

The Role of Citizens in Service Delivery and Building State Legitimacy in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations

The [World Bank](#), in partnership with the [Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University](#), convened a conference themed “**The Role of Citizens in Service Delivery and Building State Legitimacy in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations**,”¹ on **Monday, December 5, 2016**.

Bridging the academic and policy worlds, the conference brought together about 80 government representatives from fragile and conflict-affected states, research institutions, and the international development community to present research and share lessons learned and experiences on the nexus between state legitimacy, service delivery, and fragile, conflict-affected, and violent (FCV) situations and how to improve new and ongoing development programs in these contexts.

Two billion people now live in countries where development outcomes are affected [by fragility, conflict, and violence](#), and by 2030, the share of global poor living in fragile and conflict-affected situations is projected to reach 46 percent. Addressing this challenge is a strategic priority for the World Bank Group, critical to achieve its twin goals to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. [IDA](#), the Bank’s fund for the world’s poorest countries, expects to increase funding to World Bank operations in [fragile and conflict-affected states](#) in the coming years.

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Welcome: Susan Wong, Global Lead for Community-Driven Development (CDD), World Bank

Opening Remarks:

- Ede Jorge Ijjasz-Vasquez, Sr. Director, Social, Urban, Rural, and Resilience Global Practice, World Bank
- Alexandre Marc, Chief Specialist, FCV Cross-Cutting Solution Area, World Bank
- Eileen Babbitt, Director, Institute for Human Security, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy ([presentation](#))

Senior staff from the World Bank and the Fletcher School welcomed participants to the workshop. In their remarks, they emphasized the timeliness and relevance of the conference as the international development community seeks to respond better to needs in fragile and conflict-affected situations, outlined ongoing work and research on this topic by their respective institutions, and discussed the role of legitimacy, which is especially challenging to develop in FCV contexts, in building more durable development outcomes.

Panel Discussion: Latest Research on State Legitimacy, Service Delivery and Peace-Building

Presenters

¹ The conference was delivered in partnership with [Tufts University’s Institute for Human Security](#) and the [World Peace Foundation at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy](#), and [the Feinstein International Center at the Friedman School of Nutrition](#). Other partners included the [Geneva Institute of Graduate Studies](#), and the [Overseas Development Institute’s \(ODI\) Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium \(SLRC\)](#). The research was supported by the [Carnegie Corporation of New York](#), [UK Aid](#), and the [European Union](#).

- Dyan Mazurana, The Fletcher School & Rachel Slater, Research Director SLRC, ODI ([presentation](#))
- Audrey Sacks, World Bank Indonesia, Decentralized Governance and Violence in Indonesia ([presentation](#))
- Corey Pattison & Susan Wong, World Bank, Taking Stock of Community-Driven Development in Fragile and Conflict Situations: Lessons Learned from the First Generation ([presentation](#))



Presenting findings from a [study spanning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Uganda](#), researchers from the [Fletcher School](#) and [SLRC](#) offered insights on what factors help improve state legitimacy.

They were joined by World Bank researchers, who presented findings from a [study on service delivery and routine violence in Indonesia](#) and an update of a previous meta-analysis on the [impacts of CDD programs in fragile and conflict-affected situations](#).

Among the key insights:

- *Who* delivers the services matters less than *how well* the services are delivered. Governments seeking to improve their legitimacy among their citizens should seek to improve the quality of these services, even if they are delivered through non-governmental organizations. Poor delivery can quickly destroy hard-fought trust in state institutions.
- The timeframe for building the political and social environment to bolster legitimacy extends well beyond the donor project cycle.
- Routine violence in Indonesia *increased* as basic service delivery increased, possibly due to distributional conflicts between those receiving the services and those who did not. Indonesia's national CDD program, known as PNPM, mitigated the risk of conflict in local service delivery projects by integrating participatory processes and conflict resolution mechanisms into its design, and its effective complaints handling mechanisms defused tensions before they escalated.
- Lessons from Afghanistan, Nepal, the Philippines, and Myanmar show that for long-term sustainability, it is critical to embed a nascent CDD project in a national strategy and develop a clear road map for operating at national scale from the start.

Panel Discussions: Government Strategies to Build State Legitimacy and Improve Service Delivery in Fragile Situations

Session A: Moderator: Eileen Babbitt, The Fletcher School

- Scott Guggenheim, Advisor to President, Afghanistan ([presentation](#))
- Muhammed Gulleid, Deputy Governor of Islo County, Kenya
- Jess Dureza, Secretary of the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process, Philippines

Government representatives from fragile and conflict-affected countries—Afghanistan, Kenya, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, and Cameroon—shared their national experiences with CDD projects and discussed how to overcome common challenges in operations, such as building legitimacy, coordinating between ministries, and reaching far-flung areas of these countries.

In the first session, the Afghanistan representative spoke on how the country's new [Citizen Charter program](#) is an attempt to improve on the long-running National Solidarity Program through encouraging ministerial coordination and bolstering state legitimacy. The representative from Kenya discussed challenges of ensuring basic service delivery and improving state legitimacy in more remote parts of his country. The representative from the Philippines briefed the audience on the revived peace process and emphasized the need for a peace lens and social cohesion in project implementation, especially in contested regions.

Session B: Moderator: Markus Kostner, Global Lead, Stability, Peace and Security, World Bank

- K. Mahesan, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Sri Lanka ([presentation](#))
- Elnur Abbaszade, Comm. Mobilizer Manager, Social Fund for Development of IDPs, Azerbaijan ([presentation](#))
- Marie M. Nga, PNDP Director, Cameroon ([presentation](#))

In the second session, the representative from Sri Lanka provided background on his country's emergence from decades of war, ongoing development programs, with insights on what has worked for the country. The representative from Azerbaijan spoke on the Social Fund for the Development of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and some of the positive results from the program especially related to IDPs. The Cameroon representative discussed the experiences of [the National CDD Program \(PNDP\)](#) and how the program strengthened local authorities to engage better with citizens to promote local development.

Roundtable Discussions and Report Back

Participants broke out into three regional groups, based around Africa, South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific/Europe and Central Asia, to discuss the specific challenges to state legitimacy and citizen-state relations, as well as lessons learned from grappling with or overcoming these challenges. Each group summarized their findings for the benefit of conference participants.



Common Challenges

Challenges Related to Context

- **Insecurity and physical/geographic isolation of project areas.** Many project areas are in remote areas, and insecurity, especially in fragile, conflict-affected, or violent contexts can complicate access even more, hampering the smooth running of a development project.
- **Addressing displacement and IDPs.** Fragile and conflict-affected contexts often face large numbers of internally displaced persons, refugees, and/or returnees who have been affected by conflict. These vulnerable populations often change community dynamics and require additional support.
- **Mistrust of foreign support.** Projects that appear supported by foreign countries may run into mistrust by locals, complicating the smooth delivery of the project.

Challenges from Working with Institutions

- **Working with the government.** Not all governments coordinate readily on a development operation. At the ground level, government representatives may lack familiarity, engagement, or participation in communities.
- **Overriding lack of coherence in policy.** Inconsistent and duplicative policies governing the implementation of international development projects (or even a lack of such policies), as well as fragmentation of institutions and stakeholders hamper the effectiveness of local projects.
- **Governance challenges and corruption.** Similarly, governance challenges and corruption also undermine aid effectiveness.
- **Integration challenges.** Challenges can arise when integrating traditional structures into modern/mainstream Government systems, especially around ensuring equitable gender representation on councils. Targeting mechanisms for the poor can also diverge from traditional approaches to communal support.
- **Implementation capacity and poor performance of front-line agencies.** Many implementing agencies, especially those working most closely with communities, lack capacity to perform CDD operations effectively.
- **Unity government dynamics.** Multiple stakeholders within a post-conflict government can make planning and implementing a project difficult.

Project Challenges

- **Lack of broader spillover effects.** Many project benefits are highly localized and do not accrue to a broader population.
- **Ethnic and social diversity or factions.** Divisions within society—ethnic, social, political, etc.—hinder unity of action at the community level and restricts representation in policy dialogue and decisions. In post-conflict environments, prior grievances between groups can prevent the building of trust and reaching reconciliation.

Lessons Learned Across Regions

General Principles

- National programs have to be specific to regions within the countries and contexts; they should embrace experimentation, flexibility, and adaptiveness.
- Recognize that there are forces that cannot be worked around. In many places, traditional established elites make the decisions and working around them is not often successful.
- The nature of the conflict will determine the balance between service delivery and state/peacebuilding.

- Focus on *doing what we do well*; research shows quality really matters.

Project Planning and Working with Governments and Donors

- Coordinate with donors to avoid duplication of effort on the same sectors. More transparency on how donors and where donors work is needed.
- Projects should plan to evolve over time and to engage with the country for the long term.
- Devolution and decentralization can be assisted through developing or empowering provincial councils.
- Messaging and branding is a critical part of any development operation.
- Develop government capacity to implement programs for long-term sustainability.
- Negotiate a linkage between bottom-up planning and top-down information on what's feasible and desirable in a given sector.

Operations and Working with Communities

- Community management can be more cost-effective than other options.
- Use formal and informal mechanisms to widen and deepen participation.
- Plan consultation processes with communities to help manage expectations.
- Develop grievance redress mechanisms with traditional systems in mind.
- Partner with community facilitators.
- Develop feedbacks loops and process evaluation for action learning.



Conference Review and Next Steps

On December 6, government representatives met with staff from the World Bank and the Fletcher School to review their response to the conference, as well as to discuss follow-up steps and possible research using the research data set presented. The countries represented included Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Cameroon, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Nepal. While each country experiences fragility and conflict differently and have their own priorities for their development, there were a number of common threads arising from the discussion:

Program Design

Capacity building. Several countries requested additional assistance in building technical capacity, especially beyond the national level governments. For example, the Sri Lankan government would like a delivery system at the sub-national level. The Pakistan representative said that capacity building for her government is a priority, especially at local and district levels. The Nepal representative noted that the high number of development partners in Nepal, each with their own requirements, result in very prescriptive interventions and the government needs more capacity to design appropriate programs. Nepal's government also faces constraints in training budgets, so consultants hired for these programs need to ensure appropriate knowledge transfer to government staff to ensure program sustainability.

Linking to national and local governments, scaling up, and policy frameworks. Related to building capacity, many country representatives would like to see more resources and research on linking projects to governments and scaling up. The Cameroon representative noted that CDD should go beyond villages and must be linked to the government and decentralization; the government needs to put in place a policy framework to allow for day-to-day operations. For example, she stressed the need for legal recognition for villages to ensure accountability during the transfer of funds to them. Her government is also interested in learning how to scale a project up to the national level. The Azerbaijan representative said that municipalities lack funds to scale up participatory approaches beyond the project and local level. Papua New Guinea is scaling up its CDD program, so they welcomed lessons learned on this topic. Nepal is moving from a national to federalist structure, so the CDD program must be adjusted accordingly and they requested more assistance in that respect.

Research

Research should inform policy. Participants agreed that their governments should be made aware of research results to better design programs. For example, the Pakistan representative called research presented during the conference “exciting findings that should be embedded in government policies.”

Areas for further research. Among the other topics of interest: aid effectiveness, how project benefits can “trickle down” more effectively across geographical areas and sectors, transparency, fragmentation, economic engagement for women, and factors contributing to projects that are on budget and on time.

Learning

State legitimacy as a shared challenge. Many country representatives agreed that building state legitimacy was a key challenge in each of their countries and welcomed more research and operations aimed at improving it. For example, the Afghanistan Citizen's Charter project is geared toward improving state legitimacy in the eyes of citizens.

Recognizing differences in context and fragility/conflict definitions. While conflict and fragility are a common challenge, how these manifest themselves in each country varies. For example, Sri Lanka is shifting towards development from post-emergency reconstruction; Kenya faces low-intensity conflict on its borders from cattle rustling, extremists, and small arms flows, complicating service delivery; Nepal must navigate recovery from conflict, natural disasters, and trading constraints; and Papua New Guinea is geographically divided into many islands and traditional gender roles are deeply entrenched, impairing service delivery and inclusiveness. Many representatives expressed interest in learning from countries that are facing similar problems or have successfully addressed the specific challenges that their country is facing. One-on-one South-South knowledge exchanges must be nuanced by these important differences in context, although they can be a platform for more specific dialogue, such as overcoming small arms flows, on challenges and lessons for each other.

Conferences as a way to deliver the latest research and engage broadly with stakeholders. Country representatives thanked the organizers of the conference and agreed that conferences are a useful way to be brought up to speed on the latest research and to learn from many other countries. The Cameroon representative expressed her appreciation that the conference had a good blend of different countries and research. The Pakistan representative noted that repeating the conference on a different subject matter would offer further learning opportunities on other important topics.

Virtual South-South exchanges. Government representatives agreed that a virtual network among countries facing similar challenges in building state legitimacy in fragile and conflict-affected environments would be useful in sharing lessons and best practices. They committed to participating in one if developed, with representatives from Pakistan, Cameroon, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Nepal endorsing the idea. The representative from Nepal cautioned that the network, if developed, must be sustained and that any learning and insights must be translated to operations.

Next Steps

Sharing presentations. The CDD secretariat agreed to circulate conference presentations and final reports once they are finalized.

Promoting a network of learning and collaboration. The CDD secretariat will include interested individuals in the CDD Community of Practice distribution list, as well as the CDD Collaboration for Development (C4D) site, a World Bank-operated site for external stakeholders to share information with one another. The World Bank will also look into ways of supporting a virtual learning network of FCV countries — including those invited to the conference — to exchange ideas and experiences.