

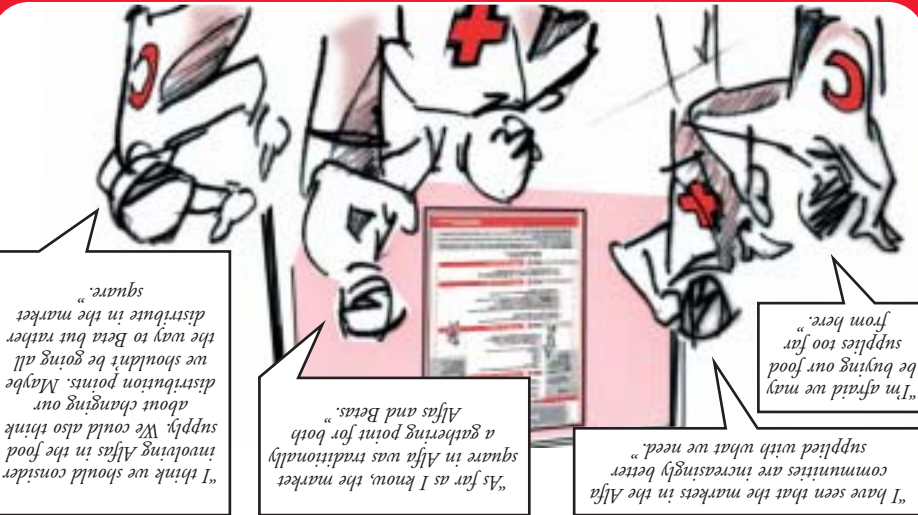
When programming their activities, National Societies can help strengthen relationships within and between divided communities and contribute to reductions in violence or they may reinforce structural vulnerabilities that set groups in society apart and thus undermine reconciliation and development.

Later on, the Red Cross Red Crescent members discussed with both Betas and Alfas the possibility of having Beta support sessions together with the Alfa women and children.



The Alfas accepted with enthusiasm to supply the weekly provisions of fruits and vegetables that would then be delivered by the Red Cross Red Crescent to the Betas.

Some of the alternatives found during the meeting on HOW to carry out the aid programme were then discussed with leaders in Alfa.



Many post-conflict countries continue to experience tensions long after a general restoration of peace, while in others high levels of social violence disrupt daily life and livelihoods.

Although the Alfas had sufficient fresh food, seeing loaded trucks for the Betas exacerbated the tension that still existed between the groups. The Red Cross Red Crescent team decided to hold an extraordinary meeting in order to evaluate their aid programme.



But passing through the Alfa area...



The Betas, most of them having been displaced during the conflict, returned with nothing and depended on humanitarian aid for survival. The Red Cross Red Crescent provided them with monthly food and hygiene parcels as well as fresh vegetables and fruits once a week. They had to travel through the Alfa area in order to cross the bridge that separated the two communities.

... with the reconstruction of community centres and basic infrastructure.



... with a psychological support project for women and children.



One day, somewhere a war broke out between Alfas and Betas. Once peace had been restored, the Alfa that had remained in the area throughout the whole conflict were vulnerable but had their basic needs covered. Red Cross Red Crescent assisted them...

# Finding a Better Way

## Better Programming Initiative Options to improve the impact of programmes

### Background

The Better Programming Initiative (BPI) is an International Federation impact assessment tool adapted from the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP), which was launched in 1994 under the coordination of the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

### International Federation involvement

The BPI began in 1998 with training workshops and programme analyses in three pilot countries: Tajikistan, Ethiopia and Bangladesh, where ten BPI workshops were held. In 2000, the initiative was expanded to include West African countries, Kosovo and Colombia.

The methodology was used primarily to analyse existing programmes in order to test its usefulness in Federation and National Society programming in situations where there are underlying problems of violence. In each of the countries, where the methodology was introduced, BPI analysis uncovered a series of negative and positive consequences of aid programming and helped to identify options to avoid or reduce negative impacts. Those case studies helped to generate examples and lessons learnt which have been reflected in a publication called: *"Aid: Supporting or Undermining Recovery? Lessons from the Better Programming Initiative"*.

### The aim

Based on the findings, the initiative aims to provide delegates and National Society staff - regardless of the level of their experience or formal training- with a simple tool to support analysis planning and implementation of aid programmes in these complex contexts.

### A practical approach

To contribute to the institutionalisation of the BPI methodology within National Societies, the International Federation is training National Society staff and delegates as BPI trainers and integrating this impact assessment tool within other Federation planning and assessment tools like VCA, PPP, FACT, etc.

Following the practical approach that led us to adopt the BPI, it was recognised by trained field delegates and NS staff that this tool can also be used in any contexts and not just in post conflict and in situations where violence was prevalent.

The BPI provides an element of analyses that links the emergency to the longer-term response. BPI is not just a broader planning and impact assessment methodology but also a capacity building mechanism.

The initiative is being implemented with the support of the Red Cross Societies of Australia, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

This brochure is available in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

Options to improve the impact of programmes.

# Better programming initiative



An initiative born of the conviction that in communities affected by violence, well-planned aid programming with alternative and creative implementation options can support local capacities for recovery and reconciliation.

For further information about BPI or to obtain publications, please contact [bpi@ifrc.org](mailto:bpi@ifrc.org)

# Better Programming: Analytical Steps\*

## Step 1 Analysis of the context

### 1.1 Identify dividers

What are the divisions in the area of /at the level of/ the intervention?

#### Categorize and prioritize them:

- Systems and Institutions
- Attitudes and Actions
- Values and Interests
- Experiences
- Symbols and Occasions



- When we chose to intervene in a specific context, we become part of it.
- An in-depth analysis of the context prior to our intervention, will allow us to design our programming better.
- Any violence-prone setting is dynamic and changes should be continuously analysed in relation to our intervention.

### 1.2 Identify connectors

What are the connectors in the area of /at the level of/ the intervention?

#### Categorize and prioritize them:

- Systems and Institutions
- Attitudes and Actions
- Values and Interests
- Experiences
- Symbols and Occasions



## Step 2 Describe your aid programme

- Describe in detail what actions are planned/underway in the area of intervention:
  - Why?
  - Where?
  - What?
  - When?
  - With whom?
  - By whom? (Are there other agencies implementing similar programmes?)
  - **How?**
- Analyse important institutional issues such as:
  - Mandate/influence in programme implementation
  - Headquarters role/influence in programme implementation
  - Fundraising/influence in programme implementation

## Step 3 Identify the Impacts

- Our actions will always have some impact on the dividers and connectors. The question is:
  - Will this action reinforce a connector or weaken one?
  - Will this action aggravate a division or lessen one?
- The following questions will help us recognize the impact of our aid through the transfer of resources:
  - Is our aid provoking **theft**, thus diverting resources towards the potential conflict?
  - Is our aid affecting the **local markets**, thus distorting the local economy?
  - Are our **distributions** exacerbating divisions within the population?
  - Is our aid **substituting** controlling authorities responsibilities, thus allowing further resources to be invested in the potential conflict?
  - Are we, through our aid, **legitimizing** local supporters of the potential conflict or those who want reconciliation?

## Step 4 Find alternative options

- For each impact identified (positive or negative) as a side effect of the planned programme:
  - Brainstorm programme options that will decrease negative effects and increase positive ones.
  - Check the options for their impact on the other connectors and dividers.

## Step 5 Repeat the analysis

As often as the context demands.  
As often as your project cycle indicates.

**REMEMBER !!** Even in societies where tensions affect daily patterns of life, many aspects continue to connect people rather than divide them. Common history, culture, language and experience; shared institutions and values; economic and political interdependence as well as habits of thinking and acting exist in all societies.

As aid providers, if we are only aware of the factors that divide communities and do not recognise and relate to those that link them, our aid can reinforce the former and undermine the latter.

The proposed analytical steps will assist us to identify the categories of information we need when designing a programme. It will organize the information gathered and highlight relationships among the categories.

\* Adapted from "Framework for Considering the Impact of Aid on Conflict", CDA 1999.