Using CDD for Post-Conflict: Experiences from Aceh

Post-conflict reintegration programs increasingly include assistance to conflict victims and use community-based approaches for targeting and deciding on fund use. Such programs may lead to improvements in social and state-society relations while improving welfare outcomes. The BRA-KDP program, developed to deliver assistance to conflict victims as provided for in the Helsinki peace agreement, covered one-third of villages in Aceh. This note presents findings from a large-scale mixed methods evaluation of the program. It finds that BRA-KDP was successful in reaching a large number of conflict-affected people and had significant welfare impacts. However, the program was less successful in improving social relations, including the acceptance of former combatants in villages, and in building trust in the state. There are a number of implications for reintegration programming elsewhere. While community-based approaches appear to have utility, they are not a “silver bullet” peace-building mechanism. Programs need to reflect the environment in which they work; and links to other reintegration programs are important. Combining assistance to ex-combatants and victims within one program, and ensuring multiple rounds of assistance, may increase social impacts.

INTRODUCTION

There is now consensus that the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life is essential for creating stable peace after civil wars end. Initially, such demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) programs focused exclusively on the needs of former combatants. This has given way to a broader vision of the reintegration process—one that emphasizes the needs of conflict victims as well (Swedish MFA 2006; CIDDR 2009). Community-driven development (CDD) approaches, where villagers themselves identify who should benefit and what funds should be spent on, are viewed as an effective mechanism for channeling such support. CDD can help ensure the right people benefit, that funds are effectively used, and can help strengthen the war-torn social fabric (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner 2003).

The BRA-KDP program in Aceh used a community-based approach to support post-conflict reintegration and recovery. It aimed to provide assistance to civilians who were most affected by the conflict in ways that improved their well-being, that enhanced relations between groups, and that built trust in local government. Village meetings, facilitated by KDP staff, decided on local criteria for who was a victim and how funds should be spent within the village. Ex-combatants were not eligible for BRA-KDP as they were to receive support through a separate program. BRA-KDP’s open menu allowed communities to decide whether to finance public infrastructure or economically beneficial private goods.

This note addresses the following questions:

- How successful was BRA-KDP in improving the welfare of conflict victims, improving social relations and building trust in the state?
- What does the BRA-KDP experience tell us about how CDD can be used for reintegration in other post-conflict areas?
These data allow for an identification of BRA-KDP’s impacts on welfare, social relations and trust in institutions. They also provide a deep understanding of how the program was implemented, why program impacts eventuated, and the sources of variation between areas.

**FINDINGS**

Most BRA-KDP money was used to fund economic activities for individuals or groups. MIS data shows that 89 percent of program funds were used for this with 10 percent invested in public infrastructure. Animal husbandry (at 48 percent of economic activity funds) and

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of BRA-KDP used a number of different sources of information. The primary data source was the Aceh Reintegration and Livelihoods Surveys (ARLS), which were implemented in every sub-district that received the program and in 67 matched control sub-districts. The ARLS, conducted one year after the program ended, included interviews with 2,150 randomly selected households, around 460 village heads and around 1,000 former combatants. Sophisticated statistical strategies for ex-post matching of treatment and control sub-districts, and to control for systematic differences between areas that received the program and those that did not, allow for accurate estimation of program impacts. Additional data was gathered from surveys of KDP district facilitators, from the program’s management information system (MIS) database, and in a series of supervision missions conducted by World Bank and BRA staff.

**Box 1: Reintegration, the Helsinki MoU and BRA-KDP in Aceh**

The Helsinki MoU was signed by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian Government in August 2005 and helped to end a long-running civil war in Aceh that had claimed up to 30,000 lives. Section Three of the MoU provided for reintegration assistance for former combatants, political prisoners and those affected by the conflict. In 2006, the Aceh Reintegration Agency (BRA) was established to deliver government assistance to these groups and to coordinate support for reintegration from donors.

After initial efforts to directly provide assistance to conflict victims had proved challenging, BRA turned to the existing Government of Indonesia Kecamatan Development Program (KDP). KDP, recently re-launched as the National Community Empowerment Program (PNPM), had been working in Aceh through the conflict and was scaled up after the tsunami to cover all areas of the province. The new Community-Based Reintegration Assistance to Conflict Victims (or BRA-KDP) program provided block grants of US$ 6,000–17,000 to villages in higher conflict areas, with communities deciding on who should benefit and how funds should be used. The size of the village block grant was decided based on previous conflict intensity and village population size. The US$ 21.7 million program (six percent was earmarked for operational expenses and 94 percent, or US$ 20.4 million, was disbursed to communities in the form of block grants) was implemented from mid-2006 to mid-2007. 1,724 villages, around one-third of those in Aceh, benefitted.
agriculture and plantations (25 percent) were most preferred. This use of funds differs from regular KDP/PNPM in Aceh, where communities typically use 80-90 percent of resources for local infrastructure. These differences were a result of communities viewing BRA-KDP as providing compensation for conflict hardships, of the widespread need for capital following the conflict’s end, and of messages from BRA’s leadership that individual assistance should be prioritized.

Where part of the block grant was spent on infrastructure, this was often an effort to limit complaints from those who were not selected by communities to receive assistance. The majority of financed infrastructure was aimed at building social cohesion rather than enhancing economic productivity: almost three-quarters of infrastructure funds were used to build community meeting spots and religious facilities.

A large number of people benefited from BRA-KDP and participation and approval rates were high. MIS data shows that 233,282 individuals directly received assistance (22 percent of the overall population of target sub-districts). Thirty-nine percent of beneficiaries were women. ARLS data finds that 57 percent of the population in target areas had heard of the program, 37 percent knew about program meetings, and 20 percent attended. The poorest in villages were as likely as others to participate, but women were less likely to attend meetings. Ninety-six percent of villagers in treatment areas said BRA-KDP was helpful for the village. The most commonly identified issue by villagers was that former GAM combatants, PETA (Defenders of the Homeland) militia or internally displaced people (IDPs) received too much from the program (Figure 1).

Targeting went well but some conflict victims missed out and some non-victims benefited. According to ARLS, 44 percent of all self-identified victims in program areas received support from the project compared to 40 percent of non-victims. Villages often found creative ways to differentiate victims according to the degree of affectedness and to scale assistance accordingly. Most-affected conflict victims (those who had a family member killed, who were injured, whose house was destroyed, or who were displaced by the conflict) on average received more than other victims and non-victims (Figure 2). However, this was largely a result of larger block grants being provided to more affected villages, rather than of effective within-village targeting.

BRA-KDP had large impacts on the welfare of conflict victims. ARLS found that participation of villages in the program is associated with an eleven-point decline in the share classified as poor by village heads. Funds led to increased ownership of assets among households in general and conflict victims in particular. Land use for conflict victims doubled as a result of the program. Conflict victims in areas that received the program were significantly more likely to report their welfare had improved than were victims in non-program areas. There is no evidence of direct welfare impacts in other areas such as school attendance, health and employment.

The program appears to have had fewer positive effects on social relations in target villages and on trust in the state. The ARLS find that social acceptance of returning groups, reported social tensions and divisions, and measures of collective action capacity are similar between areas that received the program and those that did not. There were some positive effects, such as the existence of women’s groups. But overall involvement in associational life was similar for program and non-program areas. There is no consistent evidence of impacts—positive or negative—of BRA-KDP on attitudes to local government. These findings contrast with other research on KDP in Indonesia, which has found positive program effects on various measures of social cohesion and participation in village life (Barron, Diprose and Woolcock 2010). The absence of social impacts may be a result of the one-off nature of the program grants or the fact that funds were spent on private goods that afford relatively few opportunities for cohesion-building collective action.

There is some evidence that BRA-KDP resulted in reduced acceptance by communities of former combatants. Conflict victims in areas that received the program are 18 percent less likely to say they accept ex-combatants in all roles in village life than they would.
have been if they had not received the program; village heads are 19 percent less likely to say they accept ex-combatants. While this has not resulted in increased social tensions or conflict, it does suggest that BRA-KDP was not effective in building relations of trust between victims and former combatants.

The reason for these impacts is not clear but there a number of potential reasons. Supervision missions point to problems with reintegration programs aimed at ex-combatants. In the absence of timely payments to former combatants, some tried to get assistance through BRA-KDP resulting in dissatisfaction from some non-combatants. While the ARLS finds that former combatants did not benefit more than others, the fact that they received funds at all may have caused some resentment from civilian victims. Other potential reasons include an ‘empowerment’ effect of the program on victims, who may feel more able to stand up to demands from ex-combatants. This may increase tensions in the immediate term, but enhance stability in the longer-run.

CONCLUSION

BRA-KDP shows that community-based programs can deliver rapid compensation in ways that have significant development impacts in post-conflict environments. The program was effective in improving the welfare of those most affected by war. While CDD programs are generally used to finance public infrastructure, the program shows that it can also be successful at providing one-off grants for private goods. Scope exists to try similar targeting and delivery mechanisms in other places emerging from conflict.

The BRA-KDP experience also shows that CDD programs need to be linked closely to other post-conflict programs. Failures in reintegration programs targeted at ex-combatants had a negative impact on the program. In this context, the program’s social impacts may have been more positive if combatants were not excluded from benefitting. Acceptance by victims of former combatants was higher in areas whether communities made a deliberate decision to allow them to benefit, either because pre-existing relations were good or to prevent tensions.

The evaluation shows that CDD is not a “silver bullet” peace-building approach. Such programs do not inevitably contribute to enhanced social cohesion, in particular if they have a limited duration. Rather, attention needs to be paid to the complex ways in which introducing resources, and rules for their management, changes power relations on the ground. Tracking the impacts of CDD and other projects in post-conflict contexts is vital to this end.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Globally, continue to experiment with CDD approaches to reintegration. Gathering information on what works, what does not, where, and why is vital for improving the design of future reintegration programs.
- In post-conflict areas where relations between former combatants and civilians are relatively good, deliver assistance to both groups together, preferably using the same mechanism.
- Deliver assistance over multiple rounds to improve the social impacts of community-based reintegration programs. In Aceh, continue to use PNPM for longer-term peace-building and economic recovery.

CITATIONS


