# IFP-EW SUMMARY REPORT

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## MISSION STATEMENT

THE INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING – EARLY WARNING ANALYSIS TO ACTION (IFP-EW) WAS A CONSORTIUM LED BY INTERNATIONAL ALERT AND FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION. IT DREW ON THE EXPERTISE OF TEN MEMBERS COMPRISING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS, NETWORKS AND UNIVERSITIES AND THREE ASSOCIATES WITH OFFICES ACROSS THE EU AND IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES. ITS AIM WAS TO DEVELOP AND HARNESS INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE IN THE FIELD OF CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING TO ENSURE THAT ALL STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING EU INSTITUTIONS, CAN ACCESS STRONG, INDEPENDENT, LOCALLY-DERIVED ANALYSIS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE BETTER INFORMED AND MORE EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY AND PROGRAMMING DECISIONS.

# ABOUT IFP-EW

IfP-EW was launched in 2009 as a result of a call for proposals from the European Commission under the Instrument for Stability. The three-year IfP-EW project was structured into four parallel clusters on various dimensions of early warning and conflict prevention: Climate Change and Conflict; Improving Institutional Capacity for Early Warning; Media, Information Flows and Conflict; Youth, Identity and Security. The three thematic clusters on climate change, media, and youth explored multiple drivers of fragility and conflict, while the institutional capacity cluster represented the horizontal dimension of institutional constraints to early warning-early action within the context of the European Union.

From a micro-level discussion of armed violence, to exploring the multiplying impact of climate change and media, this summary of the thematic clusters introduce some cross-cutting perspectives of conflict and conflict prevention that have real added-value for the development and implementation of early warning conflict-prevention policy. Added to this, the institutional capacity overview presents just some of the complex issues that have to be taken into consideration by those designing or working within an early warning conflict prevention system.

One of the key strengths of the project lay in its success in improving collaboration and networking amongst research institutions, think-tanks, academia and civil society organisations, thereby bringing together a wealth of expertise and experience on conflict prevention and peacebuilding from a variety of perspectives. In addition, the project has advanced EW dialogue and strengthened collaboration within EU institutions on responses to early warning and conflict prevention.

# YOUTH, IDENTITY AND SECURITY

The IfP-EW Youth, Identity and Security cluster brought together activities by **La Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Interpeace, and University of Coimbra's Peace Study Group (NEP/CES).** This cluster took a micro approach to conflict, addressing the day-to-day realities of youth violence, urban violence and the gender dimension of armed violence in order to increase our understanding of how these phenomena catalyse violence and sustain conflict and fragility. In particular, the cluster focused on how local communities respond to the (non-)provision of security and justice and assessed how government and donor policies have an impact on these issues through case studies from **Cape Verde, El Salvador, Brazil, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Mozambique, and Venezuela.**

The following reports from this cluster are available:

R. Santos and S. Gratius (Interpeace et al) (2012). *Youth, Identity and Security: Cluster Synthesis Report.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

S. Gratius and M. Valença (FRIDE) (2012). *Urban Violence in Caracas and Rio de Janeiro: Local and European Responses.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

I. Aguilar Umaña and J. Rikkers (Interpeace) (2012). *Nine Strategies to Prevent Youth Violence in Central America: Policy recommendations for the European Union.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

R. Santos, S. Roque, S. Araújo and T. Moura (NEP/CES) (2012). *Women and gun violence: Key Findings from Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), San Salvador (El Salvador) and Maputo (Mozambique).* IfP-EW: Brussels.

I. Aguilar Umaña and J. Rikkers (Interpeace) (2012). *Violent women and violence against women: Gender Relations in the maras and Other Street Gangs of Central America's Northern Triangle Region.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

C. Alfonso, K. Cardoso, R. Santos and S. Roque (NEP/CES) (2012). *Youth and Urban Violence in San Salvador, Rio de Janeiro and Praia Public Policies, Community-based Responses and Recommendations.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

K. Cardoso, R. Santos, S. Roque and T. Moura (NEP/CES) (2011). *Youth, Collective Urban Violence and Security: Key Findings.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

The findings from this work challenge the dominant confrontational, militarised, or security-focused responses to armed violence, and put forward alternative policy responses and activities that seek to reduce overall violence in society in order to contribute to healthier and more peaceful societal relations.

A valuable lesson from the work of the youth, identity and security cluster is that **all forms of armed violence, including violence affecting and perpetrated by youth, are an important component of conflict.** Moreover, whilst many prevention and combat programmes designed to address urban violence or gangs have been aimed almost exclusively at men and boys, there has been little effort to examine the roles and impacts of gun violence on women and girls.

Armed violence does not only affect those directly associated with guns. The IfP-EW study of Rio de Janeiro, San Salvador and Maputo found that the effects reach much further, and that a large part of the population are and will continue to be confronted with "indirect" or "secondary" effects of armed violence. It is, therefore, apparent that these **secondary effects, such as health and psychological problems, can easily contribute to vulnerability and fragility of a society, making it susceptible to the spread of conflict.**

A further important observation repeated throughout the IfP-EW case studies is that, **despite being often depicted as the aggressors, youth and especially the poor who experience marginalisation and inequality can also be the main victims of violence.** Therefore, a more nuanced approach is required that goes beyond a "youth as the problem" or "youth as victims" perspective, and aims for more inclusive and participatory development and implementation of policies and programmes that disproportionately affect youth within a society.

Moreover, integrating youth as protagonists and full citizens capable of fostering change within local, national, and international programmes is seen as imperative to address youth violence in general. This includes the integration of a youth perspective into public policies areas, such as employment and marginalised neighbourhoods, but also supporting initiatives on youth financial management and capacity building.

Finally, as a technical intervention, **greater support for the production and systematisation of data on violence and on the participation of youth in violent activities could further facilitate understanding of the role youth plays in conflicts and the effects of that role.** This would build on the work that the cluster has produced as a foundation.

## IMPACT

Through the activities of the cluster partner organisations and their local and international networks, the youth, identity and security cluster has succeeded in increasing the understanding of factors that catalyse violence and has highlighted the added value of inclusive and multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of conflict prevention.

The cluster has outlined a strong evidence base for the link between youth armed violence and fragility, which have traditionally been isolated from each other both in terms of analysis and programming. The importance of seeing the potential, as well as the "threat", from youth, and the gender dimension to youth armed violence were key messages that will, it is hoped, contribute to increased nuance in early warning analysis and preventive actions that affect youth.

# CLIMATE CHANGE

adelphi, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), International Alert, and Partners for Democratic Change International (PDCI) all contributed to the work of the IfP-EW Climate Change and Conflict cluster. The cluster looked at an area of policy that, while relevant, is not always considered within policy making and programming on peace and conflict. Through its activities and analysis in **Southern Europe and the Mediterranean, Argentina, Mexico, India, Nepal, the Philippines and Uganda,** the partners were able to elaborate the links between climate change, conflict and fragility, and advance thinking on ways to respond to climate change-related risks whilst avoiding violence. The cluster also addressed the potential for improved climate change governance as a means of managing and preventing conflict.

The following reports from this cluster are available:

D. Taenzler, J. Vivekanada, D. Kolarova and T. Dokos (adelphi et al) (2012) *Climate Change and Conflict. Synthesis Report.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

J. Vivekananda (International Alert) (2011). *Practice Note: Conflict-Sensitive Responses to Climate Change in South Asia.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

D. Taenzler, L. Ruettinger, K. Ziegenhagen and G. Murthy (adelphi) (2011). *Water, Crisis and Climate Change in India: A Policy Brief.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

L. Ruettinger, D. Taenzler, Dr. P. Musana and B. Narcisio (adelphi) (2011). *Water, Crisis and Climate Change in Uganda: A Policy Brief.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

F. Brodziak, A. L. García and L. Gómez Chow (PDCI) (2011). *Climate Change Impacts on Socio-environmental Conflicts Vulnerability in Facing Climate Change and Social Conflicts in Mexico.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

L. Ruettinger, A. Morin, A. Houdret, D. Taenzler, and C. Burnley (adelphi) (2011). *Water, Crisis and Climate Change Assessment Framework (WACCAF).* IfP-EW: Brussels.

P. Lumerman, J. Psathakis and M. de los Ángeles Ortiz (PDCI) (2011). *Climate Change Impacts on Socio-environmental Conflicts: Diagnosis and Challenges of the Argentinean Situation.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

J.Vivekananda and D. Smith (International Alert) (2009). *Climate Change Conflict and Fragility.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

The rationale for analysing climate change within this framework is that **it can negatively affect livelihoods in many developing countries and increase competition over natural resources in many places, thereby becoming a threat multiplier for other conflict dynamics**, such as poverty, ethnic strife and demographic change. Despite this, climate change is largely perceived as an area of technical intervention and is restricted to policy areas dealing with environmental issues. However, climate interventions are not merely technical. Programmes to address drought or water scarcity are in themselves potential drivers of conflict if, for example, they create asymmetry of access amongst communities who may already be experiencing conflict.

The case studies demonstrated that the local reality of the effects of climate change, such as weakened access to natural resources, can also signify a challenge to peace. The physical effects of climate change can have an impact on the quality of life and vulnerability of communities, for example the availability of water resources does not only have consequences for cultivation and food security, but also for water-borne diseases and corresponding public health implications.

**In addition to those physical effects, there are also socio-economic consequences of climate change, for example, tourism.** Furthermore, the loss of infrastructure caused by an increase in severe weather events can lead to more general disruption of economic activity. Added to the potential for climate change to induce migration, the links between climate change and conflict become apparent.

The synthesis report of the cluster's work identifies some key recommendations to address the nexus of climate change and policy making on conflict. The report highlights **the importance of integrating climate change information into early warning systems by including climate change risks in EW analysis at different levels** (e.g. local, national, and regional actors) and in different sectors, such as development or post-conflict interventions.

Conflict-sensitive climate change policy is another key recommendation, as well as the encouragement of the conceptual link between climate change and conflict prevention at policy level; for instance, **by ensuring that due consideration is shown for how**

**environmental crisis events, such as flooding, might impact on the conflict dynamic in a country.** Furthermore, bridging the gap between top-down and bottom-up responses is also key. Whilst policy makers should enhance the conceptual links between climate change and conflict, there should also be efforts to support community awareness and action on the links between climate change events and trends, and relations between groups in society.

## IMPACT

The findings of the Climate Change and Conflict cluster set out a clear case for including climate change risks as a vital component of assessing conflict risks and planning preventive action, citing evidence of links between asymmetrical access to natural resources as a result of climate change, weather events, and even the potential conflict risks from technical climate-related programmes that can inadvertently exacerbate unequal access to resources or economic benefits.

The observations and recommendations that have arisen from the cluster's work illustrate the success of this research in drawing out new insights on the links between climate change events and conflict. The reports on the case studies and activities offer more details on how the climate change cluster has built on our understanding of how these interlinked issues can be integrated into the policy and response mechanisms of local, national, regional and international institutions, including the EU.

# MEDIA, INFORMATION FLOWS AND CONFLICT

The IfP-EW Media, Information Flows and Conflict cluster was comprised of three partner organisations: **Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), International Alert and Search for Common Ground (SFCG).** The cluster addressed a key factor of conflict with the ability to turn fragility into open and widespread violence. Understanding information flows in fragile or conflict-affected states is vital to conflict prevention and early warning. How people receive and transmit information about their country, their community and their place within them is central to their perception of peace and security as well as their relationship to their state, nation, neighbours and community. An open and professional media is thus a necessary, although insufficient on its own, component of a peaceful society.

The cluster conducted research, capacity-building training and exchanges of media professionals in five post-conflict contexts: **Kosovo/Serbia, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste.** Through three case studies on Liberia, Nepal and Sierra Leone, it sought to identify: how people access information about their communities and states; how the type of information people are able to access contributes to or undermines peace; what challenges the media face in providing reliable information within the post-conflict context.

The following reports from this cluster are available:

Z. Candan and R. Reeve (International Alert) (2012). *Media, Information Flows and Conflict: Cluster Synthesis Report. Working with Media to Prevent Conflict.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

N. Oatley and R. Thapa (SFCG) (2012). *Media, Youth and Conflict Prevention in Sierra Leone.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

R. Reeve (International Alert) (2011). *Sustaining the Conversation: Media, Information Flows and Conflict in Liberia.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

R.Gurung (International Alert) (2011). *Journalism in Transition: Media, Information Flows and Conflict in Nepal.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

One of the key messages from the cluster is the vital importance of access to media and other forms of information and communication. Given the challenges of accessibility, infrastructure and illiteracy that typically characterise fragile and conflict-affected states, radio and mobile phones often prove to be more accessible than print media, television or the internet. For example, in the IfP-EW case study in Liberia, the destruction and looting of the electricity and telecommunications infrastructure during the civil war has meant that most of the country is now largely dependent on battery-powered radios and, increasingly, mobile phones for information. **As much as media and information have an impact on conflict, the example from Liberia also illustrates the impact of conflict on media production and access to information.**

The quality of information is another key factor in early warning and conflict prevention, and media can play a significant role in dispelling rumours or neutralising contentious issues with sensitivity. They also participate in building the state-citizen relationship, as well as promoting social cohesion. Inadequate reporting or reporting that lacks conflict sensitivity can exacerbate tensions and reduce the possibility of media playing a constructive role in reconciliation, conflict management and resolution. **Self-censorship or under-reporting can also affect public perceptions of conflict factors, whether it be government policies or under-reporting of issues affecting women,** as was observed in the IfP-EW Nepal case study. In addition, the Nepal study highlights how impunity towards threats and violence against media personnel contributes to the phenomena of self-censorship and under-reporting, which in turn weakens the conflict prevention and management potential of the media.

In response to some of the media and information flow challenges, an IfP-EW media workshop for young Serb and Kosovar-Albanian journalists experimented with fostering a dialogue between media professionals on the common problems that they encounter, such as personal security and pressure from editorial and corporate media authorities. This was not the only approach utilised by the cluster partners. In the IfP-EW Sierra Leone case study, cluster partners explored the youth dimension alongside media due to the historical use of radio to mobilise youth and incite violence during elections. This research used surveys, interviews and focus groups with youth groups, media personnel, community groups and civil society to bring together a range of perspectives on the relationship between these drivers of conflict. Finally, the Nepal study **sought to address accessibility challenges by making use of innovative methods, such as conducting a survey of radio listeners using SMS messages.**

The work of the Media, Information flows and Conflict cluster represents an in-depth review of exactly how media and information can positively or negatively influence conflict, as well as the challenges faced by media personnel in conflict-affected or fragile contexts. **In the synthesis of the cluster findings, seven guiding principles for EU engagement with information providers in conflict-affected contexts have been put forward:** (1) understand the context of existing information provision and exclusion; (2) prioritise the sustainability of information providers; (3) embrace new technologies for communication and early warning; (4) prioritise professional and conflict-sensitive reporting standards; (5) work for equal access to information; (6) strengthen media-state communication and grievance mechanisms to protect journalists; (7) support the regulatory environment for quality journalism.

These observations and recommendations are not just valuable for EU actors, but also for any organisation or actor working on media assistance or conflict programmes in fragile contexts, as they increase our understanding of how media and information flows can either turn fragility into open, widespread violence, or encourage peaceful ways of addressing conflict through communication, accountability and trust between the state and society.

## IMPACT

The Media, Information Flows and Conflict cluster advanced the discussion of media's interrelation with conflict by bringing together analysis, not only on the multiplying effect of media on conflict, but also by looking at how conflicts affect the ability of media to operate. This additional dimension could promote an approach to media support that includes context-driven understanding of how information flows and what challenges media personnel confront in playing a conflict-sensitive role in conflict-affected and fragile environments. Capacity-building on conflict-sensitive journalism with personnel from media institutions across Liberia, Nepal and Timor-Leste also left a legacy of better trained and connected journalists ahead of some critical post-conflict elections.

# INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR EARLY WARNING

The IfP-EW partners collaborating in this work were the **Conflict Research Unit of The Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael), FRIDE, International Alert, NEP/CES** and **Saferworld.** The aims of the Institutional Capacity for Early Warning cluster were to explore the systemic blockages and policies that constrain institutions from acting fully and promptly on available early analyses. Through eight country case studies in **Armenia, Bolivia, Colombia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Sudan/South Sudan and Venezuela,** as well as mapping reports on the EU's EW architecture, the cluster identified a range of general and EU-specific challenges for early warning-early response.

The following reports are available from this cluster:

T. Beswick (Clingendael) (2012). *Improving Institutional Capacity For Early Warning: Synthesis Report.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

T. Beswick (Clingendael) (2012). *EU Early Warning and Early Response Capacity for Conflict Prevention in the post-Lisbon Era.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

J. van der Zwan (International Alert) (2011). *Evaluating the EU's Role and Challenges in Sudan and South Sudan.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

M. R. Freire and L. Simão (NEP/CES) (2011). *Multilevel Dynamics in the EU's Approach to Preventive Action in Armenia.* IfPEW: Brussels.

M. Yacoub (International Alert) (2011). *Conflict early warning challenges in a post war context: The case of the EU in Sri Lanka.* IfPEW: Brussels.

S. Babaud and K. Quinn Judge (Saferworld) (2011). *Early warning, early response? Learning lessons from the 2010 crisis in Kyrgyzstan.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

S. Babaud and J. Ndung'U.(Saferworld) (2011). *Early Warning and Conflict prevention by the EU: learning lessons from the 2008 post-election crisis in Kenya.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

S. Gratius (FRIDE) (2011). *The EU's potential and limits for early warning in Bolivia, Colombia and Venezuela. Comparative case study of Bolivia, Colombia and Venezuela.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

L. Montanaro and J. Schünemann (FRIDE/International Alert) (2011). *Walk the Talk: the EU needs an effective early warning system to match its ambitions to prevent conflict and promote peace.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

S. Babaud and N. Mirimanova (Saferworld) (2011). *The European Commission Early Warning Architecture and Crisis Response Capacity.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

J. Hemmer and R. Smits (Clingendael) (2010). *The Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Capability of the Council of the European Union.* IfP-EW: Brussels.

Preventive action has slowly emerged as a legitimate and desirable component of international action to reduce the impact of violence in countries affected by deeply-rooted conflicts. However, the concept of early preventive action brings its own unique challenges. It does not allow the luxury of long timeframes for planning and generating impacts, or for addressing a conflict that has already erupted (where the conflict dynamics are, therefore, more visible).

As a result, the cluster partners **aimed to generate findings and recommendations that reflected these inherent challenges and distinct constraints within the EU context.** This was achieved by ensuring that EU actors were integrated into the data collection process, for example through key informant interviews with EU actors in-country, at the Brussels level, EU Member State representatives in country and in capitals. In addition, non-state actors and civil society in country and in Brussels contributed experience and expertise of EW and conflict prevention to help to identify both challenges and opportunities for EU early warning going forward.

In order to provide practical analysis on an EW system that could meet the criterion of bringing early action to fruition, **the cluster worked within the framework of an early warning cycle, looking at conflict analysis, the communication of analysis and warnings, decision making on early action, and the EU's capacity to act.**

The cluster identified **institutional constraints at a variety of levels; for example, some related to political commitment, while others related more to capacity or organisational practice.** One example is a key finding on conflict analysis capacity, which was drawn from the IfP-EW case studies in Sri Lanka and Sudan/South Sudan. The studies observed the lack of reliable information on the conflicts from outside the capital or from remote rural areas. In response to such findings, the recommendations endeavoured to be as detailed as possible. In this case, for example, a recommendation was made to include the building and/or maintenance of a broad geographic network in the Terms of Reference for conflict analysts or political officers within EU delegations.

In addition, **the outreach activities of the cluster partners towards the end of the project aimed to ensure that the findings reached target audiences in Brussels and in Member State capitals.** In particular, the flexibility to pursue an updated mapping of the EU's EW architecture has added value and enabled the cluster to contribute analysis and recommendations explicitly aimed at new or emerging capabilities, actors or initiatives within the EU, such as the Division on Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation, and the Intelligence Working Group.

## IMPACT

Overall, the work of the Improving Institutional Capacity for Early Warning cluster has provided updated and targeted analysis for the EU on how to mitigate some constraints and augment some of the potential of EU actors and resources. The partners have produced reports and carried out activities on early warning systems that are directly applicable within the new institutional reality post-Lisbon and since the establishment of the EU External Access Service in January 2011.

From the IfP-EW research, it is clear that a shared EU understanding of early warning and EU capacity for preventive responses will be vital at each stage in the EW cycle to overcome the early warning-early response gap. It is hoped that the sum of the cluster findings and recommendations could assist with this process by advancing reforms and modifications that promote a systematic, regularly-updated and action-oriented EW system that is integrated into all aspects of the EU's external action.

# SYNERGIES

Together, the findings from the four clusters come together to offer a picture of early warning potential from the perspective of emerging or non-traditional conflict factors, as well as a horizontal institutional view of early warning.

Some findings or recommendations for early warning conflict prevention were visible across multiple clusters; for example, the importance of mainstreaming thematic aspects of conflicts at the stage of conflict risk analysis and in the implementation of preventive conflict responses. Preventive action should, therefore, not be limited to responses explicitly aimed at conflicts, but also in the implementation of other EU activities in a country or region.

From the work of all three thematic clusters, it is clear that one of the simplest, most effective ways to achieve a preventive impact would be to increase the conflict sensitivity of the EU's programmes and activities. For instance, the Youth, Identity and Security cluster puts forward a suggestion to include security concerns in the agenda of bilateral dialogue and cooperation with the Venezuelan government as part of a preventive response. The Climate Change and Conflict cluster sets out the need to avoid top-down planning on climate change, which may fail to grasp micro-level vulnerabilities and the intricacies of community relations and tensions. Findings from the Media, Information Flows and Conflict cluster indicate that power and infrastructure weaknesses can have a significant influence on who is reached by the media, and that this asymmetry should be factored into programming to ensure that any positive impacts from external support reach a broad audience.

In line with this central recommendation on conflict sensitivity, an overarching recommendation from the Institutional Capacity for Early Warning cluster is the enhancement of EU political leverage to promote further integration on conflict prevention in the EU's political and programmatic activities. Full implementation of the comprehensive approach to conflict prevention would align perfectly with the EU's position as the world's biggest aid donor.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

At the start of the IfP-EW programme, the cluster partners came together to design and implement an ambitious project on early warning and conflict prevention that would deliver strong, independent, and locally-derived analysis to support more evidence-based policy and programming decisions. As the project closes, it is certain that the IfP-EW findings and lessons will continue to resonate in the work of each of the project partners, as well as in the EU's ongoing work to develop a robust system of early warning that can meet the challenge of effective and timely preventive action.