

POLICY BRIEFING PAPER

In post-conflict situations, employment is vital to short-term stability, reintegration, economic growth and sustainable peace. This United Nations policy contributes to a common understanding and approach to employment creation, income generation and reintegration, built around a set of guiding principles and programming guidelines designed to support programming at country level. The Post-conflict Employment and Reintegration Policy aims to help scale up and to maximize the impact, coherence and efficiency of employment support provided to post-conflict countries by United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies. Specific attention is given to the needs and capacities of conflict-affected groups, with particular attention to unemployed women and youth.

This policy briefing paper gives an overview of the key guidance contained within the UN Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration:

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Understanding Employment in Post-Conflict Settings

Challenges

Promoting employment growth is difficult in peacetime, and probably twice as complicated in post-conflict situations. Sustaining the reintegration of ex-combatants (including children formerly associated with armed forces and groups), refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) will involve continuous efforts from national and international stakeholders to avoid undermining or reversing early achievements from the stabilization phase. A thorough understanding of the underlying economy and market is needed, as an immediate requirement is to restore markets and access to markets for goods, services and labour affected by the conflict. Creating youth employment that taps into the positive energy and skills of youth is a particularly difficult challenge, as youth often find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of violence, poverty, illiteracy and social exclusion. There should be a balance between priority security concerns and equity considerations, especially when targeting specific individuals or groups, such as ex-combatants. It is essential to recognize the needs of specific target groups but such a focus can fuel resentment in communities, if not framed within an overall strategy that respects community-based needs and equity. Urban and rural areas present different challenges (and opportunities) with regard to employment and reintegration. The characteristics of basic labour markets, the levels of organization and training of labour, and the potential for employment programmes to generate desired results, all differ significantly between rural and urban areas. Root causes of conflict, such as inequitable access to land and natural resources, need to be addressed.

For further information on the United Nations Policy on Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration, please contact: ILO, ilocrisis@ilo.org; or UNDP, bcpr@undp.org.

The use of the term "employment" in this paper often refers to the full expression "employment creation, income generation and reintegration".

An Operational Guidance Note which sets out the implementation and institutional arrangements among the different United Nations bodies in this field is also available.

Opportunities

Transitions from conflict to peace create windows of opportunity for social and economic change. Socio-economic recovery should be managed to benefit, to the extent possible, the entire population. Employment should deliver the new economic benefits and peace dividends to returnees such as ex-combatants, IDPs and refugees, and the conflict-affected population. The United Nations can act as a facilitator and as a catalyst for the process of transforming opportunities into reality.

Peacebuilding processes should improve the rights of the conflict-affected population, with particular attention to reducing inequalities towards women and youth and to previously disenfranchised groups, through political, economic and labour market reforms. Substantial investments in infrastructure should optimize the use of employment-intensive and employment-friendly techniques, where this is economically and technically feasible.

Five Guiding Principles

1. Be coherent and comprehensive

Post-conflict employment programmes must be derived from assessments, including pre-programme and labour market assessments. They require structured coordination amongst all stakeholders, building on comparative advantages. Interventions should be incorporated into national and sectoral post-conflict frameworks and policies.

2. Do no harm

Post-conflict employment programmes must avoid harmful spill-over effects on individuals, communities, the environment and the economy. A surge in aid flows can, for example, lead to a sharp appreciation of the real exchange rate which can discourage investment in employment-intensive exports. Competition for staff can slow recovery of government institutions and distort private sector wage levels.

3. Be conflict sensitive

Post-conflict employment programmes must at all times avoid creating and reinforcing causes of conflict. Analysis and continuous monitoring of the root causes of conflict, as well as of programme impact, need to be an integral part of post-conflict efforts.

4. Aim for sustainability

Sustainability requires national and local ownership and investment in capacity development of governments, communities and other stakeholders. Short-term employment programmes have to anticipate and complement programmes supporting the creation of longer term sustainable employment.

5. Promote gender equality

Although certain changes in gender roles during conflict can have an empowering effect on women, these gains tend to be lost after a conflict. Post-conflict employment programmes must systematically assess opportunities in a gender disaggregated way and support both women's and men's efforts to build new and equitable social and economic relationships.

Three Programming Tracks: a comprehensive and coherent approach

Coherent and comprehensive strategies for post-conflict employment creation, income generation and reintegration programmes should always include the three concurrent tracks detailed here. While all three tracks promote employment, their focus is different: respectively stabilization, reintegration and long-term employment creation. Programme activities in the three tracks should be interlinked and all should have an early start up, preceded by pre-peace accord planning. However, although programmes in all three tracks will start at the same time, and will be observed at every phase of the recovery, their intensity and duration will vary in response to the local situation.

The figure below illustrates the evolving priorities of these three main tracks of post-conflict employment programming, with each track aimed at a different peacebuilding priority and a wider target group. Track A and Track B are geared towards addressing the more urgent peacebuilding issues, while Track C aims to support the development of national capacities, strategies and policies to achieve sustainable solutions. Track C generally requires a greater lead-in time before being effective, since developing national systems usually takes longer.

Track A: Stabilizing income generation and emergency employment

Programmes in this track include emergency temporary jobs, such as cash-for-work and public employment services, as well as basic livelihood and start-up grants (including cash aid). Short cycle skills training may also be needed, as this aims to respond to an immediate demand for a specific skill that is lacking in the labour market, and gives beneficiaries the ability to find employment quickly and contribute to the first recovery efforts.

This track of employment programmes aims to consolidate security and stability. Programmes typically target specific conflict-affected individuals. The emphasis is on short-term responses, often of a temporary nature, that provide a quick peace dividend to targeted ex-combatants, high-risk youth, returnees, IDPs and others with urgent needs or running a high risk of exploitation or abuse, particularly women. In addition to contributing to stabilization and relief, direct employment programmes can also make first valuable contributions to reconstruction and recovery. If well designed, these programmes can help kick-start economic and social recovery and restore livelihoods.

Track B: Local economic recovery for employment opportunities and reintegration

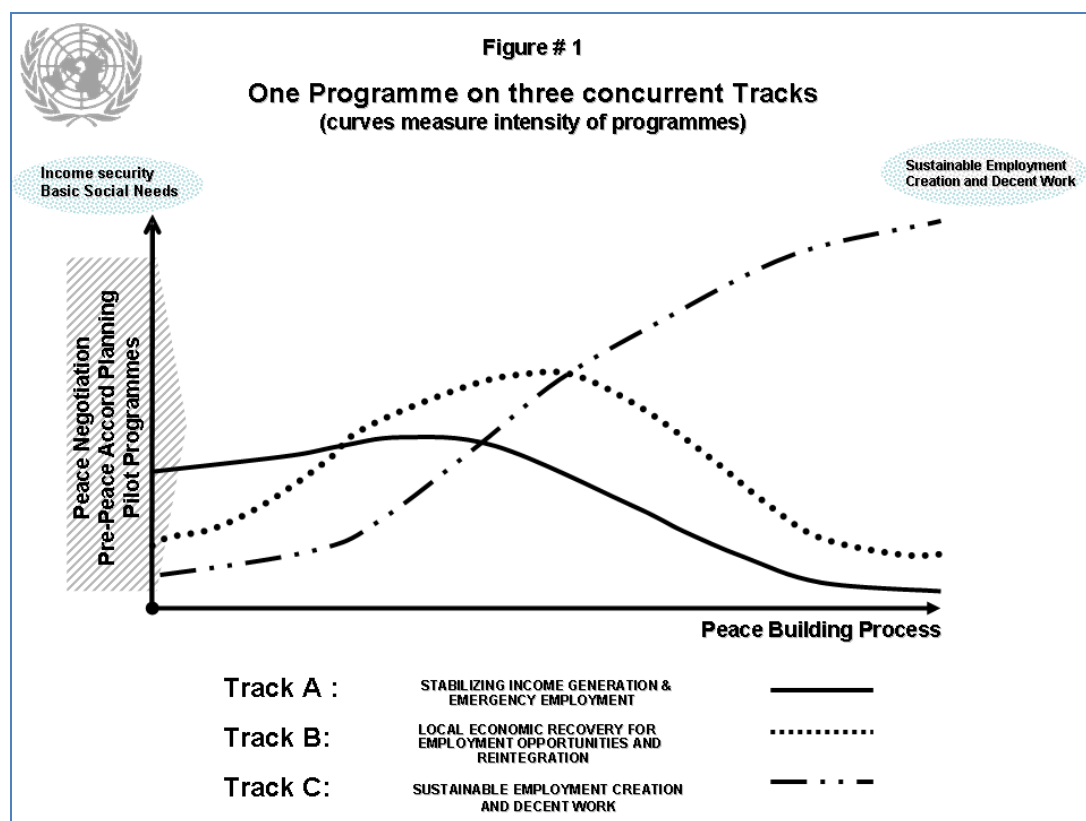
Key programmes in this track include: i) capacity development of local governments and other local authorities and institutions (including customary institutions), providers of business services and other associations; ii) community driven development programmes comprising participatory investments in local socio-economic infrastructure, and social and productive programmes; and iii) local economic recovery programmes, developed in consultation with community groups, aiming at the expansion of the private sector and direct employment support services, such as financial development and microfinance programmes.

This track of employment programmes focuses on promoting employment opportunities at the local level, where reintegration of ex-combatants and other returnees ultimately takes place. Rebuilding communities provides opportunities to address root causes of conflict and facilitate longer term reconciliation. The scope of participating economic actors is wider, and capacity and institution development become central objectives. The focus is on consolidating the peace process and reintegration.

Track C: Sustainable employment creation and decent work

Key programmes in this track include: i) support to macroeconomic and fiscal policies, to active labour market, labour law and investment policies, and to employment generating sectoral policies; ii) support for financial sector and business development services; and, iii) promoting labour-related institutions that enhance employability, social protection and other aspects of labour administration.

This track involves support to policies, institutional capacity development at the national level and the creation of a framework for discussion to define “the rules of the game”. Programmes should be supported and vetted by social dialogue between tripartite constituents (government, employers and workers) and other relevant stakeholders, to promote consensus on labour market policy, as well as legal and institutional reforms. The ultimate goal is to promote sustainable long-term development that sustains productive employment and decent work, while respecting fundamental human rights, promoting gender equality and attention for marginalized groups. While most interventions in this track continue to have a role as the country’s recovery progresses, it is important that work in this field starts immediately after the crisis, balancing the need for quick action with the importance of sustainable impact.



Planning and Designing Employment Programmes in Post-Conflict Settings

Pre-peace accord planning should address employment and other socio-economic challenges in the post-conflict setting even before conflict ends, with the possibility of pilot job creation programmes being started in safe areas before a full peace accord is reached. Programmes should reflect the specific country situation. Assessments such as the post-conflict needs assessment (PCNA) and needs assessments for the Millennium Development Goals will help determine the most appropriate interventions and activities, including those for cross-cutting issues such as youth and gender. United Nations agencies, fund and programmes with their different expertise can be tapped, using existing coordination and planning mechanisms.

PCNAs can gather relevant information regarding employment and other socio-economic needs of conflict-affected groups and their communities. During exile, most refugees are involved in employment-related projects. Socio-economic profiling of returning refugees and IDPs via interviews, which record newly acquired skills and work experience, can help in the design of post-conflict employment and income generation schemes.

Having determined the post-conflict employment needs through a needs assessment process, a national strategic employment framework can be formulated. This framework should be an integral part of the national (early) recovery strategy, and will map out gaps, objectives, response strategies, activities and actors. In simple terms, such a framework will identify what to do, when to do it, how to do, and who will do it. This framework will provide the foundation for the United Nations Country Team's employment programme response, which should be set out in an integrated and more substantive Action Plan, covering the three different employment tracks already described. The main goal of this plan is to guarantee the linkages between these different programmatic tracks supporting short, medium and long-term employment.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential components of results-based programming, and are critical to post-conflict employment programming. In the immediate post-conflict setting, M&E are particularly challenging. Developing M&E systems and formulating indicators early on are rarely priorities after a crisis, and thus these are often done too little or too late. However, since the post-conflict setting is usually dynamic and the situation is constantly evolving, employment programmes need to be constantly monitored and adapted to the changing context, increasing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of ongoing and future programmes.

THE GENDERED CHALLENGES OF POST-CONFLICT EMPLOYMENT

The fair and equal treatment of women and men is essential to promote harmonious recovery, to reduce vulnerability, prevent violence, and derive the full benefits that accrue when all development agents are engaged in the process of reconstruction. Gender-aware employment creation, income generation and reintegration programmes must be carefully set up through the post-conflict needs assessment analysis and then integrated into national development strategies, including, where necessary, through judicial reform. This requires a comprehensive gender analysis that carefully assesses roles, relations, needs and priorities.

Track A: Women's participation in temporary jobs or cash-for-work programmes can expand their marketable, non-traditional skills for later employment opportunities, and can be promoted through practical measures such as child-care, work sharing and safe mobility to and from the worksite. Women's commitment to provide for families should be protected, although a return to pre-conflict stereotypes of 'men's work' and 'women's work' should be avoided.

Track B: Local-level support mechanisms should be encouraged which allow women to participate in training and take up employment and income generation activities outside the home. For example, communities can be supported in setting up informal or formal day-care centres for children and assistance for the elderly and those disabled by war. At least in the short term, women should be supported to market skills for informal sector activities, such as selling food, or domestic labour, as the informal sector can accommodate people with less education and training and does not require as much start-up capital as formal sector employment.

Track C: A national enabling environment (of appropriate laws, regulations and institutions) that benefits gender equality in formal and informal employment should be supported. This process can be facilitated through tripartite dialogue between government, employers' and workers' organizations. A comprehensive strategy to overcome prevailing social norms that hamper gender equality in employment may need to be developed and can include sensitisation of such groups as legislators, judges, labour ministry officials, trade unions and employers.

THE CHALLENGE OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Creating sustainable employment opportunities for young people requires a comprehensive approach. Policies must recognize that youth is not a homogenous group – rather, it is a complex microcosm of society, reflecting all social differences and tensions. Policies must also recognize that young men and women face different challenges. Youth employment, income generation and reintegration programmes must both build on the strengths of young workers, such as their mobility and willingness to learn, and address their particular needs for part-time education, vocational training, and business start-up or job search skills.

Track A: Temporary jobs or cash-for-work programmes can provide valuable experience and satisfying work for young people, and also change the image of youth as spoilers. For example, special youth services groups trained in providing basic medical services can move from community to community, or youth can join emergency repair and public service programmes. Such short-term employment should be complemented with on-the-job or part-time education.

Track B: Community-based employment and livelihood support initiatives should target youth and aim to build youth employability through capacity development, vocational training and mentorship/internship/apprenticeship programmes. Support can also be given to youth organizations which sometimes develop spontaneously, as young people seek to fill conflict-related gaps in service and support provision.

Track C: Policies need to be supported which increase job opportunities for trained youth. For example, national policies can encourage the hiring of young workers by creating special internship provision and payroll, or social security tax exemptions. Start-up loans or grants can encourage young workers to become self-employed and to employ others. National policies can also create special job networks for young workers or create a national youth public service corps as an alternative to military service.

Overview of Post-Conflict Employment Programming

	Programme tracks	Target groups	Goals of intervention and assistance	Key programmes	Key issues and risks
Track A	Stabilizing income generation and emergency employment	Assistance targets high-risk conflict-affected individuals and those with urgent needs. Emphasis is placed on ex-combatants, returnees, IDPs, youth, women and other vulnerable groups.	To provide for immediate basic needs and to restore quickly key public services (such as health, security, sanitation and basic business services). This track is vital to a secure and safe environment for peacebuilding.	i) Emergency temporary jobs; and ii) Basic livelihood and start-up grants.	To create balance between, on the one hand, effective targeting of conflict-affected individuals and, on the other hand, equity considerations.
Track B	Local economic recovery for employment opportunities and reintegration	Assistance targets rural and urban communities, local governments and other authorities which are important for conflict-affected groups. Priority should be given to communities and local authorities to which ex-combatants and displaced persons choose to return.	To contribute to establishing an enabling environment at the local level to create long-term employment growth and income generation opportunities.	i) Capacity development of local governments, providers of business services and other associations; ii) Community driven recovery programmes; and iii) Local economic recovery measures.	To create opportunities for employment creation and reintegration and to enhance the capacity of conflict-affected individuals to take advantage of these opportunities.
Track C	Sustainable employment creation and decent work	Assistance targets all formal and informal labour market participants, private sector employers and employees and a wide range of stakeholders involved in social dialogue, including representatives of marginalized and vulnerable groups.	To support the sustained growth of high quality employment via enabling macro-economic, sectoral, legal and institutional programmes. Quality employment includes targeting of high risk and vulnerable groups.	i) Support to macro-economic and fiscal policies, active labour market policies and labour law and investment policies; support for employment generating sectoral policies; ii) Support for financial sector and business development services; and iii) Promotion of labour-related institutions that enhance employability, social protection and other aspects of labour administration supported and vetted by social dialogue between tripartite constituents (government, employers and workers) and other relevant stakeholders.	To provide the groundwork for a new development trajectory through capacity development and institutional development at the national level.