

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present report is to provide the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a general overview as well as a brief assessment of the “peace promotion / conflict resolution” initiatives supported by donors and international organisations in Central Asia.

After the events of September 11, Central Asia has been put back on the agenda of the international community. During the preparation of the present inventory several persons mentioned the fact that a process has started that could lead to the modification of existing donor policies for the region. The report therefore gives a picture of the situation at a specific moment. This picture will evolve in the coming months. At the same time, this process could also be a chance for Switzerland to contribute to the development of a more coordinated approach of international donors towards Central Asia. It will be important for the different Swiss institutions interested in the region to maintain contact with the other relevant actors.

If the present inventory provides (hopefully) an exhaustive list of those projects that target conflict issues in Central Asia, it should not be forgot-

ten that it is not considered as an evaluation of these initiatives and their impact. The assessment given by the author only tries to identify the main issues of concern. The author’s opinion is based on the information collected while preparing the report and the experience gathered in five years spent in Central Asia working in the field of humanitarian and technical co-operation.

Even though one could argue that by targeting the root causes of a conflict, well designed development co-operation projects provide an important contribution to its resolution, the present report focuses on ongoing and planned projects and programmes that specifically indicate “peace promotion / conflict resolution or reduction” objectives.

The report takes into consideration projects and programmes that target conflicts before they have entered into an open and violent phase as well as those targeting the phase after the conflict (resolution, reconstruction).

In order to classify the different projects, I have used the following categories⁵:

1. Prejudice Reduction

This type of project is mostly concerned with issues like tolerance building, working on cultural stereotypes and judgements.

2. Mediation, Facilitation and Dialogue

This category considers projects that intervene in (potential) conflict situation either acting as a mediator, facilitating contacts and communication between parties, fostering dialogue and / or training local actors to do so.

3. Topic- Focused (Cross-Border) Co-operation Projects

What characterises this category is the fact that the projects target specific issues considered as sources of conflict. These projects are mostly of a cross-border nature but, in some cases, can also be focused on one country.

4. Local Development Approach for Target Communities

In this case, the main focus of the project is a specific region or spe-

⁵ The present classification has been used by E. Schaufelberger of SDC COPRET at a presentation on conflict prevention activities in the Ferghana Valley at the occasion of a donors’ forum held in Budapest in March 2001.

cific communities that are considered (potentially) dangerous in terms of conflict or have been experiencing violent conflicts recently.

These types of projects usually stem from the conclusion that 'software' in terms of skills and mechanisms for dealing with conflicts alone are often insufficient to solve conflicts,

but that the local communities also need support in eliminating the causes of conflicts.

5. Conflict Assessment and Analysis / Early Warning

The main aim of this type of project is to provide information and analysis on conflict situations in Central Asia.

The five categories used for the inventory are operational in so far as they try to identify the main characteristic of a project even though sometimes they are not mutually exclusive. As a matter of fact, certain aspects of one project or programme can fall under different categories.