



# DIIS REPORT

Finn Stepputat and Lauren Greenwood

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Whole-of-Government Approaches  
to Fragile States and Situations

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## Summary

As part of the International Research Programme *ReCom*, this report looks into the documented experience of ‘Whole-of-Government Approaches’ (WoGA), a concept which many donor governments adopted in the 2000s to meet the challenges of peace- and state-building in fragile states and situations. The rationale for the WoGA is grounded in the recognition of the links between security, development and political objectives, which, as stated in the OECD’s principles for ‘good international engagement in fragile states and situations’ makes a mixture of political, security, development and other instruments necessary.

Since national security interests have played a role in donor’s engagement in fragile states and situations, development actors have seen new political and security actors entering these theatres. Hence, development actors and practices have been subjected to new pressures, not least to the expectations for rapid results that accompany the heightened political profile of these donor engagements. As the case of Afghanistan has demonstrated, such pressures multiplied once donor governments had ‘boots on the ground’.

On this background, the ambition of this report is to take stock of evaluations of WoGAs in order to answer: 1) if national WoG approaches work according to their objectives of improving joined-up governmental responses to state fragility and conflict; and 2) if it is possible to identify how WoGAs influence the outcomes of international interventions in areas of fragile statehood. The report describes the evolving approaches of the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark, and has identified evaluations and reports that deal with these donors’ activities in Afghanistan, Somalia, (Southern) Sudan, DRC, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Due to the incremental and on-going character of WoGA development, in some senses it is too early to assess whether, how and under what conditions these approaches work, in particular as monitoring and evaluation are inherent weak spots in these approaches. Furthermore, the assessment of the potential outcome and impact of smaller donors’ approaches is complicated by the problem of attribution, as their contributions are channelled through many different international agencies, multi-donor funds and NGOs.

With regard to the ‘inner’ working of donor governments’ WoGAs, evaluations point to improvements in the capacity for cross-departmental work, even though

they are still critical of donors' capacity to develop analyses as well as monitoring and evaluation with a sufficient sense of political and conflict dynamics. But evaluations are particularly critical of the capacity to include these analyses in the (iterative) planning processes. Another clear suggestion of the evaluations is that analysis, coordination, monitoring, feedback as well as programme adjustment are best served by well-staffed embassies where relatively high-ranking representatives of relevant departments are posted. Embassies are crucial elements of WoGAs in the difficult operational contexts of fragile states and situations.

Evaluations also point to the need to grasp the trade-offs between political, security and development objectives, as well as the consequences of the choices made. Whereas the establishment of cross-departmental units and approaches does not necessarily entail an encroachment on ODA funds and principles, there is a need for donor governments to be transparent in the processes of managing these trade-offs as well as the inherent dilemmas and priorities.

In relation to the outcome and impact of WoGAs, the limited number of evaluations and analyses make a few very clear points regarding the assumptions behind WoGAs, or more precisely, the assumptions behind the use of development aid to improve security and stabilize fragile situations. Contrary to what has been widely assumed in government offices, and in particular in military headquarters, there is little evidence to show that improved service delivery and short-term reconstruction necessarily lead to the increased security, stability and legitimacy of the central government. As the case of Afghanistan suggests, a lot of measurable development has taken place in terms of health, education and infrastructure, but it has not helped in improving security. Often, development and reconstruction projects have been associated with the misuse and abuse of aid resources, perceptions that have fed into mistrust rather than improved the legitimacy of the central government and its local allies and representatives. Evaluations from other contexts, such as Somalia and Southern Sudan, confirm these observations.

Rather than concluding that development aid can never be used to improve the prospects for stability and peace, evaluations suggest that it is the context that defines how ODA may be used and to what ends. Thus, there is some evidence to suggest that development aid can help stabilize unruly areas in the context of a pre-existing, credible political settlement and transition plan.

According to evaluations, security-sector reform, one of the preferred fields supported through cross-departmental funds, is a relevant field of WoG activities, with a potentially positive impact on peace- and state-building. However, ownership is essential to the reform process, as is the use of short-term results to improve the prospects for achieving long-term objectives. Whereas DDR processes also represent a field of meaningful cooperation across the security–development divide, the concept has to be developed and adapted to specific contexts, in particular in regard to the proliferation of armed actors that blur civil–military boundaries, as well as to the prospects for ‘reintegration’ into the informal economies of which ex-combatants already form part. Again, analysis and adaptation to local contexts is crucial.

The impact of WoGAs on humanitarian situations is a much-debated theme that has had divisive effects in the humanitarian community. One effect has been the withdrawal of many humanitarian agencies from theatres of operation associated with the War against Terror (e.g. Afghanistan and Somalia), which has increased the responsibility of the military to provide emergency aid in areas they control. While humanitarian aid as a tendency is increasingly being kept out of WoGAs, there are suggestions that humanitarian actors themselves should be better at understanding the political impact they can have, deliberately or not, and thereby become more effective in limiting the use of humanitarian aid for political purposes.

In conclusion, WoGAs are still very much a work in progress that do not yet live up to their own standards of integration between governmental departments and entities. The location of the boundaries around development aid is an important and continuous issue of contention, but various safeguards have been built into WoG systems over time. Evaluations acknowledge that transaction costs are high, that cross-departmental planning entails a trade-off in terms of speed, that an integrated approach is ‘not the answer to everything’, and that in many cases core development, diplomacy and development work should occur separately. Precisely in which cases a WoGA is more relevant than its opposite is unfortunately not clear from the evaluations.

## List of Abbreviations

<i>3D</i>	Diplomacy, Development and Defence
<i>BSOS</i>	Building Stability Overseas Strategy
<i>DAC</i>	Development Assistance Committee
<i>DDR</i>	Defence, Demobilisation, Reintegration
<i>DfID</i>	Department for International Development (UK)
<i>DRC</i>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>FCO</i>	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
<i>FSP</i>	Fragile State Principles
<i>HQ</i>	Headquarters
<i>IED</i>	Improvised Explosive Device
<i>JACS</i>	Joint Conflict and Assessment Tool (UK)
<i>MDTF</i>	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
<i>MENA</i>	Middle East and North Africa
<i>MFA</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<i>MoD</i>	Ministry of Defence
<i>MoJ</i>	Ministry of Justice
<i>NATO</i>	North Atlantic Treaty Association
<i>NGO</i>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<i>NSS</i>	National Security Strategy (UK)
<i>ODA</i>	Overseas Development Assistance
<i>OECD</i>	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
<i>OPT</i>	Occupied Palestinian Territory
<i>PRT</i>	Provincial Reconstruction Team
<i>QIP</i>	Quick Impact Project
<i>SDSR</i>	Strategic Defence and Security Review (UK)
<i>SSR</i>	Security Sector Reform
<i>TFG</i>	Transitional Federal Government
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>UNAMA</i>	United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan
<i>UNDP</i>	United Nations Development Programme
<i>UNISOM</i>	United Nations Operation in Somalia
<i>WoG/A</i>	Whole of Government/Approach

## Introduction

Since the 1990s, calls for increased coherence in international development aid have come high on the international agenda, with the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness being one important marker of progress. Similar calls for international coherence in strengthening states, building peace and preventing the outbreak of violence in areas of limited or strongly contested statehood have seen more contestation. This has particularly been the case when these efforts have involved strong national security concerns and the deployment of international military forces. It is generally humanitarian aid organizations that have expressed concerns, with the development sector also being reluctant to embrace these calls.

Nevertheless, in the 2000s, several concepts for increased coherence between multiple civil and military instruments emerged. The UN launched its 'integrated missions', the EU its 'crisis management' and NATO the 'comprehensive approach', while donor governments introduced, for example, the 3D (Diplomacy, Development and Defence), Concerted Planning and Action, and Whole-of-Government Approaches (WoGA). The latter became an overarching concept for integrated donor approaches from the mid-2000s, when, in several publications, the 'Fragile States Group' of the OECD's Development Aid Committee recommended a Whole-of-Government Approach for donor's engagement in fragile states.

As explained in more detail in Chapter 3, the rationale for the WoGA is grounded in recognition of the links between security, development and political objectives, as stated in the 5<sup>th</sup> principle for 'good international engagement in fragile states and situations' (OECD 2007b). According to this principle, donors must acknowledge that a mixture of political, security, development and other instruments is necessary to confront the problems that fragile states face, problems that at the time resonated with various global concerns regarding international security and crime (OECD 2007a).

While historically the nexus between security and development goes back a long way, attempts to increase cross-departmental cooperation around issues of security-sector reform predate international involvement in Afghanistan. This involvement has been a decisive factor in shaping recent attempts to develop and institutionalize cross-departmental approaches to failed, fragile and conflict-ridden states. In this context, we consider WoGAs to be approaches that straddle the security–development divide and involve, at the minimum, political, defence and development-related actors in donor governments,

even though many other entities, such as the police, correctional services, intelligence services, and justice and trade departments, have been involved in donors' WoGAs.

With the withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan drawing ever closer, it is highly appropriate to examine the approaches that have been developed and to consider how well suited they are to future challenges. While this is a tall order, the ambition of the current report is to take stock of evaluations of WoGAs in order to answer: 1) *if national WoG approaches work according to their objectives of improving joined-up governmental responses to state fragility and conflict; and 2) if it is possible to identify how WoGAs influence the outcomes of international interventions in areas of fragile statehood*. As we will explain in Chapter 2, the second question is complicated by the problem of attribution, as smaller donors' WoG contributions are channelled through many different international agencies, multi-donor funds and NGOs.

Specifically, and focusing on the role of development and humanitarian aid in WoG approaches, the analysis will seek to:

- 1) map and identify how the WoG approaches are located in the overall system of international interventions in contexts of fragile statehood and armed conflict
- 2) identify the influence of WoG approaches on development and humanitarian aid actions that are incorporated into such approaches
- 3) look at how development and humanitarian aid contributes to the outcomes and impacts of the overall, integrated efforts, and
- 4) discuss the limits to and realistic expectations of WoG approaches in specific contexts.

As mentioned above, the report will look at WoGAs that comprise military actors while avoiding the much larger question of whether the use of force works to the intended effect in preventing, mitigating, or ending armed conflict.

The report is organized into chapters that describe the development of WoGAs in general and in the cases of the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark more specifically (Chapter 2), assessments of WoGAs in terms of the internal interactions of the joined-up approaches (Chapter 3), and assessments of WoGAs in terms of their possible outcomes in the contexts in which they are supposed to contribute to peace- and state-building, in relation to both development aid (Chapter 4) and humanitarian aid (Chapter 5).

## **1. Methodological issues**

Assessing what works and what does not with regard to donors' involvement in peace- and state-building interventions in contexts like Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, DRC and South Sudan is an inherently difficult task. This study is based on existing evaluations and is hence affected by what the OECD calls the 'evaluation gap' and the relative weakness of studies in terms of data, methods and validity (OECD 2012: 7). Here we will:

1. briefly touch upon the problems of doing evaluations in fragile contexts,
2. discuss the even more complicated problem of assessing WoG approaches in such contexts, and
3. outline the approach of the present study.

One recent evaluation of state-building in fragile contexts suggests that the 'weakness of the existing evaluation literature is clear from the lack of evidence of which approaches work and which do not. There is a high convergence of evaluation results and recommendations, but this may well reflect a methodological weakness as results are often almost trivial and unfalsifiable with the existing instruments of measurement' (Grävingsholt et al. 2012: 42). When we do evaluations in fragile contexts, the problems of working in highly politicized and 'data-free environments'<sup>1</sup> are added to problems of access, the risk of violence, the lack of baseline studies, and weak monitoring systems. In particular, evaluators have to deal with problems of attribution and causality in these contexts where peace and conflict dynamics develop in non-linear and often unpredictable ways, and where the reactive and context-reliant responses of some external actors defy conventional result-based frameworks (Chapman and Vincent 2010; OECD 2012).

Recognizing that some of these problems are due to the weak design and management of donor programmes, the OECD (2012) has developed guidelines for evaluations of peace-building activities in fragile contexts. These suggest using the concept of a 'theory of change' as a way to think critically about the assumptions and strategies of peace- and state-building as well as using conflict analysis of the context as an analytical framework for assessing the relevance, effectiveness and impact of peace-building

<sup>1</sup> As remarked by a consultant in Kabul in 2005. Statistical data may be available but can be highly politicized (TLO 2010).

activities. However, only a few pilot studies that assisted the development of the guidelines have been available for our study.<sup>2</sup>

### **Evaluating Whole of Governance Approaches**

The OECD guidelines, which were drawn up to evaluate ODA-based peace-building activities, emphasize that these evaluations are complicated by the mixture of instruments that are applied in the service of donors' broader geopolitical and economic agendas,

such as combating international terrorism, stabilising access to scarce resources like oil, fighting transnational organised crime, opening markets for domestic firms and curbing immigration flows. As such, aid is at a higher risk of being politicised in fragile, conflicted situations than in more stable ones, and development actors may not be in the lead in setting the agendas for engagement. (OECD 2012: 23)

While we should recognize that aid is also a political and already politicized instrument used to push for particular forms of change, the different interests, aims and standards of the actors involved complicate evaluations and aggravate the problem of attributing results to any particular policy or intervening agent.

As we will see in Chapter three, the monitoring and evaluation of WoG efforts have generally been considered corporate or 'stove-piped', even though this is less the case in Denmark and the Netherlands, where development cooperation forms an integral part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, despite the pressure on understanding how complex interventions deliver impact and affect conflict dynamics and state fragility, there has been an absence of country strategy-level monitoring and effective country performance frameworks with clear benchmarks and indicators (Chapman and Vincent 2010). Even specific WoG instruments, such as the UK Conflict Pool, have recently been characterized by their limited capacity to measure results (ICAI 2012). This may be changing, and several evaluations are in the pipeline which would have improved the material for our analysis. An evaluation of Dutch support for fragile states will be released shortly after our deadline, and an evaluation of the Danish Peace and Stability Fund's regional programme for Afghanistan and Pakistan is forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> In particular Chapman et al. 2009; Bennett et al. 2010; Brusset et al. 2011.

## **Our approach**

These problems obviously affect our ability to assess what works with regard to country-specific WoGAs. We have chosen to look at the approaches adopted by the UK as a larger donor, and Denmark and the Netherlands as smaller donors. We have used material on Norway's 'slightly different approach' to illustrate a point regarding the involvement of civil-society organizations in WoGA and their role in Norwegian policy-making, including the decision to abandon the WoGA concept. However, the lack of appropriate evaluations hinders a consideration of how this has affected outcomes and impacts in a more comparative perspective (Strand 2012).

We have cast a broad net in our literature search since the object of analysis comprises many different types of instruments, actors and contexts. In particular, we have used Eldis to identify documents from the last ten years that relate to conflict, peace-building, state-building, security and development, fragile situations, comprehensive approaches and similar search words, in addition to country-specific searches on Afghanistan, Somalia, Southern Sudan, DRC, Sierra Leone and Burundi, countries where the chosen donor governments have been engaged. After this, we consulted key people in government departments who work on WoGA to ensure that we had identified existing, relevant and accessible documents.

Due to the intense efforts to set up national WoG systems in donor governments, there are quite a few evaluations and reviews that report on collaboration and coordination between different governmental agencies at different levels. We synthesize the findings from these process-oriented evaluations in Chapter four, using as benchmarks the generally accepted criteria for joined-up approaches that we have extracted from the WoG literature: joined-up approaches to analysis, strategy and planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and feedback.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the process-oriented analysis does not reveal anything about the outcome or impact of WoGAs. As a preliminary approximation, we have sought to 'follow the money' by looking at the instruments and activities through which WoG-defined funds flow on their way from government HQs to the situations in which the programmes are supposed to work, such as programmes to improve security in areas of troop deployment, multi-donor trust-funds, security-sector reform programs and humanitarian aid.

<sup>3</sup> Based on OECD 2007a; Patrick and Brown 2007; and Friis and Jarmyr (eds.) 2008.

Since few of the evaluations have been guided by the question of how and to what effect WoGAs work in the overall international intervention, our reading of the evaluations has been very selective, focusing on sections where collaboration arrangements across the military and different civil agencies have been analysed in the specific country context.

## 2. Whole-of-Government Approaches

According to OECDs definition, a Whole-of-Government Approach (WoGA) is:

one where a government actively uses formal and/or informal networks across the different agencies within that government to coordinate the design and implementation of the range of interventions that the government's agencies will be making in order to increase the effectiveness of those interventions in achieving the desired objectives. (OECD 2007a: 14)

Although not exclusively articulated in relation to donor policies vis-à-vis fragile states, the interconnectedness that is claimed to exist between insecurity, poverty and poor governance – which by definition characterizes fragile states – has provided an important rationale for the development of WoGAs by western donor governments (OECD 2007a: 7).

Usually involving at least development, defence and diplomatic government entities, governments that adopt a WoGA assume that donor involvement in fragile states will have a more sustainable and meaningful impact when the various departments have a shared understanding, a common strategy and theory of change, and an agreed plan of implementation, monitoring and evaluation (De Coning et al. 2009). Apart from increasing the effectiveness of donor involvement, such approaches are also supposed to be fiscally less costly and to increase the legitimacy of donor policies in the eyes of the recipient countries (OECD 2007a).

National WoG approaches have developed alongside, but mostly in isolation from, the exercise of ensuring 'policy coherence in development'. This exercise seeks to institutionalize mechanisms and prevent donors' development policies contradicting other national policies (such as trade, agriculture or migration) and that prevent the latter from impacting negatively on developing countries. Moreover, these efforts seek to encompass synergies between development and other policy areas.

Contrary to this, the WoGA emerged as part of a larger trend towards increased co-ordination and cooperation across the security–development divide, developing from the 1990s onwards with the experience gained from international peace operations. Several sectors pushed for the development of new approaches. First, actors involved in relief and development aid increasingly opted to remain engaged in conflict areas and

to work *on* the conflict, including conflict prevention and post-conflict programmes of DDR and SSR. These were obvious sites where relief, development and security organisations would meet. Secondly, whereas donors in the 1990s increasingly saw development cooperation as a way to work on the root causes of armed conflict, they reacted to 9/11 by looking at how aid could be used as an instrument in the war on terror, particularly in contributing to state-building in areas of failed or fragile statehood. Finally, the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan and the reinvention of counterinsurgency strategies led military actors to take a keen interest in how aid could be engaged to help turn civil populations away from insurgents in areas of military deployment.

Thus, while UK Prime Minister Tony Blair was using the phrase ‘joined-up government’ as early as 1997 (Gordon and Farrell 2009), the events following 9/11 gave a more prominent role to national security in relation to development cooperation and provided the context for the more institutional and operational implications of thinking across the security–development divide. Conceptually, WoG-like efforts have changed from being associated with peace-building and the military doctrinal concept of ‘peace support operations’ to being associated with state-building in fragile states and, since 2007, increasingly through the concept of ‘stabilization’. Stabilization was developed into military doctrine in the US in 2008 and in the UK in 2009, and has been defined by the UK as:

... the process of establishing peace and security in countries affected by conflict and instability. It is the promotion of peaceful political settlement to produce a legitimate indigenous government, which can better serve its people. Stabilisation often requires external joint military and civilian support to perform some or all of the following tasks: prevent or reduce violence, protect people and key institutions, promote political processes and prepare for longer-term development. (Stabilisation Unit, 2011)

As the examples below show, these changes are reflected in the changing names of the institutional, WoG-related developments in donor governments. We will briefly sketch out the WoGAs of the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway in order to give an idea of the variation in approaches.

### **Country-specific approaches**

*The UK* has been widely heralded as a pioneer of developing whole-of-government approaches to address issues of armed conflict and fragility, these approaches func-

tioning as both an international blueprint and a yardstick for smaller states. The establishment by DfID and the FCO of pooled funding in 2001 set the stage for the further development of integrated approaches. This demonstrated DfID's recognition of the importance of addressing what soon became known as fragile states, especially in SSR and other areas where DfID lacked expertise. This may be seen as a move to increase the department's involvement in policy development. For DfID, the aim of the pools was to increase joined-up working in areas not covered by the OECD's rules on ODA, namely in DDR and SSR. This allowed DfID to draw on the expertise of the MoD and FCO, but also to regulate its involvement carefully in order to safeguard its mandate. The alleviation and reduction of poverty have been key tenets since the department's creation in 1997. Both the 2002 International Development Act and DfID's Public Service Agreement with the Treasury underwrites this focus on poverty reduction, ensuring that development assistance is dedicated to and targeted at sustainable development in the world's poorest countries, without being tied to other agreements.

What followed in June 2002 was the agreement of an SSR Strategy using resources from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool and the creation of the MoD-led Security Sector Development Assistance Team (SSDAT). With accelerating involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan the inter-departmental conflict prevention pools set the grounding for further developments in joint funding and capabilities. In 2004, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit crystallised the multiple concerns of DfID, the FCO and MOD in a report that 'depicted effective states as the answer to security, poverty alleviation, and good governance in the developing world, and [...] called for a new whole of government strategy to engage Countries at Risk of Instability' (Patrick and Brown 2007: 11).

One outcome of the strategy was the creation, in 2004, of the inter-departmental Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU), which pooled staff from DfID, the FCO and MoD, directed specifically at post-conflict reconstruction and development in failing or fragile states. Reflecting experience in Sierra Leone and the increasingly difficult operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the unit was subsequently rebranded the 'Stabilisation Unit' in September 2007. This signalled the wider shift from Peace Support in the form of post-conflict reconstruction and development to Stabilisation Operations, a shift which introduced a spectrum of 'upstream' and 'downstream' activities, ranging from preventing or reducing violence, protecting people and key institutions, promoting political processes, and preparing for longer term development (Stabilisation Unit 2011).

Operationally, cross-governmental working has been tested strategically in Whitehall and operationally through, for example, the UK's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, and the expansion of the UK's Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG), which greases the links between military and civil administration and local nationals at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The Stabilisation Unit has been responsible for the development of a pool of so-called 'Deployable Civilian Experts' to support the work of the PRTs on the ground, as well as for an increase in joint courses. While an attempt to develop a high-level joint strategy for Helmand in 2008 failed, the operational Helmand Road Map took its place. Since 2009, the PRT has been subject to civilian control (an FCO initiative), which the military are arguably still adjusting to.

At this time (2007/08) the early Global Conflict Prevention Pool and Africa Conflict Prevention Pool were combined to form the 'Conflict Prevention Pool' (CPP) with a budget of £112 million. This was followed, in 2009, by the merger of the Conflict Prevention Pool and the Stabilisation Aid Fund to create the 'Conflict Pool', with a budget of £171 million in 2009/10. In 2010, further changes followed with the new (Conservative-Liberal) coalition government, the formation of the National Security Council (chaired weekly by Prime Minister David Cameron), the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and the new National Security Strategy (NSS).

The SDSR and NSS include commitments to 'tackle at root the causes of instability' and 'help resolve conflicts and contribute to stability' (HM Government 2010: 11-12). This requires, among other elements, 'an effective international development programme making the optimal contribution to national security within its overall objective of poverty reduction, with the Department for International Development *focussing significantly more effort on priority national security and fragile states*' (our emphasis).

As a key to the new set-up, the Conflict Pool is being reshaped and established as a 'core government asset', with the aim of bringing 'Flexibility, scale, ODA/non-ODA funds and innovation and risk' (DfID, FCO and MOD 2013: 19). The coalition government is set to increase Conflict Pool resources to a total of £1.125 billion by 2015. In addition to a programme for the strengthening of alliances and partners, the Conflict Pool runs geographical Conflict Pool programmes for Afghanistan, Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and Wider Europe. Apart from Afghanistan, for 2013/14 the high priorities for the UK WoGA are Libya,

(South) Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Western Sahel and Egypt, with medium priorities in Pakistan, Nigeria, the DRC, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon and Burma.

*The Netherlands* is known as one of the early birds in the field, having developed what many refer to as the 3D (diplomacy, defence and development) approach, even though it comprises other departments, such as the Ministry of Security and Justice. In the Netherlands, development cooperation has its own minister but is otherwise an integral part of the MFA. High-level steering groups with direct access to ministers provide the backbone of the set-up, with one group on military operations that has weekly meetings and a much less active group focusing on civilian operations. Since 2008, a MFA office for issues related to fragile states, peace, stabilization and, from 2012, also humanitarian aid, has acted as the secretariat for these steering groups. The office cuts across the Directorates-General of political affairs and international development cooperation, and cooperates with the regional MFA offices (Africa, Asia and MENA), as well as the Security Policy office, which is the entry point for the MoD in the MFA. The office also functions as the policy hub for the Dutch programmes in Afghanistan, Burundi, South-Sudan, Yemen and OPT, which are mainly managed at the operational level by the embassies. Only in Afghanistan did the Netherlands have a tactical-level 'program implementation unit' through the Dutch-led PRT in Uruzgan, where the Netherlands were the lead nation until Dutch troops were withdrawn in 2010.

Thus, short of a cross-departmental unit including the MoD, the approach may be characterized as mainly concept-driven. Since 2004, the Netherlands has managed a cross-departmental fund for stabilization with up to €100m (ODA and non-ODA), focusing in particular on SSR-related activities (and working in parallel with an ODA fund for reconstruction). From 2014, a new €250m fund for international security will take over the role of the stability fund. Part of this fund will cover activities related to 'security and rule of law', one of four 'spear points' of Dutch development cooperation. The fund will be co-managed by the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. Regarding the balance between ODA and non-ODA, the Dutch governments have been pushing discussions of the OECD/DAC guidelines regarding the boundaries of ODA (MFA Netherlands 2013).

In *Denmark*, a WoGA developed alongside the military contributions to NATO and coalition missions in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. From 2004, the approach was institutionalized as 'Concerted Planning and Action' with regard to civil-military coordination, with a (low-level) interagency coordination committee at the strate-

gic level, with tactical-level coordination in German- and British-led PRTs as these developed in Afghanistan, and a mini-fund of ODA (€2 million) for the military to use for projects in areas of deployment. However, most of the program development and operational coordination was anchored in a cross-departmental task force for Afghanistan.

From 2010, the government strengthened the integrated approach with a new structure and a €20 million 'Global' fund, since 2011 renamed the 'Peace and Stabilization Fund', with mixed ODA and non-ODA funds. The structure comprises an annual meeting at the ministerial level, a high-level steering group (with participation from MFA, MoD, the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Justice), and a small secretariat with staff from the MoD and MFA, which in Denmark, as in the Netherlands, incorporates development cooperation.

Within the new WoG framework, a set of principles defines the use and comparative advantage of the Peace and Stabilization Fund in supporting Danish foreign and security policy priorities and focusing mainly on security- and justice-sector development as a precondition for development. The fund gives priority to programs that combine ODA and non-ODA, the aim being to generate synergies with other Danish programs and other nations' programs, and focusing on regional programs in areas where a high degree of risk-willingness is necessary. The ODA-funded activities comprise mainly SSR- and DDR-related activities, regional crisis management and capacity-building, peace initiatives and conflict prevention in fragile states and post-conflict societies, rule of law projects, and some anti-terror and anti-piracy activities.

The main programs supported are regional programs in the Horn of Africa and in the Afghanistan-Pakistan area, but smaller programs have been funded for Libya, South Sudan, and Mali/Sahel. All ODA-funded projects are checked by the technical ODA office. Regional programmes are managed by the MFA area offices together with the MoD, while the secretariat manages a number of smaller programmes. The secretariat is also responsible for policy development with regard to stabilization and fragile states, this being different from the UK, where the mother departments have retained policy responsibilities.

To provide a contrast, we lastly mention the 'slightly different approach' of *Norway* (Strand 2012), where the government limited the WoGA to involvement in Afghanistan. With the decision in 2005 to expand its involvement in this country, the Norwegian government formalized coordination mechanisms and established the Afghanistan

Forum as an interdepartmental arena for policy-making and comprehensive strategic development, working at the level of State Secretaries from MFA (Chair), MoD, MoJ and the prime minister's office (de Coning 2009). At the same time, however, the government took a principled decision to separate military and development activities in the province of Faryab, where Norway became the PRT lead nation. A number of development and humanitarian agencies established offices and programs in the province, but the PRT did not have access to or influence over development and humanitarian funds. Thus, while in 2009 the Forum developed a 'joint strategy' for the Norwegian presence in Faryab, military and civil actors were only loosely coordinated at the tactical level. The idea was that they should work 'side by side, each in their own distinct professional role, but together contributing to a comprehensive approach to the overall objectives of the mission' (de Coning et al. 2009: 23).

While the lack of evaluations from the field makes it impossible to identify clear differences in the outcomes on the ground (Strand 2012), we include the case of Norway to illustrate a point regarding the position of NGOs in WoGAs. In the Norwegian case, it seems that it was the strong position of the NGOs against the WoGA that kept the government from developing the concept further in relation to international operations.

### **Following the money**

It is beyond the scope of this report to track how funds and resources, which are comprised by donors' WoG approaches, move through various channels to reach their designated destinations. Nevertheless, some information is useful for the following analysis. Apart from the direct military contributions in terms of troops, ships, material, special capabilities or advice, and the much less visible diplomatic political efforts in terms of negotiation, representation, recognition and mediation, ODA and non-ODA funds are directed through a variety of channels.

Some of these funds are direct, bilateral contributions, such as ODA that feeds into reconstruction and development activities in the provinces of military deployment in Afghanistan, or the ODA/non-ODA that, through the embassies, supports elements of national (host-)government programmes, such as education or border security. However, most funds are typically channelled through international or regional organizations such as UN missions and agencies or the African Union, NGOs, 'silent partnerships' with other donors, and multi-donor trust funds or other means of donor crowding.

### **3. Experience with Whole-of-Government Approaches: Organizational issues**

As described in the literature and policy documents, WoG approaches are supposed to work by increasing integration between different departments and state institutions at various levels and scales:

- Analysis
- Strategy and planning
- Coordination
- Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback

This chapter will look at whether the national WoG arrangements developed in our selected countries work according to the purpose and standards of the WoG policies and in terms of achieving increased integration and coherence across the participating governmental institutions. The chapter focuses on issues ‘internal’ to the governmental structures that have been identified by the agencies, individuals or evaluators involved, and which to some degree have been reflected in changes to arrangements over the past five to ten years. The much larger question of whether WoGAs improve situations and processes ‘on the ground’, where they are intended to have an impact, will be left to the following chapters.

#### **Analysis**

A WoGA should be based on a shared understanding and analysis of the situation at hand in order to make the context the starting point for strategy and programming, as recommended in the Fragile States Principles (OECD 2007b). The volatile conditions of fragile situations and armed conflicts place high demands on continuous monitoring and analysis. However, reports repeatedly emphasise that the complexities of local contexts are poorly understood, that host-nation and local knowledge is insufficiently incorporated and that analyses are not updated.<sup>4</sup> Assessments have often been an afterthought, have been poorly conducted, are slow to be produced and are subsequently ignored in programming, as Gordon has highlighted (2013).

<sup>4</sup> OECD 2011a mentions the case of Somalia, where programming was at some point based on a three-year-old analytical framework. See also MFA of the Netherlands 2011; Stepputat 2009; Bennett et al. 2010; Brussett et al. 2011.

Whereas the Fragile State Principles (FSP) relate to development cooperation in particular, the involvement of other governmental agencies contributes possibilities as well as problems in terms of analysis. When governmental development actors operate in isolation from more political actors, there is a risk that country analyses become overly technical or sector-specific, while emerging conflict dynamics are ignored.<sup>5</sup> Once countries or regions have become political priorities for donor governments, political and conflict analysis is upgraded, but often not institutionalized across departments. Thus, for example, an evaluation of the UK's Conflict Pool highlighted a 'lack of attention' to conflict sensitivity and the 'fragile state principle' of 'do no harm' (ICAI 2012).

In response to lessons learned, in 2012 the UK government introduced the tri-departmental strategic conflict assessment tool, the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS), which replaced DfID's Strategic Conflict Assessment. Importantly, the JACS aims to develop cross-government consensus and buy-in at the outset and should ensure that the analysis is deployed in actual programming. On the downside, the process is therefore slow, and since the military and intelligence services are involved, circulation is usually restricted, which, as the experience of Afghanistan shows, limits the sharing of analyses between interested governments and international agencies (Stepputat 2009).

As a final observation, several sources suggest that country-level representations (as opposed to HQs) should have an important role in conflict analysis in order to facilitate the incorporation of local and country conflict knowledge. This can take place through local advisory boards (de Coning et al. 2009) or by establishing better links to implementing local governments and organizations at the provincial level, which, as suggested by Brussett et al. (2011) in the case of the DRC, can improve the flow of information to donors. Also incentives for sharing and collaboration between departmental representatives are better at the country level (ICAI 2012). Long-term institutional presence in country is obviously an advantage, but this is partly offset by high staff turnovers (OECD 2011b).

## **Strategy and planning**

Those participating in WoGA should agree on strategic objectives and be able to define a coherent strategy to achieve and transform them into an operational plan

<sup>5</sup> Interview, MFA, Denmark, August 2013.

with agreed results, timelines and responsibilities. Evaluations at the highest level of strategy are scarce, but governments have by and large been criticized for the lack of a 'clear, agreed-upon strategic framework reflecting common priorities' across government departments, as Patrick and Brown (2007: 9-10) stated in regard to the UK, which otherwise has been heralded as a pioneer of WoGA. The introduction in 2010-11 of the National Security Strategy (NSS), the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and subsequently the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) to underpin the UK's integrated approach to conflict prevention signals a move towards an effective cross-governmental approach, although notably BSOS is only owned by three departments (DfID, FCO, MOD).

While the UK's new strategic integration architecture is generally considered to be reasonably well-structured and coherent, difficulties have primarily emerged in developing integrated approaches in practice and feeding the nuances of experience back into strategy. Here BSOS gives little or no guidance in terms of practical application. Despite the UK's strategy signalling a shift from state-building and post-conflict reconstruction towards 'upstream' conflict prevention, concerns have been raised (Allouche 2012, Allouche and Lind, 2013) about how this will play out in practice. There is a risk that the 'downstream' pillars of 'early warning' and 'rapid crisis prevention and response' will continue to receive greater attention, a risk that is increased by the lack of expertise in the field of upstream conflict prevention. Significantly, the BSOS is Whitehall-centric and 'ignores how to create partnerships with non-governmental organizations' (Allouche, 2012: 3).

WoGAs have so far mainly comprised the foreign policy, development and defence departments. Governments have tried to involve other departments, notably the Justice Ministry with relevance for rule of law and SSR elements, but in practice there has been limited participation. Nevertheless, entities such as the police, intelligence services and economic crime bodies have shown interests in closer involvement. At the outset, several governments imagined NGOs as being incorporated into strategic arrangements, but this has clearly not been possible in any direct way. In the Norwegian case, NGOs have traditionally had a close relationship to the government and a prominent role in its development strategies, working as 'extensions of Norwegian influence',<sup>6</sup> or the 'eyes and ears of the MFA', in de Coning's words (2009: 35). This has not been a problem as long as nobody has suspected Norway, with its small-state status, of having major power interests, but the country's close association with NATO

<sup>6</sup> Tvedt 2003, quoted in de Coning et al. 2009: 25.

and the ISAF mission threatened this special relationship. In the end, it seems that the Norwegian NGOs had a decisive role in the government's decision not to develop their WoGA beyond the set-up for Afghanistan, as described in Chapter three.

As to the pros and cons of having a specific, interdepartmental WoGA unit, the 2010 UK *SU Lessons Identified at the Strategic Level* document emphasises the positive aspects of an integrated approach to core planning phases ('assessment of the problem, creation and selection of objectives and the design of measures of effect'), such as addressing any 'misunderstanding' and 'prejudices' stemming from different departmental cultures at the outset, increasing the likelihood of 'genuine detailed agreement', driving 'genuine ownership of objectives', and reducing the likelihood of 'measures of effect becoming a "blame game"' (Wake, 2010: 1). Joint planning ideally takes place as early as possible. Despite the UK's creation of a new analytical framework or JACS, at present there is no official cross-departmental planning process, with only the MoD being prepared to see this happen. In general, such processes are complicated by very different approaches, with defence actors using doctrine and a military estimate process, political/diplomacy actors taking a reactive situational approach, and development actors operating through sequencing, long-term Theory of Change planning, the principle of 'do no harm', basic needs assessments and sustainability.

Each department must negotiate differing planning horizons, short term versus long term, with short-term military intervention at one end of the scale and long-term development aims at the other. In a cross-departmental planning environment, departments must adapt and negotiate departmental planning processes and time horizons alongside their sister departments. Large-scale military deployments have increased the weight of short-term time horizons, with their corresponding implications for expected results: the expectations and goals tend to become more unrealistic the further away from the field one gets (Bennett et al. 2009).

In particular, the country-specific WoG strategies and planning with regard to Afghanistan have been characterized as unrealistic. The Norwegian strategy, for example, 'was more of a vision, little based in realities' (de Coning et al. 2009: 39). As mentioned in the UK case, confusion was caused by various shifts in strategic rationale, from liberation through regime change to occupation to stabilisation and reconstruction. The 2009 move to a governance-led strategy and increased integration ultimately highlighted the significant strategic gap between political and operational objectives and available resources, indicating overly ambitious aims and considerable

over-promising (Bennett et al. 2009; Jackson and Haysom 2013).<sup>7</sup> However, the lack of realistic expectations has also been emphasized in evaluations of donor engagements in other country cases, such as the DRC, Burundi and Southern Sudan (MFA Netherlands 2013a; Bennett 2010; Brussett et al 2011).

Finally, when moving from the country programmes to the various peace, stability and conflict pools, we find reports that are critical of the lack of strategic coherence. The 2012 evaluation of the UK Conflict Pool maintains that '[i]ts approach to combining defence, diplomacy and development into a coherent approach to conflict prevention was left to emerge in an incremental way through its individual funding choices' (ICAI: 2012: 5). In addition, the Conflict Pool has received criticism because its configuration is considered to be 'very broad', having a significant 'overlap ... with DFID programming', and has not been used to guide programming choices (ICAI 2012: 6). Although bottom-up planning to guide Conflict Pool strategy has been successful, 'significant strategic gaps' have been left, such as a lack of an 'overall programming approach or philosophy', and 'little or no strategic or technical guidance to staff' or 'strategy on the preferred scale of interventions' (ICAI 2012: 7). Nevertheless, and despite its limited scale compared to ODA programmes, the Conflict Pool has an importance beyond its size 'as a responsive, grant-making instrument for supporting small-scale peacebuilding activities by local partners in conflict-affected countries' (ICAI 2012: 1).

In response to criticisms, recent versions of the funds have emphasized a more strategic approach, focusing on regional programmes and defining comparative advantages of the WoG funds, in particular at the 'harder' end of the spectrum, such as border security issues, anti-terrorism, anti-piracy, SSR, DDR and Rule of Law.<sup>8</sup> The recent evaluation of the UK Conflict Pool mentions the mobilisation of flexible assistance in areas of instability, funding for pilot projects and the use of non-ODA or a combination with ODA, as opposed to DfID's practice of acting independently, as comparative advantages. In short, the Pool 'needs to be clear about its role and comparative advantage and to concentrate its resources accordingly' (ICAI 2012: 7). Nevertheless, funded projects are rarely cross-departmental in the UK case, and given the relatively high transaction costs associated with smaller, short-term stabilization projects, DfID prefers to use its own, substantially increased conflict-related funds

<sup>7</sup> For the cases of Denmark and the Netherlands, see Stepputat 2009 and MFA Netherlands 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Interview, Danish MFA, August 2013. The first evaluation of Danish Stabilisation Fund projects criticizes the scattered, small-scale projects in the Balkans (Brett, J. 2013).

with larger potentials for strategic impact (ICAI 2012), while there is a sense that the FCO and MoD are looking for innovative ways of softening ODA constraints.

### **Coordination**

In a WoG approach, coordination at all levels is considered important to ensure that different activities and entities serve the overall strategic purpose under rapidly changing operational conditions. Here several reports point to the embassy as having a key role in coordination between governmental entities, high-level representatives of the host government and the wider international and national community.<sup>9</sup> However, cross-departmental engagement requires a corresponding upgrading of departmental resources at embassy level in order to ensure the continued strategic relevance of activities. The need for flexibility and for adjustment to rapidly changing conditions likewise makes high demands on the number, capability and rank of embassy staff (Chapman and Vaillant 2010).

Problems may emerge in the delimitation of responsibilities between HQs and the embassy level, in particular when the profile of the particular area or country increases HQs' tendencies to pull decisions closer (MFA DK 2011). Finally, for small donor countries representation in all countries that are part of regional WoG programs can be a problem, but here regional or international organizations, or 'silent partnerships' with other donors, may replace embassy involvement.<sup>10</sup> UK evaluations, however, note that being one of a few embassies and international organisations with a presence in fragile contexts is a drain on resources (Chapman and Vaillant 2010).

In relation to the tactical-level 'programme implementation units' such as the PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq, coordination between civil and military entities has been much debated. While the non-integrated Norwegian model was criticized for not even 'de-conflicting' relations between civilian and military actors (de Coning 2009), other problems characterized coordination in the more integrated models of the PRTs in Helmand and Uruzgan. In the latter case, the work of the PRT development and civilian advisors was sometimes hampered because close protection was not available, and the Dutch military saw the advisors as overly defensive and rigid with regard to the possibility of military engagement in reconstruction activities (MFA NL 2011). The Uruzgan evaluation states that the PRT took care not to cooperate

<sup>9</sup> E.g. de Coning 2009; MFA DK 2011; MFA Netherlands 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Interviews, Danish MFA.

openly with NGOs in the area but instead had the embassy coordinate with them. However, practice was much more mixed, and many local organizations did not mind meeting at the PRT or at 'neutral' places such as the governor's office or UNAMA in the town. In the case of the UK, while the PRT should have been a good working example of the integrated approach in action, a recent analysis suggests that in reality its constituent components were very insular, reflecting interdepartmental cultural clashes and personality differences (Jackson and Haysom 2013).

Finally, as the Afghanistan case so amply illustrates, the donor government's WoG approach is often offset by the lack of coordination and/or divergent interests between the different civil and military, international and national entities operating in the same area. As the Dutch Uruzgan evaluation concluded, the Netherlands was the lead nation in the province but did not have the corresponding powers (MFA Netherlands 2011: 106). This amounted to a serious lack of 'unity of effort', to use the military concept, caused by differing approaches and understandings of the situation.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and feedback**

Systematic and shared monitoring to see if operations are achieving their objectives is necessary for democratic oversight of operations (Parliament of Canada 2008), to coordinate participating actors and to enable the continuous feedback and adjustment of strategies and planning. The need for improved monitoring and evaluation coincides with an increased need for contextual knowledge for operational planning (Mitchell 2008), but it is also an important management tool. The process of defining benchmarks and indicators forces civilian and military actors to define in precise, operational and realistic terms what the interventions are seeking to achieve and facilitates communication between them (CITpax 2007).

Donor governments have recognized that monitoring and evaluation constitutes one of the most serious challenges for WoG approaches, as described in Chapter one. Not only are these processes confronted by complex and difficult operational contexts, including problems of scarce or manipulated statistics, inhibiting security conditions and the use of remote management,<sup>11</sup> but in addition smaller donors often operate as integrated parts of larger networks of cooperation. It is therefore very difficult to assess the performance of individual institutions. As a DfID Country Programme

<sup>11</sup> As described in OECD/DAC guidelines on evaluating peace-building activities in settings of conflict and fragility (2012).

Evaluation synthesis concludes: ‘New approaches are needed that require a less linear relationship between resources committed and outcomes achieved, and involve cross departmental approaches that can assess political, security and development results in a more integrated way’ (Chapman and Vaillant 2010: 54).

In Afghanistan since 2009 in particular, donor governments have tried to develop systems of indicators to document changes in the operational environment in terms of conflict patterns, security and economic activity as evidenced in the numbers of armed clashes, detected and exploded IEDs, traffic, numbers of market stalls and shops, enterprises, local government officials etc. Outside Afghanistan, DfID’s country programme evaluation synthesis highlighted the Nepal programme as a state of the art Fragile States Monitoring System, using a variety of sources from conflict monitoring/risk incidence, and social impact and context monitoring (Chapman and Vaillant 2010).

Despite these processes, the issue is still high on the agenda of the institutionalized WoG units, which are usually tasked with leading the processes of identifying, sharing and channelling lessons learned throughout the system. As one of two recent independent evaluations of UK cross-departmental expenditure notes, there was ‘no formal mechanism for collecting and sharing lessons and experiences’ (ICAI 2012: 1).

### **Recognizing the limits and comparative strengths of WoGA**

It has been acknowledged that an integrated approach is ‘not the answer for everything’ and that core development, diplomacy and development work should in many cases occur separately (Wake 2010). Unfortunately, evaluations are not very explicit about precisely which cases departments should work on separately and in which cases they should engage in joined-up processes.<sup>12</sup> But it is evident that there are some serious trade-offs to negotiate in cases when integrated working is deemed relevant.

First, while achieving consensus is the key to establishing cross-departmental buy-in at the outset, the process is often ‘slow and painful’ (ICAI 2012: 5). While this is probably always the case, it is also true that size matters: the problem is one of scale, which is very different in the UK compared to Denmark, where the head of the Peace and Stabilization secretariat can ‘have a mandate in ten minutes’ because everybody

<sup>12</sup> Even though Stepputat 2009 suggests that integration and co-location at the tactical level should be abandoned in permissive environments.

knows each other (and because the integration of development cooperation in the MFA has reduced part of the complexity).<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, WoGAs tend to incur high transactions costs, as in the UK case, where the National Audit Office concluded that, '[w]hile beneficial, the tri-departmental structure duplicates roles with each department having representatives at all levels. There was a consensus among those interviewed that transaction costs for this way of working were higher than they should be' (NAO 2012: 10).

Thirdly, while 'integration is primarily driven by the process of people from different institutions and different disciplines working side by side at several levels to ensure that their perspectives and activities reinforce each other' (Wake 2010: 1), inter-departmental competition over leadership and control over the use of resources may jeopardize the effectiveness of the WoG arrangements. But again size matters, and the relative strength of the defence side is quite different between the UK on the one hand and Denmark and the Netherlands on the other.

There is a clear sense that in many cases development priorities and good practice, in particular the fragile states principle of 'doing no harm' (OECD 2011b), has been trumped by political and in particular security-political aims in the joined-up WoG processes (Baranyi and Desrosiers 2012). In Denmark, as described in Chapter two, procedures have been designed to ensure that ODA criteria are not breached in the Peace and Stability Fund. In the UK, the boundaries between security and development are safeguarded to varying degrees by poverty reduction-focused firewalls or firebreaks, such as the 2002 International Development Act and, under the former Labour government, public service agreements (which were replaced by the coalition government's departmental business plans). Counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan tested these firewalls to the limit, with the PRTs being an example of where these safeguards were often breached (Wild and Elhawari 2012). DfID was continually under pressure to demonstrate that it was contributing to the Helmand effort, both through its contributions to tri-departmental mechanisms, and through its bilateral programme. To some extent this constrained the choices available to DfID and undermined the coherence of its overall strategy (Chapman and Vaillant 2010). However, for DfID the SU may also be seen as relieving the development agency from a lot of pressures.

<sup>13</sup> Interview, MFA, August 2013.

## **4. Whole-of-Government Approaches: Outcome and Impact?**

In order to arrive at an idea about the possible outcomes and impacts of donors' WoG approaches in contexts of fragile statehood, we have chosen to focus on some of the most common channels and uses of ODA provided as part of WoGAs. First, the use of ODA for programmes that are supposed to improve security; secondly, the provincial reconstruction team as an instrument of implementation; thirdly, the importance of negotiated settlements; fourthly, multi-donor trust funds as channels of implementation; and lastly, security-sector reform as a popular target of WoG strategies.

### **Development aid for security**

One of the important rationales for engaging international development aid in the context of international (and national)<sup>14</sup> military interventions has been the assumption that improved service delivery and (visible) short-term reconstruction lead to increased stability, security and legitimacy on the part of the central government, as well as its local representatives and allies. This assumption was the main driver behind the development of WoG approaches in the context of growing insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, a pressure that mounted as it became evident that the military operations were not producing the expected results in terms of stability and peace. However, this assumption has had to be revised, since, in fragile contexts, it seems that 'aid does not reduce threat' (Böhnke, Koehler and Zürchner 2010: 10). In the case of Afghanistan the few studies undertaken and published show that:

- 1) Development aid has in some cases improved the legitimacy of the international presence – but i) this does not necessarily translate into giving legitimacy of the national government (TLO 2010); and ii) there is no evidence that this translates into improved perceptions of security (BMZ 2009). Effectively, in the same period that donors' WoG efforts increased in Afghanistan, insecurity spread widely into previously safe areas of the country (Jackson and Haysom 2013).
- 2) The use of development aid in counterinsurgency scenarios may provide short-term benefits for populations and tactical advantages in terms of force protection

<sup>14</sup> This applies to national military missions as well as noted in the evaluation of international development aid in subnational areas of conflict in Asia (Parks et al. 2013).

and intelligence, but reconstruction and development projects in the theatres of military deployment do not seem to have the desired lasting impact on security or the legitimacy of the government (TLO 2010; MFA Netherlands 2011; Fishstein and Wilder 2012).

- 3) Quick Impact Projects (and similar concepts) in particular have been associated with poor planning, implementation and monitoring, and hence greater potential for the misuse and abuse of aid resources, which seems to delegitimize central and local government as well as the international presence (Bennett et al. 2009; Gordon 2011; Fishstein and Wilder 2012). Such perceptions have fed into growing mistrust of the government and the international community. In fact, there is 'actually more evidence of the destabilizing rather than the stabilizing effects of aid, especially in insecure areas, where the pressure to spend large amounts of money were greatest' (Fishstein and Wilder 2012: 3).
- 4) Reconstruction and development projects have underestimated the existing fragmentation at community level, as well as the marginalization, division and resentment that aid may cause in contexts of high fragmentation: aid is perceived as something that creates winners and losers, rather than something that benefits the 'common good' or 'development' (OECD 2010; Fishstein and Wilder 2012). The Dutch approach in Uruzgán has been credited for its sustained attempts to address such local divisions, grievances and political marginalization in the planning of small reconstruction projects, but other actors characterized such attempts as naïve and only possible under the security umbrella of other ISAF forces in the area (Fishstein 2010; MFA Netherlands 2011; Jackson and Haysom 2013).

However, this analysis requires nuance. Thus, the community-based National Solidarity Program (of the World Bank-managed trust fund) is a notable exception to the above picture, though it only works in more permissive environments (Fishstein and Wilder 2012). Also, as the Feinstein study synthesis notes, donor approaches have improved since 2009, when fieldwork for most of the studies was undertaken (Fishstein and Wilder 2012), but the outcome of adjusted approaches has not yet been identified or measured through independent assessments.

Moving beyond Afghanistan to the case of Somalia, various sources have pointed out that supporting service delivery – as well as security – through the Transitional Federal Government and UNISOM does not necessarily boost the legitimacy of the TFG (Menkhaus 2010; MFA Denmark 2010). Rather, donor support of an illegitimate government such as the TFG may reflect badly on donors and increase their reputational risk by being associated with one party in the conflict.

Also the (Southern) Sudan case has challenged the assumption that ‘development’ understood as service delivery can mitigate or prevent violent conflict. According to a multi-donor evaluation of aid to Southern Sudan in 2005-10, programming was based on the flawed assumptions 1) that conflicts in the region were related to feelings of marginalization in terms of service provision, and 2) that service provision would therefore work as a means of preventing conflict (Bennett et al. 2010). Rather, it seems that people were more concerned about personal insecurity and political marginalization, and the evaluation found no correlation between higher amounts of aid and a lower incidence of conflict. Meanwhile donors ignored local and South-South conflict patterns related to ethnic divisions, disaffected youth, and cattle and land disputes, and the evaluation concludes that aid did not contribute significantly to reducing the conflict potentials identified in 2005 (Bennett et al. 2010).

### **Programme Implementation Units**

In the context of deployments of NATO and Coalition forces (in Kosovo, Iraq or Afghanistan), donors have developed tactical-level ‘programme implementation units’ as part of their WoGAs, which are best known in the form of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Criticisms have been levelled at many PRTs<sup>15</sup> for their poorly implemented and unsustainable reconstruction projects and the blurring of civil–military boundaries (see Chapter five), but more generally, the PRTs have come to represent the tendency of donors to channel aid directly to ‘their’ areas of military deployment and PRT-lead responsibility.<sup>16</sup> Even in the cases of improved (post-2009) approaches, where local governments and line agencies have been the main partners in implementation, the tendency goes against the general guidelines as to how donors can avoid ‘doing harm’ to state-building efforts:

The delivery of aid to line agencies within the state without central co-ordination further disrupts the building of capacity and budgetary systems, with

<sup>15</sup> In particular the US-led PRTs, like the UK-led PRT Helmand, was heavily criticized in 2008 for the QIPs they had carried out: ‘DfID’s perception of QIPs in Helmand as being “rapidly implemented projects that serve as down payments on promises of political and economic progress – buying time for a government to establish its own capacity to deliver public services.... supporting and cementing political settlements between populations and their government at local levels” has been challenged by an independent evaluation. The Tribal Liaison Office (TLO), commissioned by the Stabilisation Unit, undertook a focal group(s) assessment of local Afghan perceptions and reached rather different conclusions. Within the work carried out by the PRT (the QIPs in particular), there was dissatisfaction over procurement, construction quality, lack of monitoring and over the role of interpreters’ (Bennett et al. 2009: 56).

<sup>16</sup> Norway and Denmark, for example, which have been at the lower end of the spectrum, reached a level of ca. 20% of overall aid to Afghanistan that went directly to Faryab and Helmand provinces (Strand 2012; Udenrigsministeriet 2011).

huge transaction costs. Continued flows of aid to project implementation units (PIUs) create sites of power outside the state, which has a deleterious impact on political processes. Keeping aid off budget weakens the development of public accountability and therefore state legitimacy. (OECD 2010: 15)

Nevertheless, as a synthesis of DfID programmes in fragile state contexts recognizes, donors are confronting a difficult dilemma as support for central state institutions, in particular national budget management, is a slow, long-term process and that central on-budget funds are very slow in 'trickling down' to provincial and district levels. Therefore donor agencies find it hard not to meet immediate needs at the provincial level by directly supporting PRT activities, NGOs, local administrations and non-state entities (DfID 2010: 53). As an evaluation of state-building support in fragile contexts suggests, there may be times when interventions should support lower tiers of governments directly (Grävingsholt et al. 2012).

The OECD (2010) has suggested pooled donor funding as an alternative to local and bilateral project implementation units, an alternative that is better suited to supporting state-building. Effectively, a large part of the funding from the donors in question are channelled through multi-donor trust funds, but as we shall see below, these donor funds have received mixed evaluations in terms of their potential impact on situations on the ground.

### **Political settlements**

There is general agreement among evaluations and reports that, in contexts of limited or no official statehood, security must be first in a sequenced intervention. There are encouraging examples of development aid that have worked well as part of multi-tiered peace-building efforts (working *on* conflict, as in the case of Nepal<sup>17</sup>), but it seems that development aid can support the extension of the legitimacy and reach of the central state beyond the capital only if a credible political settlement has been established, whether formally or informally. Sierra Leone represents a positive example, whereas Afghanistan has been taken as a negative example where the non-inclusiveness of the 2002 settlement has presented serious obstacles to state-building (Bennett et al. 2009; IFSH et al. 2010).

This assumption is supported in a recent evaluation of aid in the context of subnational conflicts in Asia (Parks et al. 2013), but in general, the question of political settlement

<sup>17</sup> Chapman and Vincent 2010.

is not yet a standard perspective in (aid) evaluations, even though there is an increased awareness of issues of legitimacy, elites and political processes (Grävnholt et al 2012; Baranyi and Desrosiers 2012). International interventions in fragile contexts have too often made the faulty assumption that there are ‘converging interests’ between donors and good-willed local and national authorities; they have too often neglected the authorities’ lack of interest in, resistance to or inability to support the aims and values of donor governments’ reform agendas, including SSR (Booth 2012). However, particularly in these contexts, political settlements are fragile and governments often embroiled in struggles for regime survival and short-termist logics. If settlements exist, they are often based on the kind of clientelist practices that the reforms are intended to eradicate (Zürchner 2012).

The question arises as to whether there are ways in which donors and international organizations can overcome the problems of exclusive or fragile political settlements by means of incentives and/or coercion, but there is no recent evidence to suggest what works and what does not: ‘Effectively pressurizing domestic actors is difficult. Making coercive means work requires donors to enjoy high levels of legitimacy in the eyes of political elites and the public in partner countries. What works and why, is still under-researched’ (Grävnholt et al. 2010: 35). In this regard, DfID’s synthesis evaluations of aid cooperation in fragile contexts observes that the use of Development Partner Agreements between the UK and partner governments has not been effective in holding governments to account in contexts where the higher political imperatives of the donor governments – notably security – took over when commitments were breached (Chapman and Vincent 2010; Zürchner 2012).

At a different scale, and involving relations between different donors and international organizations, the Dutch experience in Uruzgan showed that, even though the Dutch government was the lead nation in the province, their attempts to sideline informal powerbrokers were undercut by other security actors, who based their stabilization strategies on cooperation with the very same power-brokers (MFA Netherlands 2011).

### **Multi-donor trust funds**

Against the critical views of ‘bilateralization’ associated with the use of development aid in areas of donor’s military deployment, multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) have been suggested as an alternative that can enhance harmonization among donors, as well as alignment with host government policies (Nussbaum et al 2012). Many donors opt to share institutional risks by channelling aid through these funds, which are

typically managed by the World Bank or UNDP, and they are particularly popular as a means of pooling funds in fragile contexts. However, even though these funds have improved their performance during the past ten years, evaluations are mixed (Barakat et al 2012). MDTFs are often criticized for being slow, costly and inflexible, which in the case of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund in Southern Sudan led to a mushrooming of alternative pooled funds and bilateral means of channelling aid. In this case, problems have been linked to the fact that the fund was not designed in-country and did not take sufficiently into account the extremely difficult working context in terms of logistics, security and political dynamics (Barakat et al. 2012; Fafo 2013). Hence, the fund generated unrealistically high expectations.

With some notable exceptions, such as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund that operates closely with the recipient government's Ministry of Finance and provides direct budget support, donors and fund administrators remain unwilling to turn over large sums to governments that are viewed to be weak and corrupt, in particular in fragile states where capacity and the ability to manage funds is considered low (Barakat et al. 2012: 45). Thus, paradoxically, while MDTFs often work well and enhance ownership in places with firmly established governments (such as post-tsunami Indonesia), the fragile state contexts where the funds enjoy the highest popularity among donors are the cases in which they have shown the poorest results in terms of ownership (Barakat et al. 2012).

Donors have made some progress in working with state officials to develop new initiatives to anchor the management of aid funds more firmly within the state. In particular, the jointly managed state and donor funds with 'dual control oversight mechanisms' are promising, since they increase the resources managed by the state, but guard against corruption and reduce the fiduciary risks that donors face (OECD 2010).

### **Security Sector Reform**

The policy field of Security Sector Reform (SSR) has become a central component of state-building agendas, and it can play an important and positive role in generating stability. With its development policy origins and a focus on long-term 'holistic' approaches, SSR has incorporated military short-termism, but also shifted the emphasis away from it. From the outset, SSR approaches have been a core feature of integrated whole-of-government approaches, most notably through pooled funding (Albrecht et al. 2010). As part of the larger SSR efforts, DDR processes are also relevant fields for

WoGAs. However, significant gaps remain between what is generally considered to be the successful development of SSR policy and its practical implementation, although, as Andersen argues, the challenge is ‘not to overcome the gap between policy and practice, but rather to transcend the divide between the universal concepts of SSR and the particular contexts in which SSR is being pursued’ (Andersen 2012: 111). Military assistance programmes in fragile states ‘remain piecemeal and uncoordinated’ as a whole in terms of training, doctrine and equipment procurement (OECD 2010). In the case of the DRC, a multi-donor evaluation from 2010 characterized SSR and DDR efforts as relevant and relatively successful in addressing the conflict drivers, even though the extensive re-mobilization of demobilized combatants illustrated the considerable risks associated with this kind of programme (Brusset et al. 2010). Whereas DDR processes represent a field of meaningful cooperation across the security–development divide, the concept has to be developed and adapted to specific contexts, particularly in relation to the proliferation of armed actors that blur civil–military boundaries, and the prospects of ‘reintegration’ into the informal economies of which ex-combatants already form part (Brusset et al 2010; Munive and Jacobsen 2012). Again, analysis and adaptation to local contexts is crucial.

A number of cross-departmental SSR programmes have been characterized as successful and ‘cutting edge’. In Burundi, Dutch-funded SSR and justice programmes (for example, the Security Sector Development programme) have been ‘realizing results at a number of levels’ (see Ball et al. 2012: 36). In Sierra Leone, DfID-funded initiatives (e.g., the 1999 to 2008 Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme or SILSEP, and the 2005 to 2011 Justice Sector Development Programme or JSDP) have helped pave the way for democratically accountable forces and improved the population’s confidence in its security services (Albrecht and Jackson, 2009, 2011; Albrecht et al. 2013).

Unlike many SSR programmes, which, according to evaluation reports, are ‘insufficiently political’ and lacking in ‘political realism’, it seems that the positive experiences in Burundi and Sierra Leone depend on ‘getting the politics right’ (van Veen 2013: 21). SSR is an inherently endogenous process, which, to be effective, must be owned and directed by governments with the support of donors, rather than vice versa: ‘success in the sector hinges principally on government goodwill’ (Chapman and Vaillant, 2010: 21). The UK’s programme in Sierra Leone achieved high-level political support after conflict ended in 2002 (Albrecht and Jackson 2009) and has been held up as an example of how competent and committed national staff can make a relative difference to programming success (Jackson and Albrecht 2011).

The UK's programme in Sierra Leone managed to achieve political support at the highest level and illustrated the importance of how a long-term program with qualified international advisers enabled adjustment to context and daily engagement with the national leadership (Albrecht 2010; Albrecht et al. 2013).<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the Dutch programme in Burundi emphasized growing local leadership and the importance of establishing strong relations between program management, the embassy office and national counterparts (Ball et al. 2012).

However, the two cases also illustrate the need for a good grip of the political dynamics, understanding the changing conditions of the political leaders and the importance of showing results in the short term: 'Programs are likely to do better by establishing specific intermediate results for a shorter time frame in combination with more broadly framed over-the-horizon guideposts' (van Veen 2013: 25). Such an approach requires a solid baseline assessment and frequent reviews to follow the changing conditions and constellations of power. But most of all the approach requires a high degree of flexibility, as well as staff in the country office/embassy, who are empowered to manage the programme in flexible ways. In Burundi, the Dutch sought consciously to do this by, for example, generating 'different crisis response options' as well as 'dedicated projects to identify issues and interests on the go' (van Veen 2013: 28, 22).

From these evaluations, it is evident that some of the key drivers behind successful SSR programmes include the establishment of ownership, connecting short- and long-term objectives, nurturing flexible understandings and management of a programme's political underpinnings, and having a way of operating that is not too linear (Ball et al. 2012; Albrecht et al. 2013). What is in question in both countries, and particularly in the case of Sierra Leone, is the long-term political will to sustain reform efforts.

<sup>18</sup> However, Albrecht and Jackson (2009: 169) note the challenges faced by the UK's MOD, FCO and DfID in establishing a 'joined-up' whole-of-government approach (as discussed in Chapter four).

## **5. Whole-of-Government Approaches and Humanitarian Aid**

An extensive part of donors' humanitarian aid is spent in fragile states, and this is where WoGAs are most commonly brought into play. In 2010, Denmark spent 78.3% of its official humanitarian aid in fragile states, the UK 83.7%, and the Netherlands 77%. The relationship between humanitarian actors and donors' WoG approaches to fragile states has been strongly debated, not least in the early days that followed 9/11. Humanitarian actors have felt themselves coming under considerable pressure to become part of donor governments' political and security strategies.

Even though donors such as the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands have become much more cautious, relations between humanitarian and international governmental political and security actors in countries like Afghanistan and Somalia deteriorated significantly during the 2000s. Below, we will give an account of the ensuing debate about the 'shrinking humanitarian space' before looking at the cases of Afghanistan and Somalia. Whereas donors may or may not consider humanitarian aid to be part of their WoGAs, international agencies such as the UN provide the main channel for aid flows. In the case of the UK in Somalia, for example, from 2012/13 to 2014/15, 68% of this will be channelled through the UN, while 18% will fund international NGOs, with the remaining 14% going to commercial service providers (DfID 2013).

At the end of the chapter we will refer to a couple of suggestions which could help overcome the deadlock between humanitarian and political/security actors.

### **The debate**

Since the events of 9/11 and the escalating 'war on terror', it has been argued that humanitarianism has been in crisis (Donini et al 2006, 2008; Collinson and Elhawary 2012). In addition to a dramatic increase in funding, the varying degrees of politicization and militarization of humanitarian aid, through co-option as a state-building tool within the human security agenda, has challenged the core and arguably neutral aim of humanitarianism, namely to assist and protect the most vulnerable during natural disasters and complex emergencies. Politically, humanitarian action has become increasingly important because it '... influences, as well as reflects, public opinion and the views of governments at the national and global levels' (Donini et al. 2008: 4).

### Box I. Humanitarian space?

The concept of 'humanitarian space' is fraught with ambiguity (see Collinson and Elhawary 2012 for a discussion of the multiple ways in which humanitarian space has been understood and defined), with one conceptualisation being a 'complex political, military and legal arena of civilian protection and assistance, [that] is determined by the interplay of a range of actors' interests and ambitions' (Collinson and Elhawary 2012: 26). Ultimately, the concept helps humanitarian aid agencies facilitate access to affected populations, safeguard the security of both aid recipients and aid workers, and emphasise assistance based on the needs of the most vulnerable. It follows that such spaces are ideally protected by an 'essential [though now notably 'battered'] safety net' of principled humanitarian action, crafted from the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence (Donini et al. 2008: 3). Prior to 9/11, humanitarian spaces tended to be located on the side-lines. Post 9/11 and the shift towards western/northern political and security agendas, 'stabilisation' discourses and interventions in 'fragile' states, these spaces often take centre stage. A plethora of actors operate – military forces, state development and diplomacy agencies, UN peacekeepers, I/NGOs and the humanitarian community – either in country or through 'remote management', all having different core aims and principles. These actors compete, with varying degrees of coordination, for influence, impact and ultimately a range of different effects amongst local populations.

While it has always been necessary for humanitarian actors to be politically savvy, many in the field argue that this has never been more the case, with the boundaries of humanitarian aid requiring increasingly robust and principled defence from whole-of-government stabilisation agendas.<sup>19</sup> These boundaries are increasingly being negotiated in the form of debates around civil–military coordination, the implications of UN integration on UN humanitarian agencies (such as exacerbating and fuelling the distrust of local populations and undermining security), and the impact of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency on the impartial provision of aid, for example, the blocking or suspension of aid by some international donors in Somalia. This reflects the growing political economy of aid, namely the connections and the relations of power associated with, for example, the diversion and taxation of aid (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee 2012). It follows that the humanitarian community has struggled to negotiate the complex and often tangled boundaries between principled and pragmatic approaches, as well as the political consequences of humanitarian action, such as fuelling conflict by paying taxes to belligerents for access, the unintended implications associated with the theft or confiscation of aid, and the indirect influence on political structures. These tensions have been exacerbated by an escalation of need, increased awareness due to global media coverage, and the challenges associated with maintaining principled funding.

Hammond and Vaughan-Lee (2012) argue that there is a significant lack of debate about how humanitarian spaces have been created historically and how they can be regenerated and expanded today. What is evident is the highly ambiguous nature of these spaces, highlighting the need for further debate to address 'the questions of whose space are we referring to, who is an acceptable humanitarian actor and what activities are acceptable for local communities and other stakeholders', as well as 'the multiple factors that impact [on] humanitarian space' (HPG/SOAS 2011: 6).

<sup>19</sup> See arguments for, by Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah 2010; Jackson and Haysom 2013, and counter critiques by Gordon 2010

The political and strategic underpinnings of integrated whole-of-government stabilisation approaches and the implications of increasing military engagement in humanitarian spaces have both fuelled this crisis, with the former arguably presenting the greatest dilemma for the humanitarian community (Collinson et al. 2010). Co-optation by government and military forces can mean the principle humanitarian aim of protecting those in most need becoming subsumed beneath more political objectives. In addition to undermining the security of aid workers and affected populations, it also challenges the humanitarian imperative and reveals some of the 'deep-seated ambiguities at the heart of humanitarianism', an area that requires further debate (Collinson et al. 2010: S275). For example, the humanitarian community has been strongly criticised for failing to acknowledge the expanded nature of the humanitarian system and the extension of 'its reach and ambitions into types of conflict and crisis that were previously off-limits', compounded by a lack of internal reflection by the international humanitarian community (Collinson and Elhawary 2012: 25).

### *Afghanistan*

In Afghanistan, Benelli et al. (2012) note that humanitarian needs have often been 'minimized or re-branded as chronic underdevelopment' and significantly that 'the tools to assess the situation on the ground were until recently neither developed nor deemed necessary' (Benelli et al. 2012: 4). This has been exacerbated by the poor security situation in some provinces, causing many, although not all development actors and the majority of purely humanitarian agencies to withdraw from Afghanistan, although the degree to which this 'development vacuum' ever existed has been challenged.<sup>20</sup>

Nonetheless military forces and provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) have expanded into this alleged void, taking on aid and humanitarian assistance roles in the name of stabilisation (Fishstein and Wilder 2012: 17). As Jackson and Haysom note, aid actors struggled to reduce the rapid rise of the PRTs and stress that 'disunity among aid agencies was exacerbated by the absence of UN humanitarian leadership and capacity' (2013: 3). While civil-military guidelines were drawn up and agreed by UNAMA (the 'integrated' UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) and ISAF, these have had only a limited impact (ibid.). Benelli et al. point towards a deepening humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, emphasising that '... urgent changes [are] required to improve the response to a severe and deepening humanitarian crisis and to protect humanitarian agencies, to the extent possible, from overt manipulation' (Benelli et al. 2012: 4). Humanitarian space is heavily reduced in large parts of the country, and

<sup>20</sup> See Jackson and Haysom 2013: 13 and 15

is likely to contract even further with ISAF's withdrawal at the end of 2014 (Jackson and Haysom 2013: 19).

### *Somalia*

In Somalia, aid has increasingly been politicized and militarized since 2007. Hammond and Vaughan-Lee (2012) point out the international humanitarian communities' 'coherence and common stand' against the structural integration of the UN in relation to Somalia, an integration which has entailed a dual role for the organization: on the one hand UN agencies have provided impartial humanitarian assistance, while on the other the UN has adopted a political and state-building role in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia or AMISOM, and, until 2012, the Transitional Federal Government. For the humanitarian sector, this double role of the UN in Somalia provides a good example of why humanitarian agencies should not be an integrated part of (integrated) UN missions (de Coning 2008).

This situation has produced a number of different outcomes. First, the international aid community has been further fragmented between humanitarian and other actors. Schmidt highlights the fact that 'humanitarian actors and donors have retreated behind humanitarian principles, a separation that arguably comes at the cost of overall "systemic" learning, especially where humanitarian and development activities (and actors!) overlap over decades, notably in South Central Somalia' (Schmidt 2013: 68). As Menkhaus notes, there has been very little 'space for compromise and concession' between humanitarian and stabilisation interests. There is 'simply too much on the line for either constituency to give much ground' (Menkhaus 2010: S320-S321).

Secondly, in terms of state-building, the operation in Somalia has been widely criticised for 'disregarding the Somali context and, in its application, helping to maintain an illegitimate political elite that lives off playing the role of formal interlocutors to international actors (Schmidt, 2013: 59). Despite resistance from the international humanitarian community, humanitarian aid has 'become the substitute for government service provision' due to its considered 'peace dividends', thus becoming 'the default form of engagement in chronic conflict environments' (HPG/SOAS 2011: 5). In the view of the critics, counter-terrorism and anti-piracy activities have been prioritised, indicating a short-termist approach. However, rather than stability, more often than not state-building and stabilisation initiatives have created instability, insecurity and armed conflict, exacerbating the distrust of international actors amongst the Somali population (Menkhaus 2010: S331).

Thirdly, regarding humanitarian work in Somalia as in other geographical contexts, access-based as opposed to needs-based approaches have predominated that embed humanitarian communities in the political economy of violence. This happens, for example, through diversion of relief goods, payment of fees for protection and for access to key assets, rent for vehicles and housing and other avenues of economic engagement, all of which leave humanitarians increasingly exposed to political manipulation (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee 2012: 8). In the case of Somalia, donors 'prioritise political interventions such as state-building and counter-terrorism and seek to use humanitarian assistance to support these objectives, something that armed actors and local communities are well aware of' (HPG/SOAS, 2011: 2).

Granting or restricting access has become a key political bargaining tool, with the humanitarian community adopting a spectrum of pragmatic approaches depending on context to facilitate access, to the detriment of those in most need. Indeed, in many cases this is at the expense of advocacy for humanitarian principles (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee 2012: 4). This is illustrated in the relationship between aid flows and the size of the humanitarian space: 'as funding increased from 2006 onwards, humanitarian space, measured in terms of access to areas in need, actually decreased (see Bradbury 2010)' (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee 2012: 6). As Hammond and Vaughan-Lee emphasize, 'More research needs to be done to examine whether more people were served by the increase in funds, and whether aid has been distributed in a principled way, especially with respect to the impartial allocation of assistance' (2012: 6).

Thus, while the international community presently considers its involvement in Somalia to have been a success in terms of a decrease in the cases of piracy and increased trust in a more stable south and central Somalia, the ability of humanitarian action to reach those in need seems to have decreased in the same period.

#### *Alternatives that may work*

As discussions around the UN's integrated approach have shown, the context defines whether or not the incorporation of humanitarian action into WoGA's to fragile states represents a serious problem of impact (de Coning 2008). In this regard, the intractable conflicts that have become associated with the war on terror, such as those in Afghanistan and Somalia, represent conflicts in which relations between many humanitarian and political/security actors have entered a deadlock. Observers of the Somalia situation suggest the following three approaches as possible ways out of the deadlock.

First, much of the literature points towards the adoption of decentralized approaches, a focus on context and the support of local responses, including grassroots peace-building initiatives. As an HPG/SOAS roundtable discussion highlighted, ‘the lesson is that peace can rarely be imposed from the outside and that there is a need to ensure an effective humanitarian response that might create the space for Somalis to resolve their problems’ (HPG/SOAS 2011: 3). Indeed, Hammond and Vaughan-Lee note that in Somalia there has been ‘little attempt to foster legitimacy or promote dialogue at the community and other local levels’ (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee 2012: 2). It has even been argued that what may be required is a ‘reduced mandate in Somalia’, with examples citing the result of international withdrawal after 1995: ‘endogenous forces in Somalia created some stability, particularly in Somaliland (where the process of political stabilisation began earlier, in 2001) and Puntland’ (HPG/SOAS 2011: 3).

Secondly, some observers suggest that coordination of the many actors involved may best be undertaken at the country level. While there is an abundance of coordination mechanisms in Somalia, there is a significant lack of effective coordination, as Schmidt highlights: ‘Ad hoc and informal coordination mechanisms dominate coordination of donors in Somalia’ (Schmidt 2013: 66). Schmidt advocates instead ‘organisational multilateralism [as] one way to tackle coordination problems...’ (Schmidt 2013: 63).

In general, aid officials in country offices have a denser web of ties to other donors than at present at the donor capital level and they channel context-relevant information upward or act as ‘sinks’ or selective filters for it. They themselves create structures of multilateralism by identifying and selecting implementing partners and disbursements modalities such as joint project funds. Arguably over time the priorities and principles developed at this level feed back into national or multilateral policies. (Schmidt 2013: 59-60)

Thirdly, to help break what looks like a deadlock in terms of humanitarian aid and WoGAs, humanitarian actors should consider their political impact: ‘[R]ather than insist that humanitarian action should be somehow cleansed of politics, a task which is surely impossible ... a better understanding of how humanitarian action is political in its own right, and how it can, deliberately or not, influence political outcomes, from the very local to the national’ is necessary (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee, 2012: 14). With this comes the necessity to increase understanding of how ‘the political economy of aid functions and influences humanitarian and political

actions' (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee 2012: 2). It is only through these means that humanitarian space can be 'enlarged and made more effective by minimising the deliberate use of humanitarian aid for overtly political purposes' (ibid). Whilst the politicisation of assistance is certainly an issue, it might be the 'economics of resource capture or the culture of resource entitlement that represents the greatest threat' (HPG/SOAS 2011: 6).

## 6. Conclusions

### Context

The task of assessing ‘what works’ in relation to donors’ whole-of-government approaches in contexts of fragile statehood is extremely difficult for a number of reasons that we have discussed in this report.

Many of the conflicts and crisis situations in question, such as those in Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia and West Africa, were largely ignored by donors before 2001 since they did not fit the 1990s agenda for development cooperation. With the focus on good governance, good performance and willingness to reform, humanitarian aid provided the main avenue of politically low-profile international engagement in these areas. This changed in rather drastic ways in the aftermath of 9/11, as the concept of ‘fragile states’ was conceived and spread, as the political agenda became an issue of intense interest for security policy in particular. With state-building emerging as the answer to fears that fragile states and ‘ungoverned areas’ would turn into safe havens for terrorists, the development sector, with its expertise in governance, service delivery and economic development, became increasingly involved in fragile contexts.

While development cooperation has often been presented as a technical solution to poverty and poor governance, it has always been a thoroughly political instrument. But a host of international norms, guidelines, agreements and declarations have worked to temper the underlying political (and economic) agendas and to emphasize issues of ownership, harmonization, alignment, etc. However, in countries and areas with very weak state institutions and with limited legitimacy and limited effective sovereignty of central governments, development cooperation is inherently challenging. Given the limited state capacity and fragile political alliances on which governments base their rule, the countries and areas in question constitute ‘difficult partnerships’<sup>21</sup> in which the ownership of development and state-building agendas can be limited by issues of short-term regime survival. Even though we are talking about degrees of difference, donors have recognized that contextual factors become even more decisive in fragile states than in (apparently) stable states, and that influence and responsibility tend to be ‘shifted onto external actors’, as documented in the evaluation of the Paris Declaration (Phase2) (Wood et al. 2011).

<sup>21</sup> OECD 2002.

These challenges were not so different from donor engagements in various post-conflict contexts in the 1990s, when development and humanitarian aid was attributed with peace-building and conflict-preventing potentials. However, the new context added direct national security interests on the side of donor governments. Along with this, the development-oriented departments – hitherto the domain of the low-profile politics of aid and technical assistance – had to negotiate their turf with departments that dealt with security and high politics.<sup>22</sup> Hence new political and security actors entered the theatres of fragile states and subjected development actors and practices to new pressures, not least to the expectations for rapid results that accompany the heightened political profile of these donor engagements. As the case of Afghanistan has demonstrated, such pressures multiplied once donor governments had ‘boots on the ground’.

To some degree these changes explain the increased need to develop cross-departmental WoG approaches by the mid-2000s. Since then, as the examples in this report show, WoG approaches have been a work in progress, and only pursued as such by some and not all donors, as the case of Norway illustrates. Due to the incremental and on-going character of WoGA development, in some senses it is too early to take stock of whether, how and under what conditions these approaches work, in particular as monitoring and evaluation are inherent weak spots in these approaches.

## **Findings**

Some evaluations and analyses of policy practices do exist, mainly analysing the second half of the 2000s and published between 2009 and 2013. Most of them deal with the ‘inner’ workings of the WoG processes and ask whether they work according to their own premises of generating joined-up processes of analysis, strategy, planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and feedback. Evaluations of the three country cases in this report point to improvements, even though evaluations are still critical of the capacity to develop analyses and monitor systems with a sufficient sense of political and conflict dynamics. But in particular they are critical of donors’ capacity to include these analyses in the (iterative) planning processes. Whether the development of a cross-departmental instrument of analysis will be effective in the UK case remains to be seen.

<sup>22</sup> In Denmark, for example, people with a background in Danida and the ‘development sections’ of the MFA used to take the embassies in countries of development cooperation, while people with a background in security policy and ‘high’ diplomacy, took the more prestigious diplomatic posts in embassies in the US, the EU, NATO, the UN, Russia etc.

Overall, the OECD's evaluation of donor approaches to fragile states and situations is not overly positive (OECD 2011a). The OECD was one of the key organizations in encouraging donors to work on the links between political, security and development objectives ('fragile states principle' number 5), but they also pointed to the need to grasp the trade-offs between these objectives, as well as the consequences of the choices made. In an assessment of donor engagements in fragile states from 2011, the organization pinpoints the lack of transparency in the processes of managing these trade-offs, which, they argue, 'feeds a sense that certain objectives are implicitly prioritized over others' (OECD 2011a: 31). This sense comes out in both the evaluations and in interviews undertaken for the present report, where development and in particular humanitarian actors seem to act defensively vis-à-vis what they see as encroachments on ODA funds and pressures on aid principles, mainly from military actors. Whereas the establishment of cross-departmental units does not necessarily entail an encroachment on ODA funds and principles, there is little transparency concerning dilemmas, priorities, trade-offs and their possible consequences.

It is impossible from evaluations to judge whether one or the other institutional WoG set-up works better, also because size of the participating institutions probably matter for which set-up is most appropriate at the strategic level. At the operational, in-country level, one clear message is that embassies are crucial and that analysis, coordination, monitoring, feedback and programme adjustment are best served by well-staffed embassies in which relatively high-ranking representatives of relevant departments are posted. Finally, the tactical-level units for coordination, such as the provincial reconstruction teams, have not received very positive evaluations as instruments of tactical-level planning and coordination, at least not from development and humanitarian sectors.

In relation to the outcome and impact of WoGAs, the number of evaluations and analyses is even more limited. Nevertheless, those that exist make a few clear points regarding the assumptions behind WoGAs, or more precisely, the assumptions behind the use of development aid to improve security and stabilize fragile situations. Contrary to what has been widely assumed in government offices, and in particular in military headquarters, there is little evidence to show that improved service delivery and short-term reconstruction necessarily lead to the increased security, stability and legitimacy of the central government. As the case of Afghanistan suggests, a lot of measurable development has taken place in terms of health, education and infrastructure, but it has not helped in improving security. Often, development and reconstruction projects have been associated with the misuse and abuse of aid re-

sources, perceptions that have fed into mistrust rather than improved the legitimacy of the central government and its local allies and representatives.

The same was observed in relation to Somalia in the late 2000s, when donor support to service delivery and security through the Transitional Federal Government and AMISOM greatly increased reputational risk for donors, rather than producing a positive impact on the legitimacy of TFG. In South Sudan, evaluations likewise pointed to the misunderstood factors of conflict – by focusing on service delivery rather than addressing problems of political isolation, insecurity and local conflict drivers, donors did not contribute to the reduction of conflict potentials.

Rather than suggesting that development aid can never be used to improve the prospects for stability and peace, it is the context that defines how ODA may be used and to what ends. Thus, there is some evidence to suggest that development aid can help stabilize unruly areas in the context of a pre-existing, credible political settlement and transition plan.

Evaluations suggest that security-sector reform, one of the preferred fields supported through cross-departmental funds, is a relevant field of WoG activities, with a potentially positive impact on peace- and state-building. However, ownership is essential to the reform process, as is the use of short-term results to improve the prospects for achieving long-term objectives. Whereas DDR processes also represent a field of meaningful cooperation across the security–development divide, the concept has to be developed and adapted to specific contexts, in particular in regard to the proliferation of armed actors that blur civil–military boundaries, as well as to the prospects for ‘reintegration’ into the informal economies of which ex-combatants already form part. Again, analysis and adaptation to local contexts is crucial.

The impact of WoGAs on humanitarian aid and humanitarian situations is a much-debated theme that has had divisive effects in the humanitarian community. One effect has been the withdrawal of many humanitarian agencies from theatres of operation associated with the War against Terror (e.g. Afghanistan and Somalia), which has increased the responsibility of the military to provide emergency aid in areas they control. As a tendency, however, humanitarian aid is increasingly being kept out of WoGAs.

In conclusion, WoGAs are still very much a work in progress that do not yet live up to their own standards of integration between governmental departments and

entities. The location of the boundaries around development aid is an important and continuous issue of contention, but various safeguards have been built into WoG systems over time. Evaluations acknowledge that transaction costs are high, that cross-departmental planning entails a trade-off in terms of speed, that an integrated approach is 'not the answer to everything,' and that in many cases core development, diplomacy and development work should occur separately. Precisely in which cases a WoGA is more relevant than its opposite is not clear from the evaluations.

WoGAs have been somewhat discredited among humanitarian and development actors because of their association with counterinsurgency and anti-terrorism operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. But national security and political interests will not go away, and there is a need to consider how the different interests and instruments influence each other, as well as the situation at hand. Whereas the overly bi-lateralized operations connected with NATO missions gave a sense that even smaller donor countries had to develop a strategy that was coherent at all levels, the current examples of WoG approaches to fragile contexts (e.g. Libya, Mali, South Sudan) show that ODA/non-ODA contributions from one donor can in fact be quite scattered. Nonetheless strategic coherence should exist because of the international efforts and the specific local contexts they play into. The individual contributions of a small country have to be thought out strategically in terms of which processes a small donor wants to play into and push. In that regard one of the outcomes, and maybe one of the criteria of success of WoGAs – even though it is often only implicit – is the question of whether the contributions give the donor visibility and recognition in the international community.

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