

REFLECTING ON PEACE PRACTICE (RPP) BASICS

A Resource Manual



CDA

PRACTICAL
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for
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ACTION

About CDA

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) is a non-profit organization committed to improving the effectiveness of those who work internationally to provide humanitarian assistance, engage in peace practice, support sustainable development, and conduct corporate operations in a socially responsible manner.

CDA combines rigorous analysis with pragmatic field-level work to deliver practical lessons and tools to field staff and policymakers alike.

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Suggested Citation

Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2016.

Acknowledgments

The writing of this manual was made possible through funding from UK aid from the UK Government, under a *Programme Partnership Arrangement*.

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How to Use this Resource

Background: Introduction to CDA's Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP)

The work of CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) on peacebuilding effectiveness began in 1999 with the launch of the Reflecting on Peace Practice Program (RPP). RPP posed a simple, albeit complex question: ***What works- and what doesn't work – in peacebuilding?*** RPP worked with hundreds of agencies and individuals, and conducted 26 peacebuilding case studies throughout the world to glean lessons applicable across conflict contexts and develop user-friendly toolkits. The resulting lessons are presented in *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*¹.

This first phase of RPP asked the following questions:

- *What* should we work on? Which of the issues or conflict factors is a priority?
- *Whom* should we work with? Which actors/stakeholders are most important?
- *Why* should we work on that issue with those people? Is the rationale for our chosen approach solid?

Between 2007 and 2009, CDA undertook 16 case studies that investigated the **cumulative impacts of peacebuilding programs** in Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia and Latin America. Findings from these have been published in issue papers, select publications,² and will be synthesized in a book.³

Building on this cumulative impact work, CDA has developed specific approaches to systems thinking and peacebuilding, including ***systemic conflict analysis, systems mapping, and the identification of leverage points for change*** as another means of expanding the peacebuilding effectiveness field.

The experience and lessons gained through the years of RPP's operation are the foundation of CDA's current ***Peacebuilding Effectiveness practice area***, which continues to promote learning in this field, both through *advisory services* and through ongoing ***collaborative learning efforts***.⁴

CDA offers practical answers to the core questions about ***relevance*** and ***effectiveness*** in the peacebuilding field. CDA also continues to advance thinking in the area of monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding initiatives, and works in collaboration with other organizations to advance the field of peacebuilding M&E, including through the Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium.

¹ Anderson and Olson, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*

² Ernstorfer, Chigas, and Vaughan-Lee, "From Little to Large: When does Peacebuilding Add up"

³ For more information, please visit cdacollaborative.org/what-we-do/peacebuilding-effectiveness/

⁴ For more information about CDA's work and/or RPP, please visit: cdacollaborative.org

Relevance and Effectiveness are also two of the key OECD/DAC criteria for peacebuilding evaluation, and defined as follows from a peacebuilding perspective:

Relevance | assesses the extent to which the objectives and activities of the intervention(s) respond to the needs of the peacebuilding process, i.e. whether they address the key driving factors of conflict revealed through a conflict analysis. Relevance links the outcomes of the conflict analysis with the intervention's objectives, although the relevance of the intervention might change over time as circumstances change. Understanding relevance may also involve an assessment of the extent to which an intervention ties in with overall strategies and policy frameworks of the country or external partners. Different conflict groups or actors may have different perspectives on the relevance of an intervention and its results.

Effectiveness | is used to evaluate whether an intervention has met its intended objectives with respect to its immediate peacebuilding environment, or is likely to do so. The key to evaluating effectiveness – and thus the linkage between outputs, outcomes and impacts – is finding out to what degree the envisaged results have been achieved and noting changes that the intervention has initiated or to which it has contributed. [...] It is important to draw a distinction between two kinds of results. One is "programme effectiveness", i.e. to what extent the programme achieved its stated objective. The other is – if the programme met its objectives or goal – the immediate or secondary outcomes as they relate to peacebuilding and conflict dynamics identified in the analysis.

(OECD/DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility -Improving Learning for Results*, 56-57)

CDA builds on this definition of effectiveness by introducing a distinction between program effectiveness and peace effectiveness:

Program Effectiveness | focuses on assessing whether a specific program is achieving its intended goals in an effective manner. This kind of evaluation asks whether the program is fulfilling its goals and is successful on its own terms.

Peace Effectiveness | asks whether, in meeting specific goals, the program makes a contribution to Peace Writ Large and has a positive effect by reducing key driving factors of conflict. This requires assessing changes in the overall environment that may or may not result directly from the program. In most instances this requires identifying the contribution of the specific program to PWL, rather than seeking clear attribution of impacts from discrete peace initiatives. Impacts at the level of PWL typically cannot be achieved by single activities and projects, but rather are cumulative, resulting from many different efforts happening simultaneously, especially when these efforts are deliberately designed to complement one another. Strategic linkages among efforts in a single context are therefore critical. (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects 2013, 28)

CDA has distilled the following key lessons through the various phases of practical learning from RPP:

- I. Peacebuilding programs should be accountable to **Peace Writ Large**;
- II. **Conflict analysis** is crucial. Good conflict analysis should:
 - a. identify **Key Factors** and **Key Actors** vis-à-vis peace/conflict,
 - b. identify the **Relationships** and **Dynamics** among them, and
 - c. clarify **points of possible intervention**.
- III. Analysis must be linked to programming and to Peace Writ Large through a strong **theory of change**;

- IV. Programs must reach the ***Socio-Political Level*** in order to affect Peace Writ Large;
- V. ***"More People"*** work must engage ***"Key People"*** and vice versa;
- VI. It is important to engage the ***hard-to-reach***;
- VII. It is possible to assess the **impact of programs** on Peace Writ Large **IF** they are based on conflict analysis, strong theories of change, and robust program goals

Each of these lessons will be further unpacked and explained in further detail throughout the modules in this resource.

Who Should Use this Resource?

This resource is intended for use by peacebuilding policy makers and practitioners. It is helpful to guide macro-level decision-making on peacebuilding priorities within and across different agencies. It can be used at various levels - to guide the development of new peacebuilding strategies, programs, and projects and to help review existing initiatives.

CDA has also successfully applied RPP tools and approaches for other types of social change programming, as well as for internal strategic planning processes with program teams.

The RPP Basic Resource Manual includes various hints and tips for facilitators, relevant for those seeking practical guidance on how to use the RPP materials in workshop settings, in trainings, working with program teams etc. It also includes practical guidance on how to present the materials, as well as practical examples for workshop settings and work with multi-stakeholder groups.

The resource combines background information with practical how guidance and exercise examples.

**Module One:
Conflict Sensitivity
and Peacebuilding:
Distinction with a
Difference**

Module One: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding: Distinction with a Difference

Over the past twenty years, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding have increasingly become common approach and goal respectively in international assistance. However, the two concepts are often understood and applied interchangeably and in the process not reaching their full potential as they could. It is evident that both conflating and treating them as entirely separate concepts results in confusion and ultimately less than optimal results towards peacebuilding objectives and humanitarian and development initiatives.

This module aims to create **conceptual clarity** between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding by defining and elaborating the difference between the two, clarifying their aims as well as describing how conflict sensitivity could be built upon for peacebuilding outcomes. A clear of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding in program planning and implementation will lead to more intentional and effective outcomes in both areas.

Definitions and Comparisons

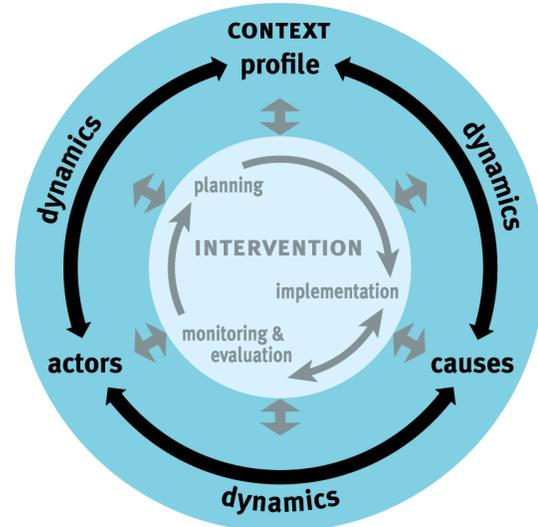
Conflict sensitivity is the ability of an organization to⁵:

1. Understand the context in which it is working, especially the dynamics of relationships between and among groups in that context,
2. Understand how the details of its interventions interact with that context. This includes not only the outcomes of the interventions, but also:
 - a. **Details of its programs** (beneficiaries/participants selection, sites and timings of programs, etc.) inclusion of beneficiaries and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in program planning;
 - b. **Details of its operations** (hiring, procurement, security, etc.);
 - c. **Specifics of its policies** (criteria-setting for both programs and operations); and
3. Act upon this understanding to minimize the negative impacts of its interventions on the context and maximize positive impacts.

A conflict-sensitive approach minimizes the negative and maximizes the positive impacts of any interventions on peace and conflict dynamics. Many organizations work on conflict-sensitivity, and use the DNH approach developed by CDA – both as a tool, a framework, and a ‘*standard*’ for *conflict-sensitivity*.

⁵ Saferworld et al. *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack*

CDA's work on conflict sensitivity began in 1993 with the launch of the Local Capacities for Peace Project, which came to be known as the Do No Harm Program. Over the years, Do No Harm has involved hundreds of aid agencies, and more than 1000 aid practitioners from all over the world in its collaborative learning processes. The resulting lessons are presented in *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*⁶, as well as many other publications and Guides available on the CDA website. Today, "Do No Harm" is relevant in practice as a **principle** and as a **tool** (the DNH Framework), and is used by many practitioners to describe their work on conflict-sensitivity.

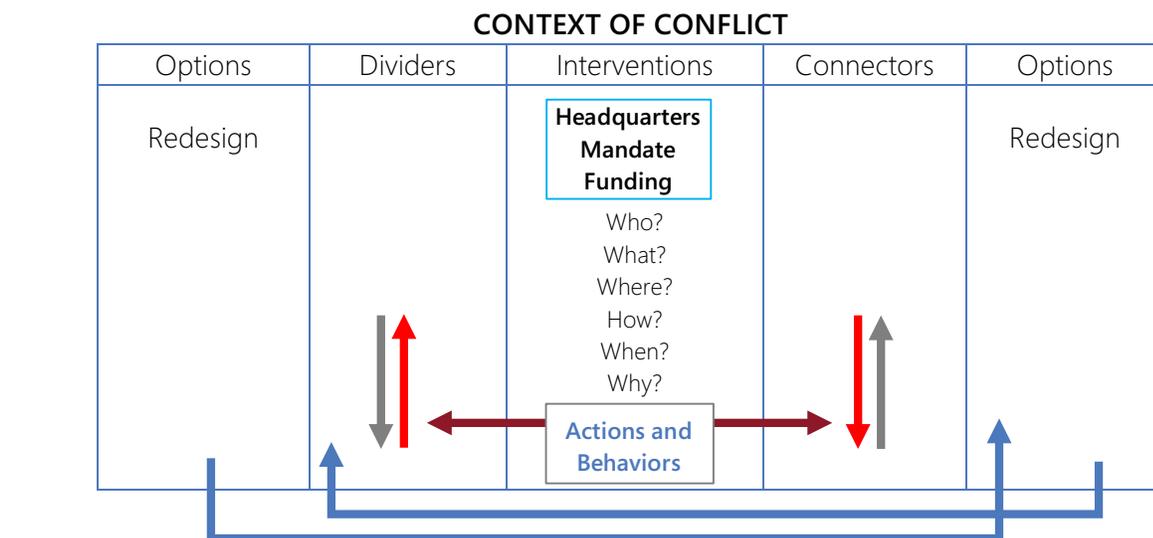


The outer circle represents a conflict analysis of the pre-existing context, organized as profile, actors, causes and their dynamic interaction (Saferworld et al. 2004, chapter 1, diagram 1)

The collaborative learning process that CDA's Do No Harm program went through led to the following **six main concluding lessons**:

1. When an intervention of any kind enters a context, it becomes part of that context;
2. All contexts are characterized by both Dividers and Connectors;
3. All interventions will interact with both Dividers and Connectors, making them better or worse;
4. Interventions interact with Dividers and Connectors through their organizational Actions and the Behavior of staff;
5. The Details of an intervention are the source of its impacts;
6. There are always Options (e.g. for program re-design or doing things differently).

These lessons resulted in the creation of the **DNH framework**:



⁶ Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*

Peacebuilding on the other hand focuses on “consolidating peace in the aftermath of war and violence and preventing a further round of bloodshed”. It refers to “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”⁷ However, over time, the concept of peacebuilding in theory and practice has expanded to include any efforts undertaken at all stages of conflict. For instance, the *OECD DAC Guidelines on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities* include socio-economic development, good governance, justice and security sector reform, reconciliation, and truth and justice activities in the domain of peacebuilding⁸.

Despite the broadening of the definition, at the core of peacebuilding is an explicit intention to “**address the key drivers of conflict and change the conflict dynamics, with particular emphasis on reducing or preventing violence as a means of addressing political, social and economic problems and injustices**”.⁹

Heightened recognition of the reality that most humanitarian and development assistance take place in contexts of existing or potential conflict dynamics and triggers, along with proliferation of tools and frameworks for conflict sensitivity, many organizations have come to assume that conflict-sensitive programming is the same as peacebuilding. Similar to peacebuilding, the concept of conflict-sensitivity has evolved to mean, in addition to minimizing negative impacts and promote positive impacts through our interventions, to include designing initiatives to also address conflict causes. While this is a positive approach and trajectory towards becoming more effective in conflict contexts, conflict-sensitive practices and programming alone will not address conflict drivers or accomplish peacebuilding objectives.

Group Exercise - Distinguish between Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding

Each group gets a pack of cards with the following statements, to identify them under ‘conflict-sensitivity’ or ‘peacebuilding’ (20 minutes):

- Analysis conducted needs to at least provide a good overview of connectors and dividers;
- The objective is to minimize negative impacts, and ideally maximize positive impacts of programming;
- The objective is to engage/address key drivers of violent conflict in the given scenario;
- Analysis conducted needs to reveal structural key drivers of conflict and underlying conflict dynamics;
- All strategies and programs (development, humanitarian etc.) in fragile contexts need to do/ensure this independent of the objective of the program;
- Is multi-dimensional (including political, economic, social, security aspects etc.) and should contribute to Peace Writ Large;
- Measure of Effectiveness: At a minimum, the initiative does not make the situation worse, and ideally makes positive contributions;
- Measure of Effectiveness: Initiative addresses key driving factors of conflict, contributing to Peace Writ Large
- Can provide an entry point for conflict transformation work;

Put out two flip chart pages, one with the heading of ‘Is a feature of conflict-sensitivity’ and the other “Is a feature of Peacebuilding”. Participants are asked to cluster their cards/responses to either one.

⁷ United Nations, “An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping”

⁸ OECD/DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility - Improving Learning for Results*

⁹ Woodrow and Chigas, “A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding”

While strict boundaries between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding may not be entirely helpful, clarity between the two along the parameters used below in the table *“can strengthen both the effectiveness of peacebuilding practice and the ability of development, humanitarian and other programming to minimize negative and maximize positive impacts on conflict”*¹⁰.

Comparison of Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding

Conflict Sensitivity	Peacebuilding
<p>Definition¹¹: Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organization to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ understand the context in which it is operating, particularly intergroup relations, ▪ understand the interactions between its interventions and the context/group relations, and ▪ act upon the understanding of these interactions, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts. 	<p>Definition¹²: Peacebuilding refers to measures designed to consolidate peaceful relations and strengthen viable political, socio-economic, and cultural institutions capable of handling conflict, and to strengthen other mechanisms that will either create or support the necessary conditions for sustained peace.</p>
<p>Main Aim: Work IN the context of conflict to minimize negative and maximize positive impacts of programming (on conflict, but also on other factors).</p>	<p>Main Aim: Work ON conflict, seeking to reduce key drivers of violent conflict and to contribute to Peace Writ Large (the broader societal-level peace).</p>
<p>Applied to Whom/What Programming: All programs, of all types, in all sectors, at all stages of conflict (latent, hot, post-war) must be conflict sensitive, including peacebuilding efforts themselves.</p>	<p>Applied to Whom/What Programming: Peacebuilding programmers are those that articulate goals or objectives aimed at securing peace. Such goals/objectives can be integrated into other programming modes (development, relief) and sectors – or peacebuilding can be a standalone effort.</p>
<p>Required Analysis: Requires an adequate understanding of the conflict (e.g., dividers and connectors analysis) to avoid worsening dividers or weakening connectors; to reduce dividers and support existing connectors.</p>	<p>Required Analysis: Requires a deeper understanding of the key drivers of conflict and dynamics among factors and key actors, in order to ensure program relevance.</p>

¹⁰ Woodrow and Chigas, “A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding”

¹¹ Definition adapted slightly from (Saferworld et al. 2004)

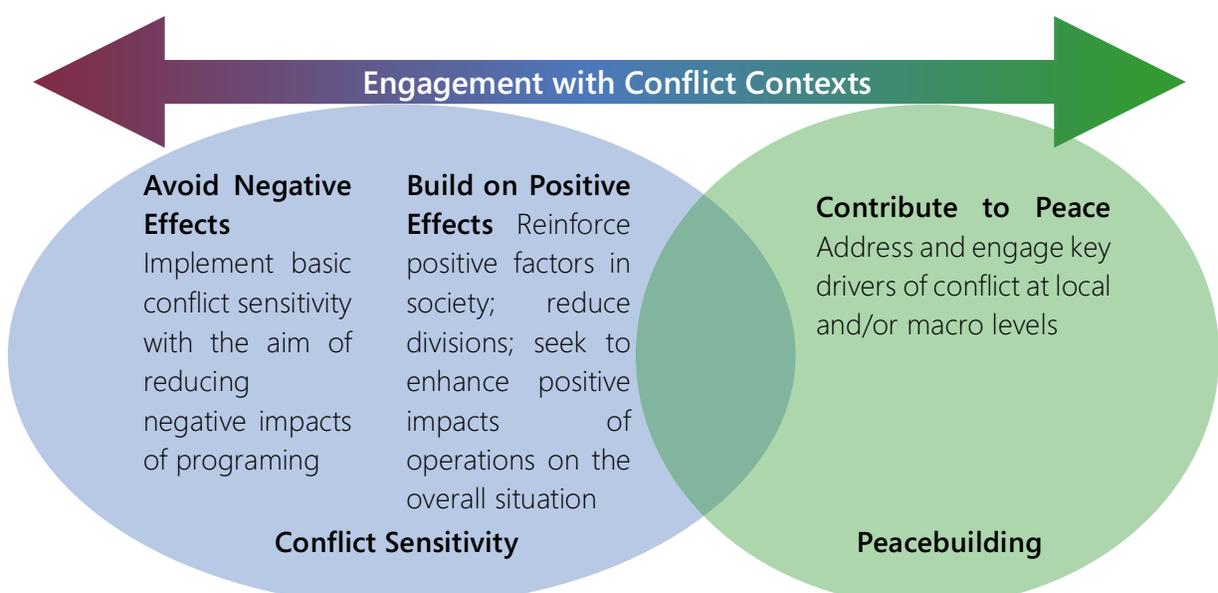
¹² Ibid.

<p>Standard/Measure of Effectiveness: At a minimum, the program/project does not make the conflict worse-and usually also makes a positive contribution.</p>	<p>Standard/Measure of Effectiveness: Program/project reduces the power of key driving factors of conflict, contributing to Peace Writ Large.</p>
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The Conflict Spectrum

Programs working in conflict contexts will always engage with conflict in a variety of ways, even if it is not in their mandate to do so. The application of conflict sensitivity frameworks can help organizations to at least avoid negatively affecting conflict dynamics and begin to work toward generating positive effects.

At this stage, with the understanding of the relationship (distinction and complementarity) between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding it will be useful to look at engagement in conflict contexts as on a *spectrum* (as shown in the diagram below), that build on each other.



Spectrum of engagement with conflict contexts. (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects 2015)

1. Avoiding Negative Effects

At a minimum, engagement in contexts of conflict should seek to avoid exacerbating the conflict. Applying conflict-sensitivity frameworks can assist program staff in identifying how their programs may have negative effects on connectors (local capacities for peace) or dividers (sources of tension), as well as which program adjustments can be made to avoid those effects.

2. Building on Positive Effects

Building on positive effects in a conflict requires close attention to what is already working to bring people together and the ways groups are overcoming their divisions. Strategic

programming choices can help build on existing connectors, or further reduce divisions in contexts of conflict.

3. Contributing to Peace

Programs that intend to contribute to peace must address conflict dynamics directly by strategically planning their interventions to reduce key drivers of conflict and/or build upon key driving factors for peace.

Insight from practice. In Lebanon, an international humanitarian agency brought together its local and international staff from different project locations in a weeklong workshop. Its aim was to assess the negative and positive effects of its current Syria crisis and aid response. An international facilitator facilitated a comprehensive Do no harm analysis of the agency's work in the different project locations. To have a better understanding of the complex conflict scenarios in the different project sites, context-specific actors and stakeholders mappings were conducted. As a result of the DNH analysis, some of the negative effects were assessed and "new" programming options developed. Staff discussed the potential for working on some of the localized conflicts such as housing conflicts between landlords and refugees – hence expanding their work on conflict-sensitivity to more directly trying to address drivers of conflict.

As depicted in the above diagram and elaborated elsewhere in this Manual, while conflict sensitive practices do not automatically result in peacebuilding outcome/s, the measures taken to avoid negative effects and to build on positive effects (conflict sensitivity!) are often one of the first steps organizations take towards developing effective peacebuilding strategies and programs (as elaborated in subsequent modules of this manual). As such, conflict sensitivity could provide the foundation for more deliberate engagement on peacebuilding.

At the same time, many peacebuilding organizations assume that their work is automatically conflict-sensitive. This is not true – peacebuilding programming need to undergo the same level of conflict-sensitivity analysis as any other development or humanitarian programming.

Module Two: Conflict Analysis

Module Two: Conflict Analysis¹³

The conflict analysis module is divided into two sections: **Part I** offers some essential insights and process learning on conflict analysis (its definition, rationale, purpose, the participants in a conflict analysis, and the data collection and interpretation). **Part II** highlights elements of a good conflict analysis and a simple tool from CDA/RPP. *Appendix Four* to this Manual highlights frequently asked questions and answers in relation to conflict analysis, which are particularly useful for program advisers and practitioners facilitating conflict analysis processes with a variety of teams and local partners.

While there is not one (best) way or tool of analyzing a conflict, CDA and the peacebuilding community has learned a lot of what works and what does not in different conflict and working contexts: This manual is guided by these guiding principles of “good conflict analysis practice”¹⁴.

Presentation Note: How to Introduce Conflict Analysis

Depending on the audience, some groups might need more introduction to conflict analysis than others. As part of a planning workshop, most likely, a few introductory remarks can set the stage for an analysis exercise.

Potential points to make—or to draw out of the participants:

- Why is it important to do an analysis?
- What is the difference between CONTEXT analysis and CONFLICT analysis?
- When/how often should we do conflict analysis?
- Where does the information come from for a good conflict analysis? Which perspectives need to be included?

The purpose of doing an analysis is to understand what the conflict is about, so we can figure out how to intervene to change the conflict dynamics, to promote change towards peace. In this sense, conflict analysis is only a tool—it is not an end in itself.

“Analysis is not optional; it is essential and obligatory for peace work”

RPP consultation participant

¹³ CDA thanks Dr. Cordula Reimann, core consultancy and training, for her significant contributions to this Module.

¹⁴ See also GPPAC, *Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines and Procedure*

Conflict Analysis – Part I: Essentials Insights and Process Learning on Conflict Analysis

What is conflict analysis?

Conflict analysis is understood as the practice-oriented analysis of the actors, causes, factors, context and dynamics of a conflict as well as the identification of (possible) entry points for program design and peacebuilding strategies.

This also means that a conflict analysis is never an end in itself: Based on findings from RPP, conflict analysis needs to be one of the first crucial steps in designing a peacebuilding project or program. Conflict analysis gives us clarity on the main actors we want to engage with and the key conflict factors we want to address. It offers crucial information about the likely impact of our intervention on the conflict and peace dynamics.

Why conduct a conflict analysis?

Without a conflict analysis, an organization might promote ill-thought strategies and its intervention could become counterproductive and exacerbate instead of mitigate conflict dynamics. While a conflict analysis is not a guarantee for an effective peacebuilding strategy, the experiences of RPP show that linking analysis with strategy is key to any effective program design in peacebuilding.

For what purpose?

Conflict analysis can be done for very different purposes. And hence there are different ways of using conflict analysis. In practice, some of these purposes may overlap.

Some of the main purposes and ways of using a conflict analysis are listed below:

- Offering a general understanding and assessing the conflict context, conflict issues and main actors engaged in a context and conflict situation;
- Preparing a third-party intervention (for example a reconciliation or dialogue program) by making explicit common and different understandings and perceptions of conflict dynamics and issues explicit;
- Presenting an analytical basis for scenario-building exercises or risk assessments¹⁵;
- Offering a basis for identifying and prioritizing the peacebuilding needs;
- Providing a general understanding about a given conflict and analytical base for awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns on a selected conflict factor such as 'human rights violations against minorities';
- Assessing the potential and actual impact of a project or program on the peace by understanding macro-level conflict dynamics;

¹⁵ Scenario-building exercises and risk assessments are often based on a comprehensive conflict analysis.

- Offering a source of information for “zooming in” on particular analytical questions of the conflict such as the actors, dynamics, needs, and interests;
- Helping to create a common understanding of the main conflict factors and dynamics before developing a joint, multi-donor or “one-government” approach in peacebuilding;
- As a first step in the program design, which helps to identify and prioritize key conflict dynamics, actors and strategic entry-points for a peacebuilding program.

Insight from practice. A political network representing one ethnic minority in Burma/Myanmar brought together different women’s, human rights’ and youth groups to conduct a participatory conflict analysis. The aim of this weeklong workshop was two-fold: first, to create a common understanding of the key conflict factors and dynamics and actors and second, to develop a common strategy and a joint conflict transformation program.

An international facilitator and local facilitator facilitated the process and the key terminology was translated into the local vernacular.

Insight from practice. In Israel/Palestine, an international development agency with a long history of engagement in the region decided to revise its country program and generate a conflict analysis in three steps. As a first step, a conflict analysis workshop was conducted with its local and international program and M&E staff working in different project sites. This workshop was followed by three separate conflict analysis workshops for the partner organizations in Israel, in the West Bank and in the Gaza strip. In the end, the international donor merged the different pieces of analysis to get the most comprehensive analysis capturing the different perspectives and nuances. According to the donor, the facilitation by an international trainer, the translation from Arabic into English and some of the training material in Arabic were crucial for the successful outcome of the entire analysis process in such a highly polarized conflict context.

Depending on the purpose and the prime focus of a conflict analysis, different (participatory) tools of conflict analysis can be used. An overview of some of the most common tools can be found in [Appendix Two](#).

The main focus of this resource is on using conflict analysis as an analytical basis for strategy development and program design.

When and how often to conduct a conflict analysis?

Ideally, a conflict analysis should be conducted as a part of the planning and design of a peacebuilding project or program, and the identified strategy be linked up with the analysis.

A conflict analysis always needs to be updated or revised, especially after radical changes in the conflict context. As part of an assessment or evaluation of a peacebuilding project, an (updated) conflict analysis needs to be undertaken to assess the positive and negative impact of a project or program.

With and for whom are you conducting a conflict analysis?

Depending on the specific purpose of a conflict analysis (as discussed above), different sets of actors can be involved in its generation: A conflict analysis can be commissioned, undertaken and used by a great variety of actors with highly different resources, capacities and political influence such as local and international staff of NGOs, development agencies, human rights and peacebuilding organizations, foreign ministries, research institutes - to name the most predominant ones.

Irrespective of who conducts a conflict analysis or is involved in its generation, good practice is to undertake a conflict analysis in teams or (smaller) groups of people, and involving local partners and participants familiar with the specific context. The outcome of each conflict analysis is highly dependent on who participates in its generation: A conflict analysis as a basis of program design, especially in highly escalated conflicts, will hardly be accepted if local or international staff were not involved in its generation.

In this context, the following questions of participation and ownership need to be clarified:

- What are the selection criteria for the participants (see also below on how to conduct a conflict analysis)? Are women and men, different age - and if relevant in the given context, ethnic, class and caste - groups (equally) represented?
- A conflict analysis does not present a neutral search for the "single truth". Is there a general willingness and openness among all participants to engage in "multiple truths" and to agree to disagree?
- Do we want to conduct a country conflict analysis for a foreign ministry, an influential international donor agency and IGO or a smaller local NGO? Depending on the background of the participants in a conflict analysis process, different analytical capacities, adult learning methodologies and resources have to be taken into account.
- Should a peace practitioner or an academic scholar facilitate the conflict analysis? In some contexts, an academic scholar may be considered more of an impartial outsider. At the same time, he or she might be perceived as too abstract and theoretical lacking the "ground reality" experiences.
- Should there be a local or international facilitator? While this depends on the context, the available resources and capacities (see also below), it generally pays off to have mixed teams of outsiders/international and insiders/local facilitators.
- Once the analysis has been done, who owns it – the organization which organized the conflict analysis workshop, all the participants who gave their input and shared ideas and experiences and/or the facilitator of the workshop – or all of them? What is the process through which the consolidated results of the conflict analysis will be shared with participants and possibly other local partners?

The different questions and points above highlight that the credibility of the conflict analysis will always greatly depend on who is involved in the data collection and the actual analysis. Any good enough conflict analysis should be based on local knowledge and ownership – and may be supported or enriched by feedback from outsiders.

How to conduct a conflict analysis?

Any conflict analysis is not an objective search for the “single truth” about “the conflict”. To avoid (obvious) bias, a conflict analysis should be conducted in a diverse team and ideally conducted with the help of a facilitator.

If the facilitator should be a local or international facilitator, depends on the specific conflict context: In a highly escalating conflict with hardened and polarized positions among stakeholders and participants, outsiders or international facilitators may be best suited to facilitate the process and structure the process around the different perspectives and contributions of the local participants. A local facilitator might be endangered in some conflicts if he or she takes a leading facilitator and highly visible role. At the same time, while one international facilitator may be perceived more objective than a local third-party, another (international) facilitator with little or no knowledge of the cultural setting or the local languages of a conflict region might be perceived too much of an outsider to gain professional credibility and acceptance.

Irrespective if international or local, the facilitator should ideally have excellent facilitation, mediation and inter-cultural communication skills next to a thorough knowledge of conflict analysis and understanding of conflict settings.

Any conflict analysis is an “intervention” in itself: A workshop or training on conflict analysis and, even if carefully planned and conducted, can create conflicts. This speaks to the careful selection of facilitators, participants and timing of a conflict analysis workshop. For a successful conflict analysis exercise or training workshop the Do no Harm (DNH) criteria or principles should be applied to the process. Questions such as the following matter¹⁶:

- Is there any risk involved for (local and international) facilitator/s or the local participants? Can the safety and security for all parties involved be secured during and after the engagement?
- Will the partner organizations be endangered by their participation?
- Do we conduct a conflict analysis only in the headquarters of an organization – but out of safety and security reasons not in the different project sites in the country sites? What are the concrete analytical consequences for our analysis and our work?
- What are topics which are currently “off-limit”, too much of a social or political taboo or – given the selected participants - too delicate to be discussed (or maybe only discussed in bi-lateral conversations)?
- If an analysis is conducted for a governmental organization, is there the intellectual freedom to challenge the status quo and mainstream political thinking? Or might the conflict analysis used as a “carte blanche” or justification for existing (controversial) governmental policies?
- What is the analytical base for our conflict understanding? What is our understanding of the conflict dynamics based on (existing conflict analyses by other agencies, mainstream or social media,

¹⁶ See also GPPAC, *Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines and Procedure*

“official conflict story” promoted by the government or other sources)? Do we have free and unrestricted access to multiple sources of information?

How to gain data and information on the conflict?

There are different methods of collecting and gaining conflict information – some of the main forms of data collection are listed below. The selection of an appropriate data collection mechanism in a given context depends on the analytical skills and capacities of the participants, the available resources, times and the current phase of the conflict.

If the conflict analysis is conducted in a participatory, interactive workshop and the participants represent local and international staff of an international or a local organization, there is usually a rich wealth of knowledge and information on the conflict under discussion. Key will be how to structure, process, prioritize and assess this information and avoid blind spots. The information generated during the conflict analysis workshop analysis may be further supplemented by other methods mentioned below.

If the conflict analysis is not done as a part of a facilitated multi-stakeholder workshop, other methods of data collection could be used, the most frequently ones are listed below¹⁷:

- Key informant/expert interviews with local experts and international professionals having in-depth knowledge and understanding of the local conflict dynamics;
- Existing country conflict analyses by NGOs/INGOs, governments or research institutes, media reports and evaluation reports;
- Focus group discussions with different stakeholders (for example with representatives from „victims groups“, the different diaspora and former fighters) in the conflict to deepen the knowledge of specific conflict issues or dynamics;
- ‘Person-on-the-street’ interviews with randomly chosen members of the general public;
- Select information through social media such as Facebook or twitter to gain additional information on selected conflict issues. However, available information through such sources needs to be very carefully screened and analyzed as to its validity.

To ensure the greatest possible buy-in, it is important that local people or workshop participants who work on or come from a given conflict context conduct “their analysis” There might be critical moments in a conflict or organizations’ daily routine where it might be more effective and strategic that outsiders (e.g. international staff in organizations, a consultant) offer their analysis to kick-start a conversation. This analysis has to be always adapted, redefined and validated by the local people from the area or workshop participants. Analysis from outsiders should not replace the analysis by the organization and its staff.

All forms of data collection raise the question of validation of information, which are discussed at greater length below and in (GPPAC 2015).

¹⁷ See also GPPAC, *Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines and Procedure*

Conflict Analysis Part II: What are Elements of a Good Conflict Analysis & CDA’s Approach

Given the great variety of tools, the question arises what are the key or “must have” characteristics or “nice to have” characteristics of a good conflict analysis.

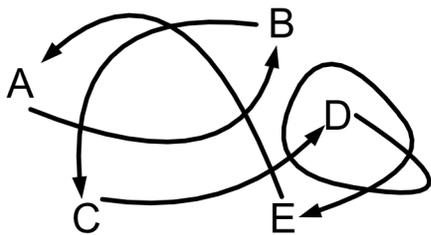
RPP has found that the following characteristics are considered key and “must have” for any conflict analysis:

- Identifying and prioritizing the key driving factors of conflict (KDFs) (and their relationships);
- Identifying main actors and stakeholders;
- Considering regional and international dimensions;
- Understanding the relationships and dynamics between conflict factors and actors, and how they have been evolving over time.

Guiding principles of “good conflict analysis practice”

A Key Driving Factor of Conflict (KDF) | is a factor or a dynamic without which the conflict would not exist or would be significantly different.

Conflict Systems Analysis | Conflict Systems Analysis or ‘Systems Mapping’ emphasizes understanding the systemic dimensions of a conflict contexts by understanding the various inter-connected relationships between conflict factors and actors. CDA has been a thought leader promoting systems conflict analysis with a variety of organizations.



For further reading on conflict systems analysis, please refer to CDA’s systems manual (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects 2016)

This section summarizes the key principles of good conflict analysis practice discussed above:

Guiding Principles	Why?
Participatory process	To increase local ownership and responsibility. To capture as many perspectives of society as possible. To challenge or validate existing assumptions on the conflict.

Inclusive process	To avoid bias and blind spots. To increase local buy-in and ownership.
Ongoing and analysis that is easy to be updated	To reflect changes in the conflict. Only an updated conflict analysis can help to identify and adapt strategic entry-points. To ensure consensus as the conflict evolves. To adapt programming as needed.
Responsiveness to local context	To respect local traditions, languages and realities. To increase local buy-in, ownership and responsibility.
Gender-sensitive approach	To ensure gender equality and prevent gender bias and discrimination. To identify additional and useful information which offers a differentiated understanding of the conflict issues and dynamics and the (different) needs, interests, perceptions and vulnerabilities of women and men.
Conflict-sensitive approach to conflict analysis	To ensure safety and security of participants and facilitators. To avoid escalating conflicts among teams and staff. To increase local ownership.
Information based on baselines	To take into account additional existing (qualitative and quantitative) data on the conflict context.

Three-box-analysis as one tool for a “good enough” conflict analysis

CDA has developed an approach to conflict analysis that complements other tools of conflict analysis and is a good starting point and first step in organizing information and providing the foundation for developing a systems approach to conflict analysis:

The so-called three-box analysis (below) is based on parts of the “Force Field Analysis” and supplemented by an actors' column. The three-box analysis helps to identify and prioritize the factors against peace/for conflict and factors for peace and the main actors and stakeholders.

The main imperative is to keep the process of conflict analysis simple and pragmatic while taking into account the real complexity of the conflict situation and organizational routines.

There are two main steps in applying the three-box-analysis:

Step One - Identify and list:

- Factors supporting conflict;
- Factors supporting peace;
- Key actors: Their behavior, motivations, interests, and constituencies of influence.

<p>Factors for Peace→</p> <p>What are the forces in the situation that exist now that can be built upon to promote movement towards peace?</p> <p>What currently connects people across conflict lines? How do people cooperate?</p> <p>Who exercises leadership for peace and how?</p> <p><i>Note: these are not things you want to exist or that you would like to see—they must be true now.</i></p>	P E A C E	<p>← Factors against Peace/for Conflict</p> <p>What are factors are working against peace or for conflict?</p> <p>What factors, issues or elements are causing conflict and/or dividing people, and how?</p>	<p>Key Actors <i>Main actors and stakeholders.</i></p> <p>Which individuals or groups in the situation are in a position to strongly influence the conflict negatively? Who can decide against peace?</p> <p>Which individuals or groups in the situation are in a position to strongly influence the conflict positively? Who can decide for peace?</p> <p><i>Note: these are not necessarily people who may be program targets/participants, such as women, youth, or religious leaders. We may be interested in engaging with those groups, but they are not always "key" in the situation.</i></p>
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Process Note: Conducting a Three-Box Analysis

Determine, first, the level of analysis you are doing (local community, larger city/town, province, whole country, region, etc.).

Clarify who is providing the information/what it is based on. This issue will depend on who your participants are—local partners, international staff, representatives of multiple organizations, people from the affected communities themselves.

Explain, briefly, the three boxes and the kinds of information you are asking for in each.

Before you start working as a group, nominate a facilitator first.

List all the factors for conflict, for peace and the main actors and stakeholders.

While listing the factors and actors, take into account the guidelines for identifying factors for peace, against peace and actors below.

Tip! What if 'peace' isn't the goal?

In some instances, the context is not seen as one of "war," "conflict," or "peace." For instance, in post-accord or post-election situations, people may think that the country is at peace, relatively speaking. In those situations, it may be necessary to reframe the discussion. One possibility is to start the analysis process by developing ***a vision for the kind of society people want***, in as specific terms as possible, and do a three-box analysis of factors moving toward the vision and holding it back. In one instance, we used the concept of ***"consolidating the peace,"*** asking what it would take to ensure a lasting peace, and in another the challenge was defined as ***"unity and reconciliation."*** The three-box analysis was then performed in relation to that vision.

Step Two - Identifying and prioritizing *key driving factors of conflict* (KDFs)

Reminder: A *key driving factor of conflict* (KDF) is a factor or a dynamic without which the conflict would not exist or would be significantly different.

Guidelines for Identifying Factors for Conflict and for Peace and Actors

- Factors are conflict issues or dynamics that can increase and decrease - in other words, they can be changed.
- Factors are not things. "Land" and "water" are not factors for conflict. "Unequal access" to "unequal distribution of land" might be factors for conflict. Always ask, what makes "land" or "water" a factor of conflict/ against peace? What does what with land or water? These questions can help to be more precise about the conflict factor. The more precise you can be, the better for the analysis.
- Factors are not your preferred solution (in disguise): "Trauma healing" would not be a factor for peace, but "inter-ethnic reconciliation efforts by women" might be. "Traumatization of the population" could be a factor for conflict/against peace.
- "Lack of something"- be it rule of law, employment opportunities, human rights, etc. - is not a factor, but again most likely our favorite solution in disguise. Focus on the factor, not the lack. Ask: what is the underlying problem to which rule of law, or employment or human rights (etc.) would be the answer?
- Factors for peace are not elements or dynamics that you would like to see in the future—they must exist now.
- A factor is not an actor: The "military" is not a factor for conflict, but might be an important actor in a chosen conflict. The "human rights violations committed by the military" could be a factor for conflict
- "Actors and stakeholders" are not necessarily the people who may be your program or project target groups, such as women, youth, or religious leaders. List under actors and stakeholders who are key to the conflict and can influence it positively or negatively.

A good conflict analysis will also look at different dimensions of conflict (or peace):

- Structural dimensions (such as social or political systems and institutions)
- Attitudinal dimensions (perceptions, culture, psychological dimensions)
- Behavioral dimensions (actions taken and by whom).

The "factors against peace/for conflict" help us to identify the so-called "key driving factors of conflict" or often just called **key drivers of conflict (KDF)**. While all factors for conflict might be important, not all of them are KDFs.

To identify a key driving factor, you may find it useful to ask:

- What would happen if you took the factor away? Would the conflict still exist or be very different?
- What makes a (possible) KDF more important than other factors?
- Which of the KDFs is/are the most important ones? Why?

Discuss in the group how you can prioritize the KDFs. You might have to vote! Make sure that you visualize your identified or prioritized KDFs: You may star the KDFs, highlight or underline them on a flipchart (or create a separate list). It is useful to limit yourself to five to six KDFs in order to be able keep the analysis action oriented.

Relationship of conflict analysis with DNH context analysis

Many users of this Manual will be familiar or have heard of the Do no harm (DNH) approach and its divider and connector analysis.

What is the difference between conflict analysis introduced above and the DNH context – Divider and Connector analysis? The main analytical difference is that the context analysis in the DNH understanding is more general and as such does not provide any substantial information about the specific conflict issues, dynamics, actors and stakeholders. Focusing on a Do No Harm analysis may make good sense if the prime focus of a development and aid intervention is conflict-sensitivity and not peacebuilding. Still, many development and aid agencies that work with the DNH approach find it useful to conduct a conflict analysis (in the form of, for example, an actors and stakeholders mapping) to get a more nuanced understanding of the complex conflict context.

A Do No Harm analysis is most useful if conducted in relation to the specific programmatic areas of engagement, embedded in – ideally – a broader macro-level conflict analysis.

Conflict analysis in relation to other types of analysis in conflict contexts

In many conflict-affected or fragile contexts, tools of conflict analysis are just one set of analytical frameworks being used by international donor agencies and (I)NGOs. Often conflict analysis tools are complemented by other types of assessments. An overview of select assessment frameworks is presented in [Appendix Three](#).

Personal or Team Reflection on Conflict Analysis

You may find it useful to ask yourself the following questions:

- In a fragile or conflict-affected context, which tools or frameworks of analysis have you used so far? Any tools of the ones mentioned above? With what success have you used them? What was useful, what was difficult and why?
- Which are your or your organization's preferred or favorite tools of analysis? And why?
- Which tools of conflict analysis have you known or used so far? And with what success have used them? What was challenging and why?
- How have you or your organization conducted a conflict analysis so far? What were the main challenges? What were crucial lessons learned for your personal and organizational learning?
- As we have already discussed, to link analysis with strategy is very challenging for many organizations and agencies. How far have you/has your organization been able to link a conflict analysis (or any other form of assessment) with your strategy and program design? How did you do it in terms of the process involved and the methodology applied? What was particularly useful?

[Appendix Four](#) provides a range of FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions and Encountered Challenges, including corresponding responses.

Module Three: Developing Strategic Program Goals

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What is Strategic Programming?

You have done your conflict analysis – now what? From a peacebuilding perspective, each organization must address the strategic question: ***What is the most effective point of intervention that our organization is well positioned to utilize, in order to influence the dynamics of the conflict system?*** Now that we better understand the conflict, we can determine how to use our particular resources, talents, networks and knowledge to generate as big an effect as possible.



Arrow of crowds. Copyright: Mike Kiev, Stock photo ID: 75272243

Before figuring out what your specific organization might be best positioned to engaged with, based on the findings of the conflict analysis, it is important to ask the ‘bigger picture’ question:

- What are **leverage points**¹⁸ in the conflict system? *“Points of leverage are “places in the system where a small change could lead to a large shift in [the system’s] behavior.”*¹⁹
- Where might positive change be possible in the conflict system?
- Where is positive change already happening – how and why?

Based on the above, an organization needs to ask itself the following questions:

- What can we possibly do to further enhance these positive change that might already exist?
- What negative dynamics need to be stopped?
- What are others already doing? How is that going?
- What are lessons available from past efforts and past ‘failures’?
- What is our organization particularly well placed to take on?
- How can we partner with other local and international partners to increase our impact and reach?

Visioning

A conflict analysis is an excellent starting point for an exercise in developing a joint vision within program teams and local partners about the overall change an engagement intends to achieve in a given context. Visioning asks the bigger picture question about the ‘desired future’ and Peace Writ Large (PWL).

¹⁸ If you want to learn more about identifying leverage points and entry points for programming, please refer to CDA’s work on systems approaches to peacebuilding (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects 2016)

¹⁹ Meadows, *Thinking in Systems*, Part 3, Chapter 6

Peace Writ Large is concerned with the “bigger picture” of a conflict. This “bigger picture” refers to the overall socio-political conditions in a given context. It can involve national level conflict dynamics (or in some contexts, sub-national or regional dynamics).

Being accountable to Peace Writ Large means ensuring that initiatives address *key drivers of conflict* and make a contribution to the 'bigger picture'. This requires an explicit strategy for influencing those drivers, and a way to monitor and evaluate effects beyond the life of the project. It does not mean that all programs should be expected to produce concrete changes at the larger societal level. In fact, many programs are successful at smaller scale interventions, such as operating at the community level, or with small groups of people, thus contributing to 'peace writ little'. The impact of these interventions will not be directly observable at a societal level. However, CDA/RPP has found that many practitioners assume that their programs, because they have solid goals, will somehow lead to or support Peace Writ Large. This is not always the case.

Assessing contribution to Peace Writ Large is difficult, as most peacebuilding programs are discrete efforts aimed at affecting one (often small) piece of the puzzle, and no one project can do everything. Hence, it is important to clarify your organization’s role as you start your engagement:

- Are we best placed to make the changes we are attempting to achieve?
- Do we have the right set of skills?
- Do we have the right local and international partners?
- Is there another organization that is already doing these things? If yes, how can we work with them?

Clarifying our role in the context, and in the changes we wish to create, can help us outline our strategies.

How to Develop Reasonable Program Goals

Program goals represent desired objectives, the *positive change, you want to see, and they are* bounded achievements (one program goal should not attempt to do it all!).

Program Goals are not: your vision statement in disguise – they need to be more precise and achievable. Program goals are steps toward the ultimate vision and macro-level theory of change.

This module will not provide a general introduction to the development of program goals, as there is a wealth of public information available on goal setting, such as SMART Goals (specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic, time-bound).

A few points will be highlighted in relation to strong peacebuilding goals that are particularly important for the purposes of this manual:



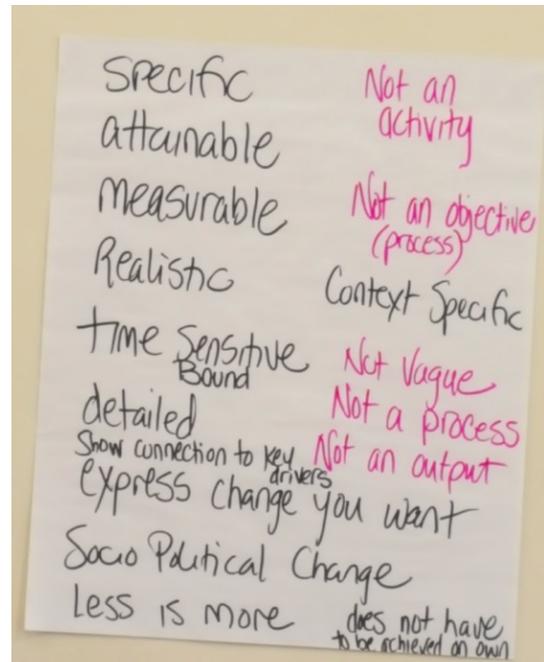
SMART Goals. Source: projectsmart.co.uk/smart-goals.php

1. **Goals need to be articulated at the right level:** Are you articulating a goal for a community level project or program, a goal for a multi-year engagement at national level, or a sector level goal jointly with a variety of other actors and partners? Independent of the level, program goals need to be articulated as a **desired change**—an observable difference in behavior, interactions, institutional performance, group relations, or norms.

2. **Program goals should be clear, realistic, and measurable.** They should have some indication of time-frame. Program goals should be ambitious but achievable. If a program is one step in a larger process, or if it focuses on one element on PWL, this can and should be stated in the goal.

Common goal formulation errors

Planners or program implementers often commit two kinds of “framing errors” in relation to peacebuilding programs.



Characteristics of good program goals. Source: CDA workshop with AFSC, July 2016

The first error we might call “void for vagueness.” Goals are framed in vague, amorphous and largely unattainable ways. For example, the program might aim: “to achieve community harmony and security,” “to strengthen democratic processes,” or “to promote coexistence and tolerance.” These are not measurable; how would we ever know that we were making progress or actually achieving the goal?

Common Goal Formulation Error 1: Many goals are expressed in *broad and vague terms* such as: reconciliation, peaceful coexistence, security, democracy, etc.). To avoid this error, **try to articulate the goal in more specific terms as a desired change**. For example:

Initial goal: “We will achieve peaceful coexistence among the three ethnic groups in the district.”

→ *Reformulated goal:* “By the end of 2016, a consultation mechanism has been established through which leaders of the three ethnic groups in the district regularly consult each other to solve mutual problems peacefully.”

The second error we might call “activities are not a goal” or “process is not our most important product!” Under this error, goals are framed as activities or processes, rather than as changes the program would like to see in the situation. For example, the program might seek: “to encourage the formation of farmers’ associations,” “to bring youth together,” or “to conduct a national debate on peacebuilding challenges.” What desired changes would result from the farmers’ association, youth encounters or a national debate?

Common Goal Formulation Error 2: Goals are expressed as an *activity* (such as training, a dialogue...) or a *process* (such as “people will participate in decision making...”). To avoid this error, **articulate the goal as a desired change at the socio-political level**. For example:

Initial goal: "Women are empowered to participate in the political process in their communities."

→ *Reformulated goal:* "By the end of 2019, a new gender policy is adopted by the national Government that includes clear participation mechanisms for men and women at all levels of society."

RPP has found that programs that formulate peacebuilding goals in these ways are less likely to have impacts on Peace Writ Large. Such programs are also often disconnected from the conflict analysis and therefore "miss the mark". They do not connect to Peace Writ Large. Or, they assume that because their programs are *good programs*, they will in some undefined way support Peace Writ Large. Good programs are not necessarily good *peacebuilding* programs—that is, they may create desirable changes or developments, but these may not be related to peace. As we have come to say, "Doing good is not a peacebuilding strategy!"

By committing one of the goal-framing errors or failing to connect with a conflict analysis, programs fail to consider important elements that are critical for effectiveness and sustainability and neglect to monitor the impact of their programs on the broader peace. In contrast, programs that consider three questions in developing their goals tend to be more effective:

1. Are our goals a **statement of change at the socio-political level**? This is effectively a statement of the way in which the program—by necessity affecting only one piece of the conflict puzzle—will contribute to Peace Writ Large.
2. If we achieve our program goals, how will this contribute to **Peace Writ Large**? What is our Theory of Change?
3. Are these the right goals for this context, that is, ***is our theory of change appropriate***? Will achieving our goals address important drivers of conflict and how?

Even if your engagement focused on achieving change at the individual-personal level, it is important to think through how you might be able to connect your work to others who attempt to work towards socio-political change in a similar area.

Additional questions from an RPP perspective include;

- How was the goal developed? By whom? Have local partners been part of the process?
- Does the whole team work toward the same goal? (Are you sure?)
- For programs in implementation: How well does your goal align with *what you are actually working on*? How likely are activities going to "add up" to goal?
- Is it realistic that the project/program will achieve the goal? How?
- How can the goal be measured? How will you know that the program/project has an impact on the larger context?

Process Note

This exercise needs to be focused on a specific strategy or program. If you are conducting a consultation with a program team you should be working with either an existing program or a prospective program. The hardest part of the exercise is identifying specific desired change. Teams may need coaching to articulate a goal.

Module Four: RPP Matrix – A Tool to Assess Program Strategies

Module Four: RPP Matrix – A Tool to Assess Program Strategies

The RPP Matrix is a four-cell matrix (see below) that permits analysis of program strategies in several dimensions, by looking at the different approaches of peace work, who is being engaged and what type of change is being sought.

We found that all of the activities included in the range of RPP case studies and consultations could be located on this four-cell matrix. For example, dialogue work with key leaders of two warring political factions would most likely be found in the upper right quadrant—as the desired changes are in the Individual/Personal realm (attitudes, perceptions, interpersonal relationships) and engage people who are key to peace. Trauma healing programs offered to the general population would be found in the upper left quadrant, as they promote individual healing among the broad population. A program that mobilized citizens’ groups to exert influence on important issues would be a More People strategy in the Socio-Political realm, the lower left quadrant. On the other hand, efforts to achieve a negotiated agreement among political leaders would be found in the lower right quadrant. Of course, these are just illustrative examples—other peacebuilding program approaches can also be mapped onto the Matrix.

In recent years, RPP has been using this tool to help program designers and implementers to examine their program strategies. Some programs engage in activities in more than one cell, or work in the boundaries between cells. Many programs start in one quadrant, but eventually move to or have impacts in others. However, many effective programs operate within only one cell.

We now have two “columns” showing the two basic programming approaches in terms of who to engage and two “rows” showing the two levels of change promoted. When these rows and columns are combined, we produce a four-cell matrix as shown below:

	More People Strategies	Key People Strategies
Individual / Personal Change	Trauma healing	Leadership dialogue
Socio-Political Change	Mobilization of citizens’ groups	Negotiation of a peace agreement

Presentation Note: Making the Matrix Come Alive

It is important to make sure people understand the quadrants of the Matrix in a concrete way before you present the RPP findings about linkages. The best way to help people understand the matrix is through examples. You can do this in an elicitive way, by giving a short example and asking participants to place it on the matrix and explain why. Following are some examples from the RPP cases and experiences. You can place the first couple of examples on the Matrix yourself and then ask the group to place the additional examples. Or you can ask the participants to place them all. Or you can use examples of the group's own work to illustrate the quadrants.

- Trauma healing with rape victims in DRC. This would fall in the individual-personal/more people box because the program worked with individuals on psychological issues. You could note that the agency doing this program decided later that they were only treating symptoms, and linked up with another organization to organize the victims' organizations and mount an effort to change the policies and behavior of the armed groups. This then took this program into the socio-political realm.
- A dialogue program brought together negotiators, leading parliamentarians and ministers from Georgia and South Ossetia. The dialogue helped catalyze significant changes in the participants, who were important in the negotiation process (at the time). It thus is in the individual-personal/key people quadrant. The program did not reach the socio-political level until the participants act on the new attitudes and ideas. When they developed agreements on return of refugees, for example, and started implementing them, then the program started moving to the socio-political/key people box.
- "Seeds of peace" – a youth camp brought Israeli and Palestinian youth together for summer camp involving camp activities together and conflict resolution training. This would be in the individual-personal/more people category.
- A program reviewed existing human rights promotion institutions, provided infrastructure for the ministry, and placed a project officer to work with the governmental and NGO human rights institutions to develop local human rights materials. This would be in the more people/socio-political realm.
- The Citizen's Constitutional Forum in Fiji was established to generate public participation in the formulation of a new constitution and stimulate inter-ethnic dialogue. It advocated for incorporation of key ideas and principles in the constitution and made an official submission to the Constitutional Review Commission. This program is in the socio-political/more people realm (setting up a process for many people to talk about the constitution and give ideas for the constitution) and is making linkages through advocacy to the socio-political/key people realm.
- A Radio program (or TV program) transmitted peace messages on tolerance and coexistence through a soap opera and talk shows to a very broad audience. This essentially operates at the more people/individual-personal level because the essential aim is to change many people's attitudes about other groups and about dealing with conflict. The program had an 80% viewership among the general population. With this scale, it approached change at the socio-political level, because of the numbers reached, the potential for changing public opinion and, ultimately, social norms.

Whom to Engage

As shown in the table below, RPP found that all activities are based essentially on one of two approaches related to *who* needs to be engaged for peace.

More People Approaches	Key People Approaches
<p>Peace needs support and participation of the general population.</p> <p>Aim to engage increasing numbers of people in actions to promote peace. Practitioners who take this approach believe that peace can be built if many people become active in the process, i.e., if “the people” are broadly involved. This may involve mobilization of larger constituencies or expanding the numbers of people committed to peace</p>	<p>Peace cannot be achieved without involvement of certain people with major influence on the situation.</p> <p>Focus on involving particular people, or groups of people, critical to the continuation or resolution of conflict, due to their power and influence. “Key people” strategies assume that, without the involvement of these individuals/groups, progress cannot be made toward resolving the conflict. Who is “key” depends on the context: they may be political leaders, warlords, or others necessary to a peace agreement. They may be people with broad constituencies. Or they may be key because they are involved in war making (e.g., unemployed young men).</p>

Presentation Note: Clarifying « More » and « Key » People

There are several common misconceptions about “key people” and “more people” that often need clarification. Key people are key to the conflict dynamics, able to decide or strongly influence decisions for or against peace, and/or able to spoil or undermine peace.

NOTE that key is *not*:

- *Elite, government or elected officials.* These are important people for society (perhaps), and may be “key people,” but not necessarily. “Key people” may include some top leadership, but it does not include all, while “more people” may include many elected and government officials, if they do not play a decisive role regarding the how the conflict will evolve. Similarly, “key people” may include middle range and grassroots leaders, or groups of people (such as youth ex-combatants) who may be critical to whether the conflict continues or not.
- *“Key” to the implementation* (getting things done), to the acceptance or to the success of the agency’s program.
- *Victims of conflict.* IDPs and refugees and others who have suffered from a conflict are important target constituencies for assistance. But they are not necessarily key for the conflict.
- *Women and youth.* Women and youth may be an important target beneficiary group for assistance, because they are affected severely by the conflict or because they have an important role to play in reestablishing livelihoods in a post-war situation. But they may not be « key » to what happens in the conflict. This does not make programming for women any less important to undertake; it simply means that the importance of women in society or in recovering from the devastation of war does not automatically make women key to Peace Writ Large.
- *Entire categories of people.* When categories of people are targeted, including women, youth, IDPs, etc., not all in the category are necessarily key. The point is that one can’t categories entire groups as “key” but need to be more specific about which youth, which women, or which IDPs, etc. based on an analysis of the conflict. For example,
 - If a teacher training program in Macedonia develops after school peace education programs that are voluntary for 11-15 year olds, is it working with “key people?” Probably not—even if 11-15-year-old youth are key, the fact that it is voluntary probably means that the youth that are likely to perpetrate violence won’t show up.
 - If a program in Liberia works with ex-combatant youth who have access to weapons and contacts with their command structures, is it working with “key people?” Probably yes...A program for youth who fled the conflict and are now in IDP camps? Maybe...if there is evidence that these youths are being recruited into militias...

Types of Change

As shown in the table below, RPP also found that all programs work for two basic kinds of change: the Individual/Personal change and/or Socio-Political change.

<p>Individual/Personal Change</p> <p>Programs that work at the <i>individual/personal level</i> seek to change the attitudes, values, skills, perceptions or circumstances of <i>individuals</i>, based on the underlying assumption that peace is possible only if the hearts, minds and behavior of individuals are changed. Most dialogue and training programs operate at this level, working with groups of individuals to affect their skills, attitudes, perceptions, ideas and relationships with other individuals.</p>
<p>Socio-Political Change</p> <p>Programs that concentrate at the <i>socio-political level</i> are based on the belief that peace requires changes in socio-political structures and processes, often supporting the creation or reform of institutions that address grievances that fuel conflict, or promoting non-violent modes for handling conflict. Change at this level includes alterations in government policies, legislation, policies, economic structures, ceasefire agreements, constitutions, etc. But it also incorporates changes in social norms, group behavior, and inter-group relationships.</p>

<p>Individual/Personal Change</p>	<p>Healing/recovery</p> <p>Perceptions</p> <p>Attitudes</p> <p>Skills</p> <p>Knowledge</p>
	<p>Behavior</p> <p>Individual relationships</p>
<p>Socio-Political Change</p>	<p>Group behavior/relationships</p> <p>Public opinion</p> <p>Social norms</p>
	<p>Institutional change</p>
	<p>Structural + cultural change</p>

RPP Findings Based on the Matrix

Since 2002, RPP has been working with the Matrix in the field in many places in the world. Through that direct work with practitioners, and through analysis of the original RPP case evidence, we have derived several key learnings.

Does it all “add up?” The importance of linkages

RPP found that work that stays within any one quadrant of the matrix is *not enough* to build momentum for significant change. Any individual program aiming to contribute to peace will have more impact if its effects transfer to other quadrants of the Matrix. Two associated lessons emerged from the case studies and discussion concerning two kinds of linkages that were found to be particularly important for programs to have impact on “Peace Writ Large.”

From Individual/Personal to Socio-Political

First, RPP found that programming that focuses on change at the Individual/Personal level, but that never links or translates into action at the Socio-Political level has *no discernible effect on peace*. Peacebuilding efforts that focus on building relationships and trust across conflict lines, increasing tolerance, and increasing hope that peace is possible, often produce dramatic transformations in attitudes, perceptions and trust. But evidence shows that impacts for the broader peace are more significant if these personal transformations are translated into actions at the Socio-Political level.

What does moving from the Individual/Personal to the Socio-Political look like?

It involves moving, for example, from changes in attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and inter-personal or small group relationships to social action, activities in the public domain, or efforts to affect something that is collective (institutions, public opinion, etc.). When participants in programs adopt new attitudes, form relationships, develop joint activities, undertake trade, do business with each other, form an NGO together, etc., they are operating at the Individual / Personal level. But as individual or small group attitudes, relationships or behavioral change expand and become community or group attitudes, relationships, behaviors or social norms, they reach the Socio-Political level. This could include changes in public opinion, mobilization of large groups to advocate for change in relation to key drivers of conflict, changes in inter-group relations, etc.

Does work at the Socio-Political level likewise need to link with the Individual/Personal level?

Evidence suggests that sometimes, but not always, work is necessary at the Individual/Personal level to ensure that Socio-Political changes are sustained and internalized in the behavior of individuals. The linkage needed from the Socio-Political to the Individual/Personal to impact “Peace Writ Large” is less strong.

Insight from practice. In Cyprus, international agencies conducted intensive conflict resolution training for local activists from both sides of the conflict. These participants formed a permanent working group of trainers and initiated a series of peacebuilding projects aimed at recruiting more participants into bi-communal activities. This spread into a wide-ranging bi-communal movement on the island. In response to a serious incidence of violence that threatened to escalate the conflict, the United Nations planned to cancel a planned bi-communal fair. The group pressed the United Nations not to cancel the event and publicized the event. Four thousand people showed up, and it became a public demonstration of support for the faltering peace process.

Presentation Note: Common misunderstandings about linkages

Working with political leaders does not mean producing socio-political change. The level at which programming occurs is determined by the nature of the activity and the change, not the people you are working with. For instance, if you are working with a political leader (who may have the ability to make changes at the socio-political level), that does not mean the program itself is working at the socio-political level. Many programs assume (falsely): “If I can change the individual perceptions of key leaders, that will lead to change in policies.” Such individual changes may be an important step, but there is no guarantee that they will lead to socio-political change.

Assuming linkages does not mean they will happen. Many programs assume that certain activities in the individual-personal realm will lead to changes in the socio-political realm. For example, they may assume that dialogue or training that results in changes in attitudes, reduction of stereotypes, skills, or development of relationships amongst program participants will lead automatically to changes in the socio-political realm, such as changed inter-group relationships, better negotiation processes, advocacy on key issues related to the conflict, collective support or advocacy for peace processes. The activities are at the individual-personal level, but the ultimate goal is at the socio-political level. We call these linkages « *hope lines* » because the linkage is based on a hope or assumption that the socio-political changes will occur. The challenge here is how to fill in the missing programmatic steps that would link the initial activities to the socio-political goal.

For further reading on linkages, please see (Ernstorfer, Chigas and Vaughan-Lee 2015)

Linkage between More people and Key people

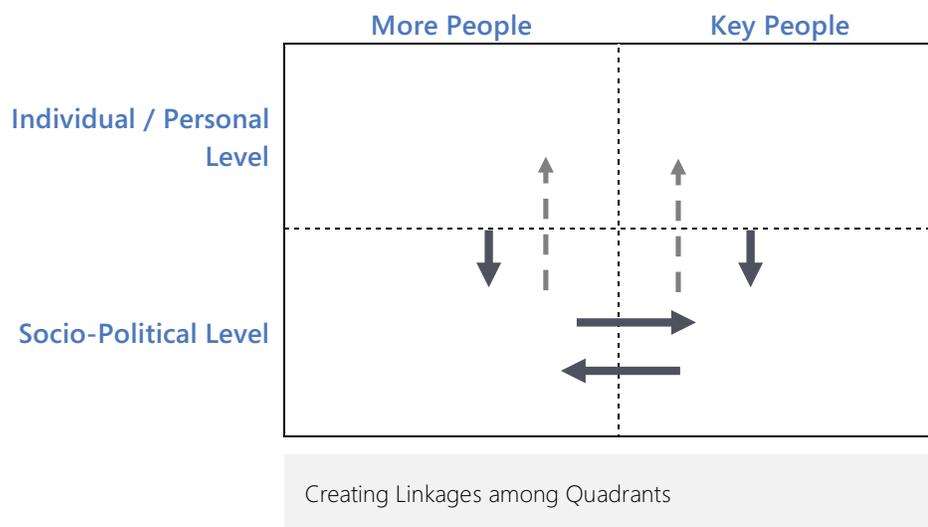
RPP has also found that at the Socio-Political level, approaches that concentrate on More People but do nothing to link to or affect Key People, as well as strategies that focus on Key People but do not include or affect More People, do not “add up” to effective peace work. Activities to engage More People must link, strategically, to activities to engage Key People, and Key People activities must link strategically to activities to engage More People, if they are to be effective in moving toward Peace Writ Large.

Insight from practice. An agency organized a high-level dialogue in the Caucasus among people on the negotiating teams and in influential policy positions in government, academia and business. This resulted in improved communication and relationships in the negotiations and the implementation of some ideas to de-escalate the conflict and facilitate refugee return. However, after several years, while some convergence had been achieved in the dialogue on political resolution, participants claimed they were blocked by public opinion (and a regional power). They urged the program to shift the focus of its work with media to affect More People.

Insight from practice. Multiple efforts funded by international donors to promote bi-communal rapprochement through conflict resolution training workshops, dialogue, and bi-communal study visits and joint projects led to improved relationships, trust and cooperation among thousands of people on Cyprus. These efforts, however, did not link to and had little impact on decision makers at the political level. The work remained for a long time at the More People level and was unable to affect Key People.

Insight from practice. The Citizens' Constitutional Forum in Fiji developed and advocated broad-based recommendations for constitutional reform to address entrenched inequalities between ethnic groups in the country. Many of their ideas were taken up by the government. Realizing that the reforms needed public acceptance to be durable, they linked with other activists to conduct a public education campaign around the country to publicize the new constitutional provisions through a series of workshops, campaigns, and sales of T-shirts and posters. The work focused on Key People but provided a link back to More People.

The arrows in the Matrix below reflect the findings about the importance of transferring impacts among the quadrants. Wherever an organization's particular project is located on this Matrix (in terms of work targets and levels), it needs to plan mechanisms for transferring project effects or extending efforts into other quadrants. Who else needs to be affected, at what level, in order to produce significant change?



These insights do not suggest that a single agency must necessarily conduct programs in all quadrants of the Matrix simultaneously. Most programs do not and cannot do everything at once, however, these linkages could be created by agency's program evolving over time, to move from one quadrant to another or as seen in many cases, opportunities can be developed for cooperation and/or coordination of efforts with other agencies working in different areas in order to magnify impacts. How these connections are best made will, of course, vary from context to context.

Which People? Key people, governments and the “hard to reach”

RPP found that most peace agencies work with people who are comparatively easy to reach – such as children, women, schools, churches, and health workers – because they are, in some way, deemed non-political or because they are often ready to collaborate. As a beginning point, this makes sense, because initiating peace activities in a tense conflict arena is difficult.

Yet RPP found that few agencies move beyond these groups to those forces that are perpetuating or benefiting from the conflict – militia fighters, economic elites, governments and diasporas outside the conflict zone. In addition, in many cases, the NGOs emphasize working with civil society, so that few peace agencies make direct connections to official governmental actors and functions or warring factions. These groups are the “hard to reach.”

RPP’s experience affirmed the importance of working with these “hard to reach” people and groups – especially government and other combatants– because involving them (or dealing with them in a way that ensures that their actions do not undermine peace) is often critical to securing peace and to building or maintaining the systems that sustain it.

It is important to engage the ‘hard to reach’

Many programs operate on certain biases. They

- Engage with the “easy to reach” (those who want to work with us);
- Work with those seen as non-political, willing to cooperate, less committed to violence;
- Focus on doing “good” vs. stopping “bad” (e.g., participatory community development, inter-ethnic dialogue, etc.) and do not deal with dynamics and people that promote or perpetuate violent conflict and/or fragility.

Therefore, it is critical for peacebuilders to ask themselves the following questions:

- What groups are systematically left out of peacebuilding efforts?
- Who is the peacebuilding community avoiding?
- Which groups might have a negative effect on peace efforts, and could undermine fragile gains?
- Who (if anyone!) has access to those groups?

Illustrative Example: Ex-Combatant Youth Program

Process Note

It is useful to go through the exercise of analyzing a program using the Matrix in a group exercise before participants work on their own programs. You can either use the example described below, or, if you are familiar with one of the participants' programs, prepare one flip chart with a large « activities/changes » chart like the one below. Prepare another flip chart with a large matrix on it. Follow the directions for the exercise below, either using this example (youth ex-combatant program) or a program example from the participants that is relatively simple. Record the responses on the flip charts.

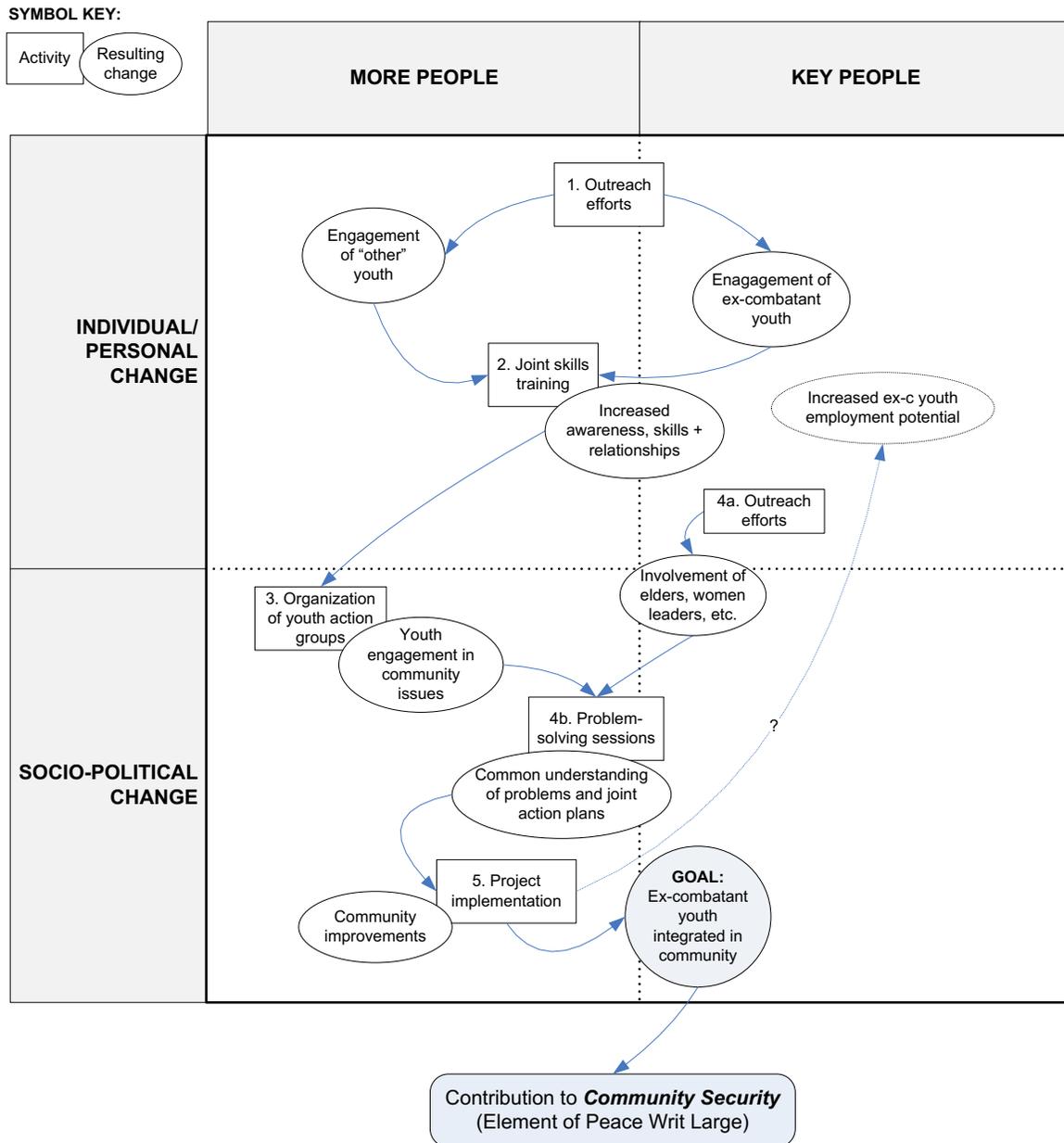
This section illustrates the application of the Matrix to a specific case example as a preliminary step to engaging training participants to apply it to their own situation or program. The example concerns a program aimed at reintegrating ex-combatant youth into a traditional rural community. In this situation, the ex-combatant youth are considered "key people" because they represent a threat to security, as most of them are unemployed, are viewed with suspicion and even fear by many members of the community, and are considered to still hold weapons and to maintain connections to their old command structures.

The overall program goal is indicated at the top of the table below. The columns of the table show a series of activities in the left column and associated changes in the right column. Note: the table indicates "proposed/completed" activities and "actual/expected" changes, as the tool can be used either to plan programs or to examine programs underway or completed.

Program Goal: *Contribute to community security by improving the reintegration of ex-combatant youth*

	Proposed/Completed Program Activities	Actual/Expected Changes, due to Activities
1	Conduct outreach and "listening" efforts to ex-combatant youths and others, find out what young people are concerned about.	Obtain agreement to participate, achieve initial engagement.
2	Joint skills training: communications skills, community problem analysis, leadership skills.	Heightened awareness of multiple perspectives, greater understanding of problems facing the community, better participant relationships.
3	Organization of youth groups: engage training workshop participants in youth action groups focused on addressing community issues, as well as enjoyable activities (sports, drama...).	Specific and ongoing mechanism for bringing youth attention to issues people hold in common in the community.
4a	Outreach to elders, women leaders, etc.: Invite community leaders to participate with youth in community problem solving.	Concrete evidence that leaders are concerned about young people and willing to devote time/energy to thinking with them about issues.
4b	Problem-solving session: Facilitated meetings to identify problems, engage in joint analysis and development of possible solutions/actions.	Joint ownership of an action plan for addressing specific community problems, with primary responsibility resting on youth for action. Youth deepen their sense of responsibility to/for the community.
5	Project Implementation: Youth action groups undertake projects to implement solutions/actions developed in the problem-solving sessions.	Concrete improvements in community life as a result of projects. Ex-combatant youth fully engaged and better integrated into the community. Possibly, some youth will gain skills that will help employment prospects.

The below Matrix illustrates how this project might be charted on the Matrix. In the diagram below, the items in boxes are activities, and the resulting changes are in circles. The overall goal is also indicated.



Youth Program Charted on the Matrix

Questions:

1. Do you think that the activities outlined above would actually lead to the goal? Is anything missing? Why and how? What assumptions is the program making about how the activities and changes they are designed to produce will lead to the goal? Are they good?
2. What linkages is the program making? What linkages are just "hopes"? How Can those be strengthened?
3. What kinds of obstacles might the project encounter? Who/what might get in the way?

Matrix Exercise: Mapping Programs onto the RPP Matrix

The purpose of mapping programs onto the RPP Matrix is to explore their strategies and to see if there are ways to enhance their effectiveness in promoting Peace Writ Large.

A Matrix mapping exercise can be applied to either an *existing program* or one that is in the *planning stages*.

Before attempting to chart the program onto the Matrix, it is helpful to list the various program activities (proposed or completed) and the changes that have happened or might be expected from those activities. If you do this first, it becomes relatively easy to map the activities and changes onto the Matrix.

Step One: Preliminary identification of activities and changes²⁰

Program Goal:

Proposed/Completed Program Activities	Actual/Expected Changes, due to Activities
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

²⁰ See [Appendix Two](#) for a hand-out: RPP's program planning chart that can be used in teams and with partners.

Process Note: Step One of Matrix Exercise

If you have a small group, you can do this exercise as a full group with facilitation. If the group is larger, break into small groups of 3-4 people. Do the exercise in two steps, and give instructions for the second step only after they have finished the first step (otherwise, participants tend to get confused). The trainer/consultant should circulate among the groups to see how they are doing, answer questions, etc.

When filling out this chart, you can decide whether or not to focus on defining the objective before identifying the activities and changes. If your purpose is to help participants understand the matrix and understand their *current* approach, then you do not necessarily need to work with them yet on making sure their objective is in the socio-political realm. Let them define their objective, and step two, make sure they place their objective in the right place on the matrix. In the debrief, reflect with the group on whether the objective is a good one, i.e. will help their program contribute to Peace Writ Large. (If it is in the individual-personal realm, then it will not; they will need to take the next step and ask what they hope the individual-personal changes will lead people to do in the socio-political realm. Otherwise, there will be no linkage between the individual-personal and socio-political realms, and the program will be less effective.)

Alternatively, if you are in planning mode, you may want to spend more time at this stage working with the group on their objectives, to make sure they identify an objective that is in the socio-political realm. If so, then you can begin by asking participants to define their objective and place it on the matrix. Ask them what quadrant it is in. If it is not in the socio-political realm, then work with them on formulating a good goal. Then, once the goal is defined, proceed to identify activities and changes.

Step Two: Mapping onto the Matrix

1. First locate the program goal on the Matrix. Is the goal at the Individual/Personal or Socio-Political level of change? More People or Key People?
2. Take the first activity and the associated change: where do you find the activity on the Matrix? Where is the resulting change?
3. Continue to map activities and changes until you come to the end of the current program steps (in the case of an existing program) or the proposed steps (in the case of a prospective program in planning).
4. Do the activities/changes add up to the desired change (goal)? Are there any gaps?
5. Are there useful linkages that can be made in **your program** from the Individual/Personal to the Socio-Political levels? From More People to Key People? Alternatively, are there other organizations/programs with which you can link at other levels?

Process Note: Placing Activities and Changes on the Matrix, and Drawing Linkages

In placing the activities and changes on the Matrix, you may want to use different colors or different shapes (as in the example) to make clear which activities and changes are connected.

Testing placement on the Matrix and flag common errors. Make sure you test with participants whether they are plotting the activities and changes correctly. There often isn't one *clear* right answer, but there are several common errors that people make when analyzing their activities (see above, presentation notes). You should bring those up when you see them and help groups rethink where the activities and changes belong on the Matrix. If there are questions, or if you think there is some confusion or misunderstanding about where an activity or change should go, challenge the participants. Why does the activity or change go in that box? Why not in another box? Flag and explain common errors if they come up (see process notes for the exercise).

Drawing « hope lines ». One area to pay particular attention to is the linkage between quadrants, especially relating changes and goals to activities. When the linkage between the activity and the change or goal is just an assumption, or a hope, then draw a dashed or dotted arrow for a linkage to indicate a « hope line ». Ask participants later, during reflection, to brainstorm ways to turn the hope line into a more solid line.

Discussing implications of the Matrix analysis. After about 20 minutes (after the groups or group have placed the activities and changes on the matrix and understood why), ask the participants to discuss what they can learn about their program from the matrix concerning a) whether the logic and links from an activity to a change or from one change to another are strong, i.e. without gaps or not totally based on hopes; b) whether the program strategy has good enough linkages from the individual-personal realm to the socio-political and between more and key people, and, if not, how they could promote them. You can use the questions for reflection below.

Reflections

1. What insights have you gained regarding your own program?
2. What challenges are raised?
3. Are there additional linkages you might consider—either within your own program or with other efforts?
4. Going forward, what do you want to think about more? What changes might be needed to make your program more effective?

Process Note: Debriefing and Closure

If the participants have been working in small groups on *different* projects, allow about 10-15 minutes at the end of the session for a brief reporting and debrief. Bring the groups back at the end and ask them to report briefly on their analyses. A faster way to do the report back is to ask participants to post their flip charts on the wall, and give them 10 minutes to go around the room and look at each other's flip charts and ask questions (make sure one person from each group is standing by their flip charts to answer any questions). After participants have looked at all the analyses, conclude with a few general questions for reflection, such as: what insights did the Matrix help them gain on their projects? What did they learn? What questions do they still have? etc.

Module Five: Theories of Change

Module Five: Theories of Change

Practitioners' decisions about what to do in a particular situation are based on assumptions about how to bring about peace and theories about how to bring about change. These underlying assumptions are often implicit, and rarely discussed. RPP is finding that effective programs clarify these Theories of Change and continually test them against the realities of the conflict.

What are Theories of Change?

A Theory of Change | is an explanation of how and why an action is believed to bring about its planned objectives, i.e. the changes it hopes to create through its activities, thereby revealing underlying assumptions. A clear theory of change helps to articulate the logical flow from the starting point (analysis) to the goal of the initiative to the broader change the organization plans to achieve.

A practical formula for articulating a theory of change is the following:

**If x [activity],
then y [expected change],
because z [rationale - why do you think this change will happen?]**
*Examples of Theories of Change*²¹

Project level (individual level change)²²

If [activity] children in this school are given individual treatment for trauma recovery,

then [change] they will develop increased ability to control their emotions and not act out against others, especially those who are different from them;

because [rationale] the activities will have helped them begin to heal from the psychological wounds of war and reduce their overall fear and sense of vulnerability at school.

If we wanted to move this engagement to potentially show results towards socio-political change:

*[Note: under these conditions, if we introduce inter-group skills (negotiation, mediation, problem-solving) to children of different religious groups together, then they will be able to learn them and use them to resolve disputes at school, including those that may arise between religious groups.]*²³

Portfolio/Sector level (socio-political level change)

If [activity] we strengthen the capacities of select local and national level government institutions in violence prevention and coexistence;

then [change] interactions within the government and between state and civil society will be more constructive and inclusive,

because [rationale] local and national government institutions will be better equipped to deal with tensions more constructively and engage in forward looking, preventive approaches within government and in state-society relations.

[Note: this sector theory of change is very macro-level and needs to be accompanied by more concrete and measurable theories of change at the program and project level. This would help further embed the theory in specific operational contexts.]

²¹ For more background on the different levels at which theories of change can be useful (activity, project, program, portfolio/sector, country level etc.) see Woodrow and Oatley, "Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security and Justice Programmes. Part I"

²² Babbitt, Chigas, and Wilkinson *Theories and Indicators of Change: Concepts and Primers for Conflict Management and Mitigation*, 9

²³ Ibid.

In many (perhaps most) cases these theories are not necessarily conscious or stated. Rather, they are embedded in the skills and approaches that peacebuilding practitioners and policy makers have learned, the capacities and “technologies” of their organizations, attachments to favorite methodologies, and the perspectives various decision makers bring to the peacebuilding process. Ideas about what will contribute to peace may also be dictated by international political dynamics and policies. Some theories focus on *who* needs to change: which individuals and groups in society or which relationships need to change. Other theories concentrate on *what* needs to change: an institution, a policy, a social norm. Still other theories are tied directly to a particular methodology or approach by which the change can or should happen.

Theories of change operate at different levels. On one level, they can relate to micro-level changes (e.g. project or program level), usually associated with specific activities. They can describe how the overall program approach and an activity (or series of activities) will add up to achieve the goal (e.g. how various justice and human rights initiatives achieve progress in that sector). In other words, what changes will result from each activity, and what needs to happen in order for the efforts to result in the goals we have set? See the chart of activities and changes in [Module Four](#).

On another level, the **Theory of Change** describes how achieving the program goals will contribute to Peace Writ Large (PWL). In other words, what does the program assume about what is needed to address the driving factors of conflict and achieve Peace Writ Large, and if it were successful, how would it contribute to PWL?

Theories of change need to be grounded in the particular context, and should be specific enough to be testable.

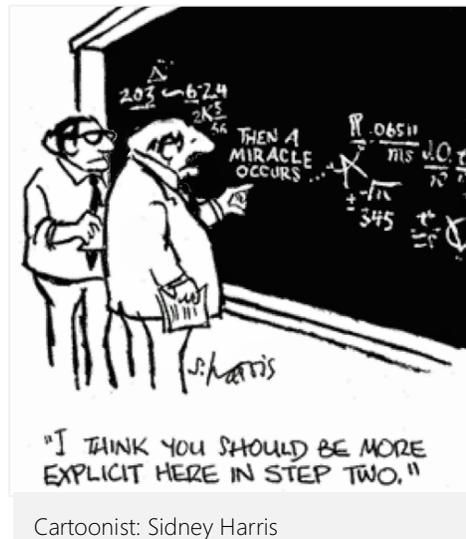
Theories of Change and Peacebuilding Effectiveness

Evidence shows that programs are often less effective than they could be, because their Theories of Change and program theories are implicit (unspoken/unexpressed or not open), incomplete or not well-thought out, untested and at times inadequate for the conflict in which they are working. RPP’s evidence suggests that two elements of a good Theory of Change are often missing, as explained below.

Explicit and well-developed connections between activities, goals and Peace Writ Large

Many programs are less effective than they could be, because they make untested, and ultimately unrealistic, assumptions about how their activities will lead to changes in Peace Writ Large. This is a problem regarding their **Theory of Change!**

For example, some practitioners working with political leaders assume that if they change the individual perceptions of key leaders (at the Individual/Personal level), those leaders will then initiate changes in



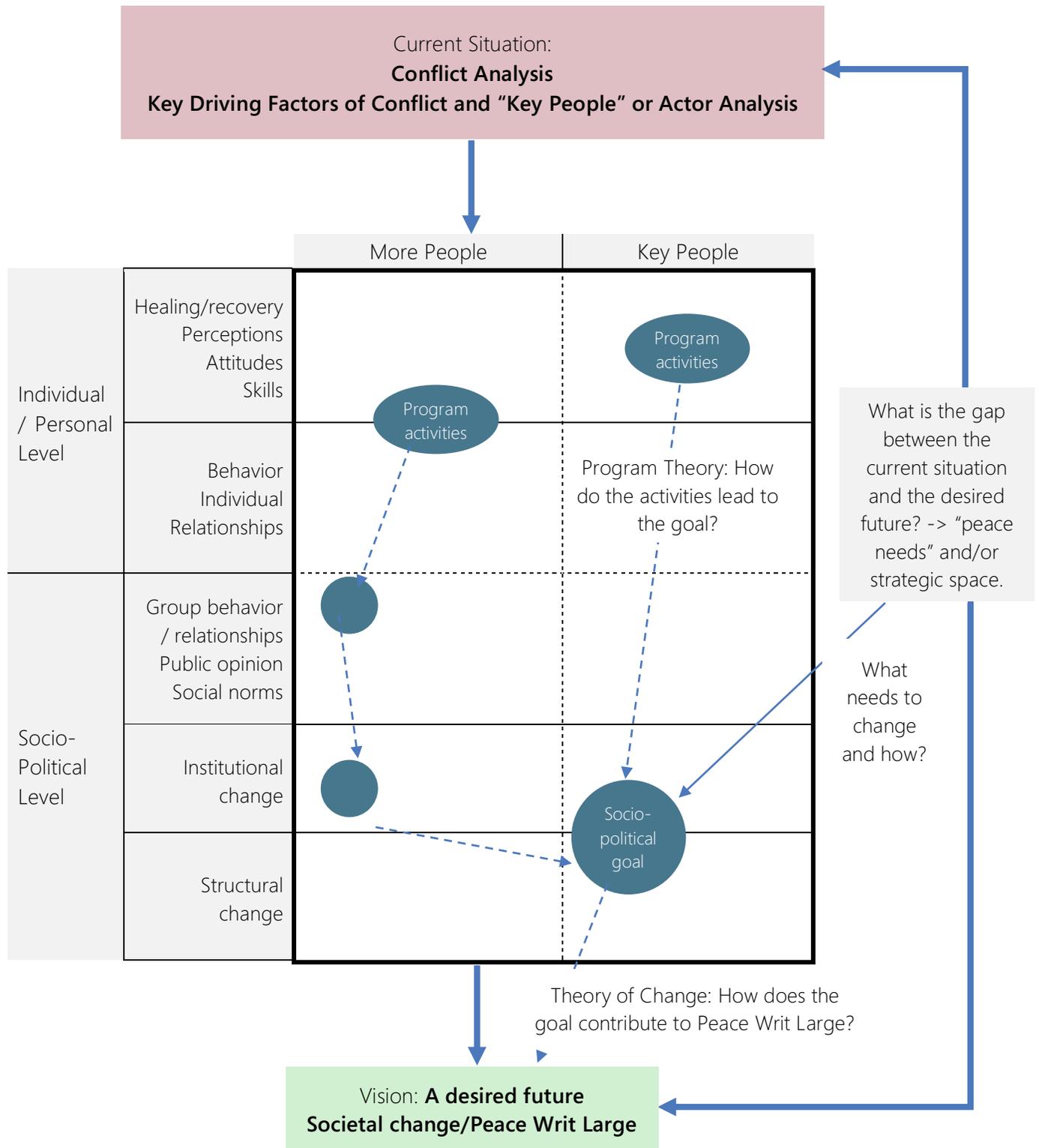
policies at the Socio-Political level. RPP has found that this assumption is not borne out in many cases. **Programs that explicitly identify and examine their program theories and Theories of Change are more likely to have effects on Peace Writ Large.** They need to be clear about what will happen as a result of the activities they undertake, and how that will lead to the goals and their desired impact on peace.

Below you see the “RPP Matrix *Plus*,” which shows how conflict analysis, Peace Writ Large and Theories of Change fit together. Note that this version of the Matrix adds subcategories of change within the Individual/Personal and Socio-Political realms. This greater specificity about the subcategories can be helpful in positioning the program goal within the Socio-Political area.

Effective peacebuilding strategies consider the links between conflict analysis and Peace Writ Large, program goals, and program activities and have an explicit Theory of Change and program theory/theories. Therefore, we can state that effective peacebuilding programs:

- Identify driving forces of conflict and key actors and a vision for Peace Writ Large that addresses them.
- Articulate program goals that reflect change at the Socio-Political level, either institutional change or collective attitude, behavioral or relational change, and ask whether their theory of how the goals will contribute to Peace Writ Large is appropriate in the particular conflict context.
- Define a series of activities and ask, at each stage, what difference these activities will make, and how the changes from these activities will result in the Socio-Political goal. Often activities begin at the Individual-Personal level, but good programs have an articulated strategy and tested assumptions about how they will move from the Individual/Personal level to the Socio-Political, and how they will link More and Key People strategies.

The RPP Matrix Plus



Two Illustrative Examples

Following are two examples of how Theories of Change and program theories have been identified and tested.

1. Community Dispute Resolution program in Liberia

A large international NGO received donor funding, in the wake of the 14-year civil war in Liberia, to develop Community Peace Councils (CPCs), a community-based mechanism for resolving a range of disputes, with an explicitly inter-ethnic approach. The CPCs were also designed to promote greater democratic participation through leadership development. An evaluation team first identified the underlying Theories of Change and program assumptions mainly by interviewing local and international staff members. The evaluation revealed the following underlying Theories of Change:

Theory 1: Establishment of a new community-level mechanism for handling a range of dispute types will contribute to peace by avoiding incidents that have the potential for escalating into serious violence.

Theory 2: Inclusive structures for community problem solving will improve communication, respect and productive interactions among subgroups in the community, as well as access of disenfranchised groups to decision making. This will lead to improved problem-solving in the community and avoidance of disputes that can escalate into violence. It will also reduce grievances of disenfranchised groups and prevent violence, by providing a forum for their voices to be heard and their needs to be addressed.

Theory 3: By creating a new leadership group infused with democratic concepts and provided with critical skills, we can foster more effective and responsive leadership which will have the willingness and ability to respond to people's needs.

Were the theories of change and program theories appropriate? The program made a number of assumptions that proved to be wrong.

- They assumed that the CPCs would handle disputes that had the potential for escalating into or inciting widespread violence. (If they did, then the CPCs would directly contribute to stopping a key factor in violent conflict; if not, then the CPCs would make little or no contribution to Peace Writ Large.)
- They assumed that the interactions in the CPCs would be positive, that disenfranchised groups would speak up and be taken seriously, and that these groups were key people in the conflict, in the sense that they might take up arms if their disenfranchisement continued;
- They assumed that the new leadership would be able to gain credibility and authority in the community.

The evaluation team found that the CPCs were, for the most part, not handling the most serious and volatile disputes, which concerned land issues. While the CPCs were set up and trained well, as communities were repopulated and traditional leadership patterns were re-established, the CPCs were

mostly excluded from handling land issues. At the same time, the hope (and Theory) regarding alternative leadership models proved unfounded, as traditional leaders gained control over the CPCs or used them to address issues they preferred that someone else deal with, such as domestic violence. The evaluation recommended that the agency work to expand the mandate and capability of the CPCs for handling land disputes, by connecting them to land commissions and other emerging government structures. It should also be said that the CPCs did represent a useful developmental advance, even if they were unable to fulfill, as completely as hoped, a contribution to Peace Writ Large.

2. Multi-ethnic reconstruction and economic projects in the Balkans

CDA performed an extensive study regarding the reasons for the recurrence of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo in the spring of 2004, and the relationship of that violence to policies and programs undertaken by the international community. Among other things, the study identified the Theories of Change underlying the various approaches to improving ethnic relations. As is often the case, these underlying theories were strongly influenced by the policies and (unspoken) assumptions of the international community. The multiple aid and development programs were directly linked to the implementation of international standards and widely held-beliefs regarding refugee returns, inter-ethnic relations, and a future multi-ethnic state. One significant programming approach was to provide rewards and incentives, mainly economic, for cross-ethnic contact and activities—through joint projects such as joint agricultural cooperatives, cross-ethnic business linkages, internet cafés serving multi-ethnic youth, multi-ethnic NGOs and businesses, reconstruction and development projects, among others.

The study identified the following Theories of Change for these programs:

Theory 1: If we develop activities that provide economic benefits to both ethnic communities (economic interdependence), people will have self-interested incentives to resist efforts to incite violence against each other.

Theory 2: If we provide opportunities for people to work together on practical issues across ethnic lines, it will help break down mistrust and negative stereotypes, as well as develop habits of cooperation.

Theory 3: If people have jobs and economic stability, they will be less hostile to the other ethnic group.

The study found that the failure of peacebuilding programming to achieve desired impacts was due in part to faulty Theories of Change, and in part to problems in program design and implementation. Several assumptions about how these programs would contribute to Peace Writ Large proved to be wrong, for example:

- While both Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs mentioned the economy as the biggest problem facing them, they referred to past and present oppression and injustice as drivers of continuing hostility. For Kosovo Albanians the poor economy fueled hostility mainly because they perceived it as the result of Serbian blocking of recognition of their independence. In

other words, the delay in resolution of the status question and Serbian actions to block independence was a driving factor of conflict.

- “Spillover” effects from joint decision making and cooperation on reconstruction projects to other domains of relationship and to broader inter-group trust did not occur. This was in part due to an inappropriate Theory of Change for this context. Many people viewed the assistance offered for multi-ethnic projects not as “carrots,” but as a form of coercion that generated resentment and led beneficiaries to circumvent the spirit of multi-ethnicity, by dividing the resources provided, or by being multi-ethnic in form only. Where there was genuine interaction and cooperation, the context limited the “spillover” that programs hoped would happen. Implicit “rules of the game” made business interaction socially “permissible” but sanctioned people who developed relationships in other domains.
- In part, program theories were insufficient, as agencies believed the trust, attitudes and interests developed in the programs would change relationships and behaviour outside the project boundaries. Social pressure to conform, continued resentment about past and present injustices and political manipulation all obstructed this, and programs did not do sufficient follow-up to these interactions, provide enough resources for the “soft” aspects (such as dialogue) of their programming or pay sufficient attention to the effects of intra-group dynamics to deal with these effectively.
- The theory that greater interaction, cooperation and relationships would lead to a reduction in violence proved to be inadequate. While many people who participated in these programs, and others who had relationships with people from the other ethnic group, did not participate in the violence, and at times took risks to protect their friends, these relationships did not lead to changes in collective behavior. In other words, the places considered to have the “best” inter-ethnic relations suffered the greatest violence, as local residents did not take precautionary or protective measures, as they assumed that *their* community would not erupt in violence.

Exercises: Exploring the Theory of Change & the RPP Matrix Plus

A. Identifying the Theory of Change of a Program

1. In this conflict context, what are some desired aspects of Peace Writ Large: what is the vision for peace? Try to be as specific as possible. For instance, not just “reconciliation” or “harmony,” but what do these look like in concrete terms. “People have put the past behind them and are able to live together.” “Conflicts that arise are settled without resort to violence.” Take about ten minutes to develop some understanding of what PWL would look like in this setting. Put this vision on the Matrix Plus (Vision: A Desired Future).

Process Note

Identifying specific aspects of Peace Writ Large is a helpful step that allows us to explore the relationship between the program goal and achievement of progress towards elements of the vision. In facilitating this process, the most difficult task is getting participants to be specific about a vision of PWL.

2. Given our understanding of the program goal and the kind(s) of change it is trying to achieve:
 - a. How would achievement of that goal contribute to Peace Writ Large as we have outlined it?
 - b. Would achievement of the goal address driving factors of conflict, and, if so, **how**?

For instance, in the example of the ex-combatant youth program in [Module Four](#), if the goal is “to improve community security by reintegrating ex-combatant youth,” how would this contribute to our vision for peace, and how would it address driving factors of conflict?

3. Write out the Theory of Change for the program you are focusing on. The “how” in the previous question leads to the Theory of Change. Make this into a statement, with the general format: “If we achieve X (goal), it will contribute to PWL, by doing Y, because....” For example:

Reintegration of youth into the community will decrease violence by reducing the influence of armed groups and their ability to recruit youth. It will also increase trust and cooperation within the community by forging bridges across group lines among youth and bringing community members together in a common cause—which, in turn, will prompt communities to resist violence.

Process Note

If you are working with a relatively small program team, you can ask people to do steps two and three in pairs or threes—and then compare what the different groups come up with in plenary – step four below.

4. Discuss the Theory of Change as stated in step three. Is it valid in the circumstances? If the goal is achieved, is it likely to make the desired contribution? Is it realistic? What does it depend on—who else needs to do what in order to reach the PWL aims? Would another goal and theory be more appropriate or practical?

B. Exploring Program Theories

Use the table on the following page to explore the program theories built into the various activities at the phases of the program. The first two columns are the same as the chart developed under [Module Four](#)—so if you have already done that, you can simply add another column and fill it in.

At this level, we are seeking to understand the rationale and assumptions behind the choices of activities of a program and the way they are implemented. Why did we decide to work with group X rather than group Y—what was the rationale behind the choice? Why was a training program necessary at this stage—as opposed to another activity? Why was it important to bring in community leaders at this stage? Most importantly, why and how will the activities we have chosen bring about the changes we desire? Under what circumstances will these changes not happen?

Process Note

If the group has NOT completed the first two columns of the chart already, it will be necessary to take the time to do so now—and this exercise will take considerable time, perhaps as much as an hour. (See instructions under [Module Four](#)) If they only have to fill in the third column on Theories of Change, it may require only 20-30 minutes.

A program team may want to do this process in their full group if it is only five-seven people. For larger groups, it would be better to break into small groups of two - four participants.

Once groups have completed the chart, engage them in a discussion based on the questions presented after the chart below. Also, if several small groups have been working, they may come up with different Theories—which will generate discussion of which ones are correct or valid.

Program Goal:

Proposed/Completed Activity	Actual/Expected Changes due to activity	Program Theory: Why this choice? How will the changes happen?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Questions for Reflection:

1. In your estimation, are the program theories valid in this situation? Will the expected changes result from the activities?
2. Are there any places where we would have to question our assumptions? Are there things that might happen (or fail to happen) that could have an impact on the program?
3. Do the activities—and associated change—“add up” to the desired goal? What is the likelihood that the goal will be achieved if all of the activities and changes are completed successfully?

Module Six: Criteria of Effectiveness, or Building Blocks Towards Peace

Module Six: Criteria of Effectiveness, or Building Blocks Towards Peace

Challenges of Assessing How Programs Contribute to Peace

Assessing contribution to “Peace Writ Large” is difficult. Most peacebuilding programs are discrete efforts aimed at affecting one (often small) piece of the puzzle, and no one project can do everything. Outcomes are also difficult to assess. Attribution of social impacts to particular peace activities is even more difficult. As one practitioner noted, “Peace requires that many people work at many levels in different ways, and, with all this work, you cannot tell who is responsible for what.” Moreover, when the goal of “just and sustainable peace” is so grand, and progress toward it immeasurable in its multitude of small steps, it is difficult to know whether a particular program outcome is significant for peace.

Yet even though a program may not fully accomplish the lofty goals of ending violent conflict or building sustainable just structures, it is not by definition ineffective. Are there criteria for determining which programs are more likely to have an impact on peace? Against what benchmarks can agencies identify whether their programs have contributed to progress? How can agencies judge, as they are planning their programs, which of the wide range of possible approaches will have more significant impacts on the conflict?

Five Building Blocks Towards Peace

From analysis of the cases and practitioner reflection on their own experiences, the RPP process identified five intermediate Building Blocks that can support progress towards Peace Writ Large. These can be used to assess, across a broad range of contexts and programming approaches, whether a program is making a meaningful contribution to Peace Writ Large. These Criteria can be used in program planning to ensure that specific program goals are linked to the larger and long-term goal of “Peace Writ Large.” They can be used during program implementation to reflect on effectiveness and guide mid-course changes, and as a basis for evaluation after the program has been completed.

1. ***The effort results in the creation or reform of political institutions to handle grievances in situations where such grievances do, genuinely, drive the conflict.*** A significant contribution to peace is the development of or support for institutions or mechanisms that address the specific inequalities, injustices and other grievances that cause and fuel a conflict. This approach underlines the importance of moving beyond impacts at the individual or personal (attitudinal, material or emotional) level to the socio-political level. This idea must be applied in conjunction with a context analysis identifying what the conflict is NOT about and what needs to be stopped. To reform or build institutions that are unrelated to the actual drivers of a specific conflict would be less effective.
2. ***The effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own peace initiatives in relation to critical elements of context analysis.*** Such analysis, and resulting programs, should address what needs to be stopped, how to reinforce areas

where people interact in positive ways, and the regional and international dimensions of the conflict. This approach stresses the importance of “ownership” and sustainability of action and efforts to bring about peace, as well as creating momentum for peace, involving more people.

3. ***The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence.*** One way of addressing and including Key People who promote and continue tensions (e.g., warlords, spoilers) is to help More People develop the ability to resist the manipulation and provocations of these negative key people. In most circumstances, one important aspect of Peace Writ Large is a significant and sustained reduction in violence. This Building Block is a stepping stone to that long-term goal.
4. ***The effort results in an increase in people’s security and in their sense of security.*** This approach reflects positive changes both at the socio-political level (in people’s public lives) and at the individual/personal level as people gain a sense of security, an important element of Peace Writ Large. Security and people’s perceptions of it contain many different aspects, which must be identified and attained based on the local context.
5. ***The effort results in meaningful improvement in inter-group relations,*** reflected in, for example, changes in group attitudes, public opinion, social norms, or public behaviors. Improved relationships between conflicting groups constitutes an important Building Block for peace—often a preliminary step towards other initiatives. It entails transforming polarized (and polarizing) attitudes, behaviors and interactions to more tolerant and cooperative ones, as part of addressing underlying grievances and building the willingness and ability to resolve conflicts and sustain peace.

These Building Blocks can best be thought of as intermediate-level benchmarks of success applicable to the broad range of peace work being done.

The Building Blocks are additive

The experience gathered through RPP suggests that the Criteria of Effectiveness are additive. In other words, peace efforts that achieve progress in more of them are more effective than those that accomplish changes in only one area. In addition, regardless of which criteria are relevant, the effort must demonstrate that it contributes to stopping one or more key driving factors of the war or conflict. *This is a condition of effectiveness for all programs: they must address people, issues, and dynamics that are key contributors to ongoing conflict, whether directly or indirectly.* Clearly, in order to accomplish this, a conflict analysis is needed.

Four additional questions

To assess the significance of a particular change in a given context, four additional, interconnected elements must be considered:

1. Is the change from this effort ***fast enough?*** Sooner is almost always better than later in ending violence and injustice. One should always ask whether this effort is more likely to gain results faster than anything else we might do, or whether there are other ways to work that could produce results

sooner. At the same time, there is a caution against inadvertently causing harm through haste! Sometimes people (perhaps pushed by donors) try to do too much too quickly, without the necessary analysis and planning.

2. Is the change from this effort likely to be **sustained**? Short-term gains are undermined over time in conflicts. Peace practitioners should hold themselves accountable to standards that look beyond the end of a particular project.
3. Is the change from this effort **big enough**? If violence is occurring at a national scale, efforts to address it at a very local level will be valuable, but not as significant as those efforts that affect the national scene. Peace practitioners should always ask: is this effort likely to have the widest possible effect we are capable of promoting, or is there something else we might do that is proportional to the actual conflict? Scale may also refer to program coverage. Are we working with only twenty communities among three thousand—and therefore having a negligible impact on Peace Writ Large? How could we scale up?
4. Are the **linkages** adequate? The stronger and more strategic the linkages programs make between levels and across sectors and constituencies, the more effective they will be vis-à-vis “Peace Writ Large.” Practitioners should ask: Can we make stronger or more strategic linkages between the Individual and Socio-Political levels, or between More and Key People? Is there something more we can do to address or take account of the regional, national and international dimensions of the conflict?

Exercises: Applying the Building Blocks Towards Peace

Option A: Individual Reflection

Reflect on a program you are familiar with using the [Building Blocks Towards Peace Worksheet](#):

1. What is/was the goal of the program? What have you done/are doing?
2. Which Building Block(s) is your program working towards or trying to address? (Rate your impact 1-5). How are you having this impact?
3. How would you know if you were having an impact in this area? (Indicators)
4. Optional (if there is time): Is the program fast enough (but not too fast)? Big enough to achieve significant change? Sustainable?
5. Share your thoughts with your neighbor.

Option B: Group Reflection

Complete the steps as outlined above, but do the work as a group regarding a program that all group members are familiar with and then report back.

Process Note

In our experience, groups tend to claim too much impact of their work, without any clear evidence that they are actually having those effects. In some cases, they are stating the effects or impacts that they *hope* to have, not those they are really having. In discussion, then, it will be important for the facilitator to push back a bit and question how they know they are having the claimed effects.

Some groups also try to claim effects in *all* of the Building Blocks—which is not realistic. Again, probe for which areas they are having the most effect.

At times, this exercise has proven a bit discouraging to peacebuilding teams, when they take it seriously and make a realistic assessment of their effects. In some cases, the team begins to see that they are not as effective as they would like to be—which is disheartening. The facilitator should be alert to that, and be prepared to help the group engage in a discussion about what it would take to produce greater impacts. There are several ways to do this:

- Go back to the conflict analysis to identify the key driving factors—and discuss how the program could make itself more relevant to the conflict. Among the five Building Blocks, which would be the most important to address?
- Discuss leverage points in the conflict. (See the [Module Two: Conflict Analysis](#))
- Consider the actor analysis: which groups of Key People to the conflict have been neglected? What approaches might be effective with them?
- Discuss the relationship between activities, Theories of Change and program goals. Given how change really happens in this situation, what can we do?

Building Blocks Towards Peace Worksheet

Rating: 0 = no impact on this factor; 5 = major impact on this factor

Big/Fast/Sustained: Mark Y/N and why

Building Block	Rating degree of impact	Big Enough?	Fast enough?	Impact sustained?	Level of impact? Linkages?	Locally Specific Indicators
1. The effort results in the creation or reform of institutions or mechanisms that address the specific grievances or injustices that fuel the conflict	0 1 2 3 4 5					
2. The effort causes participants and communities to develop independent initiatives that decrease dividers, increase connectors or address causes of conflict	0 1 2 3 4 5					
3. The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence	0 1 2 3 4 5					
4. The effort results in an increase in people's security and in their sense of security	0 1 2 3 4 5					
5. The effort results in meaningful improvement in inter-group relations	0 1 2 3 4 5					

APPENDICES

Appendix One: Recommended Resources (Selection)

- Anderson, Mary B. and Lara Olson. *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2003.
- Anderson, Mary B. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.
- Babbitt, Eileen, Diana Chigas, and Robert Wilkinson, with AMEX International. *Theories and Indicators of Change: Concepts and Primers for Conflict Management and Mitigation*. USAID, 2013.
- CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. *Designing Strategic Initiatives to Impact Conflict Systems: Systems Approaches to Peacebuilding. A Resource Manual*. Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2016.
- *Do No Harm Workshop Participant's Manual*. Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2016b.
- *Do No Harm Workshop Trainer's Manual*. Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2016c.
- Conflict Sensitivity Consortium. "How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity." Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012.
- Ernstorfer, Anita, Diana Chigas, and Hannah Vaughan-Lee. "From little to Large: When does Peacebuilding Add Up?" *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 10, no. 1 (2015): 72-77.
- Ernstorfer, Anita, Isabella Jean, and Peter Woodrow, with Diana Chigas. *Thinking Evaluatively in Peacebuilding Design, Implementation and Monitoring: Three Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) and Do No Harm (DNH)-infused options to strengthen the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies and programs*. Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, 2016.
- Fisher, Simon et al eds. *Working with Conflict. Skills and Strategies for Action*. London: Zed Books, 2000.
- Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), with CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, and Norwegian Church Aid. *Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines and Procedure*. The Hague: GPPAC, 2015.
- Harris, Sidney. *What's So Funny About Science?* from *American Scientist*. Los Altos, CA: W. Kaufmann, 1997.
- Lederach, John Paul, and Janice Moomaw Jenner eds. *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Lederach, John Paul, Reina Neufeldt, and Hal Culbertson. *Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Tool Kit*. The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and Catholic Relief Services, 2007.
- Meadows, Donella H. *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008.

- OECD/DAC. *Guidance on Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility - Improving Learning for Results*. Paris: OECD, 2012.
- Reimann, Cordula. *Towards Gender Mainstreaming in Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management: Guidelines for the German Technical Cooperation*. Eschborn: GTZ, 2001.
- Saferworld, International Alert, APFO, CECORE, CHA, FEWER. *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peacebuilding*. A Resource Pack. 2004.
- United Nations. "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping." *Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992*. UN Document A/47/277, 1992.
- United Nations Women. "Gender and Conflict Analysis." UN Women Policy Briefing Paper, 2012.
- Wallace, Marshall. *From Principle to Practice. A User's Guide to Do No Harm*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2015.
- Woodrow, Peter, and Diana Chigas. *A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2009.
- Woodrow, Peter, with Nick Oatley. "Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security and Justice Programmes. Part I: What they are, different types, how to develop and use them." *A Conflict, Crime, and Violence Results Initiative (CCVRI) Product*. London: UK Department for International Development (DFID), 2013.

Appendix Two: Tools that can be used for participatory conflict analysis

A great variety of participatory tools developed by local and international peacebuilding practitioners has been used worldwide (GPPAC 2015). A selective overview of tools is given below. The tools are clustered according to their prime purpose and analytical focus. Some of their most striking analytical advantages are highlighted as well.

Tool Name	Main Purpose and Focus	Main Advantages
ABC Triangle	Understanding the conflict context, the main actors and their attitudes and behavior. Used at the beginning of a third-party intervention to identify the motivation of the conflict parties and what factors might be addressed by the intervention.	Highlights the interaction and interdependence of attitudes, behavior and context.
Actors and Stakeholders Mapping	Giving a general overview of the main conflict parties and stakeholders, their power/ influence and their relationships.	Visualizes the power relations and asymmetries between the conflict parties; Helps to identify possible entry-points for intervention and potential allies; Clarifies the own role and standing of the organization, particularly important at the beginning.
Conflict Onion	"Zooming in" on particular questions of the conflict such as the needs, interests and positions. Used in preparation for third-party intervention.	Highlights the differences and relationships between positions, interests and needs; Helps to understand the protracted character of conflict.
Conflict Pyramid	Giving an overview of the main actors and stakeholders involved in conflict transformation according to their formal power to influence conflict dynamics. Stresses the need for horizontal and vertical alliances for (successful) conflict transformation.	Identifies the main actors and leadership at different political levels and potential collaborators and alliances on different leadership levels

Tool Name	Main Purpose and Focus	Main Advantages
Conflict Stages	Capturing the conflict dynamics & identifying future scenarios of (de) escalation	Identifies cycles and stages of escalation and de-escalation; Identifies possible future scenarios of escalation to prevent them from occurring (early-warning & early response); Helps to discuss the current situation.
Conflict Timeline	Used in a third-part intervention such as mediation processes or in citizens' "shuttle diplomacy". Highlights different perceptions and perspectives of the conflict history and – dynamics.	Facilitates discussion of different opinions based on different interpretations of history; Invites debate about controversial historical events; Helps conflict parties to see their perspective as only one part of the "truth."
Conflict Tree	Giving an overview of main conflict factors (root causes, conflict issues and effects).	Shows close and interrelated relationships of conflict causes, issues and effects; Helps to prioritize one's own activities while addressing conflict issues.
Do No Harm / Impact Analysis	Assessing the conflict context (dividers and connectors) and the (unintended) negative impact of a project (details) on the conflict context.	Helps to reduce complexity; Helps to minimize (unintended) negative effects and to maximize (intended) positive effects of a project.
Force Field Analysis	Giving an overview of the main forces for conflict and against conflict.	Helps to structure the information on the current conflict situation; Gives a good overview of the forces for conflict and against conflict; Helps to prioritize forces for and against conflict.
Interests, Needs and Fears Chart	"Zooming in" on particular questions of the conflict such as the needs, interests and positions. Used in third-party intervention.	Enables the conflict parties to become aware of the hidden needs and fears underlying behind their interests and positions; Helps to highlight the interrelated and interwoven nature of the conflict issues, context, and needs and interests of the conflict parties.
Systemic Conflict Analysis / Systems Mapping	Identifying strategic entry-points for a peacebuilding strategy or program. Offering an analytical basis for scenario-building or risk assessment.	Helps to understand and explain the dynamics and "persistence/protracted-ness" of violent and social conflicts; Allows capturing non-linear and linear conflict dynamics and relationships and dynamics of conflict factors.

Appendix Three: Overview of Other Relevant Assessment Tools

In many conflict-affected or fragile contexts, conflict analysis tools are just one set of analytical frameworks being used by international donor agencies and (I)NGOs. Often conflict analysis tools are complemented by other types of assessments.

A selection of assessment frameworks is presented below. Some of these frameworks have been developed within and for the UN system, while other frameworks have been used by a wide range of non-governmental and governmental agencies. In the international literature and practice, some of these assessments go by different names or different names are used interchangeably. Depending on the organizational practice and preference, some frameworks are sometimes used together or merged, like the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment.

The understanding here is that at their best these analytical frameworks can increase the utility of conflict analysis tools and deepen and widen the conflict information and understanding. The frameworks are clustered along their purposes, the processes and the people involved, and the main analytical differences from a conflict analysis.

Different Assessments Types and How They Relate to Conflict Analysis

Tool Name	Main Purpose	Process	Who involved?	Differences from / Link to conflict analysis
Capacity Assessment	To assess and develop the capacities of local and national development partners.	Field work and desk study.	Local and international partners.	A capacity assessment focused on capacities for conflict analysis might be a useful step in the process of strengthening peacebuilding and conflict analysis capacities of organizations.
Gender Analysis ²⁴	To identify the gender-specific vulnerabilities of women and men, needs and interests during and after conflicts and the gender-specific effects of conflicts. To offer gender-disaggregated data. To strengthen gender equality. Cross-cutting issue and aim of development and aid agencies.	Stakeholder or focus group discussions; Reports of women's organizations or international agencies focusing on women's rights and gender equality.	Local and international (male & female) gender experts; Local women's rights activists; Gender advisors of national and international organizations.	A conflict analysis can be enriched by a gender analysis by understanding the relationship between gender and conflict dynamics. A gender analysis helps us to analyze how women and men may be affected in the same or different ways by a conflict. A gender analysis calls for the equal participation of women and men in the actual conflict analysis and gives space to their different (and same) perceptions, needs and interests of women and men.
Governance Assessment	To provide a better understanding of the quality of governance mechanisms and processes in a country. Focus on governance indicators measuring the performance, accountability, responsiveness and capacity of formal institutions.	Desk study; Experts' interviews. (The general trend: to enhance country ownership, draw on nationally driven assessments).	Political analysts and donor agencies.	Governance indicators may sharpen a conflict analysis in terms of a more nuanced understanding of governance-related conflict issues.

²⁴ There are a great variety of tools for a gender analysis. The World Bank, UN agencies and international development agencies work with different frameworks. The focus here is on the commonalities and similarities across different tools.

Tool Name	Main Purpose	Process	Who involved?	Differences from / Link to conflict analysis
Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)	To identify the structural inequalities and discriminatory practices in order to overcome them. Cross-cutting issue and aim of (many) development and aid agencies.	<u>Policy/program level:</u> Aiming at strengthening the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations; <u>Field-level:</u> Human rights reports by local and international organizations. Stakeholder and focus group discussions with affected population.	International and local human rights, development & aid agencies; Local population.	HRBA can sharpen a conflict analysis on two levels: 1. Sharpening the analysis of some of the human rights related conflict issues 2. Echoing the need for adhering to the principles of DNH in conducting a conflict analysis and in the project implementation.
Livelihoods/ Vulnerability Assessment	To assess livelihoods and disasters. Includes contextual analysis (on socio-economic, political and cultural issues), effects of a conflict on households, and offers gender- and age-disaggregated data.	Household surveys and focus group discussions with affected population.	Households and communities.	A conflict analysis might sharpen the understanding of the root causes and the nature of the conflict. Livelihoods/ Vulnerability assessment might sharpen our understanding of the resilience of communities.
New Deal Fragility Assessment (FA) ²⁵	To identify the main drivers of fragility and conflict. Focus on five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) to get countries out of fragility: Legitimate politics, security, justice, economy foundation and revenues and services. Five goals should help to develop a guiding framework for national development priorities.	Country-owned and country-led process; Broadly consultative process. Overall process supported by OECD/DAC.	Diverse range of local & national stakeholders.	Conflict analysis focuses more deeply on the key drivers of conflict. Drawing on the FA, a conflict analysis can help UN bodies to identify their own strategic entry-points.

²⁵ Some of the countries which haven conducted a New Deal Fragility Assessment are Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, DRC and Timor-Leste.

Tool Name	Main Purpose	Process	Who involved?	Differences from / Link to conflict analysis
Political Economy Analysis (PEA) ²⁶	<p>To identify the political and the economic drivers of conflict, the exclusion and vulnerability of different groups and to situate development interventions within an understanding of the prevailing political and economic processes in a given society.</p> <p>Complements governance assessments by providing a deeper level of understanding about power, state capability, accountability, especially in fragile or conflict-affected states.</p>	<p>Mainly desk study; Expert interviews; National statistics.</p>	<p>Sector & political analysts and donor agencies.</p>	<p>PEA helps to make a conflict analysis “more political” by stressing the need for the political will for social change to happen, by embarking on public engagement on conflict issues and seeking to frame public debate more strategically.</p> <p>Provides a more nuanced understanding of the political economy in a given context.</p>
Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA)	<p>To identify and prioritize needs, and activities to address these needs, and to budget these activities.</p>	<p>Joint multi-lateral process in the post-conflict phase at the request of country government. Field driven; Undertaken at the beginning of a UN engagement.</p>	<p>Government supported jointly by the World Bank, UN, EU and regional development banks.</p>	<p>PCNAs are not necessarily updated.</p> <p>A conflict analysis could offer updated information on the conflict dynamics, key drivers of conflict and stakeholders.</p>
Risks Assessment	<p>To identify and assess potential risks and hazards for interventions and how to mitigate their effects.</p> <p>Form often the basis for vulnerability assessments and security protocol of organizations.</p>	<p>Fieldwork; Continuously adapted and updated.</p>	<p>Donor agencies; Local development & peacebuilding organizations.</p>	<p>A conflict analysis gives a solid understanding of the conflict dynamics, potential triggers and catalysts for violence. Risk assessments can sharpen and deepen this understanding by looking at external factors such as natural or human-induced hazards.</p> <p>Risk assessments complement conflict-sensitive approaches to development and peacebuilding by focusing on potential context-specific risks and hazards (outside the project’s influence).</p>

²⁶ Some of the more widely cited country-level approaches are DFID’s Drivers of Change, the Dutch Foreign Ministry’s Strategic Governance and Corruption Assessment, and Sida’s Power Analysis.

Appendix Four: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – Conflict Analysis

The below represents an overview of some of the frequently asked questions (i) and encountered challenges (ii) in conducting a conflict analysis:

(i) *Frequently Asked Questions*

We are a peacebuilding organization. Is it sufficient to do a conflict analysis?

A conflict-sensitive assessment in the form of a Do No Harm analysis should not be equated with a conflict analysis following different political aims and purposes. At the same time, peacebuilding can have unintended, negative effects, just like development and humanitarian interventions: Both development and peacebuilding initiatives can do harm by, for example, recruiting staff only from one ethnicity, by choosing an office location which is known to be government territory and ignoring cultural conventions and unwritten “codes of conduct”.

How to deal with emotions in a conflict analysis process?

For many participants, conflict analysis is not a neutral intervention about “a conflict”: It might be about their country or region close to their heart, and hence might provoke strong emotions and reactions. Emotions should be acknowledged and taken care of, accepted and taken seriously. At the same time, a too emotional debate makes any useful and nuanced analysis challenging if not impossible. Clarify beforehand if the participants to be invited are the “right people” for this exercise, bring the general willingness and openness to deal with different

Insight from practice. In Pakistan an international donor agency brought together its partner organizations country to revise its strategy. The partners came from and worked in different conflict areas of Pakistan. An international peacebuilding scholar was asked to facilitate a countrywide conflict analysis. Special emphasis was put on gender-specific perspectives and for some discussions the group was divided into “women’s only” and “men’s only” groups. This allowed the women to raise their opinions and perceptions freely and openly - which to that extent, they would not have done in the plenary and in a gender-mixed group. Three days into the workshop, news about a suicide attack in one of the project sites and places of origin of some participants circulated. Two participants learned that they have lost family members in the attack. One of the two decided to leave the workshop immediately. Grief and deep sadness was shared among the participants. After a minute of silence to commemorate the victims, the decision was taken by the group and the facilitator to continue the process but also to give space for relaxation/breathing exercises, mourning and sharing after and during the sessions.

perspectives and “multiple truths”, and if the timing and location fit.

How do we ensure a gender-specific perspective of the conflict analysis?

Applying a gender-specific perspective of conflict analysis works on and refers to two levels of analysis (see also Reimann 2001, UN Women 2012):

On the one hand, it is vital to ensure the equal participation of women and men in the actual conflict analysis. Dependent on the roles women and men play in a given conflict and the given society, women and men may prioritize different needs, interests and fears.

On the other hand, all issues under discussion in a conflict analysis have gender-specific dimensions and should be unpacked and brought into the open. Often women have been affected from a violent conflict in a different way than men and hence, may have a different understanding of the conflict issues and dynamics than their male counterparts.

If feasible and available, collect and make use of sex-desegregated data. As a general guiding principle or good practice, avoid stereotyping about women and men and their needs, interests and vulnerabilities. While women are disproportionately affected by gender-specific violence, such as rape, forced marriages, forced pregnancies and deep-rooted gender-discrimination in all violent conflicts, it is important for the conflict analysis not to relegate women to the category of victims. Women as well as men make choices, develop coping strategies, mobilize scarce resources and play significant roles in their communities. Different women have different priorities, just like men. There are class, ethnic, religious, age and other power differences among women and these are often heightened during conflict.

Insight from practice. A local women's network from Yemen decided to develop a common strategy on the national implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security." The international donor asked an international facilitator to conduct a participatory conflict analysis workshop and facilitate a joint strategizing process. Due to the security situation, the workshop had to take place outside Yemen, in Jordan. One quarter of the participants were men, well-known human rights and peace activists. The men and the women came from different regions in Yemen. Given that many women hardly travel outside Yemen or have time off (due to the local strict gender restrictions), some more additional time was allocated for socializing among the women. This contributed to an overall positive working atmosphere and group dynamics. In other contexts, bi-lateral conversations with women might be needed, for example in cases in which women would not open in a joint setting with men.

How to link micro- with macro conflict analysis?

The conflict dynamics in a village might be a mirror image of the wider national conflict or be micro-cosmos of its own, with significantly different dynamics than in the rest of the country: For example, there might be (official) discriminatory policies against an ethnic minority, which greatly influence the national, macro-conflict and the conflict dynamics in a particular region of this country or - due to other more predominant region-specific conflict dynamics - may in fact be of little importance and analytical relevance to the micro-specific analysis. To understand the specific macro- and micro-conflict dynamics and their linkages, it is important to conduct a conflict analysis on the micro-level and combine it with a conflict analysis on the macro-level. One way of doing it would be to conduct a macro level analysis and then specify the KDFs and key actors and stakeholders for the micro-level. The macro-level conflict analysis does not and should not replace the conflict analysis for the micro-level. Ideally, the micro-level analysis should sharpen and specify the macro-level conflict analysis.

How to make an analysis less biased and more nuanced and differentiated?

The more diverse the group of participants in a conflict analysis exercise is, the richer, more nuanced and less biased the conflict analysis is likely to be.

A form of validation might also be the critical-friendly feedback of “outsiders” or “external experts” who try to challenge the dominant way of thinking. Often some critique may offer new or fresh perspectives, which may not have been considered in the first analysis as they were ignored or considered too controversial or provocative. In the end, it may pay off to reconcile and accommodate the new, different perspectives in the preliminary analysis.

We have very little time - is there a “fast speed forward” approach to our conflict analysis?

There are three possible (pragmatic) ways, which very much go hand in hand:

First, you may have to start working with the little information you have and deepen and sharpen your understanding while working in the conflict context and in the program. Working with and through local partners will give you a good sense on the situation and will help you to quickly get up-to-date with some of the current conflict dynamics. More substantial information may be followed up later when there is less urgency and time pressure.

Second, you may start working with the existing analyses by like-minded organizations, research institutes and INGOs, which may give you a solid and first understanding of the conflict context, some of the key conflict factors and actors. When there is time and space, these existing analyses should be adapted, validated and first and foremost be updated.

Third, you may consider using so-called “systems or conflict archetypes” (see CDA 2016, Systems approaches to peacebuilding). Working with archetypes assumes that you have a general understanding of systems thinking and how to use it in a conflict analysis and program design. A conflict archetype has to be always adapted to the very specific conflict context in question.

When do I have enough information to conduct a conflict analysis? Or how much information do I need?

Usually gaining information about key conflict dynamics is not that challenging – but how to process, assess and prioritize it is often the real challenge. Conflict analysis practice shows that there is a real danger of overwhelming your team and partners with too much information— with no capacity to process it all. As a general good practice, one may begin with a modest set of data or general information, assess it, and then decide where you need to seek further information.

How to deal with team conflicts, which are “mirror images” and micro conflicts of the macro conflict/s in a country?

If the conflict has a strong ethnic or religious dimension, the different well-known conflict lines and perspectives on the macro-level are often mirrored or reflected in or as team conflicts among local multi-ethnic or multi-religious staff. Here a conflict analysis can bring into the open the different perspectives and perceptions of the conflict issues, dynamics and actors. A conflict analysis may open a safe space to discuss these different perspectives, may generate empathy

for “the other” or even a common understanding on some conflict issues or actors which until then remained hidden or implicit.

(ii) Encountered Challenges with Conflict Analysis

Many of the following challenges are based on the key findings of the RPP program and international and local conflict analysis practice:

- Due to the lack of resources and time, many conflict analyses are not updated. They might have been conducted at the beginning of a project or program, but then are often not regularly updated. Not-updated conflict analyses can lead to ill-thought and/or counter-productive strategies.
- Many conflict analyses tend to be partial and narrow as organizations or practitioners use their favorite methods or tools, which justify their own programmatic focus or mandate.
- There might be little buy-in of senior management to invest in conflict analysis. This may be due to very different reasons: there might be uncertainty of how to deal with the findings and outcome of the analysis, also related to possible sensitivities, and/or the lack of political will, time and financial resources to engage.
- Conflict analyses are done implicitly: Local and international staff have been working in a specific context for a long time and stress that they know the context “in and out”. Given their local knowledge, they do not see the need to invest time in an explicit analysis process. If information remains implicit, it cannot be shared. And there is the danger that we assume that the staff working for the same organization share the same understanding of the conflict amongst them and with local partners (this might not be true!). Additionally, many organizations have a high staff turnover and important conflict information and strategic considerations might be easily lost. This raises some general crucial questions about knowledge management in conflict contexts.
- At the same time, there might be highly escalating conflicts where written information might directly or indirectly endanger the authors of an analysis or participants in a conflict analysis workshop. While there is not just one way of dealing with such a dilemma, one option might be to share for example the visualized results of an analysis only internally and with a highly trusted donor agency and to put the least controversial issues on paper to fulfill some of the donor requirements for continuous funding or to engage with national governments.
- Analysis – Practice gap: One of the greatest challenges is that many organizations do not link their analysis with their project/program design. They develop a peacebuilding program based on their mandate, preferred program method and target group and not on a conflict analysis. For example, an organization working in a conflict context brings youth from different ethnic backgrounds together – as youth is their preferred target group and dialogue their preferred organizational approach while this might actually not address key drivers of the conflict as identified during the analysis process.
- Many of the analyses conducted - sometimes called conflict analysis or often called problem, context or situational analysis - conducted by (international or local) development or peacebuilding organizations contain a lot of contextual information on the economic,

political, social and geographical background of the conflict area, country or region. While this rich context analysis is useful for the wider program design, it often falls short of and says little about the key driving factors and the dynamics of the conflict.

- Other conflict analysis assessments especially mandated or conducted by multi-lateral or influential donor agencies tend to be too comprehensive, broad and rich: They offer a very long list of different factors without indicating the dynamics between them and prioritizing them. The link to the analysis in donor agencies' strategies is not always clear and straight-forwarded and might be more guided by governmental or national strategic interests in a country or region.
- While it is crucial to conduct a conflict analysis exercise in an inclusive manner, it is equally challenging - even more so in a highly complex conflict with shifting actors and/or little access to them. This raises the question on how to capture the perspectives of the so-called "hard to reach" in a conflict analysis. How to include the voices of those who have a vested (political and economic) interest in and profit from keeping the conflict going? An illustrative example here may be violent extremist groups, who commit gross human rights violations, reject any international involvement. and (international) organisations, in most cases, have no or very little access to them.
- The private sector plays an important part in the generation and the dynamics of many violent conflicts – and can play a crucial role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding responses. Yet, (international) peacebuilding organizations often have a limited understanding and knowledge about the specific destructive and constructive roles played by the private sector. As a result, they are often not taken into account during conflict analysis processes.

Appendix Five: RPP Program Planning Chart

RPP Program Planning Chart: Identification of Activities, Changes and Theories of Change & Assumptions

Program Goal (define timeframe! 2 years? 5 years?):

Program Goal – Theory of Change:

Proposed Program Activities	Expected Changes, due to the Activities	Activity Level Theory of Change	What assumptions do you make?
1.	<i>The 'then' part of your Theory of Change</i>	If we do xxx [<i>activities</i>] Then we achieve yyy [<i>the type of change you want to see</i>] Because zzz [<i>Rationale for why this change will be achieved</i>]	
2.			
3.			
4.			

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