

Chapter 4

Assessments: Applying the Armed Violence Lens

This chapter addresses:

- Adapting and combining existing assessment methods
- Making existing tools more AVR-sensitive
 - Combining existing tools around the armed violence lens
 - Strategic conflict assessments, in both conflict and non-conflict contexts
 - Public health approach: Mapping armed violence and building the evidence base
 - Governance and criminal justice assessments
 - Survey instruments
- Promising tools and new data sources
- Exploring data gaps and additional data sources
- Emerging principles for good practice in assessments
- Implications for monitoring and evaluation

Assessments are central to effective AVR programming. They establish key criteria, benchmarks and data essential to the design of interventions and monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness (Alkire, 2008). It is important to stress that the armed violence lens is not a “new” assessment tool. Rather, it serves as a complementary framework that can help development practitioners and their counterparts draw together information and insights derived from existing assessment tools.

Development actors routinely use a range of assessment tools to diagnose different aspects of armed conflict, state fragility, governance, crime and victimisation. By some estimates more than 100 different assessments are fielded by the UN system alone (Miller and Rudnick, 2008). Many of these overlap, and are used concurrently by different development and security actors in the same country. This has led to a degree of assessment fatigue and the duplication of efforts. At times, it has also led to incoherence, as different development, security and humanitarian actors arrive at different conclusions on how to prioritise, sequence interventions, or effectively integrate their efforts.

The armed violence lens can improve coherence by focusing attention on a set of challenging issues that reside at the nexus of security *and* development. By explicitly bringing different types of assessment tools together from the conflict, crime and public health sectors, it can help development actors think through complex determinants, protective factors and effects of armed violence. In so doing, it can also help to identify strategic entry points for intervention, thereby bridging the assessment-to-programming challenge (Box 4.1).

While AVR encourages development policy makers and practitioners to draw on multiple methods and data sources to build a solid evidence base for programme planning, it also recognises the long-standing challenge of turning analysis into programmes. More work is needed, including engagement with end-users, to determine the most cost-effective and realistic avenues for gathering, processing and sharing multiple sources of data, and how shared analysis can be translated into effective programming. Recent innovations, like crime and violence observatories, may be an important part of the solution.

4.1 Adapting and combining existing assessment methods

Existing assessments can be used creatively to capture key characteristics of armed violence. This can be achieved by *adapting existing tools to make them more AVR-sensitive* and by *combining different assessment methods and approaches*.

4.1.1 Making existing tools more AVR-sensitive

Many different types of thematic and sector-specific assessments generate data and insights that are relevant to understanding aspects of armed violence.¹ Where reducing armed violence is a demonstrated priority, the armed violence lens can usefully guide the adaptation of any given assessment instrument by identifying additional issue areas and/or questions that could be easily added. The additional information gathered would be relevant for a wide range of development actors interested in AVR programming, and could help them mainstream AVR goals.

4.1.2 Combining existing tools around the armed violence lens

To more directly capture the complex elements and dynamics of armed violence, different tools and methods can be combined (Box 4.2). The four most directly relevant tools include: strategic conflict and stability/fragility assessments; the public health approach; governance and criminal justice assessments; and a range of population-based survey instruments. This section considers each of these approaches in turn.

Strategic conflict assessments, in both conflict and non-conflict contexts

Strategic conflict assessments and related instruments such as drivers of change, power analysis, and stability and fragility assessments generally identify the key factors shaping conflict and insecurity. These instruments generate qualitative analysis of the underlying structural conditions of instability, institutional capacities and fragilities, the social, economic and political dynamics, key actors and their motivations, and the underlying political economy of conflict.

Conflict assessments are routinely used to target assistance to prevent the outbreak of violence, support a negotiated end to conflict, plan and prioritise post-conflict recovery efforts, and mitigate the risks of the conflict resuming. With respect to AVR, such assessments can generate critical data and inputs relating to the effects of conflict on specific population groups (*e.g.* women, youth), the motivations of perpetrators, the dynamics of small arms availability and (formal and informal) institutional risk factors (including issues like corruption and cultural factors shaping patterns of violence).

¹ Examples include assessments designed to appraise conflict, stability and fragility, as well as drivers of change, power analysis, poverty, SSR, governance, social exclusion, public safety, health and education, labour and employment, gender equality and relations, victimisation, vulnerable groups, water and sanitation, environmental resource use, agriculture and rural development, nutrition and household surveys.

Box 4.1. Many assessments, not enough coherence

Development actors regularly use a wide range of assessment tools and methods to inform different aspects of their programming. Examples of the many tools that exist include:

- *Conflict, stability, fragility and governance assessments*, including SSR assessments, fragility assessments, drivers of change, power analysis, landmine impact surveys, and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and small arms baseline surveys that are applied in countries affected by, or emerging from, conflict and those considered fragile.
- *Public health surveys and crime prevention assessments*, which often combine population-based surveys, surveillance and incident monitoring. They can also include justice and governance assessments and SSR surveys undertaken in countries affected by high levels of crime-related armed violence and insecurity.
- *A wide range of sector-specific survey instruments and assessments*. These focus on underlying factors that, while not exclusive to armed violence, can potentially exacerbate risk factors. Examples include: governance, poverty, gender, health, nutrition and food security, water and sanitation, urban and municipal services, infrastructure and planning and vulnerable groups.
- *A wide range of ad hoc assessments* ranging from ethnographic studies of specific communities and participatory urban/rural appraisal (and related methods), to assessments of the trade in arms, and of the macroeconomic impact of global remittance flows and other forms of informal and illicit value transfer.

Recommendations flowing from the use of a single assessment tool may favour sector- or thematic-specific responses, or be shaped by political factors associated with the commissioning agency. Typically, a single development actor employs more than one assessment instrument in the same context, with uncertainty as to how to link findings and recommendations. Programming staff are also challenged with turning empirical analysis into concrete programmes and policies.

Aid effectiveness requires greater effort by development actors and their partners to share data and findings, engage in *joint* (with national counterparts) and *joined-up* (with other donor) assessments, and undertake other actions to ensure a more comprehensive – but shared – vision of core development and security challenges, and appropriate responses.

Conflict assessments require time and intensive analysis. There is evidence that donors and multinational agencies have undertaken and applied them inconsistently. In most cases they are administered in conflict-affected countries, although this is changing. For example, DFID has undertaken strategic conflict assessments in Nigeria, Kenya, and Mozambique – countries not ostensibly at war – yielding analysis that identified key risk factors for AVR. *An important lesson is that conflict assessments can be adapted and usefully deployed in all countries or contexts experiencing, or at risk of, armed violence.*

Box 4.2. Armed violence lens and data sources

People – Solid evidence of people’s understandings and experiences of insecurity and justice are seldom captured in conflict assessments. But participatory assessments,² community security/safety needs assessments and community-based action research offer promising entry points. Periodic household surveys (including victimisation surveys and armed violence baseline assessments) offer a potentially broader and more regular approach to gathering data in stable contexts, though there is growing evidence of **household or population-based surveys being undertaken in fragile circumstances**.³ Finally, routine public health and crime data can help map the geographic and demographic patterns of armed violence and the characteristics of victims and perpetrators. This data, disaggregated according to location, sex and age, contribute to more specific targeting of AVR programming, which makes programmes more effective in preventing and reducing violence.

Perpetrators – Drivers of change and conflict/stability/fragility assessments can generally disaggregate the motivations of perpetrators. Likewise, solid public health and crime data generated from national and municipal surveillance systems can help appraise the demographic and geographic characteristics of victims and perpetrators. The public health approach can also help to identify risk and protective factors.

² There are examples of instruments being developed and tested to measure real and perceived insecurity. For example, Caroline Moser has undertaken participatory mapping of insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean (cf Moser and Rodgers 2005). The Small Arms Survey has also applied participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques to examine local definitions of security in South Asia, South East Asia and the South Pacific (Lebrun and Muggah, 2005; Moser-Puangsuwan and Muggah, 2003). Likewise, UNIDIR is piloting a Security Needs Assessment Protocol that aims to assess the security perceptions and needs of local communities – see Miller and Rudnick, 2008.

³ See, for example, the findings of Muggah, 2008 in Southern Sudan; Kolbe and Hudson, 2006 in Haiti; and Roberts *et al.*, 2004 and Lafta *et al.*, 2005 in Iraq.

Box 4.2. Armed violence lens and data sources (*continued*)

Institutions – Formal institutional and structural factors are generally addressed in strategic conflict and stability assessments; they include the issues of corruption and linkages to organised and transnational crime. Governance and criminal justice assessments, as well as more conventional SSR surveys, can also provide data to guide AVR. Small arms surveys capture, among other things, issues relating to capacity and legislation for firearms regulation, management, destruction and enforcement. Assessments of informal institutions (such as existing security and justice providers) are often less well considered, and may require alternative assessment tools.

Instruments – Conflict assessments often have little to say about the availability of, trade in, ownership patterns of and demand factors for SALW, mines or other instruments. Information on small arms is only marginally captured in conventional assessment tools and national or municipal health and crime surveillance. As such, baseline surveys generated by various agencies such as the Small Arms Survey, Saferworld and SEESAC (among others) can capture relevant information.

Applying a combination of approaches, including strategic conflict assessments, can facilitate a better understanding of the dynamics of armed violence at multiple levels of analysis. For example, public health approaches can assist in diagnosing the geographic and demographic distribution of armed violence from the household to the national level. Strategic conflict assessments (and related instruments) occasionally capture linkages to organised and transnational organised crime, as well as related illicit flows of arms, people and commodities across borders. But a solid understanding of linkages at the regional and global level remains inadequate and should be the subject of additional research.

Public health approach: Mapping armed violence and building the evidence base

The *public health approach* is a systematic approach to diagnosing and responding to specific challenges. It relies on multiple data sources, including existing national and municipal surveillance systems and epidemiological tools, to map the geographic and demographic incidence of violence, and to identify violence-related risk and protective factors at multiple levels (Box 4.3).⁴

⁴

A strength of the public health approach is that, unlike many other assessment methods, it makes no *a priori* assumptions regarding the causes or consequences of armed violence. Rather, it relies on systematic empirical investigation to build a geographic, demographic, social, and causal perspective on armed violence *as a social phenomenon*. This method has the potential to

Box 4.3. Public health approaches to mapping risks of armed violence

Understanding why violence occurs, who commits violent acts, and who is at risk of victimisation is at the core of strategies for armed violence reduction. At the centre of these interventions are risk factors, which paint a picture of perpetrators, victims, means, and types of violence in a community. These in turn enable policy makers to design interventions to target those perpetrating armed violence and protect the most vulnerable. Interventions may seek to change the behaviour of individuals or the dynamics of communities and/or create more protective physical and social environments.

Public health experts have found that general risk factors for armed violence include substance abuse, a history of victimisation, violence in the home, prevailing attitudes that support the use of violence, and high levels of economic inequality. Because of the focus on *prevention*, which is best served by early intervention in the life cycle of those at risk, special focus has also been trained on identifying additional risk factors for youth violence (Box 2.1 above).

Despite increasing knowledge about risk factors for violence, more research is required, especially in non-Western settings. More work is also needed to understand the range of potential protective factors that can contribute to the resilience of individuals, communities and societies in the face of the extreme adversity and violence.

Source: Small Arms Survey, 2008.

The public health approach often relies on quantitative data from the public health and criminal justice systems, where this is available and reliable. As such, it is well suited to countries with established national and local surveillance mechanisms and standardised reporting procedures. However, many low- and medium-income countries do not possess effective surveillance systems. This is especially the case in countries afflicted by conflict and high levels of armed violence, where there may be strong barriers to the systematic collection of data and where health systems have broken down and professionals have departed. It is also true for many otherwise non-conflict countries.⁵

reveal counterintuitive or otherwise hidden factors that may serve as important leverage points for armed violence reduction programming.

⁵ For example, SEESAC, 2006 found that even in southeastern European countries, data and reporting systems generally lacked the capacity and robustness for effective national surveillance of armed violence. Developing and improving national surveillance systems in the health and criminal justice fields are an important part of a longer-term support strategy for armed

Nevertheless, a wide number of population-based survey methods have been successfully used to generate data on armed violence in Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala and other crime-affected Latin American countries, as well as Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Sudan, and others. The resulting information has often been used to develop AVR programming, raise awareness, engage in advocacy and sensitisation, mobilise community and national action, and develop a baseline for monitoring and evaluation of programming.

Despite its growing use by AVR practitioners, the public health approach is generally not well understood or applied by the peacebuilding and conflict prevention community, or by development actors outside the health sector. A number of international and national agencies (*e.g.* WHO, UNDP, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and NGOs) have been at the forefront of promoting this approach for mapping, tracking and responding to armed violence in different country and city contexts.

Table 4.1. **Comparison of conflict assessments and public health approach**

	Conflict assessments	Public health approach
Tools	<p>Used by international development and humanitarian agencies working in fragile, conflict or post-conflict countries. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklist for Root Causes of Conflict (EU 2001) • Strategic Conflict Assessments (DfID2002) • Fragile States Grid (France 2007) • Conflict Development Analysis (UNDP 2003) • Conflict Analysis Framework (World Bank 2005) • Peace and Conflict Needs Assessments (World Bank and UNDG) • Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) • Stability Assessment (Clingendael 2005) • Joint Stability Assessment (UK 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by public health organisations, police, criminologists, social workers, municipal, state/provincial and national governments/agencies. Presently in use by: • WHO and UNDP • PAHO (Violence Prevention Programme) • USAID (Global Demographic and Health Surveys) • UNODC (various) • The International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) • Inter-American Development Bank

violence reduction and prevention. Donors have the opportunity – especially in post-conflict contexts – to invest in this strategy.

	Conflict assessments	Public health approach
Data sources	<p>Analysis seeks to understand the production and distribution of power, wealth and destitution, and the incentives and disincentives of the structures, institutions and agents involved.</p> <p>Relies heavily on qualitative data sources: key informant interviews, focus group discussions, secondary literature. Primary data sources include: national officials, other donors and international organisations, victim groups, practitioners and experts, political parties and movements, armed non-state actor groups, NGOs, community groups, traditional leaders, and women's and youth groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes an evidence- and process-based approach to building a profile of the risk factors, protective factors and consequences of armed violence. Employs both qualitative and quantitative sources of data, including: • Hospital intake systems • Mortuary reports, death certificates • Police reporting • National census/population studies, household surveys • Insurance records • Public health and criminological research and reports (victims' surveys, etc.); • Periodic population-based surveys.
Strengths	<p>Analysis generates a detailed understanding of historical, social, political and economic context, and incorporates risk assessments and the possible impact of planned interventions. Other strengths include ability to capture specific armed violence data, and applicability to fragile state contexts. Some also develop future scenarios.</p>	<p>Approach can provide a comprehensive mapping of the risk factors and protective factors related to armed violence, identifying counterintuitive or hidden factors important to shaping effective responses. The collection of baseline data allows for long-term trend analysis, which is useful for programme monitoring and evaluation.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Analysis can be subjective and limited in its ability to build a systematic perspective on all the possible causal and protective factors necessary to armed violence prevention programming. The approach is resource-intensive, which is a disincentive to its broad application at the field level.⁶</p>	<p>Insufficient data sources and collection techniques may result in significant gaps in coverage, limiting the utility of this approach in certain contexts.</p>

Governance and criminal justice assessments

Governance and criminal justice sector assessments⁷ capture vital information relating to the role and capacities of institutions and actors in the formal institutional environment to enable, or protect against, armed violence. Such assessments can serve as an important barometer of government legitimacy by gauging commitment and capabilities for providing transparent and equal access to justice and security for citizens. They can also highlight the overall commitment to the rule of law and human rights.

Survey instruments

Victimisation surveys generate important baseline data on the geographic and demographic patterns of armed crime, and also provide insight into the security needs of individuals and communities. More multi-dimensional survey tools – combining qualitative and quantitative assessments – can capture critical information relating to armed violence (Box 4.4).⁸ Such instruments have been applied in fragile, conflict and crime-affected contexts to generate effective baselines for programme planning, design, monitoring and evaluation. There are also a variety of safety and security audit-type tools that seek to understand the perceptions and needs of local communities.⁹

Donor-sponsored surveys are often *ad hoc*, one-off studies. While they can generate valuable information in data-poor contexts, they do not necessarily contribute to the development of local capacity or support for AVR. An alternative approach is community-based action research that prioritises field-based activity and collaboration with, and the capacity-building of, local experts and activists. Such research can be a highly effective way to understand the security needs of communities, identify relevant entry points at that level, ensure local ownership and sustainability, and enhance local capacity for long-term trend monitoring, social mobilisation and advocacy.

⁶ A 2007 DAC review found conflict assessments were not being systematically used to inform country programmes.

⁷ For example, the US Department of State's *Justice Sector Assessment Rating Tool*, which gauges the effectiveness of international capacity-building efforts in the criminal justice sector. See also Rausch, 2006.

⁸ Surveys, such as those developed by the Small Arms Survey, the Institute for Strategic Studies, the Danish Demining Group, or Saferworld, combine qualitative assessments of the political, institutional, social and economic dynamics of insecurity and conflict; quantitative victimisation data; and information on arms availability and supply.

⁹ UNIDIR's *Security Needs Assessment Protocol* is an emerging example. See Miller and Rudnick, 2008.

Box 4.4. Applying surveys in southern Sudan

In order to better understand the distribution and scale of armed violence in southern Sudan, the Small Arms Survey's *Human Security Baseline Assessment* undertook three victimisation surveys between 2006 and 2007.¹⁰ Semi-random and geo-referenced household surveys were undertaken in Lakes state, Jonglei state, Eastern Equatoria state and the northern Kenyan region of Turkana. The surveys were designed to demonstrate the outcomes of recent disarmament campaigns, and the prospects for future interventions.

Victimisation surveys offer a range of critical outputs for AVR. First, with virtually no surveillance- or census-based data on population characteristics in the south, the survey offered critical data on a range of victimisation characteristics, socio-economic indices and other factors. Such data are invaluable for health and education planning. Second, survey results can be used as a baseline for AVR interventions – including DDR and community security promotion – both for identifying entry points and priorities, and for measuring outcomes over time. Third, since the surveys were undertaken in co-operation with local partners and enumerators, they offer a capacity-building opportunity and, more importantly, a unified overview of a range of complex issues for international and domestic policy makers.

Source: Muggah *et al.*, 2008.

4.1.3 Promising tools and new data sources

Emerging technologies, particularly in the field of knowledge management, hold significant promise for facilitating analysis of the different elements and dynamics of armed violence. Data-mining methods and visualisation tools can help identify and analyse linkages and patterns across large amounts of heterogeneous data. For example, individual and social relationships can be mapped spatially and in relation to others sources such as perception surveys and baseline economic and demographic data. Many of these technologies and methods have already been adapted and applied in military, security and business settings; they are only now beginning to make their way into the mainstream of development practice.

¹⁰ See <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org> for more information about the survey findings.

Some of these tools and methods include:

- *Geographic Information Systems (GIS)* – Recent advances have made GIS more powerful, less expensive, and easier to set up and use, especially under field conditions. Through the use of Internet-based tools such as GoogleEarth, data embedded in GIS layers can be made accessible to a wide range of potential partners and can significantly aid co-ordination by establishing a shared situational awareness among all partners, such as a common picture of the geographic and demographic concentrations of armed violence. This in turn can be mapped against other significant events and data. GIS is also helpful for mapping gaps in assessment and survey coverage (Box 4.5).
- *Internet- and radio-based systems for knowledge-sharing* – Blogs, email and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds allow groups and individuals to aggregate and share information online and in real-time. The Internet is already empowering *ad hoc* early warning networks, often referred to as *hastily-formed networks*, in the disaster and crisis response communities, as military, humanitarian and development actors seek real-time information-sharing.¹¹ In areas where Internet penetration is limited, there are also ample opportunities to introduce communal and two-way radio mechanisms to enhance data collection, information transmission and sensitisation programmes.
- *Emerging tools for data-mining, network-mapping, visualisation and link analysis* – These tools are already used by customs, security and police officials to identify patterns of illicit trade, map the social and economic influence of local and transnational criminal and militant actors, and isolate other risk factors.¹² The identified patterns are then used to target responses. These tools make it possible to combine information from a variety of sources – such as that held by customs, police, border control agencies, national statistics agencies, development actors, telecommunications carriers and banks.

4.1.4 Exploring data gaps and additional data sources

The armed violence lens identifies analytical gaps that require research and analysis. Examples include assessment methods and indicators for measuring the impact on local communities of local and transnational organised crime, the illicit trade in small arms and other commodities, and financial flows. Relevant

¹¹ For further information on hastily formed networks, see <http://faculty.nps.edu/dl/HFN/index.htm>.

¹² Examples of tools for visual analysis of networks can be found at: Analyst's Notebook (I2) <http://www.i2.co.uk>, Visual Analytics <http://www.visualanalytics.com> and Palantir <http://www.palantirtech.com>.

Box 4.5. Tools for operations, analysis and advocacy: Geographic Information Systems

GIS is increasingly used by development and humanitarian actors as a means for supporting operations, conducting shared analysis, and advocacy.

In the **West Bank and Gaza**, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance uses GIS to maintain a database of socio-economic and demographic baseline data, plot the location and movement of development workers and projects, map security incidents by militant actors and the Israeli security and defence forces, and track checkpoints and their closures. This system allows a diverse range of development and relief actors to share a common situational awareness and has reduced the need for overlapping assessments.

In Sudan, UNDP's Threat and Risk Mapping and Analysis Project works with local communities to collect information and map security threats and socio-economic risks. These data are pooled with other data collected from a variety of sources, including information about basic service provision, land use, geology, rainfall patterns, suspected minefields, oil and mineral extraction sites, and livestock migration routes. The resulting database is available to all development actors and is actively used to inform programming by identifying priorities for intervention, co-ordination and impact assessment.

GIS is also increasingly used for broader analysis and advocacy. The emergence of inexpensive and easy-to-use tools, devices and platforms such as GoogleEarth has made GIS accessible to a new range of potential users and uses. For example, during the 2006 Lebanon war, GIS – in combination with GoogleEarth – was used by relief agencies and NGOs to map bomb damage and mark areas hit with cluster munitions. These data were used to estimate costs of reconstruction and plan day-to-day operations. In Darfur, the US "**Holocaust Foundation**" prepared a GoogleEarth-based map that provided an interactive atlas of the conflict and its consequences.

In Iraq, GIS has been used to predict areas of heightened militancy and the likely location of improvised explosive devices and ambush sites. This use of GIS brings together data from multiple sources, including community-level perception surveys, household-level data on employment, poverty, ethnicity and political affiliation, and incident reporting. GIS has also been applied to crime prevention in developed economies and is in use by many cities and municipalities for planning policing and other community-level social service, education and employment generation activities.

data sources come from migration services, financial tracking mechanisms, and intelligence from diaspora communities. In fragile contexts and communities affected by high levels of criminal armed violence, these datasets can be critical for addressing the factors affecting community-level insecurity.

To date these data sources and analysis have rarely been incorporated into development practice; the exception is where development interventions have intersected with whole-of-government approaches. The reasons for this are partly the result of bureaucratic cultures. The relationship between development actors and national security institutions is not always a close one: they do not always see the connection between development programming and security sector issues. A close working relationship is not always appropriate to every development context.

National security institutions are also concerned about issues of confidentiality. Such institutions may not openly share information for fear that it may compromise police investigations and related operations. Humanitarian and development actors share similar concerns about the use of information. In insecure situations, humanitarian and development practitioners have been reluctant to share it with the military and security forces active in a country, out of concern for maintaining their neutrality, impartiality and their relationships with local communities. The growth in civil-military relations, such as the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, is beginning to bridge this military-humanitarian divide.

4.2 Emerging principles for good practice in assessments

Invest in evidence-led approaches to enhance outcomes and “do no harm”. Development interventions that enter into the complex dynamics of armed violence risk doing harm if not well conceived. Context-specific knowledge of the key elements and dynamics of armed violence are essential. This requires investments in assessment tools and methods that generate credible and reliable data on local conditions, relationships and perceptions.

Use joint assessments where possible. National/municipal ownership and co-ordination between government agencies and multilateral, bilateral and civil society actors are key considerations when embarking on an armed violence assessment.¹³ The most effective approach is led and owned by national actors in co-ordination with donor countries, multilateral organisations, and civil society.

¹³

Civil society actors include elders associations, women, youth, survivor assistance groups, veterans, community associations and religious organisations. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to also obtain the views of armed non-state actor groups (e.g. militias, gangs). While this will likely present political challenges at different levels, these perspectives form an important part of the armed violence equation, and careful engagement may yield promising pathways forward.

In certain situations, joint assessments may be difficult.¹⁴ Likewise, governments may choose to ignore certain sensitive but critical issues. There is an obvious role for civil society to tighten or expand understandings of armed violence.¹⁵

Ensure assessments capture the people's understanding of their security needs. Assessments should identify to whom specific population groups turn for the provision of justice and security (both public and private). These perspectives are critical for building strategies that strengthen the legitimacy and resilience of fragile states (OECD-DAC, 2007d).

Creatively adapt to the data limitations of different contexts. In deteriorating, fragile and conflict settings, assessments may be limited to strategic conflict assessments, limited hospital-based studies and victimisation and small arms baseline surveys. In *post-conflict and criminal violence situations*, the scope for donor action may be wider. Assessments can potentially draw on a larger range of surveillance- and survey-based sources and instruments.

Invest in strengthening national capacities for data collection, reporting and analysis. Investment should aim to build the capacity of national and community-level criminal and health-reporting surveillance systems that are essential for AVR. Cost-effective systems can also be developed in order to gather and manage data so that they are shared with other institutions and support AVR advocacy campaigns and strategies. One potential way forward is the creation of crime and violence observatories, as has been undertaken in Honduras, Guatemala and other countries.

Combine tools and methods to generate a rich mix of qualitative and quantitative data. This can include the application of conflict assessments in non-conflict countries afflicted by armed violence and the use of the public health approaches to map armed violence in countries emerging from conflict or undergoing transition. It also includes investment in promising analytical techniques and new data sources.

4.3 Implications for monitoring and evaluation

Develop indicators in partnership with local stakeholders. Local stakeholders are best placed to identify appropriate benchmarks of success. Local ownership and engagement can also help to build longer-term capacity for research and advocacy around armed violence issues, and ensure more regular collection of data.

¹⁴ The 2008 Accra Declaration commits OECD-DAC members to undertake joint assessments in countries in fragile situations, “to the maximum extent possible”.

¹⁵ For example, civil society activists can generate appropriate data and perspectives on armed violence, which can provide useful correctives and open up national dialogue, as happened in El Salvador.

Indicators must be context-specific. For example, in some cases, using an indicator that tracks the number of homicides may not be a good indication of the social and economic distortions caused by armed violence. This can be true in territories controlled by organised crime or warlords, where homicide rates can actually decrease as control over the population becomes solidified through the threat of violence alone.

Identify project-specific indicators and benchmarks. This will often require differentiating between micro- and macro-level indicators. In many cases it will be difficult to demonstrate the impact of a single programme on a national homicide rate, because there are too many other factors influencing this rate. However, micro-level indicators – such as the level of crime in the community, the number of participants benefiting from the programme, or changes in the community’s perceptions about security – can offer important evidence of the effectiveness of AVR programming at the local level (Box 4.6).

Box 4.6. AVR programme monitoring indicators from the Viva Rio initiative in Brazil

The Brazilian NGO Viva Rio prioritised investment in the development and tracking of indicators to monitor and measure armed violence linkages and programming impacts (see Box 5.7 for the full Viva Rio case study). Statistical databases were used to target specific projects and campaigns. Relevant indicators to measure possible risk factors and outcomes included:

- The degree of public support for civilians not carrying guns (tested by national referendum).
- The numbers and types of guns collected.
- Changes in the levels of trust between police and affected communities.
- Use of violence by police in the line of duty.
- The capacity of *favela* associations and organisations to sustain projects when funding ended.
- Attitude changes of target groups and wider society in relation to SALW.
- Changes in the degree of socio-economic exclusion.
- The degree of interaction between project participants, their preparedness to address the multifaceted nature of armed violence, and interventions focused on addressing risk factors, perpetrators and victims.

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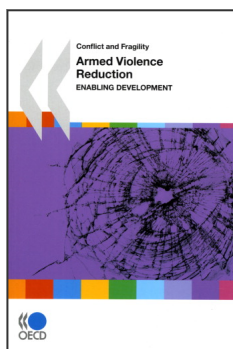
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