

conceptualised, how they can be analysed, and how decisions taken during this period can be improved and informed by appropriate forms of evidence in order to increase the likelihood of successful implementation.

Within the group discussions it was clear that issues related to *generate understanding of 'good practice'* (what is it? How can it be defined? Who determines what is good practice?), identifying contributors to achieving good practice, developing tools, methods and guidelines which are of use in promoting good practice, and making insights and experience available through networks and dissemination of good practice were all seen as key objectives. Lessons from both positive and negative examples were deemed of interest. Of particular interest to both field practitioners and donors was the need to make effective arguments regarding alternative approaches and to provide practical guidance that is evidence-based – i.e., there is a need to operationalise lessons and critiques from research.

The research framework proposes to establish *linkages* between post-conflict countries and international organisations and academic institutions. Table 1 highlights aspects of current experience in relation to post-conflict countries and sheds light on a number of key questions around which experience, expertise, tools and documented evidence are lacking. This project will contribute to resolving these inadequacies of current experience and documentation.

Figure 1 suggests how a series of *partnerships* focused on tackling key research patterns could be established, to answer the key questions identified in the middle of the diagram. Additional countries and partnerships could be added when ready. Lines of learning can be established between countries, between different actors within and outside affected countries, and between the academic, NGO and ministry of health communities.

The research project as conceptualised will have both *retrospective and prospective components*. The retrospective elements will be applicable to all countries participating and will require the development of an understanding of the conflict, the health system and the post-conflict transition.

Group discussion highlighted the importance of defining appropriate endpoints for health-related work in post-conflict countries. All agreed that a healthier, more peaceful and equitable society was desirable, and discussion focused on the relative importance of *peace and health*, *peace through health*, or *health through peace*. Approaches to defining a desirable endpoint, and to contributing ways of getting there, deserve attention in any research undertaken. There was considerable support for focusing more widely than on health care alone through this project.

Key Research Issues

Key issues highlighted for exploration included the following:

- To what extent has an effective overarching *policy framework* been established for guiding health system development? How was this framework identified? Who contributed to it? Through what processes? What are the main elements of the future health system? Who has put forward the dominant vision for the system? Do other visions/alternatives exist?