



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE



## CASE STUDY ON CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN PAKISTAN

This Case Study is from "Toolkit on Monitoring and Evaluation of Environmental Peacebuilding 2023"

[m-and-environmentalpeacebuilding.org/toolkit](https://m-and-environmentalpeacebuilding.org/toolkit)



Many communication gaps and challenges are grounded in socio-cultural differences that stem from a lack of cultural/contextual sensitivity in M&E programming. In an analysis of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA) conducted by International Development Agencies (IDAs) in Pakistan, scholar Zahid Ahmed found that many local project staff of IDAs frequently questioned the need for PCIA on specific projects and had “suspicions attached to PCIA and related tools, and they perceive it as yet another evaluating tool coming from the West and thus something they don’t find relevant to their work” For example, those using PICA in Pakistan found issue with the term “impact” because “it is not something which could be measured on a short-term basis, as most of the development projects have a timeline of no more than 5 years,” evidencing epistemological/conceptual differences (Ahmed, 2011) Moreover, there is general disagreement between donors and aid facilitators working for IDAs in countries receiving aid. Citing Neufeldt, Ahmed explains,

“There are two groups with distinct approaches to development interventions: “frameworkers” and “circlers.” For “frameworkers”, there is a linear relationship between peace-building program design, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. “Circlers” on the other hand often are interested in immeasurable aspects because they seek community based processes and view available frameworks as too focused”.

In the development sector, “frameworkers” are people working at headquarters of numerous IDAs and “circlers” are local workers for the IDA or for partnering NGOs. “Circlers” critique “frameworkers” for being too rigid, biased, and grounded in Western thinking. Contrastingly, “frameworkers” view “circlers” methodologies as too vague. Further tension is produced between these groups of people because of resulting power dynamics involved in design and M&E processes. Ahmed writes, “It became clear during my field study that people perceived PCIA as yet another evaluating exercise to look at the impact of funding coming to those NGOs. As a result, “frameworkers” have the challenge of measuring the outcome or impact of their peace-building endeavors but receive resistance from “circlers” who are not always included in the design of evaluation methodologies.

Further research may apply Neufeldt’s concept of “frameworkers” and “circlers” specifically in the field of environmental peacebuilding and identify if/how M&E methodologies, frameworks, and theories yield similar suspicions and critical feedback based on Western or colonial epistemology. Research should examine the existence of context specific guidelines and tools on environmental peacebuilding M&E and how all stakeholders may be included to produce/incorporate such cultural sensitivity.

### AT A GLANCE

#### MONITORING

- Cultural Sensitivity