Abstract

This article presents the newly developed ‘Aid for Peace’ approach. This approach facilitates the planning and evaluation of peacebuilding, development and humanitarian policies and programmes, in latent or manifest violent conflict or in the aftermath of a violent conflict or war. The ‘Aid for Peace’ framework consists of four parts that focus on the needs for peacebuilding in a given country or area. It tailors the intervention’s objectives and activities towards these needs through identifying its peacebuilding relevance, and develops or evaluates peace and conflict results chains and indicators for understanding its effects on conflict and peacebuilding. Based on the same methodological framework, the approach provides separate guides for planning and evaluating peace and aid policies and programmes.

Introduction

Two-thirds of the countries in the world today are either suffering from political tensions and violent conflict or are in the aftermath of a destructive conflict or war. Local and international organisations are working in these zones of violent conflict to reduce the suffering of populations by helping to re-establish security and monitor human rights, as they support efforts to build or rebuild democratic and economic structures essential for lasting peace.

Over the past couple of years researchers and practitioners have been developing policy instruments, operational approaches and tools for better working for and in conflict zones. While the aid community has become much more aware of the need to ‘do no harm’ (Anderson 1999) by seeking to avoid unintended negative effects of aid interventions on conflict dynamics, the peace community has started examining ways of evaluating peace efforts in order to contribute more effectively to peacebuilding. Until now, however, we have not seen a comprehensive approach that enables both the aid and the peace community to plan and evaluate systematically – and thus improve – their policies and programmes in situations of political tension and violent conflict or in the aftermath of war. The ‘Aid for Peace’ approach aims to fill this gap and contribute to debates that:

- Link development, peace and conflict, e.g. that make development and humanitarian interventions more sensitive towards the conflict situation and support them in contributing directly or indirectly to peacebuilding;
- Enhance the effectiveness and the impact of peacebuilding work by introducing planning and evaluation approaches. These can contribute to increased awareness
Many of the standard criteria for evaluating aid programmes are fully applicable in conflict zones, though others need to be modified and there are areas where new ones can be created to address conflict situations which are often more complex.

Not wanting to reinvent the wheel, the ‘Aid for Peace’ approach acknowledges and builds upon important contributions to these debates. They include: the ground-breaking work of Mary Anderson and her team on local capacities for peace known as ‘do no harm’ (Anderson 1999); Peter Uvin’s work on conflict and development (1998, 2002); Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, or PCIA (Reychler 1996, 1998; Bush 1998; Leonhardt 2002; Berghof Handbook 2002, 2005); ‘conflict sensitivity’ (de la Haye & Denayer 2003); peacebuilding evaluation (Smith 2003; Church & Shouldice 2002, 2003; Anderson & Olson 2003; Paffenholz 2005); research on policy evaluation (Rossi et al 1999; Patton 1997; Kusek & Rist 2004), and the many interesting local contributions of Southern organisations working in the field (Galama & van Tongeren 2002).

Existing planning and assessment methods and tools of the development and humanitarian community, or those generated by research on policy evaluation, are useful for assessing projects, programmes and policies in conflict zones. Two kinds of reservations about their use and adaptation are often reported. Peace organisations often argue that violent conflict and peacebuilding are such complex phenomena that these standard methods are not appropriate for planning and evaluating peace interventions. Aid organisations argue that their methods and tools are internationally accepted and that the logic of planning and evaluation is the same in conflict and non-conflict zones, thus negating the need to adapt them. In taking a closer look at internationally agreed planning procedures and criteria for planning and evaluating development interventions (OECD/DAC web; ALNAP web Kusek & Rist 2004), it seems that neither argument is totally right or totally wrong. Many of the standard criteria for evaluating aid programmes are fully applicable in conflict zones; others need to be modified, however, and there are areas where new ones can be created to address conflict situations which are often more complex. The ‘Aid for Peace’ approach takes these findings into consideration and has adapted and enriched these standard procedures and criteria.

The article has the following structure: the second section starts with a historical overview of the PCIA debate to contextualise the development of the approach; the third introduces the approach with its framework, process and different applications, and offers short examples from field-testing; the fourth offers more examples and takes a closer look at the evaluation of peacebuilding interventions. The concluding section summarises the usefulness of the ‘Aid for Peace’ approach and explores future challenges in the debates on the linkages between peacebuilding and development and on the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions.

We define ‘peacebuilding’ as 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 outbreaks of violent conflicts or to transform violent conflicts into situations of lasting peace. ‘Peacebuilding interventions’ in this article refer to policies and programmes that have peacebuilding as a primary goal, such as mediation or facilitation efforts, peace journalism and education training or the empowerment of civil society peace groups.

‘Aid interventions’ here refer to those that aim to contribute to the development of a country or region or to reduce human suffering and are taking place in areas affected by violent conflict. Their primary objectives are not peacebuilding. The development perspective of conflict and peacebuilding starts from the premise that conflict is not simply an aberration, but a normal and inescapable fact of life and a challenge of development. Thus the goal of peacebuilding from a development perspective is to help prevent outbreaks of violent conflict or the recurrence of violent conflict by working in a peace/conflict-sensitive manner, which implies at least to ‘do no harm’ or, preferably, also contribute directly or indirectly to peacebuilding.

In order to understand the entire debate on linking conflict, peacebuilding and aid, we take a closer look into the history of the PCIA debate.

A Short History of The PCIA Debate

A Political Issue: The Debate after Rwanda

The ‘Aid for Peace’ approach evolved from the debate about PCIA (Reychler 1996, 1998; Bush 1998; Leonhardt 2002; Berghof Handbook 2002, 2005). The international community started this debate in the mid-1990s after the tragic events of the genocide in Rwanda which led to increasing international awareness of the role of development cooperation in conflict and peacebuilding. Research conducted in the aftermath of events in Rwanda as well as in other conflict-affected countries showed clearly that aid can do harm in conflict situations and inadvertently impact negatively on the conflict situation. However, aid can also contribute directly or indirectly to peacebuilding, assuming that development actors are aware of this potential (Uvin 1998, Anderson 1999).

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, the launch of the PCIA debate focused on why the genocide was not prevented and what could be done to prevent another Rwanda in the future. This prompted the advent of political early warning systems (Krummenacher & Schmeidl 2001). Interestingly, during the last decade the discourse has taken another direction. Most ‘peace/conflict sensitive’ approaches today are tool-based, designed for programme implementation, and often neglect the political dimension of development and their influence on the politics of war and peace. However, programme designers should be aware that the debate about peace and conflict is not about technical tools but is a highly political issue.

At the policy level of development (in contrast to the more technical implementation level of programmes), the bilateral and multilateral donors, and some international and national advocacy NGOs have adopted different strategies such as conditionality, negotiated benchmarks, ‘bottom lines’, policy dialogue and international networks against war economies, in order to influence conflict parties by linking aid to conflict and peacebuilding (Uvin 1998; OECD 2001; Wood 2004):
‘Conditionality’ implies defining certain conditions under which aid will be provided. The hardest types of conditionality are sanctions, such as those which the European Union targets against Zimbabwe, which aim to reduce or halt aid in order to influence the conflict situation in a positive way. ‘Negotiated benchmarks’ are the opposite, offering incentives such as the provision of more aid if certain conditions in the country improve. The donor community in Nepal has, for example, made clear to the authorities that budgetary support to the government will be increased if parliament is reinstalled. ‘Bottom lines’ define the end of donor engagement, threatening disengagement ‘if the situation doesn’t improve before this date’. Through ‘policy dialogue’, usually with a partner government, donors hope to be able to influence policies in a constructive direction. International networks against war economies, like the Kimberly process which outlaws ‘blood’ diamonds, try to remove the resource base of the conflicting parties by controlling their markets.

A number of critical issues challenge actors at the policy level of development:

- How to deal with the government of a country that is both a partner in development and a party to the conflict;
- How to engage with so-called ‘non-state armed actors’ that often control major parts of the country where the affected population needs access to aid;
- How to reach for joint donor strategies where different policies and interests divide the donor community;
- How to achieve more linkages between diplomatic and development actors;
- And from where to get the expertise and capacity to analyse and manage all these critical issues.

From a Tool-based Approach to Mainstreaming:
The Operational Level of the Debate

Partly as a reaction to these political challenges in conflict-affected areas, many donors and agencies place greater emphasis on conflict-and-peace-sensitive operational programming. The aid conflict-and-peace expert community has a common understanding that there are three choices (Goodhand 2001):

- Working around conflict: conflict is seen as a negative risk factor that is to be avoided;
- Working in conflict: actors have a certain awareness that development can influence conflict and try to avoid negative effects on the conflict situation;
- Working on conflict: actors are also aware that development can contribute to peacebuilding; they apply a conflict/peace-sensitive approach to development that includes proactive peacebuilding.

A variety of peace/conflict sensitive approaches exist under labels such as ‘conflict sensitivity’, ‘do no harm’ or PCIA (Paffenholz 2005b). Several international NGOs and donor agencies have adapted these approaches to their operational procedures and are training their staff and partners accordingly. The issue of conflict-and-peace-sensitive aid has successfully entered the mainstream agenda of development donors and agencies in much the same way as gender or environment. Most donor agencies and bigger implementing agencies, meanwhile, have individual advisors or teams working on issues of conflict, peace and development. A major obstacle to mainstreaming of the conflict/peace lens into development is the lack of capacity for supporting these processes, especially at the local level, since the focus thus far has been largely on headquarters and international experts (Paffenholz 2005c).
Current Trends: Matured PCIA Approaches towards Improved Peacebuilding Effectiveness

At present the debate about conflict, peace and development moves in different directions. First, many organisations have replaced the term PCIA with ‘conflict-sensitive development’ or similar terms because the concept was watered down by terminological confusions. Second, some concepts developed earlier have matured into comprehensive, step-by-step approaches (Bush 2003; Paffenholz 2005b) and the ‘do no harm’ approach has been widely applied, primarily by NGOs working in conflict-affected areas. Third, donors, researchers and implementing agencies have started to reflect on the effectiveness and impact of peace interventions stimulating new thinking and practice on how to evaluate peace interventions (Smith 2003; Church & Shouldice 2002, 2003; Anderson & Olson 2003; Paffenholz 2005; Paffenholz & Reychler forthcoming). This has also shifted the debate in the direction of peace organisations. The last decade has seen a tremendous increase in peacebuilding interventions, primarily through development agencies which have recognised the links between peace, conflict and development. In contrast, peace organisations have generally fallen short in acknowledging the conflict/peace-development linkage and are so far not profiting from the experience of the development community. Moreover, no common approach had been developed that could be useful for both the aid and the peace community.

Introducing the ‘Aid for Peace’ Approach

Evolution and Objectives

The development of the ‘Aid for Peace’ approach started in 1996 under the label of ‘Conflict Impact Assessment Systems’ or CIAS (Reychler 1996) with the primary objective of providing an assessment framework for interventions at the macro policy level. CIAS was further developed for additional use for peace and aid programmes through field-testing in cooperation with bilateral and multilateral donors and agencies from 2000-2004 (Paffenholz 2005b).

The ‘Aid for Peace’ approach offers a systematic approach that links the analysis with the implementation. The approach can be used by a variety of actors, such as local and international, governmental and non-governmental, peace and aid donors, agencies and communities, and for policies and programmes. Based on the same methodological framework, a variety of applications have been developed for different purposes (planning, monitoring, evaluation), levels of intervention (policy or programme) and different development sectors.

The underlying purpose of applying the ‘Aid for Peace’ approach to aid programmes and policies is to: ensure that the intervention will not have unintended negative effects on the conflict dynamics; increase the intervention’s contribution to peacebuilding; reduce the risks the intervention will encounter in a situation of violent conflict; and embed these activities in standard aid planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures.

‘Aid for Peace’ is useful to apply to peace policies and programmes in order to: ensure the relevance of the intervention to peacebuilding; improve the effects of the intervention on
the peacebuilding outcomes and impact; avoid unintended conflict risks; and contribute to the development of systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures for peace interventions.

The ‘Aid for Peace’ framework consists of four parts (Figure 1) which analyse the peacebuilding needs in a given country, area or region; assesses the peacebuilding relevance and the conflict risks of the intervention and assesses or anticipates the expected or manifest effects of the intervention on the conflict dynamics and the peacebuilding process.

**Part 1: Analysing the Peacebuilding Needs**

The analysis of the peacebuilding needs in a particular country or area is the basis upon which the parts of the analytical framework are built. The peacebuilding needs are assessed in four consecutive steps.

**Step 1: Analysing the conflict-and-peace environment**

The objective in the first step is to analyse both the conflict dynamics and the peacebuilding process of a country or area. The analysis can be made on the macro, sectoral or micro level. For programmes which address a particular aid sector, an analysis of the specific conflicts and peace-related factors in the sector are needed. For example, we conducted an assessment of a development programme in Sri Lanka focusing on employment creation in supporting small- and medium-scale enterprise (SME) development. When we conducted the conflict-and-peace assessment, the programme had not yet started, but the initial programme planning had been finalised. We first conducted a macro conflict-and-peace analysis of the situation in Sri Lanka and then an analysis of the conflicts, tensions and peacebuilding potential in those districts where the programme was to be implemented. Local research teams carried out the two studies. We then discussed the results with the stakeholders in a participatory workshop and conducted further field assessments with the implementing agency, the local researchers and the international experts.

There are many methods for analysing conflict dynamics and the peace process. In general it is up to the actors who conduct or facilitate the ‘Aid for Peace’ process to choose the appropriate methods. In any case, some essential variables must be analysed: the parties of the conflict, the issues and root causes of the conflict, the conflict escalating factors, and...
and the peacebuilding potential. The conflict-and-peace processes analysis also needs to integrate a gender ‘lens’ (Woroniuk 2001).

**Step 2: Anticipating new developments**

As the situation in a conflict zone is subject to rapid change, it is necessary to anticipate possible changes and developments in the conflict dynamics and the peace process. This understanding helps intervening actors to adapt their interventions flexibly to new situations and enhances the capacity to react in a more systematic way. A variety of tools exist; an effective example is ‘scenario building’ (Schwartz 1991; Wack 1995).

In the SME programme in Sri Lanka, we also developed different scenarios for the near future to prepare the programme for possible new developments (peace processes lead to a more suitable environment for business, for instance) and a worst-case scenario (violence escalates in programme area). By discussing these different scenarios during the workshop we sought to prepare the participants for risks and opportunities they might face.

**Step 3: Identifying peacebuilding deficiencies – clarifying the vision for peace**

To identify prevailing peacebuilding deficiencies, one has to define the kind of peace one wants to achieve, specify the conditions that enhance the peacebuilding process, and compare current reality with this envisaged peace situation. Without a transparent definition and vision of the peace one wants to build, it is difficult to conduct an effective analysis of the peacebuilding deficiencies and needs in order to be able to define strategies for interventions (Boulding 2000; Dugan 2000, Fast and Neufeldt 2005). In most cases, both intervening and local actors in the conflict countries assume that everybody knows what peace they all want, and the definition and vision are often only implicit. This step is useful because it acknowledges that values, objectives and visions are often based on different cultural, religious and theoretical backgrounds that need to be discussed, made transparent and agreed to for the intervention (Lederach 2005). Defining peace is not simply a research exercise – it is also a political issue.

To specify the conditions which enhance peacebuilding, one can access different sources and procedures. For an overall policy analysis, one uses research results. To build peace, different peacebuilding blocks are necessary and mutually reinforcing (Lederach 1998; Reychler 2002). For a sectoral analysis, international norms and standards in the respective sector are used (e.g. ideal media, human rights practices or water supplies) and compared to the real situation (e.g. real situation of the media, human rights practices or water supplies in a given country).

For aid sector analysis we first identify the deficiencies in the peacebuilding process. For instance, we ask what is needed to achieve peace in Sri Lanka in general and what are the specific peacebuilding needs in the districts where the SME programme is intended to operate. Then the peacebuilding needs in the respective sectors are identified. For instance, what is needed to achieve peace-and conflict-sensitive SME development in the districts. The latter is done by identifying the needs in the SME sector in general (necessary information usually provided by a sector needs analysis) and checking them for their peace validity in line with the findings of the general analysis of the peacebuilding deficiencies (information provided by the conflict-and-peace analysis).
Step 4: Identifying and specifying the peacebuilding needs

After the peacebuilding deficiencies have been analysed, we specify the short-, medium- and long-term needs for peacebuilding. Several needs may be targeted at the same time. However, depending on leverage, experience, organisational expertise and country specifics, it is necessary to set clear priorities for responding to particular needs.

The peacebuilding needs that will be addressed by an intervention form the basis for defining or assessing the intervention’s goals, strategies and later activities. In our Sri Lanka example, the integration of the SME development with conflict-and-peace analysis led to the result that the inclusion of the different ethnic, language and religious groups into all activities of SME development was agreed to be the major peacebuilding need in the SME sector in combination with promoting a business culture of ‘learning to work together’.

Part 2: Assessing the Peacebuilding Relevance

The aim is to assess whether the overall direction of a planned or ongoing intervention corresponds to the country’s peacebuilding needs as mapped in the peacebuilding deficiency and needs analysis. The peacebuilding relevance assessment links the analysis to the implementation and defines or assesses the viability of the intervention’s goals – whether it is moving in the right direction. This is a unique methodological step that is not matched in other approaches. They tend to skip the relevance question and move too quickly to assessing the effectiveness or the impact of a programme, rather than finding out first whether the intervention is relevant at all. In the planning phase the relevance assessment makes the future intervention more targeted; in the evaluation phase, it judges the relevance of ongoing interventions and suggests ways to improve the relevance for peacebuilding.

A relevance assessment compares the objectives and main activities of a planned or existing intervention with the identified peacebuilding needs and examines how consistent they are with those needs. This is done with the help of a relevance scale (exemplified in the annex to Paffenholz 2005b). Finally, a relevance assessment also acknowledges other actors’ past and present activities and incorporates the lessons learned in the design of the intervention. This is done with the help of a survey about other actor’s previous and current interventions in the same sector.

During the stakeholder workshop for the Sri Lanka SME programme, the stakeholders jointly defined subsidiary goals to incorporate the peacebuilding needs and thus enhance the peacebuilding relevance. Specific guidelines for the selection of partners and beneficiaries were added to the implementation plan.

Part 3: Assessing the Conflict Risks

The objective of this assessment is to identify the existing problems and risks the intervention faces in zones of violent conflict. To assess the conflict risks, one can use checklists (Bush 2003; Paffenholz & Reychler forthcoming). They all raise questions about the security situation, the political and administrative climate, and the relationship between stakeholders of the intervention and the parties to the conflict.

In Sri Lanka, we analysed the potential risks for every district based on the conflict/tension analysis and compared them with our checklist. During the development of the action plan (see below), the stakeholders developed recommendations in order to reduce these risks. They realised that some of the risks, like the escalation of violence, could not be
influenced by the programme proactively, but they could plan how to deal with such a situation when it arose.

**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 on the conflict-and-peace situation - what kind of effects can be expected and are taking or have taken place as a consequence of the intervention in the immediate and wider conflict-and-peace situation? For a proper assessment of peace and conflict effects, several following preconditions need to be in place.

A peacebuilding baseline study which allows for a before-and-after comparison must be conducted before the intervention. Once the peacebuilding needs have been identified, the peacebuilding baseline study provides more details about the situation of, for example, the different ethnic and religious groups in the Sri Lankan districts and their involvement into the business sector. The peacebuilding baseline study can also be integrated into a standard development feasibility study or needs assessment. Where a peacebuilding baseline study has not been conducted, evaluators have to work with an assumed before-and-after comparison using other tools such as checklists (Bush 2004 or ‘do no harm’), or assessing the perceptions of the involved stakeholders and the wider constituency about changes (Paffenholz 2005a; Paffenholz & Reychler forthcoming).

Moreover, the stakeholders must agree about results chains and indicators during the planning phase, because they facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes and impact of programmes and policies. A set of standard indicators already exists in the field of development cooperation. Peace research is just beginning to reflect about providing a set of general indicators (Church & Shouldice 2002, 2003; Anderson & Olson 2003; Smith 2003, Fast and Neufeldt 2005).

For planning new interventions we recommend developing hypotheses with the help of results chains that create causal links between the activities of the intervention and the conflict-and-peace variables. This can be done with the help of participatory planning methods like ‘Action Evaluation’ (Rothman 2003) and checklists, and the use of the findings of peace research. However, peace research has not yet yielded a great variety of ready-made tools. In consequence, we recommend that stakeholders develop their own results chains (Paffenholz 2005a).

During the SME programme in Sri Lanka, the assessment team created a list of possible negative and positive effects on the conflict-and-peace situation. Instead of giving recommendations, the stakeholders jointly developed an action plan by checking all planned implementation activities for peace/conflict sensitivity and identified additional activities; notably a conflict-and-peace-sensitive SME needs assessment in the districts, the development of guidelines for partner selection and training, and capacity building for partner organisations. Also discussed was a local support structure to advance the mainstreaming process in order to strengthen local capacities and limit the support from international experts. We recommend such a process also for existing interventions where no hypothesis and indicators have been generated during planning.
The ‘Aid for Peace’ Process

The ‘Aid for Peace’ approach requires a participatory implementation process that is focused on the needs of the stakeholders and owners. Good preparation is essential. Stakeholders and owners should jointly identify and agree an implementation plan for adopting the approach. A good process design combines surveys or short studies with field assessment and – most importantly – participatory planning and assessment methods involving all the stakeholders and owners from start to finish. Planning a new intervention mainly takes place in a workshop, but only after a peacebuilding baseline study is conducted. For assessing existing interventions, participatory workshops are best combined with field research. Assessments are conducted both at headquarters and in the field. Most of the studies and surveys are best commissioned before the field phase. Transparency about the process is required at all times, and both headquarters and field offices therefore need to be updated regularly about the results. For aid interventions, the different steps of the approach are best integrated into standard planning or evaluation procedures (Paffenholz & Reychler forthcoming).

Applying the Aid for Peace Approach

‘Aid for Peace’ in Peace Interventions

The approach offers a guide how to plan and evaluate peace programmes and policies as well a special guide for macro peace processes monitoring:

Planning peace interventions: This guide assists the user in planning peace policies or programmes in a systematic way, leading to the adoption of an implementation plan and a monitoring system.

Figure 2: The Application of the ‘Aid for Peace’ Approach in Peace Interventions
Evaluating peace interventions: This guide facilitates understanding of the preconditions for evaluations, and shows how to conduct an evaluation with the help of a good process and the respective criteria, methods and tools.

Monitoring and assessment of the macro peace process: The user gets to know how to assess macro peace processes in a systematic way and to establish a monitoring system for the overall peace process. This application suits multilateral actors or a consortium of international actors who wish to monitor a given peace process so as to reach for joint strategies.

‘Aid for Peace’ in Aid Interventions

The approach offers a guide of how to plan and evaluate aid programmes and policies with a conflict-and-peace perspective.

Separate ‘conflict-and-peace’ assessment: This assessment adds a conflict-and-peace perspective to the design of an aid intervention in order to make it more targeted to peacebuilding and to avoid risk and negative effects.

‘Aid for Peace’ integrated with standard aid planning: In contrast to the foregoing assessment, this guide is for organisations that want to integrate the conflict-and-peace lens directly with their planning instead of making separate assessments for peace and conflict. The user understands how to integrate the ‘Aid for Peace’ framework into the project cycle management (PCM), an important planning tool used by many aid agencies.

‘Aid for Peace’ integrated with standard aid evaluation: For organisations planning to conduct or commission a development or humanitarian evaluation in a situation of violent conflict or its aftermath, the user learns to integrate the conflict-and-peace lens directly with standard evaluations in line with OECD criteria and Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Affairs (ALNAP) guidelines. It enriches these internationally agreed evaluation criteria, methods and tools with the conflict-and-peace dimension based on the ‘Aid for Peace’ framework.

Figure 3: The Application of the ‘Aid for Peace’ Approach in Aid Interventions
Examples from Field-testing: The Evaluation of Peacebuilding Interventions

To better illustrate the practical use of the ‘Aid for Peace’ approach, we share some of results of our field-testing in evaluating peace programmes (see also Paffenholz 2005c) between 2000 and 2005 in Somalia, Burundi, Angola, the Congo region, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Palestine, Afghanistan and for two global peace funds. Combining evaluation and peace research and international experiences in development and peacebuilding evaluations with our own field testing, we merged our ‘Aid for Peace’ framework with additional evaluation criteria, resulting in the following criteria and guidelines:

Evaluating Peacebuilding Relevance

The relevance criterion is used to assess the significance of the intervention for peacebuilding: is the intervention meaningful for peacebuilding; do the objectives and essential activities correspond with the needs of the peace process; have the right actors been influenced; and has the intervention acknowledged interventions by other actors, taking their successes and failures into account in the planning and implementation?

For the evaluation methods, see Analysing the Peacebuilding Needs and Assessing the Peacebuilding Relevance above.

For a peace programme in the Horn of Africa, the evaluators and the implementing organisation decided during a stakeholder workshop to conduct a relevance assessment as a joint learning exercise. Stakeholders promptly reached common understanding on the root causes of the conflict, their vision for peacebuilding and why they were addressing certain goals. They also accepted that not all the project activities were relevant to peacebuilding. They had assumed beforehand that peace journalism training for newspaper journalists was needed, yet a baseline study would have shown that most of the journalists lacked basic journalism skills and that the main media were radio stations. As a consequence, they agreed to develop training courses in line with the immediate needs for peacebuilding during the second phase of the project – first in cooperation with a media training institution to provide basic journalism skills and then peace education training for radio journalists and their editors.

Evaluating Peacebuilding Effectiveness

This criterion is used to identify the immediate results of the intervention (outcomes). It asks: what process of change has the intervention initiated in its immediate peacebuilding environment; has the project involved the relevant actors; and have the partners and beneficiaries been able to launch their own peace initiatives?

The evaluation methods involve a before-and-after comparison and checking the results chains with indicators. The information from the baseline study is compared with the results chains and their indicators, or data with information collected in workshops, interviews with stakeholders or in public opinion polls assessing perceptions of stakeholders.

Experience in the field shows that assessing outcomes is not easy because most programmes neither conduct a prior peacebuilding baseline study, nor develop results chains and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Thus the basic preconditions for assessing outcomes are not met. Most organisations are not even aware of the advantages of a proper planning process.
that creates the preconditions for monitoring and evaluating. While most may have monitoring systems in place, they are mainly focused on reporting outputs; for instance, some describe the training courses they have conducted and thus reduce monitoring to activity reports.

The organisation which offered journalism peace education aimed to change the attitudes of conflicting parties by training journalists to avoid stereotyped reporting. For assessing the output, it was sufficient to check the activity reports that showed the number of courses conducted. For assessing the outcome or ‘peacebuilding effectiveness’, we needed to know whether the journalists actually used the reporting skills learned in the training. We conducted a content analysis of the newspapers before and after the training. As this had not been planned, a rapid appraisal of a small sample of articles was made in cooperation with a journalist training institution. The finding was that the style of reporting in most articles had not changed. When we presented these results to the stakeholders, they jointly decided to introduce changes in the next phase: training courses for editors and journalists (radio and newspapers) and additional activities for monitoring outcomes, including content analysis training.

**Evaluating Impact on the Macro Peacebuilding Environment**

This criterion is used to evaluate the impact the intervention has had on the larger conflict-and-peace environment (what Anderson and Olson 2003 call *peace writ large*) and to isolate it from other influences. It asks: have processes and initiatives been instigated which have had an effect upon the macro peace process?

Assessing impact is the most difficult task in evaluation research and practice. This is because, first, most peace organisations have not developed results chains with indicators or conducted a peacebuilding baseline study at the beginning of the intervention; second, the peacebuilding community has yet to offer a set of standardised indicators; third, assessing the impact of an intervention on the macro peace process often requires longer-term and costly assessment tools and processes that are not effective in a short-term intervention; and finally, to attribute changes in the macro peace process to a specific programme or policy is difficult because other factors may account for them. In evaluation research and practice this is called ‘the attribution gap’ (Rossi et al 1999 Ch. 7).

An example of the impact of international support on the Palestinian areas of Gaza and the West Bank is provided by the research project of the Institute for Development Studies of the University of Geneva (available at www.unige.ch/iued/new/palestine/). Their comprehensive approach for assessing the impact of aid investigates the living conditions of the affected populations twice a year with the help of public opinion polls. The reports provide important insights into the requirements of the population and the impact of aid in the conflict situation. The donor organisations in turn use the data and analysis to tailor their programmes towards the needs of the population. A donor consortium finances the project. This example shows that evaluating macro peacebuilding impact is possible, but it requires solid social science research, needs to take place over a longer period of time and is only cost-effective when a number of actors collaborate.

**Evaluating Sustainability for Long-term Peacebuilding**

This criterion is used to evaluate whether the intervention can make a contribution to long-term peacebuilding: which steps are being taken to create institutions for peacebuilding; have short-term peacebuilding interventions included measures for a transition to institution-building; has a hand-over strategy been developed for local partners or institutions?
The evaluation involves the assessment of changes in structures or institutions, including the effectiveness of such changes, and of the hand-over. Project documents are studied and workshops and interviews are held with key stakeholders.

Experience shows that assessing sustainability is a crucial criterion for peacebuilding, almost comparable to a success indicator. This is not simply a lesson learned from good practice in development. From peace research we also know that peace processes are long-term and thus need long-term engagement (Lederach 1996; Paffenholz 2003). This long-term engagement can be achieved only through the commitment of an organisation in the field or a strategy to sustain the intervention’s results after it ends. The Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project (Anderson & Olson 2003) found that if local peace actors had been supported in creating their own structures for peacebuilding, this could be seen as an indicator of success for peace interventions.

Evaluating the Degree of Participation and Ownership

This criterion questions whether the relevant actors have been involved in the intervention’s planning and implementation, and whether local and national capacities for peacebuilding have been created in this way.

The ‘do-no-harm’ and RPP questions are also raised here, and gender criteria are invoked: how have local peace capacities been supported in project planning and implementation; have local stakeholders been supported to develop their own structures and initiatives; have those involved been selected according to the criteria of inclusiveness, inter-group fairness and gender?

In our experience, the degree of participation and gender sensitivity becomes apparent during the discussion about the evaluation process that eventually leads to the development of the terms of reference. Usually organisations that have a participatory culture will involve all the right actors and try to ensure that enough time will be given to the evaluation to involve both stakeholders and owners. Participation in itself is not a neutral and ‘good’ objective; it also requires representation. The ‘do no harm’ checklist is a useful tool for assessing the conflict sensitivity in participation. In an evaluation in Sri Lanka, local people took an active part in decision-making, but they were from only one side of the conflict.

Evaluating Coordination and Coherence

These criteria are used in the light of the interventions of other actors, since success in peacebuilding can be achieved only if coherence with other interventions is assured (Reychler & Paffenholz 2001, Ch. 5; Nan 2005). They raise the following questions: are the peacebuilding actors in the same country working towards the same goals and objectives; have the different activities been planned and implemented coherently; and has cooperation between the peacebuilding donors and organisations been institutionalised?

The different peacebuilding actors’ strategies, activities and cooperation structures are assessed and compared. Tools for the evaluation are surveys, group discussions and interviews.

From peace research we know that coordinated responses to the challenges of peacebuilding in war-torn societies are much more effective than the activities of a single
actor. However, often international actors in a conflict country have opposing interests that hinder coherent approaches, implementing agencies compete for funding, or are simply too overwhelmed by their task loads to find time to work together. We have found that donor agencies often have good coordination mechanisms in place, such as the Donor Peace Support Group in Sri Lanka, the Peace Support Group in Nepal or the Somalia Aid Coordination Body. However, the degree of coordination on the ground is often overlooked, and strategic coordination for coherent approaches seems weak. Another phenomenon surfaced repeatedly: new interventions or processes invested little time in finding out what went wrong in the previous peace process and what other actors did to solve the problems.

**Evaluating Efficiency**

This criterion is used to assess how efficiently the programme has deployed its personnel and financial resources for achieving its goals and objectives. It asks: how efficiently have the financial resources been used and over which period; how efficient is the management of the project; and has the management considered the conflict situation in the light of the ‘do-no-harm’ criteria?

Our experience was that evaluating the efficiency of peace interventions is the same for any other type of intervention. However, peacebuilding evaluators are often not familiar with evaluating efficiency. It is therefore useful to have someone on the evaluation team with the requisite knowledge to evaluate efficiency; often a donor or agency representative can play this role.

**Conclusions and Future Challenges**

In this article we looked back at the evolution of the debate around ‘conflict sensitivity’ and PCIA and highlighted the lack of a comprehensive approach that enables both the aid and the peace communities to plan and evaluate systematically policies and programmes in situations of political tension and violent conflict or in the aftermath of war. In presenting our approach we have shown that a unified framework is not only possible, but also a useful starting point for all actors as it links the analysis of the conflict and peacebuilding environment with the implementation of interventions in conflict zones in a systematic, step-by-step process. It also links the core of peace research (a theory of social change) with operational requirements and provides methods and tools to assess or anticipate conflict-related risks as well as effects (outcomes and impact) by introducing conflict-and-peace results chains and indicators as well as other tools.

The ‘Aid for Peace’ approach builds on a wealth of research and practitioner experiences from the peace, development and humanitarian as well as the evaluation field. In this way it has contributed to the further development of the two important debates about: a) linking conflict, peace and development; and b) professionalisation in peacebuilding. However there are still a number of challenges ahead:

**Protecting the values of peacebuilding and advancing professionalisation at the same time:** It is important that the essential values and concepts of peacebuilding – in transforming violent conflicts by peaceful means and ultimately contributing to social change – remain at the heart of peace work and include professionalisation.

**Assessing the impact on the overall peace process – modest goals and a bigger role for research:** The difficulty in assessing the impact of a single intervention on the macro
peace process lies in isolating its contribution from other factors of change in the peace process (the ‘attribution gap’). We therefore believe that goals should not be too ambitious in the approaches to assessing macro peacebuilding impact. We foresee a growing need for evaluation-oriented peace research such as developing standard results chains for recurring peacebuilding interventions with accompanying impact assessment studies for entire countries.

**Greater investment in the planning of peacebuilding interventions:** A major challenge in evaluating peacebuilding interventions, for donors and implementing agencies alike, is to arrive at an effective planning process. Donors should not only emphasise the need for evaluations, but also offer funding for training in participatory planning, workshops and peacebuilding baseline studies. Implementing organisations should focus more closely on planning to create the best conditions for internal monitoring and external evaluation.

**Strengthening training and capacity building in the South:** Although there has been extensive training in the ‘do no harm’ approach, much more capacity building is needed, especially in the South. This could take the form of training partnerships with institutions in the South which promote ownership, make greater use of local knowledge for conflict-sensitive development and advance professionalisation in peacebuilding. We need to avoid an exclusively Northern and consultancy-driven approach to peacebuilding.

**Standardisation of planning and evaluation guidelines:** It is not helpful for donors and other actors to develop their own guidelines in isolation. Such a process ideally involves researchers, governments and non-governmental actors from the North, South and East collaborating in an international network overseen by an independent research institution.

**Establishment of a web-based learning platform:** This could offer exchanges of information and experiences in linking conflict, peacebuilding and development and in the professionalisation of peacebuilding.

**Avoiding reinventing the wheel:** We find it surprising that only a few contributions to the debate on evaluating peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development draw on existing research. While it is often argued that peace processes are complex social phenomena which cannot be assessed in the same way as other types of interventions, related issues such as policy evaluation and planning of development and humanitarian aid have generated a substantial body of knowledge that could enrich the debate.

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