

## **The Dilemma of Development Aid in Conflict Areas in Afghanistan**

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**By**

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Finally I want to thank my son, Tom, who convinced me that old people can still pursue their masters, and my wife, Gonnie Smeenk, for her encouragement to do this study.

## **Dedication**

Bashir Satuaris came to my office in Kabul to apply for a job as driver at the beginning of 2007. He had been a refugee for ten years; of which the last seven in the Netherlands, until he was expelled. He spoke fluently Dutch and he was a good driver, so I hired him. Since then we went everywhere together, Bashir translating and explaining everything. Before I met Bashir, Afghanistan was a very strange and dangerous environment for me. Sometimes it felt as a weird dream that I should wake up from. Bashir, with his ever good spirit, his ability to make friends with everybody instantaneously and his theories about everything was able to make sense out the Afghan society for me. Though Bashir was very aware of the security situation in the country, he was able to make me feel relaxed, giving grip on the situation. His spirit stimulated all the DCA team members, especially when things went wrong. He would always find a solution, no matter what obstacle on the road. He had a faultless instinct to avoid and solve conflict, saying the right thing at the right moment.

One night, during a field trip in the mountains, we were discussing the meaning of life. We came to the conclusion that the only important thing is that when you are old you should be able to tell your grand children stories of your travel through life. The next day we slid of the road and fell into a ravine. Bashir died, only thirty three years old.

In the spirit of Bashir I wrote this thesis. Obstacles were eliminated or by-passed. And there were a few obstacles! But the finish was always in sight.

On my next journey I intend to put the knowledge I gathered in this study into practice.

Wageningen, October 2011

*"To whom who has only a hammer, the world looks like a nail"*  
Abraham Maslow

## **Abstract**

Aid doesn't always reach those who need it. In conflict areas aid is stolen, diverted, manipulated and abused by people with power. Donors and development organizations respond by taking the aid somewhere else, to a safer place, depriving the needy or making it difficult for the target group to reach the aid.

Aid in a conflict area has much potential. Aid can alleviate direct suffering. Development aid may strengthen the war economy and conflict. Aid can help building the peace economy and build a society and aid can reduce the conflict. But the conflict makes it difficult to implement the aid.

Many organizations find it too difficult and too dangerous to work in a conflict area. Other organizations accept all the negative impacts, as they find alleviation of suffering paramount important. Some organizations search for ways to implement the aid and avoid the negative impacts.

This study focussed on organisations that work or worked in conflict areas in Afghanistan. Key players in the Afghan conflicts are war-lords.

Project implementers in the field are confronted with those war-lords and have to find a way to deal with them.

War-lords have the means and power to make it very difficult or even impossible for aid workers to work in his area. Experience has learned war-lords do exercise this power.

Some organisations recognize the war-lord as a part of the context they work in that cannot be ignored. Ignoring or rejecting the war-lord would make him a dangerous potential enemy of the project and its staff. These organisations open the dialogue with the war-lord, to make sure he will not harm the project and sometimes even involve the war-lord in project implementation.

This approach is criticised, as war-lords are generally seen as criminals, thieves and murderers that should be brought to justice and therefore not to be communicated or cooperated with.

From the literature it becomes clear some scholars think opening the dialogue with war-lords opens ways to change towards practical solutions and towards peace.

Literature also shows that development aid may help building and developing society, reducing parameters that may lead to war and helping society to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner. Mary Anderson (1999) describes in her book: *"Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace-or War"* how development aid and aid workers can –with the best intentions- support and prolong the conflict but also how to avoid this and strengthen peace initiatives.

For this study respondents were asked to describe their experience with war-lords during the project implementation, realizing that working with war-lords is "not done", but also realizing that ignoring the war-lords could jeopardize the project and staff lives.

The respondents were informed about Andersons work and presented a list (with explanation) from the book, giving five capacities of aid that may strengthen or mitigate

the conflict. They were asked to describe how their project would deal with the five capacities and what the outcomes were.

Furthermore the respondents were asked under what conditions they would (or they would not) implement a project in a particular area related to involvement of the war-lord.

This study indicates that the approach “involving the war-lord in project implementation” can be effective at a very limited scale and provided certain external conditions are met.

The most important conditions are:

- 1 The absence of a hostile external group, such as the Taliban or bands of robbers.
- 2 The target group must be social coherent, a clan or a tribe, in which the war-lord clearly participates.  
This condition limits the geographical size of projects using this approach, to a village or for the most a cluster of villages and to small local war-lords.
- 3 The approach relies on traditional (Islamic) values. Respect for elders and Shura are indispensable.
- 4 Ownership of the project by the community ensures protection of the project by the community, of which the war-lord is part.

The approach works best in projects that are organised as participatory as possible. The presence of a coordinating body within the village(s) of the target group and consisting of members of the target group is a helpful advantage.

Speeding up the ASP (Afghan Solidarity Program) and the installation of CDC's (Community Development Councils) will facilitate this largely.

The project itself should analyze the local situation; identifying (potential) conflicts and key players in the conflicts, before even considering starting the work. Projects must also be able and willing to withdraw if the conditions change.

The topic of working with war-lords is obviously controversial. Organisations did not want to cooperate with this study and only a few individuals were found willing to share information and experience. As a result this study gives no information on how organizations and development workers that claim not to cooperate with war-lords in any way take care of security and avoid “doing harm”.

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## Acronyms

ACBAR	the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief's
ASP	Afghan Solidarity Programme; Also called NSP
ADP-N	Alternative Development Program-North
ALP-N	Alternative Livelihood Program-North (later renamed ADP-N)
APCI	Annual per Capita Income
CDC	Community Development Council
CDD	Community Driven Development
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
DAARTT	Danish Assistance for Afghan Rehabilitation and Technical Training
DETA	Development Oriented Emergency and Transitional Aid.
DCA	Dutch committee for Afghanistan
DCU	Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan
DED	Deutsche Entwicklungs Dienst
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPCI	Gross Per Capita Income
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technischer Zusammenarbeit
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Program, Also called ASP
PADCO	Planning and Development Collaborative
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PV	Para Veterinarian
RAF	Rote Arme Fraction
TOR	Terms of Reference
US, USA	United States of America
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit

# 1 Introduction.

## 1.1 Problem and background.

Aid does not always reach those who need it. Somali victims of the 2011 drought caused famine had to walk to Kenya to receive aid. The Dutch state secretary Knapen, visiting the refugee camp Dadaab, where the Dutch government positioned its aid, answered a newspaper reporter on the question *“why not bring the aid to the people?”*: *“The people have to come to the food. The (war-) lords in Somalia have allowed us to bring aid into the country, but we are not going to support the (war-) lords on their terms, we want to help the people.”* Many people, especially young children, do not survive the long walk from Somalia to Kenya and die along the road. (Sleutjes, 2011).

The Dutch government has taken a decision to give aid to people in need, and at the same time not to collaborate, directly or indirectly, the war-lords in Somalia. The consequence of this decision is that the aid is less effective for those in need and many will die because of it. Of course the Dutch government doesn't want the latter to happen, but they consider the political message at least equally important as the aid itself.

### 1.1.1 The Dilemma.

Decisions like the above are taken every day by development organizations working in conflict areas. Luckily usually not with such dramatic consequences. Not only in short term relief projects, but also in long term structural development projects. Development workers are more and more aware of the fact that their work, like e.g. technology transfer, food distribution, cannot be seen separately from the social environment they work in.

In a violent conflict area, or fragile environment, aid can mitigate or exacerbate (do “harm”) the conflict (Anderson, 1999). Therefore working in a conflict area has additional problems for the development worker and his/her organisation. As a development project, and therefore its staff, is inevitably part of the conflict, one has to decide whether or not to work in the area and if you do: how?

“Harm” can be done in many ways. If fighters take a project vehicle at gun-point, it gives those fighters an advantage in the war and thus the project has contributed to the war. This example may sound unfair, but projects should realize that a project creates opportunities. How these opportunities are used or could be (ab)used, should be anticipated by the project. If a project is not able to avoid possible abuse, it may be better not to give the opportunity. Chapter 2.2.2 gives more examples.

The statement: “Development reduces risk of conflict” (Collier, 2004) is an argument pro working in a conflict area and can be used as motivation. On the other hand, its opposite: “Conflict hampers development” is just as valuable and an argument against working in a conflict area. It raises the question that the scarce resources should be invested somewhere else with better or easier chance of success. This is the dilemma development organizations face.

Several organisations, ranging from NGO's (Non Governmental Organization) to Governments to Armies are struggling with this question.

Development was linked to conflict by Galtung (1964) in 1964. Galtung described the relation between society, its development and conflicts; in particular the peaceful or violent resolution of conflicts in society. (See 2.2.1)

Today it is generally recognized that aid can contribute to conflict prevention and conflict resolution. (Krombeen, 2006).

Armies have today a new role in conflict mitigation. The "world" (like the US, NATO, EU) has been deploying troops to stop conflicts, mainly by separating warring parties (with the use of force, if necessary), trying to force the parties to start negotiations. Aside from this "old" coercive role, armies have a new, extra role today; the role of reconstruction of the war-devastated area. Presently peace keeping parties strongly believe that reconstruction is an essential part of creating a lasting peace. (Woodward, 2010). This new approach shifts the peace keeping role from creating negative peace (absence of war) to positive peace (human integration) (Galtung, 1964).

### **1.1.2 Justification of the study.**

Recently DAP "het Montferland" worked for the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) in Afghanistan, to implement the veterinary/livestock component of the ALP-N (Alternative Livelihood Project – North) project. PADCO (Planning and Development Collaborative), the main contactor, implemented a very strict security policy. It meant protection by armed guards, armoured vehicles, and bullet proof vests. Moreover, PADCO limited the projects intervention to "secure places", which are only found near the main road in the province. DCA disagrees with this policy, because DCA wanted to implement the project mainly in the more remote areas. In order to be able to work safely in these areas, DCA Badhakshan sought actively the cooperation and protection from the war-lords in the area. Eventually DCA was able to work in all areas it selected. Today the ALP-N program is considered a complete fiasco in terms of reaching the program's objectives, with the exception of the veterinary component. (Arnoldy, 2010).

Since the main difference in implementation of projects between PADCO and DCA was the involvement of war-lords in the project implementation and I intend to do more projects in Afghanistan DAP "het Montferland" wants to know what made the involvement of war-lords in the DCA project successful.

### **1.1.3 Assumptions.**

Based on the assumption that parties involved in conflict transformation consider it worth to contribute to development as a vehicle to reduce conflict, I will describe in this paper through cases how different organizations working in Afghanistan select their strategies to operationalize their work in a particular violent conflict area, giving due attention to the "do no harm" concept, as described by Anderson (1999).

I also assume that war-lords represent a major threat to the project and its staff that needs to be neutralized.

And I assume that projects that try to improve their effectiveness will cooperate with war-lords (either forced by the war-lord or that the project actively seeks this cooperation).

Organisations that claimed not to be influenced in any way by the local war-lord were not included, as they refused to give information on how they took care of security and avoiding “doing harm”.

It could be that these organisations are not aware of the interaction between development projects and the war-lord, but it also could be that this interaction is ignored. Not unlikely is that organisations want to avoid the discussion about interaction with war-lords, as the general public opinion is that war-lords are criminals, and the organisations do not want to be associated with criminals.

I expected to find on the internet cases where the organisation involves war-lords in the project from other countries. I only found one that is relevant in this study (GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) Nepal, see chapter 2.3).

#### **1.1.4 Aid.**

Aid can be roughly divided in three categories.

First humanitarian aid or relief aid, the type of aid that is given directly after a disaster or during a crisis, like a flood, earthquake or drought.

The second type is long term structural aid that aims at bringing about structural and sustainable changes in society, usually in the field of livelihood.

The third type is commercial aid, in which a commercial foreign company implements a project that aims at improving local livelihood and a profit for the foreign company. (like Blue Green World Limited, saffron production in Uruzgan.)

Since I have no knowledge or experience with commercial aid and there are hardly short term relief projects in Afghanistan, I will only discuss long term structural development projects in this paper.

#### **1.1.5 Strategies.**

Development organisations have to choose a strategy to manage the conflict situation. Obviously, the first strategy is not to go working in a conflict area, or simply leave. Aside from this strategy, literature describes -in relation to Andersons theory- two main strategies.

One strategy is an active stance pro-peace, searching interventions that will actively promote non-war activities.

The other is a strategy that passively focuses on not to do any intervention that may exacerbate the conflict. And of course a mix of these two strategies.

A third, different, strategy is used in Afghanistan by some organisations, namely seeking active cooperation from warring parties, particularly war-lords in the target area. This approach is criticized, as it legitimizes the power of the warlords

## **1.2 Objective.**

The study intends to contribute to the knowledge of the consequences and possibilities of involving local war-lords in development projects as a strategy to improve project effectiveness; based on the assumption that projects intend to contribute to conflict mitigation by development and at the same time want to “do no harm”.

## **1.3 Methodology.**

### **1.3.1 General.**

The research took place in the Netherlands. Originally it was intended to take place in Afghanistan, but preparation time was too short to find a sponsor who could facilitate it. It consisted of a desk study and four interviews.

The desk study focussed on finding arguments in favour and against working in conflict areas in general and in finding information on involving war-lords in development programmes in particular. Internet was extensively used to find entrances and information. Information was also found in the libraries of Wageningen UR and Utrecht University.

The research is qualitative, looking for the *why* a strategy is chosen and *how* it is implemented rather than *what* strategy is chosen. The interviews were summarized two times and from the last summaries key statements were taken and tabulated. These were analyzed in a SWOT analysis.

### **1.3.2 Bias.**

My personal experience with involving war-lords in a project (DCA Badhakshan, see: 3.3 and appendix A) is positive. Therefore I tend to be optimistic about the possibilities of involving war-lords in projects and being able to avoid the negative effects. However, I do not know if the DCA Badhakshan case was a lucky exception, because the circumstances were favourable, nor that these experiences can be generalized for other cases. Furthermore I am future and problem solving oriented and therefore willing to forget crimes committed in the past; if this creates space for solutions and a peaceful future.

There are people who think no crime should go unpunished. For them involving war-lords in projects will be no option. Due to the limited time and number of respondents, this opinion –though not deliberately- was not included.

I tried to avoid my possible bias of being too optimistic about the possibilities of involving war-lords in development projects by using Anderson's (1999) concept, as this concept clearly describes the risks of involving war-lords in aid projects and possible negative effects on the conflict. Furthermore I checked with the respondents repeatedly for failures or negative effects in involving the war-lord in their projects.

All respondents said they involved the war-lord in the project implementation. Organisations that said they were not involving the war-lord in the project were not willing to elaborate more on how they avoided the common problems war-lords present.

### 1.3.3 Selection of respondents.

Using the ACBAR (the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief's) database (ACBAR, n.d.), ten organisations were selected as respondents, including the Dutch PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) Uruzgan. The criteria for selection of respondents were:

- 1 Dutch organisations that work(ed) in Afghanistan.
- 2 The aid provided must be in an economic field such as livelihood, income generation or physical infrastructure (roads, bridges, irrigation systems).
- 3 The aid must be a gift.
- 4 The projects are implemented at grass-root level.
- 5 Clear and easy measurable outcomes of the project.<sup>(\*)</sup>
- 6 Projects focussing on capacity building were excluded.

### 1.3.4 Invitation and briefing.

The selected organisations were approached officially by e-mail, requesting them to cooperate with this thesis. The Dutch PRT invited itself, through an acquaintance of mine, Lieutenant Colonel H. Jacobs.

Initially the respondents reacted positive. In making appointments for interviews, organisations asked for questionnaires and information about the topics of the interview. It became clear that the chosen concept, Anderson's (1999) "do no harm" was not generally known. Prior to the interviews the respondents were briefed on the expectations of the interviews:

- Explanation on Anderson's "do no harm" concept (see 2.2.2).
- The interview should focus on cases and situations in which the organisation had to make careful choices to "do no harm";
- Explain whether or not they succeeded in doing "no harm; or,
- Was decided to do "a little harm" in pursuit of the greater goal.
- Describe the organisation's interaction with the local war-lord in this process.

Briefing of the Dutch PRT was done personally at the Operationeel Ondersteuningscommando barracks at Apeldoorn. This meeting lasted two hours.

After briefing all organisations withdrew. Five organisations did not consider themselves relevant respondents. As reasons were given: the organisation would not deal with war-lords in principle (3 organisations); the organisation did not have such experiences (1), the organisation works too far away from the field to have knowledge about the topic (1). Four organisations did not respond at all. My contact at the PRT informed me that he was not allowed to speak with me anymore by his superior general, and the general had said the inquiries had to be taken to the ministry of foreign affairs.

---

\* Projects effectivity is defined as reaching the tangible and quantifiable objectives, as described in the project's TOR

The above coincided with the appearance of the book “onder Taliban en Krijgsheren” (Among Taliban and War-lords) (Bont, 2011). This book is very critical on dealing with war-lords and on the role of the Dutch PRT in Uruzgan.

Foreign affairs was approached by mail, asking for an interview and at the same time the information on the concepts was provided. Foreign affairs responded by forwarding me to their official website and not granting an interview. The publications on this site give no information on how “do no harm” was implemented or why “harm” was accepted. Foreign affairs was dropped as a respondent.

As a consequence, the criteria for respondents were changed. Instead of organisations, individuals were approached and I dropped the criteria that it had to be Dutch organizations. I used my Afghan network to find individuals who could share experiences on “do no harm” and the interaction of war-lords and projects. Seven prospective respondents that should be in Europe were found. I was able to contact four, of which one could not be used, as she worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAIL) on policy and therefore not suitable in this paper.

Appointments were made with the three remaining respondents in their hotels. In the first meeting they were briefed on intentions of the interview, similar to the briefing of the organisations earlier and included the research question. These briefings took two hours.

### **1.3.5 Interviews.**

A few days after the briefing, the actual interviews were held at the whereabouts of the respondents.

The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and by taking notes. Appendix A-E are the summarized transcripts from the tapes, the PRT case was described from notes and the DCA case Badhakshan was described from memory and the web log (Simonides, 2009). In total five cases.

The interviews took two hours. The interviews were semi structured. Anderson’s (1999) five points list of capacities of aid was used as a guideline to answer the research question.

As interviewer I would ask the respondents to elaborate on certain issues, give examples or clarify a statement and ask for possible negative side effects.

After the interviews a third session was held, to discuss the wider implication of the approach the respondents had chosen. This session also lasted about two hours.

I would have liked the third session to be a group session; unfortunately it was not possible to get the three together at the same time and place.

Finally I asked the respondents if they would allow me to use their names and titles and if there was anything they would not be connected to. All respondents had no objections that their names and positions would be mentioned, nor anything that should be left out or made anonymous.

I decided to use the information I received from the PRT without formal consent.

### **1.3.6 Limitations of this study.**

In this study five independent projects and programs are compared (independent: the programs operate isolated from each other and did -so far- not exchange information or cooperate). The five cases represent ten organisations and many projects. There are hundreds of development organisations active in Afghanistan. It was not studied how many organisations do implement active involvement of war-lords in their projects. Moreover, the opinion of organisations that reject any cooperation with war-lords was not included.

The few organizations known to me that reject cooperation with war-lords in words, do cooperate passively (forced or evasive), or only in peace economy activities. Passively accepting the limitations and conditions set by the war-lord is not seen as cooperating with the war-lord. Mostly those organisations are so far away from the field that there is no interaction with the war-lord and their work. None of these organizations was willing to give an interview.

## 1.4 Research questions.

### Main:

Under what conditions is it possible to involve local warlords in development programs as a strategy to increase the effectivity of the program, avoiding the negative side effects as described in the five points of Anderson's "do no harm"?

### Sub:

- 1 In what way does the local war-lord influence the project?
- 2 In what way does the project influence the local war-lord?
  - 1a Does the project benefit in terms of security and effectivity from the cooperation with the war-lord?
  - 1b Does the project have to "do harm" to secure the cooperation with the warlord?
  - 1c What conditions influence the cooperation with the war-lord and can the project negotiate the conditions?
- 2a Does the war-lord benefit from his cooperation with the project in terms of power base, financial or otherwise?
- 2b Are the war-lords interests negatively affected by cooperating with the project?
- 2c What conditions influence the cooperation with the project and can the war-lord negotiate the conditions?

## **2 Background and Literature.**

From the literature I derived definitions and opinions on the concepts used in this paper. Three authors were found: Galtung (1964), who describes the relation between development and conflict, Collier and Hoefler (2004), who found a clear relation between economic development and conflict; and Anderson (1999), who describes the interaction between aid and conflict. Mainly from these concepts I further synthesized my research.

### **2.1 Afghanistan background in figures.**

For the next chapter data were used from the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) reports 2005 and 2007-2008 (CSO, 2007; ICON Institute, 2009) if not mentioned otherwise. The data are partially recalculated or combined, to make them comparable with the literature of Collier and Lezhnev.

Afghanistan is landlocked country in central Asia with an area of approximately 650.000 square kilometer. It has a population of 28 million people. Roughly 45 inhabitants per square kilometer. It has a continental climate. Temperatures may range from +50°C in summer till -50°C in winter, though there are big differences between north and south, east and west. The country is mountainous in the north (Hindu Kush with the highest peak Pamir Mountain, 7.500m.) and desert like in the south. Annual precipitation is between 500mm. in the north and 50mm. in the south. The rain season is during winter (October-April). There is hardly a spring or autumn. Generally the country's terrain is very rugged and in the rural areas motorable roads are absent or of a very dangerous quality. In the mountains roads are during winter often not passable.

The Afghan economy is predominantly based on agriculture. Nationwide (including cities) it is the main source of income for 55 percent of the population and 68 percent of the households engage in livestock. In the rural areas nearly 100 percent of the households depend on agriculture and livestock. Productivity in the agricultural sector is low, only 37 percent of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is contributed by agriculture. Household access to land is increasing, mainly due to rehabilitation of irrigation systems. 53 percent of the households have access to land. Afghan farmers grow a large variety of crops but wheat is by far the most important. On irrigated land 77 percent of households grow wheat and on rain fed land 94 percent.

10 percent of households grow opium. Likely this figure is a considerable underestimation. In Uruzgan some 80 percent of the households grow opium and in Helmand some 60.

Only 12 percent of the total area of Afghanistan is cultivated. 3 percent is forest, 40 percent is natural pasture and the rest, 45 percent is considered not arable, as it is too mountainous. On average, farm plots are small, 7 jerib (1 jerib is 0.25 ha.) for irrigated land and 14 jerib for rain-fed. Factors constraining agricultural production are: lack of credit, lack of water, no access to extension- and veterinary services (90 percent and 85 percent), lack of access to markets and communities (due to road conditions, but this is improving since the last 3 years) Shuras mention lack of water and irrigation by far as the main constraint.

The Afghan population is rapidly growing. Fertility rate per women is 6.3 and the average household size is 7.3. The Afghan population has an extremely high share of children under the age of 15: 49 percent (highest in the world). Life expectation in Afghanistan is 49 years. Sex ratio male/female is 51/49. The percentage of people over 65 years is only 3 percent, mainly male. 20 percent of the male population is in the age of 15 to 25 years old.

The labor market in Afghanistan has the typical characteristics of a developing country: dominated by the agricultural sector and poor in providing productive employment. Jobs are vulnerable and do not provide secure, stable and sufficient income. Labor force participation is 67 percent and unemployment only 7 percent. However, this indicates more that people cannot afford to be unemployed, for bare household survival. The dichotomy of employment-unemployment that is applied in developed countries is of little use in Afghanistan, as it does not take in account underemployment.

Afghanistan is considered a poor country. The GDP is estimated to be \$900 per annum (CIA, 2010). According to the NRVA the GDP is \$400. 39 percent of the population is living below the poverty line of \$300 per annum. Another 20 percent are just above, with an income of \$336 per annum. Growth of GDP in Afghanistan in 2010 is estimated to be 8 percent (CIA, 2010), which is high, but is mainly, if not all, due to rise in aid funds.

The education system in Afghanistan performs poorly and has been doing so for decades. The results show in literacy rates. Only 17 percent of the population over 25 (2008) has received any type of formal education. Adult literacy rate is 26 percent. The main cause of illiteracy is the absence of schools. Since the fall of the Taliban regime (2001) the situation is improving. In 2008 an estimated 52 percent enrolment in primary education (2005: 37 percent). Unfortunately the NRVA does not give figures on further education after primary school, but in the best assumption from the population over 25 years old, more than 80 percent cannot have attended secondary education and for the present groups reaching the age of 25, this will be between 60 and 70 percent. Corrected for gender, at least 50 percent of the men in this group will not have received secondary education.

## 2.2 Working in conflict areas.

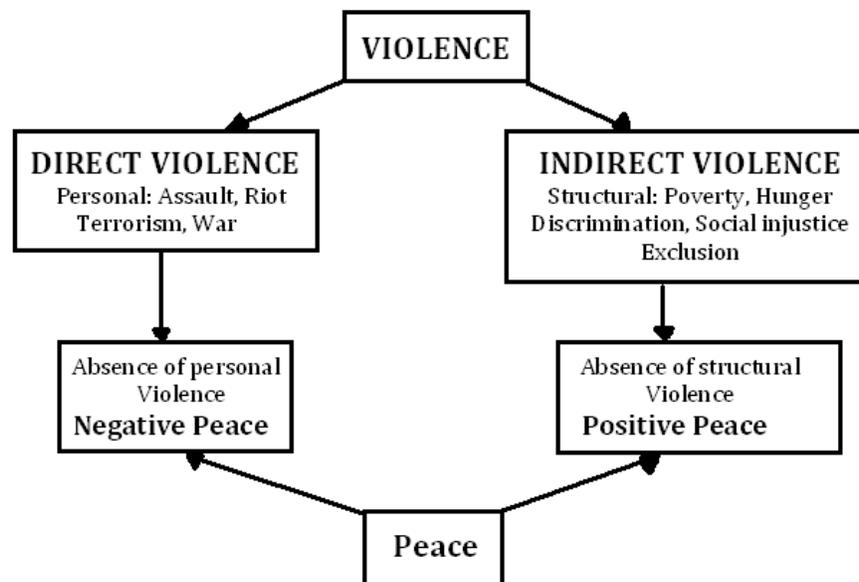
### 2.2.1 Positive and negative peace.

Johan Galtung has introduced the concept of positive and negative peace in 1964 (Galtung 1964).

Negative peace is -In short- a situation where there is no physical violence. It can be described as imposed peace. Conflicts are existing, but not fought over, discussed or solved. A strong force (government, dictator, foreign troops etc.) does not allow the conflict to be expressed openly, those who do, face serious repression. It is peace by non-peaceful means, peace by coercion.

Positive peace is achieved by involving conflicting parties in conflict solving; reaching a solution that is acceptable by all parties.

Negative peace is seen as curative and pessimistic. Positive peace is seen as preventive and optimistic. A society that has reached positive peace has capacities to prevent violent conflict solutions in favor of peaceful solutions.



**Figure 1:** The expanded Peace and Violence concept. (Source: adapted from Grewal, 2003)

Galtung (1964) related violence and peace to the structure of society and therefore with development. He appreciates positive peace as a higher goal than negative peace. He acknowledges that negative peace may be a temporally stage towards positive peace (Galtung, 2004). PRT's in Afghanistan are trying to bring this idea into practice. In his later papers, since the Iraqi wars, Galtung (2004) keeps on urging western countries, in particular the USA, to continue working on positive peace and not accept negative peace as an end goal.

### **2.2.2 The “do no harm” concept.**

**The concept** “do no harm” was first described by Mary Anderson (1999). Every development worker, if asked, will tell you that the aid provided is neutral. Available for everybody who needs it, regardless gender, ethnical background etc. Decisions are taken on “objective” criteria, such as a particular problem, geographical area etc. If certain local people with power profit extra from the aid, because they need to be bribed or even simply they steal from the project, the development workers don't like it, but regard it as unavoidable and accept it in the pursuit of the greater goal. On the issue why aid is regarded neutral, I will elaborate later in this chapter (see 2.2.4).

Anderson's concept is about the interaction between aid and conflict. In her book she gives examples on how aid can influence conflict, positively and/or negatively. Conflicting groups can use (or misuse) aid in their advantage, to achieve military or political gain.

First of all Anderson (1999) argues that development agents (agencies) should be aware of the fact that aid has an impact on the conflict. Though aid in itself will not induce nor stop a conflict, it may exacerbate the conflict or help local people to disengage from the conflict. Anderson calls it:” Do no harm awareness”.

**Examples** of “harm” range from simple to complex:

Project vehicles are used for transporting weapons, fighters or illegal goods. They also may be stolen and used by warring parties. In Afghanistan it is very easy for a project driver to use the project vehicle to transport opium (product from the war-economy) from the field to the city during a field trip. DCA experienced retreating Taliban taking two Landrovers from a project.

Goods (blankets, sacks of rice, cans with oil) can be stolen, sold for cash or be directly used in the war e.g. as clothing and food for warriors.

More difficult to pinpoint the “harm” done it becomes when hiring a war-lords facilities or staff (adding to his income), paying protection money or tax to the local war-lord. Hiring security staff from the war-lord confirms the war economy and confirms that guns rule. Directly in line with this is protection money. But how to judge renting a house from him?

Projects influence markets. In an area where there is little paid work, a project may create jobs. Project implementation may create jobs. In Afghanistan the cash for work programs draw people away from the militia, war-lord, Taliban and other war-orientated groups, as it creates opportunities in the peace economy. Mechanisation of hand labour may have the opposite effect. Projects disturb the real estate markets; the rent for office

and other buildings usually raises sky high, making it difficult for local businessmen to find workspace, hampering the local economy and job creation.

Aid can be unevenly distributed. The project may decide to help the most marginalized. If these happen to be the members of a certain ethnic group (or religious etc.) and this group is a party in the conflict, the other party(s) may feel discriminated and become hostile to the project. A strong party in the conflict can dominate the distribution, making it impossible for other groups to reach the aid. A politician at a key position can favour his own province or district by appointing it as target area.

Even distribution can create a feeling of "fair treatment". It may strengthen the feelings of people that they all experience the same problems, connecting them more.

Aid may substitute local recourses. Surprising may be the negative effect ("harm") food aid may have, as it frees people from work, allowing them to join a militia. In Somalia the warriors put their family safe in a refugee camp, allowing them to concentrate on war.

Aid can confirm people's actions and agendas. Going with the flow of the war mechanisms (because it is easier) rewards those who keep the war going. Rejecting or ignoring those mechanisms and find other ways rewards those who pursue peace. The behaviour of individual development workers (foreign or local) confirms people in their line of thinking or can serve as an eye-opener, showing other options. Working with a war-lord is implicit recognition of his (illegal) power. Anderson calls these "messages". The different messages are elaborated later on in this chapter (see: messages).

From the examples it may be clear that it is not easy to link actions to "harm". Whether or not an action does "harm" depends on the context.

**The definition** of do no harm awareness is in its aim:

*The aim of the "do no harm awareness" is to:*

*-Identify ways in which humanitarian or development aid can be provided in a conflict area so that, rather than worsening the conflict, it helps local people disengage from fighting and develop systems for settling problems.*

*-Find practical ways that humanitarian assistance can ease tension and promote peace, through supporting local initiatives, capacities and action. It also seeks to influence policy changes towards these objectives.*

(Anderson, 1999)

The effects of aid in a conflict situation are varied. Even if the "normal" criteria are met, such as saving lives, improve peoples abilities to sustain an independent economic situation, it still can fuel the conflict.

Anderson provides a framework for analysis. The aim of the framework is to incorporate the actors and factors of a conflict in the programme design, in such a way that the project will achieve its objectives and at the same time encourage people to engage in peace building- rather than fighting activities. She raises the following issues:

Who to work with and who to work for?

Who to hire?

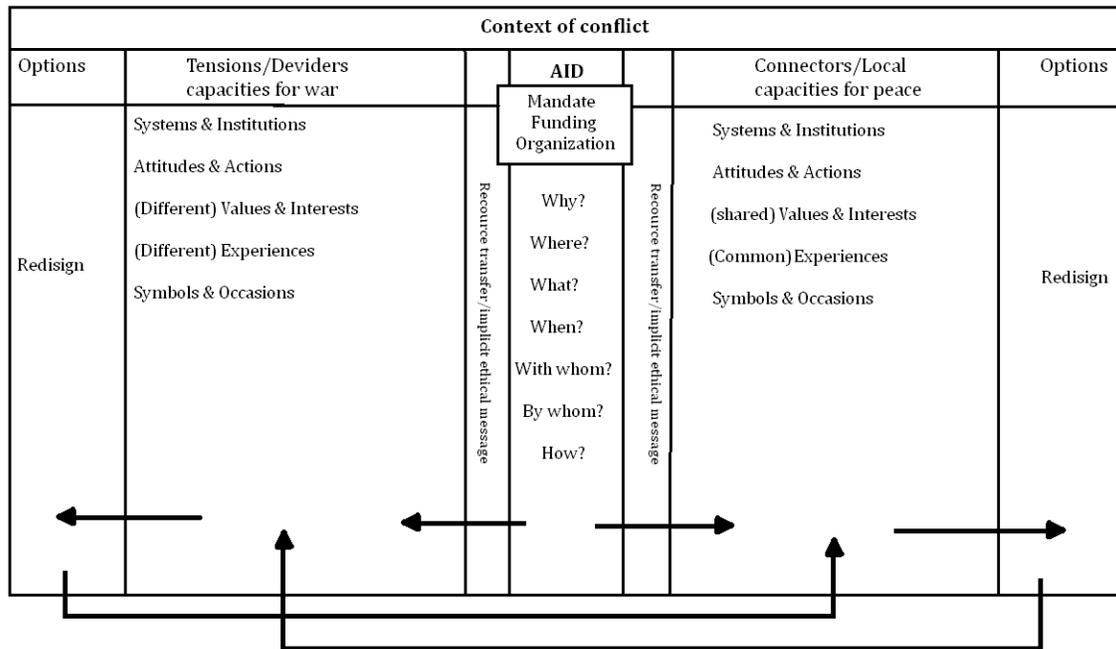
Who to work through (partners)?

What goods and services to provide, how to deliver the aid, how to cooperate with local authorities? (Without legitimising their illegal control and/or violence)

This framework will give the information (from experience) that is important to understand the relation between the conflict and the aid in a particular setting. It can be used in mapping the interactions between the conflict and the aid. It can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate the aid programme. It will give insight in actual and potential relations and will help predict the outcome of different programme decisions.

Anderson also highlights the fact that people in conflict have local capacities for peace building. She says there are alternatives to violence and adds that development or aid workers should enhance these capacities while being totally transparent. She states that creation of (mass) employment enhances the process of strengthening capacities for peace.

Figure 2 below sketches the relations between the project and the conflict, including the context, and how they interact. Centrally in the diagram is the aid project. The mandate is the mission of the organization, be it health, education, nutrition, clean water etc. From its mission the project must be designed, the why, what and how questions. The actual work of the project is resource transfer. This can be knowledge or goods, usually a combination. Uneven distribution (one side in the conflict gets all) can fuel tensions. (Left side of the diagram). But not always. In a rehousing program for refugees in Kathlon province, Tajikistan, most of the aid went to the party that had lost the war. But this reduced tension, as the winning party needed the other party to come back, in order to revitalize the cotton industry, the main source of income in the province.



**Figure 2:** Interaction between aid and context and the direction aid may steer a conflict. (Source: Anderson, 1999)

Usually in the beginning of a project it is not very clear, though the intentions are good, in what direction a certain action will push the conflict. Often the background of the conflict is also not very clear. When after some time, during which the background of the

conflict should be studied, this becomes more clear, the project should be redesigned to make it more peace oriented. If the project happens to be promoting peace, the information should be used to soften dividers. If the project happens to enhance the conflict, try to find connectors and use them to take the outcome towards peace. To achieve this, it is necessary to evaluate actions very regularly, especially in the beginning of the project. (Anderson, 1999, GTZ, 2008)

### **Implementing “do no harm”**

The main problem in implementing Anderson’s framework in practice is that in most projects, if it is implemented, it has to be done during the implementation phase of the project, as most projects are designed behind the desk, far away from the field. Changing the design during implementation is usually not appreciated by the donor and sometimes not possible. Therefore the concept is applied ad-hoc and as good as possible.

Organizations that want to apply the Anderson concept in full, should take a different approach in project design. Development is an ongoing process that takes place in a complex environment, especially if this is an environment in conflict. Organizations should therefore opt for long term involvement, preferable with no fixed end date, focus less on individual projects and more on the process. An approach in line with the ideas of Lederach (1995).

In line with the organizations objective, the organization chooses a geographical area where it wants to work. Before any project is accepted, the organization will study the area (context) and gain insight in the conflict by assessing the area and situation. Who are the actors in the conflict? What relations exist between them? What are root causes of the conflict? What are proximate causes? What are factors in the conflict? What divides and what connects people? Conflict mapping can be used as a tool to describe the present situation. What has been the historic development of the conflict so far? Have there been projects in the past and what is the experience of these projects? Was any “harm” done; if so: how and why? Were conflicts solved: how and by whom? The tools mentioned in 2.3.2 can be useful in this assessment.

Answers to these questions can be used to make a risk analysis of the area and find common interests of the groups.

GIZ uses the Anderson (1999) concept in practice in this initial assessment. See annex F, “do no harm assessment sheet” for details.

With this general knowledge about the area, the organization can start programs and projects. Project design must be based on the findings of the context study.

During the implementation of the project the context must be monitored constantly. Changes in the context should be observed and analyzed, particularly to find out if they are induced by the project. If the changes are positive, the actions that caused it can be enhanced; if the changes are negative, the actions that caused it should be changed or stopped. Changes may also come from outside the project. In that case the description of the context must be adapted and the ongoing projects reconsidered.

This is an iterative process.

In this situation the development process is the objective of the organization and projects are a tool to reach the objective; projects are no longer an end goal.

## **Messages**

In Anderson's theory the act of aid service delivery in the field, of being in the field, sends out implicit messages.

The messages development workers send out can be categorized. The ultimate result of those messages is mutual trust or distrust and subsequently strongly influences the outcome of the project. (Anderson, 1999)

The six categories of messages are:

- 1: Arms and Power
- 2: Disrespect and competition amongst Aid Agencies
- 3: Impunity
- 4: Different people are valued differently
- 5: Powerlessness
- 6: Publicity

### Arms and Power:

Organizations that use armed guards to protect themselves, accept the mechanisms of war. It sends out a message that fire power determines who has access to food, supplies and safety. Therefore enforcing the attitude of the war-lords and generally the idea that threatening is a means to achieve goals.

### Disrespect and competition amongst Aid Agencies:

Often development workers speak badly about other agencies. It may seem to help boosting their own organization and strengthen the cooperative spirit within the organization, but it sends a message of "Us" against "Them" and for the recipients of the aid it gives the message that you do not have to cooperate with others if you don't like them, thus strengthening the division of the society.

### Impunity:

The physical and emotional pressure of working in a conflict area is usually high. To remain healthy it is necessary to relax and enjoy from time to time. If project recourses are used for own pleasure, it sends the message that who has control, can use it for own personal pleasure. The same way war-lords do.

### Different people are valued differently:

Expats receive usually a much higher salary than local staff. Vehicles are assigned to the expats. Evacuation plans focus on expats, office equipment and vehicles. The message sent is one of inequality. Local staff does not deserve the same treatment and furthermore imported goods are valued more than local lives.

### Powerlessness:

Often "the situation" (war-lords, drought, donor policies) is used as an excuse for not bringing about the promised or desired change. The message is that the development worker is not responsible for his/her limited action, but somebody else; a greater force. If the development worker, with all the recourses, cannot make the change, recipients will think that they cannot do anything at all.

### Publicity:

If aid agencies use pictures and stories of the suffering of people, in order to support fundraising, it also sends the message that demonizes the other party. This creates space for atrocities against their own people.

Ehrenreich (2006) adds another dimension to implicit messages. On the issue of personal and collective security (arms and power), she gives examples of US citizens involved in aid in Afghanistan. She acknowledges the right for every individual to decide for him/her to risk personal injury, but that decision can have a wider impact on the aid in general. If a US citizen gets injured or killed, the US society may lose the will to support the aid efforts and therefore deprive local Afghan people from the aid they need. She says those aid workers are usually not very aware of what measures of precaution they have to take or the impact their presence has. Often they know little of the culture and religion and do not know what is considered offensive (Impunity) in the Afghan society. Furthermore she argues that aid-workers do not have a clear eye for those risks, as they are too occupied with the burdens and stress of the actual aid work.

Duyvensteyn and Schuurman (2010) discuss in their study the moral dilemma of negotiating with terrorists. The term terrorist is used in their paper for any armed group opposing the legitimate government. Taliban, Afghan war-lords, Rote Armee fraction (RAF) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) are all generalised as terrorists. In my opinion this is too general, but I will use the term as they do, as the next paragraph will specify it more. Duyvensteyn and Schuurman (2010) use the work of Pruitt (in: Duyvensteyn and Schuurman, 2010) to divide terrorists in three categories.

First the “absolute terrorist” or ideological very rigid, whose aims are global (like the establishment of a transnational Islamic Caliphate), who use suicide attacks and see the attack as a goal in itself.

The second group are those organisations rooted in society, with a lot of popular support. These groups do not pursue the destruction of the state, and will negotiate if their political demands are largely met.

The third category is the “pragmatic terrorists”. They have often goals limited to some political influence and some economic goals. This is by far the largest group in the world and most Afghan war-lords can be categorised as such.

Duyvensteyn and Schuurman (2010) explain the mainstream adage: “We do not negotiate with terrorists.” Later Duyvensteyn and Schuurman (2010) add to the connotation terrorists: “those with blood on their hands”.

The most important reason not to negotiate with terrorists is the implicit message of legitimizing the “terrorists” and probably encouraging others to use violence to pursue their (political) aims. Duyvensteyn and Schuurman (2010) also mention that negotiating with these groups undermines the credibility and legitimacy of the government (and groups or people who do the actual negotiating) itself. But they add that negotiating offers “a way out”; an alternative for warring groups, that has been proven effectively specially on the third group of terrorists, the “pragmatic”. Today the dominant approach in conflict transformation is “hearts and minds”, which includes negotiation, development and reconstruction with those involved in violence. In military terms DDD, Defence, Diplomacy and Development. (Woodward, 2010; Bont, 2011; Santegoed, 2011; Jacobs, 2011)

### **Capacities of aid**

Anderson (1999) identifies five predictable ways on how aid influences a conflict, or capacities of aid:

- 1 Theft: warriors steal resources for their own use or sell them to buy weapons.
- 2 Markets: Aid can support the war or peace economy.

- 3 Distributional impacts on intergroup relations: uneven distribution may feed tensions, equal distribution may reinforce connections.
- 4 Substitute local recourses required to meet civilian needs (freeing local resources to support the conflict)
- 5 Legitimizes people and their actions and agendas, being it the pursuit of war or peace.

Anderson (1999) stated that full transparency towards the conflicting parties is utmost important.

### **2.2.3 War-lord and war-lordism.**

Before I can discuss the influence of war-lords on development projects and vice versa, I have to define what a War-lord is. From literature it becomes clear that there is not a one single definition, but War-lord and war-lordism much more refer to behavioural and attitudinal aspects of a ruler and overlaps with titles given to criminals.

A rather simple definition could be: *A warlord is a military and political leader controlling a limited area, independent from the central government.* Or another: *A military commander exercising civil power in a region, whether in nominal allegiance to the national government or in defiance of it.*

Others say a war-lord basically is a highwayman, captain, gang-leader, pirate or robber who turned his occupation into big business and controls in doing so a certain territory exclusively. The territory the war-lord controls is usually a rather remote, rural part of the country. Rarely (like in Somalia) are cities part of his control.

The above does not much give a definition of “war-lord”. Several sources, ranging from modern time literature about present conflicts in Africa, South America or Afghanistan or historical documents, describing medieval war-lords or the boxer period in China, all describe similar features.

War-lords are people who exercise power (by force) over a limited area (not the whole country) and do not have the legitimacy to do so. War-lords may have had legitimacy as governors or so in the past, but have increased their power so much, that they are beyond the control of the official central government and generally they do as they please, not following orders from the official central government. War-lords may also rise from a violent conflict, after the collapse of a central government or from anarchy. Usually they act as dictators with absolute power.

A war-lord exercises his power through armed forces that are loyal to him and not to the central government/authority.

In the past, the meaning of the term war-lord, as they were present in medieval Europe was different. Though they were autonomous, had a private army etc., they derived their legitimacy from formal fealty to the central authority. (Fealty is an oath of allegiance between vassal (the obliged person) and his lord (person of rank, like the king) to create a feudal relationship.)

The term Warlordism was introduced in the 1920's to describe the period between the collapse of the Chinese empire and the rise of the republic of China in the New York Times. (Simpson "Putnam Weale", 1925). It can also be used to describe periods in ancient Japan or the period between the Russian retreat and the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Lezhnev (2005) concludes that the international community treats the war-lords in the same manner as any warring party in a conflict, as a legitimate party whose grievances should be negotiated, mediated by an impartial third party. So far this approach has not been very successful. Modern warlords have much at stake in continued conflict and behave very different from conventional insurgents. Absolute warlords are a rare phenomena, usually there are other factors involved, such as ethnicism and ideology. Lezhnev (2005) defines a spectrum, ranging from ideological groups, raising mass-struggle to transform society (like the Nepal Maoists) to armed gang-like groups, only interested in personal power and wealth, like Charles Taylor in Liberia. He states that policy makers, who focus on neutrality and hence negotiate with war-lords as a legitimate party in a conflict, fail to see the true nature of war-lords and their mentality. Duyvesteyn and Schuurman (2010), on the other hand, argue that governments that refuse to negotiate with war-lords fail to see opportunities and miss chances, probably due to a lack of vision.

War-lords are seen by the public rather as thieves and murderers than as revolutionaries. The conflicts resemble more a gang-war than societal struggle. Lezhnev (2005) describes 5 main elements that define warlords.

- 1 motivated by greed for money (fame, prestige)
- 2 ready to kill and destroy property
- 3 searching for power and control in their society, over a large number of people
- 4 operate in weak state environments
- 5 well organized, intending to operate over a prolonged period

Depending on the situation, small groups of bandits may finally evolve to warlordism.

However, most war-lords are not pure sang war-lords, only motivated by personal greed and power-lust. They usually have their roots in ethnical groups, clans, or tribes. Therefore the motives are mixed. The war-lord wants to help his own people **and** he wants to amass personal wealth and power. (Jagielski, 2002; Lezhnev 2005; Duyvesteyn and Schuurman, 2010)

From the above it may be concluded that the Afghan war lords have evolved from "war-lords pure sang" to war-lords with some concern about the people they rule. Probably personal interests still dominate the motives of their activities, but they have broadened their scope and also show interest in economic development of their area. Sometimes local clashes between neighboring war-lords erupt, but they do not last long and it seems they rather negotiate than fight. Many local rulers, head of districts, village chiefs in the rural areas have their roots in the Mujahidin period and continued their leadership. They are often referred to as "commander". As one of these commanders explained to me in a discussion on how leaders become leaders in Afghanistan, he said:" during the wars I proved to be a good leader. When Karzai came, it was just natural that I

continued my position. However, if there would be democratic elections today, I am not so sure that I would be elected.” He added: “If it would be war today, you would be dead.” In other words, he didn’t want his position to be challenged. But it also shows there is room to negotiate and discuss issues with the present generation war-lords.

Before the wars started, until 1973 when the monarchy was abolished after a coup, Afghan war-lords did have a legal status in a feudal system. (Bont, 2011) They were called Khan.

#### **2.2.4 Neutral Aid.**

Traditionally neutrality is considered to be the key principle of humanitarian aid. To remain neutral, aid workers or development workers cannot take side with one of the warring parties in a conflict. They should refrain from any political, religious or political statement. The purpose of the neutrality is to get access to target population. Nowadays aid workers come more and more entangled in a web of power politics and aid is being manipulated. Since 9/11 the general security situation has deteriorated severely for aid workers, more and more they are targeted by warring parties. (Though this is not new, in the Nicaraguan conflict, the US backed Contra declared in 1986 openly not to regard aid workers as neutral any more and consider them targets. From that time on development workers were attacked several times. (personal experience 1986)) All this gave rise to the discussion whether or not aid workers should be present in conflict areas. Another discussion is on the question: “Can development organizations or development workers be neutral in the complex conflict situations, or is it desirable to be neutral from a moral point of view, if neutrality forces you to ignore root causes of the problem?” The two mainstreams today are that it is not ethically just to provide aid if politics prevent you from tackling root causes; the other is that aid is always justified in itself and aid does not have a moral responsibility.

The idea of (strict) neutral aid started in 1863, with the foundation of the international Red Cross. The Red Cross workers (and their equipment) were “neutral” and not to be touched by either side of the conflict. In return the Red Cross refrained from any action that might influence the war nor did it give any opinion. They only helped those who were suffering. As a result the Red Cross remained silent about the existence of concentration camps in Nazi-Germany in the Second World War. The Red Cross was heavily criticized for this (Krombeen, 2006). In the Nigerian war over Biafra in the 80’s, the Red Cross asked permission with the Nigerian government, which was granted under conditions. However, the famine in Biafra was deliberately created by this government and it frustrated aid workers so much, that they decided to give up neutrality and helped in a way they thought fit in the situation. This led to the establishment of “*medicins sans frontieres*” who clearly sided with the suffering party and provided aid regardless the opinion of the official government.

In the same period a third kind of aid came up, called Wilsonism, after President Woodrow Wilson, the initiator of the “Marshall plan”. In his ideas US surplus materials and US knowledge were donated to war devastated Europe, to speed up the reconstruction, and the spread of US influence and values as a source of goodness. Most US NGO’s as well as Dutch NGO’s fall into this category. They receive generously funding from their respective governments, but are not dictated how to spend it, as long as it is in line with the NGO’s (preset) mission.

After the Kosovo intervention in 1999 aid agencies reconsidered their position. They broadened their mandate and it became fashionable to involve political goals into humanitarian aid and not only saving lives, alleviating suffering or improving livelihoods. Duffield (2001) calls this “new humanitarianism” and says it is the NGO’s reaction to failing relief operations in the 90’s (especially in former Yugoslavia) and the negative side effects of it. The assistance would be directed to create a certain outcome of the conflict. Peace building and conflict management were introduced in development work. To counter the negative side effects of aid in a conflict, the “*do no harm*” concept, as described by Anderson (1999), was introduced. Neutrality became subordinate to the idea that aid should sometimes also create a political outcome.

### **2.2.5 Economics.**

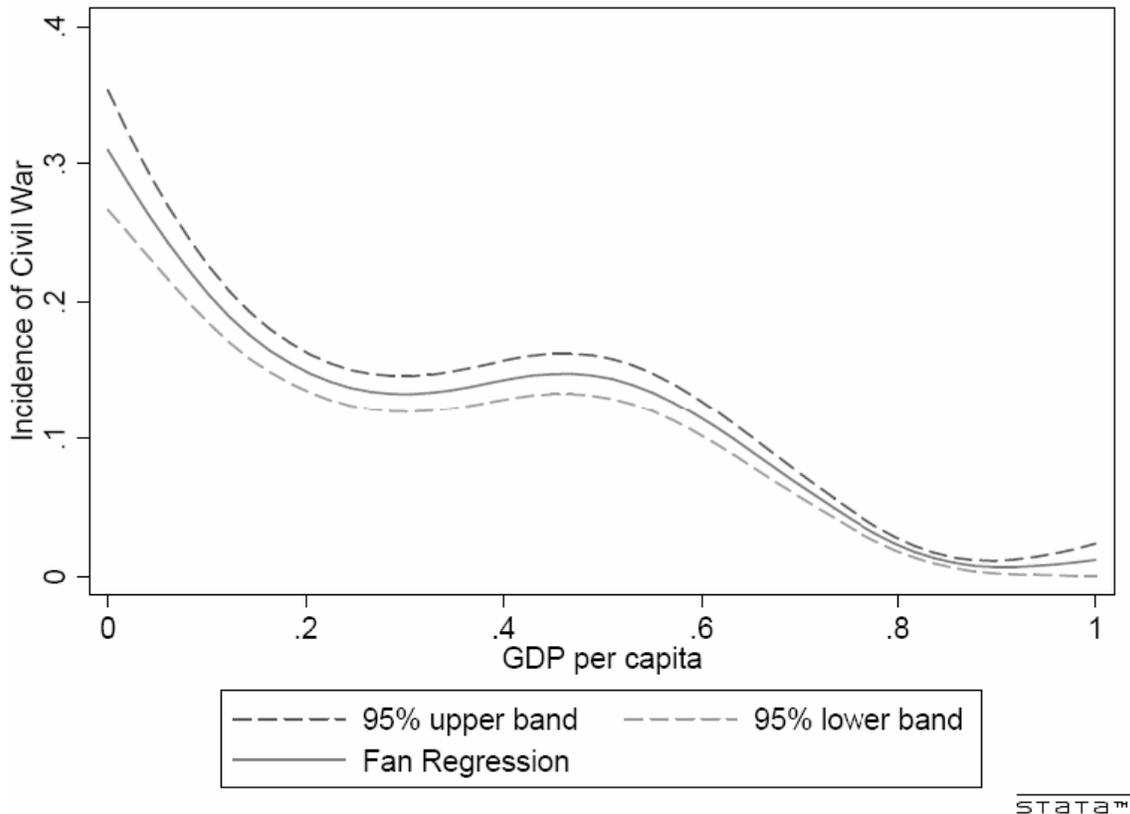
Collier and Hoeffler (2004) have researched violent conflicts all over the world from 1965 until 1999 and were able to find parameters that influence the chance of the outbreak of a violent conflict. The annual per capita income (APCI) is most important. From the data they gather that an income of less than \$700 gives a 14 percent chance the country will face a civil war conflict in the next five years. Other correlations were found with the growth of the national production (negative) and the dependence of the local economy on the export of natural resources (diamonds, timber etc.) (Positive). Blattman and Miguel (2008) found a similar relation (see figure 3)

Collier (1999) also found a relation between the proportions of young men, age 15-24, and the rest of the population. This is the major age group that joins rebellion. The willingness to join is directly related to the alternative opportunities to earn an income. If the only prospect is poverty, they will join the rebellion far easier than if there are other economic opportunities (jobs). As an example he gives the Russian civil war (1919-1920) in which the desertion rate in the respective armies (mainly consisting of peasants) was in summer (harvest time) ten times bigger than during winter.

Oxfam (Waldman, 2008) conducted a large nationwide survey in Afghanistan, indicating that the lack of opportunities drives young men to robbery, grow poppy or join local militia or Taliban, to make a living. Lack of opportunities is one of the major causes of insecurity in Afghanistan, according to this survey.

Other authors, cited in Blattman and Miguel (2008), give other causes, like ruggedness of terrain and large populations as causes as well. Lezhnev (2005) also found a relation between the number of years of secondary education and the incidence of civil war.

**Figure 3:** Incidence of civil war by country income per capita, 1960-2006.



(Source: Blattman and Miguel, 2008)

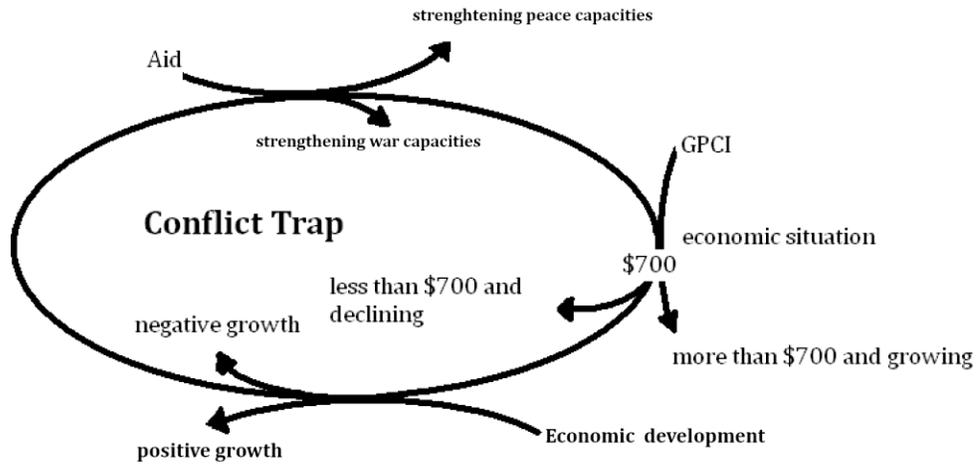
Lezhnev (2005) identifies as Collier (2004), three economic causes in conflicts. The most important explanation of rebellion is the economic viability of a country. This is contrary the popular belief that legitimate (socio-political) grievances are the primary cause. He states that these grievances are manipulated today to conceal the greed behind the uprising. Secondly he argues that rebellion is much more likely to occur in a poor country over an income resource (like gold, diamonds, timber, heroin) than in a rich country, as the poor state is likely not well organized, corrupt, susceptible to bribery and lacks the reliable infrastructure (police, courts, army) to counteract such an uprising. Thirdly increasing the GDP and international aid (together with accountability for resource spending) reduces the need for conflict recourses.

Lezhnev (2005) concludes that armed rebellion is caused by economic motivations and a possible solution is in transforming the economies that surround such rebellions. But he also recognizes that the socio-political situation is a factor that allows (or not) war-lord style uprisings to emerge.

Though above authors put different emphasis on what is the main cause of violent conflicts, they all agree that economic factors have a strong correlation, much stronger than social factors.

The relation between conflict, economics and aid can be visualized in the next model, figure 4.

Collier's term "conflict trap" (Collier, 2003) is used, as it describes well how easy it is to get involved in a conflict and how difficult it is to get out.



**Figure 4:** Factors mitigating or exacerbating conflict (source: Simonides, 2011)

## **2.3 Definitions and Models to understand conflict.**

### **2.3.1 Definition.**

Conflict can be defined as a situation in which involved persons/parties disagree and parties perceive this as a threat to their own interests.

To some extent the difference in positions –the disagreement- of the parties is clear. However, the true disagreement versus the perceived disagreement can be very different. In most conflicts there is a considerable amount of misunderstanding between parties that exacerbates the perceived disagreement. Finding and focusing on the true disagreement facilitates problem solving and addressing the true needs of the parties involved.

Based on relationship, history or role in society, individuals often become a member of a conflicting party, whilst they are not involved in the actual disagreement. It can be that people take sides or that they are simply pushed to one side.

People respond to a perceived threat. If there is a true threat, but people do not perceive it, there is no response. If there is no true threat, but people think there is, they will respond. Defining the true threat helps to solve the conflict.

The interests, felt needs and worries of people are more complex than just one tangible issue that can be reached in a relatively short period of time. Long term relations between parties also need to be taken into account.

Conflict is a normal part of life, creating opportunities for improvement by better understanding and insight. However, usually conflict is experienced negatively, as it represents a difficult period. Moreover, parties in a conflict usually only see limited options for solutions.

Conflicts are not just a disagreement, but people perceive a threat. Whether or not this threat is real, it should be given due attention. The perceptions of people are shaped by their values, culture, beliefs, information & knowledge, experiences etc. This shapes the seriousness of the problem and the options for solutions considered (adapted from Webne-Behrman, n.d. and Kriesberg, 1998).

A violent conflict is a disputed disagreement between any two or more parties, in which at least one party tries to resolve the conflict with the use of arms, resulting in at least 25 battle related deaths per year.

An armed conflict is a special type of violent conflict. It is defined as a disputed disagreement which concerns a government or state as a party, between at least two parties, with the use of armed forces, resulting in at least 25 battle related deaths per year.

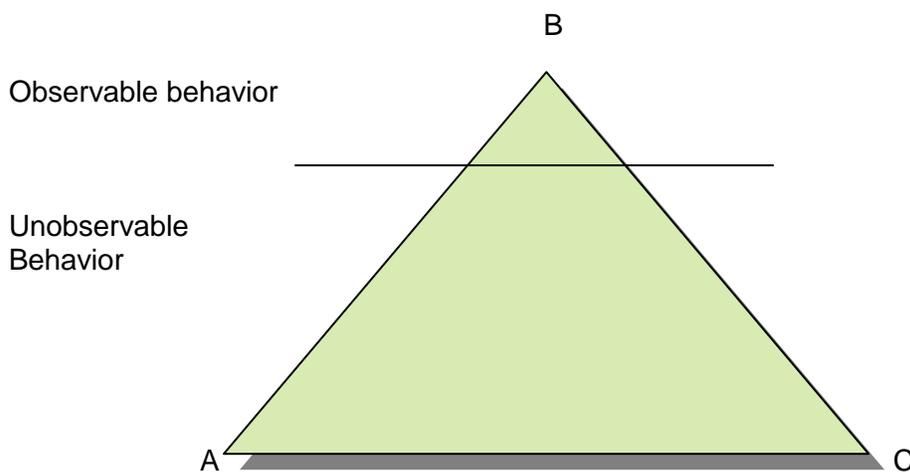
A war is a violent conflict resulting in at least 1000 battle related deaths per year. (UCDP, 2011)

### 2.3.2 Models.

Several models were designed and used to describe and understand conflict. These models can be used in project design and implementation to avoid or solve conflicts.

#### ABC triangle of conflict

The oldest model is the ABC triangle of conflict, introduced by Galtung (1964) in 1964. It describes how a conflict or contradiction (C) in a society will lead to behavior (B) (violent/non-violent) depending on the attitude (A) of those involved. Only a small portion of the behavior is visible. Underneath there is much more. Often also those directly involved are also not aware of this not displayed behavior, but it influences the outcome of the conflict largely. The attitude also influences the perception of the conflict.



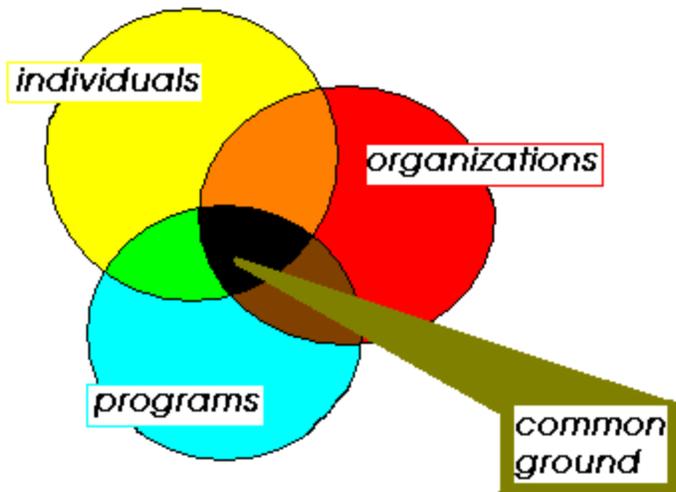
A = Attitude  
B = Behavior  
C = Context or Contradiction

**Figure 5:** The ABC triangle of conflict. (Source: GTZ conflict transformation workshop, 2008).

#### Overlapping circles

Another model to describe a (potential) conflict situation is the model of overlapping circles. People, organizations and (development) programs may have differences. In goals, cultures, values and very important, different interests. In working with such (potential) conflicts, it is important to look for the commonalities, rather than the differences.

The “others” should know who I am, what I stand for and what I want and how I think to do it. And I should know what the others think and want. The common ground is suitable to start a project on. Projects are most effective when the goals are in harmony. Even if this means the program will reach a small portion of its total aim.

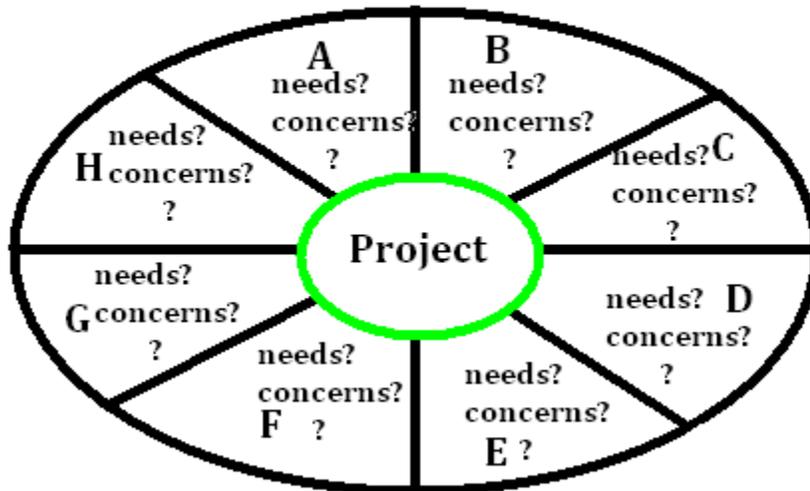


**Figure 6:** Overlapping Circles. (Source: GTZ conflict transformation workshop, 2008).

**Conflict mapping**

Conflict mapping is another tool to understand the (potential) conflict. First all stakeholders are identified (A,B,C...) Next all the needs, worries and other important issues are identified. By putting them in the diagram, it becomes easy to see what stakeholders have in common, in what issues they do not affect each other and what issues are contradicting. Programs can use this information in the project design, prioritize issues, define issues that need further discussion etc.

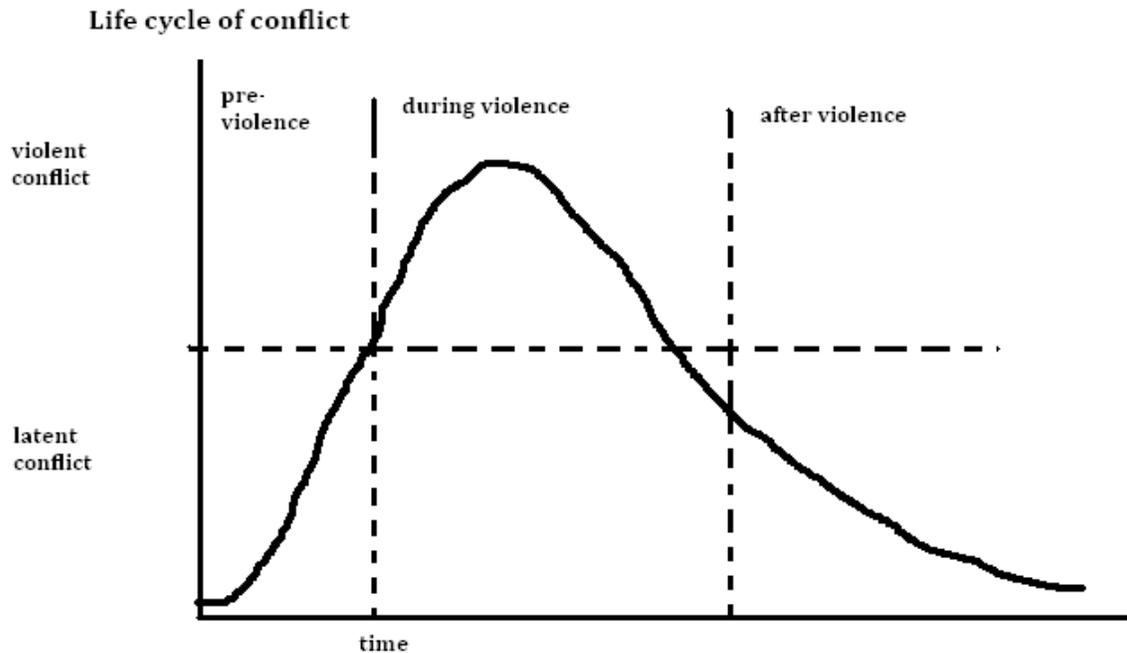
**Conflict map**



**Figure 7:** Conflict map. (Source: adapted from GTZ conflict transformation workshop, 2008)

## Cause Analysis

Analysing the causes of a conflict gives further information on how to deal with the conflict. There are two types of causes to be considered. Root-causes and Proximate-causes. (GTZ, 2008) In the beginning of a conflict the root causes are most important. In a protracted conflict, the proximate causes become more important. In an enduring conflict the proximate causes are most important, to the extent that root causes may have been forgotten. (Anderson, 1999)



**Figure 8:** Life cycle of conflict. (Source: adapted from GTZ conflict transformation workshop, 2008 and Azar, 1990).

The life cycle of conflict can be used to define in what stage of the conflict the project is to be implemented. This has consequences for the conflict causes to be considered.

Figure 8 suggests a conflict has a beginning and end. Many conflicts have a repeated cycle of relatively peace and violence alternating. It could be visualized by repeating the graphics of figure 8 on the time line. The pre-violence period is characterized by rising tensions, the post-violence period characterized by reducing tensions.

In a developed society (with developed capacities of peace) an intervention would take place as soon as tensions rise aiming at reducing tensions, thus avoiding the violence.

## **2.4 Cases from Literature/Internet.**

Though I searched intensively for cases where development projects take place in a conflict environment and involve warring parties in the implementation, I only found one that clearly describes this situation: GTZ Nepal. (GTZ-Nepal, 2004)

### **2.4.1 Case GTZ Nepal.**

GTZ described how they worked in an area, where there is an armed conflict between Maoist militia and security forces.

GTZ pointed out that money is an important factor in the conflict. Poverty can create an atmosphere that could escalate into an armed conflict. Through the development assistance, people became more able to tackle the poverty problems themselves.

GTZ also made efforts to socially include marginalized and discriminated groups (low casts) and bring them into the decision making process, as well as train them in their own traditional fields of economics. GTZ found it very important “to go local” meaning not to limit their aid-work to the urban areas, but especially to the mountains and remote areas, as in this places relatively many more people live under marginalized conditions and are therefore prone to get engaged in a violent conflict.

GTZ realized that a violent conflict restrains the freedom to travel a lot and can make “going local” impossible. And as a consequence making a vital part of the work, namely work in the field itself, impossible. For GTZ the remedy was to get local NGO’s involved in the work and share with them, but also involve traditional organizations and secure the support of local influential inhabitants. Also GTZ sped up training of local workers, especially youth, who in turn receive direct benefit through socio-economic empowerment. By creation of (mass) employment for youth, GTZ tries to prevent youngsters to join either side in the conflict, be it the Maoists or the security forces.

The GTZ project had several encounters with the Maoists rebels. Some times they were able to come to an agreement, convincing the groups that the aid efforts should not be destroyed, sometimes they did not.

Though the Maoist rebels are at the extreme edge of the definition of war-lord (maybe they should not be called war-lords) GTZ involved them in the development project. Not in the sense that they play an active role in the project, but GTZ explained in detail what they were doing and how. A GTZ official visited a Maoist headquarter to explain in detail the project and its background and funding. Most important action was to show the bookkeeping accounts, showing where the money came from and how it was spent. GTZ made itself accountable and transparent to the rebels, showing GTZ’s interests were with the people in the region and have nothing to do with the official Nepali government nor are these interests conflicting with those of the rebels.

GTZ described the problems encountered in the implementation of the project and the risks the problems contain for further implementation of the project. GTZ found peaceful solutions by negotiation to solve the problems (or better: explaining and be fully transparent) in line with Anderson’s “do no harm”. GTZ redesigned the project in such a way, that it also got a conflict resolution component and not only traditional relief and

development aid. GTZ introduced conflict management workshops, to improve awareness of peaceful solutions towards conflict resolution. These workshops were not intended in the original project design. But the situation forced GTZ to do something. "Going local" would be impossible if the Maoist rebels would continue their attacks.

### 3 Results.

The interviews and cases were compared with the research questions and the “do no harm concept”. First the main findings are presented briefly as narrative. After that the findings are presented in tables, following the research questions. For detailed information on the findings, see the annexes A-E.

#### 3.1 Controversy.

Before the actual field work started the first result was obtained from the respondents’ reaction. Though initially the selected organizations were willing and even enthusiastic in cooperating with a study on the dilemma development organizations face in Afghanistan, they all withdrew when it became clear it was about the interaction between development aid and war-lords and in particular how these organizations shaped their interaction with the war-lord. Obviously organizations do not want to be associated with war lords.

Duyvensteyn and Schuurman (2010) emphasized in their research that organizations that do negotiate with war-lords, undermine their own credibility and legitimacy.

The controversy makes it difficult to look at the problem from all angles and opinions.

#### 3.2 General factors leading to civil war.

Comparing the present situation in Afghanistan (NRVA) with factors that may lead to civil war, as found in literature from Collier and Hoeffler (2004), Blattman (2008) and Lezhnev (2005) the following factors were found to be critical:

1	GDP (per capita)	:	\$400 (range different sources: \$337 - \$450)
2	Demography	:	50% under 15 years old 20% between 15 and 25 years old 30% over 25 years old
3	Secondary education	:	less than 20%
4	Unemployment	:	7% Underemployment: high
5	Rugged terrain	:	very

#### 3.3 Brief description of the respondent’s projects and the main findings:

##### DCA

DCA Badhakshan implemented between 2006 and 2008 the veterinary component of the USAID funded ADP-N program.

DCA started working in Afghanistan in 1979 as a relief organization and soon specialized in veterinary aid. The objective of DCA is to give every Afghan farmer access to veterinary services. Main tool to reach this objective is to train Para Veterinarians (PV’s) and establish Veterinary Field Units (VFU’s). DCA and its program are well known throughout the country.

Main benefit for the farmer is improved animal production and improved income. As demonstrated by Schreuder et al (1995) the benefit-cost ratio of introducing veterinary services VFU style in an Afghan area is at least 2 and maybe 5. The total investment by

the DCA-Badhakshan project was \$1.6 million. The additional income for the province will be between \$3.2 million and \$8 million, or between \$1 to \$3 per capita or a rise in income between 0.3 and 1 %. According to Collier and Hoeffler (2004) this reduces the chance of conflict also with 0.3 to 1 %.

DCA is well known amongst farmers, and farmers are eager to be involved in the project. DCA is a traditional development organization that regards its assistance as neutral. And also expects to be regarded as a neutral organization. DCA works in the Wilsonian tradition and (thinks) it has a good product. (Krombeen, 2006). Luckily Afghan farmers share this opinion.

DCA recognizes the power of local war-lords and their potential threat. DCA confirms the war-lord by asking permission to work. Instead of opposing this illegal power, DCA sought to use it in such a way, that it would offer protection.

If DCA would not have succeeded in acquiring the protection from the war-lord, or it would have been forbidden by e.g. PADCO, the main contractor, likely DCA would only have implemented the projects in safe areas and not in the remote areas.

Aside from the negative message of recognizing the war-lord DCA was able to avoid the negative impacts of aid on the conflict (Anderson, 1999), solely by using its coercive power **not** to implement the project. Obviously the benefits of the project were sufficient and by allowing the project and the war-lord gained goodwill from the community. Aside from that his herd is 100 times bigger than the average herd size; he has a personal interest.

DCA had a conflict with another NGO on where to implement the various projects. This conflict remained unsolved. DCA blamed the other NGO for keeping the dispute alive. This was also a negative message.

DCA tried hard to avoid the other negative messages. This was mainly achieved by adapting personal behavior to the local situation and promote equality and solidarity among the team. DCA rejected the use of arms for protection.

The war-lords that DCA had to deal with were small and of the pragmatic kind. In line with the thinking of Duyvesteyn and Schuurman (2008) DCA thought it possible to come to an understanding with them.

## **DAARTT**

DAARTT started working in Afghanistan in 2004, funded by the Danish government. It implemented a program from 2004 to 2006 to built schools in Afghanistan, a nationwide program, in areas where the Danish PRT was active. DAARTT was not part of the PRT. The DAARTT project was under time pressure, as it was rather large and ambitious. The creation of school facilities may help reducing the conflict. (Lehznev, 2005). Education is considered to enhance economic development on the long term. Target areas were pinpointed by the ministry of education. Communities had no say in this. This is a message of inequality; the opinion of the community does not count. (Anderson, 1999).

The communities did not appreciate the long term value of education and looked only at short term benefits, such as cash for labour and other possible uses of the building. Afghans are opportunistic and have a short time horizon.

In order to be able to start quickly and avoid disturbances, the project asked permission with the war-lord and paid the demanded fee for security and accepted ghost labour, thus supporting the war economy. Office staff would not visit the field and monitoring was only done at the level of numbers of finished schools. It created ample opportunity for field workers to manipulate the project for their own good, favouring relatives or make lucrative deals with the war-lord. Changing project locations solely on advice of the field workers created a very uneven distribution of the project. The program expressed

powerlessness by accepting the situation as it was presented and did not even try to change things for the better.

### **DCU**

DCU (Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan) was founded in 2006. DCU is funded by several different sponsors, including the Dutch government. Five Dutch NGO's cooperate in the consortium. DCU has its headquarters in Tarin Kowt, the capital of Uruzgan province. Uruzgan is a dangerous province, where the Taliban is active. DCU deliberately choose not to secure itself with armed guards. DCU works and lives within and amidst the Afghan community, deriving its security from its network. This is a clear message opposing the mechanisms of war. (Anderson, 1999) DCU works only with Afghan staff. The absence of an expat sends a message of equality. DCU cooperates closely with other Afghan NGO's, avoiding competition.

DCU recognizes the power of the war-lord and consider him a potential spoiler. By insisting on the war-lord to cooperate with the project, they try to eliminate the threat. DCU implements a general development program, with no fixed end goals; their main limitation is the budget. It allows DCU to do the project design very participatory, creating support from a vast majority in the community. DCU relies on traditional mechanisms (Shura) to control the war-lord. (Duyvesteyn and Schuurman, 2008). To test the level of community participation a high community contribution is demanded (20 – 40%).

Projects of DCU are varied, according to the wishes of the community. Most of the projects have an impact on the economic conditions, increasing income, thus reducing the conflict (Collier and Hoefller, 2004). If an outside hostile group, such as Taliban or a band of robbers is present in an area, DCU would not implement any activity, as these groups are beyond the control of traditional systems in the community. (Duyvesteyn en Schuurman, 2008)

### **GIZ**

GIZ is a consortium of three German development organizations, funded by a bi-lateral agreement between Germany and Afghanistan. GIZ commenced working in Afghanistan in 2011 in Badhakshan. Before 2011 GTZ (member of GIZ) was working in Badhakshan since 2005. The GIZ program is multi-sector and multi-annual.

GIZ has formalized, bureaucratic lines of working. The request for assistance comes from the MRRD (Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development). Projects follow the lines as described in the ASP (Afghan Solidarity Program) which promotes a participatory approach.

GIZ uses the Anderson (1999) concept in the initial assessment of the context. (See annex F, "do no harm assessment sheet")

As DCU, GIZ recognizes the war-lord as a potentially dangerous spoiler of the project. GIZ insist with the Shura on inviting the local war-lord to participate in the project, the war-lord must take a seat in the project organization and take a clear task. GIZ legitimizes the power of the war-lord (Anderson, 1999). As DCU, GIZ relies on the traditional structures to control the war-lord, as the project was demanded for by the community. As DCU, GIZ demands a high community contribution in the project.

GIZ found that commanders become supportive and even promote the project outside his own community, especially on persuading other reluctant war-lords. GIZ notices that people (militia members) take the opportunity to earn an honest income outside the war-economy if the opportunity is there, in line with Waldman (2008). The war-lord takes the

opportunity to engage in civil business and leadership, for him “a way out” (Duyvesteyn en Schuurman, 2008)

### **PRT**

The Dutch PRT-Uruzgan was working in Afghanistan (from 2002 to 2006 in Baghlan) from 2006 until 2010. Their mission was to improve security, enhance economical development and strengthen local governance. After the initial use of military force to oust Taliban and other outside armed groups (negative peace, Galtung 1964) the PRT would start development in the area (positive peace, Galtung 1964). Shuras were approached and invited to present a list of priorities that needed to be done. Soon after, the PRT would start implementing. The projects were mainly on infrastructural work, such as roads, bridges and irrigation canals. At the same time small local warlords received extra attention, to train them in good governance, cooperate with the provincial and central government.

The local-war lords play a role in defending the area (Khan's); they are supposed to keep the Taliban out. To this end they received extra assistance. This created a more balanced power equilibrium between the tribes and made it more difficult for the Taliban to recruit within these tribes. (NB the approach was suggested by a former Dutch development worker in Pakistan (Bont, 2011)).

Not all war-lords would qualify for assistance. Those who had committed too many or too serious crimes were excluded. In practice only small and marginalized war-lords received assistance. The army kept a record, “*smoelenboek*” (mug book) of all war-lords in the area, their crime history and prescribed who could be negotiated with and who not. (pc Santegoed, 2011). According to de Bont (2011), this was a miscalculation of the Dutch government; other countries had to put in a lot of effort to prevent the powerful war-lords from becoming real enemies of ISAF and the Afghan government.

The implementation of the many small projects, created mass employment. It was observed that fewer men were joining the Taliban, as it was now possible to earn a living outside the war.

### 3.4 results of the research questions

**Table 1:** Benefit for the project in terms of security and effectivity of the cooperation with the war-lord.

Benefits The war-lord:	Effective		Security							
	Yes	no	harms the project		protects the project		participates in the project		promotes the project	
Project	Yes	no	Yes	no	Yes	no	Yes	no	Yes	no
DCA	x			x	x			x		x
DAARTT	x			x	x			x		x
DCU	x			x	x		x			x
GIZ	x			x	x		x		x	
PRT	x			x	x		x			x

**Table 2:** “Harm” done by the project to secure the cooperation of the warlord.

capacities project	Theft		Markets		Distributional		Substitute		Legitimize		“Harm” Score
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	
DCA		x		x		x		x	xx		1
DAARTT	x			x	x (1)			x	xx		3
DCU		x		x		x		x	x		1
GIZ		x		x		x		x	x		1
PRT	x			x	x (2)			x	x		4

Theft: warriors steal resources for their own use or sell them to buy weapons.

Markets: Aid can support the war or peace economy.

Distributional impacts on intergroup relations: uneven distribution may feed tensions, equal distribution may reinforce connections.

Substitute local resources required to meet civilian needs (freeing local resources to support the conflict)

Legitimizes people and their actions and agendas, being it the pursuit of war or peace.

(1): the uneven distribution **did not** feed intergroup tensions.

(2): the uneven distribution **did** feed intergroup tensions.

The “harm” score is arbitrary, 0-10, in which 0 represents no “harm” done and 10 represents all 5 types of “harm” done plus the perceived negative impact.

**Table 3:** Conditions influencing the cooperation with the war-lord and the negotiability of the conditions.

The conditions found in this research:

- 1 Presence of a hostile armed party from outside the community (Taliban).
- 2 Acceptance and ownership of the project by the community.
- 3 Presence of a coordinating body in the community.
- 4 Presence of social cohesion in the community that includes the war-lord.
- 5 Respect for traditional structures, such as Shura and elderly people.
- 6 Some coercive power for the project.
- 7 “the price of peace” – protection money.
- 8 Private interest of the local war-lord in the project’s outcome.

Condition	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
	yes	no														
Project																
DCA		nn	nn			nn	?	?	nn		nn			nn	nn	
DAARTT		nn		nn		nn	?	?	nn		nn	n				nn
DCU		nn	nn			nn	nn									
GIZ		nn	nn			nn	nn									
PRT		nn	nn		n		n									

n : negotiable

nn : non-negotiable

? : not known if the war-lord is part of the social cohesion in the project area

**Table 4:** Benefits for the war-lord from cooperation with the project in terms of power base, financial and otherwise.

Benefit project	Power base		Financial		Other	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
DCA	x			x		x
DAARTT	x		x			x
DCU	x		x		x	
GIZ	x		x		x	
PRB	x		x		x	

Other benefits found for the war-lord are: Status, Access to Peace Economy and Civil Leadership.

**Table 5:** Negative impacts from cooperating with the project (by the war-lord) on the war-lords (criminal) interests.

project	Power base		Financial		Other	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
DCA		x		x		x
DAARTT		x		x		x
DCU		x		x		x
GIZ		x		x		x
PRB		x		x		x

**Table 6:** Influence of the local war-lord on the project.

influence	threatens the project		protects the project		Participates in the project		promotes the project	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
project								
DCA	x		x			x		x
DAARTT	x		x			x		x
DCU	x		x		x			x
GIZ	x		x		x		x	
PRT	x		x		x			x

**Table 7:** Influence of the project on the local war-lord.

influence	Threatens wl's interest		Legitimizes wl's power		Contribute to wl's income		Contributes to wl's (civil) interests		Contributes to wl's (war) interests	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
project										
DCA		x	x			x	x			x
DAARTT		x	x		x			x	x	
DCU		x	x		x		x			x
GIZ		x	x		x		x			x
PRT		x	x		x		x		x	

Note: Four projects mentioned that if the situation did not meet the conditions that were considered necessary, the project would not push through. If during implementation of the project the conditions would change in a negative way, the project would be stopped and abandoned, until conditions would be favourable again.

## 4 Discussion.

### 4.1 Controversy

From the responses of the organizations that were approached initially for interviews, it became clear that the topic is controversial. Though no respondent said so explicitly, it seems that all organizations that are dealing in one way or another with war-lords do not want to share information, as dealing with war-lords is “not done” (Duyvensteyn and Schuurman, 2010; Lezhnev, 2005). Organizations deal with war-lords, but don’t want to know. Aid is traditionally regarded as neutral (Krombeen, 2006) and helps those who are suffering. War-lords are considered criminals, murderers etc., responsible for this suffering. The public does not associate war-lords with needy victims that deserve our aid. Though aid is changing from purely neutral to more political, having certain political goals in its objective as well, (Krombeen,2006; Duffield, 2001) and negotiation with war-lords may offer a way out of the war (Duyvensteyn and Schuurman, 2010), in donor countries this is not the perspective people have about aid.

In the design of this thesis research it was an underestimated feature. Reflecting on a project using Anderson’s (1999) concept, may reveal some painful truths. One can imagine that organizations rather avoid this discussion, which will be more on values than on results. Obviously the organizations do not value the opportunity to learn from each other over the criticism expected.

*If someone claims to understand the Afghan situation, it was not properly explained to him.*

*(Belgian development worker)*

### 4.2 Afghanistan

At first glance, the economic and other data from the Afghan situation, look promising for conflict resolution if compared with the information Collier and Lezhnev provide. A GDP per capita (GDPpc) of \$900 is well over the \$700 Collier (2004) found, but it includes a considerable amount of aid. Military assistance alone accounts for \$575 per capita (Nationmaster, 2011). Though Nationmaster is not a very reliable source in the way they collect data, it is an indication that a substantial part of the Afghan GDP is derived from aid. IMF (2008) mentions aid contributes more than 50 percent of the GDP. Collier doesn’t give a reference in what way aid is included or not in the \$700. Lezhnev (2005) mentions aid to be taken into account with GDP, but does not explain how. The NRVA (ICON, 2009) uses as a method to calculate the GDPpc as the per capita real consumption expenditure. Using these data the GDPpc is \$400. This figure is without the aid itself, though influenced by it. This figure is in line with sources as World Bank and IMF. The World Bank estimates the GDPpc at \$450 (World Bank, 2011), the IMF (2008) estimates the GDPpc to be \$337 similar to FAO (FAO 2008). It is far below the critical GDPpc of \$700 as described by Collier. The economic growth of 8 percent is considerable, but includes aid. I found no reliable data on the economic growth without the aid taken into account. All sources claim to be without the income derived from opium production. This would roughly add \$100 to the GDPpc. But since the opium production is clearly a part of the war economy, I will not consider it.

Collier (1999) found a relation between the proportions of young men, age 15-24, of the population and the rest of the population. In Afghanistan this portion is 20 percent. Generally this is not extreme if compared to other countries, but since almost half of the Afghan population is under 15, it means that only 30 percent of the population is over 25. Compared to the older part of the population, it is extremely high. Directly related to this is the lack of job opportunities. The NRVA 2008 describes the labor market as vulnerable, insecure, unstable and unable to provide sufficient income.

The study of Waldman (2008) indicates that especially young men join the war economy as a way to make an income, adding to insecurity, even though they would prefer a “decent” (non-war) job. Because of the wide variety of coping strategies the Afghan people have developed to sustain livelihood, it is hardly possible to apply the general “Western” economic models on the Afghan economy.

*What do you think? Afghan young men prefer a decent job, get married and be with their family. Just as anywhere else in the world.*

*(Dr. Zekria )*

Education in Afghanistan is generally poor and secondary education is very poor, which is according to Lezhnev (2005) one of the features leading to conflict.

Though a poor functioning government (Afghanistan has a poor functioning government (Bont, 2011; Woodward, 2010)) in itself should not lead to violent conflict, it creates the space for a violent conflict to emerge, as becomes clear from the explanation Lezhnev (2005) gives.

Afghanistan does not have a large population. It ranks number 160 (46/sq.km.) on the list of population density of countries. If you would calculate it back from the land area that is considered useable, it would rank much higher, place 30, close to the Netherlands (400/sq.km.). Finally Afghanistan has a very rugged terrain and has a harsh climate.

*We are no camels that love the desert. We hate this dust just like you.*

*(Dr. Zia)*

**Table 8:** Factors influencing conflict compared.

	Afghanistan	Critical value	Tajikistan	
GDPpc	\$400	\$700	\$2000	
Demography	50% < 15 20% >15 - <25 30% >25	Relative high portion between 15 -25	34% 20% 46%	
Secondary education	< 20%	Years of secondary education	>95%	
Unemployment (under 25 years)	7% (12%)	high	2%	Half of the Tajiki workforce works in Russia
Rugged terrain	very		very	
Population density ranking	160 (46/sq.km)		154 (49/sq.km)	
recalculated	30 (400/sq.km)		23 (467sq/km)	

(source: CIA, world fact book, CSO, 2007, ICON Institute, 2009)

From the comparison between factors mentioned in literature that may lead to a violent civil conflict and the Afghan situation, it may be clear that Afghanistan has every feature to be a country in civil war. As reference the figures for Tajikistan, Afghanistan's neighbor, are given.

### 4.3 Development aid

Development aid can contribute to improve some of the factors that influence the chance of war, especially income (GDP) and education. According to Collier (2004) Lezhnev (2005) and Miguel and Blattman (2008) economic development should reach a minimum level, before peace will get a chance. From this perspective development aid is worth the effort.

In all cases war-lords are perceived as a major threat, capable of destroying the projects achievements, able to stop a project, prevent a project from being implemented and the war lord is a threat to the security of staff. War-lords have the physical power (arms) to do so.

They do not have the legal power to do so, but the legal power (government) does not have the physical power to enforce the law. (Lezhnev, 2005; Bont, 2011; Woodward, 2010) Aside from that, there is hardly any legislation in Afghanistan and government officials are usually corrupt. Therefore war-lords are a force that cannot be ignored and has to be dealt with. Within this context the organizations operate.

*(On the question how commanders got their position)*  
*" During the wars I proved to be a good leader. When Karzai came, it was just natural that I continued my position. However, if there would be democratic elections today, I am not so sure that I would be elected." In the same voice he added: "If it would be war today, you would be dead."*

*A warlord*

From the cases it becomes clear that war-lords play an important role in the success and effectiveness of development projects, though none of the organizations tried to implement its projects without the cooperation of the war-lord. It can be argued that the war-lord has no positive contribution to the projects; he merely refrains from negative actions. But even this is a gain. It may be assumed that a successful project will contribute to the development of society. According to Galtung (1964) this is the road to peace. Furthermore, the war-lord offers in most cases active protection to the project and its staff in his area. Aside from the war-lord and his men, there are numerous armed criminals and robbers at large in the area. The protection could be considered a positive contribution. From the cases it also becomes clear that if a project is well designed, war-lords can be persuaded to take a positive attitude towards the project and can become important participants.

All organizations found a way to deal with the perceived threat of the war-lord, making the project successful in achieving its goals. In all cases the projects directly approached the war-lord in an early stage of the project. The results of the meeting with the war-lord were:

- A fixed price for peace. (the power of the war-lord determines the outcome)
- The project was tolerated (the persuasive power of the project determinates the outcome)
- The war-lord participated in a peaceful way (persuasive power of the project and interest of the war-lord determinate the outcome)

None of the projects were able to prevent all “harm”, as described by Anderson (1999). Most important “harm” done was de recognition and legitimation of the illegal power of the war-lord. Second important “harm” was the contribution to the war economy in two cases. All projects recognized the “harm” they did, and considered it unavoidable. The PRT took a clear stance by stating they would do a little “harm” if it would prevent big “harm”. All projects allowed “harm”, as it would give them an entrance to the community and to the war-lord. Four projects observed (but did not all recognise) a change in the line of thinking of the war-lord from war economy towards peace economy. Only in the PRT projects, this change in the war-lords attitude was part of the objective.

The phenomena that the war-lord becomes more peace orientated because of his participation in the project was only recognized by three projects, after the third meeting (discussion of results) in this research. The mentioned four created opportunities for the war-lord to show leadership in a non-war situation, contributing to civil development. This may facilitate the change from war-leadership to civil leadership (or any other peace economy related activity) for the war-lord. A way out. (Duyvesteyn en Schuurman 2010)

The GTZ-Nepal case gives solutions that are in line with Anderson (1999), who finds creation of employment of paramount importance and with Collier and Hoeffler (2004), who describe the positive relation between income and economic growth on the reduction of conflict. The fact that GTZ discusses with the rebels the project, giving full insight to be transparent could be explained as an implicit message recognizing the rebels as a party, thus legitimizing them; it can also be explained as showing the lower part of the ABC triangle or filling out the overlapping circles, showing there is no conflict of interest. GTZ did not look for common interests, as it did not seek active cooperation

with the rebels. (The national Nepali government would not have allowed that) The result was that GTZ was tolerated.

The outcome of the involvement of Afghani war-lords depends mainly on the attitude of the organization and the context conditions.

#### 4.4 Context-conditions

*Presence of a hostile armed party from outside the community.*

The first condition to be considered is the presence of an “outside” violent party (like Taliban), that is hostile to the project.

*If there is Taliban, we will not enter the area.*

*(Dr. Zekria)*

All organizations consider this situation as impossible to work in, mainly because this outside party is not controlled by the project community.

Only the PRT had the mandate and means to drive off such a party. Also in the case of the PRT projects would only start after an area was cleared of such forces.

*Presence of social cohesion in the community that includes the war-lord.*

The Afghan society is factional. Traditionally the country is divided in many small areas, controlled by one tribe or clan. Geographically this is equivalent to a village or a cluster of villages.

Afghans are deeply religious, Islamic rules and values are utmost important in life.

*Older people are wiser; they have a lifetime of experience. That's why younger people should listen to them.*

*(Eng. Sayed)*

One of the values is respect for elderly people. Every village has a Shura, council of elders that take decisions and settle conflicts. In general Shuras are willing to listen to all arguments of all parties, weigh the arguments and come to a decision. Usually Shura members are moderate and practical and base their decision on the interest of the community.

*Old people are not so fierce. They look for compromise*

*(Hamid)*

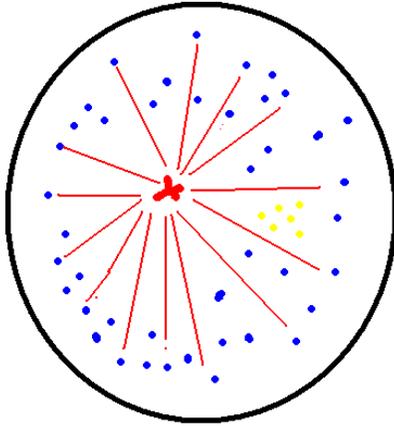
Shuras are therefore an ideal entrance into the community.

Afghan communities are inclined to defend their territory fiercely, if necessary in alliance with other clans. After 30 years of war, the leaders of this defence have become institutes: the war-lords. Most of the war-lords are rooted in their own community, live there with their family and live according to the traditional (Islamic) values. A local war-lord needs the community's support to continue his war activities. This means the war-lord would not easily oppose a Shura decision. Furthermore the war-lord has an interest in the welfare of his community; his own welfare depends on it. Finally, his men, the militia, originate from the same community. Only in rare cases, such as commander Matiullah in Uruzgan, the alliance has become more permanent and so big, that it is beyond the influence of the Shura.

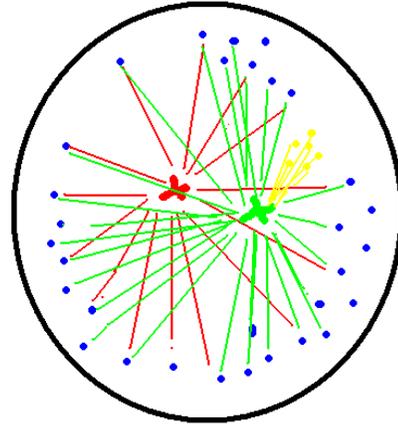
Therefore if the community supports the project, the war-lord must do so too. Otherwise he would marginalize himself. Opposing the elders –Shura- would make him rude; he would lose respect from the community.

**Figure 9:** lines of support in the village

Before the project



during implementation of the project



- Villagers
  - ✦ Commander
  - ✦ Project
  - Shura
- } Support  
—  
—

*A war-lord without soldiers is just a pathetic bully.*

*(Dr. Zekria)*

If the war-lord would marginalize himself in this situation, his militia members would leave and he would no longer be a war-lord.

*Respect for traditions.*

Respect for traditions, especially for the traditional Islamic values, gives outsiders

*(On solidarity with Afghan staff during Ramadan)  
“You are a Muslim, except that you are a Christian.”*

*(Dr. Faridoon)*

security and safety, provided the outsiders respect the values themselves. E.g. DCA Badhakshan relied on the value that a guest must be protected by its host. By only visiting an area on invitation, the DCA staff had the status of a guest. And indeed, protection was offered. Though not so obvious, GIZ and DCU use the same mechanism.

Trust is another important value. E.g. by accepting an invitation, you should also trust your host. Taking precautions, in case your host fails, is not appreciated.

*“Jan Grootboom is a white man in a black skin.”*

*(Lord Baden-Powell)*

The PRT patrolled the safe areas with minimal display of force (guns down, no helmet and socializing with people). This is a sign of trust and thus respect for the community. Afghans yoked: The Dutch are stupid, but they are not afraid!

*“The price of peace”.*

Sometimes a war-lord demands payment for security. Though it is clear that the same war-lord would implement the violence in case the price is not paid and enhances the war economy, this option was considered by two projects. DAARTT decided to pay, since they could afford the price and it saved them from trouble.

The PRT decided to pay war-lord Matiullah the demanded fee for use of the road from Kandahar to Tarin Kowt. They once tried to do without, resulting in an ambush and fierce battle; they decided the cost of battle was too high, compared to the fee. The other projects did not have budget for such payments.

*“He appreciates that we deliver services to the community and allows us to join the weekly convoy on the road to Kandahar. And that really doesn’t cost us \$3000 per truck, as some people say.”*

*Dutch businessman*

*Coercive power of the warlord and the project.*

The war-lord has physical power to sustain his demands. From the projects, only the PRT had physical power. However, use of power is not always a guarantee for success. The only coercive power projects in general have is withdrawal. The use of power will create a lose-lose situation. The community loses the project; the project will lose resources in time and money spent. In the case of the PRT, the use of military power is expensive in itself.

*Acceptance and ownership of the project by the community.*

All projects found that if the project is community owned, it is much easier to implement.

*If the community really doesn’t want anything from us, we will not persist.....*

The project is protected by the community, avoiding theft of materials and not allowing others to destroy or abuse it. Planning the project in a participatory way helps to create community ownership. Community initiated projects are the most desirable form, but lesser forms of participation can also give satisfying results.

Demanding a considerable community contribution is a method to test community’s ownership, which is at the same time strengthening the community’s ownership.

*.....But we continue awareness building and visit them regularly.*

Projects can influence the condition of ownership by using an appropriate participatory approach.

*(Eng. Sayed)*

*Presence of a coordinating body in the community.*

All communities have a coordinating body: the Shura. The Shura is not necessary able to coordinate a project. The project can train the Shura or help creating a coordinating body. Nowadays it is compulsory to have an implementing body under the ASP (Afghan Solidarity Program) called CDC (Community Development Council). Although the ASP exists since 2002, it is still unknown in remote areas such as Badhakshan. The existence of a CDC facilitates implementation a lot, especially since CDC’s are trained

on participatory approaches. A problem may be that CDC's are dominated by war-lords or people with strong private interests.

*Private interest in the project's outcome.*

Sometimes the war-lord has a direct private interest in the project, as in the case of DCA Badhakshan, where the war-lords own large herds and profit from veterinary services. The PRT focuses on the war-lord, to strengthen his power base and teach him how to cooperate with the government, making him a legal leader. In the other cases the interest of the war-lord is less clear, but projects (could) try to find out and point it out to the war-lord. If the war-lord has a positive private interest in the projects outcome, it makes his cooperation easier.

#### **4.5 Negotiating conditions**

In general the conditions of the context of the project cannot be negotiated. The presence of a hostile outside group or lack of respect for elders, are beyond the scope of a development organisation. Community ownership can be influenced. By using participatory techniques in the project design and community ownership can be tested by asking a (large) community contribution. Using the "do no harm format" (like GIZ does), a community can be pre-tested for its conflict solving abilities and potential for conflicts to arise.

#### **4.6 Effects on the project**

All projects experience cooperating with war-lords as an effective strategy to implement the project. However, none of the respondents is happy with the "harm" done and basically only found it acceptable if it leads to a change in the attitude of the war lord towards peace thinking. Most projects limit the amount of "harm" they will allow, according to their own values. If they consider the amount of "harm" too much, they will simply not implement the project. Some types of "harm" are not recognized as such and need explanation.

#### **4.7 Effects on the war-lord**

In all projects the war-lord benefits from his cooperation with the project. Sometimes directly by receiving money and goods from the project. Always by the recognition of his power base. Sometimes because the project affects his legal business positively. Whether or not the war-lord regards his own change towards peace thinking as a beneficial effect is not known, but from the perspective of development it is appreciated.

None of the projects directly affect the war-lords interests negatively. Projects may reduce the influence of the war-lord on the community on the long term, but at the same time projects (can) help a war-lord to become an ex-warlord and a civil community leader.

#### 4.8 Attitude of the project

Projects and project staff, in particular foreign project staff, are observed by local people (target community) on their behavior. It should be respectful towards Islam and traditional values. Agreements should be made by people of equal stance. Between the

village leader and the project leader and not with a community organizer. Project staff must be interested in the project and its outcome. If higher ranking staff is slack and has no eye for details, lower ranking staff will do as they like. Setting the proper example is crucial. Attitude and behavior of staff send implicit messages, which can work in favor of the project outcome or against it.

*(On the invitation from a war-lord to gamble)  
"My religion doesn't allow me to gamble, how about yours?"*

project leader and not organizer. Project staff project and its outcome. slack and has no eye for staff will do as they like. example is crucial. staff send implicit

#### 4.9 Participation

Community participation and particularly community ownership is most important. The projects that consider themselves most successful in reaching targets and avoiding "harm" spent a lot of effort on community participation. Implementing only those projects that are considered most urgent by the communities, that are supported by a large majority of the community and on which the communities are willing to make a large contribution (20-40%) assures the organization a good chance of success.

It puts the war-lord in a position where he cannot harm the project anymore, as he would harm his own community.

DCU and GIZ follow the rules on participatory project design rigidly. PRT and DCA to a lesser extent. GIZ is using the "do no harm" concept in the risk analysis of a prospective target community, through a questionnaire assessing the community's peace capacities, connectors and dividers. (See annex F)

DCU relies on large numbers of support, large CDC's (7-14 people).

GIZ relies on the history of a community, if this has been fairly peaceful, or the conflicts have been settled in a peaceful way, they assume the village has peace capacities.

DCU and GIZ both insist on involvement of the war-lord in one way or another.

During the discussion that followed the case description (interview), we concluded that an unrealized effect of the approach of involvement of the local war-lord is that it offers a good opportunity to pull the war-lord out of the war-economy and push him into the peace-economy. The GIZ program already experienced that war-lords change their attitude and become supportive in the peace economy (though this is a lucky side-effect); in the GIZ and DCU program this is not expressed explicitly, but the impact on project effectiveness is positive. The GIZ and DCU programs have found a way to avoid negative side effects ("harm") of the aid by involving all stakeholders, including the war-lord, in the project and make them all responsible for it.

#### 4.10 SWOT analysis of the results of “Involving war-lords in development projects”

In order to draw conclusions from the results, the results were compared in a SWOT diagram.

**Table 9** SWOT analysis of the results of “Involving war-lords in development projects”

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
<p><b>*Creates security for project and staff.</b></p> <p>*Enhances community building.</p> <p>*Strengthens traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution.</p> <p>*Makes development possible.</p> <p>*Uses existing strong and influential local governance (Shura).</p> <p>*Uses existing strong traditional values.</p>	<p><b>*Confirms the war-lord in his power.</b></p> <p>*Slow and demands patience from the program/organization/donor.</p> <p>*Multi annual programs, long term commitment.</p> <p>*Expensive.</p> <p>*Many determinating conditions that cannot be influenced by the program.</p> <p>*Lawlessness – little coercive power for the project.</p> <p>*Only applicable in areas with traditional social cohesion – clans, tribes. Therefore in size limited to village or cluster of villages level.</p> <p>*Taboo in donor countries</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p><b>*Opens a way for warriors to peace, by peaceful means.</b></p> <p>*Any development will pull the country a bit more out of the conflict trap.</p>	<p><b>*Outside armed groups.</b></p> <p>*Weak government.</p> <p>*Short time horizon of beneficiaries.</p> <p>*Opportunism of stakeholders.</p> <p>*“Warrior attitude” of beneficiaries.</p> <p>*The overall (economic) development of the country is too low to have momentum.</p> <p>*Not acceptable to donor.</p>

## 5. Conclusion

International aid organisations consider the involvement of war-lords in development aid “not done” and do not discuss the issue.

Involving Afghan war-lords in aid projects can be effective in small, local, community based projects. The war-lord must be involved with and belong to the targeted community and must have his power base in that community.

Involving war-lords in development will not solve the major problems of the country or settle the Taliban rebellion.

But if aid helps communities and specially war-lords to gain experience in peaceful settlement of conflicts, it may improve the country’s ability to come to peaceful solutions of the conflicts and allow development.

Anderson (1999) gives in her book examples how organisations working in a conflict area try to outsmart potential spoilers by making it not worth the effort for third parties to try to get extra benefits from the project.

DCU and GIZ have found a solution in the ownership of a project and in the involvement of war-lords and their militias in that project to prevent this “harm”.

Conflict areas, where one or several conflicting parties come from outside the community (such as Taliban or Al Qaeda, bands of robbers) should be avoided by the approach of involving the local war-lord in the project, until the outside hostile force is gone.

Involvement of war-lords in a project and implementing “do no harm” starts at the design of the project and must be monitored and evaluated constantly.

It must be possible to imply sanctions in case the project does not evolve as desired. The sanction used in the described Afghan cases is to withdraw a project.

Important to implement “do no harm”, involving the war-lord, is the project design itself.

Key points in the design are:

### 1 **Community ownership of the project ownership.**

- Bottom up approach with full participation of the community is necessary.
- Potential spoilers like local war-lords and militia should be actively included in the project, making them responsible for the process and outcome and demanding a positive (peace economy) contribution from them.
- The community is willing to make a substantial contribution to the project in money or in kind. The community complies timely and in full with the commitment. This is an important indicator of the commitment and ownership.
- Support of the local Shura for the project is a must. The influence from the Shura is derived from the old value in Afghan society that elders are to be respected. Shura members are key-players in project success, as they can settle conflicts peacefully.
- Number of people in the community that support the project. Numbers count; at least three quarter of the community should be supportive.

- 2 Peace capacities of a community.**
  - Anderson's framework can be used to predict the likeliness and kind of conflicts to arise during the project implementation and the ability of the community to solve such conflicts peacefully.
- 3 Social coherent communities.**
  - Communities involved must have strong social ties that include the local war- lord. Like tribal, clan, families. The community involved must be under the influence of one Shura.  
Potential spoilers (war-lords) must belong to the same social group as the community and the Shura. The Shura is the only institute that may control the war-lord in a peaceful way.
- 4 Small local based projects**
  - Projects should not exceed the area as defined under 3, as the Shura has no influence outside this area. The approach of "involving war-lords in development projects" can only be effective at a small local scale. Village level, a cluster of villages, for the most at district level.
  - Larger projects should be cut up in smaller projects aiming specifically at the community as defined under 3. They can be connected.

Communities must be ready for the bottom up/participatory approach, as it is a democratic process. Not every village is ready for this. The ASP is working on speeding up this process by institutionalising mechanisms to achieve community participation in development projects. Mainly through initiating CDC's and several control mechanisms at district, provincial and ministerial levels.

## **6 Recommendations.**

This research “The Dilemma of Development Aid in Conflict Areas in Afghanistan” was limited in number of respondents, representing only 10 of the organisations that work in development in Afghanistan.

Repeating this research inside Afghanistan with a large number of development organisations, including local organisations, will give a better insight in how organisations deal with the threat of war-lords and how many organisations consider war-lords a threat or a problem. Conclusions of such a research will be much better underpinned by numbers.

Local (Afghan) branches of international organisations and local organisations may be less hampered by the taboo on dealing with war-lords, as it is -likely- daily reality for them. Larger numbers of respondents may help to break the taboo.

It may well reveal other solutions than involving the war-lord in a project.

In particular it will be interesting to find out how organisations that claim NOT to deal with warlords have been able to create security, project effectiveness and avoid the “harm” as described by Anderson (1999).

The Anderson (1999) concept can and should be used by organisations to critically evaluate the impacts of their projects that go beyond reaching the objectives of the TOR.

Using the Anderson (1999) concept in project design, as GTZ (and GIZ) is doing several years now, may help avoiding many of the conflict related problems project implementation faces today. This is even more important for technical projects that do not have conflict mitigation as an objective in their TOR.

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## **Appendix A: Case DCA Badhakshan**

DCA, the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan was hired as a subcontractor by PADCO, the contractor, in the USAID project ADP-N (Alternative Livelihood Program – North) between 2006 and 2009. The overall objective of this project was to offer alternative sources of income for poppy (heroin) cultivation for farmers. DCA implemented the veterinary component of the program. The case is described by myself. I worked as program director DCA-Badhakshan.

DCA was founded in 1979 as a students initiative as a response to the Russian invasion in Afghanistan. Initially DCA delivered relief assistance, but soon the organization evolved to a development organization, delivering veterinary services. DCA provides a six months training course to selected villagers to become PV's (ParaVets), provides veterinary equipment, medicines and vaccines and VFU's (Veterinary Field Units). The main objective of DCA is to give Afghan farmers access to veterinary services and to improve animal production. The benefits of the DCA interventions are between 1.8 and 4.8 compared to the costs. (Schreuder et al, 1995) The main result of DCA projects is economic, improving farmers' income. DCA has used the Paravet/VFU project format for twenty years in Afghanistan.

### **Acceptance of the project**

The implementation of the veterinary component in the ADP-N project was straight forward and followed the format of previous projects elsewhere in the country. DCA's activities are commonly known in the country, farmers know what to expect, and they want it. Usually they are anxious to participate in a DCA project. As a village leader in Zeraki, the north of the province said: "What took you so long?" This area had not seen a government official or extension worker since 1986.

### **Security**

PADCO implemented a very strict security regime. Expat housing in fortified villas, armed guards, outdoor only with bullet proof vests, armoured cars and many limitations on go- no go areas. PADCO had received threats, were attacked in an ambush, leaving two Afghan staff dead and during the three years they were attacked violently several times. For personal reasons I do not feel at ease in a militarized environment and I knew that with all the limitations PADCO put on their staff, DCA would not be able to implement the project in a proper way, namely giving as many farmers as possible access to veterinary services. In my opinion the project should specially include the remote areas.

On the other hand the stories of the actions of the local war-lords worried me a lot. Together with my local DCA counterpart and the local NGO PRB (Pamir Reconstruction and Building) we discussed the situation. We decided that we should keep distance from "the Americans". PRB was convinced they had a good local network that would inform us of any threat beforehand and we would be fairly safe with them. DCA set up a local office in Faizabad, renting space from an influential Mullah and not from Rabani (former president of Afghanistan), the local war-lord and politician, as PADCO did. We decided we would not barricade our house and invite Afghans involved in the project in our house and office. (Unlike the PADCO office and house, that was off-limit for Afghans that were not employed by PADCO.) We also did not have any weapons. PRB thought it of no use to have arms if we were not trained on using them and we better relied on honour, namely that there is no honour in attacking unarmed people. To avoid robbery we did not

keep any cash in the office. Since there were no banks in Faizabad, we used the Hawala system. DCA Kabul would pay a money trader in Kabul an amount, inform me, and I could collect it with the Faizabad money trader, big Jan. Usually I would do all payments in the office of big Jan, which was a shop in the bazaar. Quite visible to everybody in the street. Still implementing the project in the province was a major worry, as it was not safe to leave Faizabad or get of the main road.

### **Cooperation with other NGO's**

We selected the villages where to implement the project on the map, based on geographical spread, avoiding duplications with other NGO's and as remote as we thought it possible to go. Through ACBAR we coordinated our plans with other NGO's. One NGO, Agha Khan, does not cooperate with ACBAR too much. We invited them for a meeting to discuss our respective areas of work; they were not willing to commit themselves to any agreement. As a consequence DCA tried to estimate what Agha Khan would do. Usually Agha Khan selects its project areas in Ismaeli communities, which are in the east of the province. DCA selected its areas of implementation elsewhere, mainly in the west. In two cases we miscalculated. In one case we solved the problem by persuading the PV's to cooperate, in the other case DCA did not pursue its plans and moved elsewhere. With other NGO's communication went smooth and we could avoid duplication.

### **Staff**

The next step was to hire local staff, as drivers, cook and chokidars. We selected them as much as possible from the villages we wanted to work in. Drivers from the mountains have gained their driving experience in transporting opium from the mountains to the cities. They do have connections with war-lords (as the war-lords control the opium). Before we would go to a village, we would send our local staff home, to prepare the visit, mainly by arranging an invitation for us by the village. Only if we were invited, we would go. We expected we could rely on Islamic hospitality and that the village that invited us would take care of our security. Our main worry was to be robbed or kidnapped. During our first visit we would introduce ourselves, the project objectives and what contribution we expected from the community. What we also made clear was that veterinary service and animal production are our interest, and that DCA is not interested in poppy production. The purpose was to built mutual trust; the first step was to show we are no threat to the commanders business.

In all occasions we received an invitation and only in one occasion the local commander rejected our project proposal and sent us away. Two years later this commander invited DCA again and asked DCA to implement the project still. DCA strictly implemented its own criteria on project acceptance. The community must forward several candidates for the PV training, who were assessed in a one or two day's exam in the village. From the final candidates the community (Shura) must choose one unanimously. DCA would be present at this meeting to see if there is sufficient village support for the candidate. The village also has to donate a piece of land for the erection of the VFU. This should be communal land, and it should be endorsed by the Shura (including the imam and commander) and the quadi (Islamic judge). PADCO wanted the transfer of land to be endorsed by the Afghan cadastral survey in Kabul, but this office has not been working since 1979, therefore we considered such an endorsement of no value.

After graduation from the six months PV course, the PV would receive his tools, a supply of medicines and vaccines and other necessities to start working. Further (re)supplies

would have to be bought from DCA or elsewhere. After six months his performance would be evaluated. If sufficient, the VFU would be built. In every phase DCA could withdraw further assistance if performance was below standard. This has not been the case.

In the very beginning local commanders tried to control the project by dictating who to select for the PV training, offering a piece of land that was his property. They never asked for money or goods. We could rather easily persuade the war-lords of our terms (community owned) and the benefits of having a PV in the village, namely that this would improve animal production and profits. War-lords usually own large herds; an improved health status of the herd would affect his income considerably. By allowing the project in his area, the war-lord gained status as he was doing something for the community. With election time forthcoming, it also offered the war-lord an opportunity to learn something about democracy in lengthy evening discussions with the outsiders. During a visit at the compound of a commander a Swiss knife disappeared during the night. I mentioned it and the knife was returned a few weeks later.

After reaching an understanding, usually the commander would provide physical protection; give us an escort on certain trips. In one occasion weather and road conditions forced us to camp at the road side. When the commander of that area heard of it, he immediately sent a group of militia members to guard our camp during the night (which we were only too happy to accept).

Though officially the commanders said nothing, they would always tell us what road to take, or persuade us to stay a day (or tell us to leave quickly). Sometimes there would be an ambush on our planned road, sometimes fighting, but generally we thought they wanted to avoid us meeting a drug convoy. The commanders expressed it as we were the guests of the community and of him; therefore they felt obliged to protect us. Only once we were caught up in crossfire between two competing war-lords. Villagers offered us protection, until we were escorted out by the German PRT.

One day we had a car accident at a very remote spot. We slid off the road and fell into a ravine, killing the driver and wrecking the car. Only weeks later we were able to salvage the car. No part of the car or the load was missing. The village had guarded it. They only wanted payment for the construction of a road to get the car out of the ravine. Furthermore I paid attention to behave according to Islamic values and even sometimes reminded Afghan staff to do so.

## Appendix B: Case DAARTT

DAARTT implemented a program from 2004 to 2006 to built schools in Afghanistan, a nationwide program, in areas where Danish troops were active. DAARTT was not part of the PRT. DAARTT received their main funding from the Danish government. The interview was held with Hamid Saleh, who worked as an office coordinator with DAARTT.

The objective of DAARTT was to built a school in every district, or more than one if the district was densely populated or large. DAARTT used a standard format for the lay-out (8 classrooms) of the school, that was applied everywhere. Depending on the situation, DAARTT used two methods of selecting the location of the schools. If the official government was well represented and strong in a district, they would ask the ministry of education to allocate a lot to build the school. If the government was absent, or ignored locally, they would ask local leaders. Often these were war-lords, former mujahideen. Former mujahideen usually exercise power, have weapons and money. Sometimes the local Shura (village elders, which were usually also former mujahideen) and in a rare occasion an influential teacher. Sometimes the PRT would appoint a place, after they had driven of the Taliban. This was mainly in Helmand. In general the local governments were not very cooperative. Education is not regarded important.

The minister [of education] originates from Nangarhar province. Here it was easy to get things organized and implemented. But in Badhakshan, though regarded a safe province, without rebellion, the central government has little power. Local tribes and war-lords hold the power and care little about what Kabul says. Official politicians all over the country would try to use and manipulate the project for their own agenda, to raise support in the elections. It meant that supportive districts would get everything, other districts nothing.

Only after the programme had ended, Hamid realised how much they had been manipulated and how little they had done about it. The Danish director never visited the field and was not aware of the manipulation. The field workers knew, but remained silent. If problems about the site selection came up, and that was often, they would hardly solve those problems, but go somewhere else. In the case of Durayem district (Bahdakshan) the people, divided in upper and lower Durayem, could not unanimously decide on where to build the school. The official government tried to mediate, but even the suggestion to built two schools of four classrooms, one in upper- and one in lower Durayem, was rejected. The field worker reported that the people were opposing the project and it should be taken somewhere else. He suggested a site in Logar (!) province. It was approved by the director, happy to find another place and stay on schedule. Later Hamid found out that instead of solving the problems in Durayem, the field worker had been fuelling the conflict. The field worker knew that the project would accept any solution because of time pressure. The site in Logar was the place he was born and his family profited by contracting the building. In general contracts were granted to contractors known to the field staff, mostly relatives. Hamid worked after the DAARTT project in Badhakshan, and he found out that the conflict in Durayem could have been solved.

In the project it rarely happened that war-lords asked directly for money. What was common however was that the commander would force the project to accept a list of names of labourers to be put on the payroll, usually fifty percent of the total staff. To be paid to the commander. These people never showed up for work, but were paid anyway.

Also it was common that the local commander would demand the project to do construction work at his house, an extension, a new kitchen or the like. If the project would not comply with those demands, materials and tools would be stolen.

The program was set up as cash for work program. The village where the school was built were supposed to deliver the labour, and the financial benefit of that should remain in the community. However, in most cases all schools supervised by the same field worker, would employ throughout the project the same labourers, regardless the geographical location. The two most powerful war-lords in Badhakshan, who both live in Faizabad, were cooperating with the project (not with each other) because they could benefit from it. They made sure to have some relatives in the Faizabad office, to ensure that their companies would get the work.

In Helmand province a conflict arose halfway the construction about the size of the entrance gate of the schoolyard. Normally this was about one meter wide, the people insisted on making it three meters wide. DAARTT had to stop working, as the situation became tense. Hamid was sent there to try to solve the problem. He noticed the problem was with younger men. Soon it became clear they wanted a wide door, to enable them to have a safe parking space for their trucks (as it happened, many men were engaged in transportation in this village). Hamid tried to explain that it was not the aim of the project to provide parking space for trucks, but a place for education. The discussion was useless and the atmosphere became very emotional and tense. So Hamid decided to speak to the Shura, the village elders. According to Hamid, elderly people are much better able to reason and leave the emotions out, or at least do not show them. Also this discussion took place in the Mosque and not in the open. First Hamid explained the importance of education. Secondly Hamid explained the project was building schools and nothing else. The elders suggested the village would bear the extra costs for the big doors. The site engineer wanted to agree with this proposal. Hamid continued to explain that a parking lot for trucks doesn't belong inside a schoolyard. Finally the elders accepted Hamid's arguments and dropped the demand for the door. When the younger men were informed about the decision, they went furious. The elders told them to shut up. In the south the elders are highly respected and not contradicted. Therefore they have the real decision making power. According to Hamid, educational projects in Afghanistan are difficult, because it takes a long time (15-20 years) before results show (meaning that people can use the education to make a better living). The time horizon in the rural area is very short. A few months to a year. Hamid thinks it wiser to engage in small projects with a quick result, aiming at improving livelihoods now and not on the long term.

Reflecting on his experiences, Hamid thinks Afghans are opportunistic. They cooperate in the beginning, when the project is half-way, they change and come up with extra demands. Agreements you make with people are never legal, as there is no rule of law. Corruption and bribery are common in Afghanistan. Hamid gave an example of people insisting in paying a bribe to officials at the passport office (where by exception you can get your papers processed without bribing), as they were afraid otherwise the documents would not be completely in order, so they would face problems abroad. Hamid also thinks the DAARTT project failed to make the people participate in the project. The villages did not "own" the schools. He gives some examples where schools were burnt down by the Taliban later, whereas the village elders could have prevented it (because most of the Taliban originate from the place they fight and can be influenced

by the elders.) Hamid is convinced that projects only can succeed in Afghanistan if they are owned by the recipients.

## Appendix C Case DCU

DCU (Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan) was founded in 2006 by three Dutch NGO's, Save the Children, HealthNet TPO and Cordaid. In 2008 two more Dutch NGO's joined, ZOA Vluchtelingen zorg and DCA. The interview was held with Zekria Ahmadzai, program director DCU.

Every organization has its own field of expertise, that are utilized in the projects. This is efficient and effective and together they are a more powerful negotiation partner. DCU cooperates closely with Afghan NGO's and is based in Tarin Kowt, the capital of Uruzgan. Uruzgan is a dangerous province, where the Taliban is active. DCU deliberately choose not to secure itself with armed guards. DCU works and lives within and amidst the Afghan community, deriving its security from its network.

DCU has gathered several years of experience in working in a conflict area. Involvement of war-lords in a project was first done in a seed bank project. Farmers would receive a loan in the form of seeds, that had to be paid back (in cash) after the first year. The project involved the war lord in the collection. The agreement was made up between the project and the Shura; the Shura asked the war-lord to collect the pay-back. They were using his power to make sure there would be no problems. This approach was very successful, there was a 100% recovery and nothing was stolen. This money was reinvested in the community in e.g. a generator to supply the village with electric power. In this project the community wanted the seeds and they knew that eventually the money would be invested in a project that was wanted by the entire community, such as electrification. A group of influential people (Shura) organized the project and involved the war-lord into it, because of his power. This assured them there would not be physical resistance against pay-back. The war-lord first wanted a percentage of the collected money, but the Shura convinced him to settle for the offered salary. Aside from the salary, the war-lord gained in status.

Marginalizing war-lords by keeping them out of a project makes him dangerous. He would easily continue his old habit of extortion. By including him it makes him responsible. Specially if he becomes a member of a respected group, such as Shura or CDC he has obligations to fulfill. Failing to do so, would make him lose respect and honor. Especially if he fails deliberately. That is why DCU insists on inviting the war-lord by the Shura into the project.

The project needs to be knowledgeable about the project area and on how to involve people. First there needs to be participation. Preferably the project must be on instigation of the community. Secondly the project must make an assessment of the area and a risk analysis. Thirdly the project must approach the community in a proper way, meaning participatory. The project must clarify the possibilities with examples and encourage the community to participate.

The local war-lord always has a private interest in a project. His children can go to school, his family will receive medical services etc. Often these personal benefits are not seen. Therefore the project must explain itself very clearly, create awareness building and community mobilizing.

An example on how not to do it is how a Dutch person collected money in Holland, went to Uruzgan and offered a community to build a school as cash for labor. The community agreed and the school was built. The day after it was finished, it was bombed. The

community had not participated at all in the project design and were not interested in a school. They were only interested in the cash for work.

According to Zekria a proper assessment of the needs of the communities and their priorities is most important. If the project works according to those needs, the people will feel responsible.

What is new in the approach of DCU is asking a community contribution. This can be in cash, labor, materials as sand and stones etc. This is brought in by and owned by the community. Therefore no one would touch it. DCU started with asking 20% contribution and slowly increased it. Next year they will ask 40%.

If communities are not aware of any needs or don't want a project to be implemented, DCU will wait until awareness arises. In the meantime DCU will stay in touch with those communities and continue awareness building. This process may take years. DCU will not do anything, until the community asks.

Zekria does not think cash for labor is a good approach. It is a short term benefit for the community, persuading them too easily to want a project, which can overrule long term interests. Community participation and community ownership are according to Zekria the key factors to success for the project.

War-lords are unquestionable dangerous people. The only way to avoid potential harm from a war-lord is to take them into the project. Honor and loss of face play an important role. Many war-lords have a tough mentality. The only life they know is fighting. By giving the war-lord what he wants, especially protection money will only enforce his mentality. Involving the war-lords in a project, appeals to his qualities in a peaceful way. A war-lord could be anything in a CDC. A counselor if he has particular skills (war-lords are often educated), be the chairman or just ordinary member.

The Shura or CDC is a democratic body. Even if the war-lord would have other priorities, he will accept and support the viewpoints of the majority.

By demanding the war-lord to be a member of the project implementing body, as DCU does, the war-lord is brought back into the traditional system of community decision taking.

Zekria thinks it impossible for the war-lord to continue the mechanism of war in this system, and will therefore drop his demand for protection money etc. Only if he is left out he might do that. Anyway, if it would be the case, the project would not push through. Also if such demands arise during the project, the project would be stopped. So far DCU has not experienced such cases.

Furthermore, the war-lords do get paid by the project, for their contribution. This is an ordinary salary; other members receive it as well.

In case a war-lord is reluctant, the project would continue to round up support and awareness with the community. The idea is that the war lord cannot ignore large numbers. However, as long as he is not supportive, the project will not start.

Presently the ASP is getting into full swing. On village level there are CDC's, there are district CDC's and provincial CDC's and there are Shuras on the different levels. Zekria is not very happy with the provincial Shuras, as they are dominated by politicians.

If there is no CDC or another suitable implementing body in the community, DCU will first help building one.

Factors that will make DCU not starting a project are mainly the presence of outside (the community) fighting forces. This could be Taliban, but also groups from other districts or provinces. Until these groups are gone, DCU will do nothing. But if it is a local commander doing the fighting, they will find a way.

The other factor is lack of community support.

Zekria thinks the DCU approach offers war-lords an opportunity to use their skills and talents supportive for the community in a peaceful way.

## Appendix D Case GIZ Badhakshan DETA project

The interview was held with Sayed Habibullah Nasiri, the engineering coordinator at GIZ Faizabad. Presently he is assigned to the DETA project. DETA is acronym for Development Oriented Emergency and Transitional Aid. The DETA project is part of the bi-lateral agreement between Germany and Afghanistan. Badhakshan is also the province where the German ISAF force is based.

His main tasks are to assign tasks to field and office engineers and monitor the progress of (potential) projects. His work takes place partially in the office and partially in the field. GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) is a new development cooperation of several German organizations, namely GTZ, DED and Inwent. GIZ implements “do no harm” as integrated part of their program, following the “Practitioners Guide do no harm” (GTZ, n.d.) This is mainly an extract from Andersons work, in particular her book *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War*. GTZ has been active in Badhakshan since 2005. GIZ started January 2011. GIZ gets involved in several development projects, mainly infrastructural. They divide the projects they engage in “Backbone Projects”, large multi-million, multi year and multi district projects like road construction linking several villages and districts and “Emergency projects” or “Village Projects”, small, very local projects that have a direct impact on the community and are finished in three to six months, such as a well, bridge or irrigation canal. Backbone projects usually take place in one of the 10 focus districts or several adjacent districts. The small village projects are considered complementary to the backbone projects, to give communities a chance to profit from the total project in terms of income and outputs that directly benefit the community. The village projects also create the goodwill and approval to allow the backbone projects. The projects are implemented as “cash for work” in such a way, that labour, skilled and unskilled is recruited in the village itself, or in case of a backbone project from the villages nearby, so that every community can profit from the income generating opportunity.

Project selection goes directly through the MRRD (Ministry of Rural rehabilitation and Development) or communities approach the programme directly. In the last situation the village will present a request on a specific item, such as a well, an irrigation canal, a school etc. Requests must be submitted through the ASP (Afghan Solidarity Programme), which structures the development projects. Under this programme villages should have a CDC (Community Development Council); usually the Shura would act as CDC. If necessary DETA will assist in formulating the proposal. If there is no CDC in the village, DETA will assist in the formation of a CDC, which must be elected by the community as a whole and must comprise of minimum two members. Before this new CDC can submit a proposal, they must register with the ASP and be accepted by ASP. The proposal must be forwarded to the district manager (head of district, the official representative of the central government). He will compare the proposal to the priority list, as compiled by the provincial government. If the proposed activity matches the priority list, he will endorse it and send it to the provincial government for approval. If the proposal does not match the list, the provincial manager will have to follow it up, to find out that the proposed project is urgent in this community and should be prioritized, or that the community has alternatives. The provincial government will compare the proposed project with the provincial development plan. If approved they will send it to the MRRD. If not they will have to follow it up and visit the community. The MRRD will check the plan and the procedures and forward the proposal to GIZ.

GIZ will visit the community and have the community make a detailed plan and a report on anticipated impact. GIZ assists on technical information. An important part of the detailed plan is the community's contribution, which will usually be 10% of the total value of the project, usually paid in kind. Labour, building materials such as sand, stones, site preparation, excavations etc. GIZ demands a community contribution, as this is a good indicator of the commitment of the community and assures community ownership of the project. After this plan is ready and satisfactory, GIZ will ask the community to fill out an assessment form, called "do no harm" (see annex 1). This form is designed to assess the community's local capacities for peace (or war). Direct questions, like how many conflicts were there in the last period, are there conflicts now, how were these conflicts dealt with, but also less direct, such as questions on migration. Questions on how the project might create conflicts. Questions on history: were there projects before? Are these still working? This gives the project a good insight in what to expect. If the score indicates an area to be too risky, the project will not be implemented.

If all obligations have been fulfilled and all tests passed, the project proposal is discussed with a committee, consisting of Afghans and Germans. Finally this committee will decide which projects are awarded in the next budget period. Good projects may be postponed until the next period, as the budget is always too small.

After approval by the committee, the village is supposed to deliver their contribution first. Only when this obligation is fulfilled, GIZ will start releasing the project money in small instalments, the next instalment comes only after the previous is duly accounted for (and checked and signed by many parties, the Shura, field engineer, monitor, local district and provincial district and a GIZ committee). If a village fails (or is slow) to deliver their own contribution, the allocated money will go to another project and this village may try again in the next round. The CDC is the direct implementing partner of the project.

If in the implementing phase things go wrong (conflicts arise, conditions are not met, accountability not correct) GIZ will stop the work and invite the community to solve the problems, if necessary with the help of GIZ community organizers and/or the district or provincial government. If this doesn't work, a project will be cancelled, informing all parties in writing, including the MRRD. So far this has been a successful approach. Only few projects failed, in its initial stage, mainly due to conflicts of ownership of land or a water source. There have been attempts to compromise the project by war-lords, demanding privileges (such as a well inside the commander's compound, or request for building material, only once protection money was asked). In all cases GIZ refused and left it to the Shura to solve it. Sayed is convinced that the elders are so influential and respected that the commanders will accept their word without further problems. He thinks that if commanders would oppose the Shura, the commander would lose all respect of the community and he would marginalize himself. Commanders are part of the community and their militia and support as well. Commanders need an income just as anybody else. If the project offers a position to the commander in the project, he will get paid, but has to deliver the work. In that sense he is treated equally. The project will not pay for services not delivered or badly accounted for. If a commander doesn't want to work nor has no useful skill, he will not be hired and not paid. Sayed does not consider commanders a problem, as long as a project is owned by the community and the village elders support the project. As a matter of fact they built the school in Durayem that DAARTT could not build. Sayed also believes that implementing projects through the communities is the key to success, as it generates a legitimate source of income. If projects are implemented through private companies, the people will try to get a piece of

the cake, one way or the other. Commanders would hardly oppose the projects, as most people see being member of a militia just as a badly paid job and are aware of the illegal aspects of it. They prefer to do legal work, especially if the outcome of this work benefits the whole community.

Sayed has also experienced it often that commanders that are initially reluctant to cooperate, often change opinion once a project becomes successful and turn into warm supporters that will also visit other villages to convince people to join. And they realize that with the help of projects, they can earn an income out of peace activities. Sayed expects the war-lords to disappear if economic growth continues. They will become business men or politicians. However this also depends a lot on what third parties, like Al Qaida and the Taliban will do. Those third parties are well financed and may pay militia members 300 to 500US\$ per month, as local policemen would only earn 150US\$ monthly. War-lords may be seduced by this money, even if it marginalizes them in their own communities. The elders would loose influence then, making the commanders dangerous and make it very difficult to return these commanders into the community again.

On the five points of Anderson he says that the programme refuses to meet private demands of war lords, or demands that are not in the interest of the whole community. These issues are solved through the Shura. If this fails, the project would be stopped and finally even cancelled. He cannot guarantee that nothing is stolen from the project, but it is minimal, like a handful of nails someone needs at home or the occasional bag of cement. However, this has nothing to do with warlordism. On the other points he thinks the projects support the peace building capacities. Generating cash for work projects give people an opportunity to earn an income in the peace economy. He assumes that there can hardly be distributional effects, as the projects focus on implementation of infrastructural work that are open to all community members and decided upon by the majority of the community. Substitution is not applicable, probably the contrary, as the projects demand the people to devote time (above household, agriculture etc. tasks) to the project. Sayed is sure that the program is undermining the legitimization of illegal power use, as the message is clear: cash for work. No deliverance, no pay. So even the war-lord has to do real work if he wants to earn some money from the project.

## **Appendix E Case Dutch PRT Uruzghan**

The original interview was supposed to be held with members of the CIMIC (Civil Military Cooperation) at the Frank van Bijnen barracks at Apeldoorn. Unfortunately this interview could not push through. The case as presented here is based on the meeting I had with Captain J.P.G. Santegoeds, communications officer, who spend some months in the field with the PRT in 2009 and Lt. Col. H. Jacobs, who was involved in the whole mission in Uruzgan.

The Dutch PRT-Uruzgan was working in Afghanistan from 2006 until 2010. Their mission was to improve security, enhance economical development, and strengthen local governance. The intervention was three fold: Defence, Diplomacy and Development (DDD). PRT workers believe that development is crucial in reaching a lasting peace. Captain Santegoed was pleasantly surprised to hear of the work of Collier that gives a clear correlation between income (GDP) and the incidence of war.

The PRT adopted a strategy that was called the inkblot strategy. From their base they secured areas in concentric circles around this base. Immediately after securing an area, they would contact the local Shuras and local warlords. During these meetings the PRT would explain its objectives. They would offer assistance to improve (very general) the local situation. Later the PRT would make prioritized community wish-lists of projects to be implemented. This was mainly on physical infrastructure, such as wells, roads, bridges, VFU and other construction work. These projects would be implemented as cash for work. It created a lot of employment. Besides creating jobs, the PRT would also train local leaders in “good governance” with particular focus on how to cooperate with each other and the central government in the province and in Kabul. Communication between clans and tribes was close to zero when the PRT arrived. One of the objectives was to re-instate the traditional structure of village shuras, district shuras and provincial shuras.

War-lords received special attention. In order to keep the Taliban out of the secured areas, the war-lords should be able to do so, with the use of their kandak (militia). The PRT strengthened the local war-lords, with the idea that if villages were able to defend themselves, they would be able to keep the Taliban out. At the same time war-lords were trained on good governance also.

After the battle of Chora, where the Dutch defended their position and did not abandon the area as was expected by the people and the Taliban, the PRT gained a lot of credit and this facilitated work. These war-lords are by far the strongest and play an important role in keeping the Taliban out. Involving those in the program would probably lead to desertion of the smaller war-lords, seeking assistance from the Taliban again.

The Dutch assistance was therefore not available for all war-lords and not at the same scale. The PRT limited its assistance to those war-lords that had not committed too serious crimes. Who to work with and who not, was kept in a record book, the “smoelenboek” (mug-book). Within this program of strengthening local war-lords, care was taken that all war-lords would become more or less equally strong, to create a power equilibrium in the area. (To prevent outbreak of violence among the local war-lords.) Big warlords and the war-lords that had been involved in serious crimes were excluded. The relation with the big war-lords was not good. Other countries had to deal with those war-lords to prevent new problems.

To built relations with the local population, the PRT would patrol the area with a minimum display of force. No helmets, guns down and actively contacting local people, chatting with them. This gave the Dutch PRT a human face. Unlike the US troops, that preferred to keep local people at a distance, displaying their strength with use of all kind

of high tech equipment. Afghans described the US troops as “Aliens”. On the Dutch they said: “the Dutch are stupid, but they are not afraid”. After a year the PRT observed a decline in young men joining the Taliban. The PRT attributes it to the improved economic situation that created jobs outside the war-economy.

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