

Foreword

In recent years, there has been increased interest in understanding how donor interventions in situations of fragility and conflict can contribute to processes of statebuilding. While external actors cannot determine the outcome of those processes, they can target their assistance to support positive statebuilding dynamics. Donors must ensure that they “do no harm” and consider both the intended and unintended consequences of their interventions.

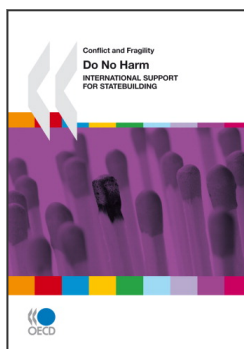
This publication fills an important knowledge gap by addressing two fundamental questions: what are the negative impacts that donor interventions can have on statebuilding; and what measures should donors adopt to avoid negative impacts on statebuilding processes?

Do No Harm argues that the challenges of statebuilding are such that donors must develop a sophisticated understanding of political processes, patterns of state-society relations and sources of legitimacy in the countries where they are operating. It helps to clarify some of the most important trade-offs among diverse goals and looks at how donors have approached them in the past and how they might approach them in the future. The publication demonstrates the ways in which decisions donors make concerning how aid is delivered can have a profound impact on policy-making processes that are central to a well functioning state. The risks of creating a dual public sector by channelling aid resources through non-state agents are highlighted.

Based on an extensive literature review and on six country case-studies (Afghanistan, Bolivia, the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], Nepal, Rwanda and Sierra Leone), *Do No Harm* offers a valuable addition to our knowledge on statebuilding in situations of fragility and conflict. I hope that policy-makers and practitioners working in capitals and the field will closely examine the recommendations put forward in this report. This will help to ensure that external engagement will reinforce – rather than undermine – positive statebuilding processes in situations of fragility and conflict.



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