Social Peace and Local Development in Libya

A handbook for local government and community leaders

Contents

This handbook is designed to provide a guide for local government bodies and community leaders on how they can work in partnership to promote social peace and development in Libya.
It does this by outlining a six-step process, with practical tools for each step.

Introduction: a vision for social peace in Libya

Libyan society is changing as a result of the revolution in 2011. This change is not just in national political processes and institutions, but also in the lives, hopes and aspirations of communities across the country.

The situation and needs of each community in Libya are different. They have different experiences of the Qaddafi period, the revolution and post-revolution Libya. Some have better opportunities to get work or access healthcare and education, some have more limited opportunities. Some feel relatively safe, some feel very unsafe. Some Libyans are still living with trauma from the past or through violent conflict in the present. All communities, however, say that at present they do not trust the Libyan state to meet their needs.

Why is trust important?

Over the last thirty years, about one third of countries that have experienced conflict or started on a path of transition have fallen back into large-scale violence within five years. The difference between those countries that fall back into violence and those that do not is the ability of the state to meet the expectations of all community groups in society. In short, transitions succeed when people develop trust in the state to meet their needs and interests, and to fairly negotiate differences with other groups in society.

If they do not trust the state and the decisions it makes, then people may choose to use violence to promote their needs and interests.

Relationships, trust and violence

Strong relationships > Greater trust > Violence is not used

State

↕ ↕ ↕
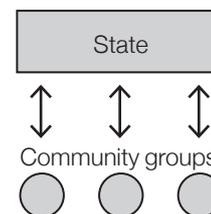
Community groups

Strong relationships between community groups and the state
People explain issues of importance and feel their opinions are taken into account

Strong relationships between different community groups
People dialogue on differences
Increases understanding and common ground

> 'Social peace' is when people have strong two-way relationships with the state and with other community groups, and when they trust that decisions made by the state are made fairly.

What is 'social peace' and how can it help?

In order to develop trust in the state, people need to be provided with information and options on issues of importance to them, to have opportunities to explain their thinking to representatives of the state, and to feel that their opinions are being taken into account when decisions are made regarding their community. Similarly, it is essential that people have the opportunity to dialogue with those groups in society that have different perspectives, opinions and needs, so as to increase understanding and to find common ground.

This is the essence of 'social peace' – that people have strong two-way relationships with the state and other community groups, and that they trust that decisions made by the state are made fairly, even if they do not benefit from them directly. Social peace does not entail removing differences in society or gaining consensus between all groups. Rather, it means better management of conflicting interests and needs, so that people do not believe that they have to resort to violence in order to protect their rights.

What is the role of local government?

In order to build relationships and trust in Libya, the state needs to develop ways of talking to all people in society about their experiences, aspirations and needs. It needs to find ways of increasing dialogue between different communities and interest groups. It then needs to support the delivery of services and development projects that respond to these experiences, aspirations and needs. As the main point of contact between people and the state, local government is best placed to develop relationships with and between community groups, to understand their needs and to deliver services that meet these needs.

At the same time, local government action can increase distrust and inflame tensions among community groups, if it does not take the time to understand their needs and make them feel like a valued part of the decision-making process. Even well-intentioned local government action can be badly designed, misunderstood or interpreted in a negative way.

> Active citizenship requires that ordinary people take responsibility for improving their lives, rather than waiting for public institutions to deliver their rights to them.

Why is a partnership with community leaders important?

Community leaders also have a part to play in building social peace, and in improving the quality of life where they live. This is because local government bodies cannot achieve positive change without the understanding and support of all community groups. Similarly, community leaders cannot achieve positive change without the resources and authority of local government. As such, local government representatives and community leaders need to work in 'partnership' with each other.

This 'partnership approach' demands that ordinary people take responsibility for improving their lives, rather than waiting for public institutions to deliver their rights to them. As such, this approach emphasises the value of citizenship – an acknowledgement that we all belong to the same society and therefore have a responsibility to each other, and to the well-being of both our local area and our country.

What does this mean for Libya?

A cross-government Working Group on Social Peace and Local Development, hosted by the Ministry of Local Government, has been working since May 2013 to identify how local government and community leaders can promote social peace, both in terms of 'how' they work together, and in terms of 'what' services and development projects they should support.

How to work together

In order to be most effective, local government and community leaders should form a 'Partnership', which then takes responsibility for identifying and engaging with all parts of the community, for assessing local needs and interests, for agreeing a plan to increase social peace and development, for communicating the plan and for monitoring tensions in the community, including perceptions of safety and trust in the state.

What to support

The Working Group has identified six local objectives that all Partnerships should try and achieve in their community – see the Strategy, opposite. If these objectives can be achieved in a community, then it is more likely that: 1) relationships between groups in that community will be stronger; and 2) people will trust public agencies to treat them fairly. As such, one of the key tasks for each Partnership is to identify concrete actions that will help to achieve these local objectives in its community.

Strategy for social peace and local development in Libya

Vision

A prosperous and cohesive society, where all people contribute to and benefit from sustainable development

Goals

1. Increase social peace during development **through** assessing needs, and increasing communication with and between community groups

2. Build trust and partnership between communities and public institutions **through** forming partnerships and public scrutiny

3. Increase perceptions of community security **through** monitoring feelings of safety, and prioritising key services that make people feel safer

Local objectives

⊞ A built environment of high quality (e.g. roads and infrastructure)

☰ Equal distribution of social, cultural and economic opportunities

✷ Good access to services, especially those deemed critical by local communities

⊛ Participation of all community groups in democratic processes

◉ People feeling safe and confident in their community

℁ Different community groups are able to dialogue with each other and share ideas

Where will the Strategy be applied in Libya?

The Strategy for social peace and local development has been designed so that it can be applied in all communities in Libya, no matter what the situation locally.

More stable communities
If the community is, on the whole stable, with strong relationships between different community groups and those groups and public agencies, then the local Partnership is able to focus on longer-term development.

Less stable communities
If the community is less stable, with weak relationships and even open conflict between community groups, then the local Partnership is able to focus on measures that reduce tensions and prevent violence.

Working Group on Social Peace and Local Development

Forming partnerships to deliver social peace

The first step in building social peace is for local government bodies and community leaders to form a Social Peace and Development Partnership ('Partnership').

Partnerships are an effective way of getting people, public institutions, civil society organisations and businesses to work together to improve the quality of life in their community.

What will Partnerships do?

The purpose of Partnerships is to build a common vision for, and shared commitment to, social peace and development, among a group of local government agencies and community leaders.

A Partnership provides a forum for debate, discussion and decision making between people from different community groups, who may have very different perspectives and limited opportunities to engage with each other. It is also a body that can identify, encourage and support those services and development projects that are best placed to build social peace. The key tasks of a Partnership are outlined in the following box. Guidance on each task is provided in the remaining sections of the handbook.

As such, Partnerships can be thought of as a long-term change in the way that services and development projects are planned and delivered – a change that is good for the community and good for social peace.

Partnerships have the following tasks

1. Create strong relationships by engaging with community groups
2. Assess local social peace and development needs
3. Agree a Plan for Social Peace and Development, and act as the focus for delivery of the Plan
4. Communicate the plan and progress in achieving it
5. Monitor levels of tension – including feelings of safety and trust in the state – and take actions to reduce tensions and prevent violence.

Who should be involved?

Partnerships should include all those groups and individuals who can play an important role in their community. To help identify who to include, it is worth asking: Who provides valued services to the community? Who do people turn to for their security and justice needs? Who in the area promotes coexistence and peace through the things they say, write or do? A diagram showing who should be involved in Partnerships in Libya is provided opposite.

Key points

1. What will Partnerships do?
2. Who should be involved?
3. How will we ensure Partnerships are legitimate?
4. How will the Partnerships work?

An example Partnership in Libya

Partnership

A Partnership is a group of local government and community leaders who come together to build social peace.

Core membership

Each Partnership is made up of those groups who provide valued services, who people turn to when in need, and who promote social peace through their actions.

▷ **local government agencies**, such as municipal authorities, education, health, environment, housing, youth services and culture

▷ **bodies that have a role in ensuring that communities feel safe,** such as the police, the army and the judicial authorities

▷ **Imams and others who increase Islamic awareness,** such as Koranic scholars

▷ **traditional community leaders,** such as representatives of hukama and shura councils

▷ **civil society organisations and professional associations,** as they are a key element in each community's social life and often deliver important services

▷ **business leaders,** as they are significant users and suppliers of local services, as well as key providers of local employment.

Partnership network

public scrutiny panel   tension monitoring group   local network
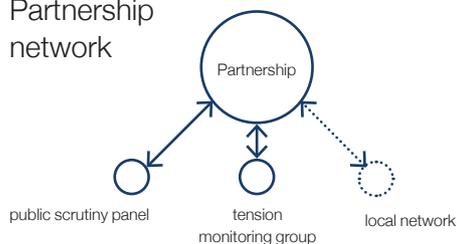
In addition to the core membership, it is recommended that each Partnership establishes a **public scrutiny panel** [section 4 ↗], to ensure public accountability over its work, and a **tension monitoring group** [section 6 ↗] to properly assess changes that may have a negative impact on relationships in the community. In addition, if needed, the Partnership can also establish a **local network of community leaders**, to further strengthen relationships with all parts of the community [section 2 ↗].

Partnership responsibilities
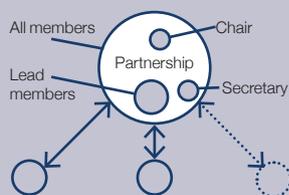
Chair
- Chair meetings
- Ensure that the Partnership's work is in line with agreed principles

Secretary
- Arrange meetings
- Prepare agendas
- Take minutes of meetings
- Receive and send correspondence

Lead members
- Take responsibility for leading on one of the Partnership's key tasks
- Develop work plans
- Report back to the Partnership on progress

All Members
- Work to promote social peace and development
- Work in accordance with agreed principles
- Represent their constituencies honestly
- Share their thoughts and perspectives openly

It is also important that Partnerships reflect the people they work for. As such, they should include representatives from all the different parts of the local community. The number of members included in the Partnerships will vary from community to community, dependent on its size and the complexity of relationships within it.

International experience has shown that a key challenge for Partnership will be to involve people who are traditionally under-represented, or who may feel nervous about engaging directly with government agencies. This challenge may prove to be most difficult in places affected by ongoing violent conflicts. In addition, particular care should be taken to ensure that young people and women are properly represented in Partnerships. To identify who should be represented in a Partnership it helps to map out the community groups that exist locally and the relationships between them. An example mapping process is provided in Section 2 [↗].

> Partnerships build a common purpose and commitment. They also provide a forum for debate, discussion and decision making between different community groups.

Transformational leadership

Any community or society going through change requires leaders that help 'transform' the way people see society and their role in it. These people drive change by challenging conventional practice and by 'modelling' how people can act better – through what they do and what they say.

The presence of transformational leaders is especially important in societies that have experienced violence, or where people have different views about the future. In these societies transformational leaders can set an example of tolerance and bridge-building, by demonstrating a willingness to listen to others, by trying to understand their views, and by being willing to work with them when needed.

Partnerships will be most effective if those participating in them try to act as transformational leaders. Firstly, by providing a good example to people in the community of how to work in a collaborative and accountable manner. Secondly, by participating in difficult conversations in the community in a manner that is open and that makes space for people with different opinions.

How can we ensure Partnerships are legitimate?

It is very important that the selection process for forming a Partnership is transparent and understood in the community. If not, it will lack legitimacy among all or certain community groups. Responsibility for selecting participants in a Partnership depends on who has the ability to convene different community groups. In most communities this will ideally be the new Municipal authorities, which should themselves have greater legitimacy as they are elected, and civil society. However, in some cases it may not be possible for the Municipal Authorities to take the lead. This is especially the case in more conflict-affected communities.

In general, it is recommended that: 1) the lead organiser publicly announces formation of the Partnership, and requests applications to become a member; 2) at the same time, the lead organiser maps community groups [Section 2 ↗]; 3) the organiser should then compare applicants for the Partnership with the results of the mapping, and decide which applicants are best suited; 4) if some key groups revealed by the mapping are not covered by applicants to the Partnership, the lead organiser should reach out to these groups discreetly and; 5) finally, the lead organiser should announce the selected Partnership members, and allow for public comments or objections within a set time period.

Social Peace and Local Development Partnership template

A Partnership Agreement should be signed by all members during their first meeting. The Agreement should then be made publicly available, so that everyone in the community has access to information on who is involved in the Partnership and their roles.

Partnership information

Community: _____   Date formed: _____

Chair: _____   Secretary: _____

Membership

	Name	Affiliation (e.g. Public Body / Community Group)
1		
2		
3		

Add additional lines for each member

Key tasks   Lead member

1. Relationship and engagement
Create strong relationships by engaging with community groups

2. Assessment
Assess the social peace and local develop needs in the community

3. Planning & delivery
Agree a Plan for Social Peace and Local Development, and act as the focus for support & delivery of the Plan

4. Communication
Communicate plans for, and progress in, achieving social peace and promoting development

5. Monitoring tensions, including safety and trust
Monitor levels of tension – including feelings of safety and trust in the state – and take actions to reduce tensions and prevent violence

Partnership meetings

Meeting dates

1	2	3

Add additional lines for each meeting. Meeting minutes to be kept separately.

Partnership principles

We the members of the Partnership agree to abide by the following principles in our work to promote social peace in our community.

- Transparency and accountability

- Consistent ways of working

- Effective communication with all other parts of the community

- Collective responsibility for failure and success

- Collaborative approach that models partnership

- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of success

All members also commit to valuing the contribution of all other members of the Partnership, avoiding domination by particular individuals or organisations.

How will the Partnerships work?

On formation of a Partnership, its members should select a Chair and secretary and then sign an agreement allocating responsibility for each principal task to an individual member, as well as committing the whole membership to work in accordance with an agreed set of principles. The Partnership should meet at least every two weeks to review progress in achieving the Partnership's key tasks.

In order to be effective, the Partnership members will need substantial support:

- financial support for running the Partnership (one of the key challenges will be agreeing the financial requirements, and source of funds)

- capacity building in assessment and planning skills

- capacity building in communication and consultation skills

- advice on the financial procedures and legal framework for local government activities.

Perhaps most importantly, Partnership members will need support to develop their transformational leadership skills (see box). This is because a partnership approach can be quite difficult for people who have lived in autocratic or oppressive regimes – in which people are encouraged not to take responsibility and personal initiative is restricted.

Building relationships by engaging communities

The primary role of Social Peace and Development Partnerships is to strengthen relationships with and between different community groups.

As highlighted in the introduction, strong two-way relationships are an essential way of increasing communities' trust in the decisions that affect them, and for avoiding negative and even violent public reactions. Stronger relationships also enable Partnerships to understand the perspectives and needs of the different groups inside their community. This means that Partnerships will make more informed decisions, and are more likely to be successful in promoting social peace and development.

Building relationships is consequently not just a morally good thing to do, it is essential for being effective, and needs to be taken seriously by Partnerships.

What does it mean to 'engage' communities?

Community engagement involves investing time and care in developing strong channels of communication with different groups in an area. Communication can take a number of different forms. At a minimum, Partnerships should: 1) provide community groups with information on issues of importance to them; and 2) consult with them on the different options available to address these issues before decisions are made.

However, relationships in communities will be stronger, and trust increased, if Partnerships also: 3) involve community groups in the actual process of making decisions; 4) collaborate with them in the design and delivery of services and development projects; and 5) support community initiatives that have a positive impact on social peace.

This progression from simple information provision to collaboration and, ultimately, empowering communities, is sometimes called the 'Ladder of Citizen Participation'. The Ladder of Citizen Participation should be used by Partnerships to identify the present level of community participation in decision making and solving problems. At the bottom of the ladder (information giving) participation is limited; however, as you climb up the ladder participation and ownership increase. Participation does not just happen; it needs to be enabled and supported, and each Partnership must ensure that community groups are not only listened to but, more importantly, are included in the Partnership's decisions and actions.

The opposite table provides guidance for Partnerships in Libya on the actions they should take to move up the Ladder of Citizen Participation.

Key points

1. What does it mean to 'engage' communities?
2. Does your community need a local network?
3. Which community groups need special attention?
4. How can we identify community groups and choose representatives?

Engagement method	Purpose	Guidance for Partnerships in Libya
Support & empower community initiatives	Supporting independent community initiatives through funding, advice and other resources.	Each Partnership should establish a 'community chest' to support impactful community initiatives, with clear criteria for how initiatives are selected included in its Plan for social peace and development [section 4 ↗].
Collaboration	Creating opportunities for greater cooperation between public bodies, between public bodies and community groups and between different community groups.	The Partnership is the primary point of collaboration between public bodies and community groups. In addition, deeper levels of collaboration will be required to deliver services most effectively, to support development projects [section 4 ↗] and to manage conflict [section 6 ↗].
Involvement in decision making	Encouraging people to provide additional ideas or options, and deciding jointly on the best action to take. This entails community representation in decision-making bodies.	Community leaders should be included in the Social Peace and Development Partnerships [section 1 ↗] and in the planning processes they undertake [section 4 ↗]. A wider group of community representatives can be included in decision making through a local network [this section].
Consultation	Identifying problems, checking preferences in relation to a number of options for solving these problems, and listening to feedback.	Partnerships should consult with community groups when assessing the situation in their area [section 3 ↗] and when monitoring tensions, including feelings of safety and trust in the state [section 6 ↗].
Information provision	Telling people what is planned and sharing knowledge.	Each Partnership should develop a community-specific communication plan. Guidance on how to develop a communication plan is provided in section 5 [↗].
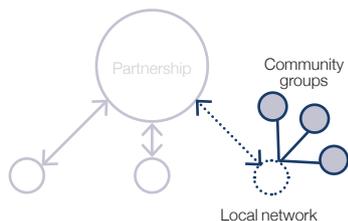
Does your community need a local network?

Each Partnership will need to decide how it includes and involves the wider community. At a minimum, a select number of community representatives should be included in the Partnership's core membership. An additional option is for the Partnership to establish a local network, made up of a wider range of community leaders and representatives. A local network works best in large areas (e.g. cities), where there are many community groups and a separate structure is needed to ensure that all groups are consulted and that their views are heard. In smaller towns it is best to include community leaders directly in a Partnership's core membership, and hence there is no need to set up a separate structure.

Which community groups need special attention?

Hard-to-reach groups
Partnerships will find it much harder to engage with some groups than others. This is especially the case in places suffering from ongoing violent conflict, where parts of society may feel traditionally under-represented in local government and more nervous about engaging directly with public officials. Indeed, the direct participation of some groups in Partnership activities may have the potential put them at risk, or to inflame tensions. This means each Partnership will need to find new and creative ways of engaging the hard-to-reach.

It also means that Partnerships should try and strike a sensitive balance between encouraging different groups to work together, and hence increasing relationships between them, and avoiding confrontation and increased tensions by pushing too hard. Options include building relationships through intermediaries (such as civil society organisations), running ad hoc 'surgery' meetings in places where people feel safe, or organising targeted communication campaigns to build trust.

Young people
It is also important to find methods for engaging young people, who are often excluded from decision-making processes. Options include engaging with young people through the use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, or reaching out to them in those places where they gather through interest, such as at university, after-school football matches or cafés. It is also important to train the young people directly involved in Partnerships to engage with other young people – peer-to-peer engagement is a very effective way of communicating with young people in a language they understand.

> Partnerships need to find new and creative ways of including groups that are traditionally under-represented, so as not to put them at risk or inflame tensions.

Women

Partnerships will need to carefully consider how to engage women in their work. The best methods for doing so will vary from place to place. In some places, women may feel very nervous about participating with men in the same meetings and feel unable to speak frankly on issues of importance to them (especially in smaller communities when people are often linked through family relationships).

As such, a sensitive balance needs to be found between respecting local norms and strengthening the participation of women. Options include preparation of men and women separately before bringing them together, physically dividing men and women in meetings, and organising separate focus groups and planning sessions for women. The best way of finding a solution that works in your community is to ask both men and women what they are comfortable with.

Groups willing to use violence

Some groups in a community may be willing to use violence in order to achieve their goals – whether ideological, political, economic or religious – and may directly threaten those participating in the Partnership, if they believe it will undermine their interests.

If such groups are not allowed to participate, this could further push them towards the use of violence, as they feel purposefully excluded. If they are encouraged

to participate, the Partnership could provide them with an additional platform to intimidate other parts of the community, and may even help to legitimise their use of violence. Further, such groups may refuse to participate in a Partnership if invited, and instead look to undermine it from the outside.

Consequently, a key challenge for any Partnership is to decide how to engage with such groups. Each Partnership should find intermediaries who can explain its purpose to these groups, and gently test their opinion on how they would like to be involved. It will then be important to consult with other parts of the community on the feedback received from such groups, before making a final decision.

How can we identify community groups and choose representatives?

There are many ways of dividing a community into groups. Community groups can be formed along ethnic lines, they can be tribal, they can be interest-based (such as businessmen, thuwwar unions or teachers), and they can also be demographic (such as young people, old people or women). The guidance on the following page provides an example of how to map community groups.

Guidance one Mapping relationships

When identifying community groups, it is most useful to ask the question 'how do people in my community identify themselves in relation to others?'

Creating a map of relationships

1. Two youth groups are in conflict over territory.
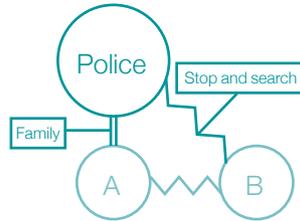
2. The police are close to one group through family contacts, but stop and search the other group regularly.
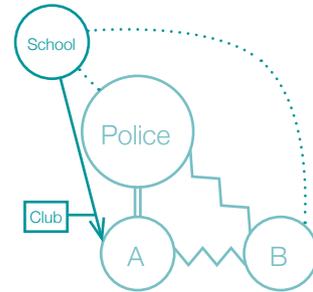
3. The school can influence only one group through after-school activities, and does not work well with the police.

Conventional symbols

Lines are used to show the nature of a relationship

A good relationship

A very strong relationship (alliance)

An inconsistent or irregular relationship

Conflictual relationship

A broken relationship

Circles represent the different groups in an area or involved in a situation. The bigger their size, the more power they have

Steps in mapping your community

First, identify all the different groups in your community.

Second, create a map of relationships using the example below as guidance. It helps to map relationships from different perspectives, so that you can see how different groups view relationships in the community.
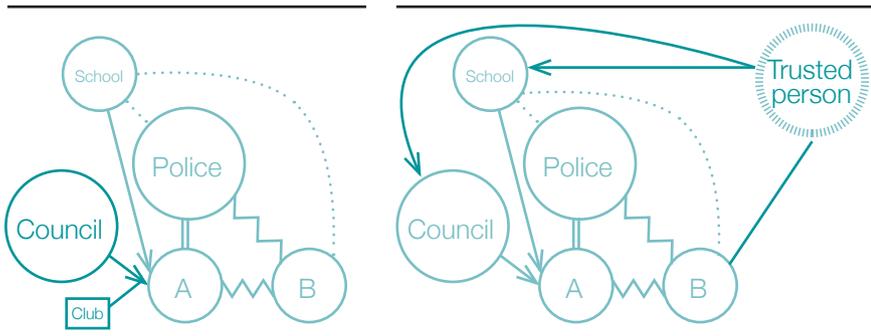
4. The local council has set up a youth centre that can only be accessed by one group.

5. Group B is isolated. A person from outside is trusted by group B and can also influence the school and local council.

Arrows show the main direction of influence or activity

Boxes represent the issue that divides or connects two groups

Shadows represent groups which are influential but not directly involved

Using the map

Once you have drawn a map of relationships, it is then important to answer the following questions for each group identified:

■ What issues are of most importance to this group?

■ What are its key positive and negative relationships with other groups? What issues divide or connect this group with others?

■ Who can represent this group in the Partnership?

■ Is there a risk if we include this group directly in the Partnership? What is the risk and how do we manage it?

■ What special measures do we need to take to effectively engage with this group (e.g. with the hard-to-reach, young people or women)?

The mapping example is inspired by the work of Responding to Conflict www.respond.org

Assessing social peace and development needs

Once the best ways of building relationships with different groups have been identified, the next task for a Partnership is to assess the social peace and development needs in its community.

Assessments should give equal importance to the 'facts on the ground' and to how people are feeling. This is because, on the whole, people base their decisions on their perceptions of what is happening, rather than on objective evidence – often because objective and trusted sources of information are not consistently available. In order to understand what people think, it is therefore essential to consult with all parts of society during the assessment process.

Assessments will provide the basis for decisions on what services, development projects and conflict management actions should be prioritised in each Partnership's Plan [section 4 ↗]. The assessment will also provide a baseline against which the Partnership can measure changes in how people feel about their community and, in less stable communities, levels of tensions [section 6 ↗].

What are we trying to learn with an assessment?

Partnerships should be able to conduct two types of assessment – 1) a general social peace and development assessment, and 2) an assessment of tensions, divisions or disagreements. The general peace assessment should be conducted in all communities, and should help each Partnership to identify the services and development projects best placed to strengthen relationships. An assessment of tensions, divisions or disagreements does not need to be conducted in all communities, but only in those places that are less stable, where violence has been used or where there is a potential for violence. This type of assessment looks to identify the measures most likely to reduce the likelihood of violence.

General social peace and development assessment	Assessment of tensions, divisions or disagreements
Focus What people feel about the general situation in the community.	**Focus** Any conflict in the community, and the issues and actors behind the conflict.
Actions identified The services and development projects that are best placed to increase social peace.	**Actions identified** Measures that will reduce the likelihood of violence.

Key points

1. What are we trying to learn with an assessment?
2. What is a focus group, and how do we run one?
3. How do we conduct an assessment?
4. What questions should we ask during the assessment?

What is a focus group and how do we run one?

A focus group involves a conversation with eight to twelve community representatives, usually lasting 2–3 hours. The process is as follows:

- Identify a moderator, to whom the participants can talk openly

- Carefully select those who will participate – you should not include people from across conflict divides in the same focus group, nor breach social and cultural etiquette

- At the start of each focus group, the moderator should record the age, occupation, tribal / ethnic group, and gender of each participant, but not his / her name so as to maintain confidentiality

- The moderator should begin by explaining the purpose of the focus group, the process for conducting it and how the information will be used

- The moderator asks a set of four to six pre-prepared questions

- The moderator listens carefully to the responses, without trying to influence the participants or explain his / her own perspectives.

How do we conduct an assessment?

Each assessment should be conducted through a consultation process, including 'focus groups' and individual interviews with representatives from the different groups in the community. It is important that assessments are done in a way that captures the different perspectives of each community group.

Once the focus groups and individual interviews have been conducted, a provisional assessment report should be reviewed by the Partnership (and their local network if one is established). It is also recommended that, if possible, the provisional assessment report be taken to a second round of community focus group consultations before it is finalised.

What questions should we ask during the assessment?

The questions each Partnership should ask when conducting an assessment are captured in the following guidance.

Guidance two General social peace and development assessment

This set of questions explores the general social peace and development situation, and should be asked in all communities.

A built environment of high quality (e.g. roads and infrastructure)

Present situation

In what state is the built environment? Has it suffered any damage during or since the revolution? What renovation or rebuilding has occurred?

What are the visible landmarks in the community that represent the image of the town? What state are these landmarks in?

Things that need to change

What improvements to the built environment would make people feel that the community is developing? What could be done quickly?

Equal distribution of social, cultural and economic opportunities

Present situation

Do all groups have equal access to social, cultural and economic opportunities? What groups have less access? How can we increase access?

Things that need to change

What improvements in social and cultural life would make people feel that the community is developing? What could be done quickly?

What improvements could be made to the business environment, to create opportunities and jobs? What could be done quickly?

Good access to services, especially those deemed critical by local communities

Present situation

Which government services are being delivered effectively in the community? What services need to be improved?

To what extent do government agencies respond to the needs of the community?

Things that need to change

What services are of highest priority in your community?

What improvements could be made to how services are delivered that would make people feel that the community is developing?

Steps in a general assessment

The first step is to ask people what they think of their community at present.

The second step is then to ask them what they want to change in their community.

Participation of all community groups in democratic processes	People feeling safe and confident in their community	Different community groups are able to have dialogue with each other and share ideas
Present situation	**Present situation**	**Present situation**
Are all groups able to participate in democratic processes? Are they equally willing? What happened during the last elections in your community? Were they well attended and peaceful? If not, why not?	What makes people feel safe and secure? What makes people feel unsafe and insecure? What are the three biggest threats generally? What incidents happen frequently? What specific threats do women and children face?	What are the main factors that prevent people from getting on? What are the issues that most groups agree on and are working together on? Where and how do people from different groups currently meet to discuss things, share news and/or socialise?
Things that need to change	**Things that need to change**	**Things that need to change**
What actions do we need to take to ensure that all groups are able and willing to participate? Which groups should we target in particular? What specific actions should we take before and during electoral periods?	What steps could be taken to make people feel safer? How can we increase trust in security providers, and willingness to work with them?	How can we create shared experiences in the community? How can we increase interaction between different community groups? Is there a role for public institutions to provide shared venues, where all community groups can meet?

Guidance three Assessment of tensions, divisions and disagreements

This set of questions is focused on understanding tensions, divisions and disagreements in a community, and should be used in those places that are more vulnerable to conflict.

Steps in the assessment	Examples	
1. Present situation First describe simply the nature of the tension, division or disagreement in your community and the impact it has.	A protest by one community group closes public buildings (e.g. hospital, banks) and results in the death of a public employee from a different community group, leading to increasing violence between the two groups	
2. Create scenarios Think through two future scenarios: 1) a 'conflict scenario' where the situation gets worse; and 2) a 'peace scenario' where it gets better.	**Conflict scenario** Violence continues, distrust between the groups increases and public buildings remain closed	**Peace scenario** Violence is stopped, people feel greater trust in each other and the environment is safe enough for public buildings to reopen
3. Driving factors Identify WHAT and WHO is pushing towards each scenario.	**Conflict drivers**	**Peace drivers**
What? What are the key issues, events or trends that cause tensions, divisions or strong disagreements? What is helping to manage tensions, divisions or strong disagreements?	Limited opportunities to interact mean that two groups hold stereotypes about each other One group feels it is discriminated against by another Anger at past human rights abuses	Shared interests or needs (e.g. the need for public buildings to remain open, so that people can access services) Shared traditions and cultural events Family and tribal connections
Who? Who are the key individuals and groups involved? What do they want? What are they doing? Who are the key people in the area who promote social peace through the things they say, write or do?	Media outlets that spread inflammatory rumours (*fitna*) Young men engaged in armed fights Public officials who look after the interests of 'their group' and neglect others	Families of victims or martyrs who promote peaceful resolution Public officials who work with both groups equally (e.g. doctors) Young people from across the divide who regularly meet
4. Potential actions Then identify potential actions that could undermine each conflict driver and reinforce each peace driver (both WHAT and WHO).	*We have only identified potential actions for the first example provided from each type of driver*	
	That undermine conflict drivers	**That reinforce peace drivers**
What?	If two groups in conflict do not regularly interact with each other, one option is to see if there are ways that such interaction can be encouraged – for example in local public meetings or shared civil society trainings. Such interaction can help to break stereotypes.	If two groups have a shared interest in opening public buildings, one option is to bring representatives from the two groups together to discuss how to achieve this joint interest. This could both solve the immediate need and create positive experiences of working together.
Who?	If the media is increasing tensions by inflammatory or inaccurate reporting, one option is to train local media in how to report more clearly on sensitive issues, or to develop alternative sources of information.	If the families of the victims or martyrs promote peace, one option is to support them to speak publicly about the need for tolerance and peaceful solutions, or to speak directly to those who are willing to use violence.
5. Double-check the actions Use the following principles to carefully think through potential actions. ■ Have you consulted with all groups involved? ■ Does your action help achieve a long-term solution, or is it a short-term fix? ■ Are you treating all groups equally? ■ Are you respecting human rights?	Sometimes the most obvious actions may be the least effective, or may even make things worse. You may decide to break up the protests. While this may help immediately by preventing the death of a public employee, the protesting group may feel that it has been treated unfairly, and/or that no one is listening, and may be more willing to use violence in the future. If, however, you do nothing, or give in to their demands, people may think that the only way they can achieve their goals is through public action or violence. In such cases, it is important to build channels of consultation with the protesting group, and take action on the basis of that consultation.	

Planning for, and delivering, social peace

The main vehicle for the work of each Partnership is a plan ('Plan') that describes how it will build social peace and promote development in its community.

The Plan should set out how the Partnership will improve those services thought to be essential to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the community. The Plan should also outline which local development projects it will prioritise. Finally, the plan should provide clear guidance for how any tensions in the community can best be managed, and violence prevented.

The Plan should provide a vehicle for improved collaboration between local government agencies and community partners. As such, it is very important that Partnerships identify ways that collaboration can be strengthened when delivering specific services. For example, if a community priority is to improve healthcare for elderly residents, is it possible to agree a coordination group with relevant civil society organisations, or for civil society and public agencies to jointly organise healthcare visits to elderly residents in their home?

What is a 'quick win'?

While the Plan should include medium-term and long-term actions, it should prioritise those changes that are visible, have immediate benefit, and can be delivered quickly. Such changes are called 'quick wins.' A quick win is an action that all community groups agree is a good thing, and does not benefit one group over another or increase tensions. You can often identify quick wins by simply asking people if they have any recommendations that would result in an immediate benefit to their community. Examples include renovation of public spaces, organising more regular rubbish collection or organising a mobile health team that visits elderly residents in their home.

What should be included in the Plan?

- Outline a long-term vision, shared by all the partners, for how to improve the lives of people in the community

- Prioritise the services and development projects that are needed locally, especially 'quick wins'

- Identify what can be done to manage conflict and prevent violence

- Clearly explain who will be responsible for each action, and how local government and community leaders will collaborate to achieve the Plan

- Set out how success will be measured

- Provide information on the support available for local community initiatives, as well as clear selection criteria.

Key points

1. What should be included in the Plan?
2. What is a 'quick win'?
3. What are local initiatives and how can we support them?
4. How can we ensure public scrutiny?

What are local initiatives and how can we support them?

Community groups are often best placed to identify and undertake actions that either increase awareness of social peace and its benefits, or help to build relationships and trust in society. These initiatives are usually inexpensive and can have a substantial impact in a short period of time. As such, it is important that Partnerships encourage such initiatives, and provide support to them. This can be done by setting up a small funding resource (for grants between 1000 and 2000 Libyan Dinars) to which community groups can apply. Such pots of money are sometimes called 'community chests'.

The local initiatives that will have the most impact will vary from place to place. For example:

■ If people do not understand the importance of 'social peace' for them, a small grant could be given to a local school to facilitate an art competition on what social peace means for the community. The best artwork can be judged by parents, community leaders and members of the Partnership and used in publicity materials, as part of communication activities.

■ If a community includes different ethnic or tribal groups, a grant could be awarded to a festival that celebrates local shared culture and traditions. This would provide an opportunity for fun shared experiences between different groups.

■ If a particular issue (e.g. compensation or property rights) is causing tensions, a grant could be provided to a community radio station to broadcast a programme featuring experts who clearly explain the issue and what is being done about it. Such objective information could help to dispel rumours and calm tensions.

■ If there are regular violent clashes between two groups, support could be provided to local leaders who have good contact with both sides and are willing to facilitate discussions. In such cases, the local leaders may not require financial support, just a venue to hold discussions and a sense that they have political support from the local authorities.

It is very important that a transparent process is developed for selecting local initiatives for support. Otherwise people will not trust the selection process, and may feel that it is biased.

Social Peace and Development Plan template

Vision for the community:

This should be a short message that answers the questions: What do we want the community to look like? How will we change it? For example, if people in the town are very vocal that they do not trust the state to look after them, a vision could be 'A town where people believe their needs will be met.'

| Objectives	Priority actions	Timeline	Public agencies' role
	What priority actions were identified by community groups? (Can be more than one under each objective.)	When does the action start? When does it finish?	Who is best placed in local government to contribute? What is their role?
For all communities			
A built environment of high quality (e.g. roads and infrastructure)	*e.g. renovate the payment outside school number 1*		
Equal distribution of social, cultural and economic opportunities	*e.g. a business skill development programme for young people*		
Good access to services, especially those deemed critical by local communities	*e.g. collect rubbish from main street daily*		
Participation of all community groups in democratic processes	*e.g. training in political debating for local election candidates*		
People feeling safe and confident in their community	*e.g. police patrols to stop illegal checkpoints and car-jacking*		
Different community groups are able to dialogue with each other and share ideas	*e.g. publication of joint community newspaper*		
For communities experiencing tensions, divisions and disagreements			
Manage conflict and prevent violence	*e.g. provide compensation for damaged buildings*		

This template should be used by a Partnership to plan for those priority actions identified in their assessment. It is important that the Plan is consulted on publicly before being finalised, and that it is a public document.

Community leaders' role

Which community leaders are best placed to contribute? What is their role?

Role of residents

What role do we need residents to fulfil? How are we going to get them to fulfil this role?

Collaboration

How will public agencies and community groups work together?

Budget

How much money is needed?

Indicators of success

How do we know if the action was successful?

Partnership

Public
scrutiny panel

How can we ensure public scrutiny?

It is important that people have the opportunity to scrutinise decisions and hold local government to account, so that: 1) residents better understand the work of local government bodies, and trust in them is built; and 2) public services and development projects are delivered efficiently and in the best interests of residents. A first step is for each Partnership to make its Plan publicly available. A second step is for each Partnership to establish some form of public scrutiny process for its work. Public scrutiny should:

- Review and challenge the Partnership's operations (especially how it engages with community groups) and its decisions

- Scrutinise delivery of the Plan and results achieved

- Examine public expenditure on services and development projects, including (e.g.) how resources are allocated and commissions distributed

- Undertake investigations into particular services or development projects which are of interest or concern to local people

- Make recommendations to the Partnership on how it can improve its actions.

Types of public scrutiny

In general there are four types of public scrutiny. At a minimum, each partnership should create a formal scrutiny panel that is separate from it and made up entirely of community representatives.

Formal scrutiny panel

An independent body of residents, either elected or selected in a transparent manner. The scrutiny panel should act as a 'critical friend' to the Partnership, reviewing processes, decisions and results.

Local scrutiny focus groups

Focus groups [section 3 ↗] in which residents scrutinise specific services and decision making that affect their group.

General public meetings

Open meetings, which can be attended by any member of the community. Public meetings allow for specific proposals to be discussed and scrutinised before decisions are made.

Unannounced (mystery) visits

Anonymous residents visit specific services or development projects to evaluate the quality of the service being delivered / work being conducted.

Case study A plan to build trust in Bani Walid
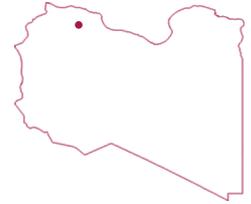
The situation

Since the 2012 revolution, Bani Walid has experienced high levels of distrust: 1) in the new Libyan government and 2) between different political groups inside the local community. This sense of distrust was especially strong after the fighting in Bani Walid in October 2012, when some people felt that they had not been properly protected by the Government. Because of distrust, there was limited communication between community groups and the temporary local council, and development projects stalled. People interpreted the resultant lack of visible improvements in the city as a sign that they had been abandoned by local and national government.

The response

Firstly, local civil society undertook a process of public consultation on the changes that were needed for people to feel confident in the future, and to have more trust in each other and the Government. The result of the consultation, a public statement called 'Our future', was used as the basis for dialogue between the different political groups in the town. Secondly, some people from the key political groups acted as 'transformational leaders' by demonstrating a willingness to talk to each other, and by using the language of dialogue and equality. Thirdly, the national government took steps to support the delivery of visible development projects in the town. Key to this was the appointment of a civil administrator by the Prime Minister.

The result

Agreement was reached on a compensation programme for 3,974 damaged households, renovation of public spaces through 15 local businesses, and investment in local police infrastructure. As a result of these visible changes, people feel more confident in their future and have greater trust in the Government. While there is a long way to go in building trust, and there are still challenges (such as an attack on the local council in February 2014), stronger relationships between the different political groups mean that such emergencies are now better managed by them.

"We feel completely different. Bani Walid is safe now and we are being listened to by the Government… young men are now talking more about starting businesses than about fighting."
Civil society representative, Bani Walid

Communicating to the public

Another key task of the Partnership is to effectively communicate:
1) How the Partnership will improve the life of people in the community; and 2) how it is helping to build social peace.

To this end, each Partnership should agree a communication plan. The communication plan should include objectives, a list of target audiences and the best method for communicating to each target audience.

What are your communication objectives?

It is important to identify communication objectives that are relevant for your community, and to do so through consultation with community groups. Some typical communication objectives related to social peace are:

■ Promoting social peace, by explaining what it means in practice and how the Partnership will help build it

■ Increasing awareness of local issues and how the delivery of local services will improve the area

■ Encouraging different community groups (i.e. women, young people, schoolchildren etc.) to get involved

■ Building consensus between different local groups if there are conflicts and disputes

■ Addressing people's negative perceptions of their local area.

Communication activities should also describe a 'story' of the community. This description should convey the unique nature of the place and the people who live there, and provide shared meaning and purpose for all local community groups. By providing a shared story that people can associate with, communication activities can provide a foundation for better understanding, dialogue and collaboration between different groups, who may otherwise focus on the differences between them.

What is your key message?

The foundation of your communication plan is a 'key message' that you want all community members to know and understand. A message should be short, simple and clear. At the same time, it needs to be tailored to be appropriate and interesting for different audiences. A message should summarise the essence of your vision for social peace in your community, and the actions the Partnership is going to take to help achieve that vision.

It is therefore important that your message can be consistently used across different communication mediums, including leaflets, posters, brochures and websites, as well as media interviews and conversations with community groups.

Key points

1. What are your communication objectives?
2. What is your key message?
3. Who are your target audiences?
4. What are the right tools to communicate with?

It is important to stick to one key message in your communication activities, as more than one message will confuse people. For example, if your community has been physically damaged by the revolution and relationships have also been damaged, your message could be 'We will rebuild our town together'. If there are different political groups in the town that come into conflict, your message could be 'Many ideas, one shared future'.

Example communication tools

- Public meetings

- Media, including television, posters and press releases

- Electronic media, such as websites

- Social media tools, e.g. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter

- Text messaging

- Friday sermons

- Face-to-face meetings with influential members of the community

- Through cafés, schools or other places where people gather

Who are your target audiences?

A target audience is the primary group of people at whom your communication activities are aimed. A target audience can be people of a certain age group, profession, gender, marital status, educational background, geographic area and so forth. Without knowing your target groups, your communication activities will not be effective. You should look at the map of relationships you developed for your community [section 2 ↗] to identify the target groups. It is important to focus on those groups that have the most difficult relationships, or are 'hard-to-reach'.

What are the right tools to communicate with?

Once you have identified your main target groups and articulated the key message that you would like to communicate, you need to focus on the most appropriate tools to get your message across. You will also need to use different mediums and tactics to engage with different groups. For example, the way you engage with elderly people in your community (possibly through meetings and discussions) will be entirely different from the way you engage with young people (such as through the use of social media, text messaging and local radio).

Communication Plan template

The Partnership should use this template to plan the ways it will communicate social peace and its activities. It is important to regularly review the success of communication activities, and to adapt the plan if needed.

Communication objectives
What are the specific communication objectives?

Key message
What is the main message you want to communicate?

Timeframe
When will your communication activities begin and end?

Start	Start	Start
Finish	Finish	Finish

Target audiences
Who do you need to communicate with? (remember there are different audiences!)

A	B	C

Communication tools
Which tools are best placed to communicate with each group?

People
Who will deliver your communication activities?

Resources required
What resources (financial and other) are needed?

Methods of evaluation
How will you measure both the quality and quantity of your communications?

Add more columns as needed

Case study Two-way communication in Misrata

The situation

People in Misrata had a difficult experience during the period of active fighting in Libya in 2011, resulting in a number of substantial justice and conflict resolution questions. At the same time, the Misratan community has played an important role during the national transition process. As such, it is essential that all parts of the community are able to talk to each other, and to make joint decisions on both local questions and their aspirations for the overall transition. This entails establishing strong two-way communication between community leaders and all groups in society.

The response

A group of civil society organisations has established a series of internal dialogue meetings inside the town that bring together members from the local council, shura council, civil society and revolutionary brigades. The dialogue provides an opportunity for two-way communication on difficult questions, especially when people have strong disagreements on what should be done. The dialogue meetings only include community members, so that people feel more able to speak freely, and are hosted in the building of a local civil society organisation.

The result

The internal dialogue meetings have allowed people in Misrata to express their opinions and to feel a greater sense of ownership of, and support for, the decisions that affect them. The meetings have also provided an opportunity for local council and shura council representatives to explain directly to their community why they are taking certain actions. As such, the dialogue meetings have provided a platform for public scrutiny of decision making through two-way communication.

"There are so many hard questions and so many different views. But ultimately everyone wants to help their community and their country. We just needed a place where we could have these conversations and communicate with one another."
Local council member, Misrata

Monitoring and managing tensions

One of the key tasks of the Partnerships is to monitor and manage local tensions. It is essential that local government and community leaders are able to understand when tensions are heightened, when people feel less safe, or when public trust in local government is undermined.

It is also essential that they have the ability to take early actions that calm the situation and prevent violence. Monitoring and managing tensions is therefore critical for social peace.

How can we set up a tension monitoring group?

The first step in monitoring tensions is to establish a tension monitoring group that reports and is accountable to the Partnership. It is critical that the group includes those organisations and individuals that have the ability: 1) to access and reflect the perspectives of different community groups; 2) to access and analyse information on incidents that happen in the community; and 3) to identify those measures best placed to manage tensions and prevent violence.

The group can include members of the Partnership, as well as additional representatives. In most cases, the group will be most effective if it is jointly led by local civil government agencies and local security providers. However, in some places it may be more appropriate for the group to consist entirely of civilian community representatives – for example where local government and security providers are perceived negatively by (parts of) society.

It may also not be possible to include representatives from all parts of the community in the same process, because of negative relationships between specific groups (meaning that they would not feel comfortable sharing information openly in each other's presence). In such places, it may be necessary to create two or more parallel tension monitoring groups.

It is also important to establish a shared understanding in society of what is meant by tension monitoring and management – how you will do it, the reason for doing it and the potential benefits for all. This is important as there could be resistance from some people in the community to sharing information or engaging with the monitoring group. Establishing buy-in from local community groups will consequently be critical to the success of tension monitoring.

Key points

1. How can we set up a tension monitoring group?
2. What are the key tasks of the group?
3. How will the group monitor tensions?
4. How will we manage tensions and respond to emergency incidents?

What are the key tasks of the group?
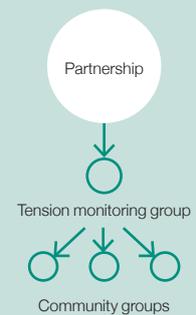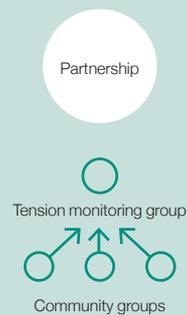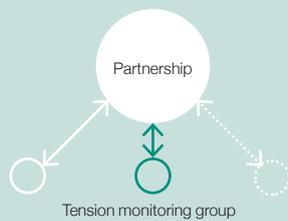
1. Monitor and analyse tension indicators, public perceptions and emergency incidents that could negatively impact on community relations.

2. Use the analysis of the indicators, public perceptions and incidents to identify measures that will help to reduce tensions and prevent violence.

3. Provide information on what is happening back to community groups, so as to combat rumour and misunderstanding.

> It is important to get support for the tension monitoring group from all parts of the community, otherwise they will not share information.

How will the group monitor tensions?

What should we monitor?
The monitoring group should monitor:

- the perceptions of community groups on the quality of life in their community – including feelings of safety and trust in local authorities

- pre-agreed indicators of whether tensions are increasing or decreasing in society

- emergency incidents that are likely to impact negatively on community relations.

How will we monitor public perceptions?
Different community groups should be asked for their perceptions on a regular basis, using standard questions (see the template opposite). It is important that all groups are asked for their perspectives, and that these perspectives are recorded and analysed separately, so that the monitoring group is aware of the way that different people are feeling.

How do we select the right indicators?
In addition to standard indicators, each Partnership should identify indicators specific to its community for an improving or worsening situation. To help identify the right indicators, it is helpful to ask the following questions:

- What are the visible signs that tell you the situation is improving or worsening?

- What are people able to do when the situation is better, and what can't they do when it is worse?

- What are people saying about issues, and each other – is certain language used when things are better or worse?

How should we analyse the results of monitoring?
The monitoring group should analyse:

- changes in the perspectives of different community groups: how is what people think changing? Is there a difference in changes between different groups?

- changes to the type and frequency of tension indicators / emergency incidents: which types of indicators / emergency incidents are occurring? How often? Is there an observable increase or decrease in the number of each indicator / emergency incidents?

- the relationships between indicators and perceptions: is there a noticeable correlation between indicators / emergency incidents and perceptions? What indicators / emergency incidents are causing people to feel more or less confident?

Tension Monitoring template

The frequency that monitoring needs to take place will vary from place to place, depending on the level of tensions and likelihood of violence. However, it is strongly recommended that monitoring is done on at least a monthly basis.

Changes in the perspectives of different community groups	Rating from 1-5 (with 5 being very good)	Why do you feel this way, and if your perception has changed, what has caused this change? (Open question)
How would you rate the quality of the built environment?		
What level of access do you have to social, economic and cultural opportunties?		
What is the level of quality of local services and facilities?		
To what level are you able and willing to participate in democratic processes?		
How safe do you feel in your community?		
How much do you feel you belong in this community?		
To what extent do you trust local authorities to deliver according to your needs?		

Occurrence over the last month	Frequency
Community-specific tension indicators *e.g. the main road into town is blocked and people can't leave the town; aggressive language used in local newspaper*	
Emergency incidents *e.g. shooting incidents; car-jacking incidents*	

> The provision of accurate information to community groups is a key way in which the monitoring group can help to manage tensions.

How will we manage tensions and respond to emergency incidents?

Monitoring groups should make recommendations to their Partnerships on actions to manage conflict, especially when emergencies happen. It is up to the Partnership to carefully consider these recommendations. If they are thought to be good, they should be added to the local Plan for social peace and development.

Principles of good tension management

However, there is the potential for recommendations to be ill-conceived, or to reflect the needs and interests of one group over another. As such, it is important that Partnerships abide by the following principles when deciding whether to implement recommendations:

- always consult with those groups that would be affected, before taking action

- ensure that short-term improvements in tension indicators are not to the detriment of longer-term relationships between groups

- ensure that any action treats the perspectives / beliefs of all community groups equally, rather than demonstrating favouritism to one

- ensure that any actions protect the human rights of all community groups equally.

What information should be recorded?

In order to properly respond to urgent incidents, it is important to analyse what is happening, including:

- the date, location and time of any incident

- the nature of the incident and who is involved

- an analysis of what caused the situation

- how the incident is being managed

- whether the situation has been reported by the media, and if so, how

- recommendations for what should be done.

Providing information to calm tensions

As well as taking direct actions to manage an emergency (e.g. deploying security actors or ambulances), the tension monitoring group represents an important platform for providing information back to the community, in order to help manage tensions. People are often not well informed of events affecting their own and neighbouring communities, relying instead on rumour for their information. As rumours are often inaccurate or inflammatory, they can increase tensions and make people more willing to use violence. If the monitoring group can provide more accurate information to community groups, then they are more likely to take considered non-violent actions.

Rapid response scenario

Tensions can also rise suddenly and unexpectedly, due to specific incidents. It is therefore important for the monitoring group to have a clear plan for how it will work with and advise its Partnership during an emergency.

Scenario

Imagine a scenario in which a catiba / brigade has killed a local resident.

This resident's family and tribe are very angry and are threatening to take retaliatory action against the catiba / brigade. If this happens, it is likely that your area will quickly descend into widespread violence, as other community groups (who are aligned with the catiba / brigade) also become involved. In addition, the family and tribe are angry with the state because they feel it is not properly protecting them. As a result, they could attack local government buildings or employees.

In such a situation, it is important to quickly answer the following two questions:

Who should we involve?

The family of the victim to reassure them about the actions being taken, and to ask them to call for calm

Community leaders to ensure that they are taking action to manage the response of their community

Security and justice services to ensure that the Partnership is well informed of their actions and able to convey this to community groups

Imams and other preachers to ensure that they convey a message of calm, especially during Friday sermons

The catiba / brigade to understand what measures they are taking, and how they will act in the event of reprisals

Representatives of public agencies to ascertain how much pressure they are under, and what they can do to quickly build trust with community groups

How will we manage the media?

The tension monitoring group and Partnership should appoint a spokesperson who will act as a regular point of contact for the media. This person should be accessible at all times by media representatives who want an update on the event.

The tension monitoring group and Partnership should also organise press briefings, in which they provide basic information about the incident, including: 1) what they know; 2) what they don't know – it is very important not to speculate and to be honest about what is not known; and 3) what the Partnership is doing about the incident. Briefings should be held as often as needed as the incident unfolds.

Case study The experience of managing crisis in Kufra
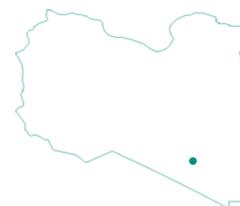
The situation

Kufra has experienced several bouts of inter-communal violence since the Revolution (the latest of which was at the beginning of 2014). While ceasefires have stopped incidents of large-scale violence, they have not led to sustainable solutions that are trusted by local community groups, meaning there is a potential for fighting in the future. As a result, the town has been designated a military area with a national peacekeeping force maintaining checkpoints between the conflicting parties, so as to prevent violence.

The response

Parallel crisis committees for the conflicting parties were agreed in a ceasefire agreement in July 2012. The six-person committees, made up of community leaders, have the purpose of managing crises when they emerge and agreeing a package of compensation. While the crisis committees have not been able to progress compensation, they have focused on managing crises when they happen. This has meant: 1) providing a focal point for contact across the conflict divide in the event of an incident; and 2) communication to their respective communities about what is happening.

The result

The leaders participating in the conflicting parties' crisis committees are broadly respected, and play a crucial role in dealing with emergency incidents and mitigating escalations in tensions. Most significantly, the committees have often been able to call for calm and deter violent actions (although there are some significant exceptions).

At the same time, some feel the committees are not inclusive enough and, as a result, that responsibility for crisis / conflict management is restricted to a small group of individuals. This can mean that the approach taken by the crisis committees does not always reflect what people want and, indeed, other leadership groups in society might be more willing and able to undertake peacebuilding actions, but are not being empowered to do so.

"There is the crisis committee. Kufra is so small that the crisis committee tends to know about what is happening and can usually manage it. But we need young people to connect to the crisis committee, as there is no way for young people to express themselves."
Youth leader, Kufra

Acknowledgements

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

This handbook is designed to provide a guide for local government bodies and community leaders on how they can work in partnership to promote social peace and local development.