressed to the grant recipients to be able to make a start with the identification of best practices in this field. Given the difficulties encountered in collecting data, it is submitted that it might be preferable that such questions are discussed in a sub-group of organizations dedicated to these issues.

1. Introduction and reminder of the terms of reference

The Reconstruction Tender working group of the Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law brings together all the organizations that received a grant in the context of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Reconstruction Tender 2012-2015. All the 29 projects tackle (elements of) the aim of this tender:

1. To improve security for citizens (human security);
2. To help build a legitimate government with sufficient capacity;
3. To create peace dividend.

Although the arguments for the statement that security, legitimate governments and peace dividend are interlinked sound convincing, the fact is that there is very little empirical evidence supporting this assumption. The 29 reconstruction projects therefore form a potential laboratory for testing the actual linkages between security, legitimate governments and peace dividend in furthering development in fragile and conflict-affected settings, as well as the influence that local and international civil society can have on this. The working group was created to facilitate coordination, networking and learning, both on a thematic and geographical level.

Early in 2013 members of the working group set up an MS Access-based database for storage of information on the 29 projects and the majority of the organizations concerned submitted information about their projects. Subsequently, the working group identified the following objectives for the database:

1. Facilitation of coordination and networking – the database should provide project and contact information, so as to facilitate contact and information sharing between the organizations, to identify areas of shared interest either in geographical or thematic terms, and to identify opportunities for joint action;
2. Identifying theories of change – the database should provide the starting point for the identification of the underlying assumptions and theories of change on which the projects are based and should make it possible to compare and where feasible cluster these;
3. Identifying best practices in terms of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) – the database should also provide a starting point for the identification of best practices in M&E of peace building and reconstruction activities so as to strengthen M&E practices of implementing organizations, and to serve as input for future MFA tender procedures.

The database that was initially developed therefore needed to be critically examined from both a structure and content perspective to ensure that it will enable the working group to achieve these goals. In addition, the working group determined that additional information would have to be collected about the 29 projects. This work was entrusted to The Hague Institute and in the present document we report on the results. Specifically, in the Terms of Reference for this assignment, the Institute was asked to provide the following:

1. An overview of the changes made to the structure of the database and of the further changes that are needed to address remaining issues regarding the structure or management of the database;
2. An overview of the additional information gathered and of the information still missing;
3. An overview of the individual and grouped theories of change that underpin the projects;
4. An overview of the M&E processes and frameworks relied on by the various organizations in the context of their project.

These four overviews are presented in the following sections. A final section concludes with a number of additional recommendations to the working group.

1. Structure of the database
   1. Work done to restructure the database

The database, as it was created late in 2012, only included information at impact and outcome level and not at output level. In consultation with the Focal Point Persons appointed by the working group members it was decided that information at output level would be necessary in order to identify and analyze the theories of change underlying the projects. The database was therefore expanded with three output columns per outcome, plus three additional columns for the related output indicators. During the collection of the data it became clear that a small number of organizations had projects that had more than the originally foreseen three outcomes. For this reason, a fourth, fifth and sixth series of columns were added to store data concerning these outcomes, outcome indicators, outputs, and output indicators.

The bulk of the work in terms of restructuring the database went into the creation of a series of queries and reports that facilitate access to and analysis of the database. A query is essentially a question to the database to show parts of the database that satisfy certain criteria (e.g. show the name of the organization and the project name of all projects that are located in country A and involve OECD DAC Purpose Code 15160). In MS Access the result of a query is shown in a basic spreadsheet format which isn’t easily read. To make the results readable a report can be drawn up that can be more easily consulted and that can be exported to Word or Excel. In the table below a list is presented of all the reports that were created. It should be noted that when new information is added to the database, all related queries and reports are automatically updated.

**Table 2.1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reports** | |
| **Name** | **Information** |
| Report 100 – Organization and Project Details | Basic information about the organizations and projects (name of the organization, name of the project, contact details, etc.) |
| Report 200 – Countries, areas, and partners | Overview of all projects, the target countries and areas, and partner organizations involved |
| Report 201 – South Sudan | Idem for South Sudan |
| Report 202 – Burundi | Idem for Burundi |
| Report 203 – DRC | Idem for DRC |
| Report 204 – Uganda | Idem for Uganda |
| Report 205 – Afghanistan | Idem for Afghanistan |
| Report 206 – Colombia | Idem for Colombia |
| Report 207 – Guatemala | Idem for Guatemala |
| Report 208 – Yemen | Idem for Yemen |
| Report 209 – Ethiopia | Idem for Ethiopia |
| Report 210 – Honduras | Idem for Honduras |
| Report 211 – El Salvador | Idem for El Salvador |
| Report 212 – Somalia | Idem for Somalia |
| Report 213 – Pakistan | Idem for Pakistan |
| Report 300 – Purpose and Impact | Overview of all projects’ purpose and impact |
| Report 301 – Purpose Code 151XX | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on government and civil society (OECD DAC Code 151) |
| Report 302 – Purpose Code 15160 | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Human Rights (OECD DAC Code 15160 ) |
| Report 303 – Purpose Code 15160 South Sudan | Overview of projects in South Sudan with purpose focusing on Human Rights (OECD DAC Code 15160 ) |
| Report 304 – Purpose Code 15160 Burundi | Overview of projects in Burundi with purpose focusing on Human Rights (OECD DAC Code 15160) |
| Report 305 – Purpose Code 15160 DRC | Overview of projects in the DRC with purpose focusing on Human Rights (OECD DAC Code 15160) |
| Report 306 – Purpose Code 15150 | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Democratic Participation and Civil Society (OECD DAC Code 15150) |
| Report 307 – Purpose Code 15150 South Sudan | Overview of projects in South Sudan with purpose focusing on Democratic Participation and Civil Society (OECD DAC Code 15150) |
| Report 308 – Purpose Code 15150 Burundi | Overview of projects in Burundi with purpose focusing on Democratic Participation and Civil Society (OECD DAC Code 15150) |
| Report 309 – Purpose Code 15150 DRC | Overview of projects in the DRC with purpose focusing on Democratic Participation and Civil Society (OECD DAC Code 15150) |
| Report 310 – Purpose Code 15130 | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on legal and judicial development (OECD DAC Code 15130 ) |
| Report 311 – Purpose Code 152XX | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Conflict Prevention and Resolution, Peace, and Security (OECD DAC Code 152) |
| Report 312 – Purpose Code 15220 | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Civilian Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution (OECD DAC Code 15220) |
| Report 313 – Purpose Code 15220 South Sudan | Overview of projects in South Sudan with purpose focusing on Civilian Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution (OECD DAC Code 15220) |
| Report 314 – Purpose Code 15220 Burundi | Overview of projects in Burundi with purpose focusing on Civilian Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution (OECD DAC Code 15220) |
| Report 315 – Purpose Code 15220 DRC | Overview of projects in the DRC with purpose focusing on Civilian Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution (OECD DAC Code 15220) |
| Report 316 – Purpose Code 15210 | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Security System Management and Reform (OECD DAC Code 15210) |
| Report 317 – Purpose Code 311XX | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Agriculture (OECD DAC Code 311) |
| Report 318 – Purpose Code 113XX | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Secondary Education (OECD DAC Code 113) |
| Report 319 – Purpose Code 730XX | Overview of projects with purpose focusing on Humanitarian Relief and Reconstruction (OECD DAC Code 730) |
| Report 350 – South Sudan Purpose and Impact | Overview of the purpose and impact of all projects in South Sudan |
| Report 351 – Burundi Purpose and Impact | Idem Burundi |
| Report 352 – DRC Purpose and Impact | Idem DRC |
| Report 400 – Outcomes and Indicators | Overview of the outcomes and related indicators for all projects |
| Report 500 – Outcomes and Outputs | Overview of the outcomes and outputs for all projects |
| Report 501 – Main Outcomes and Outputs | Overview of the main (max 3) outcomes and outputs for all projects |
| Report 600 – Learning Issues | Overview of information relating to M&E and research for all projects |

* 1. Remaining shortcomings in the structure of the database

In late 2012 and early 2013 and again in the fall of 2013 e-mail forms were used to collect data from grant recipients. The advantage of using e-mail forms is that once the form is completed and returned to sender, MS Access automatically stores the data provided in the database, thus removing the need to manually enter data. With 66 questions concerning each of the 29 projects, this was an important consideration. Still, the use of e-mail forms presented a number of problems. Most importantly, MS Access can only process the data provided if the completed e-mail form is sent in a direct reply to the message coming from the database manager. This meant that if several persons from one organization were involved in completing a form, they could not forward it to one and other and then send it back to the database manager. This went wrong in a number of cases and meant that data had to be sent several times and in the case of two projects had to be entered manually. For this reason, data collection took considerably more time than foreseen.

The database should facilitate coordination, networking, and learning (initially on theories of change and M&E practices). If it is to fulfill this purpose, it should be easily accessible to the members of the working group. At present, the database is saved on the computer of the database manager. It can be copied, but as soon as new data is provided the copy will be outdated. Creating copies also introduces the risk of sowing confusion. Reports can be extracted from the database and spread among the members of the working groups, but these too are fixed in time and do not evolve with the database. Ideally, therefore, the database will be made accessible to working group members through the internet. The entry point could be the Knowledge Platform website. Initial discussions on this topic with working group members suggest that outside partners should not have access to the database. Working group members should have read-only rights. Data will then be provided through web-based forms. A database manager retains administrator rights and checks the data provided before it is stored.

To facilitate the reading and analysis of the data in the database, some further steps could be taken. The answers given to a number of questions vary a lot from one organization to another in terms of the way in which the question is interpreted, the amount of language or information used to answer the question, and the way in which the data provided is structured or presented. It might make sense, therefore, to complement these questions with definitions or guidance, to provide examples of good and bad answers, to introduce a maximum number of characters, or to work with drop boxes. These issues can be considered as working group members study the present report and the database. Finally, as is explained in more detail below, the database contains relatively little useful information in terms of M&E frameworks and Coordination. At a later stage, if this is considered useful and feasible by the members of the working group, the database may therefore have to be expanded so as to be able to draw in extra information on these matters.

1. Content of the database
   1. Work done to collect additional data

Twenty one organizations received a grant within the context of the MFA’s Reconstruction Program. The number of projects funded within this program is 29. The following table provides an overview of the relevant organizations (in alphabetical order), projects, and target countries. As explained, in late 2012 and early 2013 these organizations were asked to provide data concerning their projects. In this period, data was received regarding 17 projects (see the table). In the fall of 2013, therefore, the 9 organizations that had not responded in the first round were asked to provide full information about their projects (i.e. all the questions of the first round, plus those regarding output-level information of the second), whilst the other 12 organizations were asked to provide additional information only. Annex 1 provides an overview of the projects per country (14 countries with at least 2 projects).

**Table 3.1**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Organization** | **#** | **Project Name** | **Target Countries** | **Result 1st Round** |
| 1 | Acord | 1 | Pan Africa Program | 12 African countries | No data received |
| 2 | Awepa | 2 | Local Councils Capacity Building | South Sudan | No data received |
| 3 | Care NL | 3 | Foundation for Peace | Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen | Data provided |
| 4 | Peace under Construction | Burundi, South Sudan | Data provided |
| 4 | Center for Conflict Resolution | 5 | Building Peace and Human Security | South Sudan, Burundi, DRC, Uganda, Rwanda | Data provided |
| 5 | Cordaid | 6 | Restoring the Contract | Burundi, DRC | Data provided |
| 6 | GPPAC | 7 | Consolidating Peace Building | Burundi, DRC, Uganda, Rwanda | Data provided |
| 7 | Hivos | 8 | Human Security and Justice | El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras | No data received |
| 8 | ICCO | 9 | Building Protection | Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador | Data provided |
| 9 | IKV Pax Christi | 10 | Van Fragiel naar Stabiel | Colombia, Guatemala | No data received |
| 10 | IRC UK | 11 | Promoting Peace and Security | Burundi, Rwanda | No data received |
| 12 | Partnership for Peace | Afghanistan, Pakistan | No data received |
| 11 | NIMD | 13 | Linking Civil and Political Societies | Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia | Data provided |
| 12 | Oxfam GB | 14 | Creating Enabling Conditions for Pastoralists | Ethiopia, Somalia | No data received |
| 13 | Oxfam/Novib | 15 | Beyond Borders | Burundi, Rwanda, DRC | No data received |
| 16 | South Sudan Peace and Prosperity | South Sudan | No data received |
| 17 | Citizens First | Afghanistan, Pakistan | No data received |
| 14 | Saferworld | 18 | Improving Reconstruction and Development | Zuid-Soedan, Jemen, Bangladesh | Data provided |
| 15 | Save the Children | 19 | Empowerment of Youth | South Sudan, Uganda | Data provided |
| 20 | Women and Youth Empowerment | Afghanistan, Pakistan | Data provided |
| 16 | Search for Common Ground | 21 | Strengthening Participation | Palestinian Occupied Territories, Burundi, Rwanda, DRC | Data provided |
| 17 | SOMO | 22 | Road Map to Sustainable Peace | DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, POC, Colombia | Data provided |
| 18 | Spark | 23 | Rapid Rural Job Creation | Burundi, Rwanda, Zuid-Soedan, Jemen | Data provided |
| 19 | VNG-International | 24 | Interlinking Peacebuilding | South Sudan | No data received |
| 20 | World Vision | 25 | Reconstruction for Peace and Human Security | South Sudan | No data received |
| 21 | ZOA | 26 | Hope and Recovery | South Sudan, Ethiopia | Data provided |
| 27 | Promoting human security in Ruzizi Valley | Burundi, DRC | Data provided |
| 28 | Land and Water for Human Security | Afghanistan, Sudan, Uganda | Data provided |
| 29 | Semi-Pastoralist Conflict Mitigation | South Sudan | Data provided |

Once data was received, some additional work was needed to ensure that it was integrated in the database in a way that allowed for easy reading and analysis. In particular, the additional data received from the organizations that had already responded in the first round was stored in a different row of the database than the original entry. This information therefore had to be cut and pasted into the right row. Certain organizations completed the form in a short-hand way, notably by putting the information about all outcomes in the box on the form concerning outcome 1, and so on for all outcome indicators, outputs, and output indicators. All this data had to be separated and pasted into the right cells in the database. This was a further reason for considerable delays in data collection. In addition, some entries were in Dutch and had to be translated to English, other entries used different spelling (e.g. for the name of the same country), which needed to be synchronized to allow the queries to do their work. Finally, to a very limited extent, some simple data was added in spaces left blank by the grant recipients (in particular in the column regarding the OECD DAC Purpose codes).

* 1. Remaining gaps in the data

The following table provides information about the data stored in the database as per the 1st of January 2014 (i.e. after completion of the second round). The results can be summarized as follows: complete data was collected regarding 21 projects, partial information was collected regarding a further 3 projects (first round only), and no information was obtained regarding 5 projects. The data regarding 2 projects (from amongst the 21) could not be analyzed because all outcome and output data had been grouped together in single boxes. In effect, therefore, the analysis can be based on the data regarding 19 projects. Though it is quite time-consuming, it should not be difficult for the organization concerned to split-out the data regarding the 20th and 21st projects.

**Table 3.2**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Organization** | **#** | **Project Name** | **Status** | **Comment** |
| 1 | Acord | 1 | Pan Africa Program | No data received | - |
| 2 | Awepa | 2 | Local Councils Capacity Building | All data received | - |
| 3 | Care NL | 3 | Foundation for Peace | All data received | - |
| 4 | Peace under Construction | All data received | - |
| 4 | Center for Conflict Resolution | 5 | Building Peace and Human Security | All data received | - |
| 5 | Cordaid | 6 | Restoring the Contract | Only 1st round, additional information missing | - |
| 6 | GPPAC | 7 | Consolidating Peace Building | All data received | - |
| 7 | Hivos | 8 | Human Security and Justice | All data received | - |
| 8 | ICCO | 9 | Building Protection | Only 1st round, additional information missing | - |
| 9 | IKV Pax Christi | 10 | Van Fragiel naar Stabiel | No data received | - |
| 10 | IRC UK | 11 | Promoting Peace and Security | No data received | - |
| 12 | Partnership for Peace | No data received | - |
| 11 | NIMD | 13 | Linking Civil and Political Societies | All data received | - |
| 12 | Oxfam GB | 14 | Creating Enabling Conditions for Pastoralists | All data received | - |
| 13 | Oxfam/Novib | 15 | Beyond Borders | All data received | - |
| 16 | South Sudan Peace and Prosperity | All data received | All data blocked together and cannot be analyzed |
| 17 | Citizens First | All data received | All data blocked together and cannot be analyzed |
| 14 | Saferworld | 18 | Improving Reconstruction and Development | Only 1st round, additional information missing | - |
| 15 | Save the Children | 19 | Empowerment of Youth | All data received | - |
| 20 | Women and Youth Empowerment | All data received | - |
| 16 | Search for Common Ground | 21 | Strengthening Participation | All data received | - |
| 17 | SOMO | 22 | Road Map to Sustainable Peace | All data received | - |
| 18 | Spark | 23 | Rapid Rural Job Creation | All data received | - |
| 19 | VNG-International | 24 | Interlinking Peacebuilding | All data received | - |
| 20 | World Vision | 25 | Reconstruction for Peace and Human Security | No data received | - |
| 21 | ZOA | 26 | Hope and Recovery | All data received | - |
| 27 | Promoting human security in Ruzizi Valley | All data received | - |
| 28 | Land and Water for Human Security | All data received | - |
| 29 | Semi-Pastoralist Conflict Mitigation | All data received | - |

1. Identifying theories of change

4.1 Definition and approach

As part of its Action Plan for 2013-2014, the working group intends to study the theories of change underlying individual projects in the Reconstruction Program, to compare these, and, where possible, to form clusters of similarly-oriented projects. For this purpose, the working group has asked for an overview identifying individual projects’ theory of change, as well as a starting point for developing such clusters.

It should be noted that no specific definition of the term theory of change has been adopted by the working group. Within the working group, the term is generally used to refer to the intervention logic of a project, or, in other words, to the overall objective of the project and the different steps that are, explicitly or implicitly, foreseen within the context of this project to bring this change about. In addition, the Terms of Reference for this assignment do define the objectives of comparing and clustering theories of change. In the context of this report it will be assumed that there are four such objectives:

* To allow grant recipients to understand and learn from how they analyze the problems of conflict, stability, peacebuilding, and development that they deal with in their work;
* To allow grant recipients to understand and learn from the interventions they have designed in order to address these problems;
* To allow grant recipients to assess possible complementarities in terms of approaches to problem analysis and intervention strategies;
* To allow grant recipients and the MFA to learn about the relative effectiveness of similar or related intervention strategies.

The responses given by grant recipients to the question concerning a tentative theory of change for their project differ considerably in nature. As can be seen in Annex 2 – Report 600 – Learning Issues, some organizations provided no answer to this question, others restate their overall objective, others still list the overall objective, the main outcomes, and intervention strategies, and only a few develop this into a shorter or longer narrative that addresses issues of causality. In many cases, the intervention logic driving a project is better appreciated by looking at the overall objective, outcomes, and outputs, as presented in Annex 3 – Report 300 – Purpose and Impact, Annex 4 – Report 400 – Outcomes and Indicators, and Report 500 – Outcomes and Outputs (not presented as an Annex because of its size). Still, without insight in the analysis of the precise context within which these projects are intended to operate and effectuate change, it is difficult to formulate adequate individual theories of change.

Below, two overarching clusters of theories of change are identified that appear to capture most of the projects funded through the Reconstruction Program. Theories of change for individual projects are best formulated by or in collaboration with the organizations concerned. It is recommended that the working group discusses whether this is worth the necessary time and resources. It is difficult to see, however, how the four objectives listed above can be met without a deeper understanding of individual projects.

If indeed the working group decides to develop theories of change for some or all projects, a definition and approach should be agreed upon. A useful starting point for the development of such a definition and starting point is provided in two papers on theories of change by ActKnowledge:

* H. Clark and D. Taplin (2012). [*Theory of Change Basics: A Primer on Theory of Change*](http://www.theoryofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/toco_library/pdf/ToCBasics.pdf) . New York: Actknowledge;
* D. Taplin, H. Clark, E. Collins and D. Colby (2013). [*Technical Papers: A Series of Papers to support Development of Theories of Change Based on Practice in the Field*](http://www.actknowledge.org/resources/documents/ToC-Tech-Papers.pdf). New York: Actknowledge and The Rockefeller Foundation.

The second of these papers gives the following description of the process of developing a theory of change, which could guide the work of working group members to identify individual theories of change. ‘At its heart, a theory of change spells out initiative or program logic. It defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify changes that need to happen earlier (preconditions). The identified changes are mapped graphically in causal pathways of outcomes, showing each outcome in logical relationship to all the others. Interventions, which are activities and outputs of any sort, are mapped to the outcomes pathway to show what stakeholders think it will take to effect the changes, and when. Theory of Change provides a working model against which to test hypotheses and assumptions about what actions will best bring about the intended outcomes.’

4.2 Two overarching clusters

The projects in the Reconstruction Program must be situated in a general context of fragility. They focus on countries and regions affected by (protracted) conflict or recovering from conflict, countries and regions that are characterized by strong ethnic or social divisions, recurrent instability, and often deep poverty. Within these contexts, the projects (at impact level) aim to foster peace and stability, increase human security, and enable development and reconstruction. Whilst all projects ultimately aim to improve the lives of the populations living in these countries and regions, some focus more directly on citizens, groups, or populations, whereas others put emphasis on dynamics at societal, state, or regional level.

*Improving state-society interaction to build peace and increase security*

A first cluster of theories of change that emerges from the data presented in Annexes 2 – 4 center on the interaction between the state and society or civil society. Some projects put focus one of these actors (e.g. by enhancing the state’s responsiveness to the needs of the population, or by enabling the population or CSOs to engage constructively with the state), whereas others focus on both state and society and the spaces where they meet or interact. In terms of outputs, projects in this cluster seek to build state, non-state, and hybrid institutions (e.g. creating mixed security committees, creating advocacy platforms, and creating community based institutions to resolve disputes), to reshape existing institutional architecture (e.g. through decentralization, or security sector reform), and to build capacities (e.g. to engage with other actors, to represent the interests of constituents, to resolve conflict, to deliver justice and deal with crime, and to deliver basic services).

Projects within this cluster appear to strive for two general types of intermediate result (outcome level), which relate to the first two impact level aims of fostering peace and stability and enhancing human security:

* To create the conditions for peaceful and constructive dialogue about the past and peaceful and constructive decision making about the present and the future, notably by ensuring voice (inclusiveness, participation) and accountability (responsiveness);
* To increase the security of individual members of the population and the respect for their human rights.

The table below shows the 15 projects that can be brought under the heading of Improving state-society interaction to build peace and increase security. As the last column shows, this cluster brings together projects that, in particular, involve OECD DAC Purpose codes 151 (Government and Civil Society General) and 152 (Conflict Prevention and Resolution, Peace and Security). An overview of these codes is provided in Annex 5. The most frequently occurring codes are 15220 (Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution), 15150 (Democratic participation and civil society), and 15160 (Human Rights). The most frequently occurring combinations of codes are: 15210 (Security system management and reform) and 15220; 15210, 15220, and 15160; 15220 and 15150; and 15220 and 15130 (Legal and Judicial Development). Such combinations could provide starting points for the development of sub-clusters, once individual theories of change have been formulated. In that process, the assignment of purpose codes to individual projects should also be reviewed. As is indicated in Table 2.1, in the MS Access database file, Reports 301 up to 319 provide more detailed information about projects involving specific purpose codes and about projects in specific countries involving (combinations of) purpose codes.

**Table 4.2.1**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Organization** | **#** | **Project Name** | **Target Countries** | **OECD DAC Codes** |
| 2 | Awepa | 2 | Local Councils Capacity Building | South Sudan | 15152 |
| 3 | Care NL | 3 | Foundation for Peace | Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen | 15160; 15170; 15210; 15220; 24040; 31163; 15220; 25020 |
| 4 | Peace under Construction | Burundi, South Sudan | 15110; 15150; 15153; 15220; 24040; 13020; 15130; 15160; 22030; 43050 |
| 4 | Center for Conflict Resolution | 5 | Building Peace and Human Security | South Sudan, Burundi, DRC, Uganda, Rwanda | 15112; 15160; 15170; 15210; 15220 |
| 5 | Cordaid | 6 | Restoring the Contract | Burundi, DRC | 15112; 15113; 15130; 15150; 15170; 15210; 15220 |
| 6 | GPPAC | 7 | Consolidating Peace Building | Burundi, DRC, Uganda, Rwanda | 15220 |
| 7 | Hivos | 8 | Human Security and Justice | El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras | 15130; 15150; 15160; 15210 |
| 8 | ICCO | 9 | Building Protection | Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador | 15150; 15160; 15220 |
| 11 | NIMD | 13 | Linking Civil and Political Societies | Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia | 15220; 32210; 14010 |
| 14 | Saferworld | 18 | Improving Reconstruction and Development | Zuid-Soedan, Jemen, Bangladesh | 15210; 15220 |
| 15 | Save the Children | 19 | Empowerment of Youth | South Sudan, Uganda | 15130 , 11330 |
| 20 | Women and Youth Empowerment | Afghanistan, Pakistan | 16050, 15160, 11330 |
| 16 | Search for Common Ground | 21 | Strengthening Participation | Palestinian Occupied Territories, Burundi, Rwanda, DRC | 15150; 15153; 15220; 22030 |
| 19 | VNG-International | 24 | Interlinking Peacebuilding | South Sudan | 15112; 15220 |

*Building peace and security through development and reconstruction*

A second cluster of projects that emerges from the database focus on enabling or igniting development and reconstruction as a way to build peace and prevent and resolve conflict. These projects involve some form of agricultural development, non-agricultural alternative development, or financial or other support to business. Frequently cited purpose codes, in this regard, fall in the 311-category (Agriculture). The following table provides a list of the x projects that can brought under this heading.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Organization** | **#** | **Project Name** | **Target Countries** | **OECD DAC Codes** |
| 3 | Care NL | 3 | Foundation for Peace | Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen | 15160; 15170; 15210; 15220; 24040; 31163; 15220; 25020 |
| 4 | Peace under Construction | Burundi, South Sudan | 15110; 15150; 15153; 15220; 24040; 13020; 15130; 15160; 22030; 43050 |
| 12 | Oxfam GB | 14 | Creating Enabling Conditions for Pastoralists | Ethiopia, Somalia | 14015; 14081; 15150; 31140; 31163; 31261 |
| 17 | SOMO | 22 | Road Map to Sustainable Peace | DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, POC, Colombia | 15150; 15160 |
| 18 | Spark | 23 | Rapid Rural Job Creation | Burundi, Rwanda, Zuid-Soedan, Jemen | 25010; 31120; 31191; 32130; 73010 |
| 21 | ZOA | 26 | Hope and Recovery | South Sudan, Ethiopia | 15220; 73010; 31166; 31161; 14031; 11330 |
| 27 | Promoting human security in Ruzizi Valley | Burundi, DRC | 15220; 73010; 31166; 31161; 11330 |
| 28 | Land and Water for Human Security | Afghanistan, Sudan, Uganda | 15220; 73010; 11220; 14031; 11330; 31166 |
| 29 | Semi-Pastoralist Conflict Mitigation | South Sudan | 15220; 73010; 14031;11220; 31161 |

1. Identifying best practices in the field of M&E

As regards their M&E processes, thus far, organizations have been asked to provide information about (see Report 600 – Learning Issues):

* The research questions they have formulated in the context of their project;
* The baseline study foreseen as part of their project;
* Whether an impact study is foreseen in their project.

In addition, organizations were asked to provide information about their indicators at outcome and output level. It is not possible, at this moment, to provide a useful overview of the M&E processes and frameworks relied on by the various organizations in the context of their projects. This is so for two reasons.

Firstly, as is the case with the information provided regarding theories of change, quite a few of the answers to questions concerning M&E processes are very sketchy or simply missing. More importantly, though, several additional questions would have to addressed to the grant recipients to be able to make a start with the identification of best practices in this field (concerning data collection methods, the frequency of data collection, data sources, approaches to the assessment of outputs and outcomes, actors involved and their relation to implementing partners, etc.). Given the difficulties encountered in collecting data, it is submitted that it might be preferable that such questions are discussed in a sub-group of organizations dedicated to these issues; this is likely to be more fruitful.

1. Concluding remark

As explained in the Introduction, in addition to examining theories of change and M&E processes, the working group aims to make use of the database in order to facilitate of coordination and networking. In its present form, the database provides extensive information about the substance of the projects, as well as relevant contact information that allows organizations to enter into contact discuss areas of shared interest or opportunities for joint action (see Annex 6). It does not, however, allow grant recipients to coordinate activities by providing information about the progress that has been made with the implementation of the project and about the planning of future activities. These were key issues mentioned by working group members at earlier stages in the debate about the aims of the working group and of the database. It may be worth reflecting, once again, on the need for such information and on the way in which that need can be met.