



# **How Do We Know Whether Development Programs Contribute to Stabilization?**

**Evaluating Multiple Programs  
in Afghanistan, Philippines, and Southern Sudan**

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Conference on Program Evaluation  
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# Policy Context: U.S. and International



- To achieve stabilization and durable peace in conflict-affected countries, socio-economic development and governance programs are regarded as essential, in addition to security forces
- No single donor or government can provide the full array of development, governance, and security programs that is needed.
- Multiple sectors and agencies of a government, and several governments and multilateral organizations, must work together



## Policy Context, cont'd

- Fiscal constraints make results-based programming imperative
- To ensure the efforts of multiple actors are achieving the overall goal of lasting stability, systematic evaluation is needed of their combined impacts on stabilization and peace.
- Yet reliable evidence is lacking about whether development programs increase stability, which programs and how.
- Workable methods are needed to define, collect, analyze, and share the evidence so as to improve the joint effort



# Challenges to Rigorous Evaluation in Conflict Countries and Fragile States

- Valid data lacking; no baselines
- Insecure environment makes collecting primary data risky; difficult to travel
- Cultural hierarchies and contending political agendas color “the public’s” opinions
- Enabling environment for programs is unstable; one aim of programs is to stabilize that environment
- Volatile, kinetic forces mean programs often fail, evaluative conclusions are short-lived



# Challenges to Evaluation, cont'd

- Extraordinary scrutiny by “home” political level, pressure to show “successes” that allow exit ASAP
- Strategic priorities may shift often, requiring frequent and ongoing feedback
- Need to assess aggregated outcomes of multiple programs with differing sectoral goals
- Separate professional and organizational cultures have differing performance criteria, time horizons, and M&E skill levels
- Reporting goes up separate silos
- Frequent staff turnover reduces institutional memory



# We Will Discuss:

- I. Three **key tasks** of evaluation in conflict-zones:
  - A. **Measuring** stabilization and peacebuilding
  - B. **Analyzing** impacts of development sectors on stabilization
  - C. **Engaging** multiple decision-makers in using the findings
  
- II. Ways our evaluation work approached these tasks to overcome challenges in 3 conflict zones
  
- III. Emerging implications



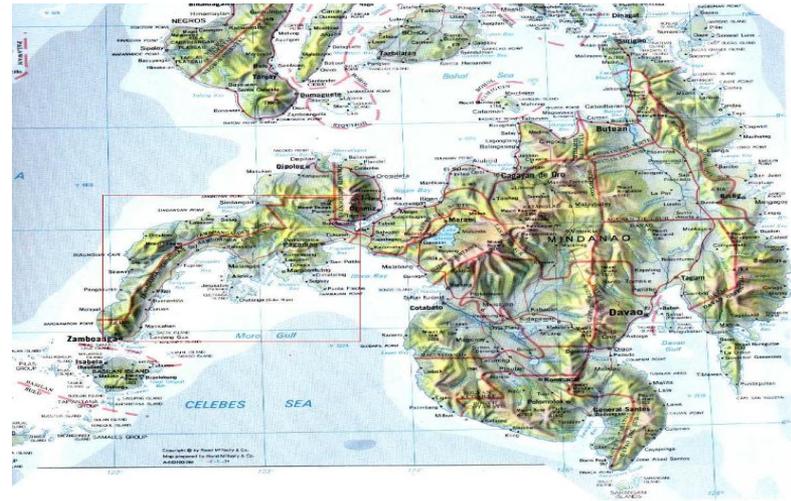
# These insights drawn from three multi-program evaluation projects:

1. **Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Program (HMEP)**, Helmand Province, **Afghanistan** for DFID PRTs to assess impacts on stabilization of donor & ISAF development, governance, and security efforts



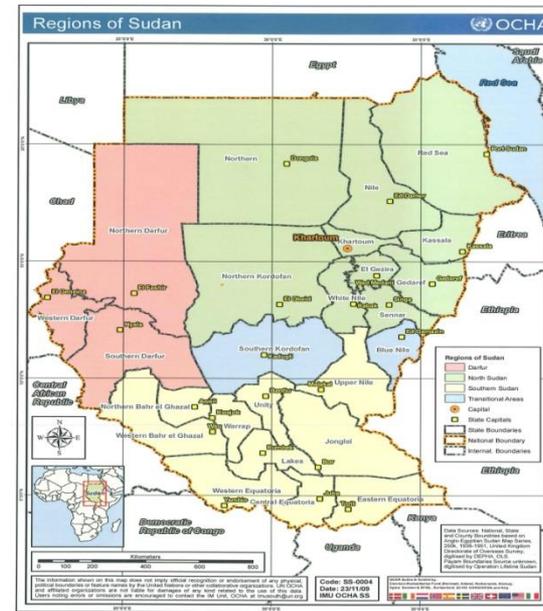


## 2. Evaluation for USAID/Philippines of all its development programs in Mindanao (southern **Philippines**) regarding their impacts in reducing sources of MILF insurgency, Abu Sayyef influence, and clan/local conflicts





### 3. Multi-donor evaluation in southern Sudan of all USAID and major donors' programs concerning their impacts in building peace since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005





# Task One: **Measuring Stabilization and Peace**

Task: Identifying the societal and security conditions that reflect overall progress toward lasting stability achieved by multiple programs. This entails:

- Defining indicators of outcomes and impacts
- Collecting data and setting baselines



# Defining indicators of outcomes and impacts

- Afghanistan (HMEP): The “Helmand Plan” defined the overall goals, based on a logical model derived from the COIN stabilisation theory of change
  - This model links the interventions’ rationales and activities to desired outcomes and impacts
  - Through prism of campaign goals; nine sectors: (e.g., agriculture, education, governance, growth, health, infrastructure, rule of law) and 10 districts
  - Examples: access to government-run health centers, confidence in police, extent of traffic on roads



## Defining indicators, cont'd

- Mindanao and Sudan: Indicators were derived in part from the sources/drivers of the conflicts identified by conflict assessments – i.e., underlying/socio-economic, institutional/policy, mobilizing, immediate factors – and existing capacities for peace
  - These indicators were grouped under the categories in OECD's Peacebuilding Evaluation framework – relevance, effectiveness, impact
  - Example: creation of judicial procedures for land disputes, reduction of pastoralist raids



# Collecting data and setting baselines

## Afghanistan

### Data tools

- Secondary data: administrative data of government/donors/military, secondary sources
- Primary data: household survey, focus groups, key informant interviews, through local partner; geo-spatial products

### Baseline & progress review

- Partial baselines for Helmand Plan elements; quarterly all-source reviews combine administrative data, public activity & public perception measures



# Collecting data and setting baselines, cont'd

## Mindanao and Sudan

### Data tools

- Same as HMEP: Administrative data, household survey, focus groups, interviews, except no survey in Sudan

### Baseline & progress review

- Mindanao: “baseline” imputed by asking how conditions in 2008 compare to turn of millenium: e.g., “Have your employment opportunities increased since 2000?”
- Sudan: Compared conflict assessments done in 2005 with 2010 assessment



## Task Two

# Analyzing impacts of development sectors on stabilization

Task: Testing the theories of change:

- Does development contribute to stabilization?
- Through which programs and causal processes?



# HMEP Analysis

Theory of change: COIN/stabilisation theory assumes better development increases population's support of government and decreases it for insurgency.

Method of analysis: Statistical and regression analysis, geospatial analysis identify correlations between developmental progress & perceptions of government/insurgents. Enables evidence-based discussions of causality and relative contributions.



# HMEP Findings

- **Governance** -- Strong correlations between increased access to information, contact with the District Governor, *and* perceptions of government legitimacy.
- **Socio-Economic Development** – Positive relationships between income; beliefs in economic growth; access to healthcare *and* perceptions of government legitimacy. And between perceived improvements in roads *and* government legitimacy.



## However...

- **Rule of Law** No significant link between tashkiel fill *and* public perceptions of the police or willingness to use them.

No significant correlation *either way* between respondents' confidence in state courts *and* trust in Taliban justice.



# Mindanao and Sudan

Theories of change are similar:

- Mindanao: Boosting funding for the diverse aid programs in Mindanao, especially Muslim areas, will reduce sources of conflicts
- Sudan: Rapid development in south will provide “peace dividend” that reduces sources of conflicts

Method of analysis Mindanao looked for attitude/perception changes, but did not correlate. Both assessed program impacts against conflict sources.



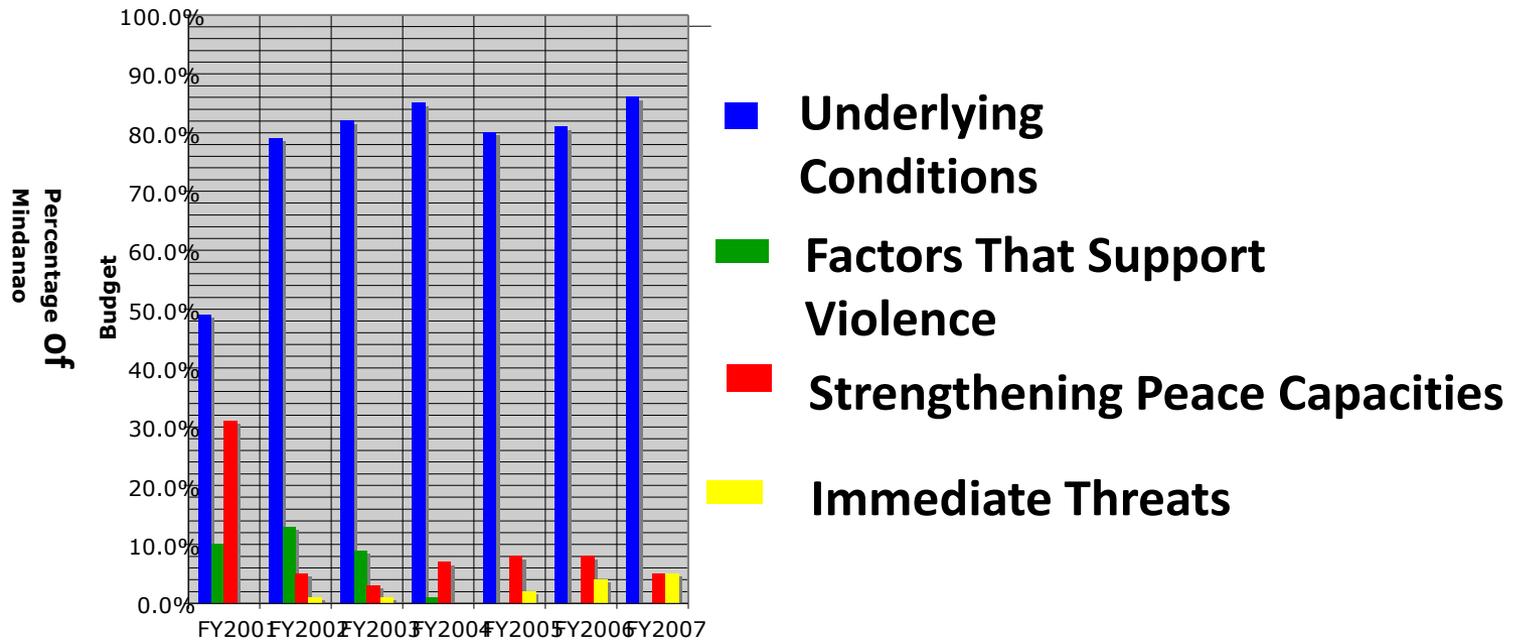
# Mindanao Findings

- Muslims noticed more special attention to their needs, perceived more opportunities and improved standard of living
- Governance in Muslim ARMM not prioritized
- A few innovative cultural initiatives addressed Islamic teachings and revenge violence (rido). Neglect of clan, election violence
- No significant reduction in the insurgent clashes or other kinds of violence



# Program priorities favored socio-economic sources of conflict:

## USAID Budget Allocations to Various Sources of Conflict in Mindanao





# Sudan Findings

- New roads boosted commerce, optimism
- State institution-building and legal reform was top-down and slow. Pooled funds cumbersome. Thus, visible material improvements did not show up at local level
- LRA raids not deterred. Pastoral conflicts continued. Displacements prolonged humanitarian needs



# Does socio-economic development promote stabilization?

- Cannot substitute for security, but can help consolidate security gains
- Needs to be structured into political settlement, human security provision & accountable governance
  - Not just socio-economic needs but linking service provision with drivers of conflict and stability
- Needs to address conflict drivers, differentiate population, and focus on key political actors
- Can also destabilize (feed corruption, political inequities)



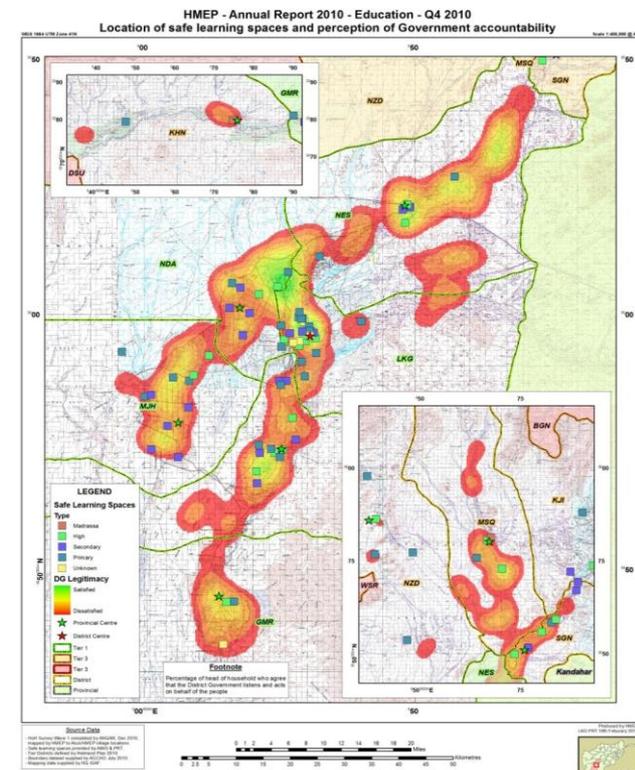
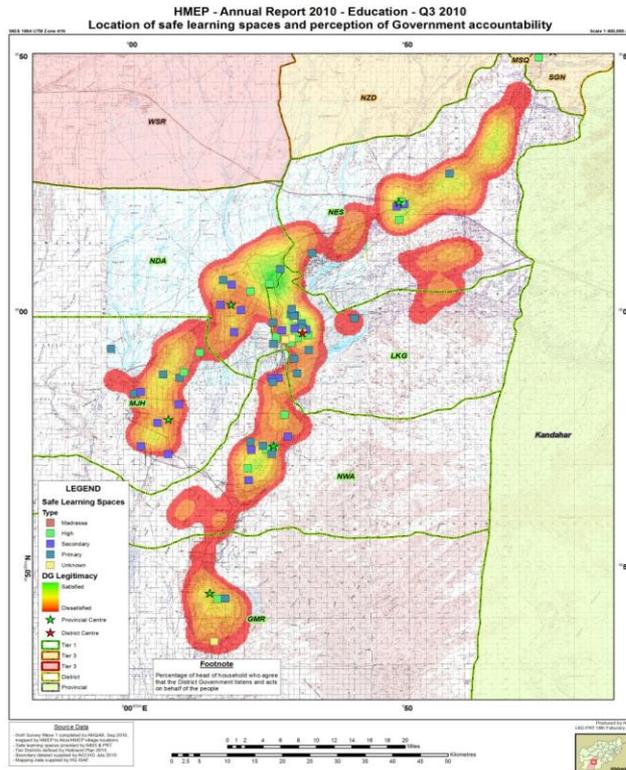
## Task Three: Engaging multiple decisionmakers in using the findings

Task: How can findings from multiple programs support decision-makers in separate organizations so they improve joint strategy? HMEP:

- Combined civ-mil reporting; 2-3 day key stakeholder workshop
- Website, database, GIS, capacity building as communication tools
- Quarterly reports, analytical paper
- Briefings for wider utilization by Kabul-based donors and ministries



# Communicating the analysis: Geospatial correlations between sites of high schools and positive perceptions of district government legitimacy





# Sudan and Mindanao Dissemination

Sudan: Extensive briefings and consultations with multiple donors, government, allowed feedback and transfer about findings

Mindanao: Report to mission led to staff training in conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive programming



# Emerging Implications

## **Assessing causality & attribution difficult:**

Understanding mechanisms requires ongoing research effort, underpinned by robust monitoring program

## **Theories of change at issue:**

Do popular perceptions matter or only elite actions?

How do improved governance and service delivery affect security?

What is key to engaging the population as an actor?

**Contextualization essential:** Program designs need grounding in frequent assessments of drivers of conflict and political economy, differentiation among population



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