

Measuring Results of Private Sector Development in Conflict-Affected Environments:

A Case Study of the Sustainable Employment and Economic Development (SEED) Programme in Somalia



Prepared by MarketShare Associates
Author: Adam Kessler, Editor: Ben Fowler
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The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

1 Introduction

The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) has published [Practical Guidelines for Measuring Achievements in Private Sector Development in Conflict-Affected Environments](#) (CAEs), using the [DCED Standard for results measurement](#) (hereafter referred to as ‘the DCED Standard’).¹ The DCED Standard is a framework that enables private sector development programmes to better measure, manage, and demonstrate results.²

Brief Description of the DCED Standard for results measurement

The DCED Standard specifies eight elements of a successful results measurement system. Programmes using the DCED Standard begin by clarifying what exactly they are doing, and what results they expect to achieve. This is represented in a ‘results chain’, and indicators are set to measure each key change expected.

This provides a flexible, credible way to demonstrate results and manage projects, based on an inter-agency understanding of good practice. For more information, visit the DCED website at <http://enterprise-development.org/page/measuring-and-reporting-results>

This case study is one in a series³ that supplements the Guidelines with detailed analysis of how elements of the DCED Standard have been applied in a CAE. This specific study examines the Sustainable Employment and Economic Development (SEED) programme, implemented by a consortium led by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.⁴ SEED was selected because it explicitly aims to reduce conflict through employment promotion, and develop a conflict sensitive results measurement system.⁵

The case study opens by describing the Somali context and introducing the SEED programme. It then draws nine lessons from SEED’s experience, structured around five of the eight elements of the DCED Standard: articulating the results chain, defining indicators, measuring changes in indicators, estimating attributable change, and managing the system for results measurement.⁶ It concludes with a summary of the key learning points. The study is based on a review of programme documents and a week-long field visit in Nairobi to interview key staff from SEED and partner organisations.⁷

Feedback on this case study is welcome and should be sent to ben@marketshareassociates.com and adam@kessler.co.uk.

¹ Fowler, Ben and Adam Kessler, [DCED Practical Guidelines for Measuring Achievements in PSD in Conflict-Affected Environments](#), Ben Fowler Consulting Inc., 2013.

² For more information on the DCED Standard, see the website [here](#). For an online library with a wide range of useful resources on private sector development in conflict-affected environments click [here](#).

³ A further case study, on the Employment Promotion Programme in Sierra Leone, can be accessed [here](#).

⁴ The author would like to thank the FAO team for hosting him, answering questions, and providing insights into their work. In particular, thanks are due to Edwin Barasa and George Obhai for facilitating the case study, making introductions, and sharing their knowledge and experience.

⁵ SEED, Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, 2011, p.2.

⁶ The other three elements, while important, did not provide as many learning opportunities during the case study.

⁷ The field work was conducted by Adam Kessler. In total 16 people were interviewed, including three partners and one field staff. All but one interviewee were Nairobi-based, due to time and security constraints. This limits the robustness of the findings, and future case studies should strive to include more field input.

1.1 Somalia

Somalia has not had a central government since the fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. This collapse led to prolonged fighting between rival warlords, and one of the worst humanitarian crises of modern times. Two thirds of the population live on less than two dollars a day, just a third of children are enrolled in primary school, and less than ten per cent have access to clean drinking water.⁸ Stability has been largely restored in the north of the country, in Somaliland and Puntland. However, in South Central Somalia the conflict has continued, with devastating impact.

The conflict is extremely complex, with multiple combatants, motivations, and interests. The seeds of the instability were sown during the predatory regime of Siad Barre, between 1969 and 1991. Political leaders used their power to dominate others and acquire resources, deliberately stirring up inter-clan conflicts in order to strengthen their own position. A World Bank conflict analysis in 2005 identified seven dimensions of conflict, which include:⁹

- **Clan Identities.** The clan is the basic unit of Somali society, which fragments into multiple, fluid sub-clans and sub-sub-clans. Almost all conflicts break out among clan lines – but the clan can also serve as a conflict moderator, enforcing customary law to reduce tensions.
- **Governance.** Partly due to the legacy of Siad Barre's regime, the centralised Somali government has been a continual source of conflict. As of early 2013, a new Somali government has formed and enjoys considerable international support – but it is not yet clear whether it will be able to command similar levels of support from inside Somalia.¹⁰
- **Economic Performance.** Businesses can both unite and divide society, as groups cooperate or compete for economic opportunities. Flows of money can also fund armed militants.
- **Natural and Productive Resources.** Competition over land, water, and other natural resources can lead to conflict. This frequently sets agriculturalists against pastoralists, a trend exacerbated by increasing environmental degradation and desertification.
- **Militarization.** The breakdown of government in Somalia led to ready access to guns, and little accountability for human rights abuses.
- **International influences.** International influences can be positive or negative. For example, regional powers have used Somalia to wage proxy wars, funding weapons and armed groups. On the other hand, the African Union and several African states are playing a key role in the peace process.

Despite the challenges, it would be misleading to depict Somalia solely in terms of conflict and violence. In the north of Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland have established regional administrations, bringing relative stability. These administrations were the product of a local peace process, uniting different clans to form a joint administration. They combine elements of Somali culture and modern democracies; for example, the Somaliland upper house comprises clan elders, while the lower house includes other clan representatives.

⁸ Data from UNDP/World Bank, [Somalia Socioeconomic Survey](#), 2002, and World Bank, [Open Data Service](#), accessed 2013.

⁹ World Bank, [Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics](#), 2005.

¹⁰ IMF, [Press Release on Recognition of Federal Government of Somalia](#), 2013.

Moreover, the private sector in Somalia is booming, despite – or perhaps because of¹¹ – the lack of stable government. Modern technologies, such as mobile phones, have been enthusiastically adopted, and fierce competition has resulted in some of the cheapest call rates in Africa.¹² Innovative *Hawala* money-transfer services transfer an estimated \$1.6 billion annually from Somalis living abroad, straight to their rural relatives.¹³ The livestock sector – currently generating about 50% of Somalia’s exports – is also booming.

“Somalis are business minded. Just show them the way.”
Interviewee

1.2 The Sustainable Employment and Economic Development programme

The Sustainable Employment and Economic Development (SEED) programme, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), aims to improve stability in Somalia through economic growth and sustainable employment, supporting the dynamic private sector. The programme is currently in its second phase, which began in 2012 and will last until mid-2014. SEED is primarily implemented by FAO, with a budget of £12.5 million over the two phases.¹⁴ They work throughout Somalia, in Puntland, Somaliland, and South-Central regions.



SEED aims to introduce a new way of working in Somalia. The majority of international programmes are humanitarian, directly providing services such as health, education or food aid. By contrast, SEED aims to develop markets, enabling Somalis to find better income and employment. Moreover, it takes an explicitly conflict-sensitive approach, aiming to understand the context in which it operates, and act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of the project.¹⁵

The SEED programme does not use the DCED Standard. Nevertheless, its approach to results measurement and the lessons it has generated can inform the application of the DCED Standard in CAEs. SEED uses a logical framework with one or more indicators defined for each output, outcome and impact. Its expected impact is to contribute to improved stability through economic growth and sustainable employment. SEED employs an M&E Advisor and a Conflict Analyst in order to manage and strengthen the relevant aspects of the programme.

¹¹ Leeson, Peter, [Better Off Stateless: Somalia Before and After Government Collapse](#), *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 2007.

¹² Nenova, Tatiana and Harford, Tim, [Anarchy and Invention: How Does Somalia’s Private Sector Cope without Government?](#), 2005, World Bank.

¹³ Nenova, Tatiana, [Private Sector Response to the absence of government institutions in Somalia](#), 2004. See [CIA World Factbook](#) for reference to volume of *Hawala* money transfer services.

¹⁴ The first phase was led by FAO, and implemented by a consortium of FAO, the World Bank, UNDP, SCUUK, and ILO. The second phase is primarily implemented by FAO, with a second component of business environment reform implemented by the World Bank. This case study concentrates on the FAO component, in particular the second phase.

¹⁵ [Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building Resource Pack](#), p.3. *Photo: Community planning meeting in Togdheer Region, Somaliland; Credits: Erastus Mbugua, George Obhai and Edwin Barasa/ FAO-Somalia*

2 Articulating the Results Chain

SEED uses a logical framework¹⁶ to show programme outputs and outcomes, rather than results chains. FAO are experimenting with alternative logical approaches, and are including results chains in a forthcoming project. While it is not currently possible to infer direct conclusions about the use of results chains, this section draws on SEED's experience to provide lessons about programme design in a CAE.

2.1 Adopt a conflict sensitive monitoring system

The DCED's Practical Guidelines for Measuring Achievements in private sector development in CAEs stresses the importance of conflict sensitivity, in order to minimise negative and promote positive effects on conflict.

"Where resources are involved, conflicts will come"
Interviewee

Project staff confirmed the importance of conflict sensitivity, giving examples from their own experiences. A conflict analysis, conducted by SEED in Somaliland and Puntland in 2011, discussed four potential sources of conflict:

- **Allocation of resources.**¹⁷ Almost 70% of conflicts identified related to competition over the allocation of resources. In one instance, SEED worked with a local business association to provide training in soap, dried meat, and bone craft manufacturing. However, this association had been formed only after a split in a previous, larger organization, and the other splinter group believed that they were being unfairly neglected by SEED. This generated resentment towards both SEED and the training programme, which had to be postponed.
- **State interference in project implementation.** In several projects, political interference led to a risk of conflict. In one case, the municipal authority overseeing the reconstruction of a market decided to dismantle a market stall in order to make way for the construction, without agreement from the stall-owner. In response, the affected vendor demolished the newly constructed section, derailing the project.
- **Threatened livelihoods.** Private sector development projects can have negative effects on livelihoods, as well as positive. In one instance, the rehabilitation of a market did not include space for food vendors, who previously sold food to traders. Worried that they could lose their livelihoods if the market was completed, some food vendors began sabotaging construction work.
- **Misconception of project objectives.** If local stakeholders do not fully understand the programme objectives, they may form negative perceptions which hinder implementation. For example, a public private partnership (PPP) for managing new infrastructure was negatively perceived by the local community, who believed that the company running the PPP would benefit at the expense of those who used the infrastructure.

"Managing a conflict is harder than preventing it."
Interviewee

Staff recognised that a good results measurement system is crucial for predicting and detecting conflict. Feedback from staff, partners and other community members

¹⁶ A logical framework is a project management tool very commonly used in international development. For a clear explanation see [here](#).

¹⁷ SEED, Conflict Sensitive Development: A case study of FAO-SEED intervention on enterprise development in Hargeisa, Somaliland, 2012.

enabled SEED to detect the early signs of conflict, conduct a more in-depth conflict analysis, and adopt mitigation measures to reduce the risk. For more lessons on monitoring the risk of conflict, see [sections 2.2, 3.1, 3.2](#) and [4.2](#) below.

2.2 Take care in the design of public private partnerships¹⁸

The SEED programme develops public private partnerships (PPPs) to manage new market infrastructure. For example, SEED is supporting the Puntland Ministry of Fisheries to launch a PPP for the management of a new fish market. While the Ministry of Fisheries retains ownership, the private company operates the market and maintains the assets. Profits are shared between the company, the Ministry of Fisheries, and the district municipality. The aim of the PPP is to maintain the new infrastructure, and increase revenue for both the government and private sector.

SEED’s experience indicates that PPPs can face additional challenges in maintaining relationships with the community. For example:

- **Community understanding.** The community may misunderstand the aims or mechanisms of the PPP. For example, they may suspect that it will lead to an increase in price or tax. Alternatively, they might believe that, after construction, the infrastructure is community owned, as would be typical in donor-funded projects. In one instance, the community perceived the PPP as a plot to enable private businesses to benefit at the expense of the poorest.¹⁹
- **Clan dynamics.** Clan dynamics can affect the acceptability of the PPP. SEED noted that a dominant clan may block rivals from managing PPPs – even if they have no desire to run it themselves.²⁰
- **Labour and cost:** PPPs may result in job losses, which could trigger confrontations with labour unions or staff whose jobs are at risk. It may also result in higher prices or taxes, which must be justified by reference to an improved service.
- **Conflict over resources.** PPPs present an opportunity for control over resources. As with any such situation, this presents a risk of conflict. For example, one PPP to run a slaughterhouse in Somaliland was delayed as local groups negotiated over control.



In response, SEED performs a conflict analysis before PPP programmes. These explore the level of awareness and understanding of PPPs among different stakeholders, and the existing community institutions which could manage tensions and provide a forum for negotiation. The analysis should ensure that these are not just ‘paper institutions’, but have real presence and representation in the community.²¹

¹⁸ This section is indebted to observations presented in Barasa, Edwin and Kennedy, Nyawira, *Public Private Partnerships in Fragile States: Reflection on the practice, challenges and opportunities in Somaliland*, 2012.

¹⁹ *Photo credits: Edwin Barasa/FAO-Somalia*

²⁰ Barasa, Edwin and Kennedy, Nyawira, *Public Private Partnerships in Fragile States: Reflection on the practice, challenges and opportunities in Somaliland*, 2012, 17

²¹ *Photo: Meeting with stakeholders at Burao to facilitate formation of a PPP within the Burao meat market; Credits: Erastus Mbugua, George Obhai and Edwin Barasa/ FAO-Somalia*

SEED also educates staff and external stakeholders on the aims and objectives of PPPs, and try to involve them in the design of the project. The negotiation process is crucial for generating buy-in, and must be accompanied by a robust dispute resolution procedure. In some instances, SEED may also adjust the PPP model, for example by including community acceptability as a criterion in the tender.

When using the DCED Standard, the results chain and documented assumptions should reflect these risks, and clearly show how the project aims to address them. The monitoring system should then explicitly examine these risks and assumptions, in order to show whether the logic of the results chain is really valid. This could include, for example, monitoring the level of community awareness of the PPP project, or whether it has support from key stakeholders.

3 Defining Indicators of Change

The SEED logframe lists 25 indicators, including the three universal indicators recommended by the DCED Standard: jobs created, net income, and scale. These are used to judge overall performance of the project, and are supplemented by ‘management indicators’ to provide rapid feedback to project staff on the progress of the project. This section focuses on indicators of conflict, an innovative area of the SEED programme.

3.1 Use indicators of conflict creatively

SEED has developed fourteen qualitative indicators of conflict, as shown in the below box. These indicators are based on a conflict analysis carried out in Puntland and Somaliland regions, and would sit at the lowest level of a results chain, serving as an early warning for risk of conflict arising from project activities.

Early warning indicators of conflict used by SEED Programme

- Boycott of programme meetings by invited parties
- Unofficial meetings with a negative agenda convened locally to discuss the programme
- Distortion of programme information (perceived as deliberate) regarding interventions
- Reluctance by state officials/interest groups/beneficiaries to participate in programme interventions
- Complaints from state officials or community leaders of non-involvement/non-recognition
- Demands by some interest groups for involvement in programme interventions
- Segregation of certain organized interest groups/individuals in community mobilization processes
- Non responsiveness to programme related communication by stakeholders
- Threats to staff/beneficiaries: warnings to avoid certain areas/activities
- Expression of doubt by beneficiaries on programme strategies/decisions
- Reflections on past incidents and linkages with ongoing interventions
- Expression of grievances/discontent around resource distribution
- Use of political, social or economic influence to interfere with programme interventions
- Sustained conflicting perceptions of project objectives amongst individuals/interest groups

There is an interesting difference between these and other indicators used by SEED. The majority of programme indicators are principally used to judge the overall success of the programme, and for reporting to donors. However, they are not used in day-to-day management. These indicators of conflict, by contrast, are not designed for reporting, and do not appear in the logical framework. Instead, they help field staff recognise the early warning signs of conflict, and take action to mitigate the risk, asking for further support from regional headquarters in Nairobi if necessary.

In a sense, these conflict indicators act as capacity-building tools, helping staff to observe early warning signals which otherwise would have gone undetected. In so doing, they offer a structured way for field staff to assess the risks facing the programme. SEED aims to introduce these indicators to field staff in a forthcoming workshop, which will develop a system for using and reporting against them. By involving field staff in this process, SEED hopes to ensure that they have ownership of the conflict indicators.

SEED's experience suggests that qualitative indicators are more effective than quantitative indicators for conflict management, as they leave more room for judgement. For example, an indicator such as 'number of conflicts in the area' forces an unhelpful binary classification of conflict/non-conflict, which is likely to be overly simplistic. A more open-ended indicator, such as those listed above, leave the field staff better able to make judgments about the severity of the early warning signs, as well as their presence.²²



3.2 Quantitative indicators of conflict require significant resources

SEED also measure conflict through a 'stability index'. This is a quantitative measure with nine components; levels of violence, economic activity, freedom of movement, perceptions of security conditions, marginalised groups, rights to access and use resources, harmonious coexistence among clans, predicted effect of SEED interventions, and local perceptions of government. This index is an indicator for SEED's expected impact; a contribution to improved stability through economic growth and sustainable employment.

During the SEED baseline, enumerators asked around 120 respondents to rate their perceptions on each of the above components, using a five point rating scale or a simple yes/no. These responses were quantified and weighted to provide an overall 'stability score' for four sub-regions of Somalia.

However, SEED are concerned about the accuracy of this survey. For example, 94% of respondents indicated that there was no violence in one region, which is inconsistent with staff experience and secondary data. There are a number of possible reasons for these discrepancies:

- **Sample size.** The sample size was small (120 people in total) relative to the size of the population that SEED was attempting to draw conclusions about.
- **Sampling methodology.** The survey used convenience sampling, relying on respondents at local markets who were able to participate in the survey. Moreover, the majority of the respondents

²² Photo credits: Erastus Mbugua, George Obhai and Edwin Barasa/ FAO-Somalia

were from Hargeisa, with less than 20 from each of the other three sub-regions. This may have resulted in a unrepresentative sample.

- **Enumerator quality.** It is challenging to find dependable enumerators with sufficient training to conduct surveys. Enumerators may have asked questions in inconsistent ways, and answers may have been affected by personal biases. In particular, enumerators may have wished to give a positive impression of their own communities and clans.
- **Inappropriate questions.** Some of the questions asked were not appropriate for the context. For example, one question related to local perceptions of central, regional, and municipal government. However, these are irrelevant for the majority of Somalis as the clan is the most important system of governance. A positive impression of government may reflect clan loyalties, for example because the local mayor belonged to the same clan as the respondent.

SEED view the initial data collection as a pilot, and plan to follow up with a larger survey which addresses some of these issues. SEED will increase the sample size to nearly a thousand respondents across three regions of Somalia, using a random sample stratified by clan and class. They will also modify the questionnaire based on the initial results. It is clear that a reliable stability index requires a significant investment in resources, both time and money.

SEED will also put further resources into training enumerators, and building long-term relationships with those who display particular ability. The M&E Advisor offers regular training to enumerators, and attempts to build their understanding of the importance of good quality data. He discusses how incorrect information leads to poor decision making from SEED, ultimately reducing the impact of the project. By giving practical examples, he helps enumerators see how high quality data collection contributes to the successful development of their region.

At this early stage, it is difficult to assess the overall value of the stability index. The design of the index, with sub-components measuring different aspects of conflict, will help SEED understand the conflict in some detail. However, it is challenging to see how changes in the indicator could be attributed to the programme. Good qualitative data collection may assist in this, especially if it explored the links between the different components of the stability index and SEED activities.

“If you ask someone about their clan in Hargeisa (Somaliland), you will be put on the first plane out of there.”
Interviewee

4 Measuring Changes in Indicators

4.1 Trust is crucial for good monitoring

Years of conflict in Somalia have destroyed social as well as physical capital, and the failure of previous interventions has left many communities suspicious of international agencies. This creates challenges for SEED in building trust with partners and the community in which it works.



This lack of trust weakens results measurement, which relies on discussions or surveys with those affected by the intervention. This might include partners such as government ministers or NGOs, as well as the community who utilise the services. However, if these groups do not trust the SEED staff, then they may refuse to answer questions or choose not to answer honestly. This is especially relevant when investigating sensitive topics such as clan linkages or conflict. Asking for

direct feedback on project impact may also be challenging, as this will be perceived to affect future funding in the area.²³

There is no simple solution to this issue. However, all interviewees stressed that the manner in which staff interact with the community is extremely important for building up trust. For example:

- **Choice of partners:** All projects work with partners. These might be government ministries, other NGOs, elders, religious associations, or community groups. Care must be taken to ensure that these are acceptable to the community and not dominated by one clan or interest group. Investigating the structure of these groups can help ensure that they are representative. For example, SEED asks whether they have a constitution, how they consult with different groups, and how members are elected.

“If you are in a hurry, you end up with results that are totally skewed....with time you discover the intricacies”
Interviewee

- **Entry Strategy:** The first contact with the community is particularly important. Who introduces you, how you act, and who you speak with can all build or reduce trust. It is important to introduce yourself and the project as early as possible, and be clear and transparent about the aims and objectives. This process takes time; trying to rush it will hinder efforts to build up trust.

- **Transparency.** Misinformation spreads quickly, especially in the oral Somali culture. Ensure that information about the project and planned results measurement activities is shared early and often.
- **Understand the culture.** Without an understanding of the culture, it will be easy to inadvertently offend. For example, Somali culture is predominantly oral; the Latin script was only adopted in 1972 and communication in meetings is very important. All participants will expect the opportunity to speak for as long as they wish, and a failure to honour that – for example, because of time constraints – can be perceived as offensive.

As a general framework for results measurement, the DCED Standard does not directly address the issue of trust or community relations. However, the SEED programme’s experience suggests that in a CAE strong relationships are an essential pre-requisite for successful results measurement.

4.2 Find innovative ways to triangulate information

SEED works in South Central Somalia, which is too insecure for international staff to access. Data is collected by partners and local staff. It is difficult for SEED to independently verify their reports, which poses clear challenges for results measurement.

FAO scaled up their work in South Central Somalia during the 2011 food crisis. To manage the challenges, they developed a monitoring unit, with 7 Nairobi-based staff and 25 field-based monitors. This unit works across FAO’s programmes to provide a consistent approach to monitoring. They have developed a sophisticated system for triangulating information, using methods including:

“In South Central Somalia, monitoring is always difficult.”
Interviewee

²³ Photo credits: Erastus Mbugua, George Obhai and Edwin Barasa/ FAO-Somalia

- **Partner reports.** In South Central Somalia FAO works largely through partner organisations. These submit regular reports on project progress against very clear indicators, related to pre-defined steps in the project. For example, the twelve-step monitoring framework for agricultural inputs distribution includes indicators for the selection of villages, the production of a distribution plan and the distribution itself. At each stage, activities and outputs are specified, along with the means of verification. This structured monitoring system reduces the flexibility of the project, but helps ensure the quality of work. While appropriate for humanitarian programmes that are predominant in Somalia, the lack of flexibility makes this technique less suited for PSD programmes.
- **Random calls.** FAO requires partners to collect phone numbers from 25% of beneficiaries. A separate unit in FAO, the ‘call centre’, conducts a short, structured phone interview with a randomly selected 10% of beneficiaries listed, 2-3% of the total. This is supplemented with phone interviews with key informants, such as market vendors or community elders. FAO initially conducted phone surveys at the end of projects, but have recently shifted to calling before and in the middle of projects as well, to provide real-time information on the progress of projects. These checks are conditional to the continuity of contracts with - and payment of - NGOs.
- **Field monitors.** The monitoring unit has 25 local field monitors, who can access insecure areas and verify that the activities are taking place. They can also interview beneficiaries to gauge satisfaction and outcomes, and take photos of progress.
- **Satellite imagery.** FAO have a large programme to rehabilitate irrigation canals. They require partners to map out the planned canal route with a GPS device, and FAO use satellite imagery, to assess the progress of the project. It is an expensive but reliable way to confirm that the infrastructure is constructed.
- **Biometrics.** FAO are trialling biometric identification for cash-for-work programmes. FAO implementing partners with a laptop which scans the fingerprints of participants, allowing FAO to register and verify the actual number of individuals participating. It will also verify that the registered participants are the ones receiving the fees. While the trial is running successfully, it may not be possible to implement in more insecure areas of South-Central Somalia, where collecting identifiable data may put beneficiaries at risk.

None of these methods is perfect. Reports from partners may be untrustworthy. The call centre provides some independent validation, but only interviews a small percentage of beneficiaries and is reliant on partners to provide phone numbers.



Field monitors may be biased towards their region and clan, or subject to pressure from others in the community to submit positive reports.²⁴

By triangulating information from all of these sources, FAO has raised the quality of implementation by partner organisations. Disbursements to partners have been delayed if results were not being achieved, and contracts have been cancelled due to poor performance. For example, during one

²⁴ Photos: Harvesting of fodder from the flood plains at Beer Village, Burao District, Somaliland, and Trucks carrying fodder from Odwyne are en-route to Berbera Port; Credits: Erastus Mbugua, George Obhai and Edwin Barasa/ FAO-Somalia

cash-for-work project, calls to beneficiaries revealed that they were not aware how they had been selected for the cash for work programme, nor what the daily rate for their work should be. This implied that the implementing NGO had not conducted the awareness campaign correctly, and the project was delayed until this was corrected.

In another example, calls to beneficiaries revealed that one staff member from a partner NGO had failed to distribute goats in a village, paying villagers just a quarter of their value as compensation. FAO passed this information on to the partner NGO, which launched an investigation that resulted in the animals being returned to their rightful owners and the staff member being fired. This shows the value of a monitoring system which can triangulate information from multiple sources, including directly from project participants.

5 Estimating Attributable Change

5.1 Use simple methods to estimate attribution

SEED uses simple approaches to assess attribution that can be feasibly implemented in a CAE. These include:

- Asking beneficiaries to rank causes.** The simplest approach to assessing attribution is to ask beneficiaries to give their opinions on the likely causes for the changes that they have observed. For example, one tracer study followed 221 participants of training sessions ran by Save the Children UK, which aimed to improve the productivity of participants in the meat, honey, and fodder value chains. The study asked for respondent’s views on the usefulness and relevance of the training, as well as the increase in income that resulted. One question asked for two main reasons for the increase in income.²⁵ The responses were:

	1st Response	2nd Response
Better hygiene that attracts customers	99%	7%
Better market facilities (infrastructure)	1%	86%
Training improved my work		7%

This indicates that the primary reason for the increase in income was better hygiene, followed by better market facilities. The latter is not related to the training, while the former may be a consequence. Further exploration would be needed to examine whether the better hygiene was as a consequence of the training programme.

- Estimating ‘attributable income’ based on clear assumptions.** The SEED programme measures ‘net attributable income’, echoing the DCED Standard universal indicator of ‘additional net income’. For example, if SEED supports farmers to keep bees, then they monitor the number of hives kept, the likely amount of honey produced, the value of this honey, and so on. From these assumptions, they can estimate the benefit of the beekeeping programme. By linking the estimate of income so directly to project activities, SEED avoids the problems of attribution inherent in a broader survey of income before and after the intervention.
- Attributing conflict on a micro level.** It is particularly challenging to attribute change in conflict to an intervention. One approach is to attribute changes in conflict on a micro level, based on an

²⁵ Save the Children, The impact of SEED trainings in selected communities of Somaliland: A tracer study, 2012.

explicit theory about how they positively affect conflict, known as a ‘theory of change’. For example, in one project SEED worked with six different cooperatives, which were divided along sub-clan lines. SEED encouraged them to work together in order to grow fodder, and eventually they merged into one cooperative. By providing an opportunity for different groups to work together, SEED believes that they have helped to strengthen community ties and reduce the risk of conflict in the area. This theory of change could be validated through interviews and local discussions. Although it does not demonstrate an overall contribution of the SEED programme to stability, it does show how it contributes on a local level.

Attribution is a real challenge for all social projects, regardless of location. The methods presented here do not differ from common practice. The key to assessing attribution in a CAE is to use simple, clear methods that are within the capacity of the implementing organisation.

6 Managing the System for Results Measurement

6.1 Focus on internal advocacy

Many SEED staff have previously worked in humanitarian programming, where results measurement typically differs in two important ways from the approach advocated by the DCED Standard. First, it is relatively uncommon for humanitarian programmes to monitor beyond outputs. The focus is on getting things done quickly rather than managing for outcomes. Second, the causal logic between activities, outputs and outcomes in humanitarian programmes is generally clear. Distribution of fertiliser, for example, is expected to lead to farmers using the fertiliser and so increasing crop yield. There is no consideration of the behaviour or incentives of intermediaries, service providers, or other actors.

“If you uncover conflict in the project, staff feel that they have failed”

Interviewee

Moreover, many staff will be unfamiliar with conflict sensitivity. They may feel that uncovering conflict reflects badly on their work, or simply be uncomfortable with discussing and analysing it. They may also have limited experience with conflict analysis, and find it challenging to uncover the structural causes of violence, such as inequality or grievances.

The M&E Advisor and the Conflict Analyst both emphasised the importance of internal advocacy on these issues to change the mindsets of programme staff. This is necessary for staff at all levels, from field officers to senior managers.

6.2 Build external capacity in results measurement

SEED relies on external partners for results measurement, such as government officials and community groups. This requires them to have the knowledge and skills to gather and analyse this information. In order to get good information from partners, it is important to make materials as simple as possible. For example, the M&E Advisor recently revised the reporting format to focus on core topics: achievements, challenges, lessons learnt, and planned activities.

It is vital to use as little jargon as possible. Terms like ‘indicator’, ‘means of verification’, or even ‘monitoring and evaluation’ will not always be understood. It should always be possible to rephrase to better reach the target group. For example, rather than asking about indicators, ask how the audience will know if the project is working.

Training is necessary, but often not sufficient. Training opportunities are often taken by senior managers, not least because it involves overseas travel to Nairobi. However, it is frequently more important to train lower-level staff, who are directly involved in project implementation and monitoring. Consequently, SEED now trains two staff from each partner, one of whom must be directly involved in results measurement.

7 Conclusion

A conflict-sensitive results measurement system is a crucial tool to improve the positive impact of the programme on conflict, while minimising any negative impacts. The examples [cited above](#), covering everything from enterprise training to fish markets, show how the risk of conflict should always be considered in implementation and results measurement. [Public private partnerships](#) are particularly risky, as they can be misunderstood by local communities, present an opportunity for control over resources, and can lead to increased prices or job losses. SEED mitigates these risks by performing a conflict analysis and educating staff and external stakeholders on the aims and objectives of public private partnerships.

Conflict-sensitive indicators help programme staff manage the risk of conflict. The fourteen qualitative indicators of conflict [listed above](#) are used by field staff to detect early warning signs of conflict, and react appropriately. Interestingly, qualitative indicators have been more helpful than quantitative indicators to date. The main quantitative indicator– a [‘stability index’](#) – aimed to monitor change at the impact level of the results chain. However, the initial baseline collection did not provide reliable information, and SEED aim to redo the baseline with a greater sample size and improved sampling technique. A question for future research is how conflict indicators can be based on a results chain, validating the logic of the programme’s expected impact on conflict.

Trust is crucial for results measurement. As a generic framework for results measurement, the DCED Standard says more about what to do than how to do it – but in a conflict affected area the latter is at least as important. Results chains, indicators and surveys will not gather reliable information without [good relationships](#) with enumerators, partners and local communities. While true in every context, the legacy of conflict makes relationship building more challenging, and particular attention should be paid to this in a CAE. The manner in which staff behave towards partners and communities is crucially important.

Triangulating information improves the reliability of information collection. SEED were bursting with innovative ways to [triangulate information](#). From validating beneficiary numbers with fingerprint scanners, to quality-controlling construction with satellite imagery, they used new technology to improve work in exceptionally difficult circumstances. However, triangulation is not just about modern technology; partner reports and field visits are equally important tools, along with direct contact with beneficiaries through mobile phones and face-to-face interviews.

Finally, in every context, capacity-building is essential. Staff in conflict-affected areas frequently come from humanitarian backgrounds and take very different attitudes to results measurement. They may be unused to measuring outcomes, and unfamiliar with the complex causal chains of PSD programmes. [Internal advocacy](#) as well as [training and capacity building](#) is essential in order to have a team who can successfully measure and manage a programme.