Lesson 24
Understanding Civilian Assistance

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Define key terms related to civilian assistance
- Recognise the distinctions between different forms of assistance, such as the difference between humanitarian assistance and development assistance
- Identify three ways that assistance impacts or relates to security
- Identify military and police roles in civilian-led humanitarian assistance
- Identify military and police reasons for engaging in civilian assistance
- Identify civilian concerns with military and police roles in civilian assistance
- Identify principles of effective development assistance
- Identify civil society principles for assistance
- Identify methods for reducing the negative impacts of assistance

This lesson defines and identifies the scope of civilian assistance. It explores some of the reasons why civilian assistance is important to different stakeholders. It also identifies principles and best practices for anticipating and avoiding unintended impacts. Good intentions behind civilian assistance do not always lead to good impacts.

1. Terminology

Lesson 8 identified legal frameworks that guide assistance for people in need. Civilian and military organisations use different terminology in reference to assistance given to local populations.

Civilian assistance or civil aid: This is a broad term used to describe all efforts to help civilians.

Disaster Assistance: Civilian assistance given during a natural disaster. Military and police may take on civilian roles to assist with the crisis.

<u>Foreign Disaster Assistance:</u> Some militaries use this term to describe a situation where a foreign military assists civilians in another country during a crisis.

<u>Humanitarian Assistance:</u> By definition, the primary objective of humanitarian assistance or aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity through material or logistical assistance in response to natural disasters and man-made disasters.

<u>Development Assistance:</u> Also referred to as international aid, overseas aid, official development assistance (ODA), or foreign aid, supports the economic, environmental, social, and political development of developing countries.

<u>Governance Assistance:</u> An specific type of development assistance related to how society makes decisions and manages its resources. In most societies today, informal, non-state governance structures complement or exist outside of formal state governance.

The distinction between humanitarian assistance and development assistance is important. Humanitarian assistance requires strict operational requirements for neutrality, impartiality, independence and a sole goal of relieving human suffering. While humanitarian assistance addresses specific crises, development assistance provides longer-term efforts to transform the root causes of poverty, economic inequality, lack of healthcare and education, and other social problems. For this *Handbook*, the term "civilian assistance" is used to refer to both humanitarian and development assistance.

2. Relationship between Security and Assistance

There is a complex relationship between assistance and security. Scholars refer to a "security-development nexus" revealing that assistance to people in need can improve security, or it can fuel insecurity.[116]

    a. <u>Development can weaken local support for violence</u> by spreading the economic benefits of peace. Development can foster middle class and civil society actors that can put a brake on political violence.

    b. <u>Development can discourage people who might use violence or join a violent group</u> by addressing their perceived grievances and offering better economic alternatives.

    c. <u>Development can empower local change agents</u> who can make demands on their government for transparency and accountability.

3. Assistance Can Contribute to Insecurity and Fuel Support for Violence

No type of assistance, regardless of intent, has a purely neutral affect. All assistance creates winners and losers. Providing assistance is complex, and accompanying dangers can create harmful and counterproductive second and third order effects. Development experts and NGOs with decades of experience have recognised that despite their good intentions, they have often caused harm and increase local conflict by their lack of understanding of local culture and contexts. Despite the best of intentions, sometimes humanitarian and development assistance does more harm than good. International assistance, be it private or governmental, can undermine local initiative, disrupt local economies, and create a dependency trap.

    a. Any transfer of assistance resources into a community can foster corruption and unintentionally legitimate unpopular local leaders and armed groups.

    b. If development resources are perceived to benefit some groups but not others, development can exacerbate existing tensions between groups.

    c. External development assistance can free up local resources for war, relieving leaders of their responsibilities to provide basic services to citizens.

    d. If assistance is suddenly withheld or repeatedly used as a "stick" to punish support for political leaders, it can foster a backlash of support for groups that provide aid in the vacuum of international support.

    e. Inadequate development assistance funding relative to the population, geography and needs may lead dependency and inflated expectations and public frustration.

4. Sequencing of Assistance and Security

Some argue that security should come first, and assistance should follow. In counterinsurgency, for example, a "clear, hold, build" approach would see military efforts to clear and hold an area to come first, before the "build" approach which would include development assistance and governance efforts. Others

argue that security, development, and governance are interdependent. In most situations, civilian assistance and security efforts should be *simultaneous and not sequenced*.

5. Military Assistance for Humanitarian Purposes

Military forces conduct a range of activities in civilian sectors. Military leaders articulate a range of objectives for their involvement in civilian assistance. Some of these fit into the civilian definition of humanitarian assistance, aimed purely at relieving human suffering. Many civilians recognise that in the midst of a disaster or crisis, only the military has the logistical capacity to assist with infrastructure support and transportation of large-scale humanitarian assistance efforts. Many civilians also recognise that the military and police contribute to area security.

- Providing area security to help establish and maintain the basic conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance by civilian organisations
- Providing indirect assistance (transportation), logistical support or infrastructure support after natural disaster or manmade crisis as a last resort through civilian-led effort (See MCDA guidelines)

6. Military Civilian Assistance for Non-Humanitarian Purposes

Some civilian and military leaders ask military forces to take part in civilian assistance activities for non-humanitarian purposes. This list below identifies some of these purposes.

- <u>Preparing forces to work abroad through training and exercise</u>
- Improving visibility, access, and influence in support of broader military and national interests through <u>security cooperation</u>
- Providing <u>capacity building and infrastructure</u> support to help other countries prepare for crises
- Creating <u>"peace dividends"</u> to help publics see the impact of a peace process
- <u>Building confidence</u> in the good intentions of military forces; Generating collaborative relationships with a host nation's civil society as well as positive <u>public relations and goodwill</u>
- Addressing <u>perceived drivers of instability</u> and the root causes of ideological extremism
- <u>Extending the state's local legitimacy</u> and authority by gaining support and winning the loyalty of relevant communities or local elites
- <u>Countering ideological support for terrorism</u>
- <u>Gaining access to and information about specific populations</u>, including intelligence that can assist in enemy targeting

For example, the UN's Quick Impact Project (QIPs) provide peacekeeping forces with funding to do civilian projects aimed at helping local communities and in turn, adding legitimacy to the presence of UN forces.[117] International forces in Afghanistan built schools and health clinics to win support of local populations.

Some military personnel express concern that civilian tasks distract from military tasks. They would prefer to "stay in their lane" with activities that are purely military. They question the rationale for participating in civilian activities. In particular some see efforts to win the hearts and minds of local populations as "soft" and ineffective.

7. Civilian Concerns with Military Civilian Assistance

Some civilians view the increase in military-based civilian assistance activities as "instrumentalising assistance" for security purposes, thus distracting from civilian goals of poverty alleviation or relieving human suffering. A number of researchers have already documented a range of unintended consequences from complex peace operations and peacebuilding systems.[118] These unintended effects include those that obstruct the goals of international development and peacebuilding programmes, and those that adversely impact local governments and populations.[119] Civilians assert that military involvement in civilian activities has a variety of potential negative impacts, including the following:

- <u>Decreases Trust and Access:</u> Military involvement in civilian tasks or efforts to work with civilian populations can blur the distinction between civilians and combatants mandated by the Geneva Conventions. Such blurring can reduce the ability of civilian agencies to maintain trust with, and access to, people in need of assistance.
- <u>Decreases Safety</u>: Lack of distinction between civilians and military forces can result in threats to civilian beneficiaries and civilian staff.

- Undermines or Duplicates Civilian Assistance: Military involvement in civilian tasks to achieve short term political and security goals can also duplicate, undermine, or conflict with civilian activities, making assistance efforts less effective in the long term.
- Fuels Corruption, Conflict, and Unintended Impacts: Military assistance provided without proper oversight and accountability has the potential to fuel corruption or increase divisions, causing unintended second order impacts. In many instances military involvement in civilian activities have not taken adequate precautions to avoid negative impacts such as increased conflict and corruption.
- Is not cost effective: Deploying military personnel to conduct civilian assistance is often far more costly than civilian alternatives.

Civil-military guidance and coordination mechanisms are needed to address these potential negative consequences of military involvement in civilian assistance, and to allow dialogue between civilians and the military in those instances where civil-military cooperation and collaboration are appropriate and necessary.

The next two lessons on civil-military-police coordination and lessons identify the following principles for military support to civilian assistance that relate to these concerns.

8. Busan Principles for Effective Development Cooperation
The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation build off a series of international conferences highlighting best practices of development assistance.
- Local ownership of development priorities by developing countries and supporting local capacity
- Focus on sustainable results of development assistance on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality
- Inclusive development partnerships characterised by openness, trust, and mutual respect and learning between the distinct and complementary roles of all assistance actors
- Transparency and accountability to each other and the intended beneficiaries of development cooperation as well as to our respective citizens, organisations, constituents and shareholders.

The International Dialogue on *Peacebuilding and Statebuilding* is another international process to identify standards for assistance to address the root causes of security challenges.

9. NGO and CSO Assistance Standards
Umbrella networks for NGOs aim to identify best practices, standards and accountability mechanisms. The Sphere Project is a global effort to establish minimum standards in humanitarian response.

In development assistance, NGOs insist HOW assistance is provided is more important than WHAT is provided. Civil society emphasises *empowerment* and *inclusion* of local people in the planning, design & delivery of efforts to *minimise human suffering and maximise the quality of life*. Civil society organisations focus on human security goals related to the safety of individuals and communities.

Focus on Local Goals: The goal of any form of assistance is to improve the lives of local people and not to achieve foreign political or economic goals. Assistance should build programmes from the community level, focusing on local aspirations and needs.

Local Ownership and Genuine Partnership: Locally identified needs provide guidance for NGOs. Assistance should be demand driven, not supply driven. Ideally, beneficiaries invite NGOs in. Principled NGOs never impose their programmes upon communities. Assistance works best when national staff with local knowledge hold key leadership positions within the NGO. While there is a clear trend towards international NGOs hiring local people as staff members, few NGOs actually provide direct funding to locally-led independent institutions. To the extent possible, assistance should ensure local people are in charge of programme decisions that affect their communities.

Local Accountability and Sustainability: Assistance should be accountable to both donors and local beneficiaries. The objectives and budgets of any assistance should be transparent so that they can be understood and examined by local governments and communities. NGOs are accountable for the positive and negative impacts of their assistance efforts. They are responsible for monitoring, evaluating programmes and redesigning their plans if their assistance efforts cause harm. All programmes should be for sustainable.

CSOs met in Istanbul, Turkey in 2010 to outline "Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles." These principles guide the work and practices of civil society organisations in both peaceful and conflict situations, in different areas of work from grassroots to policy advocacy, and in a continuum from humanitarian emergencies to long-term development.

- Respect and promote human rights and social justice.
- Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls' rights.
- Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation, with an emphasis on the poor and marginalised.
- Promote environmental sustainability with specific attention to the socio-economic, cultural and indigenous conditions for ecological integrity and justice.
- Practice transparency, accountability, and integrity in their internal operations.
- Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity with other CSOs and development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organisational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship.
- Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning, including the knowledge and wisdom of local and indigenous communities.
- Commit to realising positive sustainable change, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.

10. "Do No Harm" Approach

Assistance is never simple or inherently good. All assistance efforts change dynamics in the local context. All forms of assistance have frequent unintended consequences, also known as second order effects. There are no completely neutral assistance interventions. When assistance is given without a thorough understanding of the local conflicts and divisions between groups, assistance can easily and frequently create further conflict or do more harm than good.[120] Most civil society organizations, including NGOs, have taken steps to anticipate and mitigate any negative impacts through specialised *Do No Harm* training that enables them to provide conflict-sensitive assistance.

Conflict Sensitivity is an approach to programming and policymaking that recognises the potential influence for any type of intervention to cause harm. It is also referred to as *"Do No Harm."* Conflict-sensitive policies, programmes and projects aim to minimise unintentional negative impacts that may drive conflict and cause further social divisions while maximising positive impacts on the context that mitigate conflict and bridge social divides. Conflict assessment and self-assessment research is central to conflict sensitive policies, programmes and projects in human rights, humanitarian assistance, development and related efforts.

Lesson 13 on Conflict Assessment Tools outlines how the Do No Harm method for assessment of context works to reduce unintended consequences and improve the design of programmes to foster resilience. In addition, when bringing aid resources into a complex operational environment, Do No Harm approaches strive to be aware of the following five dangers:[121]

a. Theft: Armed groups may steal assistance to support their forces or to sell to raise money to buy weapons.
b. Market Effects: Aid may undermine the local civilian economy by making it difficult for local producers to find a market for their goods and reinforce the war economy where people benefit from the continuation of violence.
c. Distributional effects: Assistance given to some groups and not to others can reinforce lines of conflict and increase divisions between groups.
d. Substitution Effects: Foreign assistance can substitute for local resources held by the government or armed opposition groups that would have been used to meet civilian needs, thus freeing up resources needed to continue to wage war and making it possible for local governments to not provide for its own citizens. Donor driven assistance can also discourage local volunteerism and create a brain drain of staff toward international efforts rather than local, national government and non-profit agencies.
e. Legitimisation Effects: Assistance can unintentionally provide legitimacy to armed groups on all sides of a conflict who control territory where assistance is provided. When NGOS engage with such groups to demand access to a given territory, they accept them as the "de-facto" authorities, although the government or other actors may still be in control of the affected area.

For example, when security forces go into a community and build a school or hire a contractor to build a school, a range of unintended impacts could occur.

- It could be a disincentive for participation in programmes that require volunteers.
- It could be inadvertently placed on land that privileges one group within the community.
- It could bring in resources to the community that are siphoned off by contractors, fuelling corruption, or worse, end up in the hands of violent groups.

"Do no harm" is a commitment that all groups offering assistance can avoid harming others intentionally or unintentionally by ensuring all programmes, particularly transfers of resources, are sensitive to dynamics in local conflicts and divisions.

11. Conflict-Sensitive Assistance

A conflict sensitive approach to assistance examines whether there is an inclusive and transparent process for designing the assistance programme, involving local leadership, if not input, into decision-making at every possible step, from design of the project to who is involved to where and when it takes place and how it is evaluated. Conflict sensitive assistance asks, "How will the assistance exhibit caution in every step so that it does not inadvertently increase tensions or re-affirm existing power structures and divisions between groups?" A conflict sensitive design of any type of assistance effort continually questions the following:[122]

a. <u>Where will the assistance take place?</u> Will those who live further away resent the geographical location of the project? Will there be a local office for the project? Will the location of this office favour one side of the conflict? How will local people perceive the location of and standard of living at the office in relation to the standard of living of local people?

b. <u>Where will resources for the assistance come from?</u> Will funds be used to buy local goods and services? How will decisions be made about which local vendors are used? Will they come from all sides of the conflict?

c. <u>Who will benefit from the assistance?</u> Will those left out of the project resent those who benefit or those who helped them? Is there a way of structuring the project so that neighbouring communities can also benefit at some point?

d. <u>Who will staff the assistance?</u> Do they represent people from all sides of the conflict? Will those not represented resent those who are? Will all staff be evacuated if violence should take place? If not, how will security decisions be made and prepared for ahead of time?

e. <u>Why is the assistance being provided?</u> Are the goals of the assistance transparent?

f. <u>What will the assistance impact?</u> How might the project be negatively impacted by the conflict-affected context? How might the context be negatively affected by the peacebuilding effort?

g. <u>How will resources be brought into the local context to support the assistance?</u> What intended or unintended impacts will these financial, material, or human resources have on the local context?

h. <u>When will the assistance take place?</u> Will some people be left out because of the time of day or year when it will happen?

SUMMARY

Civilian assistance will be an important set of activities in any complex environment. Many different stakeholders will be providing civilian assistance. This lesson surveyed the different forms of civilian assistance. It also outlined the tensions between civilian, military and police roles in civilian assistance. For all stakeholders, there is often a gap between the good intentions and unintended impacts of civilian assistance. This lesson described the standards and principles for civilian assistance that help to mitigate, anticipate and prevent unintended impacts.

Citations

[116] See the following publications for a discussion on the relationship between civilian assistance and security:
Paul Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler, *Greed and Grievance in Civil War,* (Washington DC: The World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355, 2002).

Kim Cragin and Peter Chalk. *Terrorism and Development: Using Social and Economic Development to Inhibit a Resurgence of Terrorism, (*Washington, DC: RAND, 2003).

Lael Brainard and Derek Chollet. Editors. *Too Poor for Peace?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2007).

Mark Halle. Sonia Peña Moreno. Sebastian Winkler. Editors. *Trade, Aid, and Security,* (London: Earthscan, 2007).

Coralie Bryant and Christina Kappaz. *Reducing Poverty, Building Peace.* (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 2005).

Lael Brainard, editor, *Security By Other Means.* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2007).

[117] "Quick Impact Projects – A tool for confidence-building" in *Civil Affairs Handbook. United National Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support,* (New York: United Nations. 12 March 2012).

[118] See Aoi, Chiyuki, Thakur, Ramesh Chandra, De Coning, Cedric. Eds. *Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations*, (New York: United Nations University Press, 2007).

[119] Hull, Cecilia, Mikael Eriksson, Justin MacDermott, Fanny Rudén and Annica Waleij, *Managing Unintended Consequences of Peace Support Operations*, (Stockholm, Sweden: FOI Swedish Defence Research Agency, December 2009).

[120] Mary Anderson. *Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace - or War,* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010).

[121] See CDA Collaborative Learning Projects for more information on this training programme on conflict sensitivity and "Do No Harm," http://www.cdacollaborative.org/programs/do-no-harm/, accessed October 2015.

[122] Excerpted from Schirch, Lisa. *Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning*. Kumarian Press, 2013.

Lesson 24   Learning Exercises

Anchor   *10 minutes*

To begin the lesson, anchor the content in this lesson with a series of questions:
- What is one experience you have had in your life where someone else offered you assistance when you were in need?
- Based on your experiences, what do you think are the links between civilian assistance – helping local populations – and security?

Add   *20 minutes*

Present the PowerPoint slides or ask participants to discuss the lesson readings in a small group.

Apply   *25 minutes*

The goal of this exercise is to understand the role of civilian assistance in a complex environment. An earthquake occurs in each scenario. It is now eight months after the humanitarian crisis. The government declares a shift from humanitarian assistance to development assistance. The military had a significant role in humanitarian assistance. The Ministry of Interior announces that $300 million in remaining funds for assisting civilians in recovering from the earthquake will be channelled through military forces to build positive relationships with citizens and counter violent extremism.

Each scenario stakeholder team should assess their reaction to this announcement. Each group has thirty minutes to develop an initial response and to negotiate with other stakeholders to develop a plan for how remaining civic assistance funds should be spent. Groups may continue to discuss internally their own plan, or work with other stakeholders to reach a joint plan. Then, each stakeholder team or group of teams has two minutes to outline their plan and/or to oppose the plans of other groups.

Debrief with open questions about the challenges and trade-offs in this role-play.

See the "Scenario-based Learning" section in the Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum for explanation of the scenarios and teams.

Away   *5 minutes*

In a large group, participants can discuss this question:

- What will I take away from this lesson on civilian assistance that might impact the way I do my work in the future?