

Reflecting on Peace Practice Program
Understanding Cumulative Impacts of Peacebuilding

Issue Paper:

LINKAGES AND CONVERGENCES

We are seeking your feedback & reflections!

This Issue Paper is a working DRAFT.

*As part of our collaborative process,
CDA's Reflecting on Peace Practice Program
welcomes your feedback,
based on your own experience and insights.*

*Please e-mail your thoughts or questions regarding this Issue Paper
by or before **October 1, 2012**
to Chloe Berwind-Dart at cberwind@cdainc.com.*

*Thank you in advance
for your observations and suggestions.*

This document was developed as part of a collaborative learning project directed by CDA. It is part of a collection of documents that should be considered initial and partial findings of the project. These documents are written to allow for the identification of cross-cutting issues and themes across a range of situations. Each Issue Paper represents the views and perspectives of a variety of people at the time when it was written.

These documents do not represent a final product of the project. While these documents may be cited, they remain working documents of a collaborative learning effort. Broad generalizations about the project's findings cannot be made from a single case or Issue Paper.

CDA would like to acknowledge the generosity of the individuals and agencies involved in donating their time, experience and insights for these reports, and for their willingness to share their experiences.

For background information on the collaborative learning process and cumulative impacts, please refer to the *Understanding Cumulative Impacts of Peacebuilding* document on the CDA website by directing your browser to the following pathway:

http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/other/rpp_understandingcumulativeimpactsofpeaceefforts_background_Pdf.pdf

Issue Paper:

LINKAGES AND CONVERGENCES

INTRODUCTION

In its first phase (1999-2003), RPP gained the key insight that the effectiveness of peace initiatives depends to a large degree on their strategic links to the driving factors of the conflict and their linkages to efforts at other levels of society, sectors and constituencies. RPP learned that program impact increased when there were linkages between efforts that stimulate change at the individual/personal level (attitudes, feelings, perceptions, skills, etc.) those promoting change at the socio-political level (societal, institutional, public), and between efforts targeting “more people” (grassroots, broad engagement in the peace process) and efforts targeting “key people” in the conflict.¹ Experience showed, however, that peace programs often were not linked to each other in ways that improved joint effectiveness, and efforts at coordination did not necessarily result in synergies and increased effectiveness.

Most agree that we need to improve our understanding of linkage, and operational methods for linking peacebuilding efforts. What do the RPP cases tell us about what kinds of linkage promote cumulative impacts and how those linkages are forged?

What are linkages and why are they important for cumulative impacts?

A “linkage” is a factor or relationship that connects one thing to another. The cases suggest that these connections or bonds can be:

- Relationships among people (e.g., coalitions, collaboration among peacebuilders, contacts and dialogue across conflict lines);
- Connections or links between different peacebuilding work or interventions; or
- Ties or relationships between different issues or types of change (e.g., attitudes and political action, development and peace).

Linkages can be formal, structured and visible (e.g., the National Peace Accord in South Africa) or informal and less visible. They may involve direct connections between people, as in a formal network or collaboration between different agencies, or may be achieved in the absence of direct coordination, communication or joint planning by peacebuilding agencies.

Linkages facilitate cumulative impacts of peacebuilding efforts by:

- Providing a core coherence to programming that can be seen in shared goals and understandings of the conflict;
- Creating a “density of activity” that can enhance the importance and weight of peacebuilding activities;

¹ See M. Anderson & L. Olson, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2003), http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/confrontingwar_Pdf1.pdf.

- Expanding the reach of peacebuilding and people’s engagement in and ownership of the peace process, often transforming “targets” into “actors.”
- Enhancing the scale of change—connecting fragmented activities to build a critical mass;
- Stimulating collective action among a variety of groups;
- Creating synergies among different work, issues or components of peace work.

What kinds of linkage promote cumulative impacts?

While practitioners agree that linkages are important to effectiveness, there is little clarity about what an effective linkage is. Is linkage the same as relationship, alliance or partnership? Is it broader? In the cases and feedback workshops conducted to date, several kinds of linkage appear to be important for peace efforts to “add up.” The linkages are not mutually exclusive, and where there are cumulative effects, many kinds of linkages seem to be at play.

I. Individual-personal/socio-political

The cases confirmed the findings of the first phase of RPP that linkages between individual-personal change and socio-political change in peacebuilding efforts help them “add up” beyond individual programs. These linkages translate or connect changes in attitudes, skills or conditions of individuals or even large groups to changes in public behavior or norms, or changes in policies or structures.

In northern Cyprus, for example, the people who had been trained in conflict resolution methods and skills in their individual capacity became active in civil society organizations to mobilize mass support for a “yes” vote on the United Nations’ peace plan. In the south, by contrast, “the focus of these activities on producing a mental shift rather than having a political goal” restricted the visibility and effect of the bi-communal activities.

In Mozambique, the Organization for Conflict Resolution (OREC) has provided training for local leaders, including youth groups, women’s associations and sports organizations, and established conflict resolution nuclei in several districts. They have used this base, and their membership in the Electoral Observatory, to play a role in monitoring and defusing post-election violence. Another NGO organized training for demobilized soldiers and subsequently helped them formulate a coordinated strategy for negotiations with the government.

II. Linkages across levels (vertical linkages)

Confronting War found that linking efforts to engage or change “more people” (grassroots/broad engagement) and “key people” approaches enhances impacts on Peace Writ Large. The case evidence in

this phase of RPP supports this finding and further points to three kinds of vertical linkages that appear to help efforts at different levels achieve cumulative impacts:

- Linkages between “tracks” (tracks 1, 2, and 3), especially where peacemaking efforts are ongoing or stalled, and between work at different “levels” of society in a post-agreement peacebuilding environment. Linkages between Track 1 and Track 3 (grassroots) in several cases ensured popular support of and engagement in the peace process and the agreements reached at the Track 1 level.
- Linkages between “peace writ little” and “peace writ large,” and especially between local-level and national processes.
- Linkages between leadership and field-level.

The importance of such linkages is most evident in places where peace processes have stalled—such as Sri Lanka, Israel-Palestine, Mindanao or Cyprus. In all these cases, negative effects or lack of progress was at least partly attributable to *lack of linkages*, often described as a “disconnect” across levels, in particular between Track One (high-level/official or political) efforts and Track 2 and 3 (civil society and grassroots) efforts.

Disconnects between “tracks” of peacemaking and peacebuilding processes

In Cyprus, peacemaking was described as being “conducted in a tight-knit circle, and there was not a great deal of linkage of civil society into that process.” In Sri Lanka, the limited release of information about the negotiation process in 2003, and the lack of a powerful mechanism to take the peace message to the population undermined the peacemaking process, while civil society fell short “in terms of reaching out to community-based organizations and to the grassroots, thereby inadvertently perpetuating a perception of peacemaking as an elite activity.” In Israel-Palestine, people described the peace process as an “exclusively political process” in which much was invested in gaining key political actors’ support, but little in preparing people for the consequences of decisions taken at the top level.

Some patterns have emerged across the cases on what constitutes *effective* linkage in each of these categories:

- *Participation in/interaction between civil society and “Track One” processes.* Direct interaction between Track One and Track Two and Three processes and actors can be effective linkage. In Liberia, the Poverty Reduction Strategy planning process allowed a number of Liberian civil society groups to provide input on important peacebuilding topics; their presence helped put important issues on the PRS agenda. An NGO program that encouraged local dialogue, mediation and technical assistance on land issues connected the grassroots level with county initiatives and national institutions of land management, and lobbied with policy makers. These multiple initiatives and connecting interventions have led to the resolution of several hundred local-level land conflicts, prevented escalation of inter-ethnic tensions and contributed to the advancement of land reform.
- *A national policy framework or structure operating at many levels and providing channels of interaction between them.* The National Peace Accord in South Africa, for example, was a national

structure involving civil society and the full spectrum of political opinion, with national, regional and local structures that were interconnected. In Aceh, it was noted that the BRR, lead agency for rehabilitation and reconstruction in Aceh following the tsunami, was far more effective than its post-conflict homologue, the BRA, because of its strong mandate and institutional support from and connections to the highest levels of government in Indonesia.

- *Public communication and information dissemination about the peace process.* Communication initiatives that broadly made information about the process available and that made people feel like they were a part of the process were important to the process of “adding up” in many of the cases. Shared information and discussion becomes a form of and basis for broad public engagement in the peace process. “Transparency and open public debate,” including television debates and discussions and outreach to the village level, for example, is credited with bringing about acceptance of the UN-mediated settlement plan in northern Cyprus. In South Africa, communication initiatives, including workshops, meetings, and mass communication made people feel they were a part of the process, understood it and had an acknowledged role in it. Organizations such as the Black Sash, which operated at both Tracks One and Three, were “able to communicate the track one processes to the communities” and promote “a broad dissemination of knowledge and consequently a broad ownership of the process” that facilitated acceptance of the results. In several cases, intra-party linkages between the policy level and the field were important to progress in peace processes. In Aceh, for example, the GAM leadership was funded to hold meetings with field commanders and civil society to provide feedback on developments in the negotiations; these meetings provided a forum for these actors, who were excluded from the negotiations, to feel that their perspectives were incorporated into the negotiations. This linkage enhanced GAM’s ability to deliver on its commitments in the negotiations.

“[In Aceh], prenegotiations, negotiations and the resulting MOU might have remained only a vision of the elite had the AMM [Aceh Monitoring Mission] not provided a stabilizing presence, supervised implementation of the security arrangements, disseminated information to the middle and bottom levels of the pyramid through Timsos and provided a forum for dialogue and dispute resolution.”

- *Convergence of work on similar issues at different levels.* The cases suggest that different initiatives to address the same issue in different ways, carried out at different levels with different constituencies converged to have cumulative impact, even when there was no coordination. For example, in Northern Ireland, contacts and relationships built by the Catholic clergy provided a foundation for the British and Irish governments to make contact with the Republicans, while civil society groups began to prepare the ground for this step; many different kinds of peace initiatives at different levels aimed strategically at similar results converged. In Mozambique, as direct negotiations became likely, the Catholic and Protestant churches used homilies, sermons, and songs to educate and mobilize the population; as negotiations progressed, they worked at the community level to prepare people for peace through training and mobilizing of a group of “social integrators” who would provide education, broker local ceasefires and defuse community tensions.

III. *Horizontal linkages*

Horizontal linkages across peace efforts in different sectors, constituencies or issues enhance the cumulative impacts of peace initiatives. Three kinds of horizontal linkages seem to be important based on the evidence to date:

- *Coalitions/Movements.* People from different groups form coalitions to advocate for change/peace, based on shared goals, common interests, or a shared vision. The broad coalitions that ousted Marcos and Estrada in the Philippines, the 2006 People’s Movement in Nepal (against the king) and the 2003 movement in northern Cyprus under the banner of “This Country is Ours” all brought together disparate civil society and political groups for a common, concrete and achievable goal. Many of these coalitions have involved civil society (NGO—both peace-focused and not), trade unions, business and political actors. Many of these coalitions have been useful for short-term, specific goals (such as a nonviolent election) but often do not last once the specific goal is reached, because they have been formed around a “negative unity” (agreement on what the groups are AGAINST). Nonetheless, in several situations, a “latent” ability and commitment to (re)mobilize the coalition is seen to exist when the need exists.

“Latent” coalitions

In the Philippines, the coalition that came together to mobilize against Marcos then became a loose and dormant structure for sixteen years until they came together again to oust Estrada from office. South African local peace committees were in some cases less effective when they met regularly, but members mobilized for action when there was a threat of violence. Similarly, civil society in Kenya mobilized quickly to respond to post-election violence in Kenya in 2008.

- *Collaboration/coordination toward a common goal.* Collaboration and coordination among agencies working toward a shared purpose often, but not always, led to linkage. In Burundi, civil society and the media worked in mutual reinforcing ways: civil society served as a source of information or pressure on the state, and the media served to transmit and amplify the message. Civil society and media put pressure on relevant actors to develop proposals for an election law to bring the political transition to an end. Informational meetings were organized, a network was developed to advocate for legislation to the political class, and the Citizens’ Electoral Education Program—a collaborative endeavor between civil society and the media—was established that trained electoral observers, monitored the electoral code of conduct and documented and reported voter registration irregularities. In Abkhazia, donor-driven coordination of all *outsiders* who came in to facilitate projects across all levels minimized competition and led to long-term cooperation and some breakthroughs in linking Peace Writ Little to Peace Writ Large.

Not all networks, however, lead to effective linkages. In southern Thailand, for example, although agencies are working toward a common goal, the influence of donors creating a competitive environment among civil society (Track 2 and 3) actors and the lack of initiatives to map who is doing what in different communities has undermined accumulation of their efforts, as each CSO works on its own particular issue, with isolated impact. Similarly, in Aceh, while the broad peace goal is shared, more specific shorter-term objectives are not; this has led to a lack of synergy in efforts, where each organization is working individually.

- *Convergence: multiple initiatives on the same issue in different domains.* Initiatives focusing on different dimensions of the same issue in different sectors, domains and constituencies. Thus, for example, in Northern Ireland, Fair Employment legislation, trade unions, confrontation of discrimination in the workplace, development of integrated education and ecumenical activities

by some churches converged to facilitate progress on an important driving factor of the conflict there. In Aceh, the mediation process intervened at the political level, but was linked closely to the Aceh Monitoring Mission's mandate and activities in the security domain, as well as dissemination of information through. In Burundi, the role of civil society and media organizations working on different initiatives, with different constituencies, at different levels, converged in their common goal of promoting "shared spaces of expression and communication" and played a key role in supporting the transition. Studio Ijambo radio covered the Arusha peace process, while the United Nations led a number of awareness-raising activities through local NGOs and the Catholic and Episcopal churches developed sensitization programs on tolerance, justice and dialogue. These activities reinforced public support for the Arusha process, which had strongly been opposed by a segment of society opposed to dialogue with "genocidal groups." And in Nepal, work on grassroots mobilization around land rights (especially among women, who did not have land titles), on tax provisions that indirectly inhibited transfers of title, and on government policy *inter alia*, led to progress on land issues there. And in Cambodia, the demand for a trial did not progress until the genocide education effort helped get issues into the open and preserve evidence.

- *Development, peacebuilding and human rights.* Linkages between development or human rights and peacebuilding work has led in the cases to broadening of engagement in peacebuilding as well as sustained effort. Development activities have been used as a "platform" for an expansion of the agenda into peacebuilding work. In one case, a women's group used the "platform" of a microfinance program to begin talking about the problem of violence against women and to organize a women's peace committee that developed effective strategies to reduce gender-based violence in their communities. Linkages between development and peacebuilding work has helped keep people engaged with peacebuilding; in one case, linkage of work with youth on conflict transformation through youth clubs and work on livelihoods for these youth has helped to sustain impacts and keep youth engaged with peacebuilding issues.

In South Africa, small community organizations established to deal with "bread and butter issues, around water, electricity, school fees" tended to "escalate very quickly into more ideological discussions of the larger ideals." Civil society organizations, such as the Black Sash, assisted these small CSOs, provided training and development assistance, and connected with their discussions. Because of the high level of trust, organizations such as Black Sash was able to communicate the track one process to the communities.

- *Building on the work of others: deepening and broadening engagement.* Even if groups do not cooperate directly, they can have a greater effect if they identify and supplement what has been accomplished by others. When initiatives build on others' gains, either by deepening the level of work or expanding the agenda, work can achieve larger-scale impacts. For example, the Hume-Adams talks in Northern Ireland built on contact made between the clergy and Republicans; the British and Irish governments built on these talks to engage in secret contact with the Republicans themselves. In Mozambique, the church organizations (both international and local) built on humanitarian work to educate about peace and to support the peace process.

IV. International-local linkages

Effective linkages have involved connecting work within a country or at the local level with work on international dimensions (e.g., international advocacy, work with diaspora groups, etc.). International-local linkages have been valuable means for civil society actors to influence people at higher levels. In Somalia, networks of doctors were able to get their voices out with the help of outsiders, who benefitted from the local knowledge and analysis they were able to gain from the linkage. In Myanmar/Burma, connections of civil society organizations with international NGOs to support advocacy with the United States and other international actors created space for discussing policies that affected Myanmar. In some cases (e.g., Haiti), international engagement with local agencies as “full and equal partners,” as occurred between MINUSTAH and the police, enhanced the impacts of the efforts.

How are Linkages Formed? Mechanisms that Appear to Promote Linkages

There are factors that encourage linkages (“*attractors*”), although they are not sufficient in themselves to form the linkages. *Detractors* from linkages include proliferation of groups, competition for funds, ignorance or what others are doing, and government suppression.

I. Conceptual linkage

When groups come to understand how their efforts might be “conceptually linked,” even when the groups do not coordinate directly, linkage can occur. Some of the ways ideas have been connected in the cases include:

- *A shared conceptual framework* that allows people to see the conflict or their roles in a new way that permits mobilization of additional energy for peace or to see how disparate efforts can work together to greater effect. In Northern Ireland, a paper analyzing how efforts in various domains relate to each other was instrumental in mitigating competition among peace efforts.
- *A policy framework* for reform, reallocation of resources, or redress of grievances key to the conflict, such as the National Peace Accord, that promotes interaction between the local and the political or national level;
- *A shared vision* for a desired future state that presents a rallying point for multiple actors. Shared values, visions, and principles are only effective, however, when they are not too general or vague; a shared commitment by NGOs in Mindanao, for example, to accountability, governance and human rights has not led to greater linkage because they view these concepts differently and have formed competing networks of organizations.

The more the linkage—whether relationships among people or groups, or synergy between uncoordinated efforts—is centered on key driving factors of the conflict, the more likely it is to be effective.

II. Using the same “platform” for different kinds of work

The cases offered several examples of development programming becoming a “platform” for an expansion of the agenda into peacebuilding work. Similarly, peacebuilding initiatives have sought to integrate development activities into their work with groups as a means of promoting sustainability of the initiatives. It has been noted that the proliferation of groups working in the same community, and the participation by the same people in multiple different “groups” has frequently operated as a detractor from linkage.

III. *Individuals acting as connectors*

Civil society organizations—whether NGOs or religious organizations—and particular individuals have often themselves been a mechanism for linkage, connecting national movements and processes with local communities by providing channels of communication and consultation, as well as developing linked strategies for their work at both levels.

IV. *Networking and coordination*

The cases relate numerous instances in which lack of coordination undermined cumulative impacts: from the existence of uncoordinated, parallel forums for dialogue that led to confusion about the roles of dialogue processes (Aceh) to the lack of effort or vision connecting third parties' efforts to each other (Cyprus) and the lack of coordination amongst efforts in different sectors (e.g. DDR and SSR in Haiti).

Practitioners have emphasized that relationships, collaboration and synergy among diverse agencies and stakeholders pursuing a common goal can be an important mechanisms for linkage. Yet while coordination can help bring about linkage, coordination has failed to lead to linkage at least as often as it has facilitated linkage in the cases. The cases and feedback workshops have emphasized that these linkages cannot be forced, but are more effective when they are “voluntary and incidental,” i.e. grow out of the situation. Yet while they cannot be forced, participants stress the need for “strategic” connections that:

- Respond to a problem, and based on a clear understanding of the issues and how they relate;
- Are addressing key driving factors;
- Are voluntary, in the sense that each member/participant is ready and willing to work with others to resolve the problem;
- Are based on clear objectives—a clear, shared vision;
- Recognize and bring different (and synergistic) skills of agencies to bear on the problem. Many people note the value of mapping peace efforts to overcome isolated efforts.
- Work to develop trust among the members and bridge differences;

In some cases, outside events (e.g., the tsunami in East Timor, or impending EU membership in Cyprus) have triggered opportunities and motivations for establishing connections.

Outstanding Questions/Dilemmas

1. Are linkages across domains (i.e. efforts working in tandem and connected to changes in other socio-political domains) more powerful than linkages within domains? When and how?
2. Civil society linkages and relationships with government have been problematic. In some cases, civil society actors have moved into government, but expected openness to linkages with civil society because of their presence do not materialize. In other cases, civil society and government operate on parallel tracks and do not want to interact. When civil society and government are working toward a common goal, linkage occurs, but when civil society is working on issues with which key people disagree, they are seen as a threat. What are effective linkages between civil society and government? When are they necessary?

3. When and how do widely used approaches create effective linkages?
 - a. Consultation and multi-stakeholder dialogue is often used by agencies to encourage linkage between different levels (policy makers and grassroots). When and how do these dialogues create linkage?
 - b. Networks?
 - c. Civil society advocacy?
4. What is the relationship between building a “critical mass” and linkages?
5. When and how can peace writ little work prepare the ground when no effective macro level peace processes exist?
6. What are the main roadblocks to (or detractors from) linkages across levels, particularly connecting Track 1 with Tracks 2 and 3? How might these be overcome?
7. How can coalitions or networks organized around opposition to a person or other factor be sustained once that factor is removed? Do they need to be—and to what end? Can they be reoriented towards addressing deeper long-term structural issues?
8. None of the mechanisms that appear to encourage linkages are sufficient in themselves, nor are they applicable in every situation. How can we determine when and how to apply different approaches?