

Peace and Conflict Sensitivity in International Cooperation: An Introductory Overview

THANIA PAFFENHOLZ

Introduction

Two-thirds of the countries of the world are either suffering from political tensions and violent conflict or find themselves in the aftermath of a destructive conflict or war. As a consequence, local and international organizations are working in these zones of violent conflict to reduce the suffering of the population by helping to re-establish security, monitor human rights, build peace or support efforts to rebuild the democratic and economic structures that are essential for sustainable peace.

Over the past couple of years the community of researchers and practitioners has been developing more effective approaches and tools for working in zones of violent conflict or in the aftermath of violent conflict or wars. While the aid community has become much more aware of the need to »Do no harm« (Anderson 1999) by working »conflict sensitively« (De la Haye and Denayer 2003), the peace community has started looking into ways of more effectively contributing to peacebuilding by evaluating peacebuilding efforts (Church and Shouldice 2002 and 2003; Anderson and Olson 2003; Paffenholz 2005a; Paffenholz and Reyhler 2005; Fast and Neufeld 2005).

Today, peace and conflict have successfully entered the mainstreaming agenda of development donors and agencies: there has been a tremendous institutionalization and conceptualization of the topic. Most donor agencies and larger implementing agencies nowadays have a unit or an advisor for conflict, peace and development under a number of different headings. Almost all organizations have a developed strategy for peace and conflict-sensitive development policies and cooperation, mostly based on the OECD guidelines for conflict, peace and development (OECD 2001).

This article presents an overview of the topic and seeks to contribute to a better understanding of peace and conflict sensitivity in international cooperation. The article is structured as follows. In the introduction the

issues are stated and terms used throughout the article are defined; section 2 presents a short history of the debate on peace and conflict sensitivity; section 3 goes into practical issues and provides good and bad practical examples; and finally, section 4 presents conclusions and challenges.

The following definitions are used throughout the article:

Conflict is normal when different people live together. When dealt with in a constructive way, conflict can lead to positive developments, both for individuals and the society as a whole. However, conflict can also lead to violence if dealt with in a destructive way. Today, there are nearly 200 places in the world where people are involved in violent conflicts and wars (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 2001). The article focuses on violent forms of conflict only.

Peacebuilding is a long-term process that covers all activities intended to build and promote peace and overcome violence. The overall aim of peacebuilding is to prevent violent outbreaks of conflicts or to transform violent conflicts into peaceful processes and in a sustainable manner.

Peace and conflict sensitivity in international cooperation is integrating the peace and conflict dimension into the policies and programs of international cooperation. It starts out from the premise that conflict itself (see the definition above) is not just an aberration but a normal and inescapable fact of life and development. Thus the goal of »peace and conflict sensitivity« in international cooperation is to help prevent slides (back) into violent conflict and not to try to prevent conflict altogether, which is an illusory ambition (Wood 2001). In applying a peace and conflict sensitive lens to international cooperation, donors and agencies want to (a) reduce the risk that aid unintentionally contributes to conflict escalation (Do no harm) and (b) contribute directly or indirectly to peacebuilding.

International cooperation in this article defines all the policy and program activities of donors and agencies in the context of development, humanitarian, democratization, human rights and peacebuilding work for and in developing and transition countries in the South and East.

The Link between Conflict, Peace and International Cooperation: A Short History

There have always been mechanisms for dealing with conflicts, even violent forms of conflict, in both traditional and modern societies. However,

only in the late nineteenth century was the resolution of international conflicts and wars included in international law. This was further developed with the foundation of the United Nations in 1945. The objective of all these efforts was to accumulate concepts and instruments to deal with wars between states (Paffenholz 2001a and 2001b).

After the end of the Cold War, at the beginning of the 1990s, the international community was increasingly confronted with internal wars for which the international legal framework was not sufficiently prepared. With the »Agenda for Peace« (UN 1992), and the report of the UN Secretary General on preventing violent conflict a decade later (UN 2001), the process of adjusting international mechanisms to these situations got under way.

Development cooperation has always been understood as less political in nature and mainly concerned with the development of a country or region. However, this view was challenged by the tragic events of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, which took development actors by surprise. In the aftermath of the Rwandan crisis, a major debate started among development actors about the role of development in conflict affected areas. This first debate was characterized by two discussions in particular:

1. The possibility of preventing another Rwanda situation. This was the beginning of political early warning (Krummenacher/Schmeidl 2001). In the beginning of the early warning debate it was assumed that within a couple of years quantitative early warning methods would be available that could precisely predict upcoming political violence and thereby create the preconditions for political early action. However, these hopes were not fulfilled because it became clear that (a) quantitative early warning systems alone will not be able to predict political violence, and (b) lack of information was not the main problem but rather the lack of political willingness to engage in early action. Thus the early warning debate lost momentum and was absorbed into the general debate about prevention culminating in the UN Secretary General's report on »Preventing armed conflict« (UN 2001).
2. Research conducted in the aftermath of Rwanda (Uvin 1998) and in other conflict-affected countries (Anderson 1999) clearly showed that aid can inadvertently do harm in conflict situations. Further research explored developing assessment methods and tools for responding to these findings in a constructive way: from 1996 onwards, Mary B. Anderson and her team developed the »Local Capacities for Peace Approach,« better known as »Do no harm,« with a planning matrix and

check lists for identifying the potential effects of aid projects on conflict and peace. The »Do no harm« debate is a major success story: the phrase has developed almost into the »mantra« of a new understanding of development cooperation.

Luc Reyhler and his colleagues started to develop »Conflict Impact Assessment Systems« (CIAS) focusing on the macro policy level, also from 1996 (Reyhler 1999). In 1998, Kenneth Bush developed a »Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment« (PCIA) methodology comparable to environmental or gender impact assessment, also designed for the project level of interventions (Bush 1998).

Kenneth Bush's research triggered an intensive debate about PCIA assessment possibilities and limitations (Bush 1998; Leonhardt 2002). Both »Do no harm« and »PCIA« originally focused on international or local NGO aid projects, but they quickly spread and were used by a variety of organizations. Big international NGOs and a number of donor agencies have adapted the »Do no harm« approach to their organization's operational procedures and apply it in the field through training of staff and partners. A good example is the systematic incorporation of the »Do no harm« approach by CARE International. In Germany, NGOs like World Vision or the Protestant Church Development Service (EED) are at the forefront of »Do no harm« implementation.

Currently many organizations use the term »peace and conflict sensitivity.« the concept of PCIA has been watered down by many terminological confusions. »Conflict sensitivity« (de la Haye and Denayer 2003) is thereby used as an overall term to describe different efforts, methods and tools for working in conflict zones with the objective of at least avoiding harm and, if possible, also contributing to peacebuilding. I use the term »Peace and Conflict Sensitivity« in order to emphasize the peace dimension as well. The term PCIA or PCA (Peace and Conflict Assessment) still prevails but is used more to describe assessment methods, while peace/conflict sensitivity is broader.

Secondly, some of the approaches of the earlier phase matured into comprehensive, step-by-step methodological peace and conflict assessment approaches (Bush 2003; Paffenholz and Reyhler 2005) and the »Do No Harm« approach has been widely applied, primarily by NGOs working in conflict-affected areas.

Thirdly, the peace/conflict mainstreaming debate tries to tackle the organizational, managerial and program implementation levels at the same time. This stems from an understanding and experience that successful

mainstreaming requires a lot of organizational and management changes by the organizations involved. One major obstacle derives from the fact that the expert community is still unable to provide sufficient capacity to support these processes, especially at local field level. Many government agencies are putting more emphasis on training their staff and assigning conflict or peacebuilding advisors to field offices in order to ensure operational mainstreaming. Like many other agencies the UNDP's Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the British DFID, USAID and the German GTZ have all seconded a number of such advisors to their field offices, while NGOs opt for building local capacities. For example, in the Horn of Africa the EED has trained a number of local trainers in the application of a peace and conflict sensitive approach. Moreover, agencies like the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) are starting to apply so called »Conflict Sensitive Programme Management« (CSPM) which tackles the entire dimension of mainstreaming, not limited to the operational level (SDC 2005).

In Germany, the main development and peace organizations and networks have joined hands and established a joint working group to foster mainstreaming. The Working Group on Development and Peace (FriEnt: www.frient.de) is made up of seven organizations of different sizes, institutional backgrounds, mandate and working culture. FriEnt evaluates information about projects and research findings with practical relevance, further develops methodological and conceptual approaches, and promotes dialogue among member organizations and between members and other institutions. FriEnt was established in 2001 at the initiative of the German Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Protestant Church Development Service (EED), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), the Catholic Central Agency for Development Aid (Misereor), the Civil Peace Service Group (ZFD) and the NGO Platform for Civil Conflict Management. A similar project exists in Switzerland, also since 2001 (KOFF: www.swiss-peace.org).

Fourthly, donors, researchers and implementing agencies started to reflect on the effectiveness and impact of peacebuilding interventions. This triggered a new wave of publications and conferences on how to evaluate peacebuilding interventions (Smith 2003; Church and Shouldice 2002 and 2003; Anderson and Olson 2003; Paffenholz 2005a; Paffenholz and Reyhler 2005; Fast and Neufeld 2005). This has also shifted the debate in the direction of peace organizations. This debate is sometimes also re-

ferred to under the label ›conflict sensitivity‹ (Resource Package 2004), although it is essentially about the professionalization of planning and evaluation procedures within the peace community and not the introduction of a new concept (Paffenholz 2005a and 2005b).

Peace and Conflict Sensitive Cooperation in Practice

Policy-Level Concepts

On the policy level, bi- and multilateral donors, but sometimes also international and national advocacy NGOs, have started a process of understanding and applying different strategies, such as conditionality, negotiated benchmarks, bottom lines, and policy dialogue, as well as international networks in relation to war economies in order to influence the conflicting parties by linking aid to conflict and peacebuilding (Uvin 1999; OECD 2001; Wood 2003).

Conditionality implies laying down conditions under which aid will be provided. The hardest types of conditionality are sanctions, such as the EU sanctions against Zimbabwe or the long-term sanctions against apartheid South Africa. The objective is to influence the conflict situation through these conditions in a positive way, for example, by preventing a major actor from continuing violent conflict or gross human rights violations by reducing or stopping aid resources and linking their restart to certain political conditions.

Negotiated benchmarks are the obverse of conditionality, operating on the basis of positive incentives: for example, more aid will be provided if certain conditions in the country improve. The donor community in conflict-affected Nepal, for example, has made clear to the government/king that budgetary support will be increased only if major democratic institutions are reactivated, such as the parliament.

›Bottom lines‹ define the end of donor engagement: for example, ›if the situation doesn't improve by this date in the future, we will cease our engagement with the country‹.

Policy dialog is long-term engagement, usually with a partner government. Donors hope through long-term relations with a partner country to be able to influence policies in a constructive direction.

International networks against war economies, such as the fairly successful Kimberly process for banning war diamonds, try to eliminate the conflicting parties' resource base through control of markets. Other cur-

rent processes, such as efforts to make oil revenue in conflict-affected countries transparent or to create alternatives to the drug trade in Afghanistan or Colombia, have so far not proved effective.

All (but the last) of these policy measures build on the hypothesis that aid and international reputation are attractive resources that conflicting parties do not want to lose. Thus, most of these measures can only have an effect if a country is a donor dependent: for example, oil and diamond exporting Angola has been more or less resistant to donor pressure.

The policy level of international cooperation has also become very difficult as it challenges donor/partner relations. Here donors are challenged by a number of critical questions/issues, such as the relation to the government as conflicting party, the engagement with so-called »non-state armed actors« or the linkages between diplomatic and development actors.

Nepal: Bad and good practice on the policy level of peace and conflict sensitive cooperation

The donor community in conflict-affected Nepal has commissioned more than 30 different conflict analysis reports and assessment missions in recent years. However, they have not managed to come up with a joint assessment of the situation that could lead them to a joint response to the conflicting parties. While all donors agree on joint operational guidelines for working in conflict-affected areas of the country, which are more linked to security issues and primarily aim at dealing with the Maoists, there has been no clear position vis-à-vis the Nepalese government as an actor in the conflict. All this has happened in the light of the total aid dependency of the Nepalese state. Many »Do no harm« or other peace and conflict sensitive training and capacity building activities have taken place, but their limitations have become clear: without a clear political strategy, the donors were unable to influence the conflict situation in a timely and constructive way. Only when the King assumed power in an anti-democratic coup in February 2005 did the majority of donors unite and suspend budgetary support to the government, and also pushed for human rights monitoring linked to a strategy of targeted conditions.

Operational Level I: Concepts

In response to policy level challenges in conflict-affected areas, many donors and agencies have put more emphasis on the operational level. However, this might also be linked to a general belief in tool-based solutions to problems among cooperation actors. It is now commonly accepted in the aid practitioner/expert community that on this level cooperation actors have three choices (Goodhand 2001):

1. Working around conflict: conflict is seen as a negative risk factor that is to be avoided.
2. Working in conflict: actors have a certain awareness that development can influence conflict and try to avoid negative effects on the conflict situation (Do no harm).
3. Working on conflict: actors are also aware that all cooperation work can contribute to peacebuilding. They apply peace and conflict sensitive approaches to development, including pro-active peacebuilding work.

The overall objective of all concepts is the same, namely designing policies and programmes in such a way that aid does not inadvertently do harm and that its peacebuilding potential is used for working in and on conflicts.

Nevertheless, a critical look at post-tsunami aid in Sri Lanka (see box below) in terms of overall distribution and delivery mode shows how far away the field currently is from automatic, systematic peace and conflict sensitive aid implementation. In reality, the peace and conflict field is just beginning to attain practical momentum on the ground, besides a few good pilot examples, a lot of rhetoric and good mainstreaming efforts at headquarters.

Bad practice: conflict insensitive tsunami aid delivery in Sri Lanka

The overwhelming aid donations to tsunami-affected Sri Lanka have also created a set of severe problems as regards peace and conflict insensitivity. The first problem is linked to the amount of aid: the latest donor post-tsunami needs assessment came to the conclusion that there are four to five times more aid resources in the country than needed. This has led to overfunding in a lot of areas, thereby favoring certain groups over others. Secondly, the overfunding has shifted the power balance in the conflict setting towards the government that

now does not need to compromise with the other conflicting party, the LTTE. As a result, political tensions and violence have increased. Thirdly, the many private aid organizations especially founded for tsunami aid delivery have no experience in international cooperation in general and thus also no idea about peace and conflict sensitivity. This adds to the problems of unjust resource distribution. Fourthly, the large amounts of aid that need to be spent quickly create a need to work mainly with the government, which has the necessary absorption capacities. This fuels one of the root causes of conflict, namely unjust regional distribution of resources. The LTTE-controlled areas in the North and East are getting far less tsunami aid than the South because there agencies have to work with NGOs, which takes much longer. Interestingly, most professional agencies are aware of this, but do not see any other way of coping with these huge resource allocations.

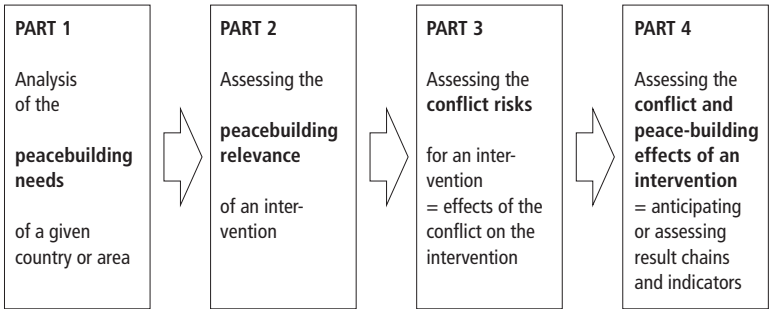
Operational Level II: Approaches, Methods and Tools for Peace and Conflict Sensitive Planning and Evaluation

Today, it is common to conduct a conflict analysis on the operational level and a great variety of tools are available (Resource Package 2004). However, many of these analyses do not sufficiently consider actual implementation of the program or do not involve the staff of aid organizations in the assessment or planning of peace and conflict sensitive cooperation. Only a couple of approaches are comprehensive. The most developed of these approaches are the following:

- ▶ Mary B. Anderson's »Do no harm« approach and its various applications by organizations, some under the heading of peace and conflict-sensitive development.
- ▶ Kenneth Bush's enlarged PCIA approach: »Hands on PCIA.«
- ▶ Thania Paffenholz and Luc Reychler's »Aid for Peace« approach. The latter also provides separate applications for peace and aid interventions in respect of planning, assessment and evaluation for both the policy and the program level.

In what follows I would like to focus on the »Aid for Peace« approach and give an example of its application in peace and conflict sensitive development programmes. I provide a short introduction to the logic and functioning of the approach, also because it has been now taken over by the German Ministry of Development Cooperation's (BMZ) Strategy for Peacebuilding (Übersektorales Konzept Friedensentwicklung und Kri-

Figure 1:
The »Aid for Peace« Framework



senprävention) as the methodology of »Peace and Conflict Assessments« (PCAs). Thus all German government agencies, such as GTZ or KfW, need to adapt the »Aid for Peace« framework to their organization's planning, implementation and evaluation procedures in order to ensure peace and conflict sensitivity when working in a conflict country (for more information about the approach see: Paffenholz 2005b; Paffenholz and Reychler 2005). Which countries fall in the category of »conflict countries« is determined by the BMZ once a year with the help of a set of crisis indicators developed by German research institutions in Hamburg (Deutsches Übersee Institut).

The »Aid for Peace« framework consists of four parts (see Figure 1): part 1 analyses the peacebuilding needs in a given country, area or region; part 2 assesses the peacebuilding relevance of the intervention; part 3 assesses or anticipates expected or manifest effects of the conflict on intervention activities (conflict risks); and part 4 assesses or anticipates expected or manifest effects of the intervention on conflict dynamics and the peacebuilding process (peace and conflict outcomes and impact).

Part 1: Analyzing Peacebuilding Needs

The analysis of peacebuilding needs in a particular country or area is the basis on which the following parts of the analytical framework are built, and comprises four consecutive steps: 1) analysis of the conflict and peace environment; 2) anticipating conflict dynamics and peacebuilding; 3) analyzing the peacebuilding deficiencies defining the envisaged future

peace; and 4) specifying the needs of peacebuilding in general or in a particular sector.

Step 1: Analyzing the Conflict and Peace Environment

The objective is to analyze both the conflict dynamics and the peacebuilding process of a country or area. For example, we conducted an assessment of a development program in Sri Lanka focusing on employment creation for pro-poor growth by supporting small and medium-size enterprise (SME) development. When we conducted the peace and conflict assessment with the help of the »Aid for Peace« approach, the program had not yet started, but the initial program planning had been finalized. We conducted a macro conflict and peace analysis of the situation in Sri Lanka first, followed by an analysis of the conflicts, tensions and peacebuilding potential in those districts where the program was to be implemented. The two studies were carried out by local research teams. We then discussed the results with the stakeholders involved in a participatory workshop and conducted further field assessment together with the implementing agency, local researchers and international experts.

Step 2: Anticipating Conflict Dynamics and Peacebuilding

As the situation in a conflict zone is subject to rapid change, it is necessary to anticipate possible changes and developments in conflict dynamics and the peace process. The understanding of different possible future developments helps intervening actors to flexibly adapt their interventions to new situations and also enhances their capacity to react in a more systematic way to changed situations. A variety of tools exists to support the planning process for aid and peace interventions. A particularly effective one is scenario building (Schwartz 1991; Wack 1998). In the SME program example from Sri Lanka we also developed different scenarios for the near future in order to prepare the program for possible future developments that were discussed during the workshop.

Step 3: Identifying Peacebuilding Deficiencies: Clarifying the Vision for Peace

To identify the prevailing peacebuilding deficiencies one has to (a) define the peace one wants to achieve (for example, explain the vision for peacebuilding), (b) specify the conditions that enhance the peacebuilding process, and (c) compare the reality with this envisaged peace situation. Without a clear and transparent definition of and vision for the peace one wants to build, it is very difficult to do a serious analysis of the peace-

building deficiencies and thus define strategies and activities for interventions. In most cases, both intervening actors as well as local actors in the conflict countries assume that everybody knows what peace is all about and therefore the definition of and the vision for peace are often left implicit (Boulding 2001; Fast and Neufeld 2005). For aid sector analysis we first identify the deficiencies in the peacebuilding process (for example, what is needed to achieve peace in Sri Lanka in general and specific peacebuilding needs in the districts in which the SME program wants to operate) and then identify the peacebuilding needs in the respective sectors (for example, what is needed to achieve peace and conflict sensitive SME development in the relevant districts with also peace »added value«). In practical terms, the latter is done by identifying needs in the SME sector in general (the necessary information is usually provided by a sector needs analysis) and checking these needs for their conflict/peace validity with the findings of the general analysis of peacebuilding deficiencies (the information is provided by the conflict and peace analysis).

Step 4: Identifying and Specifying Peacebuilding Needs

After the peacebuilding deficiencies have been analysed, we can now specify the short-, medium- and long-term needs of peacebuilding. Several needs may be targeted at the same time. However, depending on leverage, experience, organizational expertise and country specificities, it is necessary to set clear priorities for responding to particular needs. In our example in Sri Lanka, the integration of the SME and the conflict and peace analyses showed that the inclusion of the different ethnic, language and religious groups (both refugees and local communities) in all SME development activities was the main peacebuilding need in the SME sector, in combination with promoting a business culture based on cooperation.

Part 2: Assessing the Peacebuilding Relevance

The aim is to assess whether the overall direction of a planned or ongoing intervention (policy or program) corresponds to the country's peacebuilding needs as mapped in the peacebuilding deficiency and needs analysis. The peacebuilding relevance assessment ensures a link between the analysis and the implementation of the intervention. It defines or assesses the viability of the intervention's goals: for example, whether or not the intervention is moving in the right direction. During the stakeholder workshop for the Sri Lanka SME program, the stakeholders jointly de-

financed sub-goals for the program to incorporate peacebuilding needs and thus significantly enhanced the peacebuilding relevance of the entire program. Among other things, specific guidelines for the selection of partners and beneficiaries were added to the implementation plan.

Part 3: Assessing the Conflict Risks

The objective is to identify the problems and risks which (the) intervention(s) in zones of violent conflict currently face, for example, assessing or anticipating the effects of the conflict on the intervention. For planning new interventions, the conflict risk assessment anticipates potential conflict related risks. To assess the conflict risks, one can make use of a variety of checklists (CDA website; Bush 2003; Paffenholz and Reychler forthcoming). All checklists focus on questions relating to the security situation, the political and administrative climate, relationships with partners and stakeholders, and relationships with the parties in conflict and other intervening actors. In our example from Sri Lanka, we analyzed a series of potential risks separately for every district based on the conflict/tension analysis done in all the districts in question and checked it against one of the above mentioned checklists.

Part 4: Assessing the Effects on Peace and Conflict

The aim is to assess the effects (outcomes and impact) of the planned or ongoing intervention(s) on the conflict and peace situation. In other words, we want to know what kind of effects can be expected, what kind of effects are taking place, and/or what kind of effects have taken place as a consequence of the intervention(s) on the immediate and wider conflict and peace situation. For a proper assessment of peace and conflict effects a peacebuilding baseline study must be conducted prior to the intervention which allows a before/after comparison as part of the assessment. For aid interventions, the peacebuilding baseline study can be integrated into the normal development feasibility study or into the needs assessment. Moreover, result chains and indicators must be agreed upon by the stakeholders during the planning phase that can be assessed for monitoring and during evaluation. Result chains and indicators facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the intervention (Kusek and Rist 2004). Peace research is in its infancy as far as providing a set of general indicators is concerned (Smith 2003; Fast and Neufeld 2005).

For planning new interventions we recommend developing hypotheses with the help of result chains that create causal links between the activities of the intervention(s) and the conflict and peace variables. This can be done with the help of (a) participatory planning methods like Action Evaluation (Rothman 2003), (b) check lists (CDA website for »Do No Harm« and »RPP« criteria; Paffenholz and Reychler forthcoming), and (c) the findings of peace research. Getting back to the example of the SME program in Sri Lanka, we came up with a list of possible negative and positive effects which the program could have on the conflict and peace situation. Instead of giving a recommendation, the intervention stakeholders jointly developed an action plan for incorporating the peace and conflict lens into the program implementation plan during a facilitated workshop. The stakeholders checked all planned program implementation activities for their peace and conflict sensitivity and defined additional activities accordingly. Part of this plan was, for example, the development of guidelines for partner selection or training and capacity building for partner organizations in peace and conflict sensitivity. Moreover, a local support structure to assist the ongoing mainstreaming process was discussed in order to strengthen local capacities and limit the support from international experts.

Conclusions and Future Challenges

This article has provided an overview of peace and conflict sensitivity in international cooperation. We have seen that peacebuilding is not a new issue, but has been known since ancient times. However, the incorporation of a peace/conflict lens into international cooperation started only after the tragic events in Rwanda in 1994. At the same time, the peacebuilding field has started to mature and is engaged in a debate about professionalization. Today peace and conflict is one of the most successful mainstreaming topics on the development agenda.

After Rwanda the topic was discussed largely as a political issue and then shifted into a tool-based discussion. In recent years a variety of tool-based approaches have been developed. The availability of so many approaches has watered down the concept of peace/conflict sensitivity and PCIA and contributed to a great deal of confusion among actors in international cooperation. However, only a few approaches are comprehensive and also useful for a variety of different actors on all levels of inter-

vention. Important requirements for good approaches are (a) a systematic link between the analysis of the conflict and peacebuilding environment and the implementation of interventions in conflict zones in a systematic step-by-step process, and (b) the combination of a theory of social change and conflict transformation with professional, operational requirements for policy and program planning and implementation.

The discussion long focused on development cooperation and only shifted towards professionalization of the peace field in recent years. It seemed for a while that the development field could learn a lot from the peace field, but the latter has so far been quite resistant to any exchange in the other direction. Many organizations, for example, start the debate about evaluation of peacebuilding interventions from scratch, ignoring many existing research and development practitioner findings and experiences. The same is true for planning. I therefore see the following challenges ahead:

Protecting the Values of Peacebuilding and Moving towards Professionalization

It is important that the essential values and concepts of peacebuilding – the transformation of violent conflicts into peaceful processes and ultimately contributing to social change – remain at the heart of peace work and also include professionalization.

Repoliticization of the Debate

In order to cope with the challenges of working in conflict zones, there is a need to repoliticize the debate around peace/conflict sensitivity (Bush 2005a and 2005b; Paffenholz 2005b and 2005c). Often the available policy concepts are not properly applied as donors find it hard to implement coherent policies in fragile, conflict affected countries. However, peace and conflict are political issues: partner governments turn into conflicting parties and the need to talk to »non-state armed actors« arises as they often control large parts of the country where access is needed to help the affected population. This fosters the need for better cooperation between diplomatic and development actors. Moreover, the entire debate around peace and conflict sensitivity needs to be better linked to the international debate among donors within the OECD/DAC on so-called »fragile« or

»least developed countries under stress« (LICUS) as most of these fragile states are also countries affected by violent conflict (OECD 2002; World Bank 2002; Debiel et al. 2005).

From a Tool-Based to a Holistic Peace/Conflict Mainstreaming Approach

As with many development mainstreaming topics, the peace/conflict lens was introduced by many agencies with a tool-based strategy. It is now time to engage in a more holistic mainstreaming approach that involves all dimensions and aims at systematic »peace and conflict sensitive program management.«

Assessing the Impact on the Overall Peace Process

It is difficult to assess the impact of a single intervention on the macro peace process because it is difficult to isolate the precise contribution of a particular intervention from other contributions if something changes in the peace process. In evaluation research this is called the attribution gap. However, this is not a problem specific to peacebuilding since the same attribution problems occur in development cooperation or policy evaluation. Therefore I am opting for both more modesty in the debate on assessing the impact of peacebuilding interventions on the macro peacebuilding process (for example, not setting too ambitious goals), and more investment in serious social science research on assessing impacts. In the future, there will be a growing need for evaluation oriented peace research such as developing standard result chains for certain recurring peacebuilding interventions or accompanying impact assessment studies covering an entire country program.

Investment in the Planning of Interventions in Conflict Areas

One of the main challenges when evaluating peacebuilding interventions and development programmes in conflict affected areas is investment in a good planning process. This concerns donors and implementing agencies alike. Donors should therefore not only emphasize evaluations of peace programmes or commission separate peace and conflict assessments (PCA) of development and other programmes, but would be well-advised to also include funds for training courses in participatory planning for their peace partner organizations and provide their development

partners with integrated peace and conflict planning procedures. This also applies to policy interventions.

Strengthening Training and Capacity Building in the South

Although there has been a lot of training around the »Do no harm« approach, much more training, but most of all capacity building is needed, especially in the South. There is a need to establish training partnerships with institutions in the South in order to create ownership and make more use of local knowledge for peace/conflict sensitivity in international cooperation. We need to avoid a North-only agency- and consultant-driven approach to conflict and peacebuilding.

Standardization of Planning and Evaluation Guidelines

A further challenge is to achieve a certain degree of standardization for planning and evaluating peacebuilding interventions, as well as aid interventions in conflict zones on similar lines to the OECD criteria for the evaluation of development programmes. It would not make sense for every donor and organization to start developing their own guidelines. It would be far more beneficial if this process were carried out by researchers, governmental and non-governmental actors from the North, South and East in the context of an international network. Such a network – which could also provide knowledge sharing and joint learning – should be located at an independent institution that is not a donor or a donor-dependent international NGO. A start could be the establishment of a web-based joint learning platform to share information and experiences of the practice of planning and evaluation, linking conflict, peacebuilding and international cooperation, as well as professionalization in peacebuilding.

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