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A Human Rights Based Approach to Peace Building - Summary

In spite of the intuitive sense of similarities between the promotion of human rights and peace, experience from development countries has emphasised the need to understand the relationship between the promotion of human rights and peace-building. Sometimes the approaches can be conflicting, but the possibilities for synergies are numerous. The application of a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and its four principles can be a useful tool to integrate the two. Possible steps can be to:

1. Analyse the current situation in the country, assuming that HRBA and peace-building have a positive and negative interdependence;
 2. Assess the claims of rights holders and the response and capacity of the duty bearers and how these relate to the key drivers of peace and conflict. Based on this analysis, find practical approaches and options avoiding mutual negative impacts and exploring mutually enforcing opportunities. Ask how peace-building can apply HRBA and the promotion of human rights can be conflict sensitive. Key issues to reflect upon, during assessment, according to Swedish policy is the choice of timing and methodology;
 3. When the HRBA is made conflict sensitive and applied to peace-building, the following opportunities can be utilised:
 - Integration: Initiatives can be supported that integrate both HRBA and peace-building by addressing mutual root causes. For example, programmes that address both uneven land distribution (HRBA) and the conflicts caused by this distribution (peace-building).
 - Twinning: Initiatives can be supported where human rights and peace-building are complementary paving way for one and another. For example, when a programme on disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration of combatants (DDR - peace-building) is paving way for a programme in support of claims (HRBA) by war victims, and vice versa, in a planned and harmonised way, for example, by carefully documenting, during the demobilisation, the former combatants and their participation in the conflict.
 4. When the context change and/or when preparing for a new phase of a strategy or programme, a re-assessment of the current situation is needed.
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Finally, peace-building should always be implemented in relation to the four HRBA principles. Possible questions to ask when working “in” and “on” conflict could be:

<p>Non-discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the root causes of discrimination and how can HR and peace-building interventions help address them? • How can powerful actors be included as well as the actors with less access to influence and power this be done? • In what way can women be empowered to participate? • How can the rights of people with special needs, for example disabled people, be integrated into analysis and how can they be supported? • How can persons with psychological and physical disabilities and indigenous groups be supported to resist violent conflict and benefit from protection? 	<p>Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has access to information and in what way is it used in relation to the conflict? Is it misused for propaganda reasons? • How can the risk of affecting an eventual peace process when promoting transparency from a HRBA be mediated? • When promoting transparency from a HRBA, there is a risk of affecting an eventual peace process. How can this • What are the implications of timing in your context? • Are there opportunities to support initiatives on documentation as access to information is essential for justice, reconciliation and peace?
<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can support to build capacity in civil society be made flexible while taking calculated risks? • How can potentially powerful and democratic groups be supported? • Are there ways of strengthening women's participation in decision-making? 	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there options for supporting state building? • Are there possibilities to strengthen local governance? • In what way can state-building and civil society support be balanced? • Can the post conflict process of reforms of the constitution, parliament, civil service etc. provide a window of opportunity to strengthen the state's adherence and capacity as duty bearer? • How can transitional justice be supported while aiming at rule of law?

To learn more on HRBA and peace building, read the full thematic area brief.