

Reflecting on Peace Practice Program
Understanding Cumulative Impacts of Peacebuilding

Issue Paper:

Timing of Work and Progress in Domains

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

This Issue Paper is based upon initial analysis of the cases themselves as well as comparative analysis from the initial consultation process.

Understanding Cumulative Impacts of Peacebuilding ***RPP Issue Paper: Synchronicity and*** ***Timing of Work and Progress in Domains***

In many cases, various initiatives undertaken often over decades, but without a plan or overarching explicit strategy, start to “add up” and enable progress towards peace. The evidence gathered by RPP and summarized in *Confronting War* (2003: 7) pointed to the conclusion that “all of the good peace work being done should be adding up to more than it is. This continues to be true—in other words, peace efforts *do not* eventually “add up” automatically. A number of mechanisms or processes have helped uncoordinated and unplanned activities achieve cumulative impacts. One such mechanism is *parallel forward movement in several socio-political domains*.

A key point is that the domains seem to stand as indicators of possible change or progress from the unacceptable to the acceptable, for some groups within society. Different groups will perceive a default in different domains. Their assessment of whether overall progress or change is possible seems to depend on what they see in the domain(s) they are concerned about. It also appears that there may be several key concerns within a given domain, where progress in one is seen as indicative of possible progress in others, and that this “clumping” of concerns within a domain may vary from situation to situation.

This hypothesis may offer one answer to a dilemma. In a given situation of conflict, particularly over an extended period of time, many issues and problems will be seen as factors in the conflict, in the perception of different groups. Must all these problems be fully resolved to everyone’s complete satisfaction before there can be peace? And how is a contested or divided society to set priorities among the many disputed problems that beset it? If we try to achieve perfection in the area of justice, will we make opponents of those who see political structures or deep-seated prejudice as more crucial issues?

If there is supporting evidence in this area, it may suggest incremental possibilities for progress: how to “tack” between competing priorities while showing incremental progress in all of them, without having to achieve perfection, or focus on one while neglecting the others.

Six Parallel Domains

The cases seem to show that, for different groupings in a conflicted society to believe that there is or could be significant momentum toward peace, there needs to be some form of progress in several domains. There is no hierarchy of domains across cases; in other words, no domain is consistently more important than any other, although, in a given situation, some will be considered higher priority by particular constituencies.

1. **Political:** This domain concerns relations and interactions between contending parties. It includes attitudinal/cultural, behavioral and structural dimensions. In terms of political culture, it includes how politics works, customs regarding how power is held and exercised, as well as prevailing attitudes (mental models) regarding power and politics. In its behavioral dimension, it includes interactions among key contending political actors and elite power holders—communications, relationships and negotiation processes. Structurally, these elements can be enshrined in commitments, such as peace agreements, treaties, political settlements, and constitutions that determine the ‘rules of the game’ – mechanisms for power sharing, elections, and so forth.
2. **Social Fabric:** This domain concerns the degree of social cohesion or disunity/divergence among groups in society. Such dynamics could be intra-group or inter-group. The domain includes changes in acceptance, suspicion/fear and/or perceptions and attitudes of the other, as well as cooperation or tension amongst or within groups, the sense of whether they constitute a society together, or have a possible shared future or common identity.
3. **Policy:** This domain relates to government or collective action to address sources of grievance and/or promote equity. It comprises changes in policies, laws, rules, regulations or institutions that determine how government or other systems manage intergroup relations, diversity issues, exclusion or discrimination, or other key sources of grievance.
4. **Stability/Security.** This domain concerns peoples’ physical safety and psychological sense of security. It may involve progress in dealing with actual or potential threats to security, such as improvements in the role/competence/behavior of the military, improvements in peoples’ perceptions of these institutions or of their safety, more equitable recruitment or inclusion of groups previously excluded from security forces, or reductions in fears of the other side.
5. **Perceptual:** While this domain does not appear to be of the same order as the others, it has emerged as an important domain underpinning change/progress towards peace. Changes in the ways key people see and define the conflict or dilemma and frame or reframe the problem, and in what is “on” or “off” the table (discussable and not) have been important factors in facilitating cumulative impact, in particular when they develop into shared understandings or analyses of the problem or shared definitions or visions of peace. This may also include perceptions about governance, government, political parties and the state.
6. **Economic.** This domain has not been addressed in depth in the cases. It would include changes in prosperity, economic growth, distribution of or access to resources, reductions in rates of poverty on a national or sub-national basis, or changes in relative poverty or wealth across groups (horizontal inequalities), as well as in unemployment rates, especially in specific vulnerable populations or groups associated with potential or actual violence. However, to date, the evidence has suggested that real *progress* in the economic domain may not be necessary to cumulative impacts, but that change in the prospects for or belief in future economic fairness or gain is important.

The domains represent areas of concern or significance for progress toward Peace Writ Large; they do not represent categories of issues or work. Many issues relate to several domains (e.g., reintegration of ex-combatants has security, policy, social fabric and economic dimensions, while transitional justice may have political, social fabric.) In addition, progress (or negative events) in one domain can lead to progress in others.

Example: Burundi

In Burundi, progress occurred in the *political domain* as a variety of efforts brought the main political parties into a negotiation process that resulted in the conclusion of the Arusha Agreement, which itself represented significant change in the political domain as it defined how power was to be held and shared in Burundi. The commitment to integrate the armed forces and police provided significant progress in the *policy domain*, while at the same time, these agreements led to progress in the definition of the problem—specifically, the psychological impact of the Arusha Accords as “a training ground for dialogue, tolerance and a search for compromise” and, with Buyoya’s departure from office in accordance with the Accords, a “culture of respect for commitments.” Civil society and the media played a significant role in opening question for public discussion and in facilitating dialogue and reestablishment of relations across groups in the *social fabric domain*. Progress in the *security domain* was delayed due to the exclusion of significant armed groups from the process, but the conclusion of a general ceasefire (including major rebel groups) paved the way for a general election process that further consolidated peace.

Timing of changes or movement in the different domains

While it does not appear that it is necessary to address any specific domain in all situations, the evidence suggests that lack of movement in or failure to address any domain risks undermining overall progress, in particular where the definition of the problem is contested, and where driving factors of the conflict reside within that domain. In these situations, a little progress in one area may need to be paralleled by a little progress in other areas; if advances in one domain get too far out in front of the others, then the peace process is likely to encounter obstacles. This is because different constituencies have interests or concerns in different domains, and if one domain advances rapidly while another lags significantly behind, then it is likely that an important constituency is also being left behind while another is “winning” the peace.

At the same time, where there is sufficient consensus on what the problem is, it may be possible for one domain to move forward while the others catch up over time.

Examples: Northern Ireland and South Africa

Synchronicity of progress amongst domains occurred in Northern Ireland. The four key initiatives mentioned by people tracked progress in several domains: the Hume-Adams talks “were one of the decisive initiatives in bringing Republicans in from the cold,” i.e. bringing Republicans into the political process, while work with political prisoners, the most important constituency in contributing to change, was instrumental in transforming political relationships and perceptions of the other. Community relations work facilitated change in the social fabric domain, while “the movement of key constituencies toward willingness to consider and discuss the possibility of any solution at all” and the development of a different discourse and “shared analysis, comprehending different viewpoints, and working together to create options” was

critical to progress and was reinforced by Hume's leadership and the work with and by political prisoners.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement, cited as one of the key initiatives contributing to change, changed the nature of the problem and the parameters of the solutions on the table—by enshrining the legitimate interest of the British and Irish governments in the situation and institutionalizing their cooperation on management of the conflict. Fair employment legislation, a policy change, was also cited as important.

In South Africa, a shared definition of the problem existed—the legitimacy of the government in the country. There, the fact that progress in the social fabric and security domains lagged far behind political and economic progress has not undermined the peace process (although now, after many years, it has potential to undermine the peace).

Outstanding Questions/Dilemmas

1. What are domains? How can we discover, in any given situation, whether there are problems grouped in such a way that progress in one may be accepted as evidence that progress is possible in other concerns within the same domain? Are these clumpings of problems or concerns similar or predictable from one situation to another?
2. Is the evidence of the contribution of relatively parallel progress across domains to the achievement of cumulative impacts robust? Is there counter evidence? Does the lack of parallel progress across domains also help explain the unraveling of progress in peace? If some domains fall far behind, does this put a drag on all progress, or can progress in most areas overcome lags in some?
3. Are all the domains equally important? When/how is the economic domain an important factor? Are there domains which are insignificant in a given case --- perhaps clumps of problems which are not contested, or are not driving factors of the conflict?
4. Are there cases where a dramatic breakthrough in one domain that goes far ahead of progress in all other areas spurs progress across other domains? Or is the evidence consistent that small, parallel steps across domains are necessary to bring stable and significant progress?
5. In cases where peace agreements have been reached, does a backward-looking, retrospective lens help identify whether there are domains where progress on one problem is taken to mean that progress is possible on others? When does "unfinished business" undermine the sustainability and advancement of the peace? Can the domains facilitate understanding of what unfinished business needs to be addressed as a priority and what an evolving agenda for peace might be?
6. How is progress in the domains produced? Is there anything to be understood about where, how and by whom peacebuilding work is done in relation to synchronicity of progress?
7. What is the relationship of the domains to the driving factors of the conflict? If the driving factors do not touch a particular domain, does the domain become less relevant for the achievement of progress towards peace?