

**The following is an excerpt from the Preserve and Adapt: Education and Training for Responding to Conflict and Humanitarian Emergencies. Report and Recommendations by the Integrated Education and Training Working Group January 2012:**

## **Conflict Prevention**

### **HARNESS EXISTING TOOLS AND CAPACITY TO SHARE THE SPACE**

#### THE SITUATION

Significant conflict prevention capacity exists. Analytical capacity is available in the form of monitoring and early warning systems, understanding how states fall into conflict, and tools for identifying conflict drivers and resiliencies. Nongovernmental organizations characterize their work primarily as structural prevention and have been building lessons learned for decades. Increasingly, the U.S. government and international organizations, such as the World Bank and the United Nations, are re-crafting traditional work (security, development, diplomacy, and economic) to fortify vulnerable and conflict-prone states. The U.S. government is also placing increasing emphasis on reorienting its conflict response capacity. This shift will place government actors increasingly in the space that nongovernmental actors have worked in for many years.

To date this existing and emerging capacity is not used consistently and systematically to prevent conflict. Initiatives to protect vulnerable populations (including, Responsibility to Protect, prevention of gender-based violence) and prevent mass atrocities highlight the difficulties in developing coherent strategies and operational approaches for conflict prevention.

Acknowledging these circumstances, the IETWG notes the importance of further and better defining of prevention, including a clearer understanding of how and if conflict response techniques do apply, and identifying appropriate institutional roles and responsibilities. The Working Group also agreed that leaders and practitioners need to:

Recognize that fragile and failed states are neither developing nor necessarily secure and standard security assistance and development programs may in fact aggravate conflict vulnerabilities.

- Develop coherent multi-tooled and multi-actor strategies for vulnerable states of the future that are encumbered with more obdurate conflict sets caused by serial incidents of violence and the co-mingling of conflict drivers.
- Recognize that nongovernmental and civil society organizations have developed education and training based on their considerable experience in structural prevention, which should be used to inform other institutions as they shift to prevention work and to develop more coherent official/non-official approaches.

## HARNESSING EXISTING CAPACITY: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training has a central role to play in introducing new prevention tools and approaches to conventional foreign policy work by providing access to critical conflict management experts and skills (such as conflict assessment, mediation and negotiation, etc.). It can also help develop coherent multi-actor prevention responses, which require a shared perspective on the cause of conflict, a shared strategy, and a firm understanding of institutional roles and capacities—practices that integrated education and training can provide.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Map institutional roles and develop lessons on how institutions do prevention and how conflict response and traditional diplomacy/development work might be applicable to prevention with special focus on the experiences of non-governmental and civil society organizations.
2. The Busan Declaration, which provided commitment to and consensus on a development approach for engaging fragile and conflict-affected states, provides a unique opportunity to discuss USG, NGO and civil society roles and more coherent approaches to assessment, planning, etc. Use Busan recommendations to guide a “roles and mapping” session.
3. Based on existent education and training, develop a framework for conflict prevention curricula, identifying core skills and competencies.
4. Take advantage of upcoming integrated conflict prevention education and training opportunities
  - a. In June, Ft. Leavenworth/Combined Arms Center is developing a Mass Atrocity Response Operation two-day table top exercise for civilians to be held in conjunction with a military exercise.
  - b. UNITAR is developing courses on preventive diplomacy based on a United Nations study on the topic. Working group members are welcome to send participants.