# Evaluation of Conflict Management and Mitigation Activities in Peru

# Executive Summary

## Purpose and Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is a part of the implementation of the USAID cooperation strategy and aims to assess the activities of conflict mitigation projects implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), CARE Peru and Rural Education Services (SER) during 2011-2015. The objectives of the evaluation are the following.

1. Identify lessons learned regarding the design and management of four projects through a prevention and conflict mitigation lens framed within the People-to-People (P2P) approach.
2. Provide evidence of the achievements of the evaluated programs.
3. Identify problems in the execution of the programs, unmet needs, and unexpected results.
4. Explain program contribution in the generation of inter-institutional and multi actor dialogue spaces for conflict management.

The specific objectives respond to the evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of projects, and to the identification of lessons learned from them, under the P2P framework.

The information gathered may be used by USAID, to make decisions regarding the continuity of conflict mitigation activities in Peru, with the use of the approach.

The evaluation was performed under the following questions.

1. Does the design of the projects respond to the needs and problems of existing conflicts?
2. What is their contribution to capacity building and to the generation of spaces for dialogue?
3. What are the contributing and limiting factors that affect program achievements?
4. Have the projects been efficient?
5. Are the projects and their activities sustainable?
6. What are the main lessons learned?

## Projects’ Background

Since 2004, the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation of USAID Washington (DCHA/ CMM) implemented a competitive fund made up of small grants for conflict mitigation activities. These calls for proposals or Annual Program Statement (APS) were intended to finance activities or projects using the People-to-people (P2P) approach to bring together representatives of affected groups surrounding conflicts, to get them to interact effectively in a secure and neutral space.

In simple terms, the P2P approach implies bringing together representatives of groups that are in conflict to interact around common interests in a safe and neutral space. In this manner, they can create opportunities to begin a process of mutual understanding, trust and empathy, which allow the peacefully resolution of conflicts.

This evaluation included four interventions carried out in the Amazon and the Andes by organizations that work on prevention and mitigation of conflict, seeking to contribute to the culture of dialogue and building capacity through a climate of trust between actors possibly involved in conflicts related to extractive industries.

Despite the heterogeneity of the contexts, in all cases the programs applied the P2P approach to work towards the solution of social conflicts over natural resources in rural areas, mostly, conflicts regarding extractive industries (mining, oil and gas).

## Methodology

The methodology used was mainly qualitative. To the extent that it was available from secondary sources, quantitative information has also been used (for this assessment the collection of primary quantitative information was not part of the methodology).

Triangulation techniques, based on the combination and use of different sources of information, were used to give greater order, analysis and sense to the research.
Interviews with different key actors, such as providers, program officers, beneficiaries, and other local actors (among which were civil society organizations and public officials) were carried out. Focal groups with beneficiaries were also part of the methodology. The information collected through these techniques was complemented by reviewing the documents of the evaluated projects to which the evaluation team has had access.

## Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation has obtained the following findings:

1. **Does the design of the projects respond to the needs and problems of existing conflicts?**
* The design responds to the causes and problems of social conflicts only partially.
* Programs address lack of capabilities and scarce skills for dialogue, surrounding conflicts.
* However, inefficiencies on government procedures or institutional arrangements (such as land titling or territorial order) that may deter conflicts from transforming, have not been considered neither in the design of the projects, nor in their training activities.
1. **What is their contribution to capacity building and to the generation of spaces for dialogue?**
* The main contribution of the projects can be summarized as follows: i) projects have caused a shift in attitude and behavior on the beneficiaries regarding how they address everyday conflicts, and ii) projects have also contributed to build capacities for dialogue, although to a limited extent.
* A limited contribution to the creation of spaces for dialogue is observed. Those spaces generated as part of projects activities have not been institutionalized, so that beneficiaries do not continue with meetings when they face the appearance of a conflict; although they are aware of the benefits they can bring to the process of dialogue.
1. **What are the contributing and limiting factors that affect program achievements?**
* The main factors contributing to the achievement of results were: (i) the national political and social context in which these projects were developed, that highlights social conflict as a national priority; (ii) the high demand for all types of training by indigenous communities; and (iii) the previous existence of dialogue processes.
* The main limiting factors were: (i) the lack of strategic partners at the local level to ensure the expected results; (ii) lack of state involvement, at all levels of government (local, regional and national), important for the design of activities and the sustainability of results; (iv) lack of strategic vision for selecting beneficiaries from a broader spectrum of key actors, in order to achieve the expected results of the project and ensure its sustainability over time, and (v) insufficient capacity to recognize the heterogeneity of beneficiaries. It’s worth to mention that at the initial stage projects did not develop an adequate diagnosis that would incorporate elements to design the training activities and to facilitate implementation.
1. **Have the projects been efficient?**
* Two reasons are behind the finding that projects were not efficient:
	+ Beneficiaries successfully received the training, but most of them were unable to replicate the knowledge acquired, because they did not have the skills to do it.
	+ Cities located in the Amazon basin are characterized for the presence of informal services (for sectors as transportation, food, among others). Long distance mobilization costs may have affected the use and control of financial resources.
1. **Are the projects and their activities sustainable?**
* Projects did not identify or implement strategies to guarantee the sustainability of their efforts.
* Greater involvement of state actors could have contributed to the effectiveness and sustainability of expected results.
* Training led to results at the individual level, but these results were not generalized at the community level. Beneficiaries were not successful in replicating what they learned in training activities to broader audiences.
1. **What are the main lessons learned?**
* In-depth diagnoses, necessary to understand the complex nature of conflicts, should be considered in the design stage.
* Presence and experience of implementing partners and active participation from strategic partners (e.g. government) at the local/district level is key for project success.
* Evaluated projects were better suited to improve skills of key actors to engage in dialogue and negotiations prior to conflicts escalating to crisis stage.
* Training positively valued by beneficiaries.
* Products (e.g. action plans) need to be included in the local public policy agenda.
* Use of combined output & result based indicators to ensure monitoring and achievement of results.

The conclusions of the evaluation are as follows:

1. The P2P approach in the Peruvian context is not enough for mitigation and conflict transformation in the country as most of the conflicts in Peru are more related to institutional and legal factors.
2. For the same reason, the design of the projects responds only partially to the real needs and problems on the basis of conflicts.
3. The main effect of the evaluated projects is reflected in the beneficiaries´ attitudes toward daily conflicts, as a result of the training they received. However, these effects were identified only at the household and individual level, so they were very limited in scope.
4. Projects have strengthened capacities for the deployment of spaces for dialogue, but not for the implementation of those spaces in practice. This was reflected in greater comprehension and understanding of the beneficiaries of the conflict and rights that are about the territorial issue and indigenous community, mainly. However, the effect on the organization of spaces for dialogue was very limited.
5. Among the favorable factors facilitating the achievement of results, the following can be mentioned: i) social situation and national policy, which justifies the presence of initiatives towards conflict resolution; ii) the high demand for all types of training to help solve local needs of the target population; iii) in the case of CARE, the existence of a dialogue platform as GDMDS in which the project falls.
6. On the contrary, among the limiting factors for the achievement of results, the following can be mentioned: i) lack of foresight and implementing partners have also strategic partners to ensure the expected results; ii) lack of strategy and actual apparent involvement of the State; iii) centralization of training in nearby cities and the lack of a more careful field work and covering a broader spectrum of communities; iv) lack of strategic vision to convene as beneficiaries to a broader spectrum of stakeholders.
7. The trainings have been given only to representatives of communities lacking the capacity to transfer knowledge from a position of leadership. In addition, operative expenses were more than expected due to the lack of planning, which is difficult given the high level of informality in the target areas.
8. The projects do not have strategies for making their results sustainable. Programs are not sustainable neither from a financial perspective nor from a technical or institutional perspective.
9. According to the documents presented by all the projects, they achieved most of the goals put forward in their proposals and monitoring plans. However, fieldwork results show that the quality and the effects of the activities carried out is far from optimal.
10. It is worth to notice that all projects indicate that female beneficiaries had a high and committed participation.