New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)

Introduction

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Background

When the Berghof Research Center and its Handbook team facilitated the first scholar-practitioner dialogue on PCIA[1] between the years 2000 and 2003, the editors located PCIA in the following context:

"Over the last ten years, interest in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities has increased significantly. Relief and development organisations working in places of civil war have raised awareness of conflict-sensitive planning and are seeking to integrate peacebuilding activities into their work. They have learned from recent experiences in war-torn societies that well-intended activities might have unintended outcomes and that development cooperation is never neutral in conflict situations. Under unfavourable conditions it may further entrench unjust power structures and prolong situations of war. This is also true of humanitarian aid. A series of problematic side-effects has been identified, showing that the influx of resources can induce dramatic changes in the political and economic situation on the ground and can cause turmoil in local markets. Equally dangerous are implicit messages conveyed by development or relief agencies and inappropriate or ill-reflected behaviour of the project staff which, often unintentionally, can fuel conflicts.

Whereas some humanitarian and relief agencies are interested in avoiding unintended negative impacts, others have engaged intensively in reflecting on the impact of their

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1 Alex Austin, Martina Fischer and Oliver Wils (eds.) 2003. *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. Critical Views on Theory and Practice.* Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management.

strategies. They want to contribute actively to peace processes and overcome structures of violence. State and non-state actors in these fields started to discuss how to combine strategies, methods and instruments of conflict resolution and transformation with their traditional approaches and working programmes. Moreover, in the late 1990s, organisations and institutions, which have gained experience in peace work and conflict resolution, began to reflect on the impact of their work. The question of how to evaluate activities aimed at peacebuilding and conflict transformation gained importance not only for researchers and scholars but also for practitioners. They wanted and still want to know which strategies work under which conditions, and they are asking themselves: Are we doing the right thing at the right moment? Could we do other things which could be more useful instead?

Finally, donor organisations which have opened new budget lines earmarked for conflict resolution and transformation activities are also interested in improving practices and evaluation methods for serious assessment of programmes and projects. Some donors even oblige their partners to deliver evaluation reports on their interventions. Others have become actively involved in discussions on the conceptualisation of evaluation.

As a result of this interest, there is a high demand for "model" projects, good practices and "lessons learned" which are transferable to other projects and regions. At the same time, however, supply does not match this demand. There are still no quick and easy answers to the question of how to best assess, monitor and evaluate peace practices. On the contrary, experience shows that assessing and measuring the impact and outcomes of peacebuilding activities is actually a very complicated task. There are at least three major reasons for this: First, conflicts are by nature highly complex and dynamic. Second, the field of peacebuilding is a relatively young one as many organisations only emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. It is therefore not surprising that many strategies, methods and instruments still remain in a test phase and therefore need further elaboration and investigation. Third, under the label PCIA, we find quite different concepts and approaches. For some users, PCIA is a toolset that is applied for programme planning, while others regard it as a framework for evaluation and cross-country comparison. Similarly, some view it as a method to contribute and monitor the contribution of an intervention to peacebuilding, while others use PCIA for screening the impact of a conflict on the project itself."

Recent developments

Two years later, this analysis is as accurate as before. If anything, evaluation and impact assessment initiatives have become more widespread, increasingly focussing on overt peacebuilding and conflict resolution/transformation projects and programmes. At the same time, there is continued need to assess positive and negative, intended and unintended consequences of development and humanitarian projects on the structures and processes of violence or peace.

Among the most notable recent attempts to improve the understanding and methodology of peace-and-conflict-related assessment and evaluation we find the following:

· Kenneth Bush's 2003 publication *Hands-On PCIA: A Handbook for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment*, which he describes as "a reader-friendly, user-friendly 'manual' containing quick check lists, diagrammes, examples, question-answer boxes, and worksheets" and which is regularly revised "in response to experiences and on-going learning".

· The project on *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding* – undertaken by a consortium of six southern and northern NGOs (Africa Peace Forum, Kenya; Center for Conflict Resolution, Uganda; Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, Sri Lanka; Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, International Alert, and Saferworld, all UK) – and the related 2004 publication of *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: A Resource Pack*.

· Thania Paffenholz and Luc Reychler's forthcoming *Aid for Peace* Approach (to be published in 2006), delineating a step-by-step "multi-purpose, multi-level process" of, respectively, planning, assessing and evaluating development, aid or peace interventions.

These authors' have contributed to this issue of the *Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series*. All three undertake to (re-)develop – in participatory, inclusive or consultative processes – more user-friendly or efficient *tools and methods* for understanding the consequences of *projects, programmes and policies* on structures and processes of peace or violence. Peacebuilding as well as development/ humanitarian activities are to benefit. While some of the self-declared guiding principles of the approaches are similar, the priorities, target groups, formats and language vary considerably.

Kenneth Bush's recent work puts very strong emphasis on developing practically useful tools for practitioners in the midst of zones of violent conflict. He stresses southern wisdom and empowerment over the improvement of northern agency or consultancy services and refinement of logical frameworks.

The researcher-practitioners involved in developing the Resource Pack (*Adam Barbolet, Rachel Goldwyn, Hesta Groenewald and Andrew Sherriff*) report from a process that was designed to strengthen local capacities and improve the awareness and skill of project staff. This group of authors stresses the need to sensitise organisations and individuals for the conflict-related consequences and ramifications of their work over the fixation on infinitely refining assessment tool kits.

Thania Paffenholz (with her co-author, Luc Reychler) chooses a different focus. Here, standardized process-steps are formulated for planning, assessment and evaluation, to be used by a wide range of actors – from field staff to headquarters. Terminology and methodology of the approach show stronger roots in the western/northern scientific discourse than the other approaches, and render it most applicable for donors and larger agencies. A special emphasis on planning, and the import of methods from related fields in social science further distinguish the approach.

There have been other processes and outputs with respect to impact assessment and evaluation in peacebuilding and development cooperation in recent years, which are worth mentioning here:

· The third phase of the *Reflecting on Peace Practices* (RPP) Project, initiated and sustained by the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) based in Cambridge, USA

This ongoing and carefully facilitated experience-based learning process continues to search for lessons learned by actors in peacebuilding through joint workshops and application. The process includes a broad range of implementing agencies – the level of analysis is the programme and project level. The first and second phase of RPP have identified tentative criteria for success as well as good practice, which can be used as signposts in evaluating the contribution of programmes to peacebuilding, or violence reduction. The third phase, which will be documented on CDA's website (www.cdainc.com), consists of utilization programmes in four focus regions around the world. Local staff and CDA staff/consultants work together on devising RPP-informed strategies, and on

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monitoring, assessing and adjusting them in light of the RPP results and practical experiences. RPP's co-directors Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow hope to "publish a variety of materials to help field practitioners in peace work to use RPP findings – in the form of application cases, training exercises, compendiums of lessons learned" at the end of the two-year project period (2003-2005).

· The European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP)'s series of conferences to collect and compare lessons learned in the field of peacebuilding has led, as an interim-result, to the publication (2002) *Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice. On Lessons Learned, Evaluation Practices and Aid & Conflict*.

ECCP and its director, Paul van Tongeren, have since focused their energies on advocating a stronger role for peacebuilding NGOs, acting on the conviction that the young field of conflict resolution has indeed learned many lessons and now needs to be more collectively assertive of its knowledge. The *Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict* (www.gppac.net) is the chosen platform "to increase the effectiveness of conflict prevention efforts, and to highlight the role of civil society in peacebuilding and preventing armed conflict". An international conference at UN headquarters in July 2005 is to form the peak of a series of regional conferences.

· Cheyanne Church and Julie Shouldice's INCORE-based *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions. Part I: Framing the State of Play (2002)* and *Part II: Emerging Practice and Theory (2003)*.

Here, a very useful effort is made to sift through the current knowledge and practice of how to evaluate. The reports clarify terminology, approaches and methods with a clear conflict resolution focus, trying to level the evaluation field. The main focus is once more the project/programme level. The study analyses important aspects of evaluation and points to necessary next steps in improving the practice (and theory) of evaluation and peacebuilding. It specifically names clarification of evaluator roles, micro-macro linkages and an examination of assumptions and theories.

· The comparative *Utstein Study of Peacebuilding* (and Dan Smith's 2004 overview report *Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting their Act Together*).

A government-driven, donor-inspired comparative evaluation of peacebuilding projects points to the need for acquiring more comparative knowledge – echoing numerous actors in the field. The overview report asserts that currently, "there is no known way of reliably assessing the impact of peacebuilding projects". It does call for more strategic cooperation by agencies engaged in peacebuilding in a given country or region on all levels. *Impact* assessment, argues the stark conclusion of the report, is quite useless on the level of projects or even programmes. Instead, the impact of strategically linked interventions across the peacebuilding palette, carried out by governmental or non-governmental actors over a significant period of time, needs to be evaluated. The report acknowledges that the international evaluation and peacebuilding community at present lacks strategic coherence as well as promising evaluation mechanisms. It devises ways to address "the strategic deficit" with respect to policy, evaluation and research.

Beyond these milestones, a myriad of organisations – development agencies, government departments, conflict resolution organisations – are engaged, albeit at different levels and with varying commitment to "mainstreaming", in activities to identify appropriate ways to evaluate and improve their work.

Berghof Handbook Dialogue revisited: "New Trends in PCIA"

The past two years have obviously seen a flurry of activities (conceptual as well as strategic, with respect to tools, theory and terminology as well as with respect to politics). Consequently, the Berghof Handbook editorial team renewed its invitation to experts in the field of PCIA and related methodologies to reflect on new trends and progress of the field. We asked them to map the field as they currently perceive it and to critically discuss the methods that have been designed, or refined, in light of the developing demand.

We invited the contributing authors to this dialogue on "New Trends in PCIA" to explore the following questions:

· What do they see as notable recent developments and modifications of the concepts and methodology referred to, sometimes rather loosely, as "PCIA"?
· What are areas and organisations in which PCIA has been tested or applied in the last years?
· What were the difficulties encountered in implementing the concept? What ways were devised to overcome such difficulties?
· What are the personal experiences and lessons learned concerning the authors' own approaches to PCIA or related methodologies?
· Where do they think the field should focus its attention in the coming years?

In order to fully capture the expected richness of experience and opinion, the following format was chosen for this Berghof Handbook Dialogue: First, each author/author-team wrote an independent contribution. In a second round, everyone contributed a short response paper to the most central issues raised in the initial contributions. Links/references to the fully developed approaches complement the picture and allow the reader to see for herself the "meat" behind the arguments.

Issues and themes

The 2003 round of dialogue on PCIA hosted by the Berghof Handbook had identified the following clusters of issues that all authors, scholars and practitioners, had grappled with:

· The question of **ownership** of evaluation processes by various **stakeholders**
· The related question regarding the **level and quality of participation** in evaluation and assessment processes
· The difficulty of **linking** project outputs and outcomes on the **micro level** to changes and thus impact on the **macro level** of politics and society (an often-cited *influence gap* as well as an *attribution gap*)
· An agreement that assessment and evaluation need **indicators**, yet disagreement over a standard set of indicators (the spectrum ranging from a call for clear, standardised indicators to a call for a context-specific, open and flexible process of jointly defining appropriate indicators)
· A general recognition of a lack of theoretical coherence and a lack of explicitness of hypotheses and assumptions, in particular with respect to theories of change, yet a disagreement over whether more **theory-building** was to be the top priority of the field at present

In light of the contributions to this dialogue on "New Trends in PCIA", it seems fair to say that none of these issues has 'gone away' in the meantime.

Especially the **questions of ownership and participation** are passionately, sometimes hotly, debated by Kenneth Bush and the others. While, in principle, all contributors agree on the importance of conducting assessments and evaluations by carefully designed and integrative processes, Kenneth Bush admonishes the many instances in which practice falls short of these principles. At the same time, all contributions paint a clear picture of how difficult it can be to devise and implement such processes on a case-by-case basis even given the best intentions.

Good analysis and planning certainly are a necessity. One needs to carefully look at what the relevant purposes, the appropriate actors and methods are – the contributing authors do share inside stories of what to do and what not to do.

But at least three dilemmas remain: Reality on the ground knows shortage of funds as well as occasional over-abundance of funds (as currently witnessed in the post-tsunami countries), knows big egos and smaller ones, knows crisis-mode employment as well as long-term, carefully accompanied and reflected processes. It will, to a certain degree, see better and worse practice in sharing ownership and achieving empowerment. A certain humility is needed in what we can expect to achieve and what we ask others to achieve. In some cases, it might be nothing more than what Samuel Beckett once described as "try again, fail better".

The second dilemma is more fundamental than pragmatic in nature: A radical reversal of ownership, as envisioned by Kenneth Bush, challenges power as well as cultural balances. It entails a quite radical notion of social change which many, even in the peacebuilding and development field, may not be ready for at all, as it would topple certainties they rely on. Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, as a set of tools and a space for reflective encounter, will be overburdened by the demand that it should act as catalyst for such deep social change. A joint learning process on the theories and notions of social change would be the more appropriate place for such debate.

Finally, there is an inherent dilemma in the idea of local ownership that has become such a token for development and peacebuilding projects in recent years. Andy Carl, in a 2003 occasional paper, warns "we should avoid the tendency to romanticise local and indigenous capacities for peacebuilding. While they are vitally important, it is often overlooked that traditional capacities for conflict management have failed […]." Dan Smith in the Utstein report also argues "that in the context of violent conflict, local ownership becomes a more complex concept and needs to be handled with care. Local ownership can unintentionally come to mean ownership by conflict parties, or by the most powerful sectors of society". Thania Paffenholz reminds Kenneth Bush of this in her comment, as Manuela Leonhardt had done in the 2003 dialogue. There is no shortcut way to deal with these complexities but to engage the reality one intervenes in carefully, critically and openly.

The issue of **linking micro, meso and macro levels** of interventions is discussed most prominently by Thania Paffenholz on the one hand, and Adam Barbolet et al. on the other. Thania Paffenholz in particular offers a model of relating macro, meso and micro levels by formulating so-called result-chains that run from input to impact. The London-based team of authors echoes the need for better strategy formulation and strategic coordination by agencies, in order to increase coherent, inter-linked and, ideally, more powerful and efficient interventions. These propositions underline that concrete efforts are being made to tackle this issue, while, again, many obstacles remain (lack of information, competing realities between headquarters and field offices, competition for funds and influence between agencies and departments, a 'culture of success' rather than acceptance of occasional failure and an associated reward system). Such obstacles make the neat formulation of result-chains, as well as the cooperation between agencies, far from easy to put into practice.

Thania Paffenholz (in her comment) and Adam Barbolet et al. relate examples of **good practice in developing indicators**. The general debate – whether there can be a set of standardised

indicators (as suggested by Thania Paffenholz's idea to develop a set of standardised result-chains) or whether indicators need to be context-specific and custom developed, ideally in a participatory process of joint analysis – seems to tip slightly in favour of, at a minimum, context-adjusted indicators. It will be interesting to see what the joint reflection on the initial set of indicators and criteria of success from the RPP project will yield.

The **role and importance of theory** is judged in similar ways between Kenneth Bush, Adam Barbolet et al. and Thania Paffenholz: Kenneth Bush sees theory as an "either useful or useless" resource in peacebuilding and development work – and theory development of rather secondary importance. The authors from London call for more pragmatic realism in assessment and evaluation, acknowledging in particular that no one theory would be able to explain all relevant aspects of a peace process in its complexity. Thania Paffenholz underlines that there already exist many theories in related fields (development cooperation, political science, management science, sociology, etc.) that hold insights for the theory and practice of evaluating both peacebuilding and development or humanitarian interventions. Theory thus seems to be available in sufficient measures for these authors not to make the further development of theory a priority. These assessments contradict the findings of the Utstein study as well as the INCORE reports.

A last issue that was prominent during the 2003 round of dialogue is still causing debate this time around: it is the questions of the **politics of PCIA**. Kenneth Bush has consistently argued that PCIA is political, rather than a mere toolbox of methods. While there seems to be no disagreement from Thania Paffenholz or from Adam Barbolet et al. – all acknowledge the importance of politics and influencing politics in order to induce peaceful relations and development – it seems to me that there is a subtle difference in the meaning of "political" that is generally overlooked: On one level, all assessment and evaluation can (and must) be applied to policies and political processes, and influence politics. Thus, PCIA is "political". On another level, though, all assessment and evaluation carries in it another political component – by using methods or processes that are scientific, verbal, logical and linear, we have to be aware that we are opting for one system of meaning, power, and culture, and not another. By opening our set of methods or processes, we may contribute to shifting meaning, power and culture. PCIA becomes "political" in a different sense. Such openness, though, runs counter to calls for common frameworks, comparable results and strategic coherence.

What will be next – challenges and ways forward

Judging from this new round of dialogue, an assessment from the first round certainly has come true: "The variety of concepts and methodologies of assessing and measuring impacts makes it unlikely that a single concept of PCIA will emerge soon." Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA); conflict-sensitive approaches (CSA); Aid for Peace – there has been a further proliferation of names and concepts for knowing whether we are doing the 'right' thing (and with what consequences) and whether we are doing it the 'right' way (and with what consequences). In part, this is a 'natural' development in the process of mainstreaming, as naming something goes some length in appropriating it. The debate about "branding", "labelling" and naming that Kenneth Bush and Adam Barbolet and his colleagues engage in should make us aware, though, that the issue is by no means inconsequential or superficial. While it is advisable to let different flowers bloom, it is also true that names and words convey intentions, power relations and other connotations. It does us no harm to reflect on these critically and regularly. I believe that the energy of those engaged with the single concepts will be best used if they make sure that their particular concept transparently

conveys what it aims for and entails, and to whom it owes thanks. It also seems clear that one major source of confusion springs from the fact that PCIA has come to be used both to describe a single approach and as a shortcut phrase for the general idea of assessing what works and what does not work in peacebuilding and development cooperation. More linguistic discipline by all is called for.

Other challenges remain:
· Questions relating to ownership – including issues of relationship and power, partnership, gender, control, empowerment, efficiency or quality, and accountability – have not and cannot be solved once and for all, but need to be mindfully engaged in every case.
· Mainstreaming conflict-sensitive approaches into operating procedures and agencies will likely cause more terminological confusion as well as more attempts to standardise and make comparable monitoring, assessment and evaluation tools. There is a danger that this will result in a general assessment and evaluation weariness. In my experience, focussing on designing well-balanced evaluations that combine reflecting, acting and supervision, as well as reasonable institutional (financial and other) support, best counter such weariness.
· Theory-building may, at this juncture, not be central to Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, Conflict-Sensitive Approaches or the *Aid for Peace* Approach, but thinking through and making explicit hypotheses and assumptions about social change, thus laying open theories in use, will be an important task for the understanding of peace and development interventions. It is also likely to further our understanding of impact, both intended and unintended.

All the authors who have contributed to this dialogue on "New Trends in PCIA" agree on one necessary next step in further developing the practice of impact assessment: engaging in processes of joint learning and open sharing of findings (whether through a network of practitioners, a "PCIA facility", or a web-based joint learning platform). This seems to echo another assessment from the first round of dialogue on PCIA: "In order to develop PCIA further, it is necessary to use it as a learning tool from the outset, not as a means of control. A culture of transparency and a willingness to share results would greatly enhance this prospect. Donors should motivate this process and create positive incentives for agencies, encouraging them to reflect critically on their peacebuilding activities. As long as projects are rewarded for good practices [outcomes] only, the willingness to discuss 'failure' or negative consequences is reduced – and a learning opportunity missed. Funding criteria and 'fashions' set up by donor agencies often contribute to inflexible or harmful practices as agencies are often reluctant to admit if conditions have changed and strategies they once suggested are no longer practicable. In order to create space for learning processes, donors therefore need to establish more flexible mechanisms and criteria." The peacebuilding and evaluation field, at the same time, needs to develop a shared understanding of what we most need to learn about and how this is best to be done.

There is one major lesson for those engaged in any form of impact assessment. The concept of PCIA – and the idea of evaluation in general – are in danger of becoming a cure-all for negative impacts, lack of peacefulness, exploitative relationships, etc. I believe that we will need to develop a new humility and pragmatism in acknowledging what PCIA and related methodologies can and cannot achieve. We will also, as the Utstein study recommends, need to find a new division of labour. Many practitioners have found the academically- or conceptually-laden assessment methodologies impractically complicated and too burdensome to implement given shortages of staff, time and money, as well as a remarkable confusion of terms. They will not become any more secure or efficient in their work if they are asked to do assessments not only on the project level, but comparatively and across levels. Not surprisingly, both Adam Barbolet and his colleagues and

Thania Paffenholz remind us that some projects simply are not designed to have a nationwide impact on "peace-writ-large" yet may still be very useful interventions if done mindfully of increasing peaceful processes and structures, and diminishing violent processes and structures. While any intervention should be carefully planned and assessed by those involved and affected, the task of drawing comparisons and distilling theories of peace-supporting interventions or processes of social change may be better placed with interdisciplinary teams of action researchers. The task of promoting transformative policies and devising strategies for peace will need to engage an even wider range of actors, experts and stakeholders.

Thus, four paths lead onwards from here

· Strategic planning, evaluation and impact assessment
· Comparative studies of interventions and evaluations, informed by learning from practice and answering to a common framework of guiding questions
· Empowerment of local actors through participatory evaluation practice, among other things
· Global cooperation in learning, advocacy and strategy development for effective peacebuilding

As is usually the case with the Berghof Handbook Dialogues, we do not end with certainties or recipes but rather with a new and refined set of questions and ideas of where to focus our attention. After all, the *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* aims to provide a platform for exchange between different experiences, cultures and organisations, to present various perspectives and to contribute to bridging the gap between theory and practice. As this round of dialogue has seen contributions by scholar-practitioners rather than by those fully engaged on the operational side of peacebuilding work, development and humanitarian cooperation, we specifically extend our standing invitation to further contribute to this dialogue to the latter. We do thank all those who have so far shared their thoughts, ideas and experiences and look forward to your reactions and reflections.

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New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) - Introduction

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The utility and dilemmas of conflict sensitivity*

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The utility and dilemmas of conflict sensitivity

Adam Barbolet, Rachel Goldwyn,
Hesta Groenewald and Andrew Sherriff

1. Introduction

We would like to preface our article with a few words on how we understand conflict sensitivity. Essentially, this concept is about much more than tools – hence our reluctance to feature tools or extracts from tools in the following. We recognise that tools and methodologies are a very important tangible way in which one can make conflict sensitivity concrete, but when conflict sensitivity (or PCIA) is reduced to tools only, it is of very limited utility. Undue emphasis on complex tools, tables and methodologies seems to be a primarily Western approach that often has a limited resonance with many Southern organisations. Thus, a more encompassing approach is needed – and is slowly being adopted in practice by agencies. We wanted to illustrate that conflict sensitivity could best be achieved with a 'tools plus'-based approach, and that the principles of conflict sensitivity could be applied to a wider cross-section of activities than to those strictly in the humanitarian and development sphere.

2. Conflict sensitivity and PCIA – on the importance of process and the power of terminology

When asked what is needed to make their organisations conflict-sensitive, Kenyan and Ugandan participants in a workshop in Entebbe, 2003, described a vast array of actions – awareness raising; promoting leadership by

Box I – Project on 'Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding'
The two-year project, undertaken by a consortium of six Southern and Northern NGOs, drew together learning on good practice. The project built upon an extensive consultation process in Kenya, Uganda, Sri Lanka and beyond, and included a mapping of conflict-sensitive practice among development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actors from governments, donors and civil society. Learning from these consultations provided the basis for the conceptual development of conflict sensitivity, captured in the Resource Pack, various drafts of which were widely discussed among these same actors. Awareness raising and capacity development activities were developed from the Resource Pack, and continue at the time of writing.

Through creating bridges between North and South, the project has ensured that Southern agencies have themselves shaped the international conflict sensitivity agenda. The project was implemented by Africa Peace Forum (Kenya), Center for Conflict Resolution (Uganda), Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (Sri Lanka), Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (UK), International Alert (UK) and Saferworld (UK).

It was through the experience of implementing this project that the authors became increasingly aware of the utility of 'conflict sensitivity', although the catalysts promoting its utility were multiple (De La Haye and Moyroud 2003, 1-2).

The Resource Pack and more information about the project can be found on: www.conflictsensitivity.org

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example; effective networking and communications; including conflict sensitivity in the mandate, vision and mission of their organisations; creating structures to enable decision making. These are all important contributions to building the vision of 'conflict sensitivity' as an approach that reaches much beyond the application of tools.

The phrase 'conflict-sensitive' or 'conflict sensitivity' has been at the margins of development practice since at least 1999. The idea of conflict sensitivity owes a great deal to diverse literature and thinking on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), though PCIA is not the only intellectual and, importantly, experiential source that has influenced the development of 'conflict-sensitive approaches' (CSA). Mary Anderson's 'Do No Harm' work; the macro conflict assessment work undertaken by DFID, USAID, the World Bank and other donors; the writings of Jonathan Goodhand; and over thirty years of peace and development academic discourse have also provided significant insight.

Depending on the view or definition of PCIA and CSA to which one subscribes, it is possible to see PCIA as either a method to achieve 'conflict sensitivity', or alternatively to see 'conflict sensitivity' as an aspect of PCIA. Clearly, all users and promoters of the various concepts and terminology have their own opinions.

We use the concept of conflict sensitivity as developed in *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: A Resource Pack* (2004, henceforth 'Resource Pack'). This specific understanding of the concept was developed through consultations with hundreds of individuals and agencies over a two-year period. In Kenya and Uganda, practitioners were particularly vocal in advocating for the use of the term 'conflict-sensitive' over a number of alternatives. We acknowledge that the concept is not static and will evolve over time as greater learning from practice is gathered. We certainly do not claim any explicit or implicit 'ownership' of the term. A slightly different interpretation of conflict sensitivity has been advanced by some NGOs (Lange 2004, 5) and the World Bank also noted the existence of various understandings of conflict sensitivity in its consultation with civil society in Bosnia (World Bank 2004). Acknowledging that these different understandings of CSA exist, this article uses the definition below.

> **Box II – Defining conflict sensitivity**
> The Resource Pack (2004) defines conflict sensitivity as the capacity of an organisation to:
> · Understand the (conflict) context in which it operates
> · Understand the interaction between its operations and the (conflict) context; and
> · Act upon the understanding of this interaction in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on the (conflict) context

The term 'PCIA' is understood differently by members of the comparatively small group of people who use the terminology within the field of development and conflict (Hoffman 2003). Some see PCIA as "a means of anticipating and evaluating the impacts of development projects on both the structures and processes that promote peace and those that increase the prospects of violence" (Church and Shouldice 2002, 43). Others see it as a process of mutual learning that should be led by people from conflict zones, not aid agencies (Bush 2003b). Yet others see that the application of PCIA is primarily at the project and programme level, as opposed to more macro conflict assessments (Smith 2004, 45).

Adam Barbolet, Rachel Goldwyn, Hesta Groenewald and Andrew Sherriff

> ### Box III – Different understandings, different analysis
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> Different understandings of key terms lead to very real problems in analysis. For example, if one were to ask the question "Has the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) developed its own PCIA capacity?" the answer would vary depending on how the term is understood. DFID has not developed specific project level or sectoral level conflict analysis tools. However, it has developed and used its own Strategic Conflict Assessment tool, which does not include much about 'impact'. It has also pushed for the mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity within the World Bank, UNDP and in certain of its own country strategies. DFID has further built its own capacity in conflict-related issues by hiring more specialist advisors. However it is questionable to what extent DFID has adopted mutual learning or ownership with those directly affected by conflict in relation to its strategy and programming. Thus, it is possible, depending on the definition and understanding applied, to say that DFID has progressed significantly, in a limited fashion, or not at all, in relation to PCIA.

A number of tools have been developed during recent years, many of which are utilised by organisations (see for example those profiled in Chapter 2 of the Resource Pack). Indeed, from experts through practitioners the last few years have seen significant steps forward in not only the development of operational guidance (see for example Bush 2003a), but also the actual use of it. Many have also begun to refine these tools, or to question some of the assumptions underpinning them (Buckley-Zistel 2003). There is no doubt that some tools are more appropriate than others for particular tasks, and there is still a need to look at the theoretical assumptions on which they are based. Despite the fact that there is more utilisation than in the past, most humanitarian and development organisations in most settings still do not use any specific conflict-related tools. This is perhaps not surprising, as 'tools' to promote gender sensitivity or even the adoption of 'rights-based approaches' are still not widely utilised, even in organisations that have supposedly made an institutional commitment to their mainstreaming. For a tool to be effective, it has to be placed firmly within the wider context, both the particular geographical context as well as the institutional context. However tools are only one dimension of conflict sensitivity – applied on their own they will have little impact on better practice.

Despite the assertions by some prominent proponents of PCIA to the contrary, the term PCIA itself quickly leads to those unfamiliar with it thinking that it is merely a 'tool' or set of 'tools' (Shannon 2003/04). We acknowledge that the joint CSA project contributed to the perception of PCIA as a 'tool' by its initial subtitle of 'Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment'. Clarity over this matter really began to take hold during the implementation of the project. However, a tools-based approach has severe limitations, as is recognised in the literature (in particular works of Kenneth Bush, Manuela Leonhardt and Maria Lange). More importantly, the spirit and approach with which any tools are utilized determine their impact. The same tools can be used to promote learning and empowerment as well as in ways that control, distort and exclude. Walking this line is challenging, and we willingly admit that we have not always achieved balance in our own experiences.

In many circumstances, tools can be an important component of any approach to promote and enable reflection, learning and better practice. However, operational guidance for conflict sensitivity should not come in the form of a 'correct' one-size-fits-all 'tool', but rather as a menu of options and guidance which can be adapted, localised, and developed as the context and purpose demands. In our experience, the terms and concepts of 'conflict sensitivity' and 'conflict-sensitive

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approaches' are less likely to be interpreted or understood as only a tool or set of tools. The word 'approach' indicates something broader: an entire ethos as to how organisations could strategise, plan, implement and evaluate their work.

> **Box IV – Community empowerment**
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> When understood as a tool, PCIAs can be participatory and empowering, depending on whether the process engages communities or is conducted in isolation by programme staff. In her Berghof article, *Toward a Unified Methodology: Reframing PCIA,* Manuela Leonhardt (2003) makes the point that, "PCIA could be empowering if it offers people living in conflict with the chance to voice their concerns on the conflict impact of certain development plans and jointly develop alternatives." The point here, which applies equally to conflict sensitivity, is that process needs to be paramount; people affected by violent conflict must be active participants in solutions to violent conflict. And it is no coincidence that their involvement in the resolution of their conflicts is an empowering experience.
>
> Non-combative community members living in areas of violent conflict often see themselves as innocent victims of a political conflict operating at a national level. Their only relationship with this national conflict, as they understand it, is when it arbitrarily reaches into their community and visits untold hardship on self and loved ones. A conflict-sensitive approach must engage project participants or beneficiaries – at a minimum in the analysis and implementation phases – to ensure the intervention considers and addresses conflict in all its nuances and intricacies. Through so doing, community members begin to understand that their own actions towards people from other ethnic, religious, social, economic, cultural or linguistic communities have a direct bearing on what they formerly understood as a disconnected macro political issue.
>
> Typically they react in two ways to this new understanding. First, with dismay at their own role in perpetuating violence through inadvertently supporting the structures of violence. Second, with excitement and empowerment as they understand that changing their own behaviour, and encouraging their friends and neighbours to do the same, will support peace and undermine violence. So the overall objective of conflict sensitivity is not empowerment, but empowerment can be an important and rewarding by-product of a conflict-sensitive approach.

3. New directions in conflict sensitivity

The thinking underpinning conflict-sensitive approaches is evolving and expanding, being applied to new areas and sectors. This section describes new ideas in mainstreaming conflict sensitivity and the developing application of conflict sensitivity to peacebuilding actors and the private sector.

3.1 Mainstreaming conflict sensitivity

3.1.1 *Agency level*

Transforming the behaviour of organisations working in conflict areas requires something more fundamental and encompassing than even the best adapted tool can deliver. Research indicates

that the positive impact of conflict sensitivity is limited if it is confined to technical activity, rather than understood as strategic and relevant to an entire organisation and its partners (Lange 2004). The development sector is suffering from initiative overload, having had the mainstreaming of environment, gender and rights-based approaches on the agenda over the past few years. Many people let out a collective groan at the idea of yet another 'mainstreaming' initiative. The legacy of past 'mainstreaming' that has been limited to top-down roll-outs is keenly felt, as are concerns that conflict sensitivity may politicise organisations, undermining their core mandates.

The six-agency conflict sensitivity project sought to find new ways to support mainstreaming and institutional learning on conflict sensitivity beyond what is often the default action of training. It proposed integrating the appropriate attitudes, approaches, tools and expertise into the organisation's culture, systems, processes and work, such that conflict sensitivity is applied not just to isolated projects but becomes an entire organisational ethos. In the Resource Pack (Chapter 5, Annex 1) a framework was developed to invite reflection on possible leverage points to introduce and strengthen capacity internally and externally – this has been much developed in Lange's work (2004). The five pillars of this framework are:

- Institutional commitment
- Willingness to make changes in organisational culture and institutional structures
- Support for capacity development
- Conducive external relationships
- Accountability mechanisms

Building capacity in conflict sensitivity requires strength in all five pillars. The failure of an organisation to form connections between the pillars will result in islands of conflict sensitivity within a sea of conflict-blind institutional practice. However, an incremental approach to mainstreaming may be all that most large operational organisations can cope with.

3.1.2 *International Organisations*

International players, particularly bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies, need to recognise their role in conflict-sensitive or conflict-blind practice. The strategies of donors and other in-country representatives of international agencies are influenced by policies and approaches taken by the agencies' headquarters. The approach a World Bank office takes in any given country is heavily influenced by the policies and procedures – including reporting requirements – determined in Washington. Guidance related to applying conflict sensitivity to macro processes such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) is emerging, and experience in application is developing (see the Resource Pack, Chapters 4 and 5, Annex 1).

3.1.3 *Governments*

With a few notable exceptions, the debate and implementation experience around conflict sensitivity and PCIA has predominately been focused on international agencies and national civil society. Some of the exceptions are the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) project on 'Building African Capacity in Conflict Management' and some of the CSA joint project work with government officials in Kenya, Uganda and, to a lesser extent, Sri Lanka. Governments are significant socio-economic as well as political actors, articulating national development frameworks such as PRSPs. Yet, because of their size, complexity, dysfunctionality, corruption, or complicity in violent conflict, national governments are often overlooked as stakeholders in the application of conflict sensitivity. Engaging politicians, government departments and public officials in conflict sensitivity is therefore extremely important despite the inherent risks

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and moral challenges. A sense of realism and clear ethical guidance must always be maintained in dealing with any parties to a conflict and/or powerful actors within it.

> **Box V – Ethical guidance in conflict transformation**
> In response to both good and bad experiences in its peacebuilding work, International Alert developed a code of conduct to guide its actions (International Alert 1998). The code of conduct provides an ethical framework for conflict transformation work, and consists of guiding principles for the organisation and the development of policies on human rights, impartiality and working partnerships.

There is undoubtedly concern amongst some agencies about the value of putting limited resources into engaging the government bureaucracy which is often so reform resistant. Our own experience shows that framing discussion as conflict-sensitive development is one way in which constructive engagement can be approached, whereas 'conflict transformation' or 'promoting peace' can be seen as too esoteric or 'political'.

> **Box VI – Conflict sensitivity training with government officials in Kenya**
> Based on the Resource Pack, the Africa Peace Forum, Center for Conflict Resolution and Saferworld have conducted CSA awareness-raising and training workshops in 2003 and 2004 with provincial administration officials from conflict-prone districts in Kenya. The district commissioners and district officers are responsible for all government projects (whether development, humanitarian assistance or peacebuilding) in their geographical areas. Their work potentially impacts hugely on the conflict dynamics in the communities where they work, yet they are given no training on conflict issues. It clearly emerged from these workshops how big the need is for more skills and capacity on understanding conflict and responses to conflict.

3.2 Conflict-sensitive business practice

The negative impact that the private sector can have on conflict dynamics is well documented. However, if applied in good faith, learning from conflict sensitivity and PCIA could assist the private sector to make better informed choices about avoiding negative impacts and enhancing possible positive impacts on violent conflict.

Drawing on the experience of the development and humanitarian sectors in conflict sensitivity, International Alert has developed 'Conflict-Sensitive Business Practice: Guidance for Extractive Industries'. This methodology provides a framework and tools to enable companies to anticipate, monitor and assess business interactions with conflict, and to design strategies to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The methodology is closely linked to the operational lifecycle of oil, gas and mining ventures, from initial geological investigations, through exploration and production, to closure and withdrawal. Conflict-Sensitive Business Practice relates to all areas of business operation and influence – core business, social investment, and policy dialogue – and seeks strategies that not only aim to avoid contributing to conflict, but also to find practical and legitimate steps to contribute to peace. The development of the methodology has been guided by a multi-stakeholder steering group comprising industry, government and civil society

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representatives, and has been discussed in detail with civil society representation in Colombia and at a mining site in Indonesia.[2]

4. Our experience in Sri Lanka – a case study

Just because an activity is labelled as peacebuilding does not automatically mean that it has a positive impact on conflict. Much of the focus in the development of thinking and practice has been aimed at the potential conflict insensitivity of humanitarian and development action. However, activities that promote dialogue, peace education, or reconciliation can also have negative impacts on conflict dynamics. The Resource Pack project found that peacebuilding actors found this a particularly difficult message to hear.

Likewise, just because an activity is designed to promote conflict sensitivity, does not mean that it is automatically conflict-sensitive in itself. A few examples are offered in the following section, which traces briefly the six-organisation conflict sensitivity project (described in Box I) as it was implemented in Sri Lanka. It provides insights into the extensive experience of conflict sensitivity documented by the project, indicating how conceptual development was driven by indigenous practice in the South.

4.1 Insights and Learning from Sri Lanka

Interviews, workshops and training events convened across Sri Lanka from 2002 to 2003 formed a major plank in the learning on practice and challenges in conflict sensitivity for the six-organisation project, alongside similar work in Kenya and Uganda, and other experiences in Nepal, Guatemala and beyond. The Sri Lankan experience involved the government of Sri Lanka, local and international NGOs as well as donors engaging in development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding programming. The project focussed on conflict sensitivity as a practical approach, in order to simplify the concept and promote its application, and thus framed it in terms of 'how to' rather than as an academic discussion. This generated not only a considerable body of knowledge on conflict sensitivity as practiced in Sri Lanka but also contributed to the development of conflict-sensitive practice in Sri Lanka as well as the project team's own learning.

As anticipated, the project team quickly discovered that conflict sensitivity is not new to Sri Lanka – many organisations were conflict aware, incorporating some form of conflict sensitivity within the framework of their interventions, although this was often ad hoc, intuitive and geographically uneven in application (particularly apparent was the gap between Colombo and the rest of the country). Few actors however, had embedded conflict sensitivity throughout their project lifecycle (i.e. were conflict-sensitive), although a handful of agencies, including AHIMSA (the 'Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peace', a Sri Lankan NGO based in Colombo), CARE, Oxfam, Helvetas (a Swiss development NGO based in Colombo) and DFID were on the leading edge in the application of conflict sensitivity in Sri Lanka. 'Do No Harm' is being used extensively in Sri Lanka and several agencies have developed their own tools to both sensitise programming and build capacity (internally and of partners). At the other end of the spectrum are those who were conflict blind, who did not use conflict analysis tools nor understood the links between their interventions and conflict. This was particularly concerning in certain conflict flashpoint rural communities that were also the sites of considerable development programming undertaken by civil society and the state.

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2 The full set of documents comprising the Conflict-Sensitive Business Practice methodology is available on www.international-alert.org.

Not all implementation of the project in Sri Lanka went smoothly; we learnt some lessons the hard way. An initial lack of awareness of the local context by the international staff of the project team meant that we were not always as sensitive to the context as we should have been, nor made enough of the impressive cross-section of participants that attended organised events. More importantly, a dedicated conflict analysis was not undertaken at the start of the project, and the international partners were thus obliged to rely too heavily on the local partner for detailed context knowledge. As the project team came to recognise this crucial gap, a more methodical approach was taken, thus the emergent framework of linking conflict analysis to project planning and implementation was piloted in the ongoing Sri Lankan work. The project team recognised that there is a key need to demonstrate a willingness to learn in promoting conflict sensitivity.

4.2 Key outcomes of the work in Sri Lanka

The mapping process engaged numerous indigenous and international organisations, drawing the learning from the grassroots into the Resource Pack, and simultaneously helping to progress their understanding of conflict sensitivity. The concepts and terms of conflict sensitivity have been adopted widely in Sri Lanka, with considerable resonance and value attributed to them in key institutions. Indigenous technical expertise and self-sustaining training capacity has been supported and enhanced, and the project's partner organisation is driving domestic application with a strong sense of ownership.

It is impossible to capture here the wealth of conceptual development that was drawn from the organisations and individuals engaged in the Resource Pack project. Nevertheless two concepts warrant particular attention: linking conflict analyses with needs assessments, and developing indicators for conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.

4.2.1 *Linking conflict analysis with needs assessment*

The foundation of conflict-sensitive practice is a thorough and regularly updated conflict analysis; it is the base rock to which all project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation should be linked. These linkages had previously not been clearly articulated and the work in Sri Lanka provided important examples of how to create such linkages between conflict analyses and needs assessments (Resource Pack, Chapter 3, Module 1, Section 2). Al Quraish Social Development Society (a Sri Lankan NGO based in Akkaraipattu), for example, uses a linked process: a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) that maps social welfare and identifies particular problems, supplemented by a conflict analysis to explore the root causes of such problems, mapping out a 'problem jungle'. This linked analysis expands the household focus of PRA to a more systemic understanding of problems and their causes. For instance, one PRA identified that school drop-out rates were contributing to poverty. Further analysis using a conflict tree (Responding to Conflict 2000) revealed that frequent displacement, destroyed and missing identity documents and orphan status were key causal factors of this.

Other organisations, such as AHIMSA and Helvetas use an integrated process. Helvetas incorporates components of conflict analysis tools into their PRA process, supplementing the individual perspective of the needs assessment with an analysis of the interests and strategies of conflict actors. For instance, a PRA revealed some unusually distant relations between sections of a community. Incorporating elements of the Attitudes, Behaviours and Context Triangle (Responding to Conflict 2000) enabled an understanding of why these relationships were distant. Another organisation, AHAM (a Sri Lankan NGO consortium, based in Trincomalee), uses a conflict analysis as a statement of need, such that the conflict analysis itself defines the intervention without an

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additional needs assessment process. In a process facilitated by AHAM staff, representatives of the conflicting parties undertake a shared analysis and propose project interventions, which they then explain and discuss with their constituent communities.

4.2.2 Developing indicators for conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation

The development of indicators to measure the interaction between a project and its (conflict) context was of considerable interest to many Sri Lankan-based organisations. The Resource Pack promotes the use of perception-based indicators in addition to objective indicators to capture the more intangible impacts of programming, for example whether a respondent feels more or less safe (perception-based indicator) compared to the recorded number of incidents of violence (objective indicator). This approach drew on Oxfam Sri Lanka's ground-breaking work in devising indicators to evaluate their peacebuilding work. Oxfam's relationship building programme, which seeks to build relationships across communities divided by the conflict, involves inter-community exchange activities. A series of innovative indicators were developed by the beneficiaries and cross-checked by Oxfam, including:

· The existence of communications taking place above and beyond those organised by the project (including inter-group marriages)
· The form of visiting during organised encounters (Do people behave as relatives or strangers? What kinds of gifts do they bring?)
· Actions of those not directly involved in the organised encounters (for example, a Buddhist Monk who was not directly involved in the programme activities allowing announcements to be made in Tamil from the Buddhist Temple, when the Tamil language is not normally used by Buddhists).

These insights only scratch the surface of extensive and high calibre indigenous practices of conflict sensitivity, not only from Sri Lanka but also Kenya, Uganda and beyond.

5. The future of conflict sensitivity

There are a number of new sectors and areas to which the concepts and ideas underpinning conflict sensitivity could usefully be applied, as well as suggestions for the evolution of the concept.

5.1 Coherence with macro peace strategies and cooperation with other actors

As with PCIAs, conflict sensitivity is rooted in the belief that by improving the ability of development projects to avoid negative and maximise positive impacts, appropriately designed and implemented projects will contribute to sustainable peace (Bush 1998, 7; Gaigals with Leonhardt 2001, 23). However, because it remains extremely difficult to determine impact in peacebuilding, it cannot be said with any sort of confidence that a conflict-sensitive project will, *a priori*, contribute to the consolidation of peace. In other words, the maturation of conflict sensitivity requires an examination of the assumption that 'avoiding harm' and 'doing some good' necessarily builds peace. Two complementary avenues for such maturation are explored here: linking up conflict-sensitive projects with a broader peace strategy, and collaboration.

The Utstein Study of Peacebuilding identifies what Dan Smith calls a "strategic deficit" in peacebuilding. The majority of the peacebuilding projects analysed in the study did not have a clear connection to a country or regional peace strategy, also a pervasive problem for development

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and humanitarian assistance (Smith 2004, 10). Just as better development practice should link development and humanitarian assistance projects to a broader country development strategy, projects should also be linked to a country-level peace strategy. Building such links is fundamental to deconstructing the assumption that conflict sensitivity will automatically contribute to peace. As Anderson and Olson point out, "people will say, 'I have to assume that, over time, all of our different activities will add up.' But the evidence shows that without explicit efforts to add it up, this does not automatically or inevitably occur" (Anderson and Olson 2003, 54). Linking conflict-sensitive projects to a country-level strategy would challenge practitioners to question assumptions, to understand the role and activities of other actors, and to ensure some level of collaboration and complementarity. More importantly, better understanding country-level implications for community-level projects would encourage practitioners to make the connections between their work and the macro conflict context.

Another important aspect of the strategic deficit is coordination both within agencies and with other complementary organisations. As Smith argues, agencies working in a "beneficiary country need all to be pulling in the same direction" (Smith 2004, 57). Calls for coordination amongst development, humanitarian and peacebuilding agencies are not new, and continue to be frustratingly evasive for a variety of reasons, including high staff workloads and the perceptions and reality of inter-agency competition. As Thania Paffenholz has said "everybody wants to coordinate, but nobody wants to be coordinated!" (Paffenholz 2004, 163). Conflict sensitivity provides two important mechanisms for coordination. First, joint conflict analyses – good practice in conflict sensitivity – help agencies to see how they can complement each other's efforts and ensure that the collective whole is more than the sum of its parts by providing a commonality of purpose. As Jeroen de Zeeuw puts it, "The lack of international consensus is […] linked to the absence of identified objectives and priorities for peace-building" (De Zeeuw 2001, 16). Second, understanding a context from a conflict-sensitive perspective helps agencies to understand that their own positive contributions to mitigating violence can easily be frustrated by carelessness from a conflict-blind or conflict-insensitive organisation operating in the same area. This realisation encourages organisations that wish to be conflict-sensitive to strategically engage with organisations they might otherwise choose not to engage with.

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> ### Box VII – Cross-agency collaboration in the Caucasus
> In the three South Caucasian countries of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, for example, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has been working with a wide range of national and international development NGOs to raise conflict sensitivity awareness and capacity. By bringing representatives from both national and international NGOs together in joint workshops and training sessions, CRS has successfully encouraged cross-agency collaboration within and across the national and international divides. Agencies that have participated in the CRS activities have shown a strong desire to work together on joint conflict analyses and joint conflict-sensitive development projects. However, questions still remain as to how this initiative is explicitly linked to addressing macro conflict dynamics in the region.

Bringing a more strategic approach to conflict sensitivity also opens a new opportunity for measuring impact. Because of the existence of significant external factors, the peacebuilding field has struggled with measuring project impact. Conflict sensitivity faces similar problems with impact measurement, although there have been some recent advances (as outlined in Section 4.2.2 above, and Resource Pack Chapter 3, Module 3). Better understanding the interconnections between country-level macro

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conflicts and community-level projects provides another opportunity for measuring impact, although significant and challenging questions do remain regarding how to measure the interaction and ascribe attribution.

New questions are also emerging. For example, with regards to stakeholders, can linking interventions to a country-level strategy and coordinating with other interventions produce a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts? The application of conflict sensitivity at the project level typically identifies stakeholders in development, peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance projects as community members (beneficiaries and their neighbours) and development actors (Community Based Organisations, local and international NGOs, and donors). While these two categorisations of stakeholders are important, it is generally prohibitively difficult to determine how effecting positive change amongst them will support the consolidation of peace at the macro political level.

In terms of engaging with stakeholders, conflict sensitivity is quite clear about the need to work beyond one's own organisation, and even beyond partner organisations (Resource Pack, Chapter 4, 5). Bush (2003b) expresses concern that PCIA was seized from the field by bilateral and multilateral donors. It is therefore important that conflict sensitivity apply to – and be understood by – a wide range of stakeholders. For reasons of practicality and efficiency, the application of conflict sensitivity often leads organisations to work with other like-minded organisations and to advocate for change amongst those most amenable to change. To ensure that conflict-sensitive development, peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance projects do in fact contribute to the consolidation of peace, more work is required to effect change amongst agencies that are either uninterested or antagonistic to engaging constructively in conflict transformation.

5.2 Post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding

As with the unproven assumption that conflict-sensitive community-level projects will naturally contribute to peace, there is also a prevalent assumption that post-conflict reconstruction is inherently pro-peace. Some seem to think that there is no need to consider the risk of violence in post-conflict reconstruction because the conflict has been resolved (CSIS/ AUSA 2002, 2). Yet as US President Harry S. Truman said, "the absence of war is not peace".

Two aspects of post-conflict reconstruction illuminate the opportunity (and need) for the application of conflict sensitivity: First, democratisation, and second, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. Timing is critical for both, not only to ensure they are understood as a long-term transition from emergency assistance to development, but also that they correspond to local realities and needs, rather than the political agendas of donor countries.

5.2.1 *Democratisation*

Many practitioners believe that democratisation *prima facie* contributes to peace (De Zeeuw 2001, 19). However, as a recent SIDA publication highlights, "democratisation in its first stages *increases* the likelihood of armed conflict" (Söderberg and Ohlson 2003, 1; emphasis added). Democratic governance, political party development, citizen education and particularly elections all have the potential to exacerbate societal tensions. The challenge is to support a societal shift from negative peace to positive peace without inadvertently increasing the likelihood of violent conflict.

Many post-conflict reconstruction interventions focus on democratisation processes and, more problematically, on the 'trappings' of democracy, the most celebrated of these being the multi-party election. The logic appears to be that by holding elections early, democracy will naturally follow. Or perhaps, more disingenuously, that the completion of an election offers positive proof of the existence of democracy in a particular country. In relation to the Palestinian elections, for

example, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair said "it was important to support the elections because it was the first opportunity for democracy to take hold on the Palestinian side" (Jones 2004, 1). In reality, elections in weak or conflict-affected countries are unlikely to be successful and unlikely to support either peace or democratisation processes. First, in even the most stable countries, elections are inherently about a struggle for power. In unstable countries this struggle can be "highly destabilising", encourage "ethnification" and sometimes lead to "political violence or armed conflict" (Söderberg and Ohlson 2003, 26). Second, elections in conflict-affected countries are "likely to lead to sedimentation of the existing power structures through a 'premature closure' of the process of democratisation" (Söderberg and Ohlson 2003, 26).

We are not aware of any processes undertaken to date that can be considered even an earnest attempt at 'conflict-sensitive democratisation'. Nevertheless, a picture is beginning to emerge of what such a process might look like. First, as indicated above, there is a need to de-emphasise democratic *mechanisms* and focus instead on the full breadth of democratic *culture* that includes the acceptance of norms such as transparency, accountability and responsiveness of institutions to public interest. In some fragile states and difficult partnerships we are now seeing a shift by the international community from supporting governments to supporting governance. This is a welcome shift because it recognizes that effective governance and democracy – particularly in conflict-affected contexts – require a change in culture, and not just improving or building new structures and processes.

So we can imagine that a conflict-sensitive approach to democratisation would involve building on a detailed understanding of existing indigenous governance norms and approaches to ensure that new approaches and interventions actually serve to consolidate peace, and do not entrench existing inequitable or unjust power structures. Clearly much work remains to be done on this issue.

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5.2.2 *Demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR)*

Demobilising, disarming and reintegrating combatants is crucial in any post-conflict environment. At their most basic, DDR programmes attempt to remove arms from all but the regular armed forces (i.e. military and police) and to reintegrate former combatants into society. However, complex political and social contexts can undermine these interventions, resulting in a failure to contribute to consolidated peace and stability, or even in a recourse to arms. Evaluations of long-term impact seldom highlight the levels of conflict sensitivity of such programmes.

A government-led DDR programme in Uganda, for example, aimed to integrate former rebel groups and reduce the size of the regular army (Saferworld and InterAfrica Group 2000). However, an increasingly fragile security situation in the north, coupled with an under-funded reintegration phase, resulted in problems. Large numbers of the demobilised combatants were recruited into emerging rebel movements (often because of security threats to their families); others were re-absorbed in the standing army as home guards or reserve forces. Re-skilled individuals had to move to urban areas to be able to apply their new skills, but even there economic opportunities were limited. Membership in the army offered an easier livelihood option. A failure to understand and respond to the structural constraints in the socio-economic context meant the programme, at best, did not fulfil its potential and, at worst, created a pool of demobilised combatants without livelihoods in an unstable security environment.

Similarly, when designing a weapons collection or small arms programme, insufficient attention is often paid to the context; civilians and former combatants will only relinquish their arms if their security situation improves and they trust the state security services to protect them. In the

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Karamoja region of Uganda, for example, several disarmament attempts by the government failed. The reasons include a general perception among the population that the government would not be able to protect them, and a situation where cattle rustling is key to economic survival. A conflict-sensitive disarmament programme should consider how to improve these circumstances.

There are numerous other areas that might also benefit from the application of a conflict sensitivity lens. More importantly, however, is the understanding that the consolidation of peace at a country-wide level requires a maturation of conflict sensitivity beyond a project-focus to a country-wide application.

6. Conclusion

We believe that some of the most useful conflict-sensitive approaches reflect the experience and findings of Southern organisations working in conflict-affected countries. These organisations have made a contribution to the implementation of better practice and to raising awareness, learning and reflection amongst a diverse group of actors. Key learning and trends have emerged from our experience with the implementation of conflict-sensitive approaches. While many of these are not new, and others were 'foretold', we believe our experience with implementation – and the documentation of others' experiences in other organisations and regions – gives us particular insight into conflict-sensitive approaches.

At the core of conflict sensitivity is an investment in learning about the conflict context and a responsibility to act upon that learning to make better-informed choices. These tasks seem deceptively simple. They, however, require a great deal of commitment on the part of any organisation. Tools help to 'concretise' the rather abstract concept of conflict sensitivity. Yet as we have noted throughout this piece, the reduction of PCIA or conflict sensitivity to a 'tools only' based understanding will not achieve the 'avoidance of negative impacts and the enhancement of positive impacts', nor will it empower in the way that some would hope. A lack of clarity on 'what is' conflict sensitivity or PCIA is not merely an academic issue, but one that inhibits its adoption and application. Moreover, while operational guidance in the form of tools is an important aspect of conflict sensitivity, true impact requires a more fundamental and focused transformation of institutional practices. This requires the 'mainstreaming' of conflict sensitivity within an organisation. Without mainstreaming, islands of better practice will emerge that will have limited impact. This paper describes key approaches to engage in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming, moving it from the conceptual to the practical. Mainstreaming is, however, a significant task for any organisation and will necessarily be a long-term process.

Conflict sensitivity has a relevance and importance to government, the private sector and peacebuilding actors, much beyond only the traditional humanitarian and development sectors. There is some emerging experience of engaging government and the private sector, but it is early days. Conceptually there is no reason why conflict sensitivity cannot be extended to new areas such as macro post-conflict reconstruction and DDR. We, and those we were working with, learnt the hard way that conflict sensitivity is relevant to all programming, including programming aimed at promoting conflict sensitivity. We know from experience that for conflict sensitivity to move beyond rhetoric and concepts, changes in practice are required, not least by those organisations and individuals championing it.

Our experience in Sri Lanka, Kenya and Uganda demonstrates that a number of agencies have already developed methods to understand the conflict environment, make informed decisions

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on how to avoid negative impact, and increase positive impacts. A wealth of experience exists that, while not specifically called or understood as 'conflict sensitivity' or PCIA, is nevertheless highly relevant, important and should be studied and utilised by practitioners and scholars alike. The adaptation of existing methods of assessment and evaluation in the humanitarian and development sector to make them more conflict-focussed is also being attempted, and again shows some promise. The development of impact monitoring and evaluation remains an area of huge interest, but one in which there is the least guidance in terms of theory or practice. New thinking on topics such as 'interaction indicators' shows promise worthy of application and subsequent learning. More application and documentation of practice should be the focus rather than conceptual tinkering, away from the realities of implementation.

The last five years have seen significant advances in the application of conflict sensitivity, though application remains weak in both breadth and depth across the myriad of actors and processes connected with 'development' worldwide. Conflict sensitivity has not yet reached the same level of recognition as have topics such as mainstreaming the environment, gender or rights-based approaches. Nor has conflict sensitivity yet become the catalyst for empowerment of communities that some analysts would have hoped.

Despite the limits of the breadth and depth of applications of conflict sensitivity, there are a number of new areas and difficult questions it can help address. Conflict sensitivity and emerging thinking such as 'strategic peacebuilding' complement each other, and as we have indicated, may help address some of the issues concerning coordination of agencies and the divide between micro-level interventions and macro-level impact. As was often indicated by practitioners in Sri Lanka, Kenya and Uganda, the responsibility and need to be conflict-sensitive increased with the size and influence of the organisation. For conflict sensitivity to truly have an impact it must be adopted by all actors (national governments, donors, international NGOs and civil society) – with the understanding that there are many practical and political obstacles to making this a reality. The challenge of the future of conflict sensitivity is for the views of those at the sharp end of implementation to be continually sought in order to achieve learning and accountability. These views should be sought in much more comprehensive, systematic and impartial ways than has been the case in the past.

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7. References and Further Reading

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The utility and dilemmas of conflict sensitivity

FIELD NOTES

Fighting Commodification and Disempowerment in the Development Industry:

Things I Learned About PCIA in Habarana and Mindanao

Kenneth Bush

1

Fighting Commodification and Disempowerment in the Development Industry:
Things I Learned About PCIA in Habarana and Mindanao

Kenneth Bush

"It is not possible to be a 9-to-5 project officer in a 24-hour war zone."
(Participant at the Habarana workshop, May 2004)

Preface

Warning: This article is not a delicately rendered diplomatic engagement in an abstract discussion about ideas and practices. Rather, because it builds from the experiences and stories of individuals and organisations who are working heroically in violence-prone regions around the world, the article reflects a low tolerance – impatience even – for the sophistry or politics that distract attention from muddy, life-and-death realities on the ground. The article rests on a belief that constructive change and net positive impact requires more than just doing "more of the right thing." It also requires that we *stop doing the wrong things*. For this reason, it speaks in fairly explicit terms about actions and actors that risk undermining the empowering potential of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. The absence of such details would leave us speaking a vague language of generalities, and risks creating the impression that a self-described PCIA initiative is puttering along, more or less, on the right path. Sometimes this is true. Sometimes it is not. If PCIA is to stand a chance of living up to its potential, we had better be able to distinguish between when it is working (and why), and when it is not working (and why).

1. Introduction

I welcome the Berghof Research Center's continued enthusiasm to stimulate critical thinking on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA). Just as the first round of dialogue (or "debates" as they are known in some circles) created a timely and strategic moment to reflect on the evolution of the idea and practice of PCIA, so does the current round of papers offer an opportunity to consider recent developments. The Center's genuinely constructive and collaborative approach to the dissemination of applied research is one which is too rare in a development industry where competition between organisations for dwindling or newly available resources too frequently leads to unconstructive competition, duplication (often transparent plagiarism) and sub-optimal outcomes.

The broad parameters of the current dialogue were set out by the Berghof editors as follows: "under the heading "New Trends in PCIA," each author presents his or her own approach/experience with PCIA or similar methodology." I find myself in an interesting (and sometimes uncomfortable) position that shapes my analysis and assessment of these "new" trends in PCIA. Having coined the term "PCIA" in 1996, and introduced the concept into the development/

peacebuilding lexicon, I have watched what happens to an idea from the point of release into the real world of politics, bureaucracies, competing interests, and – not to put too fine a point on it – money. It has been an educational experience, to be sure. I should be quick to add that my own role in the development of PCIA has not been restricted to that of passive observer or critic. I have worked intensively with partners to seed, and to grow,[1] PCIA in places and ways that are intended to enable users – especially communities – to develop tools and techniques that are principled, appropriate, and most importantly *their own.*

I view the Berghof Center's invitation to contribute to the current debates as an opportunity to build from a position of critique towards a more concrete and *useful* project that reconnects practice with the original aspirations of PCIA, specifically its desire to contribute to the empowerment of communities – not least their ability to nurture existing peacebuilding capacities that would enable them to assert control over those decisions and initiatives (internal and external) that affect lives and livelihoods in violence-prone regions around the world. To this end, the second half of this paper points to some exciting work taking place in the South that is moving PCIA in what I consider to be the right direction.

The most exciting work related to PCIA is not taking place in London or Bern or Ottawa. (A very interesting exception may be found in the work of Janet McGrath, a graduate student at St. Paul University who is working with indigenous communities in Canada to "translate" and "transform" PCIA concepts and tools into forms that are useful in the politically charged and confrontational relationships that have evolved between indigenous communities, settler communities, and the Canadian Government. Technically, these initiatives are not located in the overdeveloped North, but rather in the Southern margins within the overdeveloped North.) The most exciting work, though, is taking place in the South – on-the-ground in the midst, and on the margins, of war zones. However, these Southern stories, lessons, and experiences are not being heard; they are not even being listened for. More often than not, those in the South working with PCIA-like tools in difficult, under-resourced, and violent settings are too busy to contribute to the academicized, English-language, elite-driven, self-interested initiatives driven by Northern organisations. Meanwhile in the North (to only slightly over-state the case), marketer-consultants are jetting between rich capital cities promoting PCIA products in packages that are so far removed from on-the-ground realities, that they are practically (*sic*) useless. The irony here is that PCIA is not rocket science. It is based on simple ideas that can be applied (and modified for use) in fluid and complex settings. PCIA expertise in interpreting peace and conflict impact potentials rests (currently and ultimately) with those closest to the ground. Indeed, the chances are that they already use a form of PCIA – it is worth remembering that the structure and content of PCIA came originally from hundreds of conversations with field workers in the South. So new approaches should be welcome only to the extent that they build from, and reinforce, existing capacities. Anyone who has worked in the field has heard their fill of stories of arrogant Northerners whose starting assumption is that communities have needs, but limited capacities or expertise.

In some ways, the current discussion picks up from the question that struck me after reading Mark Hoffman's article in the first round of debates (Hoffman 2003): "where's the politics" in all of the frenetic activity around PCIA. Everywhere I looked, there was (and is) an obsessive fixation on the technocratic dimensions of "operationalising" PCIA. This is understandable. In fact,

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[1] As a colleague of mine, Madeline Church, once began a discussion about peacebuilding: "You can't build peace." You might grow it, or birth it, or nurture it, but you can't build it. This starting point allows us to consider the limitations of the mechanistic logics that underpin most approaches to "peace" in the development industry. More appropriate metaphors to frame peace-"building" may be found in the organic. Thus, I use the building metaphor self-consciously.

FIELD NOTES: **Things I Learned About PCIA in Habarana and Mindanao**

as is evident below in the section on PCIA theory, I view *utility* as the single most important criterion for assessing the development of PCIA. The central – and fundamentally political – questions here are: Useful for whom? Useful for what? Whose interests are being served (or not)?

The question of politics is epitomized by (but certainly not limited to) the discussions concerning indicators, which focus *not* on the (highly political) *process* of defining indicators, but on the search for a cheque book-ready, Holy Grail, one-size-fits-all, list of impact indicators that could be pasted into the full range of country settings from Peru to Papua New Guinea. Such a list may be less useful for measuring an initiative's on-the-ground impact, than for reinforcing the asymmetrical power relationships between Northern-driven initiatives and evaluations on the one hand, and those Southern communities on which they are "implemented." So too, is this obsession reflected in the technocratic fetishism and mechanistic checklist approaches being marketed by a growing number of white, Northern, cadres of self-defined peacebuilding "professionals." One bilateral "peacebuilder", for example, who was building a compendium of peacebuilding tools insisted that only contributions which could be presented on a single page matrix would be included (The Compendium of Peacebuilding Tools).

The difference between now and the last round of debates is that there are more examples that could be used to illustrate the ways in which PCIA is being "commodified" in a "peacebuilding industry" (which itself is a subset of the "development industry.") However, in this post-10-7,[2] hyper-hegemonic, world, there is a corrosive trend in the overdeveloped world towards the "securitization" of development policy and practice. In this context, any whining and whingeing about peacebuilding industries may well become academic, if all policy, action, and interventions are strained one-dimensionally through the kaleidoscope of the war on terror and hyper-power self-interest. Here, I would expect many of the current self-labelled peacebuilding experts to recast themselves as "development and security experts." As they say in the advertising world: "watch this space."

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2. Sub-Titling

It is appropriate to begin by disentangling the title of this article.

Field Notes: The following pages draw on years of observation, conversation, and participation in the development of the idea and practice of PCIA. The format of this article more resembles the rough form of anthropological field notes than the polished elegance of academic articles. Further, the term Field Notes is meant to indicate that the ideas and arguments presented here are part of an on-going process. The appendix offers the readers two documents that are more systematic: (1) HANDS-ON PCIA ("HOP"): a handbook for conducting peace and conflict impact assessment (Bush 2003a); and (2) a graduate syllabus on the evaluation of the peace and conflict impact of interventions in violence-prone areas. Both will be discussed further below.

Elsewhere, I have described the **commodification of peacebuilding** as: "a process in which peacebuilding as an idea and as a set of practices is (to be churlishly provocative) simply

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2 9/11 has been used instrumentally as a rallying call to jingoism; as a commodity; as an excuse to attack civil, political and human rights; as a means of legitimating and institutionalizing racism and xenophobia; and, most obviously, as a justification for applying military responses to social and political problems. But who remembers 10/7? That was the date that the U.S. and the U.K. began their bombing campaign in Afghanistan. Most of the non-Western world is struggling with the post-10/7 world and the political pathologies noted above, not the post-9/11 world. While the horrific attacks in September 2001 may have brought the dangerous world to the heartland of the United States, it has not brought the U.S. into the world in any constructive way, as its go-it-alone-if-necessary militarism illustrates.

stuffed into the standard operating systems of the standard [actors] who do the same old song and dance to get the cash/ funding. When 'new monies' are found, or existing monies are reallocated, to support 'peacebuilding' activities, the old wine-new bottle syndrome is as prevalent as the faces at the funding trough." (Bush 2004a, 116). This idea is developed further below in the discussion of the "branding" of PCIA. To be (more) blunt, the commodification of peacebuilding involves the selling of a product – with the overwhelming emphasis being on the selling, rather than the "product." The product is tailored largely to the buyers: development agencies, rather than the communities themselves who live and die in dirty war zones; who are the objects/ subjects/ beneficiaries/ targets/ victims of both peacebuilding projects and armed stakeholders; and who were there before the international community arrived on the scene, and will be there long after they leave (which, at the level of staffing, they do every 3 or 4 years, as ex-pats roll in and roll out of their field postings). Commodification is obvious in the content, structure, style and marketing practices of the marketers, as discussed below.

This being said, only a fool would be blind to the stunning exceptions to this pattern. There are extraordinary individuals and organisations which consistently swim against the current. This includes colleagues who: extend their postings longer than is good for their careers; naturally cultivate genuine relationships with local friends and colleagues from every point on the political-social spectrum; work against those institutional obstacles and incentive structures that inhibit continuity and learning within Northern Development Agencies, and that subsidize organisational amnesia and sub-optimal impact; and understand and subvert the development industry while working within it – a role a colleague in the World Bank once described as a "bureaucratic guerrilla."

Disempowerment: This is a difficult term to define. In common usage, it refers to the incapacitating impacts of an intervention on a particular group or subgroup – and the consequent loss of control over fundamental aspects of their lives. However, the term also includes an element of "overpowering." That is, it is not simply about taking control away (and undermining existing authority structures), it often includes the imposition of new structures and processes of control which serve to decrease internal independence and increase external dependence on resources (broadly defined) which are supplied in ways that are exploitative. One illustration of the disempowering impacts of PCIA may be found below in the discussion on the PCIA workshop in Sri Lanka. It is also interesting to note that while the earliest original writings on PCIA placed significant emphasis on "empowerment," neither that term (nor "capacity-building") are included in the glossary of the *Resource Pack for Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peacebuilding* (Resource Pack 2004).

Development Industry refers to organisations, projects, programmes and initiatives that approach development narrowly as a business, and, as a result, lose sight of the human realities and consequences of their work.

> **The Development Industry is based on:**
> • short-term/ temporary rather than long-term interventions
> • absence rather than presence
> • "product" rather than "process"
> • external control rather than internal control
> • efficiency rather than effectiveness
> • mechanistic, recipe book approaches rather than organic, learning approaches

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- pre-programmed rather than responsive approaches
- routine, boring approaches rather than creative approaches
- predictability rather than indeterminacy
- linearity rather than non-linearity
- anonymity rather than friendship and relationship-building
- checklists rather than stories
- budgets rather than people

(This list was first presented in Bush 2004a.)

Mindanao is a cluster of islands in Southern Philippines that were sites for a series of unique PCIA workshops with community workers, activists, development workers, as well as local government officials. These workshops were initiated and undertaken by the CIDA-supported Local Governance Support Programme (LGSP) in the Philippines. The level of commitment and enthusiasm by the organisers and participants was as intense as it was humbling. The HANDS-ON PCIA workbook (see appendix) is the product of their willingness, commitment and patience to work collaboratively to create something that suits their particular needs in their particular communities. They have fully appropriated – in the best sense of the word – PCIA, and are using their own versions, in their own languages, in their own islands, in their own realities.

I remember very distinctly the moment in one particular workshop north of Davao City, Mindanao when discussion suddenly intensified and quickened as workgroups applied some of the PCIA Handbook tools to project/ programme documents they brought with them. My white ear kept hearing different groups talking in local languages about an island I did not know: "Pikee-yah." I asked whether it was close to Tawi Tawi. When they stopped laughing, it was explained that Pikee-yah was, in fact, the local word for "PCIA." It was clear that they had picked up the tools and were running with them. At that point, the tables turned. Since then, I have been learning more from them than they have learned from me.

They have not simply translated foreign ideas and tools into local languages; they have *made them their own* (more below). I understand that their initiatives (or what they call "Pikeeyah") include the use of PCIA to guide decision-making and monitoring of services and programmes by Local Government Units (LGUs) in seven selected Zones of Peace[3] in Mindanao. PCIA training has also taken place with a very wide range of organisations and actors – facilitated by a growing cadre of Filipino peace activists, completely independent of Northern-defined/ controlling PCIA "professionals".

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3 Zones of Peace (ZOPs) constitute a people-initiated, community-based response to the situation of raging armed conflict in the country. Peace Zones contribute to the building up of a peace constituency in the grassroots and work to immediately relieve local communities, especially the civilian population, of the burden of war. Through Peace Zone action, communities seek to create a "social space" in which to address and resolve community issues as well as to explore alternative modes of conflict resolution, in accordance with their local culture and traditions. Peace Zones are geographical areas which community residents declare themselves to be off-limits to armed conflict. They range in size from the area covered by a *purok* or neighbourhood to that of a province. Based on terms and conditions set by the people themselves, Peace Zones are maintained and reinforced by the community's sustained, creative expressions of commitment to peacebuilding, which are expressed and managed through community-based implementing structures. Peace Zones are actual and operational community-managed entities that are gaining ground in the effort to halt armed hostilities and lay the groundwork for pluralism and dialogue immediately on the local level; to intervene in situations that threaten the security of life, property, and livelihood of the civilian population; as well as to pursue a local development agenda on the community's own terms. Peace Zone builders all over the country comprise a major constituency for the pursuit of peace processes on the national level. ZOPs are *not* simply gun-free zones. They are much more than spaces free from the visible tools of violence. They are defined by the active presence of the tools to build relationships of tolerance, respect, understanding and peace.

Habarana is a small village in North Central Sri Lanka, which was the site of a PCIA workshop supported by OXFAM UK (Sri Lanka) and the Asia Foundation (Philippines & Sri Lanka Offices), as well the Local Governance Support Programme in the Philippines. Expanding the mentoring process/ relationships that were built explicitly into the Mindanao workshops, the Habarana workshop was co-facilitated by three Filipino colleagues and myself.[4] Participants were primarily local Sri Lankan NGOs and partners of OXFAM (including two Nepali partners). Drawing on Filipino experience, the workshop rooted PCIA self-consciously in work being done on Culture of Peace (COP). As far as I am aware, this is the only initiative which has created the space for *genuine* Southern-*led*, South-South, PCIA capacity-building. There are other instances where Southern organisations have been stuffed into Northern-defined, and Northern-driven agendas.

3. Logos, Branding and PCIA

One of the striking features of what is quickly becoming a PCIA cottage industry is the effort of marketers to distinguish their particular brand of PCIA from other brands. In other words, these "PCIA-NGOs" and consultants have figured out what the private sector corporations learned long ago: to be successful, you have to produce brands, more than products (obviously, Klein 2000). In the current context there are three essential dimensions in the branding process: (1) the fashioning of a unique *term* or label that distinguishes one PCIA brand from another; (2) a re-writing of history to so that the producer of a particular brand is seen to be located "there at the beginning" and/ or leading the PCIA charge; and (3) a systematic marketing of a brand that includes the active exclusion (erasing) of other brands and conspicuous labelling with the producer's logo.

A short list of PCIA-derivative labels would include:

• Conflict Impact Assessment	• Conflict Sensitive Programming	• Peace and Conflict Development Analysis
• Conflict Impact Assessment System	• Conflict Sensitive Approaches	• Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) – "Do no Harm"
• Conflict Assessment	• Conflict Risk Analysis	• Peace & Conflict Assessment Model (PCA)
• Strategic Conflict Assessment	• Conflict Development Analysis	

Thus, the PCIA market is characterized by a proliferation of terms and labels created by organisations selling their wares (i.e., consulting expertise that delivers a PCIA product for a given price on a given date) to buyers in the development-peacebuilding market.

To illustrate this point, let's look at two examples where there has been a conscious and explicit effort to generate brand recognition in ways that are simply unconstructive. The first is the *Resource Pack for Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peacebuilding* produced by a consortium led by International Alert, Saferworld, and FEWER (Resource Pack 2004).

In the production of this Resource Pack, it appears that a conscious decision was made to systematically eliminate all references to "PCIA" in order to shine the spotlight on their own term

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4 The Filipino co-facilitators were Myn Garcia (Philippines-Canada LGSP, Pasig City, Philippines, mgarcia@lgsp.org.ph), Madett Virola-Gardiola (CO Multiversity, Davao City, madett@hotmail.com), and Abdul Jim Hassan (Philippines-Canada LGSP, Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, Philippines, ahassan@lgsp.org.ph).

"Conflict Sensitive Approaches" – at least, this was how it was explained by a researcher involved in the preparation of the document. The complete absence of the term "PCIA," and its omission from the summary of "Conflict Analysis Tools," is all the more conspicuous given (1) the "PCIA"-specific programmes and projects (*qua* PCIA) that had been undertaken by at least four of the six sponsors of the pack – that is: each of these organisations had already successfully used PCIA to attract donor funding for specific "PCIA initiatives"; and (2) the centrality of PCIA in orienting International Alert and Saferworld's "review of literature and practice" (Leonhardt 2000). While oversights may be idiosyncratic, branding is very systematic.

The second example of branding may be found in the literature developing Peace and Conflict Assessment (Paffenholz and Reychler 2004). Considerable effort is spent trying to differentiate the term "PCA" from PCIA. Even a cursory review of *A Measure of Peace* (Bush 1998) or *HANDS-ON PCIA* reveals that every "difference" identified by the author is, in fact, already present in the original PCIA.[5] The question of the originality of the content of a brand – though significant – seems less important than ways in which the brands are being marketed and sold.

To the extent that control (so-called "expertise") is monopolized by groups of Northern elites, it subsidizes (and reflects) the massive power imbalances whereby Southern participation is reduced to a kind of puppetry by Northern ventriloquists. Reflecting on the dialogue encouraged by the Berghof Center, this observation suggests another facet of the PCIA debates: the ethics of PCIA, in addition to on-going discussions of the methodologies and politics of PCIA.

4. PCIA in Theory

I must say that I was struck in the first round of the Berghof dialogue (Austin, Fischer and Wils 2003) by the call for a more explicit theoretical grounding of my work on PCIA – though in retrospect perhaps I should not have been, given the academic predispositions of the contributors. At the time, I countered this (feebly) with the observation that experience suggests that practical work in war zones is generally better served by looking at interests rather than theory. I suppose with the luxury of time, one might develop a theory of interests in war zones – perhaps drawing on some of the stimulating research being directed by people like David Malone, Mats Berdal, Paul Collier on interests and grievances in the political economy of violent conflict. However, I would need to be convinced that communities on the ground felt that such theory construction was more useful (or at all useful) compared with the bare foot inductivism that enables survival – even peacebuilding – in violence-prone realities.

Nonetheless, the question of theory kept lurking at the jungle's edge throughout the Habarana workshop. Listening to colleagues working in exceptionally difficult conditions in Sri Lanka, Mindanao, and Nepal, I realized that in war zones, theory is either useful or useless. There is no middle ground. And there is rarely the luxury of time or space to mull over and contemplate abstractions, however erudite, parsimonious, or elegant. If PCIA works for you in the field, use it. If not, throw it out. We all have much more important things to do with our very limited and precious time. This much I can tell you, though: where PCIA has been used, and where it appears to have been successful, it was because PCIA was fully appropriated by communities themselves. They took it; they changed it; they used it so that it worked for them in their communities, in their realities.

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5 This includes assertions that PCA is unique in its: comprehensiveness and inclusiveness (which is also challenged by the narrow donor focus of the PCA model); unique as a pre-intervention planning tool (see HO PCIA, p.6); application to all kinds of interventions, conventional development and humanitarian as well as "peacebuilding" (HO PCIA, p. 6, 9); multi-level, multi-sector applicability (*HO PCIA* 2003, and *Measure of Peace* 1998).

Perhaps sometime in the distant future – when whatever will work, has worked – university-based academics will wade in to excavate theories. But for now, the distance between the academy and the field suggests that it may be a long while before we see useful theory.

5. "User-Friendly" PCIA: for whom?

It has been observed that *A Measure of Peace: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Development Projects in War Zones* (Bush 1998) was not sufficiently user-friendly; that it lacked user-ready tools. This is true – with two points of elaboration. First, as pointed out repeatedly, the reason for writing that study was to chart the conceptual boundaries of an area of activity which, up to that point in time, had not been systematically defined or explored. Criticisms that *Measure of Peace* was not user-friendly misunderstand the intentions and context of its writing. Second, it strikes me as logical that the development of anything seeking to be user-friendly needs to employ an iterative process which begins with the conceptual – problem identification, a survey of existing theories, responses, tools, and so on – usually drawing from research, conversations, and experiences related to a particular problem. This process generates ideas and suggestions that might then lead to "prototypes," testing, rethinking, more conversations, re-testing, and so on. It strikes me as premature (if not foolhardy) to jump into the fashioning of "user-friendly" tools without having (1) explored the nature of the set of problems to be addressed; (2) discussed existing and possible responses with those most affected by these problems.

In the appendix, I have included my modest effort to develop a "user-friendly" tool called "HANDS-ON PCIA." As with *A Measure of Peace*, this is the product of intensive collaboration with colleagues in the field (in this case, Mindanao). It is written in English for non-English speakers, using a "PCIA for Dummies" format that includes quick references, examples, question-answer sections, illustrative tables, diagrams, and so on. In an effort to be user-friendly, the handbook includes "Worksheets" that may be used in capacity-building exercises with cases of the user's choice, or directly in the field. It is still too technical and mechanistic, but it is moving in the right directions. More on this, shortly.

Given the lamentations over the lack of user-friendly tools, one might reasonably expect to have seen the development of a variety of nifty instruments in the years since the publication of *A Measure of Peace*. Unfortunately not. With the exception of some very exciting work being undertaken by communities and peace activists in Mindanao, the "tools" in the tool kits are overwhelmingly academic and tailored narrowly for donors in the North. Interestingly, the fact that there are not collections of competing PCIA tools floating around in cyberspace does not seem to have inhibited donors and development agencies from finding consultants to conduct Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments. The fact that this kind of grey literature is not circulating freely is itself a hindrance to the accumulation of a body of material that would allow a more systematic analysis of the idea and application of PCIA.

6. Outsourcing PCIA

In mid-2004, I was approached by UNICEF Sri Lanka to undertake a PCIA of its programme (Bush 2004b). I offered my now-standard response: "You don't want me to 'do' a PCIA for you. What you should want is to develop the capacity within UNICEF and among your

partners to undertake PCIA themselves. That way, in the future you won't have to rely on outsiders to do what should be part of the project cycle, from beginning to end." The UNICEF response was telling, and explains the lack of much systematic awareness of the peace and conflict impacts of that organisation's work in Sri Lanka: "Of course, we probably have the capacity to do a PCIA, *but we are out-sourcing all of our evaluations*." While my assessment in Sri Lanka did not find much internal PCIA capacity within UNICEF, the point – which applies to most organisations in the development industry – is that the reliance on outside "expertise" to "do" PCIA (read "one-shot-forensic-evaluation") short-circuits the development of the necessary capacities to integrate PCIA throughout the project cycle.

The "out-sourcing" of PCIA (and evaluation in general) may create a number of problems.

1. The transactional cash-for-product relationship between the buyer (development agency) and seller (consultant-evaluator) may exercise a strong dampening impact on critical findings – and thereby inhibits operational changes that may be necessary to genuinely mainstream PCIA.

2. It allows the managers of the project or programme to "plausibly deny" or bury any negative assessments.

3. As noted above, it inhibits the development of PCIA capacity with organisations and their partners.

4. For the most part, it excludes genuine participation of those affected by the interventions being evaluated.

I decided that if an organisation is not interested in cultivating its own PCIA capacity, then perhaps there are ways for an external Northern "expert" to cultivate local capacities by insisting on undertaking PCIAs in a team composed of local partners. In the UNICEF Sri Lanka case, there was no particular interest in such an approach. It just wanted a PCIA product, not a process – particularly one that might entail additional financial or logistical costs, even if it made sense in the longer term.

This orientation was not really that different on a UNDP-supported PCIA in Solomon Islands (Bush 2004c). One of the conditions I put on my participation in a "team" was that the division of labour would have to be one where I contributed to the development and application of an appropriate methodology (drawing on twenty-four years of work with colleagues in Sri Lanka and, more recently, the Philippines), while the rest of the team would be composed of Solomon Islanders who would provide the substantive "stuff" (the political context, the grounded analysis, the historical nuance, and so on). In the end, the "team" consisted of two Australians, one Brit, an American, one Solomon Islander intern, and me, a Canadian – certainly not the local team that I had argued was needed for the exercise.

While some development organisations may "talk the talk" regarding PCIA or "conflict-sensitive" programming, they do not "walk the walk" in terms of efforts to systematically integrate peace and conflict impact issues into standard operating procedures of the organisation. No doubt there is a variety of reasons for why this might be the case. It may be a matter of "operational habitus," that is, it may be a function of the rigidity and inherent conservatism of all bureaucratic organisations which tautologically assert, "we do it this way, because that is the way we do it." It may be a function of the perceived efficiency of out-sourcing work. Or it may be rooted in the feudal in-fighting within organisations as sub-groups try to assert control over policy and programming territory while blocking the efforts of others. The fact that such pathologies exist in some organisations should not be taken to imply that it is so in all organisations.

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7.● How *not* to do PCIA – creating conflict in the name of peace

In Sri Lanka, so-called "PCIA workshops" were held both in rebel-controlled and government-controlled areas. By most accounts, they were disorganised, confused and ill-prepared. They were led by foreigners who knew next to nothing about the conflict, very little about PCIA, and absolutely nothing about the intense sensitivities around "peace" at the time of the workshops – which were held as very delicate peace talks were taking place inside and outside the country. The facilitators were unable to respond to questions about the specific relevance of PCIA to the on-going peace process (questions that should have been expected, since PCIA had been a part of a three-year consultation between government, donors, and civil society).

The response from organisers concerning the apparent political insensitivity of their workshop was that PCIA was treated only from a "technical point of view" which "was never looked at from a political perspective." This response only reinforces the sense of their basic misunderstanding of PCIA, a misunderstanding which quickly slides down the slippery slope of commodification. You cannot separate the political from the technical. PCIA is fundamentally, and inexorably, *political*. PCIA is not a "tool" or a set of tools, it is a political process. How could the organisers have expected participants not to focus on the current peace process – especially in the rebel-controlled areas? When participants did try to steer discussion towards their immediate political-conflict context, it was dismissed: the specific national context was explicitly not structured into the workshop. It appears that the workshops saw the meeting of two disconnected universes: the one of the facilitators who knew next to nothing of the political realities of the country, and the other of participants who were inextricably mired in these realities. How is it possible to have a workshop in rebel-controlled areas – or any part of a war-affected country – where that context is not the overwhelming point of reference for everyone in the room? Not only should this have been expected, it should have been the basis for holding the workshops. To not anticipate this, to not respond to this, is to set the workshops up for failure, and to invite the disgruntlement of participants – who would be correct in dismissing PCIA as an irrelevant academic concept. The workshops therefore missed an opportunity, while possibly foreclosing more relevant and informed discussion on PCIA in the future.

In addition to the confused content and process of the workshops, documents were written in academic English and not translated into local languages. On-site interpretation was inadequate. All of these factors combined to ensure the frustration of participants and the failure of the exercise. Ironically, the net impact of workshops may have been to decrease the opportunity to strengthen PCIA capacity. Despite this, a second round of workshops was held.

The second workshop followed a similar path – its Northern-defined agenda was based entirely on academic, English-language, material. Local participants were required to sign forms committing themselves to "rolling out" the tools in the workshops before they were accepted to participate. That is, they were required to commit (in writing) to support a process/ product which they had not yet seen. On the second day of a week-long workshop, the deputy director of the Sri Lankan organisation which was serving as the "sales agent" for the Northern project had to drive to the site to try to address the clash of expectations between the academic – PCIA products being sold off the rack by Northern consultants – and the field workers – looking for useful relevant approaches and tools. (Details for this harsh assessment were derived from interviews with a number of participants in the workshops.)

One of the lessons that might be drawn is that even PCIA workshops should be vetted with a pre-project PCIA.

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8. What *is* working? Habarana and Mindanao – "Linking The Cultural And The Technical": Building a Culture of Peace and Applying PCIA

In late May 2004, OXFAM UK (Sri Lanka) and the Asia Foundation (Sri Lanka & Philippines Offices) supported a five-day workshop in Habarana, Sri Lanka that sought explicitly to create the space to examine and strengthen the capacities of Sri Lankan participants to manage the often competing personal and professional demands of working in violence-prone settings – whether they worked in the North, the East, the deep South, or any other area at risk of inter- or intra-group violence.

The Habarana Workshop was based directly and explicitly on the lessons learned from two similar workshops held in Mindanao (Philippines) in 2003 organised by the Local Governance Support Project.

The Sri Lankan workshop contained two distinct, but inter-related, components.

The *first part* focused on the challenges of building a Culture of Peace in Sri Lanka. For the first two days, participants were introduced to concepts of the Culture of Peace and presented with various types of activities designed to deepen their understanding of a COP, which enabled them to delve into the cultural dimensions (broadly defined) of violence and peace in Sri Lanka. The original framework was developed by Toh Swee-Hin, UNESCO Laureate for Peace Education in 2000 (LGSP 2003).

The *second part* of the workshop consisted of a capacity-building exercise that introduced the concept of PCIA (drawing specifically on Bush 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d), and allowed participants to apply tools developed and presented in *HANDS-ON PCIA: A Handbook for Conducting Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments*. Participants applied this material to actual projects or programmes, which they themselves brought to the workshop.

Culture of Peace is...

√ **Dismantling the culture of war,** including militarized/ armed conflicts or physical violence – within a country or between countries (macro); within a family, community, school (micro), as well as symbolic manifestations (e.g. media and war toys);

√ **Living with compassion and justice** – how we live in a manner where all resources are distributed in a way that meets the basic needs of all peoples within and across societies and nations;

√ **Building intercultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity** – how we can build relationships among different cultures and civilizations so that we can live in harmony, peace and respect with each other; no racism and discrimination of any forms;

√ **Promoting human rights and responsibilities** – based on the principle that each human being has rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural) as well as responsibilities; we can promote human rights rather than violate them;

√ **Living in harmony with the earth** – how to prevent environmental destruction due to unsustainable development policies and lifestyles, and promote peaceful people-planet relationships;

√ **Cultivating inner peace** – how do we nurture and cultivate a deep sense of spirituality that enhances inner peace, which in turn has an impact on building social peace.

FIELD NOTES: **Things I Learned About PCIA in Habarana and Mindanao**

Workshop Objectives

1. Deepen the understanding of basic concepts and principles of the Culture of Peace, cultural diversity and intercultural solidarity in the midst of the multiple conflicts and immediate challenges confronting those working in violence-prone areas (recognizing that in Sri Lanka there is a multiplicity of conflicts throughout the island which sometimes intersect/ interact and sometimes do not).
2. Articulate the relevance and challenges of conflict and identify the factors which help in assessing the state of a particular conflict.
3. Demonstrate skills in the use of conflict mapping and analysis.
4. Cultivate *and apply* the understandings and *practical, hands-on,* skills necessary to anticipate, monitor, and evaluate how a developmental, humanitarian, peacebuilding, or private sector intervention may affect the dynamics of peace or conflict in violence-prone regions.
5. Initiate an assessment of the peace or conflict impact of a project or programme which the participant is familiar with/ working on to deepen knowledge and skills in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment.
6. Plan follow-through mechanisms for continuing exchange and sharing learning applications among participants.
7. Develop South-South (Filipino-Sri Lankan) linkages to facilitate capacity-building relationships in the area of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment.

The Habarana workshop was an unprecedented and unique contribution to the development of peacebuilding capacities in Sri Lanka because of its attempt to link the work being done globally to nurture a Culture of Peace with on-going work on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. It should be highlighted that it was the first time in Sri Lanka that Culture of Peace and PCIA have been bundled together in a workshop. (The approach was piloted in the Philippines in collaborative initiatives between the Local Government Support Programme and myself.)

It is essential to understand why the workshop sought to integrate Culture of Peace with Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment in a single workshop, because it sheds light on the structure, content and the implications of this workshop and future efforts to nurture PCIA capacities.

In the past, Culture of Peace training has tended to be undertaken without the explicit consideration of the institutional realities and professional demands of those working on, or in, conflict-prone areas. It was left up to the individual to decide how (or whether) to incorporate COP ideas into their work. Conversely, training in PCIA (or derivative methodologies) has been treated almost entirely as a mechanistic, analytical, exercise in complete isolation from the personal and cultural (not to mention philosophical and ethical) foundations that will shape the ways in which PCIA is understood and applied – and that will ultimately determine its success or failure, by whatever criteria one chooses to use. So, even when done properly, "single-track" (technical) training artificially compartmentalizes the cultural and the technical, and makes it difficult for participants to apply – let alone integrate – workshop learning and tools into the professional and personal realities of their daily lives.

As one workshop participant observed, "It is not possible to be a 9-to-5 project officer in a 24-hour war zone". In other words, there is no hard and fast border between the personal and the professional demands thrust on individuals working in conflict-prone areas. The struggle to manage these two sets of demands often leads to burn out or break down at a personal level, and poor decision-making leading to project failure (or worse) at a professional level.

One participant described the attempt to integrate the cultural and the technical in

Habarana workshop as an effort "to connect the heart with the mind." It would be naïve to expect that the workshop could succeed in catalysing this connection in all of the participants – since the very process of working in conflict zones actively works against such integration. However, the slow process of such integration begins with the realization that (1) this compartmentalization exists (for various reasons) and (2) it carries a price that diminishes us both personally and professionally. The workshop itself offered an opportunity to examine these connections and disconnections. Through increased awareness and the application of basic tools, capacities were stimulated to begin a self-critical process to connect the cultural and the technical in the work and lives of participants.

Why Resist Disconnecting PCIA from COP?

One participant suggested that it might be more efficient to separate the Culture of Peace component of the workshop from the PCIA component. Because it is difficult to get people to commit to a five-day workshop, and because people want the immediate hands-on tools of PCIA, why not just have a 2-day PCIA workshop? Or alternatively, why not divide the workshop into two separate shorter workshops?

There are a number of reasons for resisting efforts to disconnect PCIA from Culture of Peace workshop components.

·   As discussed above, an integrated workshop allows participants to recognize the disconnections between the personal and the professional, and thereby creates the space for self-conscious efforts to connect them.

·   An integrated workshop allows participants to articulate a principled foundation from which to make personal and professional decisions in conflict-prone areas. Cognizant of the fact that we can never be bias-free in how we assess the impact of any initiative, the Culture of Peace module provides an opportunity for the participants to surface and become aware of their own way of looking at peace and conflict issues and may be strategically applied in PCIA based on how they have personally worked out these issues themselves.

·   An integrated workshop allows for trust to begin developing among participants. This is essential not only for the success of the workshop but for the evolution of the supportive personal and professional relationships which will support their individual and their organisation's efforts to work with PCIA.

South-South Linkages

One particularly exciting dimension of the Habarana workshop was that it was co-facilitated by three Filipino colleagues (Myn Garcia, Madett Virola-Gardiola and Abdul Jim Hassan, see footnote 4) who are the pioneers in developing COP-PCIA training in the Philippines – which now includes working directly with communities and local governments that are applying PCIA in seven Peace Zones in Mindanao. There is no other group in the world that currently possesses experience in training and application of PCIA that surpasses the informal PCIA network in the Philippines. In addition to this unrivalled expertise which they brought to the workshop (and which, in practice, is an openness to share from their PCIA experiences and to learn from others), there were many times when contrasts and comparisons were made between the Philippines' efforts in PCIA and Sri Lankan efforts. This added a very important dimension of two-way learning to the workshop. In addition to the three Filipino co-facilitators, there were two participants from Nepal whose presence and engagement similarly contributed to learning using comparative methods. The potential for further South-South linkages beyond the personal friendships which were initiated is high.

Peace and Conflict Stakeholder Mapping

FIELD NOTES: **Things I Learned About PCIA in Habarana and Mindanao**

Working in groups, participants undertook an exercise to map the peacebuilding and conflict stakeholders in the immediate area of a project site. Through this exercise participants see that mapping involves more than finding and fitting pieces into a single peace/ conflict puzzle. Participants realize that there are, in fact, different pieces to different puzzles (different conflicts; different conditions at different points in the same conflict; intersecting conflicts; and so on). Sometimes the same group is identified (correctly) as both a conflict and a peace stakeholder. And they see that the interests, objectives and means associated with different stakeholders may also change over time. The fluidity and complexity of the map underscores the need for an iterative approach to mapping throughout the life of a project.

Test-Driving PCIA Tools

Participants apply PCIA tools to projects that they bring to the workshop. This exercise allowed them to develop a *hands-on* understanding of the tools. (See the discussion below, "Responsive Changes in Workshop Format".) This gives participants a reasonable basis to decide for themselves whether (or to what degree) PCIA may be immediately useful for them. Because participants' projects are usually drawn from different phases of the project cycle (pre-, in, and post-project), the sharing of findings/ experiences allows the possibility of appreciating the differences in application in different projects, stages, sectors, contexts, and locations. A number of participants found it particularly useful to have to identify and distinguish between peace indicators, conflict indicators, and development indicators in their particular projects. This was the exercise that, for them, summed up the way in which PCIA challenges us to rethink the ways we do our conventional development and humanitarian work.

Responsive Changes in Workshop Format

The major change to the workshop was a decision by the team of facilitators to not use the hypothetical case study ("Tugal") as the focus for the first application of PCIA tools (i.e., before applying the same tools to existing projects in Sri Lanka). The original reason for developing the hypothetical case study was so that participants would not get hung up on disagreements over the details or minutiae of an actual case. The intention was to allow them to concentrate on the tools, and their systematic application in pre-project, in-project, and post-project phases. The case material was prepared and presented in a way that was designed to facilitate quick assimilation of the salient details of a project, a conflict, and an implementing agency. In practice, however, as experienced in the workshops done in the Philippines, there was considerable difficulty by participants to absorb the details and then apply the new tools. Further, upon reflection, any debate or dispute over "details or minutiae" can prove to be quite beneficial to the learning process, provided it could be harnessed and directed appropriately. The experience of conducting a PCIA workshop in the Zones of Peace in Mindanao, Philippines, wherein the participants used their actual community projects in applying the PCIA tools, clearly showed the relative ease in understanding the concepts and applying the tools of PCIA when using a "real" project that the participants know by heart. The additional advantage of using Sri Lankan cases (drawn from all phases of the project cycle) is that it provides a better opportunity for participants to actually test the utility of PCIA ideas and tools in cases that are pressing and important to them and their organisations.

A focus on existing projects (proposed, underway, or completed) means that facilitators need to have a detailed knowledge of the country (especially conflict-prone regions) in order to be most effective – or that they need to be paired up with co-facilitators with deep knowledge and area expertise. In one working group, for example, it took considerable probing and discussion before it

was made explicit that a border village in which a project was to be located was politically volatile not only because of a history of confrontation between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan armed forces and between Tamil and Sinhalese villagers. Because it straddled the dividing line between the Northern Province and the Eastern Province, and had been the site of a major battle between the LTTE and rebel-LTTE forces in Spring 2004, the location was also exceptionally volatile as a potential site for future confrontations within the LTTE. For a variety of possible reasons, this crucial fact was not placed on the table for discussion. The facilitator needs to be able to follow and understand not only what is being said but, more importantly, what is not being said in order to sharpen participants' application of PCIA tools.

Workshop Documentation and "Packaging" PCIA for Different Communities

The documentation used in the workshop is being revised in response to suggestions and experiences during the workshop. However, earlier versions of material used in the workshop may be downloaded from the web site for the Philippine-Canada Local Government Support Project.[6]

One of the exciting possibilities generated by the workshop was the connection made between an organisation interested in translating HANDS-ON PCIA into Tamil and Sinhala, and an organisation interested in funding such an initiative. This, however, is only the technical side of an issue that was raised throughout the workshop: the need not only to translate the language of PCIA, but to ensure that it is presented in forms that are appropriate and intelligible to a given constituency, whether this is community leaders, government decision makers, international NGOs, or donors. Unfortunately, there is not a single recipe that can be used to "cook up" a different PCIA dish to suit the tastes and appetite of each constituency. A lesson from Mindanao suggests that this can best be done through participatory engagements between the facilitating organisation and the constituency. Even more important to understand from the Mindanao experience is: (1) PCIA was only accepted once it was appropriated and "indigenized" by local communities; (2) the adoption of PCIA was a slow, organic, process; (3) PCIA was not the reason for initiating a relationship with a community. That is, a relationship was not built instrumentally with a community so that PCIA could be introduced into it. Rather, long standing relationships of trust and communication had built up over the years through an organic process of working with the communities, organising them, building their capacities and empowering the women, men and other sub-groups. PCIA just happened to be in the right hands, at the right place, at the right time. According to one of the Filipino co-facilitators, when this happened in Mindanao, the communities developed their own language, terms, and approaches. This was seen to be one of the next steps for PCIA in Sri Lanka.

9. Teaching PCIA in the Academic Setting

Obviously, teaching a full course on PCIA at a graduate level in a university is very different from week-long capacity-building workshops in the field. Even if the total number of hours is roughly the same in each format, the fact that a university course stretches out over 12 weeks permits a much more extensive engagement with "the literature." It also allows the space to glimpse the "larger picture," not only by comparing and contrasting different versions of PCIA, but by developing a better understanding of the basic "nuts and bolts" of monitoring and evaluation in general, and by examining the ways in which evaluation and assessment are conventionally undertaken in the fields of development, human rights, governance, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, and peacebuilding.

6 http://www.lgsp.org.ph/pdf/COP-PCIA.pdf

As an illustration, the appendix includes the English and French syllabi for a course taught in the MA Programme in Conflict Studies at St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada.

The centrepiece of the course is the requirement for students to apply the Hands-On PCIA Handbook to a project of their choice located in a conflict-prone setting. Those students with field experience, or those who choose to work on projects drawn from home countries such as Lebanon, Ethiopia, Somalia or Sudan, may be closer to the thick details of a case, but each student faces his or her particular challenges in applying newly acquired tools and approaches to a case with more detail than can possibly be absorbed over the span of a few weeks. Further, none of the students are able to integrate the essential element of broad participation and consultation into their assessments. In one class, a student asked, "How can we possibly do this assignment within these severe constraints of information and time?" She was right. It was indeed impossible to succeed. However, the assignment does not seek (indeed, cannot expect) to generate the "perfect" PCIA. Rather, the best it can hope for is a "successful failure" – one that illustrates that the student: (1) "gets it" or understands the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of PCIA; and (2) is able to apply this understanding and related tools to a case in a way that demonstrates an ability to tease out and interpret impacts (potential or actual) of an intervention on the structures and processes of peace or conflict. Particularly important is that the student get a "feel" for conducting a PCIA; develop a sense of the complexities of a case and the analytical challenges involved in interpreting it; be able to read between the lines of descriptive project documents in order to flag possible peace or conflict impacts; develop an ability to interrogate the project story to identify logical gaps, information holes; and to know what questions need to be asked (and answered) before impacts or proto-impacts (that is, possible impacts) may be determined or divined.

The greatest challenge to teaching PCIA within the university is the great distance between university realities and case realities. PCIA assignments risk being intellectual exercises. However, when university training is viewed as a starting point, rather than an end point, the fruit of the exercise may only become apparent in the future as students learn from experience and grow and develop in the real world.

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10. Next Steps

In light of this discussion, where should we be placing our emphasis? In my opinion, the foregoing analysis suggests the following:

(1) The **cultivation of patient and collaborative working relationships with Southern partners** that would form the foundation for learning from their experiences with formal and informal PCIA (both successes and failures), and for understanding how they (and their work) may be supported, and how knowledge and experiences may be seeded through our relationships with communities in other conflict settings. Here, it cannot be over-emphasized that genuine North-South partnerships are possible only if they are built on respect, true collaboration and long-term relationships. More often than not, Southern participation is forced into agendas that are Northern-defined, and characterized by top-down arrogance/ control, short-term transactions, and budgets that benefit Northern "partners" over Southern "partners."

(2) **South-South linkages:** Even more useful than the cultivation of respectful North-South relationships is making the connections between those organisations and individuals in the South who possess practical PCIA experience and expertise and other Southern groups in other violence-prone areas – as was done in Habarana where PCIA facilitators from the Local Governance Support

Programme in the Philippines led a week-long PCIA workshop for Sri Lankan and Nepalese field workers.

(3) The **explicit engagement of Northern organisations in the challenge of integrating or "mainstreaming" peace and conflict impact issues into their work** – at country, programme, and project levels. I know of two organisations – OXFAM and WUSC (World University Services of Canada) – who are developing initiatives which attempt to do just this. While learning from these efforts, we should not avert our eyes from other initiatives by international actors like UNICEF in Sri Lanka and UNDP in Solomon Islands where it is patently clear that although they might have learned how to sprinkle PCIA phrases into proposals to donors, they have so far failed to genuinely integrate PCIA into their projects, let alone programmes. Among the possible reasons for this is the fact that PCIA must be participatory; it must include communities; it must build on and develop existing national capacities, if it is to be useful and relevant. All this is necessary for the simple reason that it is impossible to identify or understand impact without the active participation/ analysis/ assessment of partners and communities on the ground. However, genuine participation with communities poses "problems" from the perspective of most Northern organisations because it increases "inefficiency" (e.g. by increasing the time needed to conduct an assessment; or by requiring the cultivation of trust with communities instead of the usual short-term-transactional relationships) and risks loss of control (by raising expectations and increasing community demands for accountability by the organisations; by creating the space for community influence over the means and ends of an initiative).

(4) **Launch of a PCIA "Facility":** There is a general appreciation of the potential utility of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment in the work of development actors and donors. Exactly how this might be undertaken and integrated into their work is less clear. The establishment of a PCIA "facility" or "mechanism" would serve as a resource for all stakeholders interested in using, and ultimately integrating, PCIA within their organisations and activities. This facility could take the form of a team of individuals backed up with the necessary resources (financial, administrative, logistical, institutional) to undertake or facilitate the following activities: (1) PCIA training; (2) managing a mentoring programme for individuals within organisations to undertake PCIAs and to integrate Peace and Conflict Sensitivity throughout their work; and (3) the collection, analysis and dissemination of PCIA experiences (assessments, toolkits, training material, mainstreaming efforts, etc.) and lessons, leading to the creation of a repository of PCIA-relevant initiatives and the on-going, systematic analysis of this material in order to develop a clearer sense of what is working, where it is working, why it is working, and whether lessons culled from successes and failures can be applied to other settings. The explicit objective is the development and refinement of tools, approaches, and expertise in peace and conflict impact monitoring and programming. Wherever the facility is located, it should be readily accessible to those who will draw upon it, and it should very explicitly demonstrate its commitment to the principles of capacity-building and local ownership discussed above. Among other things, the facility would collect and translate material into hands-on and immediately useable PCIA-relevant tools.

(5) **PCIA Pilot Projects:** Parallel with, or even prior to, the launching of the PCIA Facility noted above, it is recommended that a number of pilot projects be identified and supported. This might, for example, include a commitment from cutting-edge organisations to explicitly integrate PCIA into selected projects – as is being proposed by WUSC and OXFAM. And it should include the participation of partners within the pilot initiatives.

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To ensure that any PCIA initiative will have a positive peacebuilding and developmental impact, it ultimately needs to be able to answer "yes" to the following two questions:

1. Is the initiative increasing the capacities of participants – particularly Southerners – to (a) identify the real and potential peace and conflict impacts of an intervention; and (b) formulate and implement their own solutions non-violently and effectively?

2. Is the initiative built on a partnership that leads towards genuine ownership by Southern partners?

What we soon see is that there is no silver bullet; no one blanket solution to address all problems; and that the answer "yes" to the deceptively simple questions above requires an examination of a thick and complex set of issues that are guaranteed to slow initiatives down, increase ambiguity about the process and outcomes of an initiative, and raise awkward political questions of control. If these are indeed the costs of undertaking PCIA, the costs of not undertaking it are even higher.

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The Author

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Dr. Bush has worked with UNICEF, OECD DAC, the World Bank, SIDA, DFID, DFAIT, CIDA, IDRC, and a host of NGOs on the challenges of peacebuilding. He served as Special Advisor on Humanitarian Issues to the Canadian Government when it held a seat on the UN Security Council (1998-2000). He has published widely on issues of peacebuilding, identity-based conflict, and bad governance. He is Chairman of the Garden Path Campaign, Member of the Consultative Group to the Butterfly Garden in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka and Member of the International Advisory Board for the Center for Research on Globalization and Democratic Governance, Koc University, Istanbul, Turkey.

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Kenneth Bush
FIELD NOTES
Fighting Commodification and
Disempowerment in the Development
Industry:

Things I Learned About PCIA
in Habarana and Mindanao

APPENDICES*

Appendix I

**Kenneth Bush. HANDS-ON PCIA: A Handbook for Peace and Conflict Impact
Assessment (Version: Sept 2004)**
A manual conceptualised to be reader-friendly and user-friendly, containing quick check-
lists, diagrammes, examples, question-answer boxes, and worksheets. Please note that
recent versions are always available directly from the author at: kbush@ustpaul.ca or
kbush@iprolink.ch.

Appendix II

**St. Paul University, MA in Conflict Studies, Faculty of Human Sciences
ECS 5330: "Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Interventions in Conflict-
Prone Settings", Fall 2004**
Course outline and bibliography.

Appendix III

**Univerisité Saint-Paul, Maîtrise des Arts, Études de Conflits, Faculté des sciences
humaines.
ECS 5730 : Résolution des conflits: résultats et évaluation – « l'évaluation d'impact
sur les situations de la paix et de conflit (EIPC) » Winter 2005**
Course outline and bibliography.

* Disclaimer: The Berghof Handbook editorial team does not assume editorial responsibility for the
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Third-generation PCIA:
Introducing the *Aid for Peace Approach*

Thania Paffenholz

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Third-generation PCIA: Introducing the *Aid for Peace Approach**

Thania Paffenholz

Abstract

This article presents the newly developed Aid for Peace approach. The Aid for Peace approach builds on the debate of "Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment" and presents a further development of this debate. The Aid for Peace approach is a multi-purpose and multi-level process that facilitates the planning, assessment and evaluation of peace as well as aid interventions in situations of latent conflict, manifest violent conflict, or in the aftermath of violent conflict and war. The essence of the Aid for Peace approach is a basic model that focuses on the needs for peacebuilding in a given country or area, tailors the intervention's objectives and activities to these needs through identifying their peacebuilding relevance and developing peace and conflict result-chains and indicators for monitoring. From the basic model, separate modules have been developed for planning, assessment and evaluation purposes focussing on peace or aid interventions.

1. Introduction

During the last decade many lessons have been learned about building peace in societies affected by violent conflict (reflected, among others, in the Berghof Handbook by Austin, Fischer and Ropers 2004). The debate has moved to the question of how effective all the different local and international efforts have been to build peace.

As a result, the aid community is now very aware that they need at least to "do no harm" in conflict situations (Anderson 2004) and watch for possible negative effects on conflict dynamics; while the peace community is much more aware that they need to better assess effectiveness and impacts of their interventions on the peace process in order to reach their objectives.

The Berghof Handbook has contributed a lot to these ongoing debates by providing a platform for discussing different approaches and ideas. Since the first Berghof Handbook Dialogue issue on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) was published (Austin, Fischer and Wils 2003), the debate has developed further into different directions and triggered

- the development of an array of approaches under the label of "conflict sensitivity" (Barbolet et al. 2005, Resource Pack 2004)
- a debate on the effectiveness of peace interventions currently resulting in a debate on evaluation of peace interventions
- the development of more comprehensive PCIA approaches such as "Hands-On PCIA" by Kenneth Bush (Bush 2003), and the "Aid for Peace Approach" by Thania Paffenholz and Luc Reychler (Paffenholz and Reychler forthcoming)

This article focuses on the Aid for Peace approach. I will first go back to the evolvement of the

PCIA debate and look into open questions of the previous PCIA debate (section 2), as presented in the Berghof Handbook. In the following sections, I will present the Aid for Peace approach, its basic model with different modules for planning, assessment and evaluation of peace and aid interventions, as well as the process for its implementation (sections 3, 4 and 5). I end with conclusions for the current PCIA debate, focussing in particular on challenges for evaluating peacebuilding interventions and further developing the Aid for Peace approach (section 6).

2. Phases of the PCIA debate and the road to the Aid for Peace approach

The Aid for Peace approach evolved from the debate about Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. This debate originated in the mid-1990s after the tragic events surrounding the genocide in Rwanda, which led to increasing international awareness of the role of development cooperation in conflict and peacebuilding. This awareness went hand in hand with the demand to make the underlying assumptions concerning the effects of aid on peace and conflict explicit.

The evolution of PCIA has gone through different stages. Therefore, we find no common understanding today about the concept of PCIA. The use of the term PCIA covers instead a wide range of different approaches, not all of them building on the original concept.

All PCIA approaches do have in common the thorough analysis of the conflict situation and the formulation of recommendations for coping with the situation, e.g. for reducing possible negative effects of an intervention on violent conflict and for enhancing its contribution to peacebuilding.

The evolution of PCIA can be differentiated into three phases:

The first phase of PCIA (1996-1998/99) focused on the original idea to assess the effects of aid interventions on conflict dynamics and peace processes. Methods were developed mostly on the project level – such as the "Do no harm" approach by Mary B. Anderson (Anderson 1999) or the PCIA approach of Kenneth Bush (Bush 1998), which gave the concept its name. While these approaches originally focused on aid projects of international or local NGOs, they have quickly spread and have been used by a variety of other organisations.

At the same time we saw the development of approaches on the macro policy level assessing the effects of policy interventions on peace and conflict dynamics, e.g. Luc Reychler's "Conflict Impact Assessment Systems" (Reychler 1999, Reychler et al. 1999).

Among donors, the OECD/DAC Task Force and the European Union (Communications from the Commission to the Council) were discussing the issue already from 1995 onwards. This discussion resulted in the production of official documents mentioning the need for impact assessment (OECD 2001).

The second phase of PCIA (1999-2003/04) saw the development and introduction of a variety of different conflict-sensitive analytical tools, mainly inspired by peace research, into development cooperation. Several characteristics of this phase warrant mentioning:
• A lot of terminological confusion occurred as many of the conflict analysis tools where introduced into the development field under the same label "PCIA". However, few of these approaches provided a systematic link between the analysis of conflict and the project or programme.

- Nevertheless, we saw a tremendous increase in training of aid organisations, enhancing their conflict-related analytical capacities.
- At the same time the PCIA approaches developed in the first phase where tested.
- Moreover, many donors and other organisations developed their own approaches or adapted existing ones to their needs and procedures (see many examples in the Resource Pack 2004).

The third phase of PCIA started in 2003/4 and currently moves into three different directions:

- Many organisations replaced the term PCIA by conflict-sensitive development or similar terms since the original idea of PCIA, e.g. assessing the impact of aid interventions on peace and conflict, was not the main or sole focus any more (examples are Nyheim et al. 2001, or the Resource Pack 2004 that gives an overview of many current approaches, including efforts by donors and aid agencies).
- Some of the approaches of the first phase were refined into comprehensive, step-by-step approaches (Bush 2003, Bush 2005, Paffenholz and Reychler forthcoming).
- Donors and organisations started to reflect about the effectiveness and impact of peacebuilding interventions, which triggered a new debate about the evaluation of peace interventions (Smith 2003 (Utstein study), CDA (Reflecting on Peace Practices – RPP Project), Church and Shouldice 2002 and 2003 (commissioned by INCORE), Paffenholz and Reychler forthcoming).

As the PCIA debate has developed into so many different directions, it is difficult to currently define the concept. To fully grasp it, it would be necessary to describe every single debate and approach mentioned above. At a minimum, it is necessary to distinguish between approaches

- for aid and peace interventions
- on the project, programme and policy level
- on the macro, country or local level
- for planning, assessment or evaluation purposes
- comprehensive, multifunctional and multi-level versus single functional approaches

The previous PCIA debate as presented in the Berghof Handbook had identified mainly the following open questions:

- Is a unified methodology/ framework for PCIA needed or not?
- Is the purpose of PCIA technical or political?
- Is PCIA a Northerners' assessment tool or a Southerners' peacebuilding tool?
- Is PCIA useful only for aid or also for peace interventions?
- Does PCIA function for different levels (policy, programme, project) and actors?
- Should PCIA be mainstreamed or not?
- How can PCIA help to focus on the impact of interventions on peace and development goals?
- How can we define criteria and indicators for monitoring and assessing effects of interventions?

Looking at the third phase of the evolvement of PCIA, I would like to formulate the hypothesis that most of the above questions have been answered by the new developments. To illustrate this point, I want to present the Aid for Peace approach as it has set out to address the above mentioned shortcomings. I will also come back to these questions in the concluding section.

3. What is the Aid for Peace approach for conflict zones?

3.1. Objectives

The Aid for Peace approach is a multi-purpose and -level process that can be used for

development and peace interventions. Its objectives are to support users
- to plan new, or assess and evaluate existing, intervention designs in such a way that they:
    - will reduce the risks caused by violent conflict
    - will reduce the possibility of unintended negative effects on the conflict dynamics
    - will enhance the intervention's contribution to peacebuilding
- to develop a conflict and peace monitoring system, or integrate the conflict and peace lens into standard planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures
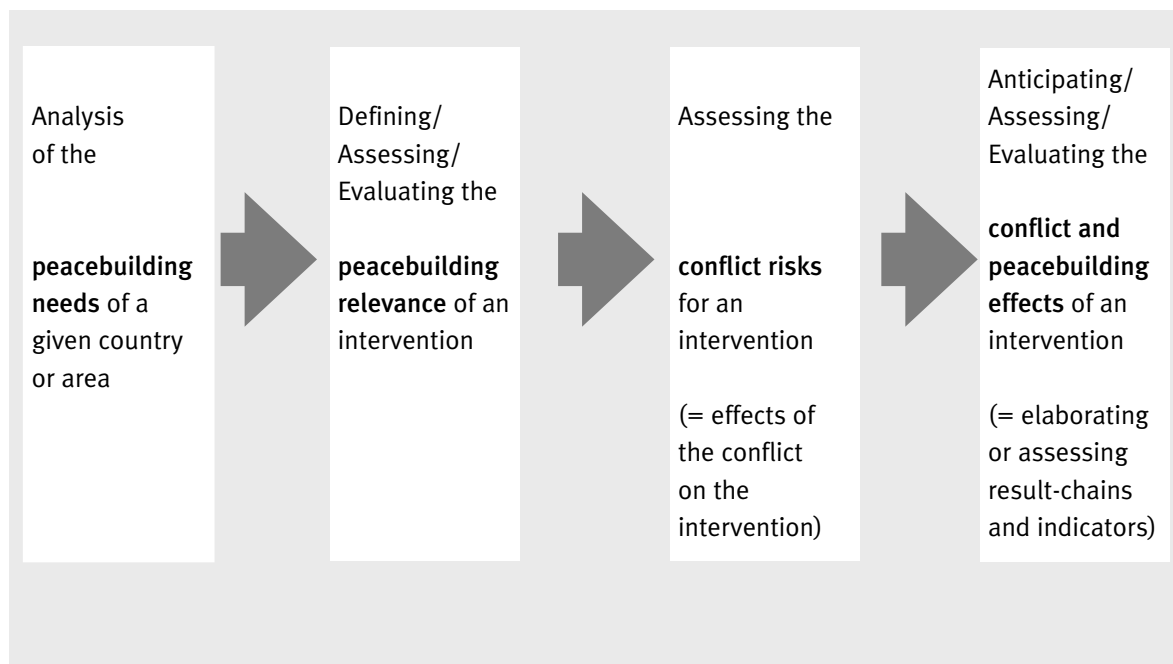- to assess the success or failure of peace processes on the macro level

3.2 The basic model

The essence of the Aid for Peace approach is a basic model that focuses on the needs for peacebuilding in a given country or area, tailors the intervention's objectives and activities to these needs through identifying the peacebuilding relevance and through developing peace and conflict result-chains and indicators for understanding the effects of an intervention on conflict and peacebuilding. From the basic model, separate modules for planning, assessment and evaluation purposes have been developed focussing on peace or aid interventions.

The Aid for Peace approach is not exclusive: Within its different modules, it builds in and combines the most important methods and tools in the fields of peacebuilding, evaluation and planning that stem from the previous PCIA and other debates. During the process the user also gets to know when, how and for what types of projects, programmes or policy interventions to best use what kinds of methodologies and tools.

I consider the Aid for Peace approach a major breakthrough, since it achieves an explicit connection between the conditions in a specific conflict context (peacebuilding needs), the peacebuilding goal of an intervention (relevance) and the actual effects of the intervention's activities on peace and conflict.

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Figure 1: The basic model of the Aid for Peace approach

Analysis of the **peacebuilding needs** of a given country or area

Defining/ Assessing/ Evaluating the **peacebuilding relevance** of an intervention

Assessing the **conflict risks** for an intervention (= effects of the conflict on the intervention)

Anticipating/ Assessing/ Evaluating the **conflict and peacebuilding effects** of an intervention (= elaborating or assessing result-chains and indicators)

Third-generation PCIA: Introducing the *Aid for Peace Approach*

3.3 Areas of application

The Aid for Peace approach can be applied
- for peace as well as aid programmes, and other interventions with different objectives than peacebuilding
- by a broad range of different actors (local and international, governmental and non-governmental, peace and aid donors, agencies and communities)
- for all levels of interventions (policy, programme, project)
- for different purposes (planning, assessment, evaluation)

3.3.1 Working in conflict zones with the objective of "peacebuilding"

This refers to all interventions directly aimed at contributing to peacebuilding, such as peace, reconciliation or democratisation projects, programmes or policies. Here the project planning is already designed to fulfil the purpose of peacebuilding. The reasons for using the Aid for Peace approach are
- to ensure the relevance of the intervention in terms of peacebuilding
- to monitor, assess and, ultimately, improve the effects of the intervention on peacebuilding while avoiding risks and problems caused by violent conflict by engaging in a systematic planning, assessment and evaluation process.

3.3.2 Working in conflict zones with other objectives

This refers to all interventions that have objectives such as development (water, health, agriculture), security reform, or humanitarian work. The goal of development interventions is to contribute to the development of a country or region. The reason for applying the Aid for Peace approach is to reduce the risks the intervention will encounter in the violent conflict situation, ensuring that the intervention will not have an unintended negative effect on the conflict dynamics, and increasing the chance that it will also contribute to peacebuilding.

Interventions aimed at enhancing democracy and good governance can fall in both categories (peace or other objectives), depending on their specific objectives.

3.4 Development of the approach

The Planning and Assessment for Conflict Zones project that led to the Aid for Peace approach was first started in 2000 on the basis of previous research done by Luc Reychler on Conflict Impact Assessment Systems (CIAS) (Reychler 1999). Subsequently, the Aid for Peace approach was developed by myself in cooperation with Luc Reychler building on
- the further development of the debates on PCIA, "Do no harm" and conflict sensitivity
- the debate on evaluation of peacebuilding interventions
- social science research on policy analysis and evaluation (Patton 1997, Rossi et al. 1999, Bussmann et al. 1998)
- the debate on evaluation of aid interventions in the OECD, the World Bank and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)
- methods of participatory planning for aid and peace interventions (European Commission 2002, Action Evaluation Research Institute (AEPRO), Aria Group)
- field experience, testing and training

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Field testing and training was done in cooperation with the Center for Peace Research and Strategic Studies and the Field Diplomacy Initiative in Leuven, Belgium, with both donors and aid agencies looking into various aspects of the assessment or planning process in conflict zones (2001: Rwanda; 2002: Bosnia, Burundi, South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, and Nepal; 2003: Angola, Sri Lanka, South Kivu, and Nepal). In addition, a three-day training module was developed and tested during 2003 and 2004 both with headquarters and field staff of a number of aid and peace donors and agencies.

4. An Overview of modules and steps

The basic model of the Aid for Peace approach that was presented in section 3.2 provides separate modules for planning, assessment and evaluation purposes focussing separately on peace and aid interventions (see also Annex 3).

The first box of the basic model (see Figure 1) – analysis of the needs for peacebuilding – is to be applied for all modules. From then on, different tools and processes are to be applied within the various modules. Figure 2 shows the different modules of the approach.

Figure 2: The Aid for Peace approach and its modules
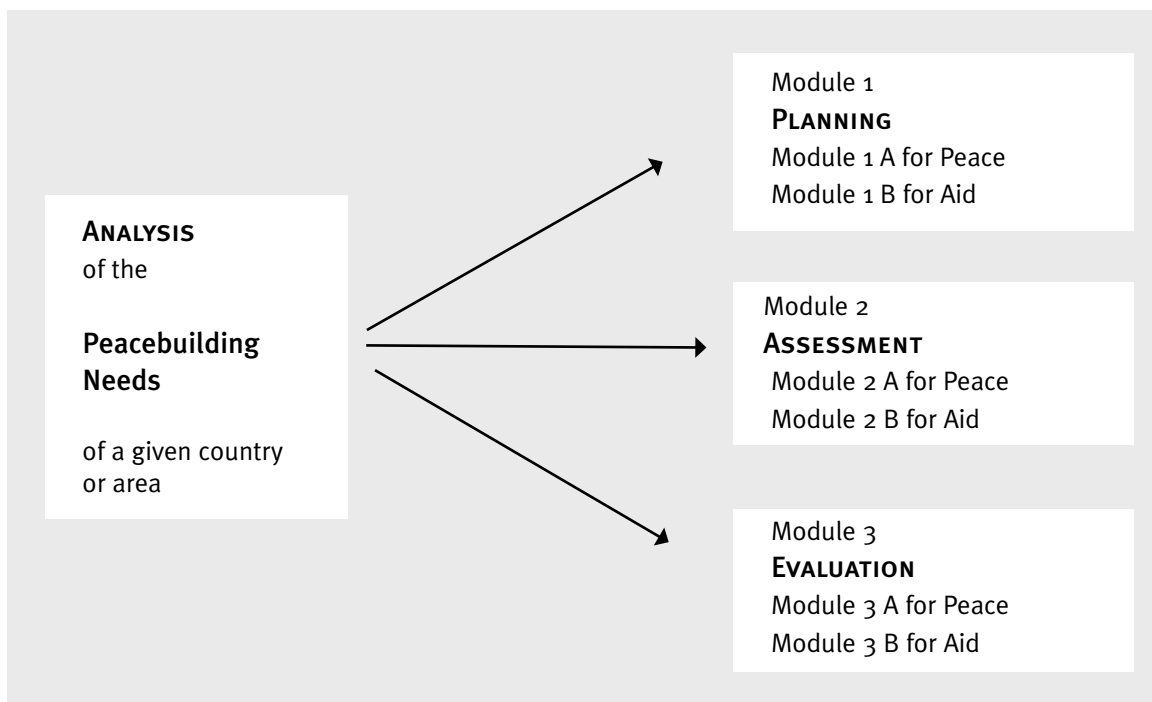
When the Aid for Peace approach is applied, this is done following seven steps that build upon each other (see Figure 3 below). The first step defines which module will be applied and prepares the implementation of the Aid for Peace process. Steps 2 and 3 lead to the identification of the peacebuilding needs that are to be used by all modules. Steps 4, 5 and 6 are applied in varying ways, using different tools and processes for different modules. In the final 7th step, recommendations are made for adapting the intervention design according to the results of the Aid for Peace process.

Figure 3: The seven steps of applying the Aid for Peace approach

Third-generation PCIA: Introducing the *Aid for Peace Approach*
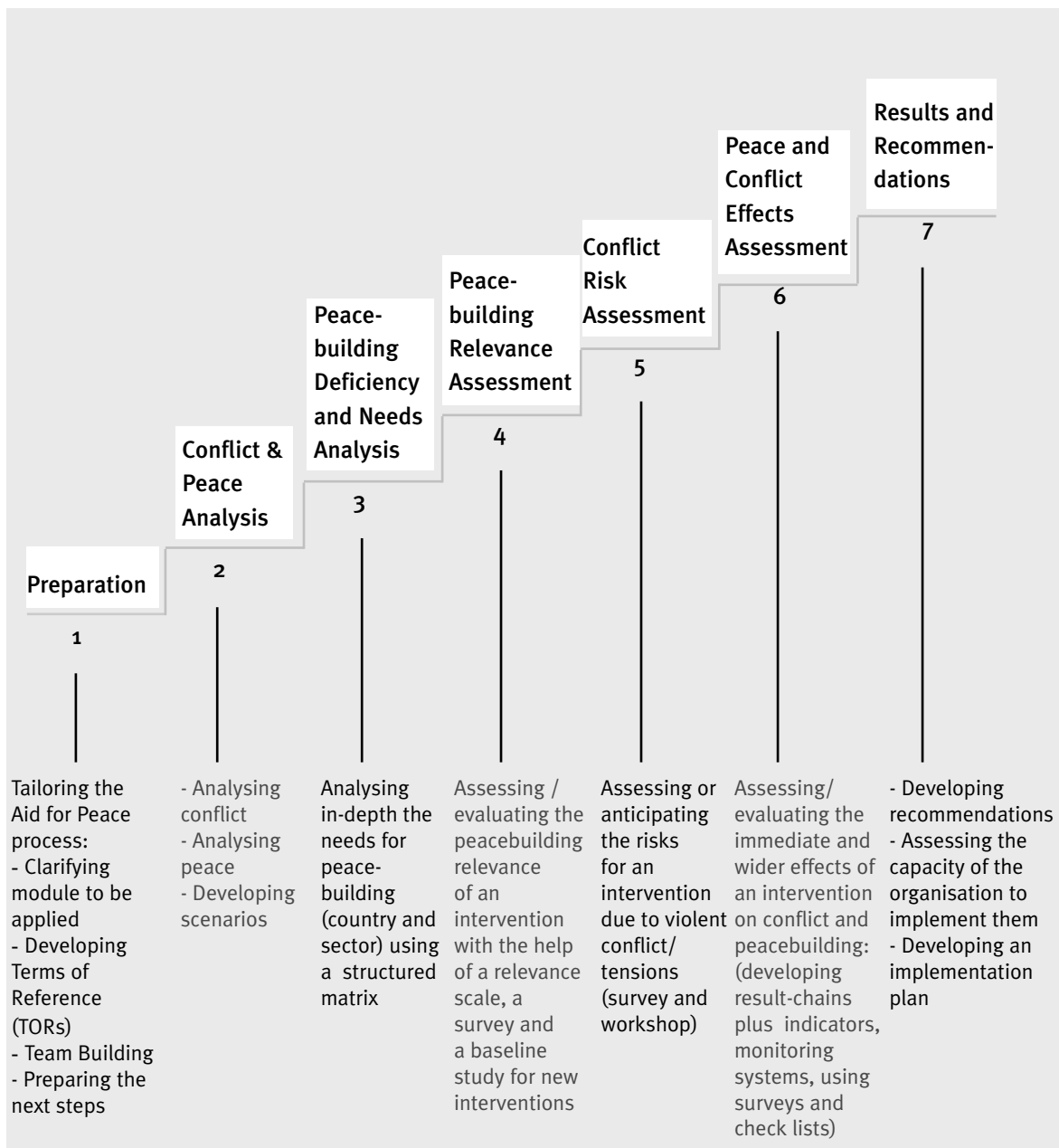
In the following, I walk the reader through the seven steps and explain which adaptations are made for the different modules.

Step 1: Preparing and Tailoring the specific Aid for Peace process. One starts by getting clarification about the objectives, purposes, and process ideas. This prepares the ground for conducting the process. The objective of the first step is to get a better idea of the particular intervention(s) to be planned or assessed/ evaluated and to prepare for the analysis and assessment steps. This step also encompasses awareness building, getting the commitment of all stakeholders involved, and *clarifying which module is to be applied*. It is also important to get a realistic picture of the human and financial resources available. All these discussions should result in "Terms of Reference" for the Aid for Peace process.

Step 2: *For all modules:* Conflict and Peace Analysis. This is the first step that leads the user to the identification of peacebuilding needs and has to be applied by all modules. The objective is to analyse both the conflict dynamics and the peacebuilding process of a country or area. When applying the Aid for Peace approach at the programme or policy level, we analyse the macro conflict setting and the status of the peacebuilding process. When applying the approach on the project level, we briefly analyse the overall conflict and peace situation of a country but focus mainly on the conflict and peacebuilding situation in the intervention area.

There are different methodologies for analysing conflict dynamics and peace processes. In general it is up to those who conduct or facilitate the process to choose the appropriate methodology. However, a certain number of essential issues must be analysed: the parties to the conflict, the root causes of the conflict, the factors escalating conflict, and what peacebuilding potential there exists. In addition, as the situation in a conflict zone is subject to rapid change, it is necessary to anticipate possible future developments by formulating conflict and peace scenarios. At this stage of the process it is important to integrate a gender lens and ensure that the results will be taken into account in the following steps (Reimann 2001, Woroniuk 2001).

Step 3: *For all modules:* Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs Analysis. This step involves a greater specification of the analysis of the peace context and will lead the user in a systematic way to the peacebuilding needs. It mainly consists of a comparison between an ideal model and the real situation. The objectives of this step are to specify what conditions ideally tend to enhance peacebuilding in a particular situation (country or sector) and to compare the reality with this ideal situation. Through this process the peacebuilding deficiencies and needs are identified.

For an overall policy analysis, research results can be used to identify building blocks for sustainable peacebuilding. For a sector analysis, international norms and standards in the respective sector can be used (e.g. ideal media or water supply situation) and compared with the real situation (e.g. real situation of the media or water supply in a given country). It is necessary to differentiate between peace interventions and those with other objectives, because the 'sector' analysed for peace interventions is the peace process, whereas for aid interventions the sector to be analysed would be health, education, or water, etc. We can then identify the deficiencies in the peacebuilding process (e.g. what is needed to achieve conflict-sensitive media or what is the link between conflict, peace and the water sector) and identify the peacebuilding needs in the media or water sector. The Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs Analysis remains on the macro and sector levels, and does not go down to the project level, since every project is to be located in a specific sector.

This step is very useful because it obliges the interveners to make explicit the ideal type

of situation they have in mind when analysing the current peacebuilding needs. It is also important for the stakeholders of the intervention, because values, objectives and visions are often based on different cultural and theoretical backgrounds that need to be discussed, made explicit and be agreed upon for the intervention. Moreover, the identification of the peacebuilding needs is the basis for the following steps to assess the peacebuilding relevance and effects of an intervention. Therefore, the gender lens needs to be inculcated here as well.

⋯⋯⟩   *From now onwards: Different tools and processes are used for the various modules.*

Step 4: **Peacebuilding Relevance Assessment.** This is the first of the three *assessment* steps within the Aid for Peace approach. The objective is to assess whether the overall direction of an intervention (policy, programme, project) corresponds to the country's peacebuilding needs as analysed in the Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs Analysis. This step assesses how relevant an intervention is for reducing violence and building peace.

General application: There is a single methodology, though it is used in assessing and evaluating the peacebuilding relevance both of existing and of new interventions. The actual relevance assessment is done by comparing the objectives and the main activities of the intervention with the identified peacebuilding needs (step 3) and examining whether or not, and in what ways, they are consistent with these needs. This is done with the help of a relevance scale. In addition, a general mapping of interventions by other actors in the same sector is also needed. This is particularly important, as it is difficult to judge a single intervention's relevance for peacebuilding when we do not know what others are doing in the same sector.

Peacebuilding Relevance Assessment is a central part of the Aid for Peace approach because current practice goes too quickly into the assessment of the effectiveness or impacts of a programme, rather than first analysing whether it is worth doing the specific intervention at all.

Application for module 1: During planning, the Peacebuilding Relevance Assessment serves to make the future intervention more targeted towards peacebuilding.

For peace interventions (module 1 A) this is done by choosing the appropriate peacebuilding needs to be addressed from the needs identified previously (step 3). Moreover, a baseline study is conducted to get more detailed information. For example, when there is an identified need to support civil society, the baseline study focuses in more detail on the roles, status and general situation of the different civil society groups prior to the intervention. The baseline study also serves the purpose of assessing and monitoring effects of the intervention at a later stage, by comparing the situation prior to the intervention to the changes effected by the intervention during implementation.

For aid interventions (module 1 B) Peacebuilding Relevance Assessment is done by identifying the appropriate peacebuilding needs to be addressed by the intervention in addition to the identified development needs. The further a conflict has escalated, the more aid interventions should be targeted towards the peacebuilding needs that can be addressed by a specific development intervention. The baseline study will be integrated into a development baseline or feasibility study for the intervention.

Application for module 2: During assessment, this step is aimed at judging, and possibly improving, the relevance of an intervention for peacebuilding. For peace interventions (module 2 A) and aid interventions (module 2 B) this is done as described above under general application.

Application for module 3: During evaluation, this step is aimed at evaluating the relevance of an intervention for peacebuilding.

For peace interventions (module 3 A) this is done by adapting the OECD criterion

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"relevance" (see Annex 2) to the peacebuilding context, e.g. one evaluates to which extent the intervention is consistent with the country's peacebuilding needs as defined in the Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs Assessment as described above.

For aid interventions (module 3 B) this is done by adding peacebuilding relevance as an additional evaluation criterion to the existing OECD criterion "relevance" for evaluating aid interventions (see Annex 2), e.g. both the development and peacebuilding relevance will be evaluated as described above under general application.

Step 5: Conflict Risk Assessment. This step assesses the effects of the conflict on an existing or planned intervention. The objective is to identify problems and risks with which the projects and interventions will be confronted in zones of violent conflict. For new interventions (module 1 A and B), the Conflict Risk Assessment tries to anticipate the potential conflict-related risks for the intervention.

General application: There are different risk assessment methods and checklists that can be used (Bush 2003, Paffenholz and Reychler forthcoming). All these lists centre on questions concerning the security situation, the political and administrative climate, the relationship to partners and stakeholders, and the relationship to the parties in conflict and other intervening actors. This step is applied in a similar way for all modules. However, when planning aid interventions (module 1 B) and using the logical framework approach, it is important not to 'hide' the conflict risks in the section "risks and assumptions", but to try to change as many conflict risks into activities that the intervention can address (see Annex 1).

Step 6: Peace and Conflict Effects Assessment. The objective of this step is to assess the effects of an intervention on the conflict and peace situation. We want to know what changes have occurred or may occur as a result of the intervention within the immediate and wider peace and conflict situation of the region or country.
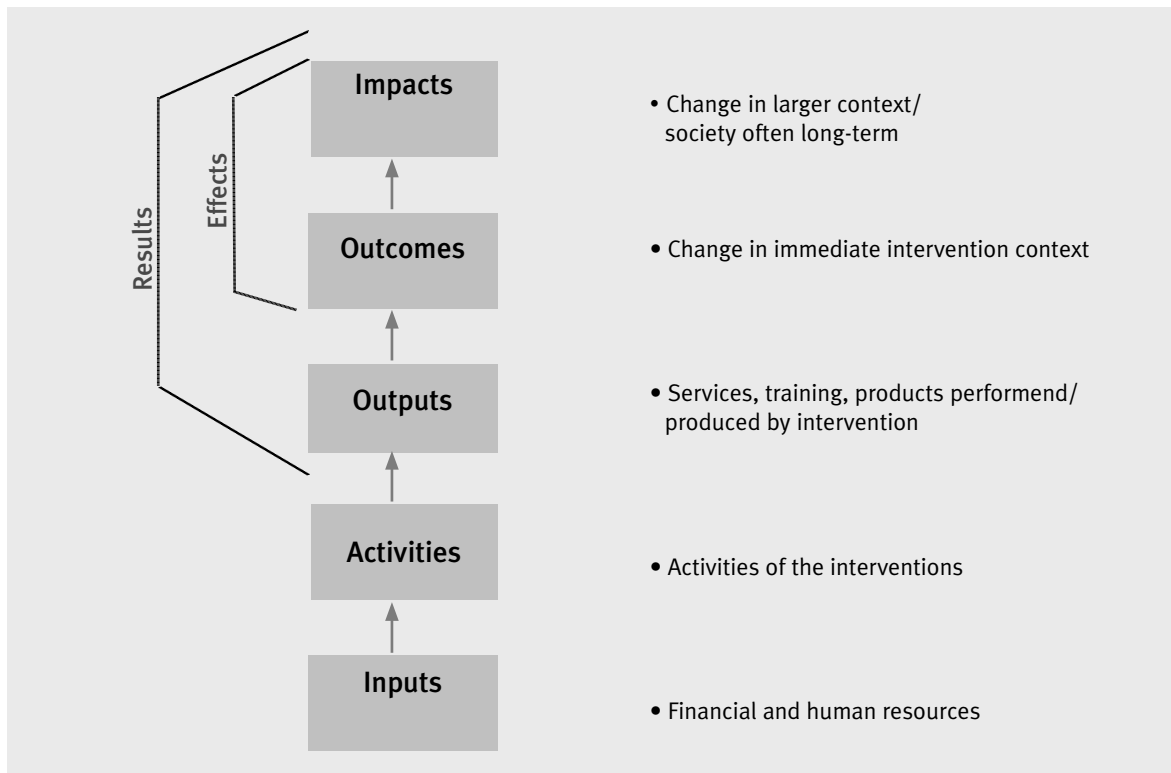
When doing such an assessment, we need to be very clear what kinds of effects we want to assess, as there are in general two levels of effects often confused with each other: *outcomes* and *impacts*. An assessment of these effects is an attempt to differentiate those changes that are attributable to the intervention from those due to other factors. Therefore these effects are often called *results*. The *outcomes* refer to the changes an intervention has initiated within its immediate environment. The *impacts* are determined by examining the larger changes an intervention has initiated within the general context, which often occur only after a longer time. To attribute these changes to the intervention in question is often difficult as there may be many other reasons why certain changes have happened. In evaluation research and practice this is called "the attribution gap". (This attribution gap is a common problem in impact assessment. There are a couple of techniques to deal with it, see, for example, Rossi et al. 1999, chapter 7).

Application for module 1: When planning new peace interventions (module 1 A), we want to anticipate the expected effects that the intervention hopes to achieve (peacebuilding outcomes and impacts).

For planning aid interventions in conflict zones (module 1 B) we want to anticipate possible negative effects the intervention could have on the conflict situation, and also to find possible positive effects the interventions could contribute to peacebuilding.

Methodologically, we recommend developing hypotheses with the help of peace and conflict result-chains that create a causal link between the intervention(s) and its context. During this process, indicators are established that allow the monitoring of effects during the implementation

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Figure 4: The result-chain of an intervention: from inputs to impacts

Impacts	• Change in larger context/ society often long-term
Outcomes	• Change in immediate intervention context
Outputs	• Services, training, products performend/ produced by intervention
Activities	• Activities of the interventions
Inputs	• Financial and human resources

(Left side brackets: Results, Effects)

and that also serve for evaluation purposes. This can best be done with the help of participatory planning methods.

When monitoring entire peace processes, result-chains with qualitative and quantitative indicators need to be developed for each peacebuilding need previously defined in the Country Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs Assessment. This will consequently lead to a monitoring system for the macro peace process.

Application for module 2: Assessing the peace and conflict outcomes and impacts of interventions is possible when the above mentioned result-chains with monitoring indicators have been established and a baseline study had been conducted at the beginning. This enables the assessors to track changes and effects with the help of indicators. If neither result-chains nor a baseline study have been prepared, assessing the peace and conflict effects of an intervention properly is difficult. In this case we have to work with implicit result-chains and indicators – such as checklists like the "Do no harm" lists for aid projects – and/ or conduct a survey among the main stakeholders on their perceptions of the effects of the intervention on peace and conflict. Both methods are approximating an assessment of the effects. However, when no hypotheses and indicators have been generated during planning, we strongly recommend engaging the intervention's stakeholders in such a process, even in the middle of an ongoing intervention. This will enable staff, and donors, to better monitor outcomes and impacts for the next phase.

Application for module 3: Evaluating the effects of peace interventions (module 3 A) has the same objectives and uses the same methodologies as in module 2 A for assessment (see above). However, this is usually done together with a broader evaluation of the intervention using other criteria (see Annex 2).

Evaluating the peace and conflict effects of aid interventions (module 3 B) aims at evaluating whether there had been any unintended negative effects on violent conflict, or whether the interventions could even contribute to peacebuilding in addition to its development goals. The OECD criteria for evaluation are usually applied. In module 3 B of the Aid for Peace approach we have adapted these criteria to the use in conflict-affected areas, so that the criteria "peacebuilding effectiveness" and "peace and conflict impact" have to be added (see Annex 2). The same methods are being applied as described above under module 2.

Figure 5: Example for developing result-chains: Young Leaders Forum in Afghanistan

Conflict Analysis and Peacebuilding Needs

The conflict analysis on Afghanistan resulted in various recommendations to the implementing agency, the German Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES), and the international community. Among these were support for the establishment of democratic institutions and processes. Besides contributing to political education in the provinces, this includes increased participation of youth and women in politics. Additionally, the analysis of the conflict and the peacebuilding needs stressed the importance of capacity-building for the peacemaking process.

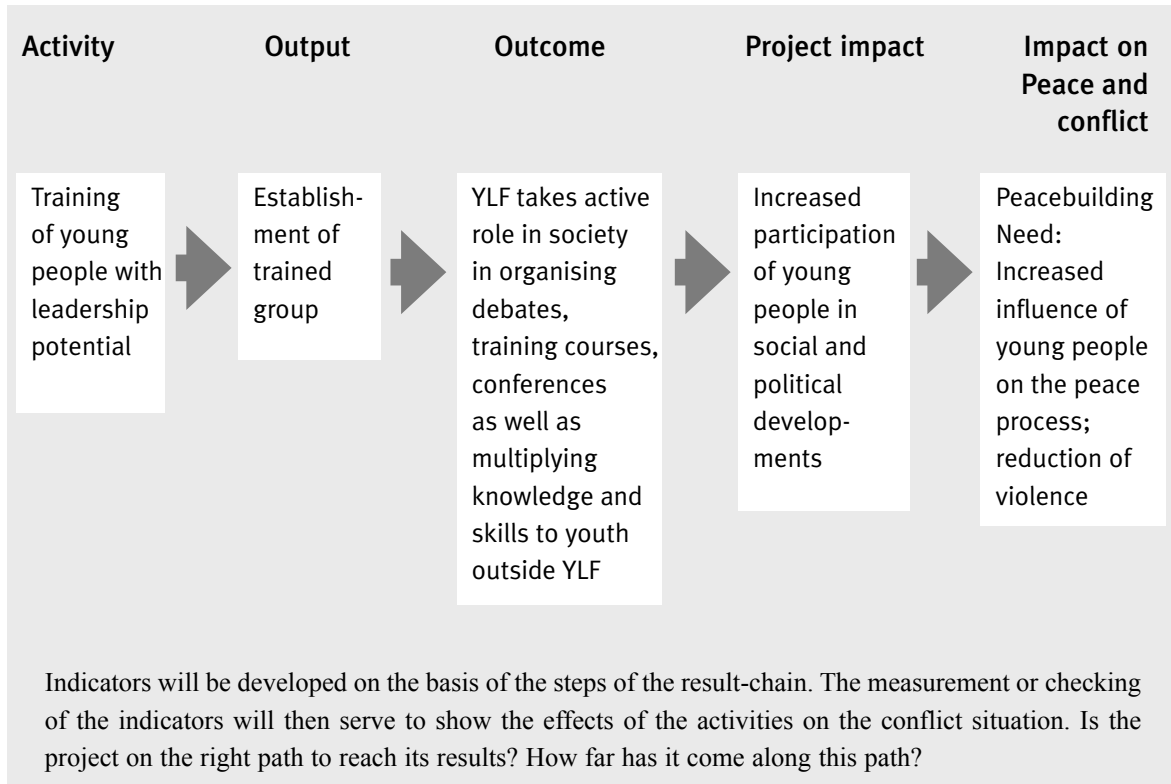#### Peacebuilding Relevance

The project "Young Leaders Forum" (YLF) addresses the above peacebuilding needs. The aim of the Young Leaders Forum is to build the capacity of potential young leaders of Afghanistan so that their participation in the future of the country will be guaranteed and their voice will be heard on all political levels. The project also aims at promoting the culture of peace, understanding and communication between youth in the region by connecting the YLF to organizations in other countries (e.g. Young Professionals Network in Pakistan). The purpose of the project is to bring outstanding youth from different social, ethnic, political and professional backgrounds together in one group to build their capacity and to enable them to take an active part in democratic processes.

Project activity

The well-trained members of the Young Leaders Forum (trained through discussion forums, workshops, exposure visits, etc.) take an active role in the community in social and political issues (by organising conferences, training courses, lectures, etc.) and are beginning to work with other youth.

Expected impact of project activity on peace and conflict

The YLF is politically and socially involved in the issues surrounding it. The YLF also uses the knowledge and capacity that they have developed during the project activity to make the voice of the youth heard on different levels of the peace process. They also have the means for transferring their knowledge and skills to other young people, thus acting as multipliers to those who have not had the same opportunities.

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Activity	Output	Outcome	Project impact	Impact on Peace and conflict
Training of young people with leadership potential	Establish-ment of trained group	YLF takes active role in society in organising debates, training courses, conferences as well as multiplying knowledge and skills to youth outside YLF	Increased participation of young people in social and political develop-ments	Peacebuilding Need: Increased influence of young people on the peace process; reduction of violence

Indicators will be developed on the basis of the steps of the result-chain. The measurement or checking of the indicators will then serve to show the effects of the activities on the conflict situation. Is the project on the right path to reach its results? How far has it come along this path?

based on Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung: konfliktbearbeitung@fes.de,
see also http://www.fes.de/conflictprevention.

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Step 7: Results and Recommendations. The objective of this last step within the Aid for Peace approach is to summarize all the results of the different analysis and assessment steps, draw conclusions and develop recommendations for improving the peacebuilding relevance, reducing the conflict risks and improving the outcomes and impacts on peace and conflict. This step applies mainly for modules 2 and 3, as for module 1 the steps are an integrated part of planning and lead automatically to an according design of the intervention. However, the last step is also important for planning purposes, as the intervention's activities need to be developed along different scenarios for conflict and peacebuilding. (The recommendations for modules 2 and 3 need to be developed for different future conflict and peace scenarios, too.) This is important, because the situation in zones of violent conflict is often rapidly changing. For all modules it is important to develop an implementation plan ahead of time in collaboration with the stakeholders of the intervention. During this process it is also necessary to assess the organisation's capacity to implement the recommendations. At the end, usually a report will be written for assessment and evaluation purposes. For planning exercises, the result will be the intervention's project proposal with the implementation plan at the end of the planning process.

Finally, the Aid for Peace process itself needs to be evaluated: firstly, for the purpose of learning lessons about the approach, and secondly, for the purpose of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the applied process in question. This is done jointly with the relevant stakeholders. Lessons should be shared with the interested expert community.

5. Process Design

The best process design for this model is a combination of surveys or short studies, assessments and, most of all, participatory planning and assessment methods involving all the relevant stakeholders of the intervention from the very beginning.

However, there is no ready-made 'best' process design. A suitable design needs to be tailored during step 1 of the Aid for Peace process for every intervention in question. Nevertheless, there are some general process guidelines: It seems advisable to conduct the process both at headquarters as well as in the field. It is efficient to conduct studies or surveys prior to the field phase. During the field phase, interviews and participatory workshops can be held. The analysis of the conflict and peace context is best done as a mix of expert study and participatory stakeholder workshop.

For *planning* new interventions (module 1), the main work takes place during the participatory planning workshop using the results of the baseline study, interviews and field trips.

For assessing or *evaluating* existing interventions (modules 2 and 3), a couple of surveys/ studies should be conducted prior to the field phase (for example Conflict and Peace Analysis, Risk Assessment Survey and survey of other actors' activities). The field phase then comprises interviews, further surveys, meetings, field trips, and participatory stakeholder workshops. At least two different workshops need to be conducted. A first workshop addresses conflict and peace analysis and scenario building (step 2). The second one addresses joint development of the peacebuilding needs (step 3), the relevance assessment (step 4), the discussion of, and addition to, the risk assessment (step 5), the assessment of effects (step 6) and finally developing results and recommendations (step 7). For step 6, an additional survey could be undertaken depending on the methods used to assess effects. At the end of the field trip, a debriefing workshop or meeting needs to be held. It is recommended that such a debriefing workshop be held at headquarters as well in case they are involved in the process in question. The book *Aid for Peace* (Paffenholz and Reychler forthcoming) gives detailed practical recommendations and many examples on how to apply the different Aid for Peace process steps.

6. Conclusions and the way forward

At the beginning of this article I looked back at the evolvement of the PCIA debate and the main open questions and controversies of phases 1 and 2. The approach presented in the previous chapters – a set of unified and inclusive methodologies that can be used by a broad range of different actors (local and international, governmental and non-governmental, peace and aid donors, agencies and communities) for all sorts of interventions (policy, programme, project) and purposes (planning, assessment, evaluation) – provides an answer to most of these questions.

A unified framework is useful since it represents a common starting point for all actors. Opting for a set of methodologies and a sequence of process steps, we avoid an overly rigid format and allow for different needs of different actors to be met. In that sense, the approach can be appropriated by Northerners and Southerners, peacebuilders and development actors.

The approach presented in this paper goes, in my opinion, also a long way in being useful to interventions with different purposes (namely development and peace) and on different levels (project, programme, policy), breaking down the either-or decisions that seemed to dominate phases 1 and 2 of the PCIA debate.

The question whether such methodology risks ignoring the political issues (such as empowerment, injustice, etc.) while becoming obsessed with technicalities seems, to me, exaggerated in its juxtaposition. Kenneth Bush rightly points to the danger that a highly political issue as peacebuilding risks being "technicised". However, without a proper and systematic integration into standard procedures, there is a danger that the peace and conflict lens will be 'discussed away' in a couple of years, as it has happened with other mainstreaming topics. This does not mean that important political issues should not be addressed. On the contrary, we can address the political dimension of work in conflict zones on the level of empowerment, on the macro level of advocacy, or on the level of development or peace policies. For example, influencing the programme implementation of big donors, such as development banks, with more effective methodologies so they avoid having negative effects and better contribute to peacebuilding, is as political as using stakeholder votes in the World Bank to influence its policies towards conflict countries. There are many strategies to bring in the political dimension of aid, peace and conflict.

Mainstreaming, a related and often debated issue, is already a reality in development cooperation. I think it is also in the interest of peacebuilders. Yet it is a laden term for many as they are bombarded with mainstreaming initiatives (environment, gender, peace and conflict, HIV/ Aids, poverty – to name but the most popular). It thus seems better – as Manuela Leonhardt has suggested (Leonhardt in Austin, Fischer and Wils 2003) – to talk about integrating the peace and conflict lens into the work of aid (and other) organisations rather than to use the term "mainstreaming".

We have to be aware that the PCIA debate – whether new or old – is only one strategic element in integrating such a peace and conflict lens. It is important that the debate about contributions to peacebuilding is driven not only by "Do no harm" or "conflict sensitivity" on the project level, but increasingly focuses on the policy level of interventions. Therefore, we need more macro planning and assessment processes involving all relevant donors in a country experiencing violent conflict.

Finally, with respect to criteria and indicators that can help to better assess the effects of peacebuilding and development interventions, I have tried to demonstrate that there is a wealth of such criteria to be found in the existing literature and among the OECD publications which we have further developed and adapted to the needs of peacebuilding and incorporated into our Aid for Peace approach.

Having said all this, I still see a number of challenges ahead. I would like to focus in the following on
- the further dissemination and development of the Aid for Peace approach
- the application of the PCIA debate to the evaluation of peacebuilding interventions

6.1 Challenges for the Aid for Peace approach for conflict zones

I see the following challenges for the further development of the Aid for Peace approach. We would like to address these challenges in a follow-up project:
- **International dissemination** of the Aid for Peace approach through presentation at important donor, agency and research meetings and conferences.
- **Training and capacity building**
  - Organisation of regular tailor-made training courses for different target groups
  - Training of Trainers courses with a certificate
  - Establishment and servicing of an international trainer pool
  - Establishment and servicing of an international advisor pool

- **Field testing:** Further systematic testing of the approach in cooperation with donors and agencies in cooperation with the above mentioned pools.
- **Establishment of a web-based joint learning platform** to share information and experiences of the practice of the approach for conflict zones.
- **Applied research**
  - Developing user-friendly checklists for assessing the Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs in different sectors (step 3 of the P&A approach) through cooperation with specialised research institutions and agencies.
  - Focus on outcomes and impacts: There is a need to provide more user-friendly assessment methods for easier assessment of the effects of interventions on the peace and conflict context. We mainly want to develop user-friendly result-chains for various standard project and policy types and their possible effects on peace and conflict. This should facilitate the establishment of peace and conflict monitoring systems for interventions taking place in areas of violent conflict.
  - Applying the approach to related fields.
- **Establishment of an international network to develop international standards** for working in countries affected by violent conflict: In order to get to a decent level of standardisation for interventions taking place in conflict situations, our new project aims to build up an international expert and practitioner (donors and organisations) network comparable to the humanitarian networks of SPHERE and ALNAP. The purpose of this network will be to help achieve internationally agreed standards for:
  - Planning, assessing and evaluation procedures for aid interventions in conflict areas through commonly agreed standards;
  - Arriving at commonly agreed standards for planning, monitoring and evaluating peace and democratisation interventions.

6.2 Challenges for evaluating peace interventions

6.2.1 *More investment into planning*

The current debate focuses too much on *evaluation* of peace efforts. There should be more discussion about *better planning procedures* for peace interventions that create the preconditions for good monitoring and evaluation.

Donors should support implementing agencies through training and participatory planning. Planning workshops and baseline studies, including thorough conflict analysis, should be included in all budgets. Implementing agencies, on the other hand, should engage in better planning. Most importantly, they should work together with their partners on all levels to assess the relevance of planned projects for the peace process and to come up with result-chains and indicators for monitoring. This would ensure that actors involved in peacebuilding can more easily assess the results of their own projects, increase their contribution to peacebuilding, and improve internal monitoring and evaluation processes.

6.2.2 *Measuring impact on peace processes*

While it is relatively easy to measure the effects that projects have in their immediate context (=outcomes), it is much more difficult to assess the effects that project interventions have on the macro peace process (=impacts). It is very difficult to isolate the contribution of one single project if there are changes for the better (or worse) in a peace process. This "attribution gap" is a problem encountered in peacebuilding, development cooperation, or human rights advocacy alike.

While the „attribution gap" can never be fully bridged, it seems advisable to formulate standardised result-chains for frequently implemented types of projects, and to disseminate these models together with participatory planning methods.

6.2.3 No need to reinvent the wheel

It is obvious, and strange, that little thinking on evaluation and impact assessment in peacebuilding makes use of the knowledge that is already there. We often hear the argument that peace processes are highly complex social phenomena, which cannot be understood, tackled or assessed along the same lines as other phenomena. I argue, on the contrary, that the field of peacebuilding can benefit very much from ideas, models and insights gathered in related fields (policy analysis, development practice, etc.) – and that it is about time we start doing so.

6.2.4 Standardisation of planning and assessment methodologies

It seems more promising to work towards a common standard in planning and evaluation of peacebuilding interventions, along the lines of adapted OECD criteria for development projects, rather than have each organisation develop their own standards and procedures. A good idea, which I want to take up in our upcoming project, would be for governmental and non-governmental organisations to work together on such standardisation in an international network.

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Useful links, networks and documents

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) at
www.alnap.org.
Action Evaluation Research Institute at www.aepro.org.
Aria Group, Inc., a conflict resolution consulting and training firm, at www.ariagroup.com.
Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), Reflecting on Peace Practices, project and related
reports at www.cdainc.com.
EU documents at http//:europa.eu.int/documents/comm/index_en.htm.
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Conflict Prevention work at http://www.fes.de/conflictprevention.
OECD documents at www.oedc.org.
SPHERE at www.sphereproject.org.

The Author

Thania Paffenholz received her Ph.D. in international relations, focusing on the theory and practice of mediation and peacebuilding in civil wars. After working as a research fellow at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (1992-1996) she held a position as peacebuilding officer within the Regional Delegation of the European Commission in Kenya (1996-2000), and subsequently joined the think tank swisspeace as Project Director of the Center for Peacebuilding (KOFF). Since early 2003 she is teaching at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Berne and runs the policy advisory firm "Peacebuilding Research and Advice" also based in Berne, Switzerland.

Thania Paffenholz is a trained mediator, has participated in several missions of the United Nations and is advisor to various national and international organisations. She was a member of the Board of the UN Lessons Learned Unit, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (1996-2002) as well as Council member of the International Peace Research Association (1994-2000).

She has edited and authored numerous articles and books. Her recent publications include *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide* (together with Luc Reychler; Lynne Rienner Publishers 2000) and *Community-based Bottom up Peacebuilding* (The Life and Peace Institute's Horn of Africa Series 2003).

Annex 1

Integrating the Aid for Peace approach into the Project Cycle Management (PCM) and the Logical Framework for planning

Standard PCM and Logical framework	Integrating Aid for Peace
1. Context and Stakeholder Analysis	1. **Integrate conflict and peace context, actor analysis as well as peacebuilding needs** (= *steps 2 and 3 of the approach*)
2. Problem Analysis	2. **Ensuring that analysis of conflict and peacebuilding needs is included in the problem analysis**
3. Analysis of Objectives	3. **Discussing influence on objective** *(this applies for projects with a development or humanitarian goal: e.g. should "peace" be integrated as a sub-objective or will it be a cross-cutting issue)*
4. Planning with the Logical Framework *4.1 Formulating the Objectives* *4.2 Formulating the Purpose, Results and Activities* *4.3 Developing Monitoring Indicators (OVIs) and Source of Verification* *4.4 Analysing Assumptions and Risks*	4. **Integrate Aid for Peace into Logical Framework** *4.1 Whether or not to integrate peace as an additional objective or sub-objective (see 3)* *4.2 Checking purpose, results and activities for their conflict / peace sensitivity (= steps 4,5,6 of the approach)* *4.3 Developing additional conflict / peace monitoring indicators (step 6 of the approach)* *4.4 Integrate as many conflict risks as possible into activities of the project*
5. Activity Plan	5. **Guarantee integration into action plan and staff/ experts**
6. Monitoring and Evaluation	6. **Monitoring and Evaluation** · *Monitor conflict-related OVIs* · *Integrate conflict / peace lenses into mid-term review and evaluations*

Annex 2

Integrating the Aid for Peace approach into standard evaluations for peace and aid interventions

Most evaluations in the development field are carried out on the basis of the OECD criteria for evaluations. For humanitarian evaluations, OECD and ALNAP have expanded these criteria. For peace interventions, no standardised evaluation criteria have yet been established.

We have checked the aid evaluation criteria for their validity for aid interventions in zones of violent conflict (development and humanitarian), as well as for their usefulness for evaluating peace or democratisation interventions. This was necessary because in the course of developing the approach we adapted the assessment criteria (relevance and impacts) that are required for better working in conflict zones. However, when an evaluation is being conducted, other issues also need to be tackled such as the efficient use of resources (efficiency). In this annex we therefore want to show how the Aid for Peace approach can also be applied to evaluating aid and peace interventions in conflict zones.

For evaluating aid interventions, we discovered that some of the criteria can be applied as they are, but most of them need to be adapted.

For evaluating peace interventions or democratisation interventions including the peace objective, the picture is slightly different. These interventions are designed for work in conflict zones, but so far there have been no internationally agreed standard evaluation criteria. However, we found that in applying the Aid for Peace approach, most of the main standard evaluating criteria, such as relevance and impact, were met. For the remaining questions, such as effectiveness (how well has an intervention reached its results) and efficiency (use of resources), the OECD criteria for evaluating aid projects can be easily used as there is no difference between these dimensions for different types of interventions.

In the table below, we show what the application of the Aid for Peace approach for evaluating aid and peace interventions in conflict zones looks like:

The first column shows the standard OECD and ALNAP criteria for evaluation of development and humanitarian interventions. In case the evaluation is performed in a violent conflict zone, the middle column needs to be added as additional evaluation criteria, e.g. can be integrated into the standard evaluation criteria on the left side.

The right column shows how to evaluate peace interventions.

Applying the Aid for Peace approach for conflict zones to standard evaluations

OECD/ALNAP criteria	Additional evaluation criteria for aid interventions in conflict zones that need to be added to the standard OECD criteria	Aid for Peace for evaluating peace interventions
1. Relevance The extent to which the objectives of the programme are consistent with the needs of the country, beneficiaries, partners and donor policies.	**1. Peacebuilding Relevance** The extent to which the programme is - in addition to the definition on the left side - consistent with the country's peacebuilding needs as defined in the Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs Assessment *(step 3 of Aid for Peace)*.	**1. Peacebuilding Relevance** The extent to which the programme is consistent with the country's peacebuilding needs as defined in the Peacebuilding Deficiency and Needs Assessment *(step 3 of Aid for Peace)*.
2. Efficiency How economically the resources/ inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into outputs.	**2. Efficiency** No special application needed. Can be used as on the left side.	**2. Efficiency** No special application needed. Can be used as on the left side.
3. Effectiveness The extent to which a programme and its activities have attained, or are expected to attain, their objectives.	**3. Peacebuilding Effectiveness** The extent to which a programme and its activities have also attained peacebuilding objectives (intended or unintended) *(step 6 of Aid for Peace)*.	**3. Effectiveness** The extent to which a programme and its activities have attained, or are expected to attain, their objectives (= impact on the project's immediate peace and conflict environment).
4. Impact Impact relates to the effects of an intervention on the larger context. What has happened in the larger context as a result of the intervention?	**4. Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment** Assesses the impact a conflict has on the intervention (= Conflict Risk Assessment, *step 5 of Aid for Peace*) and the impact the intervention has on the conflict and peacebuilding process *(step 7 of Aid for Peace)*.	**4. Impact** Impact for peace interventions also relates to the effects of an intervention on the larger context. We assess: (1) what has happened within the larger peace context as a result of the intervention, and (2) the conflict-related risks *(step 5, 6 of Aid for Peace)*.
5. Connectedness or Sustainability Connectedness is the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account. The concept is intended to link relief, rehabilitation and development. 'Sustainability' is the development version of connectedness and more long-term orientated.	**5. Peacebuilding Sustainability** Has the intervention also considered contributing to the building of sustainable peacebuilding structures in its immediate environment?	**5. Sustainability** What steps have been taken to include the building of sustainable peacebuilding structures in the intervention's design and implementation? This also applies for short-term peace interventions. E.g., how can interventions of a short-term peacebuilding nature be linked with longer-term peace and democratisation efforts.

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OECD/ALNAP criteria	Additional evaluation criteria for aid interventions in conflict zones that need to be added to the standard OECD criteria	Aid for Peace for evaluating peace interventions
6. Coordination and Coherence Are the actors in the same field working towards the same goals, and are the interventions being planned and implemented in a coherent manner? Is there coordination among donors, agencies and NGOs?	**6. Coordination and Coherence** Are the actors in the same field also working to contribute to peacebuilding? Is there coordination among donors, agencies and NGOs on conflict- and peace-related questions *(analysed in steps 2 and 3 of Aid for Peace)*?	**6. Coordination and Coherence** Are the actors in the peacebuilding sector working towards the same goals and are the interventions being planned and implemented in a coherent manner? Is there coordination among donors, agencies and NGOs?
7. Coverage (Humanitarian) The extent to which a programme reaches the affected population.	**7. Coverage** The extent to which a programme's outreach also takes into account a just and fair selection of target groups and thereby contributes to inter-group fairness and prevents possible conflicts relating to the programme's resource allocation. Is aid provided in ways that benefit one (some) sub-group(s) more than others? Do material goods go more to one group than to others? *(=integrating "Do-no-harm"-checklists)*.	(Does not apply for peace interventions)
8. Participation The extent to which a programme and its projects include other donors, partners and beneficiaries in the planning and implementation phases.	**8. Participation** In addition to the issues on the left side, does the project planning and implementation reinforce a local sense of inclusiveness and inter-group fairness in a conflict-sensitive manner? Does the staff recruitment policy strengthen the sense of inclusiveness and inter-group fairness in a conflict-sensitive manner? Does project planning and implementation empower relevant stakeholders to develop structures that will have the potential to contribute to conflict management and peacebuilding? *(= integrating "Do-no-harm"-checklist)*.	**8. Participation** The extent to which a programme and its projects include other donors, partners and beneficiaries in the planning and implementation phases, as well as in tackling the issues in the middle column *(from the "Do-no-harm"-checklist)*.

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Third-generation PCIA: Introducing the *Aid for Peace Approach*

Annex 3: Applying the *Aid for Peace Approach*

The Aid for Peace approach can be applied separately for planning and evaluating peace or aid interventions (development and humanitarian).

Applying the Aid for Peace approach for peace interventions

The approach can be useful during planning, for the evaluation of interventions (during or after implementation) and also for the monitoring and assessment of macro peace processes:
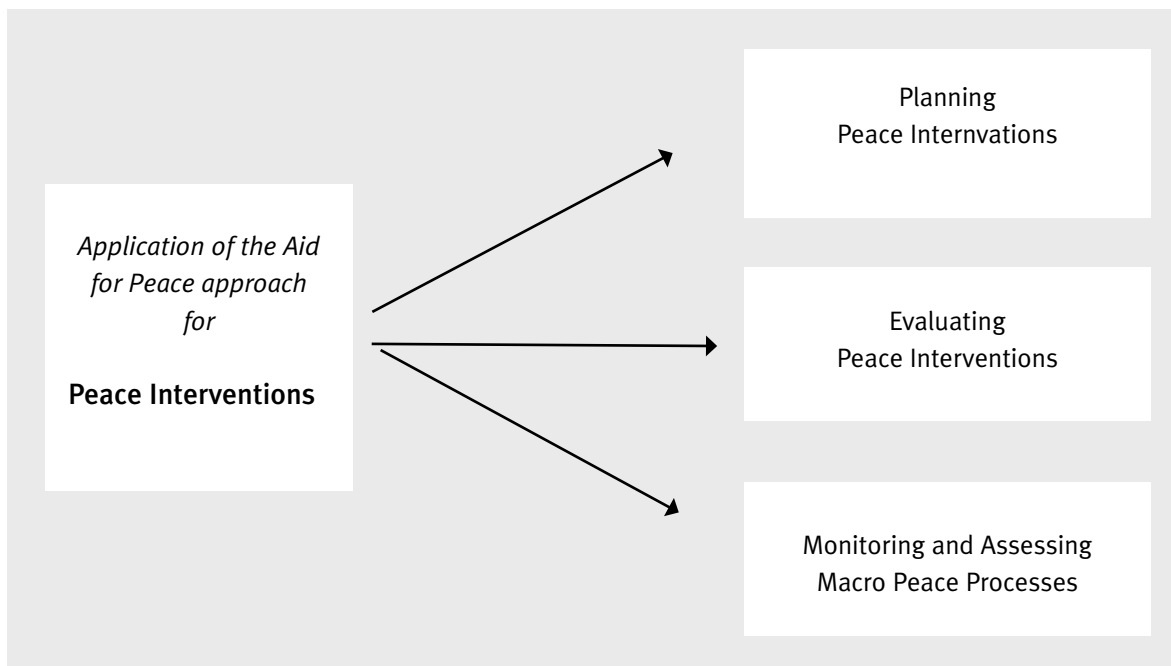

Figure 1: The application of the Aid for Peace approach for peace interventions

Planning Peace Interventions

This application has been developed for the planning of peace interventions on the policy or project level. The user learns how to plan peace interventions in a systematic way that will result in an implementation plan and a monitoring system for the respective intervention.

Evaluating Peace Interventions

This application has been developed for the evaluation of peace interventions on the policy or project level. The user will reach an understanding of the preconditions for evaluation and will learn how to conduct a systematic self- or external evaluation.

Monitoring of Peace Processes

This application has been specifically designed for multilateral actors or a consortium of coordinated international actors that wish to monitor a specific peace process in order to channel their policies or support jointly into the right direction. The user will learn how to assess macro peace processes systematically and how to establish a monitoring system for the overall peace process.

Third-generation PCIA: Introducing the *Aid for Peace Approach*

Applying the Aid for Peace approach for aid interventions

In development and humanitarian interventions, the approach can be applied during the planning phase as well as for assessment or evaluation (during or after implementation). Again, we distinguish three application forms:
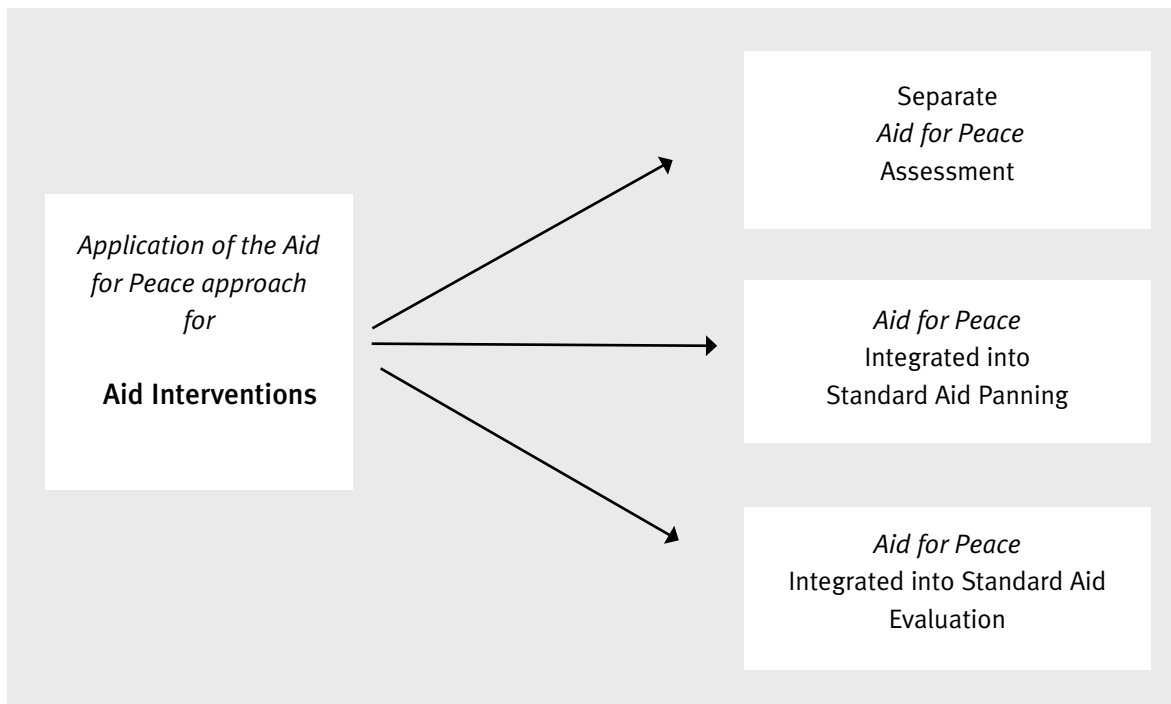

Figure 2: The application of the Aid for Peace approach for aid interventions

Separate Aid for Peace Assessment

This application has been developed for the assessment of aid interventions on the policy or project level that are (or are planned to be) taking place in situations of violent conflict. The application is specifically designed for aid interventions that have just passed the stage of standard aid planning or have already entered the implementation phase and would like to add the peace and conflict lens. Here, the Aid for Peace approach provides a separate assessment framework (basic model) to ensure peace and conflict relevance and effects in addition to the development or humanitarian goals.

Aid for Peace Integrated into Standard Aid Planning

In contrast to the separate Aid for Peace Assessment, this application has been developed for those organisations that would like to engage in planning processes that already integrate the peace and conflict lens. Here, the user learns how to integrate the Aid for Peace framework (basic model) into the Project Cycle Management (PCM); because this planning tool is used by many aid agencies. This application is directed towards organisations that are already familiar with planning procedures along the PCM-lines or similar instruments, including the logical framework (basic model). However, it is up to the specific aid agency to further adapt this general application to their specific planning procedures and needs.

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Aid for Peace integrated into Standard Aid Evaluation

This application has been developed for organisations planning to conduct or commission an evaluation of aid intervention(s) – with a development or humanitarian focus – taking place in situations of violent conflict or in the aftermath of a war or violent conflict. Here, the user learns how to integrate the peace and conflict lens directly into this standard evaluation by enriching internationally agreed evaluation criteria and questions for the evaluation of development and humanitarian interventions with the peace and conflict dimension.

Third-generation PCIA: Introducing the *Aid for Peace Approach*

Ways of moving forward:
A community of practice and learning

A Response by

Adam Barbolet, Rachel Goldwyn,
Hesta Groenewald and Andrew Sherriff

1 On further developing the methods and instruments of impact assessment

Tools for Conflict-Sensitive Approaches (CSA) and Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)

It is clear from the articles and exchanges between the authors that the issue of labels or names for what we want to achieve when we do CSA/PCIA work is far from resolved. Intertwined with this is the existing and continuously developing body of work on defining tools for CSA, PCIA and related work. For us, this discussion brings two important points to mind.

First, the question of names or labels goes far beyond 'branding' – it actually impacts on people's understanding of, and willingness to choose, some sort of conflict-sensitive approach to their work. In addition, it is never really possible to 'brand' something that is intended for use by a wide-ranging audience, as different individuals and institutions would (and certainly have in the case of CSA and PCIA) appropriate the terms and develop their own understanding of it. As we have argued in our initial article[1], being conflict-sensitive goes far beyond tools, so that it is not only deceptive, but also restrictive, to pretend that there is a 'brand name' that could include all the aspects and nuances of undertaking conflict-sensitive work.

Second, although it is very useful to have tools that enable people to put into practice

1 Barbolet et al. 2005 at www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/PCIA_addBarboletetal.pdf .

the theory of CSA and PCIA, there may be diminishing returns at this point in the development of the field to continue fine-tuning existing tools and inventing new ones. The question now needs to become whether people are using the existing tools, at what level, and with what outcomes.

The danger of asserting propriety over a tool or process is that it makes it difficult for others to adopt, adapt and use that tool or process in a way that makes sense for them, their organisation and their operational context. This exertion of ownership robs the global community of concepts that can only work if they are collectively owned. While we may not always be comfortable with the way concepts that we have contributed to get used by others, the important thing is that others are using them. We can choose to impute malicious intent when they use it in ways we do not like, or we can humbly accept that ideas can (and must) change and grow over time in ways that we have little control over. Thus, when we pose the question whether a tool or process is working or living up to its potential, we need also to consider: Working for whom? Living up to whose definition of 'potential'? The question is not only "useful for whom?"; the next question is: "who asks the question and who is allowed to answer it?"

Objectives of CSA and PCIA

A central question in the CSA and PCIA discussion is therefore: what are we really hoping to achieve? Are we aiming only for development assistance not to do harm or are we actively seeking to ensure that all the resources at our disposal (including development assistance) are aimed at ending violent conflicts? We probably need to think of it more as a continuum with, on the one end, those who aim for the minimum in terms of conflict sensitivity, i.e. not causing harm or aggravating conflict, and, on the other end, those who aim to actively contribute to peacebuilding. At this point, all positions on the continuum would probably be an improvement in practice, as so many organisations are not even on the continuum yet. And of course the question of where they place themselves relates strongly to their roles, mandates and skills.

Yet those of us considering ourselves to be peacebuilders may wish to push everybody to the peacebuilding side of the continuum. In doing this, we need to be critical of the ideas and concepts that underpin our work – our own as well as those of our colleagues – but that criticism needs to focus on improving the peacebuilding field and the peacebuilding impact of development and humanitarian assistance. That includes being willing to learn from our own and other's mistakes without creating an aggressively competitive environment where only one set of tools or one approach is portrayed as being correct. The unfortunate reality is that even peacebuilding practitioners do not know for certain how to stop violent conflicts. Some ideas and some important sign posts do exist, but at the end of the day no-one can say for certain how to prevent a Darfur or stop an Afghanistan. It therefore seems to be much more important to let a thousand flowers bloom rather than to insist on one particular tool or approach.

2 On coming to a theory of impact assessment

Different levels of impact

It is clear that there are strong linkages between the social, economic and political spheres of conflict, as well as the macro, meso and micro levels. However, linking need not mean conflating. For example, an irrigation project in rural Kyrgyzstan cannot be expected to counteract the post-Soviet malaise and decade-old economic collapse of the region. That is why we need to encourage development actors out of thinking only in terms of projects, and thinking more strategically.

Ways of moving forward: A community of practice and learning

Similarly, the peacebuilding field's preoccupation with the 'attribution gap' is symptomatic of the existing confusion between the political and the social. It is also symptomatic of a lack of resources – and perhaps lack of willingness? – to systematically conduct baseline data collection and regular reviews that would enable both peacebuilding and development practitioners to start understanding and overcoming the 'attribution gap'. At the same time, we need to be realistic about what we are attempting to assess. For example, the impact of a shallow tube well project on large macro-political conflict is bound to be limited. Although it is clearly important to understand the project within the national political framework, there is also a need to acknowledge the limited impact such a project can have on issues well outside its sphere of influence.

Acknowledging the clear separation between the national (macro) and grassroots (micro) spheres will also require peacebuilders and development actors alike to rethink how we use the tools at our disposal to affect positive change on the macro/national aspects of conflict. Again, there is a need to link these approaches to the micro/grassroots spheres, but different spheres require different approaches. Nevertheless, as pointed out by the Utstein papers and by Thania Paffenholz, the need still exists to try to assess the local level work in terms of its impact on peace writ large.

3 On improving the practice of impact assessment

Ownership, legitimacy and influence

All the articles that form part of this dialogue/discussion refer in some way to the questions of how local communities can own PCIA or CSA and what their role and influence is on their conflict vis-à-vis that of external actors. This is particularly important as both peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development or humanitarian assistance aim to bring about social change and contribute to long-term peace. In the process, sensitive choices need to be made and the question arises as to which actors have the legitimacy as well as the ethical standards and professional standing to make these decisions.

For example, a national NGO can decide to conduct civic education work in an undemocratic society, based on an analysis that lack of civic education is a key structural cause of conflict in that society and that civic education will contribute to longer-term, sustainable peace. However, in the context, civic education may in the short term lead to an increase in tensions. Assessing such a project would raise a number of questions about the organisation and the way they work:

1. Is their analysis accurate, i.e. is weak civic education an important enough structural cause of conflict to justify the increase in short-term tensions?
2. Does the organisation in fact have an agenda that aims to promote peace (or are there other motives in play)?
3. Is the organisation rooted in the context? Is this consistent with the scope of the project, i.e. are they genuinely national and working countrywide rather than capital city-led?
4. Do they have a track record of doing good research and successfully engaging communities?
5. Do they connect the project's message with their organisational ethics and mandate?

These questions become even more difficult if there are external actors involved, or a multitude of actors who may have different points of view. Yet it is exactly this murky reality within which the majority of local and international actors find themselves having to make difficult decisions.

Ways of moving forward: A community of practice and learning

Similarly, it is very difficult to assess the impact of a project if the project is not based on an explicit analysis or assumptions and does not make clear the theory/theories of change or conflict transformation that inform the project design. The reason being that if a project does not achieve its intended impact, the answer may lie in a variety of different places. Yet, who judges what would be the appropriate analysis, assumptions and theories of change or conflict transformation?

This leaves us with the question of roles and contributions among different actors. On the one hand, some of our experience suggests that, left to their own devices, those committed to increasing the efficacy of their work on conflict will adopt the tools at their disposal in locally appropriate ways. Issues of institutional support and individual confidence cause more problems than the lack of any particular expertise. Those of us who work on peacebuilding issues for a living have a tendency to make things more complicated than they need to be, including using all kinds of tables, charts and language that makes perfect sense to us, but little to anyone else. The issues around the development/conflict nexus, particularly at the project level, are not particularly complicated. So while it is sometimes helpful to have an external perspective, that help need not come in the form of an external Western consultant. Where agencies simply do not have the time on a day-to-day basis for staff to engage on these issues, external assistance can make an important contribution, but only if it assists in developing relevant internal capacity. We all agree on that.

Clearly, community involvement is paramount in terms of testing analyses and assumptions as well as trying to determine impact. One way to do this more systematically may be to adapt some of the methodologies used in public opinion polls for the purpose. Such processes actually consult people on their views, and – although used for a different purpose – have been undertaken in reference to conflict issues and international agencies' engagement in Kosovo and Bosnia. But even in these cases, political agendas may still interfere and the interpretation of results of such consultations or polls will still be subject to people's position in the conflict.

In terms of community ownership, it is indeed crucial that people affected by conflict are empowered by their involvement in conducting conflict analysis and shaping interventions that influence their lives. Their agency is essential to ensuring that they have a peaceful future. At the same time, we should not over-estimate the influence of empowering local populations, as their ability to "assert control over those decisions and initiatives (internal and external) that affect their lives and livelihoods in violence-prone regions around the world" is often extremely limited. Are we not creating unrealistic and false expectations if we lead people in rural villages of Bangladesh to believe that they have any agency at all over decisions by Washington legislators on the "Global War on Terrorism"? Even at the more local level, a sense of realism has to underpin any evidence-based advocacy towards changing the un-conflict-sensitive practices of international or, for that matter, national institutions.

The ideological ethos of peacebuilding lends itself to us calling for the empowerment of communities, but setting aside for a moment what specifically we mean by 'community', individual communities have agency over a very limited scope. Other approaches beyond community development projects and work on other levels of the conflict are required to address these more macro political issues.

A community of practice

While all the authors raise issues around ethical standards, professional standards, accountability, learning and capacity development, we need to try and find way in which to address these practically. One way forward certainly seems to be more widespread sharing among

practitioners at all levels of their experiences and findings from conflict analysis processes, as well as identifying and evaluating their theories of change or conflict transformation (as aimed for in the work of the Collaborative for Development Action on the Reflecting on Peace Practice project[2]).

A possible approach could be to establish a network – a community of practice, a broad, inclusive group of practitioners. The network cannot be dominated by any individual or organisation and their interests, especially not Northern 'experts' or institutions. The aim of the network would be to work towards articulating ethical and professional standards and capacity development in communities affected by conflict all over the world. While experience and expertise would be an asset, commitment to agreed principles would be the criterion of membership, in order to avoid alienating a new generation and those with an interest but little or no experience. The members would have to be a cross-section of people from conflict-affected communities as well as project implementers, trainers and those developing methods.

The network could also provide a useful information point for its own members and others alike on PCIA/conflict sensitivity and could even do advocacy work on challenging donor-imposed parameters on undertaking PCIA/conflict sensitivity related work.

One of the abiding principles of the network should be developing capacity in conflict-affected areas throughout all the activities of its members. This could even be complemented by a 'conflict communities capacity development fund' – into which all international consultants would pay a percentage of their earnings from relevant consultancies. The broader membership – or a committee comprised only of people from conflict communities – could then decide what type of activities the fund would support.

In articulating ethical and professional standards, the network can also be used as a forum to voice concerns about breaches of these standards, which the network can then investigate. Perhaps the network should even be able to name or expel members who maliciously break these standards, although it would be hoped that this type of occurrence would be a rarity.

In addition to holding its members to account to certain standards, we think there must be a strong reflection, learning and professional development component to the network. However, care will have to be taken that emphasis is placed within the group on joint learning and improvement of practice, rather than creating an atmosphere of aggressive criticism, which would make practitioners hesitant to share learning and discuss failures.

We believe that such a network could create a forum for starting to address the 'big' questions around impact and go some way to promoting better ownership, standards and accountability in our work. It, however, could only achieve this if it had widespread buy-in across the field.

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2 See www.cdainc.com/rpp/

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Alice Through the Looking Glass

A Response by

Kenneth Bush

I have to admit that the contributions to this round of dialogue and debate have not fully assuaged my concerns about disempowerment and commodification in the development industry at large.

A passage from Lewis Carol's *Through the Looking Glass* keeps coming to my mind:

"When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means what I choose it to mean. Neither more nor less."
"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."
"The questions is," said Humpty Dumpty, "who is to be master. That is all."

Even some of the passages intended to address the dangers of the lack of community participation in my ears suggest worrying underpinnings of disempowerment through cooptation and paternalism, of which external actors may well be unaware. If one understands cooptation to be a process by which the interests, needs, and agency (i.e. the ability to act) of an individual or group are subordinated to those of another individual or group, then the direction into which some of the initiatives on peace and conflict impact assessment or conflict-sensitivity are moving do raise warning flags. In order to avoid such pitfalls, we need to watch out for a number of "traps":

Focusing our engagement

We need to be careful that we base our interventions on a broad base of invited engagement. It is detrimental to ignore those who are neither direct project participants nor beneficiaries (but who are nonetheless affected by positive or negative impacts). It is crucial that we put the emphasis *on*

the communities rather than on the intervention we are planning (because we have the funds to do so, because we believe that we will do some good, because it is what we are good at doing). Community "engagement" needs to lead, not follow, an intervention. When communities are fit into externally initiated, and, likely, externally controlled, interventions there is a strong smell of instrumentalism.

Power and control

A rough-and-ready test for instrumentalism in our interventions would include an examination of two features of control:

(1) **Money** – How are financial resources allocated in the project budget (or, more broadly, the "initiative")? What proportion goes to the field beyond the capital city? What proportion goes to foreign consultants and to the operating costs of foreign organisations?

(2) **Decision-making** – Who makes the decisions, small and large? How are they made? Are decisions reflective of the interests and needs of those on-the-ground *as they have articulated them*, or do decisions tend to represent the interests of those outside of immediate conflict zones?

Such tests are as appropriate for initiatives in Kenya and Sri Lanka as for those working with indigenous communities in Canada.

Knowledge and understanding

I firmly believe that individuals and communities are acutely aware of the myriad ways in which their lives, livelihoods, and deaths are enmeshed within the political webs of violent, militarised conflicts. This is reflected daily in their resourcefulness and courage. At the moment, PCIA is largely used by outsiders as a means of improving their understanding of these inter-connections. Yet, to the extent that communities are put in a position of having to explain the obvious to the outsider, and to the extent that there is no sufficient foundation of trust between insiders and outsiders, communities have a strong incentive not to participate in such exercises based on, first, reasonable doubts about the immediate utility for the community itself, and, second, their very fine understanding of the thin line between *information* and *intelligence* – and the consequent increase in personal insecurity that would likely follow if information shared with "good guys" found its way into the hands of "bad guys".

Forgetting peace

There is a rather short-sighted focus on conflict, over peace – not just here, but in most writing on peacebuilding – which I think is a big mistake. It suggests an approach that focuses on the nature of – often only incidents of – violent conflict, but ignores the capacities and opportunities for nurturing peace. Thus, while the scope of the problem may be glimpsed, not much is known about possible solutions. At best, one might acquire a general understanding of what not to do, but much less is learned about what *might be done*. This approach to "peacebuilding" ignores the latter

Alice Through the Looking Glass

of two fundamental dimensions: (1) the conflict-focused deconstruction of the structures/processes of violence, and (2) the peace-focused construction of the structures/processes of reconciliation/ justice (Bush 1998; 2004).[1] The obvious implication is the need to place at least equal (if not more) emphasis on peace (explicitly defined) as on conflict (non-violent and violent), as well as the linkages between them.

It was an example of the best, it was an example of the worst

In one contribution to this dialogue on "New Trends in PCIA", the "PCIA" workshops in Sri Lanka are used as an example of how to move forward in the area of capacity-building. In another contribution, the same workshops are used as an example of how *not* to proceed. The reader might find this striking, confusing, amusing, weird, or all of the above. A number of points should be highlighted here: On the rare occasion that initiatives are evaluated, the results are rarely circulated. Internal evaluations (or less formal assessments or reviews) that are externally distributed need be read with a large grain of salt since, more often than not, they are part of a broader public relations/fund raising effort. Not surprisingly, the more interesting and useful reports that critically assess an initiative tend to be swallowed into the black hole of an organisation. This underscores the importance of independent, and widely available, assessments of self-labelled peacebuilding initiatives, as well as development or humanitarian initiatives in conflict zones. For me, this points to the need to develop an independent facility for PCIA – a space where the compartmentalised work at community, project, programme, organisational, and country levels could come together, and build on each other.

3

Where we've come from, where we should go

It is striking to see how theoretically refined the thinking on PCIA has become in some circles in the North. A common vocabulary is evolving – as is evident in the current discussion about terminology, principles, and core concepts. We are seeing the growth of a body of experience as a result of the application of PCIA-related ideas, approaches and tools. There is even an appreciation that institutional politics within and between development organisations may need to be taken more seriously if mainstreaming is to stand a chance of success. I would imagine that this is a trajectory similar to that taken by environmental impact assessment and gender analysis.

It is also exciting to see how such developments have accelerated over the past few years between the "round 1" and "round 2" of the Berghof dialogues/debates. The two organisations that have been most central to sustaining the virtual space for promoting learning from this accumulating body of ideas and experiences are the Berghof Center and International Alert. As a result of their efforts to make PCIA-related material available over the Internet, I have personally met strangers from as far afield as Peru and Taiwan who were current in the electronic exchanges. While not detracting from these contributions, one of the central challenges now is to balance the current North-to-South flow of ideas with South-to-North and South-to-South contributions. This challenge includes getting beyond the mediated footprint of the Internet – in light of the fact that more than 50% of the world's population has not made a phone call, let alone surfed the net.

I wonder, for example, what an appropriate and useful "PCIA" would look like if it

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1 All references may be found in the original article Bush 2005 at www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/PCIA_addKB.pdf .

Alice Through the Looking Glass

grew from the soil of a non-literate (oral-based), agrarian society set in the context of protracted militarised conflict? How might story-telling, song, popular culture, art be woven into experiences of, understandings of, articulations of *peace* (locally-defined) and *conflict* (locally defined) over time? Would the findings (read "assessments") generated by such initiatives have the same legitimacy, credibility, and clout as those produced by consultant-evaluators who speak the log-frame language of the development industry? Could such "assessments" even be understood by those outside that field reality? The answer is: not likely. However, the answer is not a full "no". This leaves space for important and creative work in the field. The presence of those with anthropological sensibilities and like-minded allies in the development industry also suggests exciting possibilities for running conduit South-North as well as South-South.

The harsh critique of the development industry in my contribution to this round of debates and elsewhere (Bush 2004) should not lead to the conclusion that attention should be directed exclusively to communities in conflict zones. If the development industry is a part of the problem, it must be a part of the solution. Clearly, there are actors that are moving the PCIA agenda forward with vision, integrity, and effect. The question raised in Adam Barbolet et al.'s contribution to this dialogue – how to "mainstream" peace and conflict issues into projects, programmes, and organisations – is certainly the right question. The answer requires more than simply an add-PCIA-and-stir approach. Ultimately, it requires a fundamental paradigmatic shift. Approaches which are blind to – and passive in the face of – the power imbalances, competing interests, and political interests within the political economy of the development industry are doomed to fail, or worse, to reinforce their corrosive impacts. Since this tectonic shift is unlikely to happen anytime soon, we are left to pursue change incrementally and strategically one project, one programme, one organisation at a time – learning as we move along.

4

Alice Through the Looking Glass

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More field notes:
Critical issues when implementing PCIA

A Response by

Thania Paffenholz

The Berghof Handbook team has initiated a new round of the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) dialogue and invited the contributors to "New Trends in PCIA" to continue the debate with a short response, reflecting on critical issues raised in the initial articles.

I have enjoyed reading all the contributions and would like to discuss a number of specific issues mentioned in all of them. I also want to share my own experiences in implementing PCIA in the field. I will focus mainly on process questions and methodologies:

1. The question of "Who should participate in PCIA workshops?"
2. The use of case studies and examples during workshops
3. The danger of workshop enthusiasm
4. Beyond workshops: The limits of workshops and the need for additional methods
5. PCIA is political: Tool-based approaches versus politics
6. The difficulty of assessing impact on the macro peace process
7. The use of indicators

1 Who should participate in PCIA workshops?

Main messages: The participation of people from the conflict zone is crucial, however, we should also be careful not to paint a black-and-white picture of "wonderful Southerners" and "evil Northerners". The involvement of external stakeholders and workshops at headquarters can be equally important. It is also necessary to be critical towards Southern gatekeepers.

All three contributions agreed that participatory workshops with the stakeholders seem to be *the* means of conducting a PCIA process. I would like to focus in the following on some of my

experiences when engaged in PCIA workshops in the field.

First, I share the experiences of the other contributors that these workshops are key and need to be driven by the people from the conflict zone, as they are the ones who have the knowledge and the means of changing the situation on the ground.

When I was invited to facilitate a PCIA workshop for international aid agencies in Yemen, I was astonished to learn that only expatriate project staff from Europe would participate. When I criticized this, the agencies ensured that the local staff and partners from Yemen would be included in the next workshop, which actually happened. I learned a couple of things from these workshops:

Interestingly, the analysis of the conflict potential in Yemen during the first workshop, where only expatriate staff participated, was identical to the analysis of the Yemenis in the second joint workshop. However, the expatriate staff was not able to analyse any peace potential in Yemen, whereas this part of the analysis by the Yemenis was very rich and innovative and created a lot of ideas for supportive action.

At the same time, the exclusive involvement of expatriate agency staff, and especially the involvement of the leadership level of the agencies, during the first workshop created an openness for the issues of peacebuilding and conflict-sensitivity that resulted in a remarkable commitment from the leadership and expatriate staff to further engage with the issue and even create an interagency unit to deal with conflict and peace issues on the programme and the political level. I asked the expatriate participants whether this impressive result could not have been achieved by an initial joint workshop. They replied that, had the workshop started off together with partners from Yemen, they would have felt too much pressure to avoid talking about the conflict situation or to immediately make concessions to their partners. By having a series of workshops, they had more time to reflect among themselves first and were then more open for the work in the joint workshop.

Second, the South-to-South exchange as mentioned by Kenneth Bush is crucial and should be considered more often. During a workshop in the Horn of Africa with people from different African countries, the exchange between these different groups was not only rich in analysis but, most of all, a learning experience for all participating actors. Interestingly, the different cultures in French- and English-speaking Africa turned out to be a major obstacle for shared learning and were intensively discussed, as were ways to overcome the obstacle.

Thus, the importance of participation of people from conflict zones is not questioned at all; however, we should be careful not to paint the picture of the "wonderful Southerners" and the "evil Northerners". Ownership is crucial, and participation is a means to ensure it, but there are Southern groups of people that act as gatekeepers to the real communities in need. I have not been to a place in the South where I did not, among others, find representatives of Southern, urban, upper-middle-class NGOs that control external funds, dominate workshops in the capitals and claim to reach the affected population, while never even leaving the capital. Sadly, this is one consequence of the developing "peace industry" that builds on the concept of empowering the middle level of society to reach the top and the bottom. This finding is not discrediting the concept, but it does show that we have to critically analyse with whom to engage.

I want to make a last point concerning PCIA workshops in industrialised, western countries: One could understand Kenneth Bush's plea for Southern ownership in such a way that it would not seem appropriate to work with "Northerners" (I do not think that he means that). I believe that – if Kenneth Bush is correct and the way of dealing with development and peace work in the South is problematic because of the way "Northerners" act – it is high time to work especially with organisations in the North at headquarter levels. And my experience has in fact been a different one from that of Kenneth Bush: Often, the issues of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding are recognised

by an organisation at headquarter level; however, insufficient exchange and communication between headquarters and the field hamper the implementation of policies in the field.

2 Case studies and examples used during PCIA workshops

Main message: The work with real cases, which represent the working context of the participants, helps to better understand the PCIA methodology and to come up with concrete action plans for implementation.

Kenneth Bush shared with us his experiences of using made-up, remote examples as opposed to a real case during PCIA workshops. I would like to add my own experiences with this issue from several workshops that I facilitated in Nepal and in the Horn of Africa for international and local organisations.

Just like Kenneth Bush, I decide to take on an assignment only if I know that the organisation wants to build its own capacity and engages in a process in such a way that they are not growing dependent on outsiders, but only rely on this support for the short-run. In order to find out whether this is the case, it is important to understand the goals of the process, the stakeholders involved, and the flexibility and openness of the organisation. Often, a workshop is a starting point for such a process. In our first talks, I ask about the objectives of the workshop and discuss with the involved stakeholders whether they want to use their own cases – which I usually recommend – or work with other cases.

Most of the time, organisations want to work with their own cases. In my experience, this is very good because it usually leads to a better understanding of the methodology and also creates a lot of ideas for immediately changing the planned intervention. Thus participants leave the workshop with a concrete action plan for implementation.

What to do when organisations refuse to use their own cases? I usually work with similar cases from other countries without naming the organisations involved and adapt these cases to the situation in the country in question. This creates a feeling of "This is exactly what happens in our case" and it often paves the way to their own cases. I also try to reserve a day at the end for "any other topic", which is then often used to go through their own cases. An additional option is to work with story telling. In a workshop with organisations from Somalia and Congo in Kenya, I presented different organisations' experiences in the same field of work from other countries. Focussing especially on the "How not to do it"-issues, this story telling opened the way for the participants to critically tell stories about their own mistakes and possible ways forward. This intermezzo of story telling paved the way to engage more deeply with the methodology during the next session.

When we do work with real cases, it is important what kinds of examples we choose. This, of course, depends on what the process and the organisation need. We jointly discuss this question, and I advise the organisers if necessary. It often does not help the process to take a case that is already decided or finalised, or a case where the involved stakeholders are not ready to engage in the process. What are good cases depends foremost on the objectives of the entire PCIA process. I have worked a lot with organisations that wanted to integrate the conflict/peace lens into entire country programmes. In these cases it made sense to choose cases on different levels, e.g. one group worked on the national level, another group on a sector level that was highly affected by the conflict situation (the water sector in Yemen, the education sector in Sri Lanka, or the health and rural development sectors in Nepal). Yet another group worked on the project level. This division enabled the participants to understand the methodology on different levels. It also allowed participants to choose the group that was most relevant for their work.

More field notes: Critical issues when implementing PCIA

3 Beware of workshop enthusiasm!

Main message: Good workshops are great, but the ultimate success of a workshop only shows when the methods and tools are used, and when the participants initiate changes in the conflict situation.

We should not overestimate what can be achieved by a workshop. During a good workshop, the atmosphere is often very nice and people leave feeling empowered and enthusiastic. However, this feeling can quickly be counteracted by the workload of an intensive job in a war zone that makes it very difficult to implement the learning of the workshop. As facilitators we need to be aware of this. We can be happy when we have supported a good process, yet should not be too flattered by a good workshop evaluation with a lot of praise for our great facilitation. On the contrary, we must raise people's awareness that the process must be continued and that a workshop does not tell us anything about the utilization of the results and the final impact of the learning. Therefore, we should develop – with the involved stakeholders – a clear and realistic implementation and follow-up plan with concrete tasks assigned to the involved stakeholders.

4 Beyond workshops: The limits of workshops and the need for additional methods

Main message: Participatory workshops are crucial but not sufficient. Other social science research methods, especially field research, are needed to assess the effects of interventions.

Can we do every important PCIA step during workshops? In my experience, the answer to this question is clearly a "no". Participatory workshops are crucial but not sufficient. Other social science research methods are needed.

During a PCIA assessment in Sri Lanka that was focussing on planning new programmes in conflict-affected areas of the island, a pre-study on what had already been implemented by other actors in the same area was a necessary step for clarifying the potential programme of the organisation. The results of the study were used during the workshop to assess the relevance of the organisation's programme in Sri Lanka (compare the relevance assessment methodology in my initial contribution[1]) as well as the cooperation potential with other actors.

Another example comes from the project level: During a PCIA assessment of the work of local NGOs in Nepal, it was necessary to visit the remote conflict-affected areas in the country to talk with the communities in order to assess the effects of different local organisations' conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding work. The picture that many of the local NGOs presented of the effects of their work contrasted starkly with the actual achievements on the ground. For example, during a workshop many local NGOs had claimed to have had tremendous impact on peacebuilding in certain regions through linking development with peace work. Visiting the communities the picture was mixed: on the one hand, a lot of empowerment work had been done; on the other, when people in remote rural areas that where squeezed between the conflict parties wanted to use their skills to claim their rights in front of the security forces, they were simply arrested or killed as they had no access to justice. Thus a lot of the empowering peace work did actually more harm than good. In those communities, though, that had active youth who were standing up for their rights in combination with access to regional and national human rights networks, the peace work had a lot of positive effects, in some cases even much more so than envisaged by the organisations prior to the

[1] Paffenholz 2005 at www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/PCIA_addTP.pdf .

More field notes: Critical issues when implementing PCIA

interventions. In short, these intensive and often exhausting field trips enabled the PCIA assessment team to match the workshop with the reality on the ground. During the workshop, all the findings of the field trips could be used for working on the improvement of the programmes.

5 PCIA is political: Tool-based approaches versus politics

Main message: PCIA is political. Therefore, single PCIA processes always have to be aware of the macro situation in the country.

I agree with Kenneth Bush that PCIA is fundamentally political. While PCIA, the way I understand it, can be used on the macro level of politics as well as on the project level of interventions in conflict-affected areas, we must understand that all the different levels of interventions are peace-building blocks in a country. As my colleagues from the UK point out in their article, there is a need to link PCIA on all levels with a macro peace strategy. I would like to give some evidence for this remark: When the Nepali king took over power in the beginning of February 2005, leading to a further escalation of the conflict and increased human rights violations, time was not ripe for conducting PCIA on the project level, as many organisations could not even work in the most conflict-affected areas. Time was riper for macro-political interventions. For example: through joint analysis of the situation and pressure from human right groups in Nepal and the North, the international donor community started to increase pressure on the king and the "government" of Nepal.

Another example comes from Sri Lanka: An analysis of the effects of different donors' policies on the conflict situation and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka came to the conclusion that a lot of donors and agencies are supporting conflict-sensitive work; however, especially the big donors – such as the development banks – do not implement such approaches and thereby counteract much of the conflict-sensitive work. In response, the British Department for International Development (DfID) seconded a peacebuilding advisor to the Asian Development Bank in order to influence the policy of the bank. This illustrates that PCIA can go and must go beyond the project level of intervention.

Still, PCIA can be also political on the project level: A PCIA assessment of development projects in Nepal came to the conclusion that one of the conflicting parties, the Maoists, did not allow certain development projects for ideological reasons (for example rural banking projects as they perceive these projects to not support the poorest of the poor). Another assessment of human rights work in Nepal after the royal coup in February 2005 showed that it was not timely to continue to conduct human rights training, but necessary to engage in protection programmes for human rights activists. The decision to stop these projects or adapt their implementation to the political context is a fundamentally political issue beyond any technicality.

6 Assessing the impact on the macro level of the peace process is difficult

Main message: Assessing the impact on the overall peace process is important; however, more modesty and realistic goals are needed.

To assess impact of an intervention on the macro process is a very difficult task, because it is difficult to isolate the exact contribution an intervention has made from other contributions if something changes in the peace process (the 'attribution gap'). Moreover, methods for solid impact

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assessment can be costly. Interestingly, however, the PCIA debate – and even more so the debate on the evaluation of peace interventions – is very much focussing on assessing impact on the macro peace process. Actors are trying hard to find the link between, let's say, a peace journalism training project and changes in the macro peace process. While I believe that it is necessary that intervening actors ask themselves before the start of an intervention how it will affect "peace writ large", does every intervention truly have to reach the top? Does that not depend on the specific goals of an intervention? Is it not one of the main problems that peace actors too often set too ambitious goals? If the goals are set as high as achieving peace writ large, it is only fair to look for impacts of this intervention on peace writ large. Would it not be better to focus on relevance for peacebuilding first ("Are we doing the right thing?") and, second, look for a link between this relevance and the immediate outcomes of our interventions rather than to always aim high?

The example of peace journalism training can demonstrate this: Often, goals are formulated like this: "Making a contribution to peacebuilding in country X through peace journalism". Stated more modestly, it could read as follows: "Changing stereotypes in conflict reporting to contribute to more accurate reporting". Before starting the project, it would be necessary to assess the relevance of such an intervention for peacebuilding, that is, to ask: "Is such an intervention appropriate for peacebuilding in the country at this very moment?" In the current situation in Nepal, for example, where journalists are constantly threatened by the conflict parties and put in jail if they report certain issues, it is not the right time for such a project. Other measures, such as protection projects for journalists and political pressure towards the conflict parties, are more appropriate.

7 The use of indicators

Main messages: Organisations are able to develop their own monitoring indicators. Measuring indicators needs to be part of the project's activities and has to be planned from the very beginning of an intervention.

All three articles look into the role of indicators. I would therefore like to give an example from the field: During a workshop in Kenya, the participants of a peace NGO working in different African countries developed result-chains with indicators that led from the activities of the interventions towards the peacebuilding need they wanted to address with their peacebuilding training projects (compare the methodological background in my initial article). To find existing indicators was difficult, as peace research up to now does not provide us with a set of standard indicators as other fields do. The participants therefore developed their own indicators. This was not too difficult since they know the situation best and understand what kinds of indicators can be realistically used to monitor the intervention's effects. During this process, participants realised that – if they wanted to seriously assess the outcomes of the training programme on the peace and conflict situation – they had to change the original project design by adding additional activities such as follow-up workshops and surveys to assess the utilization of trained skills by the trainees at a later stage. If they wanted to assess the impact the training programme would finally have on the macro peace process, more additional activities would have to be added. They identified, for example, "changed behaviour and attitude of the population" as an important indicator. To measure this indicator, methods such as public opinion polls on changing attitudes and behaviours of the population would be needed. It was then decided to only go up to the outcome level of the result-chain, as assessing the actual impact was too costly for a single NGO (compare figure 4 in my initial contribution).

For this reason, it is worth the effort that different actors and agencies engage in joint impact assessments.

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