

Collaborative Learning Projects

Final Report

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Non-Governmental Organisations,
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Abbreviations

AUSAID	Australian Aid Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CDA	CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DNH	Do No Harm
EED	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RPP	Reflecting on Peace Practice
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
STEPS	Steps Towards Conflict Prevention
TOR	Terms of Reference

1 Executive Summary

Introduction

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Inc. (CDA) is an organisation based in Massachusetts, USA, focusing on the roles of third party actors in countries dealing with poverty, conflict or post-conflict.

Over the 14 years in which CDA has been supported by Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), the organisation has developed its role as a global learning and knowledge centre exploring the challenges facing international organisations operating in poverty and conflict zones. Before 1993, few other organisations had tackled such issues, broadly defined as conflict sensitivity. CDA has consequently attracted a lot of attention in the development co-operation and humanitarian assistance community and has in particular become associated with the principle of “Do No Harm”.

The organisation probes into key and insightful questions in cooperation with its partners and seeks to identify patterns of answers through fundamentally participatory processes. These exchanges of knowledge and identification of patterns subsequently serve as guidance for better programming in conflict prone environments for international agencies.

Sida commissioned this evaluation of CDA in early 2007. The evaluation comprised two main elements: institutional capacity and programme delivery.

Concerning the institutional aspects, the evaluation reviewed CDA's governance, management systems and human resource arrangements with a view to assessing the organisation's overall reliability to deliver on its objectives. A mix of international donors is supporting CDA financially – averaging a combined total of approximately US\$1 million per annum, over the last three years. Sida has been a major donor to CDA.

As regards programme delivery, the evaluation focused on three of CDA's programmes, each of which draws learning from the following questions:

- a) Do No Harm (DNH): How can international development and humanitarian actors provide assistance so that it has no negative consequences for society (by fuelling conflict) while assisting local capacities for peace?
- b) Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP): How can we improve the effectiveness of peace efforts? How can the efforts of multiple international agencies have a greater impact on the ending of war and the achievement of peace?
- c) Steps Towards Conflict Prevention (STEPS): What can be learned from local communities that, in the midst of conflict, find ways to ‘exempt’ themselves from participation in these conflicts that can be instructive and useful for the international community concerned with conflict prevention?

Approach

The Terms of Reference (TOR) asked the evaluation to focus on the implementation in three case study countries, as well as review documentation and view at headquarters level for CDA and some other organisations. While extrapolation from this base to the whole of CDA's programme may present some risks, the team has sought to minimise these through selection of a broad cross-section of sources for consultation. The evaluation was carried out over the period February–May 2007 and covers the work carried out by CDA from 1993 to the time of writing.

The focus of the TOR reflects the results based philosophy increasingly applied to development and humanitarian assistance and hence looks most closely at how the learning prompted by CDA is used (i.e. its outcomes). While this inevitably places the *process* for the generation of the learning somewhat into the background, it does provide a useful vantage point from which to explore the quality of the process and of the knowledge deployed in the field, because it asks how and why it was used, or not.

The evaluation team would highlight, however, that CDA is not an implementing organisation and the impact of its activities depends upon the degree and manner in which they are taken up by “partners” in the field. CDA’s focus has been on collaborative learning which involves a process of iterative generalisation and validation to which partners dedicate resources and which is facilitated by CDA.

Partners’ actual “uptake” of the ideas and tools generated is influenced by a number of factors, including the appropriateness of the ideas and tools, the capacity of the organisations concerned, and the opportunities available to take them forward in the field. Thus, we have reviewed CDA’s influence as it extends beyond input to activity, to outcome, and so contributes to impact.

The evaluation uses the following concepts:

- *Activity*: the process to deliver an output (use made of an input or resources)
- *Output*: a product, usually a definable quantity (most easily monitored over time and space)
- *Outcome*: use made by the beneficiaries of an output
- *Impact*: the consequence of the outcome (change triggered by the use of an output)

Findings on reliability, effectiveness and efficiency: relationship between Activities/Outputs and Outcomes

The evaluation team was tasked to enquire whether CDA’s approach is useful and if the organisation is of the right size and posture to help partner agencies pursue and apply the ideas and tools generated. To assess impact, the evaluation also explored whether agencies have been successful in implementing them. The findings on reliability, effectiveness and efficiency are the following:

1. The *institutional assessment* shows an organisation aligned with good practice for its partners and fundamentally *reliable* as a funding partner for Sida. CDA creates an opportunity for bodies working internationally to improve their work through capacity building and the development of ideas thanks to its ability to mobilise resources to work on ground-breaking topics.
2. The organisational structure and management is basically horizontal with a small core of permanent staff based in Cambridge. It has, however, been operating in a quite informal manner with important staffing constraints (particularly concerning the number of staff) considering the amount of work taken on. The potential retirement of the head of CDA, Mary Anderson, underscores the importance of the human resource element.
3. This informality has resulted in some limitations, in particular in communication: for example, the document hierarchy is often unclear (although this is now being addressed). In a situation where knowledge (and CDA’s documentation) is continually being renewed, this has meant that participants in the processes have sometimes been unsure of documents’ status and of the stage of thinking on an issue.
4. Programme planning and monitoring takes place amongst the staff at CDA but is not formalised according to normal results based management (RBM) practice. For example, because objectives are not formulated in terms of outcome to be achieved, operational strategies have tended to be reactive and based on field requests and on funding received. While there is internal reflective work (the DNH lessons learnt paper and the current series of DNH case studies looking at uptake are

examples of this), the monitoring of outcomes has tended to be unsystematic. The evaluation found only one other evaluation carried out on CDA's work (in the Great Lakes) and the integration of findings into projects is not reflected in reporting (including to donors).

5. CDA's activities are, however, conducted in a highly participatory manner and participants report favourably on the conduct of the process. The guidance and good practices are also thoroughly tested with agencies in different environments.
6. The evaluation finds that CDA's financial and personnel management is continually capitalising on previous experience.
7. The evaluation finds that outcome *effectiveness* is constrained by CDA's deliberately collaborative and non-directional mode of partnership. This style of cooperation (i.e. the timing, locations, participants and selection of partners are informal) draws heavily upon personal contacts which limits the range and character of partners involved. A wide range of outputs in the form of documents, seminars and training are made available for partner agencies to use or not, but personalities remain the key factor in uptake.
8. The evaluation extrapolates from its three case studies and the global interviews and data collection that a small number of targeted agencies have integrated the DNH methods into their planning and use the tools while a significant number of agencies (both targeted or not) have staff who are familiar with the basic intuitive principle. RPP on the other hand has not yet been widely adopted. STEPS has yet to produce generalisable findings that can be adopted.
9. Outcome *efficiency* for DNH is good when compared to the small management structure because of the number of places where ideas developed by CDA can be found. The significant global "brand" recognition is however balanced in key ways by the knowledge generated and consistency of support. For example the stronger up-take of DNH compared to RPP is due to the intuitive simplicity of the DNH tools. Yet many of the partners consulted found the complete DNH package overly complex because of limited support in the application on the ground (lack of continuity of access to advice) and because it is hard to relate to existing organisational systems (in terms of language and also its lack of connection to the project management cycle).
10. RPP, in spite of an ambitious agenda, has not been well recognised or adopted in the peace-building field. We found that the purpose and direction of research under the RPP project have been unclear to many of the partner agencies consulted and the considerable documentation generated is not easily accessible.
11. STEPS, which has been in existence since 2002, has yet to generate generalisable guidance.
12. Because of its focus on the process of knowledge transfer, CDA has not yet seized the opportunity to make clear connections to other bodies of knowledge but seeks instead to remain unique, non-threatening and neutral. Terms such as RPP's "effectiveness criteria" are used quite differently from emerging conventions in performance assessment, for example. We see that this position can limit the uptake of CDA's tools and ideas because partners still need to relate them to a wider body of knowledge that is continually changing.
13. This points to the need for CDA to be adaptable and operational in the way it relates to new developments, such as the Paris agenda (with its emphasis on ownership, alignment, harmonisation and management for results) as well as the new aid modalities (such as budget support and sector wide approaches) and other policy trends (rights based programming, gender sensitivity, poverty reduction, etc...).

14. On the other hand, there is a sense in international NGO quarters in the three countries visited that demand for further CDA inputs remains significant, even though CDA's tools are now not the only ones available. One must remember the limited budgets and human resources that have been deployed to realise the degree of efficiency that has indeed been achieved by CDA, based on its considerable knowledge-base, commitment and hard work.

Findings on impact: relationship between Outcomes and Key Issues in Conflict

The evaluation team sought to verify the significance of impact in the three countries using tests of relevance, extent and duration/sustainability. This allows us to trace the links which the development and humanitarian agencies have made between the outcomes (how the knowledge and tools are used) and key conflict issues. We extrapolate from these three (necessarily limited) forms of evidence to the overall work of CDA.

1. CDA's work under the DNH Project has a high level of *relevance to aspects of conflict with which the agencies engage* and often helps to identify specific elements within a situation that are critical in programming. Through DNH, CDA has done much to raise the importance of considering the way in which assistance is delivered.
2. The selection process (criteria) of who to engage, when and how, is not well documented for the three projects. The documents seen by the evaluation reflect a preference to tune existing approaches rather than target resources to actors or regions so that they have an optimal impact on priority conflict issues using an explicit assessment of what outcomes and impact there have been.
3. The *relevance of the actors and relevance to key issues* identified in generally accepted conflict analyses is assessed as medium. The agencies that DNH works with in greater depth exercise their influence mostly in the field and are not necessarily well positioned to influence strategic decision-making in crisis or conflict. Increasingly over time, for geo-strategic reasons relating to the growing isolation of international NGOs and the importance of aid harmonisation, the preferred partners of CDA exist in a particular institutional niche. In the case of RPP, the focus of the ideas and tools generated is on conflict resolution (or dialogue promoting) organisations, whose role can be constrained. In the countries visited, there is a shortage of relationships with organisations engaging in governance, human rights, or media, as well as multilateral or donor organisations and (except in Rwanda) with host state organisations. Yet these were the more relevant actors in the countries visited by the evaluation in relation to overall conflict issues highlighted in conflict analysis.
4. The evaluation finds that DNH's influence within organisations is stronger at a junior level or with non-managerial conflict advisers at headquarters who have to compete with guidance generated for many other cross-cutting issues. At more senior management levels, there is a low degree of awareness of the tools. This limits *relevance in today's conflict-focused organisations*, as the personnel who are most well-versed in the tools are not in a position to challenge agency policy.
5. *Extent of impact* (i.e. how widespread the effects of the outcomes are in relation to key actors and issues in the conflict) is strong in some institutions but overall is still limited. To summarise our findings in this area, the evaluation drew up the following categories of stakeholders:
 - a) *Primary partners* who are relevant peacebuilding actors and have solid (in some cases longstanding) experience of working with CDA (eg. World Vision, CRS, CARE). It is in this group that the greatest uptake (or potential for uptake) of CDA's methodologies is found, yet it remains small.
 - b) *Secondary partners* who are relevant peacebuilding actors and have been involved in some CDA activities, typically one to three workshops. In this group, we found very mixed levels of uptake, typically quite low.

- c) Stakeholders who are *familiar with DNH and/or RPP* methods, but have not formally engaged with CDA (e.g. Oxfam). These are often well versed in other related tools and use CDA material as a complement.
- d) Stakeholders who do not work with any CDA tools and have not participated in any CDA events (i.e. no impact), yet are *important actors in the conflict*. These remain the larger category.

The primary focus of CDA's engagement is international NGOs and thus represents a specific segment of the organisations involved with conflict. They operate worldwide and in areas which call for conflict sensitivity skills. They also have significant budgets. However, in at least some of the countries visited, their effect in terms of conflict sensitivity is limited for reasons of sectors of intervention and political control.

6. *Duration and sustainability* of impact is greatest with three key partners (World Vision, CARE and CRS) because the DNH methodologies have been mainstreamed, formally or informally, into their programming. But the evaluation finds from the three case studies that they are not applied in a particular country or on a continuous basis. Turnover of agency staff is a challenge for all partners as the methodologies are hosted within personnel, not the institutions.
7. Other factors of sustainability include the availability of CDA's own staff, which is a natural limitation imposed by the small size of the organisation and its small funding base. In the absence of long range CDA engagement, partner agencies are easily diverted by other imperatives. In the case of the tsunami emergency in Sri Lanka, for example, CDA was not able to seize the opportunity to emphasize the need for a continued focus on conflict sensitivity. The knowledge was swept aside – as were, it is important to point out, many other good practices, as shown by the many evaluations carried out of the relief and rehabilitation operations.
8. DNH (and possibly RPP) is being progressively complemented with other methodologies, in particular the application of conflict sensitivity analysis to poverty and crisis planning. This remains to be taken into account by CDA through a review of the possible links between tools and organisational project cycle management where these are progressively integrated.

In summary, CDA's good reliability and overall relevance of the lines of questioning contrasts with more limited efficiency and effectiveness and irregular significance of impact over time.

Conclusions

The fundamental point is that the organisation's strengths reflect a very competent focus on the process and dimensions of learning. For these levels of change (activity and output), CDA is uniquely qualified. The consequence of that however is that the three projects have lost focus on their outcomes and impact, which are delegated to the partners. The (admittedly decreasing) CDA responsibility along the chain of effects (i.e. from input to activity to output to outcome) could be much more deliberately taken into account to generate more appropriate levels of impact.

The evaluation finds that CDA's deliberate focus on process presents new challenges vis à vis itself, its donors and partners, creating a need for strategic choice. There is currently a disproportion between the ambitions expressed in the research and lines of questioning, the tools, the perceptions of outsiders, and the nature of up-take among development and humanitarian agencies.

The critical learning promoted by CDA has not yet led to the internal self-assessment that would allow for a better selection of partners, timing and continuity of support, and links to contemporary institutional dynamics.

There are also significant differences in the operationalisation and utilisation of the knowledge: DNH (in existence since 1994) is by far the most advanced and gives CDA its international credibility. RPP is still in the process of elaborating its concepts and building its institutional constituency. STEPS has been considerably delayed, and after three years is only now beginning to define general findings from the case studies, to be further tested.

With limited resources, CDA has deployed considerable energy and established lasting relationships. There is still a gap in the skill sets of development and humanitarian agencies for tools to support strategic planning, and to challenge institutional imperatives. Yet over the years, a new context and new thinking is emerging. Continuity of presence is critical to respond to this new environment.

CDA's methodologies have been largely focused on local action ('more people') and CDA should seize opportunities to achieve greater influence with 'key people' and consolidate the process in critical areas. To further use CDA terms, there is an urgent need to review the theories of change, or strategies of intervention, and review the connection between CDA's capacities and project objectives.

Recommendations

CDA has developed greatly since the days when it was a lone voice on issues of conflict sensitivity and peace-building. These issues are now widely acknowledged and are being addressed, thanks in part to CDA's work. Donors have begun to support CDA with substantial sums and are increasingly required to meet the requirements of results based management systems. Scenarios for CDA's ongoing development need to be defined in the light of these factors.

The evaluation team recommends that Sida (and CDA, although the brief of the evaluation is only indirectly to make recommendations directly to CDA) follows one of two approaches:

1. Narrow option: Sida should assist CDA to focus during the utilisation phase of its projects on a small number of countries where CDA will engage strategically, setting measurable objectives and articulating a theory of change to be in a better position to achieve long term impact. Meanwhile, research activities could be streamlined in terms of participants and timing so that they are more time efficient while still being sufficiently broad (in terms of number of case studies) to generate credible generalised findings.
2. Wide option: Sida should encourage and support a wider engagement of CDA with conflict issues including global objectives, a pre-determined agenda of country studies and specified outcomes, and extended field presence. This would require expanded resources and a significant shift of operational posture.

General Recommendations Regardless of Options:

- a) In both these options CDA and Sida should develop a forum for discussion with other donors to CDA.
- b) Sida should clarify its reasons and expectations in funding CDA in terms of *results to be achieved*. This should be done both in terms of the development and humanitarian assistance community in general (e.g. specific progress on conflict sensitivity tools) and/or specific outcomes at country level.
- c) Sida should encourage CDA to *increase the monitoring of the outcomes* of the three programmes (which can be defined as the uptake of the ideas and tools) and systematically explore reasons for cases where there is less success (as is now being done with DNH), in particular for RPP.
- d) Sida should ask that CDA refer more frequently to theories of change implicit in its own choice of methods and partners and the process nature of the work. This would include the need to *map more precisely the different categories of invited users (i.e. stakeholder analysis)* and the issues that are to be addressed

through capacity building. CDA could also benefit from more cross-referencing to other existing tools. A *strategy for selecting partners* should be developed.

- e) CDA should seek to regularise its *relationships with consultants and researchers* working with its own staff to ensure that they are adequately supported to follow-up on requests by partner agencies, with a particular focus for some selected countries, as per the previous recommendation.

Recommendations Aligned with a (preferred) Narrow Option

It should be pointed out that this option does not call for more operational presence by CDA, but rather more concentration on key areas and stable partnerships with external stakeholders, also supported independently by donors.

- f) Sida should *select capacity building partners* to work with key agencies and personnel in focus countries and require them to call down appropriate capacity building resources and tools based on a local assessment of needs and demand. This would imply an assessment by these national partners of the comparative advantages of suppliers of methodologies. It would lead to a more structured approach toward partners and countries within the CDA headquarters.
- g) Sida should promote joint donor processes seeking to *develop strategic conflict sensitivity assessment tools*, in particular to develop a stronger link to planning at country programme level and to facilitate the evaluations of conflict sensitivity at country level. These should seek to integrate the knowledge and tools generated by CDA, but clarify links to poverty reduction strategies and budget support, to project appraisal and evaluation frameworks, and to reporting formats.
- h) CDA should tighten up on the *publication and follow-up of its reports*. It should develop the capacity, in association with partners, to engage in advocacy at local and international levels, based on documentation and ideas generated. It should seek to promote ground-breaking comment and research on global issues relating to peace and conflict.
- i) DNH is but one of many tools and may not always be the most appropriate. CDA should seek to participate in discussions in the broader field of conflict sensitivity (for example as it has with the OECD DAC on guidance for the evaluation of conflict prevention), and seek to align its terms and concepts to the emerging conventions of international development and conflict institutions.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

2.1.1 CDA Collaborative Learning Projects

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects is a non-profit organisation based in the United States which works through a world-wide network of partners to promote improved effectiveness in humanitarian assistance, peace practice, and development assistance. It follows on from the Collaborative for Development Action founded by Mary Anderson in the 1980s, which took on the programme called Local Capacities for Peace and later became Do No Harm.

The organisation is currently structured with a small core of 11 permanent staff and a number of additional associate researchers and consultants attached to particular programmes. These programmes define the way in which CDA organises its work and are multi-donor and multi-year activities.

On-going programmes include:

- The Corporate Engagement Project (since 2001), which aims at identifying (and optimising) the direct and indirect impacts of corporate decision-making and operations.
- The Listening Project (since 2005), which aims to improve the accountability of international assistance and the ability of recipient societies to provide feedback on impacts.
- The Do No Harm Project (since 1994), which aims at identifying ways in which humanitarian and development assistance can help support processes for peace and not exacerbate conflict. Stated very briefly, the Do No Harm methodology developed by CDA takes its starting point in the recognition that assistance inevitably affects social (and conflict) dynamics and that greater understanding by development and humanitarian workers of opportunities and possible harmful effects can help improve the quality of aid and contribute positively to local capacities that will help overcoming conflict. One of the major outputs of the Do No Harm project was a framework for considering the impact of aid on conflict – and it uses terminology such as “dividers and connectors”, now widely referred to in conflict analysis.¹
- Steps Towards Conflict Prevention (since 2002), which aims at identifying the experiences of communities in situations of conflict who have managed to exempt themselves from the conflict. STEPS has so far resulted in 14 individual case studies, while two others also carried out may not be included for analysis.
- Reflecting on Peace Practice (since 1999), which examines experiences of agencies whose activities attempt to prevent or mitigate violent conflict with a view to improving future peace practice. Since 2003, RPP has engaged with organisations in a “utilisation phase” to improve peace programming through the application of RPP findings. This includes application of the RPP Matrix (which distinguishes between more people/key people and the individual/personal level and Socio/political level).² RPP has also resulted in the definition of six criteria of effectiveness and a systems approach to conflict mapping.

CDA also undertakes pieces of contract research for specific clients, such as the pre-guidance advice given in January 2007 to the OECD-DAC working group on evaluation of conflict prevention and peace-building. The corporate engagement project has also been reproduced on company websites, such as the Myan Mar Yadana Pipeline project documentation on the human rights impact of Total, the oil company.

CDA operates a small headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, just off the Harvard University campus. It collaborates with, and is supported by, a number of major international development donors, including Sida, DfID, CIDA, SDC, AusAid, GTZ, Norad, and Danida.

2.1.2 CDA's approach

CDA's approach is highly participatory and encourages collaborative learning that reflects the dynamism of peace and conflict contexts and the impact of aid (positive and negative) on such dynamics. The name chosen by CDA (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects) reflects this emphasis on facilitation and on relevant knowledge in all its forms.

The approach is field evidence and interaction-based, driven by the experience of participants (rather than theory or model-based) and seeks to develop a context in which organizations learn from and with each other. This aims to overcome the compartmentalisation of learning due to the natural competition between the multiple agencies working in the international development and humanitarian assistance field.

¹ *Do No Harm: How Aid Supports Peace – or War*, Mary B. Anderson, 1999. Field testing of the ideas and approaches reported in the Do No Harm book were reported in *Options For Aid In Conflict: Lessons from Field Experience*, Mary B. Anderson (editor), 2000.

² *Confronting War: Critical Lessons For Peace Practitioners*, Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olsen, 2003

To gather evidence, CDA conducts a large number of field-based case studies in conflict areas around the world. These cases are collectively analysed with stakeholders and other parties to detect generalisable patterns. In the case of Do No Harm, for example, this concerned how “outsider” aid interacts with local conflicts in both negative (exacerbating) and positive (encouraging local capacities for peace) ways. For RPP, it concerns identifying ways of improving the effectiveness of peace practice. In the case of STEPS, it concerns how communities exempt themselves from the conflict and how this can be capitalised on by international development and humanitarian assistance organisations.³

CDA projects hold feedback workshops and “consultations” in conflict zones and in areas where development and humanitarian agencies are headquartered, including Cambridge, Massachusetts. The cumulative effect of this high level of participation is that many thousand individuals can be involved in “testing” the lessons learned from the case studies against their own experience, to refine and improve the relevance and usefulness of these lessons.⁴ A further effect is that a large number of people are associated with the process and thus have an opportunity to absorb the lessons into their own peace practice.

The CDA team also holds information dissemination and training sessions based on the key findings and tools which are generated by this learning process. The tools consist essentially of ways of organising information: for example seeking to define which actors in a conflict act as connectors, and which act as dividers (in the case of Do No Harm). Some of this training is carried out by people with no institutional connection to CDA.

Finally, CDA personnel participate in specific consultancies with identified outcomes, such as an evaluation of Community Housing Fund in Liberia, an evaluation of the Berghof Foundation in Sri Lanka, or assisting the OECD Development Assistance Committee in drawing up guidelines for the evaluation of conflict prevention and peace-building.

In general, CDA does not enter into formal arrangements with its partners (CRS is an exception) and there are no funding relationships. This reflects the collaborative learning approach, where CDA likes to emphasise that it is an NGO. As one of the RPP Co-Directors noted, “CDA is not operational.... CDA does not do peacebuilding work in the countries in which it is working”. The focus is rather on improving effectiveness by gathering and analysing experience “collectively with agencies in ways that help the agencies reflect and learn from experience, answer important dilemmas they face about their work and develop practical options for addressing them”.⁵

CDA has proposed the table below as best capturing the intent and achievements sought by the projects:

³ *The Collaborative Approach to Learning (a.k.a CDA's "Methodology")*. Explanatory note from CDA.

⁴ RPP – on www.cdainc.com/rpp/about_rpp.php

⁵ e-mail from Diana Chigas dated 15th March 2007

CDA Activity/Intent	Effects
Identify an important issue for international implementing and donor agencies	1. Recognition of a shared issue/problem 2. Raised awareness regarding the potential negative effects of current practices
Convene agencies/hold inter-agency consultations	1. Increased openness to acknowledging need to learn within and across agencies 2. Deepened appreciation for shared experience 3. Development of analytical skills regarding programming processes and impacts
Engage collaborating agencies in a process of gathering/analyzing field experiences together	1. Experience working together on common issue across agencies 2. In some cases, interagency cooperation/coordination in field programming 3. Increased awareness of the value of learning from experience and increased knowledge of how to do so 4. Redesign/adaptation of programs
Emphasize importance of listening to and learning from and respecting local people	1. Staff people in collaborating agencies take time/are given time to be attentive to local people 2. Agencies value ideas and insights that come from local people as the source of learning about their impacts 3. Programs are redesigned in response to local inputs
Extend and highlight discussion regarding an important, shared issue	1. An issue previously under-discussed becomes accepted as important and relevant 2. Paradigm shift in thinking about programming
Generate new ideas/concepts	1. Vocabulary of discussion changes Staff within agencies and among agencies report that they have new language to analyze effectiveness
Conceptualize lessons from accumulated and analyzed experience	1. Agency staff begin identifying their own contributions to/experiences with these lessons 2. Generation of options for programming that break out of previous limiting either/or analysis 3. Integration of lessons into program design/redesign
Develop practical tools for analysis and programming	1. Participating agencies change the ways they analyze contexts and strategize programs 2. Tools and concepts become integrated into organizational systems and processes
Publish lessons and tools in a widely accessible document	1. Wider acknowledgement of the central issues and dilemmas 2. More sophisticated, evidence-based understanding of the issues and potential options for corrective action 3. Dissemination beyond those directly participating in the process
Develop training packages, provide training programs, consultations, training-of-trainers	1. Extension of a common vocabulary for understanding international interventions and impacts 2. Collegial interaction within and among agencies in dealing with crucial issues in tense situations 3. Increased attentiveness to and appreciation of the voices of local people 4. Practical application of tools, resulting in changed (improved) programming
Influence policy frameworks of donors, multilaterals and major international implementing agencies	1. Increased acceptance of important new principles and best practices 2. Development of “standard practices” and expectations of many agencies 3. Increased incentives for applying new tools and concepts

We insert this table here to underline the approach taken by CDA with its clear focus on the multidimensional nature of the learning and incentives for change that the activities should generate.

2.2 Definition of the Task

The Terms of Reference (TOR) indicate an interest from Sida to examine two principal areas: (a) CDA's internal management and financial control systems (i.e. institutional capacity) and (b) the quality and impact of its activities (i.e. programme delivery). We see these two areas as linked in that the quality of CDA's internal systems (for instance regarding strategic planning) will have a bearing on their programmes in the field.

2.2.1 Assessing how CDA works – its internal systems

The evaluation was asked to consider the entire management chain – a term referring to the generation and utilisation of this facilitation of learning from HQ to partners, and including CDA internal communication and the adequacy of its staffing. In particular, it was asked to provide an inventory and assessment of routines and systems for financial and business management, including the reliability and relevance of CDA reports to Sida. It was to assess whether CDA's internal control and systems ensure the quality and accuracy of its documentation (i.e. annual accounts, operations planning, applications, financial and narrative reports and other materials presented to donors) and whether CDA has the appropriate systems and routines needed to ensure the quality of, and direct, the activities towards the goals established for its work. The evaluation was asked to provide recommendations for improvements in CDA's management of its processes.

2.2.2 Assessing CDA's processes – its projects and their impact

The other main area on which the evaluation was asked to focus concerned the quality of CDA's project activities and outputs (whether they be participation in meetings, consultations, facilitation of analysis and planning, training, production of studies) and the means of their delivery, follow-up, and more importantly impact. This focus includes: the nature of partner relations to CDA and partner roles and responsibilities; the degree of partner integration of CDA working methods and learning processes; the quality of the activities and analyse of the reliability and relevance, taking into account conflict mapping (risk and opportunity assessment); CDA's follow up on training and case studies; and the direct and indirect consequences of CDA related peacebuilding efforts (in three selected case study countries).

Finally, the evaluation was asked to examine the way in which CDA's partners (and other agencies) have drawn upon CDA's tools and methodologies in their concrete interventions in the field. There should be a focus on three programmes in particular: Reflecting on Peace Practice, Do No Harm, and Steps Towards Conflict Prevention (STEPS). These programmes have developed or expect to develop a number of practical tools or methodologies.

2.3 Evaluation Approach

We have linked the two areas of inquiry (institutional and programme effects) by establishing a framework which defines the benchmarks for institutional capacity, plus efficiency, effectiveness, and significance of impact achieved by Sida in its funding of CDA. We have undertaken the evaluation in three phases: an inception phase, a data collection phase, and a report writing and delivery phase:

Inception Phase. During the inception phase outstanding aspects of the TOR were clarified, including identification and proposed selection of partners and programmes/projects for visit within each of the three countries selected, timing issues etc. We reviewed a sample of the documentation on CDA's organisation, approach, reporting etc. and on the three focus programmes (DNH, RPP and STEPS). An inception report was produced that was approved by Sida and discussed with CDA.

Data collection phase. For the collection phase we used participatory techniques and semi-structured interviews in the field following a short desk study and discussions with CDA at their headquarters in Cambridge, (25th–28th February), with gradual testing of our working hypotheses.

Three countries were selected for field work based primarily on discussions with CDA who felt they were where most critical mass of work and spread (between the three projects) was to be found: DNH had been applied extensively in Rwanda and in Sri Lanka, RPP work had been done in depth in Kosovo, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, and STEPS cases had been done in Sri Lanka and in Rwanda, the latter a place where it was felt it had already achieved some outcomes. Accordingly, field missions were carried out to Kosovo (18th–24th March), Rwanda (27th March–3rd April) and Sri Lanka (9th–15th April).

This phase generated a fuller understanding of CDA's programmes and implementation modalities – as well as its institutional aspects. This was further enhanced when one team member participated in the second STEPS Consultation organised by CDA at their headquarters on 13th–15th March.

Report writing and presentation phase. The present draft report is the second deliverable of the evaluation. The report findings have been presented at a workshop with Sida and CDA in Cambridge on 2nd–3rd May.

2.4 Evaluation Methodology

Sida wished the evaluation to be both retrospective *and* real time. Our understanding has been that we should therefore examine how CDA's activities have been performed, assess their mode of delivery and impact, take account of current initiatives or developments in hand or planned, and identify concrete recommendations for improvement where relevant.

We have also been particularly careful to recognise the fundamentally partnership driven approach of CDA: the fact that achieving the outcome belongs to the partners – it is their responsibility and minimal control is (very deliberately) exercised by CDA over how the tools and thinking which it has provided are used. At the same time, we have had to remain focused on results, for reasons explained in the opening paragraph of the ToR: increased demands for quality in assistance, and reporting on this quality in terms of the difference it makes for the ultimate beneficiary.

We have used key planning terms in ways that are slightly more precise than how they are defined in the evaluation literature, in particular the current OECD-DAC Glossary of Terms (2002), to reflect the non-operational nature of CDA:

- *Output*: a defined quantity which is the service provided by CDA to the development and humanitarian assistance community (reviews, methodologies, reports, etc.). A process can well be an output spread over time, or an activity, defined for example by the number of persons involved (interviews, meetings, consultations, workshops, etc.).
- *Outcome*: the manner in which CDA's output is used, or not used, by the international development and humanitarian agencies and groups, whether this is intended or not intended in the planning stage (we understand intended outcomes as the objectives of a CDA project).
- *Impact*: the consequences in society of the use of an outcome, in other words the ownership of the outcome as it translates into better or worse conditions of life. This can be represented as the ripple effect of an outcome, and can also be intended or unintended (intended impact is connected to the general objectives of a programme).
- *Result*: this is the cumulative term for output, outcome, and impact.
- *Conflict issue*: this term we have used to render more verifiable the impact assessment. It points to our understanding of the causes, drivers, and triggers of conflict – those factors that call for intervention by people working across borders, to follow the CDA focus. The issues we have used for our country analyses are drawn from respected country level conflict analyses in each of the three countries visited.

Overall, the evaluation has been guided by the established evaluation criteria developed through OECD/DAC, namely: Effectiveness, Relevance, Sustainability, Impact and Efficiency. We have taken account of the fact that further work is on-going in the DAC to make these more useful to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation (a process to which CDA has itself contributed). We have understood these terms in the following manner, drawn from the DAC definitions:

- *Effectiveness*: this is defined by the connection between outcomes intended (i.e. project objectives) and outcomes achieved. We have asked whether the use of the tools, as defined in CDA documentation and interviews, match the outcomes achieved in the case study conflict situations.
- *Efficiency*: this is defined as a measure of the outcomes achieved compared with a given outputs, and revolves around identification of the issues of opportunities used, or missed (waste). We have asked whether CDA's governance systems, organisational and financial management, and human resources, were proportionate to the outputs and outcomes, and whether gains could still be made here with no additional resources.
- *Impact*: for the purposes of this evaluation we have not sought to review the attribution of impact to outcomes, which we feel would have been spurious. We have instead reviewed the contribution made by CDA to an impact, by testing this contribution according to three criteria (counting duration and sustainability as one) which allow us to verify the significance of the impact of CDA:
 - *Relevance*: this is defined by DAC as the alignment of objectives and activities to needs. In a refinement of this definition, we have asked whether the outcomes achieved by CDA partners using the CDA outputs have targeted the priority issues in the conflict and peace dynamics as identified through reliable and authoritative conflict analysis.
 - *Duration*: this relates to the dimension of time also covered by sustainability, and is defined as the period over which the interaction of outcomes of CDA with key issues in a conflict take place, usually for a single country, or better for a certain type of institution or population of participants. It assesses the way in which a single process supported by CDA may lead to prolonged influence locally. This allows us to capture the importance of continuity of influence over time in a particular context, which would not be as adequately captured by effectiveness or relevance.
 - *Sustainability*: this is defined as the ability of outcomes to be continued after the end of activities financed under a programme. We have asked whether there would be continued use of methodologies and concepts developed under the three CDA programmes independently of CDA (in terms of places where CDA does not operate, as well as over time).
 - *Extent*: this is here defined mostly in terms of people: where they work, how many they are, how significant and powerful they are in applying CDA methodologies, and consequently how widespread the effects of the outcomes are in relation to key issues in the conflict. This also does justice to the unique quality of the CDA outcomes to reach over and beyond the immediate participants in CDA workshops and trainings.

These criteria are for us constitutive of the notion of significance of impact, and are open to independent verification. They allow us to explain why, or why not, impact was achieved, without entering into a description of the myriad individualised strategies of intervention and theories of change used by personnel on the ground. They also allow us to use qualitative as well as quantitative evidence, so avoiding the trap of seeking only to 'measure' impact.

2.5 Limitations

The team would like to draw attention to the following constraints or limitations encountered during the evaluation and the mitigating actions taken by the team:

- Time constraints. The evaluation is relatively ambitious in terms of the material to be covered and the time available to the evaluation team. In particular, there was one week per field mission. To overcome this constraint the field teams focused on a representative selection of stakeholders, and used e-mail and telephone contact. We relied upon existing conflict analyses, cross-checked with local stakeholders interviewed.
- Choice of countries for field missions. Both Sida and CDA gave the team considerable flexibility. The team concentrated on countries in which CDA has had extensive engagement for the three projects (and where experienced stakeholders are available) rather than countries which might be more challenging but where CDA has been less involved and there would be less evidence. The views of CDA were used for the final list of three.
- Programmatic focus. The TOR ask that a focus is placed on three programmes: DNH, RPP and STEPS (which are also the focus of Sida's support). This seems reasonable given the time constraints but cannot present the full picture of CDA's outcomes (which would need to include other projects).
- Stakeholders which had been involved for many years have often moved on from the countries visited, and early preparation of field visits proved to be deceptive. The teams instead had to resort to a 'snow-ball' sampling process and discovery while on the ground, in other words gaining access through progressive referrals.

3. Findings of the Institutional Assessment

Our institutional assessment of CDA is based on an examination of the quality of its planning, management and information systems, and consideration of the context in which this happens, i.e. the role of external and internal institutional factors. This analysis is implicitly related to benchmarks in other comparable organisations and responds to the question about reliability in the ToR. The team focused on four key areas which group together the institutional aspects that Sida asked to be assessed, namely:

- Governing structure, including: CDA's vision, values and mandate and the role, selection and composition of the CDA Board.
- Organisational management, decision making structures (meetings, etc.), internal communication and information; operational planning; implementation of work and monitoring of progress/results; reporting; effectiveness of the organisational structure vis-à-vis tasks
- Financial management and administration, including existence and quality of the funding strategy; budgeting and contract monitoring; reporting; accounting arrangements; cost-efficiency; accountability; administrative procedures.
- Human resources and learning, including staffing, training, personnel policy and practices; and use of external staff and of reviews and evaluation.

The institutional assessment has been based on a desk review of written material such as plans, progress reports, minutes, audit reports, accounts, budgets etc., combined with interviews of selected staff and management at CDA and relevant staff in member organisations in the three targeted countries.

3.1 Governance

Vision

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Inc. is a project-based organisation with an overall *vision* “to improving the effectiveness of international actors who provide humanitarian assistance, engage in peace practice, and are involved in supporting sustainable development.”⁶ CDA’s methodology is based on a learning approach, i.e. learning from international experience through a process of collaborative activities (which gather and analyze formally as well as informally the experiences of international development collaboration) to bring out patterns across contexts and project types. The projects involve international and local partners in humanitarian and development assistance agencies, peace practice groups, and corporate enterprises.⁷

CDA was started in 1985 when Mary Anderson and Catherine Overholt established the for-profit company *Collaborative for Development Action, Inc.* Under this umbrella, three major projects Do No Harm (DNH), Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) and Corporate Engagement Project (CEP) started. However, under the influence of donors (particularly Sida), *CDA Collaborative Learning Projects* was formed in 2003 as a non-profit entity and all project activities of the for-profit company were transferred to this new organisation. It was thought that a non-profit organisation would form a more appropriate platform for the methods of collaborative learning and for raising the necessary funds from governments and other organisations.

Board

According to the law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a Board was not required for a sole-proprietorship company such as *Collaborative for Development Action, Inc.* Only when CDA Collaborative Learning Projects was formed did the law require a Board of Directors to be established. Also according to the law, the Board could be comprised of staff of the organization with no participation from outside. Hence, until the present, the Board has consisted of three senior internal staff.

On the advice of CDA’s lawyer, the size and composition of the Board will soon be changed by adding four external members.⁸ This will bring the Board to seven members who will meet for the first time in May 2007. The new external members will be community members, some known to CDA for collegial reasons, some for business reasons. The new Board is expected to meet 2–3 times a year. The three senior CDA staff will continue to be an operating committee for day-to-day decisions, hiring, etc. acting on behalf of the Board. It is expected that the new Board may wish CDA to develop more formal, organisational plans for its future development.

While minutes of Board meetings exist with intervals of two to four months from 2004 until 2006, the meeting agendas have not been available. The issues which are summarised in the minutes of the Board meetings relate mainly to monitoring and development of staff policy (e.g. salaries, bonus, health insurance, hiring) and financial issues (contributions from donors). The Board has acted as a forum for finalising management decisions on these issues. However, according to the minutes, project development decisions have not been a major issue for discussion, and would seem to have been taken in the framework of the projects themselves.

⁶ See http://www.cdainc.com/about_cda.php

⁷ See CDA, “The Collaborate Approach to Learning (a.k.a. CDA’s “Methodology”)”, undated.

⁸ One of the reasons was to avoid the situation where Board members (i.e. CDA staff) would decide on their own salary and bonus levels with no external control.

3.2 Management

Structure

Since its establishment as a non-profit organisation in 2003, CDA has doubled in size – from 6 to currently 11 staff. It is a team-based organisation characterised by informality and without a pronounced hierarchical structure. However, staff positions and titles are used to explain functions and present the organisational structure.

The current structure consists of the Executive Director Mary B. Anderson (co-founder of CDA Inc.), five project directors, three project/field associates, and the Chief Financial Officer supported by one assistant. This structure is supplemented by external consultants associated with the different projects from time to time. The evaluation team was informed that Mary Anderson plans to retire within the next few years but will do so gradually. How CDA manages this transition is a key current issue for them but one not yet fully resolved. However, the expansion of the Board of Directors appears a relevant step in this regard.

Staff meetings and communication

Formal staff meetings occur on an ad-hoc basis dependent on when staff are not travelling – in practice 2–3 times per year. These meetings are called in advance with a set agenda. However, given the size and informality of the organisation, it is also common practice to gather around specific issues (mostly project specific) at short notice in order to discuss and take decisions. Moreover, as the CDA office space is essentially one large office, it is common practice to continuously consult with other staff whenever an issue arises that requires discussion/reflection.

Operational planning

Operational planning takes place within each of the five main projects and is not an organisation-wide issue. Operational plans are continuously adjusted in accordance with the available funding and requests received. The operational planning does not appear to be clearly outcome related (CDA do not routinely use a standardised planning tool, such as Logical Framework, to assist in this respect). Nor did the evaluation team identify any general project development guidelines and tools (except for the “CDA Methodology”) which leads to institutionalised way of operating in the projects developed over time. This methodological process is described by CDA as a flow with the following stages:

*1. Issues identification >> 2. Gathering experience + evidence >> 3. Analysing + generalising >> 4. Testing + verification >> 5. Reporting lessons learned >> 6. Further testing + learning + utilization.*⁹

These six very general steps guide the operational running of each of the main projects, while specific *ad hoc* initiatives may be taken on that are perceived as complementing or enhancing the process of learning.

Some project-specific guidelines have been developed to support project delivery during the utilisation phase. In the DNH project, the evaluation team was presented with a “trainers manual” with modules on “background and history”, “training case studies”, and “workshop”. Also, a one page summary sheet to help guide the writing of case studies is available. For the STEPS project, terms of reference have also been developed for case study writers. In the RPP project, a draft “RPP Training of Trainers Manual (2007)” was provided to the team.

Sub-consultants are used extensively. In particular, case study writing is mainly done by sub-consultants. From 2004 CDA has attempted to develop a cadre of trained people who will assist in providing backstopping to the agencies that are applying the learning.

⁹ “The Collaborate Approach to Learning (a.k.a. CDA’s “Methodology”)”

Using different case study writers within one project is considered important to ensure that different perspectives and frameworks are brought out. Overall, most of the project directors expressed satisfaction with the work of sub-consultants who are hired on a standard contract of between 18 and 27 working days (of which 10–14 days are normally field based). The level of daily fee ranges from approx. \$250 to \$400 depending on the level of experience. Expenses are covered based on reimbursement of actual costs and consultants are normally paid in arrears at the end of their contracts.

Selection of partners

CDA does not have a methodology to systematically select partners and assessing their capacity for using the outputs of the projects (turning outputs into outcome). Rather, partners become associated with the projects due to selected case subjects and the personal networks of the project directors. The process of selection is guided by trial and error, nature of openness or demand of the professional groups contacted, and what CDA staff estimate to be the groups with the highest potential to use the learning. This last element is particularly difficult to assess as it occurs exclusively orally, and guidelines do not exist in this area. As stated by CDA “Our practice over some years has been to respond positively to as many of these invitations as possible.”¹⁰

In Rwanda, for example, RPP had initially made use of a network of NGOs (the Co-existence Network) to select workshop participants. However, this does not appear to have been very successful; workshops provided difficult to arrange and participants were often junior staff. Subsequently, access to a major government stakeholder was provided through a well-placed (Rwandan) CDA associate.

Reporting to donors

CDA reports on project processes and results to the donors of the projects in accordance with a predefined reporting schedule mentioned in the funding agreements. To the extent possible, one report is made and sent to all the donors.

The reports are essentially narrative (somewhat discursive) overviews, focused on processes, activities, and events. In some cases they describe key reflective work going on in CDA headquarters, including regarding internal management arrangements. The report from June 2004–December 2005¹¹ is a good example of this, pointing to adjustments in governance and issues of critical scale, but also to the difficulties faced by agencies that are convinced of the value of the learning, and yet find it difficult to apply to the work routines.

However, while issues are often raised, and broad objectives stated, there are virtually no indications of actual outcome or impact which will be of key interest to donors. In the example noted above, the report moves from the need to analyse impact to the assistance provided to NGOs and development and humanitarian agencies to analyse their own impact. Crucially lacking are geographically or institutionally specific targets and indicators of verification. Similarly formal after action reviews are carried out irregularly, which would enable an independent observer to gain a sense of progress or obstacles. The documents seen by the consultants¹² could not serve as a basis for planning due to the confusion between levels of analysis (activities, outputs, outcomes, indicators are interchanged), and the lack of contextualisation in the description of desired change.

One evaluation was carried out in the Great Lakes region, but its critical findings concerning lack of impact were not given follow up (in particular tackling the issue of heterogeneity of participants and follow-up as opposed to “falling out of the blue”¹³).

¹⁰ “Report of CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, June 2004–December 2005”, Mary B. Anderson.

¹¹ “Report of CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, June 2004–December 2005”, Mary B. Anderson.

¹² In particular “RPP Goals and Objectives 2005”, undated and no author.

¹³ “Reflecting on Peace Practice in the Great Lakes Region: Mid-Term Assessment, February 2006, Tracy Dexter.

Strategic planning

The evaluation team was told that strategic planning takes place informally within the organisation. However due to the lack of writing on this subject, and the difficulty of reconstituting such strategy after the fact, we were not able to conclude on the reliability of this planning. We did find efforts by CDA to engage more actively from 2004 with some actors, such as the UN agencies (which our country studies did not identify as a strategic actor), as well as with donors.

Filing practice

CDA is about to introduce a systematic procedure for filing project documentation. Until now the existence of multiple versions of the same documents has been common practice. Documents are often not dated or filed according to date, and there is no document hierarchy or document control system. This is probably the effect of a continual forward looking concentration of the staff on the actual learning taking place among partners, participants and beneficiaries.

Internet site

CDA is aware of the shortcomings of its current internet site (<http://www.cdainc.com/>) and expects that a revision process will be initiated. The current version presents limited information about the organisation and the documentation it has generated and is not user friendly. The summary pages for the main CDA programmes, for example, could usefully include sharper statements of programme objectives and key results/findings.

3.3 Finance and Administration

CDA financial management and administration routines are documented in the internal reference document “CDA Financial management and Administration Policy” (January 2007) of approximately 20 pages.

CDA does not have a general funding strategy but raises funds on a project by project basis. Funding requests are developed for specific donors based on the results of the networking efforts of the Executive Director, who is the primary fund raiser of CDA. As donor funds are very difficult to predict, CDA often applies for more than what it receives. Afterwards it adjusts the level of activities accordingly. For example, Norway decided to provide a \$250,000 contribution for the DNH project long after discussions with CDA had taken place. These funds were not expected and, in common with all funds, were pooled to continue with the overall approach of case studies on DNH use that was ongoing.

The revenue of the organisation has been the following:

1995	\$437,019
1996	\$524,097
1997	\$642,525
1998	Not Available
1999	\$729,501
2002–2002	Not available
2003	642,313
2004	1,363,840
2005	1,426,387

The years for which figures are not available are those that are filed in Mary Anderson’s residence and are not easily accessible at the time of evaluation.

Most CDA donors allow for funds to be transferred from one project to another. Since CDA was formed as a non-profit organisation in 2003, the top-four donors have been the following, with Sida as the primary contributor.

*CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Inc. top-four donors, 2003–2006*¹⁴

Top four funding agencies	Contributions
Sida	657,966
Swiss DC	448,279
BUZA (Human Rights and Peace Building Dept)	262,155
Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst	160,732

In addition, the donations from private corporations to the CEP amount to \$446,368 for the period 2004–2006. These individual contributions from corporations are at a level above the actual project costs of CEP and are also being used to finance general administrative expenses and projects related costs.

Auditing practice

Since its conversion to a non-profit organisation, CDA is being audited annually by an external auditor – a US based certified public accountant. In the three audit reports (2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06) that the evaluation team has reviewed it is emphasised that the audits are conducted “in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America” (the “GAPP” standard). None of the yearly audits have resulted in any “audit opinion”. In all three audit reports the financial statements “present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position of CDA [...] in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America”.

A supplementary management questionnaire on internal control follows the yearly audit and in none of the audited years did it result in any important recommendation for change of management practice.

Accounting

CDA has outsourced all accounting tasks to an external service provider. As a result, all invoices received by CDA and approved by the CFO are either scanned and sent electronically or sent by mail to the accounting company, eCRATCHIT Inc.¹⁵ with a coding according to source of funding (donor) and project. After receiving the invoice, eCRATCHIT provides it on-line on a secured web portal and lists the outstanding invoices for payment for CDA approval. After CDA approval, eCRATCHIT mails a cheque to the vendor. Likewise, eCRATCHIT also processes the payroll on the last business day of each month.

Each month all transactions are balanced with eCRATCHIT on a QuickBooks bookkeeping system. Bank statements are balanced and cash on hand is reported per donor per contract. The CFO monitors and checks this process, assisted by a part-time assistant.

Individual project expenses and the draw-down of donor funds are monitored on a monthly basis. The system has evolved over time with eCRATCHIT and the CFO at CDA and provides up to the minute information on funds remaining and project expenses. All monthly work is balanced within 2–2½ weeks of the end of the preceding month. eCRATCHIT provides monthly and yearly statements of financial activities and processes all applicable federal and state taxes.

¹⁴ Annual accounts

¹⁵ eCRATCHIT has approximately 25% of its customers among non-profit organisations.

By outsourcing the accounting task CDA ensures a high quality and efficient accounting financial reporting practice with several built-in checks and balances. The monthly costs of this service amounts to approximately \$1100.

Financial reporting

The CDA financial year runs from 1st June until 31st May each year. A consolidated financial report on spending and income in each project is prepared by the CFO on a monthly basis and given to the project directors. This report provides a real-time financial status on each project.

The CFO spends a significant share of her working time on monitoring funding agreements and following up on the fulfilment of the conditions in the agreements.

Procurement

CDA does not procure any significant goods except for office computers when replacements are required. This is handled by an IT consultant, who apart from providing regular help-desk service, also assists CDA in purchasing IT equipment.

3.4 Human Resources and Learning

Personnel

CDA has a “Personnel Policy Manual” (dated February 2007) which presents staff policies, procedures, and principles for employee benefits.¹⁶ The manual is quite extensive in view of the size of the organisation, and CDA should be commended for clarifying all these different employee issues which leaves few personnel areas uncovered.

CDA has grown from 6 staff members (3 full time and 3 part-time) in 2003 to 11 staff today – either as regular full-time or regular part-time staff. Project associates are shared by projects and the director of 2 projects is one individual. The CFO has a part-time assistant (3 days/week).

Overall, the job positions in CDA are rather fluid with co-directorships, non-full time project directors, a project director sharing his time between two projects, project associates shared between two projects, etc. However, job descriptions exist for every position and each member of staff has a letter of employment which is dependent on the condition that donors continue to fund CDA.

A rough assessment of staff competencies reveals that project directors are well qualified with relevant work experiences and an appropriate educational background. A more thorough assessment of CVs, etc. has not been undertaken.

The salary levels of staff are said to be based on the on-going market level in similar US-based organisations. For example, a full time project director receives in the range of \$7000–8000 per month before taxes. Project associates receive approximately half of that.

Training of staff paid by CDA does not take place. It is understood that the project implementation process provides ample opportunities for staff learning.

A formal system to ensure quality management does not exist in CDA. However, certain quality management routines exist informally at the project level. It is, for example, common practice for a project director to ask colleagues to read and comment on a draft case study. Feedback is then given in pre-announced informal meetings of 2–3 hours duration with some or all present staff participating. As already noted, a more formalised system of project planning could be used to increase the visibility of planning factors and the focus on outcomes and impact.

¹⁶ Previously personnel policy was dealt with in a “Policy Manual”. Clarification from CDA, 25th June 2007.

The project-related consultations (in Cambridge and elsewhere) are organised by the project directors. They bring together 20–40 partners from a range of different government and non-governmental agencies, academia, or consultants. CDA confirm that they are not used to employing participant evaluation forms at the end of such consultations. CDA considers that the proof of a good consultation is that people return for the next – which they often do.

Learning

Learning is fundamental to CDA. The organisation is keen to highlight that its approach is primarily to bring agencies together to reflect, analyse and plan using the concepts and tools that emerged from the first phases of RPP or DNH. In this sense, CDA considers everyone who engages in the process of sharing and reflection on experience as partners in the learning process. The learning value is perceived to come through CDA's convening of a variety of agencies, framing questions that promote sharing, and facilitating discussions that help think in different ways – regardless of the “frameworks” or tools. CDA does not do its work through partners, but engages with partners who are willing and ready in a collaborative learning effort of which the produce is a shared product¹⁷.

The evaluation finds that the search for consensus on the patterns of recurrent evidence, and good practices, is very lengthy and may at times obscure an evaluative or peer review approach, questioning the underlying premises of the process: reviewing the identity and status of participants, tracking the links between agency up-take and best practices identified, validity of findings.

The review documents (for example those seen in CARE Sri Lanka) are often written by persons who accept the premise that the process is valuable and focus on the subject matter and how the agency could better use it¹⁸, rather than limitations of the method and content delivered by CDA which might reflect on the approach and knowledge.

The learning that takes place in CDA is similarly about the agencies and around the key questions asked by the three programmes. Paradoxically it has until recently been much less applied to the internal process and products of CDA, to identify critical assimilation of errors and opportunities within the CDA methodology. There is a growing effort to capture lessons learnt for improvement, as reflected by the current initiative to learn lessons from the mainstreaming of Do No Harm. However this has not yet led to a global review, and still focuses on tuning of the methods and processes.

For example the study seen by the study on DNH uptake in Afghanistan¹⁹ recommends more focus on international staff and a continual training of trainers. It describes a country that is a particularly fertile territory for Do No Harm and concentrates on the affinities of DNH with local conditions.

Some critical issues would have needed thorough review. A 2003 study on mainstreaming identifies the issues that an organisation needs to be aware of when involved in a mainstreaming effort²⁰. But it does not ask why DNH has not been mainstreamed at donor or agency headquarters. The donor reporting concentrates on a listing of events and processes. The critical learning promoted by CDA has not yet led to the self-assessment that would allow for a better selection of partners, timing and continuity of support, and links to contemporary institutional dynamics.

¹⁷ Extract from e-mail from Diana Chigas dated 15th March 2007

¹⁸ For example “The Use of DNH and Other Conflict Sensitive Programming Tools in CARE Sri Lanka”, Nona Zicherman, July 2004, mentions increasing use of short term contracts in CARE, application only at the time of delivery, absence of coherent guidance from Colombo.

¹⁹ “Do No Harm in Afghanistan: A Study In Cycles” Sue Williams, Hamidullah Natiq, August 2006

²⁰ “CDA: Mainstreaming Do No Harm – first lessons from practice”, 2003

4. Findings of the Programme Assessment

In the assessment of CDA's programmes, we have focused on the results achieved by RPP, DNH and STEPS combined as a whole without seeking to distinguish the contributions from Sida or other donors, which are treated as core funding. Where these results are differentiated, we attribute them to individual programmes, where they are not we speak of the results achieved by CDA methodologies and knowledge and the work of the partners of CDA.

The approach taken during the field visits to Kosovo, Rwanda and Sri Lanka was essentially the same in all three countries. The field teams explored how partners were selected; the ease of understanding and of use of the material and guidance generated; the reference made to other tools and guidance (and possible synergies); the relevance of the tools to the needs of partners; the support given to subsequent implementation of the guidelines and feedback processes; and the eventual ability of partners to use the material and to adapt it to their own needs. The team was also interested in exploring possible wider outcomes, for instance amongst organisations not directly targeted by CDA.

We asked the following three questions in relation to the CDA tools/programmes that have been used: (1) was it useful to your own work? (2) how did you integrate it into programming (guidelines and reporting)? (3) what difference did it make in your activities? We also sought to assess whether the changes in outcomes were relevant and having a significant impact in relation to the broader dynamics of the conflict which CDA's partners could influence. Our findings are summarised below and in more detail in the individual case study reports.

4.1 Efficiency

Concept

By efficiency we mean the ability to achieve maximum outcomes with a given input of resources. As it is rarely possible to achieve maximum outcomes when one intends to provide minimum control of partners, we have resorted to focusing on the connection between outputs (i.e. CDA's methodologies, workshops, etc.) and outcomes (the use to which the outputs have been put by CDA's partners) and to making a professional judgement about what can be expected for similar work in similar circumstances.

We do not return here to the institutional assessment which focuses on the input/output relation. We will instead use indicators such as the manner and degree to which tools are understood, the ability of participants to remember the matter discussed in workshops, and the integration of development and humanitarian agency guidelines with Do No Harm or RPP principles.

CDA is relatively small when one compares it to the scope of the outcomes it has achieved among agency personnel around the world. Do No Harm in particular enjoys real 'brand recognition' in the entire development and humanitarian assistance community, in part tied to the fact that it refers to an indisputable principle of life-saving practice (the Hippocratic oath taken by medical doctors), but also because it is a reference among tools developed in conflict sensitivity, alongside Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) and Peace and Conflict Assessment, and DfID's Strategic Conflict Assessment. DNH is described as versatile and simple to grasp and use, particularly at the project and ground levels.

Yet many of the partners consulted also said that they found the complete DNH package overly complex and that they only used elements of it, particularly the connectors and dividers. They did say it gave them a broad mandate to explore the connections between aid and conflict, which can be described more broadly as conflict sensitivity. Some found the connectors and dividers difficult to apply because it requires a level of simplicity (two or three sides) which many of today's conflicts do not have.

Some situations (for example in the south of Sri Lanka) were seen as impermeable to connector/divider frameworks. This may be because of limited support given to staff in the application on the ground (lack of continuity of access to advice) and also because it is hard to relate to existing organisational systems (in terms of language and also its lack of connection to the project management cycle).

RPP has not found the same level of success. It is known only to people who have participated in its workshops and research and, even then, in many cases these people tend to confuse the tools and do not perceive its full applicability. The one exception to this is the Berghof Foundation which has relied on RPP for strategic planning and evaluation and reports (in Sri Lanka) that the inputs allowed the organisation to focus more and use resources efficiently.

The RPP matrix allowing a classification of “more people” and “key people” and socio-political change is mentioned by participants as a good heuristic device. However, nobody interviewed during the field work was aware that RPP’s effectiveness criteria had changed over the last three years. The terms themselves (both effectiveness and criteria) do not correspond to the agreed definitions (for example the DAC definitions) in monitoring and evaluation and therefore impede dialogue with that professional group.

STEPS has so far resulted in 14 case studies but has yet to produce useful generalisable findings. It does not (yet) provide a tool or methodology along the lines of DNH or RPP. In the field, very few people apart from those directly involved, were aware of the case studies. The programme has been running since 2002 but is finding the identification of recurrent patterns of “exemption from conflict” particularly challenging due to the cultural nature of the phenomenon: thus informant accounts rely on personalities, on military strategies, or political history, to explain these exceptions. Staff attention and difficulty in running the case studies are reported by CDA as also contributing to this delay.

Assessment

The limited capacity of the organisation due to its size and its openness to requests and discussion do not allow it to provide backstopping in a continual manner. There are long periods of absence in between the processes to which CDA contributes and the resulting documents are often lengthy and unfocused (the key findings are not highlighted clearly and can be difficult to operationalise). CDA itself recognises these learning constraints in *Confronting War* in which it is noted that “Trainings are often short-term, one off experiences that are insufficient to impart clear skills and the practical experience and confidence to use them... When participants return home ready to implement new ideas and activities, if they do not have access to on-going support, funding, or feedback on questions that come up, they often cannot make progress²¹ This key lesson lies behind some of the difficulty in moving beyond outputs to outcomes, and has implications for the validity of the present approach.

A further finding is that participants in CDA’s processes often do not know how documents have evolved and are being used. For example, UNICEF personnel met in Sri Lanka only had a draft “not for circulation” of a study on Children as Zones of Peace carried out in 2001 and did not know how it had been used, in spite of having facilitated the visit of two CDA experts. Similarly, a lessons learned paper on mainstreaming tools within development and humanitarian agencies was written with external stakeholders who do not know its current status.²² As a result, the knowledge is less used and difficulties go unchallenged.

Finally, CDA has not yet taken the initiative to make clear connections to other bodies of knowledge which are applied by development and humanitarian agencies. It is a deliberate policy of the organisation to remain unique and hard to pin down in any typology of knowledge or institutions, so that it is perceived as non-threatening and neutral, particularly among the peace-building NGOs. Yet this compli-

²¹ *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*, Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olsen, 2003. P94.

²² *A Mainstreaming Guide for NGOs*, CDA, undated.

cates the integration and assimilation of the new knowledge. Very few agencies have integrated DNH or RPP in their project cycle analytical stages. In spite of being mentioned in donor guidance documents (for example the Sida's "How to Conduct a Conflict Analysis" section on project level conflict sensitivity), the evaluation found that the tools were not known in the diplomatic posts of the donors visited.

What can be described as cultivated autarky or self-sufficiency is taking place in a policy environment where there is increased effort to avoid a multiplication of guidelines, quality standards, and increase streamlining around an operation project cycle management. Because of the increasing manner in which concepts within the aid management field are required to interrelate (rights based programming, gender sensitivity, poverty reduction, etc...), it is difficult for participants to mainstream the tools and thinking they adopt from CDA outside a handful of agencies that have decided to carry out this integration work as a policy priority. The evaluation found that this has been achieved to a greater extent to three NGOs (CARE, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services) and reportedly also to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent.

These limitations on the work of CDA should however be contrasted with the small size of the organisation, and the commitment shown in terms of travel, ethical participation in local learning processes, production of material, and openness to invitations. The wide recognition of the work of DNH in particular would force the conclusion that this remains an efficient programme.

4.2 Effectiveness

Concept

Effectiveness concerns the connection between outcomes intended (i.e. programme objectives) and outcomes achieved, in other words how material and methodologies are intended to be used and how that relates to how they are actually used. For example, the report "Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo?" contains important and challenging ideas but it has come out three years after the events described and at a time when attention is focused elsewhere. There would have to be a strong input in order to make the report effective but CDA does not have such a strategy and many of the others involved have moved on and turned to other issues. It is a valuable book but without a strategy for using it the result will be extremely limited.

Assessment

The main difficulty is that CDA concentrates on efficiency of process, i.e. the best work approach to deliver a particular result. There is throughout the documentation a consistent focus on process but without rigorous consideration of alternatives, and above all a deliberate avoidance of prior definition of intended results. For example, a logical framework for RPP²³ which was provided to the team contains as objectives the different *activities* of RPP (development of materials, workshops) and as a goal "improving the effectiveness of peace-building". Paradoxically there are no identified theories of change as to why one particular approach would be better than another or what outcome is sought. There appears to have been no subsequent written evaluative follow-up to this planning attempt.

The implicit assumption made within CDA concerning the outcomes is that lessons on strengthening local capacities for peace, or improving the effectiveness of peace activities, should be mainstreamed. A 2003 document ("A Mainstreaming Guide for NGOs") states that "Mainstreaming is an organization-wide uptake of new material and/or a new approach in ways that lead to changes in the organization's operations". Do No Harm underwent a "Mainstreaming Project" process and Memoranda of Understanding were signed with certain organisations such as CARE to achieve it. Another implicit objective would be to have a critical mass of aid personnel in any country in a position to implement the knowledge and tools generated by collaborative learning.

²³ « RPP Goals and Objectives » Undated, believed to be 2004

However, while all the persons interviewed who had participated in the workshops expressed a high degree of satisfaction in the way CDA has interacted with its beneficiaries during the workshops and through informal communication, very few could claim to be actively implementing the learning and even fewer could describe the material difference it made to their work other than adding a better lens through which to perceive the context.

Amongst organisations where mainstreaming had been done, such as CARE, there is considerable inconsistency of awareness (for example between Rwanda and Sri Lanka). Strikingly, donors which had funded CDA tended to perceive only the ethical message of doing no harm and did not see how the tools could be applied to strategic planning. It seems that while DNH has spread among organisations at the grassroots its ideas and implications have not been mainstreamed in those organisations. Conflict sensitivity remains a local activity among junior staff, rather than an input to management strategy. This may mean that the local frontline staff who use DNH may be unable to carry out its implications because they lack organisational support.

The evaluation was, however, able to find, throughout those organisations where mainstreaming had been carried out, indirect references to DNH material – such as the structure of CARE’s Benefits and Harms approach, which some people define as a response to some of the pitfalls of Do No Harm (too focused on avoiding all negative effects which makes development of humanitarian interventions problematic). By refuting DNH, it becomes genealogically related to DNH thinking. Many of the organisations which had undergone extensive training in DNH were seeking facilitators that could provide additional training over time, even when these professional trainers were themselves sceptical about the value of the learning (example of the Centre for Poverty Analysis in Sri Lanka). There are also a number of very committed individuals who are using CDA methodologies in their work independently of CDA – or are linking organisations in need of such methodological strengthening to CDA experienced trainers.

4.3 Relevance of Impact

Concept

This section tests the alignment of the outcomes achieved (skills/tools used by international organisations and other actors) to the critical issues identified in conflict analysis. Do the outcomes help achieve change in the area of these issues, acting as accelerators or on the contrary as brakes?

To assess the relevance of the outcomes in the country case studies we have used reputable existing conflict analyses to the extent possible. These have been found externally to CDA, as the organisation has not sought to contextualise its work by establishing priorities according to the state of conflict. These analyses have yielded key issues which we have then checked against the work of the agencies who have been exposed to CDA’s outputs.

Assessment

Our findings in the three case studies are that, while CDA’s outputs are largely relevant, the people who were most influenced by CDA would have little ability to achieve significant impact. One respondent in Sri Lanka asked how development and humanitarian agencies can really avoid doing harm when they have to work with a Government that spends 45% of its resources on waging war on part of the country? Therefore, the big issues relating to conflict became relegated to the level of local problems which might reflect those bigger issues but would not necessarily affect them. DNH helped to identify local tensions but did not reach to strategic level. Moreover, the division of conflict elements into ‘connectors’ and ‘dividers’ was not good at differentiating the roles played by politicians and by other actors who have to work in a highly politicised environment.

The case of Kosovo is in this sense very telling. A study carried out by RPP highlights the very judicious and challenging finding that intra-community peace-building is more relevant to conflict than inter-community work. But very few participants in the RPP process were aware of this potentially highly significant finding and understanding was particularly weak among managers and decision-makers – some of whom thought the conclusion was the opposite.

In Rwanda, a conflict dynamic is the legacy from the 1994 genocide coupled with new social and economic stresses. There continues to be a strong ethnic dimension. RPP conflict mapping reflects this finding and so does DNH in the (relatively few) cases where they are known and are being used. The relevance appears highest when the approaches are directed towards community level conflict resolution – where international as well as local NGOs and the government are able to focus.

In Sri Lanka, the development and humanitarian agencies that would have most freedom to implement RPP and DNH would not be the international NGOs, due to the current climate of hostility against them and the collapsed peace process following the tsunami and subsequent political polarisation. Many of the local organisations have not been approached by CDA, and donors do not know the methodologies.

4.4 Extent of Impact

Concept

This section examines the identity of the users of CDA tools and knowledge and how widespread they are in relation to key issues in the conflict. For example, we consider the background of participants in workshops and whether they operate in areas where this knowledge is relevant.

Assessment

Stakeholders interviewed may be categorised according to their involvement with and knowledge of CDA tools and methodologies:

- A) Primary partners who have been involved in extensive activities in country (which we will call *primary* partners).
- B) Secondary partners who have been involved in some CDA activities, typically one to three workshops (which we will call *occasional* partners).
- C) Stakeholders who work with DNH and/or RPP methods, but have not been engaged with CDA (which we will call *indirect* partners).
- D) Stakeholders working within peacebuilding who do not work with any CDA tools and have not participated in any CDA events (which we will call *potential* partners).

Four findings emerge from this typology. The first is that primary partners are predominantly aid delivery organisations, often with headquarters in the US, Germany or Switzerland (CARE, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, EED the German Evangelical service, DED, and some of the Swiss conflict specialists). Personal links to CDA appear to play an important role here, as like-minded individuals tend to come repeatedly to the CDA events and weave the methodologies in their own organisations.

The second finding is that there is still a preponderance of potential and indirect partners. The number of agencies which have heard of the tools may be considerable, but the actual practitioners are few. Within these we find that the awareness of senior staff is very limited. One resident representative of an international NGO working on peacebuilding who was contacted had not heard of Do No Harm, which was surprising given its generally widespread currency, at least as a brand.

Thirdly, the actors which would be most important in dealing with key issues (governance, centralised military power, or human rights, for example) are often to be found in the category of potential partners. The country case studies found that donor agencies, which are more able to deploy political instruments, and local organisations which can occasionally advocate more openly for peace (as in the case of Sri Lanka) than international NGOs, were not included in the CDA coverage. It would appear, on the other hand, that in Afghanistan the coverage has been stronger amongst local NGOs than international ones, according to the Lessons Learned study on DNH. It is not clear why this contrast exists.

Fourthly, the number of personnel vary. While CARE staff in 25 out of 27 districts have been trained in Sri Lanka, other agencies, such as Oxfam and Save the Children, show very low awareness of the tools, if at all. These concepts are not applied to bring agencies together, and the synergies established in workshops do not lead to joint analysis or even less programming. In Rwanda, there did not appear to be any correlation between participation in workshops with memory of the tools. There appeared to be no mainstreaming in Rwanda among local NGOs – the only cases of it were among international NGOs.

4.5 Duration and Sustainability of Impact

Concept

Duration and sustainability are the final tests of the significance of impact. While they do not allow for the key question of attribution of impact, they do allow for the verification of whether knowledge and methods were used over long periods of time (or at a minimum with continuity over time), and whether this use continued after the withdrawal of direct CDA involvement. We have, for example, looked at whether training on Do No Harm continues after the CDA processes have ended, how frequent it is, and how long it is liable to go on.

Assessment

Duration of impact is certainly strong (in terms of repeated interventions) in the case of DNH because it has been repeated over many years (for example since 1998 in Sri Lanka), but this is severely affected by high turnover of staff, which is a chronic weakness of international NGOs. There is however strong local interest. DNH has in some cases been mainstreamed in the work of agencies since the mid-1990s, and the call for it has not been reduced. As in Rwanda, there are also groups of training facilitators that have sprung up to continue activities in this area.

Quite striking however was the finding that DNH had probably decreased in influence in Sri Lanka since 2004 (date at which its effects were studied in CARE, for example), which is the year in which the tsunami hit the coasts of the island. All evaluations carried out of the response (in particular those carried out under the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition and the Sida funded evaluation of the Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development) highlight the manner in which good practices were swept aside by the need for rapid response, in particular as regards recruitment, targeting, and capacity building. All analyses in Sri Lanka point to the nexus between badly managed aid and the subsequent backlash of conflict, and hostility to international NGOs. However, DNH has not been able to recuperate in agencies such as CARE, partly due to the fact that CDA staff has not visited the country in connection with this particular project.

RPP is more focused in its work and has had a shorter lifespan. Moreover the uptake in the agencies is much less, and (as shown in Rwanda) there are at this point in time overwhelming odds that it would be forgotten should the activities of CDA cease. In general, stakeholders feel a need to place RPP (and DNH) among the other conflict analysis tools on offer. The fundamental difficulty of not making explicit the link between project outcomes and the overall objective of reducing conflict is being overcome through the introduction of intermediary planning steps and the recognition that contribution to impact is more valid as an assessment criterion than attribution of impact.

STEPS is still at a stage where it is seeking to draw up patterns of similarities between the case studies. There is material emerging (such as constructed overlapping identities and the adaptation of leadership), but this is currently too idiosyncratic to provide any basis for projections in the framework of this evaluation.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Assessment of the Knowledge and Guidance

Knowledge

The guidance and methodologies developed by DNH and RPP are widely available and evidence of DNH can be found in such agency guidance as the CRS “Green Book”. The principle of Do No Harm is universally associated with the work of CDA, and with Mary Anderson in particular, even when the ethical stance is combined with the tools and approaches developed by CDA. The evaluation has observed repeatedly that the intuitive adoption of Do No Harm is often not followed by any deep familiarity with the tools among field staff, who can only enumerate one or two concepts.

CDA’s documents detailing the findings of its work are slightly confusing in that they are not necessarily well related one to the other. Evolutions in the knowledge (for example in the number and nature of the principles of effectiveness in RPP) are not fully explained. CDA staff remarked that they are not aware of the location of key documents and have difficulty finding personnel who are qualified to train agency staff in DNH, which is the most widely requested programme.

Guidance

The ToR ask whether CDA has done well in creating a space within which indigenous actors can identify problems and formulate their own solutions for peace-building. In fact, CDA has made a strong effort in this direction, but increasingly falls prey to the structural issues pervading the governance of development and humanitarian agencies in today’s conflicts. Its own methods are also more adapted to organisations that have a centralised programming system that could ensure integration of the guidance into aid management at the corporate level.

The first of these new conditions is the greater level of suspicion which is being placed on international agencies and the consequent difficulty they face in generating a fabric of sustainable local agencies who share their approaches and concerns. In Sri Lanka, Rwanda and to a lesser extent Kosovo the NGOs have been placed under pressure to dissociate themselves from broader political processes where they are perceived as compromised. The local NGOs often use very different strategies and have a different culture in how they relate to their environment. In Sri Lanka, they are not encouraged to cultivate links to international agencies, and remain outside the sphere of influence of CDA’s learning.

Local NGOs are still subject to the vagaries of funding and even where they are encouraged to provide evidence of the application of DNH in their funding applications by some donors, this is subsequently not treated as a priority by the donors themselves, who do not use DNH or RPP for their own assessments. The evaluation has, for example, not been able to identify a single evaluation of the implementation of DNH or RPP in partner work.

The tools do not offer a strategic focus. A paper which is probably dated 2003 on lessons learned about DNH²⁴ recognises this by saying that ‘it has become clear that NGO field staff alone cannot correct all

²⁴ “Lessons Learned Through the Local Capacities for Peace Project”

the negative impacts that aid may have in conflict areas'. It names the focus on delivery as opposed to impact, targeting of specific beneficiary groups, demonising of one side in the conflict. These are issues that also appear in the more recent assessment on the uptake of DNH in Afghanistan (August 2006) that the evaluation team has seen. As this report notes, "working inclusively and preventively may cause latent conflicts to be more open and visible, which offers an opportunity to deal with them. But, if the people involved feel they do not have the skills or the 'mandate' to deal with conflicts, they may be left with discord."²⁵ The tools are not adjusted to deal with these issues and offer limited applicability to make sense of the more complex conflicts, such as those prevalent among underlying tensions in the east and south of Sri Lanka, in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

One of the fundamental difficulties in this seems to come from an unwillingness of CDA to relate to existing debates and other tools of planning – factors which operational agencies in the field do need to take into account. In Rwanda, for example, one of CDA's key partners was very open about this saying that RPP's system approach to conflict mapping had been useful for them but, when asked about the degree to which RPP would be mainstreamed, commented that RPP would need to take its place amongst other tools.

This could take place through an effort at using more references to emerging instruments, such as Strategic Conflict Analysis, approaches such as budget support modalities, and results based frameworks. The current situation means that the tools often remain as pedagogical devices for the induction of new staff or as a simple way of analysing the context.

Furthermore, the nature of the methods used to generate knowledge, which are not related to any particular discipline, is difficult to communicate and so makes inter-professional discussion more difficult. Misunderstandings on terms such as "effectiveness" (focusing for CDA on impact) will hinder for example in-depth discussion about the assessment tools, and make comparative training difficult.

5.2 Business Management down to the Field

Partnerships

CDA has managed to spread some relevant tools to analyse the reality of conflict with a very small and efficient structure and very informal and participatory methods. This has been done with fluid divisions of labour and no systematic document control. Outcomes have been achieved in thousands of work places around the world, in particular opening up the linkages that have always existed between the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance and the potential for violence (actual or structural). Most respondents have commented very positively on their participation in CDA processes of learning, citing a greater ability to think about their work. In the course of our field assessments, all partners expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the way CDA interacted with participants during workshops or through informal communication.

Alongside this, the organisation has maintained what are fundamentally personal relations with managers and decision makers at many levels in the field of humanitarian and increasingly development assistance, entertained through events and discussions. The energy and commitment of CDA staff and key associates is very obvious. But it leads to a reliance on physical presence and a continual stream of documents and communication. As there are never more than about ten staff at headquarters, supplemented by a similar number of occasional consultants, this capacity has been limited, by necessity.

Moreover, the level of involvement and degree of understanding of CDA's methodologies clearly varies across stakeholder categories, and is generally quite low and of limited duration except in a few large NGOs. Methodologies have often not been mainstreamed (there are some exception to this) and

²⁵ "Do No Harm in Afghanistan: a study in cycles", Sue Williams & Hamidullah Natiq, CDA, August 2006

workshop participants have difficulty recalling basic principles and terminology – which indicates a lack of follow-up by them and of subsequent mainstreaming. The collaborative methodology works best amongst stakeholders where CDA has maintained a long-standing and deeper relationship.

Field Ownership

A comment made by several stakeholders was that the methodologies appear attractive but are difficult to apply in practice. Thus a more practice-based relationship is needed to translate outputs to outcomes. There is also a resulting opacity of management, whereby respondents often express ignorance as to why and when events occur, and where the resulting material can be found after the events. There is a yearning among field staff for more information about CDA, the tools, and for a “hands on” relationship with CDA.

Headquarters

CDA has sound financial and personnel practices and is a reliable partner for Sida. Its management practice relies heavily upon internal and somewhat ad-hoc consultation and dialogue. This has advantages in the opportunity for peer review and contradictory review (which are critical elements in an innovative knowledge-based organisation such as CDA). However, they could break-down when key staff are absent from the office for extended periods.

We assess that the organisation has reached a maximum level of performance in terms of its current manning level, organisational methods and the demands of its programme stakeholders. The evaluation team was told that CDA is seeking to increasingly prioritise programme work, more general outreach (speeches, lectures, etc.), and fund-raising activities. This is supported by the finding of the programmatic assessment that there is a need for more in-depth back-stopping work in relation to RPP and DNH if these key methodologies are to be mainstreamed into peace-building and development practice on a wider scale.

Put succinctly, it is not possible for CDA core staff to maintain the quality and innovative standards of work on the global scale which their programmes could claim without some adjustments in levels of ambition or *modus operandi*.

The fundamental point is that the organisation’s strengths reflect a very competent focus on the process and dimensions of learning. For these levels of change (activity and output) CDA is uniquely qualified. The consequence of that however is that the three projects have lost focus on the outcomes and impact, which are too much delegated to the partners. The (admittedly decreasing) CDA responsibility along the chain of effects could be much more deliberately taken into account, to generate more appropriate levels of impact.

6. Ways Forward

6.1 Review of Options

Before coming to recommendations we would like to set out the strategic options that should be considered by CDA and Sida.

CDA has developed greatly since the days when it was a lone voice on issues of conflict sensitivity and peace-building. These issues are now widely acknowledged and are being addressed, to a greater or lesser extent, as part of programme strategy by many of the most influential actors and medium-sized organisations. Policies and principles for engagement in conflict areas and fragile states have spread

throughout the aid system, including in areas such as impact assessment for large projects funded by the World Bank.

Over the years CDA has done much to sensitise front-line aid workers about conflict. Many of them have gone on to integrate conflict into their organisational strategies and thinking. There is still a need to educate new workers and new organisations but as a general routine this process can now be left to local initiatives. Particularly useful in this has been the shift from a focus on humanitarian aid to development assistance in general, and the support to peace-building organisations.

Similarly, there are now many organisations reflecting on peace practice and CDA's input today is far from unique. Indeed, there may be some risk attached to heavy funding for a particular approach.

So where does this leave CDA? The first option is to remain small, flexible and simple, rolling out the same tools and approaches for new aid workers, and relying on an expanding capacity of professional specialists in countries affected by conflict. This would allow CDA to continue in a role of support to those who are interested. This would be a very limited role which could be supported largely without donor funding.

The second option is to apply the lessons (and tools) of the RPP and make a greater effort to influence 'key people'. This would mean changing the focus from Local Capacities for Peace to National and International Capacities for Peace. It would mean finding ways to influence actors who are not sensitive to conflict. For example, in Kosovo aid actors continue to promote inter-ethnic activities even though CDA has shown that intra-ethnic harmony is more important. Without a supporting effort CDA's finding will have little influence. This option would mean confronting those donors who, in effect, take sides in the Sri Lankan conflict. CDA would move towards being more of an advocacy organisation, although still drawing on its long experience of DNH, RPP and other projects.

CDA faces serious questions about its future because donors have begun to support CDA with substantial sums. New grants from DFID and others raise questions whether the small and limited role is commensurate with the resources available. CDA could go beyond 'Do No Harm' and adopt the principle 'Do Good' in order to re-establish a clearer balance between the benefits of doing some "harm" to establish the greater good through active peace-building or development. It can think about structural change rather than influencing individual people.

6.2 Recommendations

CDA has developed greatly since the days when it was a lone voice on issues of conflict sensitivity and peace-building. These issues are now widely acknowledged and are being addressed. Donors have begun to support CDA with substantial sums and are increasingly required to meet the requirements of results based management systems. Scenarios for CDA's ongoing development need to be defined in the light of these factors.

The evaluation team recommends that Sida (and CDA, although the brief of the evaluation is only indirectly to make recommendations directly to CDA) follows one of two approaches:

1. Narrow option: Sida should assist CDA to remain focused on a small number of countries where CDA will engage strategically during project "utilisation", setting measurable objectives and articulating a theory of change to be in a better position to achieve long term impact. Project research could be streamlined in terms of participants and timing, so that it is more time efficient while still being sufficiently broad (in terms of number of case studies) to generate credible generalised findings.
2. Wide option: Sida should encourage and support a wider engagement of CDA with conflict issues including global objectives, a pre-determined agenda of country studies and specified outcomes, and

extended field presence. This would require expanded resources and a significant shift of operational posture.

General Recommendations Regardless of Options:

1. In both these options CDA and Sida should develop a *forum* for discussion with other donors to CDA.
2. Sida should clarify its reasons and expectations in funding CDA in terms of *results to be achieved*. This should be done both in terms of the development and humanitarian assistance community in general (e.g. specific progress on conflict sensitivity tools) and/or specific outcomes at country level.
3. Sida should encourage CDA to *increase the monitoring of the outcomes* of the three programmes (which can be defined as the uptake of the ideas and tools) and systematically explore reasons for cases where there is less success (as is being done with DNH), in particular for RPP.
4. Sida should ask that CDA refer more frequently to theories of change implicit in its own choice of methods and partners and the process nature of the work. This would include the need to *map more precisely the different categories of invited users (stakeholder analysis)* and the issues that are to be addressed through capacity building. CDA could also benefit from more cross-reference to other existing tools. A *strategy for selecting partners* should be developed.
5. CDA should seek to regularise its *relationships with consultants and researchers* working with its own staff to ensure that they are adequately supported to follow-up on requests by partner agencies, with a particular focus for some selected countries, as per the previous recommendation.

Recommendations Aligned with a (preferred) Narrow Option

It should be pointed out that this option does not call for more operational presence by CDA, but rather more concentration on key areas and stable partnerships with external stakeholders, also supported independently by donors.

6. Sida should *select capacity building partners* to work with key agencies and personnel in focus countries, and require them to call down appropriate capacity building resources and tools based on a local assessment of needs and demand. This would imply an assessment by these national partners of the comparative advantages of suppliers of methodologies. It would lead to a more structured approach toward partners and countries within the CDA headquarters.
7. Sida should promote joint donor processes seeking to *develop strategic conflict sensitivity assessment tools*, in particular to develop a stronger link to planning at country programme level and to facilitate the evaluations of conflict sensitivity at country level. These should seek to integrate the knowledge and tools generated by CDA, but clarify links to poverty reduction strategies and budget support, to project appraisal and evaluation frameworks, and to reporting formats.
8. CDA should tighten up on the *publication and follow-up of its reports*. It should develop the capacity, in association with partners, to engage in advocacy at local and international levels, based on documentation and ideas generated. It should seek to promote ground-breaking comment and research on global issues relating to peace and conflict.
9. DNH is but one of many tools and may not always be the most appropriate. CDA should seek to participate in discussions in the broader field of conflict sensitivity (for example as it has with the OECD DAC on guidance for the evaluation of conflict prevention), and seek to align its terms and concepts to the emerging conventions of international development, humanitarian and conflict institutions.

Appendix 1 List of Key Documentation

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Appendix 2 List of Persons Consulted

Global

Name	Designation	Organisation
Mary Anderson	Executive Director	CDA
Beate Bull*	Senior Evaluation Office, Evaluation Department	NORAD
Cynthia Brady	Conflict Specialist, DCHA/CMM	USAID
Diana Chigas		CDA
Steve Darvill	Peace-Conflict Adviser	Australian Agency for International Development
Tracy Dexter	Senior Programme Officer, Great Lakes Programme	International Alert
Julia Ekstedt	Adviser, Division for Peace and Security in Development Cooperation	Sida
Tara Farman	Project Associate	CDA
Maria Lange	Programme Officer, Great Lakes Programme	International Alert
Thania Paffenholz**	Consultant	
Johan Schaar	Special Representative of the Secretary General on the Tsunami	IFRC
Jennifer Stuttle	Conflict Adviser, Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department	Department for International Development (UK)
Marshall Wallace	Project Director	CDA
Peter Woodrow	Project Director	CDA
Luc Zanzvliet	Project Director	Corporate Engagement Project
Deborah Zawulich	Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer	CDA

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Kosovo

Name	Designation	Organisation
Julie Chadbourne	Representative	International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHFHR)
Vincent Dontot	Consultant	ICCED/KEP
Ervor Edman	Senior Programme Officer	Liaison Office of Sweden/Sida
Leslie Enright	Business Development Manager	ICCED/KEP
Abdullah Ferizi	Program Coordinator	Kosovan Nansen Dialogue (KND)
Anne Lise Fosslund	Resident Representative	Norwegian Church Aid (KND)
Oleg Gregovski	Senior Programme Officer	UNMIK
Kristin Griffith	Mission Director	MercyCorps
Bujar Hoxha	Program Director	CARE
Maria Keating	Programme Portfolio Manager for Returns	UNDP
Gaspër Komani	Head of Office	Caritas
Alistair J. B. Livingston	Director	OSCE, Regional Centre
Jorun Lunestad	Programme Coordinator	Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)
Jerome Mellon	Project Coordinator	Saferworld

Darko Miljkovic	Project Administrator	Caritas
Lulzim Morina	PRM Program Manager	MercyCorps
Ferdinand Nikolla	Drejtor Ekzekutiv	Forum for Civic Initiatives
Michael Possmayer	Representative	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
Petar Prica	PB Program Manager	CRS
Ivan Radic	Program Coordinator	Kosovan Nansen Dialogue (KND)
Nehari Sharri	Project Manager	Forum Civil Peace Service
Rick Spruyt	Civil Society Program Manager	World Vision
Florije Sylaj	Project Coordinator	Community Building Mitrovica (CBM)
Maria Vetting	CSO Specialist in Kosovo	
Florent Vranica	Head of Office	CRS
Marko Vujacic	Political Officer	British Office Pristina
Michael Warren	Program Analyst	UNDP
Karmit Zysman	Coordinator	Balkan Sunflowers

Sri Lanka

Name	Designation	Organisation
Surani Abeyesekera	Programme Communication Officer	UNICEF
Dilshan Anaraj	Programme Coordinator for Peacebuilding	World Vision
Sally Austin	Assistant Country Director	CARE International Sri Lanka
Nikki Burns	Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Advisor	CARE International Sri Lanka
Aruna Dayavathna*	Conflict Adviser	Oxfam International
Konraad Denaye	Independent consultant	
Denis Dressel	Senior Adviser Peace and Conflict	Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA)
Scott Faiia**	Former Country Director	CARE Sri Lanka
Jonathan Goodhand*	Lecturer in Conflict and Development Studies	SOAS, London
Rachel Goldwyn*	Conflict Adviser	CARE International, London
Steve Hollingworth**	Former Director	CARE International Sri Lanka
Ulrike Hopp	Deputy Director	Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies
Gudrun Kramer	Co-Director	Institute for Integrative Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding
Bijay Kumar*	Country Director	ActionAid
Kathrin Lorenz	Head of Advisory Service for Conflict Transformation	GTZ
Camilla Madsen	Adviser, IDP Unit	UNHCR
Dr Anita Nesiah	Advisor, Policy and Advocacy	World Vision
Jehan Perera	Executive Director	National Peace Council of Sri Lanka
Victor Robinson**	Former Adviser	CARE International Sri Lanka
Dr Norbert Ropers	Director	Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies
Dr Kumar Rupesinghe**	Director	Foundation for Co-existence
Goran Schill	First Secretary/ Deputy Head of Mission	Embassy of Sweden, Colombo
Prashan Thayalasingham	International Relations	Centre for Poverty Analysis
Dave White*	Emergencies Manager	Oxfam International
Sue Williams*	Consultant	CDA
Cecillie Winther	Country Representative	Danchurchaid

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Rwanda

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Mohammed Bizinana**	Great Lakes Advocacy Coordinator	Care-Rwanda
Jean Descéné	Coordinator	CDJP
Saleh Habimana**	Mufti	Muslim Community in Rwanda
Béata Ingabire	2nd Vice President	EPPR
Jérôme Kajunga	Coordinator	Association Modeste Innocent (AMI)
Paulette Kansinga	Vice President	EPPR
Aimé Safari Kayinamura	Advisor/Conseiller	SNV (previously w. GTZ)
Frank Kobukyeye	Coordinator	NURC
Patrick Merienne**	Conflict Adviser	DFID London
Francois Mpayimana	Focal Point	PTN-Rwanda
Marie Rose Mugoyikazi	Programme Officer	Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
Agnès Mujawayezu	National Executive Secretary	Pro-Femmes
Grace Mukagabiko	Programme Officer	Oxfam GB
Fatuma Ndagiza	Head of Commission	NURC
David Moussa Ntamabara	Consultant	Freelance (currently UN in Liberia)
Martha Okumu	Administrator	Peace Tree Network (PTN) Nairobi
Suzanne Ruboneka	Coordinator	Pro-Femmes
Oswald Rutimburana	Coordinator	EU/NURC
Louis Rwagatu	Executive Secretary	Gahanga Sector (local authority)
Sylvia Servias*	Coordinator	FriEnt (Germany)
Arne Ström	Counsellor	Embassy of Sweden
Frédéric Kama-Kama Tutu	Coordinator	Peace Tree Network – Nairobi
Florien Ukizemwabo	Former Exec. Secretary	LIPRODOR (since 2007 with UNFPA)
Pastor Emile Uwimbabazi	President	EPPR
Gloriosa Uwimpuhwe	Communication and Administration Officer	Catholic Relief Service (CRS)
Gabriele Winai	Senior Consultant	Sida
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Appendix 3 Country Report Summaries

Summary of Key Findings from Kosovo²⁶

CDA has been working in Kosovo since 1996, first with Do No Harm followed by RPP and STEPS. A range of Do No Harm (DNH) training activities were undertaken in Kosovo from 1996 to around 2000. Some agencies have since then on their own initiative undertaken internal DNH trainings for staff. Following the 2004 riots, CDA initiated an RPP exercise resulting in the publication of the book “Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo?”. The RPP collaborative learning process included extensive field interviews; case studies; and the facilitation of a total of eight open workshops around Kosovo in the period 2004–2006. The book was officially launched in Kosovo February 2007. CDA has assisted CARE in the development of a proposal for mainstreaming the findings in its work with local partners. David Reyes wrote a STEPS case study on community experiences from avoiding conflict in 2003. The study was funded by CARE.

The team found that the stakeholders it interviewed could be categorised according to their involvement with and knowledge of CDA's ideas and tools:

- A) Primary partners who have been closely involved (mainly CARE and CRS –and to a lesser extent Forum Civil Peace Service and MercyCorps). All Category A organisations' links to CDA have been established via headquarter contacts.
- B) Secondary partners who have been involved in some CDA activities, typically one to three workshops (OSCE, UNDP, UNMIK, NCA, Balkan Sunflowers, World Vision, Kosovan Nansen Dialogue).
- C) Stakeholders who work with DNH methods, but have not been engaged with CDA (DRC, Caritas).
- D) Stakeholders working within peacebuilding who do not work with any CDA tools in Kosovo and have not participated in any CDA events (such as CBM, Saferworld, Forum for Civic Initiatives, ICCED/KEP, IHFHR).

The team assess that CDA's focus on Kosovo within the Balkan Region is highly strategic and relevant. A question may arise, however, as to whether CDA has been sufficiently focused on state-building (which is the dominant theme of conflict analysis concerning Kosovo). CDA's focus of attention has been on civil society and much of its activity has focused around the issue of ethnic relations.

In particular, CDA's RPP research has concluded that inter-ethnic relations are less important than relations *within* each ethnic group and in particular the importance of civil society as a democratizing force. In *Has Peace-building made a difference in Kosovo?*, CDA challenges the dominant paradigm that a multi-ethnic society can be created without necessarily addressing issues of governance.²⁷ According to CDA's research, projects based on inter-ethnic activity (such as sports, clubs, meeting places, multi-ethnic economic activity etc) do not make any significant difference to the level of violence.

The research suggests that the focus instead should be on intra-community relations (to increase 'bonding social capital') in order to limit and modify the internal tensions that might lead to inter-ethnic violence. These findings may be counter-intuitive and are certainly controversial as they question much of the current peace-building activity.

²⁶ The field mission to Kosovo was undertaken 18th till 24th March 2007 by Tony Vaux and Erik Bryld. The team conducted the field interviews in Pristina and Mitrovica following the methodology set out in the Inception Report.

²⁷ The research builds on the collaborative learning process including 200 interviews, workshops, desk studies and consultations.

The team found, however, that knowledge and use of the book was scattered, which indicates limited efficiency in the work of CDA in this respect in Kosovo. All persons interviewed who had read the book (from seven organisations) found it challenging, thought provoking and useful in their work. Several of the persons interviewed stated that the findings of the book will or had already had an impact on their work. Once read, the book has the potential to be an effective tool in promoting peacebuilding in Kosovo. The problem is that it is not yet widely known and will need substantial backing in order to have its proper impact.

Part of the limited knowledge and interest in this important work may be attributed to the timing of the book launch, which took place three years after the events in Mitrovica it analyses and at a time when most actors were preoccupied with the question of the future status of Kosovo. Respondents said that the ICG report published a few months after the riots provided them with the explanations they needed. A more strategic advocacy approach from CDA or a CDA partner focusing on promoting the book's key messages (through e.g. targeted presentations and publication of an abbreviated version with the key messages) to key people would generate more interest and therefore represent greater efficiency in relation to the extensive process of consultation.

In other respects, partners who have a close relationship to CDA were found to have a generally good understanding of the RPP ideas and tools and of what they can expect from the organisation. Several expressed an interest in continued cooperation with CDA, but which should in the future be more focused on practical hands-on assistance in terms of applying findings in practice. They differentiated between 'more people' and 'key people' when explaining their work, however none of the persons interviewed seem to have fully understood or related to the other dimension of the matrix, i.e. 'individual/personal' and 'socio/political level'. In two cases, RPP was used as a planning tool supplemented by other planning tools such as SWOT analysis, and one organisation used RPP when undertaking peacebuilding training with local NGOs. Among secondary partners, most of those interviewed found the RPP workshops of high quality and 'useful' as a forum for exchanging information, but not as a learning exercise. Most of these stakeholders were invited as they came to hear about the process and therefore joined the activities at different stages. Some appear to have been confused as to the objectives of the collaborative learning process. The fact that no organisation seems to fully understand the RPP matrix indicates that the tool is not applied effectively, either because it is too complicated or as a result of ineffective training. Either way we conclude that the impact was marginal.

The STEPS study shows that certain unusual communities have been able to behave in unusual ways but this has no clear implication for the conflict. Only two of the persons interviewed had read the STEPS study, which they found interesting and informative for illustrating that there are factors beyond NGO promoted peacebuilding work that affect peace in Kosovo. But no practical outcomes were identified.

DNH seem to have played an important role in the immediate aftermath of the Kosovo bombing population displacements of 1999. Under a CARE initiative, a code of conduct was developed by 40 NGOs and international organisations based on DNH in terms of ways of working externally and internally. The code is no longer in active use. Today, DNH is more a concept than an applied methodology. Approximately every second person interviewed had heard of the 'Do No Harm' principle but very few were aware of anything else about it, including CDA's existence. Very few people knew how to apply the tool using 'dividers' and 'connectors'. One NGO stated that DNH was of importance to donors, and that they therefore included the phrase in their documents without applying it in practice.

In terms of extent of impact, primary partners that have a more direct link to CDA seem to have had the greatest benefit from the CDA ideas and tools. Internal workshops and regular communication and feedback on proposals have resulted in an adaptation of parts of the CDA methodologies (CRS uses RPP as a planning tool and Forum Civil Peace Service use the RPP matrix as part of their training) and

in the development of conflict sensitive peacebuilding project proposals (CRS and CARE). In other words, the more targeted the work of CDA and oriented towards practical aspects such as proposal formulation and programming, the more effective does the work seem to be in improving peace practices for partners, while the more peripheral contact with secondary partners in most cases had limited or no effect at all. The limitation, however, is that the group of primary partners is small.

It would be reasonable to say that CDA has had an overall influence on humanitarian and peacebuilding work in Kosovo and that this may have translated into impacts on the ground. But this influence can easily be exaggerated because the 'Do No Harm' principle is so widely recognised. A significant number of people, some of whom were moderately influential, attended workshops and a few have read the RPP book. But in CDA's own language, the workshops have tended to reach 'more people' rather than 'key people'. The team were not able to discern a marked effect on key people in the quasi-government, donor institutions or the international apparatus in charge of the territory. Even among NGOs, CDA's influence has generally been limited to persons rather than organisations. The influence is limited because only two international NGOs (CARE and, to a lesser extent, CRS) have engaged closely and consistently. It is really only in relation to CARE that CDA has really made a considerable difference. There is no institutional arrangement between CDA and CARE but close relationships have developed in a number of cases. For example, in relation to Kosovo, the role of CARE's conflict adviser in London has been important.

Recommendations (to CDA)

1. Develop a strategy for promotion of the CDA/CARE book in Kosovo;
2. Focus any future workshops around this purpose;
3. Focus future activity on 'Key People' rather than 'More People';

Recommendations (to Sida)

1. Engage with its mission in Kosovo to consider the implications of the CDA book for Sida policy;
2. Define the purpose and 'added value' of funding to CDA.

Summary of Key Findings from Rwanda²⁸

CDA involvement in Rwanda has included DNH, RPP and STEPS. CDA has created a positive impression amongst stakeholders and are well-liked. However, the actual impact of CDA's activities has been limited and comparatively few of the organisations or individuals consulted are conversant with the ideas or use the DNH or RPP tools in a structured way. The majority of stakeholders consulted were individuals working for international and local NGOs active in the general area of peace building. This work is generally done at community level and has a focus on reconciliation and low level conflict resolution.

The team found that stakeholders could be categorised according to their involvement with and knowledge of CDA.

- A) Primary partners who are relevant peacebuilding actors in Rwanda and have solid (in some cases longstanding) experience of working with CDA (NURC, CRS, CARE). It is in this group that the greatest uptake (or potential for uptake) of CDA's ideas and tools is found.
- B) Secondary partners who are relevant peacebuilding actors and have been involved in some CDA activities, typically one to three workshops (NPA, Pro-Femmes, PTN-Rwanda, SCUR, AMI). The degree of understanding and uptake of CDA ideas and tools amongst this group was limited.

²⁸ The field mission to Rwanda was undertaken between 28th March and 2nd April 2007 by Julian Brett and Erik Bryld, accompanied by Augustin Ngendakuriyo. The team conducted the field interviews in Kigali and a nearby rural area (Gahanga Sector). A short stop over was made in Nairobi (27th March) to meet with a key stakeholder there.

- C) Stakeholders who are familiar with DNH and/or RPP methods, but have not formally engaged with CDA (Oxfam GB, CDJP). One of these had been trained by CDA associate trainers.
- D) Stakeholders working who do not work with any CDA tools in Rwanda and have not participated in any CDA events (EPPR, LIPRODOR, Ukuri Kuganze Association, Gahanka Sector Administration). Amongst this group there was no knowledge of CDA's ideas or tools.

The unambiguous message from all those interviewed was that there remains a need for peacebuilding and conflict management efforts in Rwanda, particularly at community level. While security in general is much improved, many Rwandans are still living with the psychological and social consequences of the 1994 genocide. Rwanda is still in a process of reconstructing itself socially and politically. Actual violence is low, although there are isolated cases of (ethnic) attacks on individuals. New stresses have also emerged, including the impacts of returnees (many of whom have lived for extensive periods outside Rwanda, have exposure to different cultures, languages, and have greater wealth), and the release of prisoners. Other pressures arise from high rates of poverty, limited productive land, HIV/AIDS, urban youth unemployment etc. There are a number of human rights concerns.

Given the need for continued efforts towards peacebuilding in Rwanda and the technical capacity building of most stakeholders, CDA's outputs (particularly DNH) are assessed to be relevant. The relevance would increase if stakeholders were better able to apply the tools (i.e. supplying CDA's outcomes). We assessed that relatively few are able to do this unaided to a significant extent in practice – which suggests a need for CDA to use approaches that link the ideas and methodologies to practical case work. The strong message received from stakeholders at all levels is that they are seeking practical tools that they can use in the Rwandan *context*. Where stakeholders utilise other methodologies (e.g. problem tree), the degree to which CDA's tools are assimilated into practice is likely to be restricted.

CDA's efficiency, effectiveness and impact is assessed to be medium to high among the primary partners in Rwanda as they are aware of the main ideas and the tools are partly applied (particularly DNH dividers and connectors). This also offers possibilities for synergies to emerge. With the exception of the RPP Matrix, the application and understanding of the RPP is less evident and is yet to influence the programme level. This indicates that there is room for improving efficiency and the effectiveness of the work for it to impact on "Peace Writ Large". One way of achieving this would be through closer and regular follow-up based on practical application. The attention now being given to NURC is strategically relevant in this respect.

The efficiency, effectiveness and extent of impact of CDA's work among secondary partners (i.e. NGOs who have received training through workshops) is very limited, with no proper understanding or application of the methodologies or organisational mainstreaming. The team see this as a deficiency with the "more people" approach that has been used. It also means that limited synergy is emerging amongst the organisations as a result of their common participation in workshops. nb. RPP has since switched to a focus on "key people", i.e. NURC.

Among the stakeholders consulted who have not been directly involved with CDA, efficiency, effectiveness and extent of impact is assessed to be medium with good understanding and some application of DNH or RPP ideas respectively. This is likely to reflect the general circulation of CDA's ideas and tools within the aid community and their uptake amongst certain INGOs.

Duration/sustainability of impact is understandably greatest amongst stakeholders who have adopted CDA's ideas and tools internally. In the case of NURC, the methodologies are regarded as part of a palette of tools that can be used. However, they have not yet been mainstreamed and so their sustainability is questionable without further input from CDA (which NURC is eager to receive). In the case of CRS, DNH has been mainstreamed and is regarded as sustainable. Amongst other stakeholders, there was a clear wish for further expert advice regarding the application of the tools in practical contexts.

Recommendations (to CDA)

1. CDA activities in Rwanda should reflect CDA's core expertise. This will be particularly relevant in cases where CDA is being asked to extend its range of "services" (as with NURC). CDA should be prepared to say "no" where requests fall outside their core competence.
2. New "CDA events" should be preceded by a stakeholder analysis to ensure that CDA reaches "key people". Efficiency, effectiveness and impact will be increased where key people push for mainstreaming of methodologies within their organisations.
3. Practical case work on "live" issues will help assimilation. Follow-on "project sparring" was a general request from those interviewed. CDA may consider linking up with institutions/organisations more acquainted with project implementation to undertake this practice oriented part of the training/sparring.
4. CDA should consider why stakeholders have difficulty in applying the RPP matrix and in relating to the Criteria of Effectiveness.
5. CDA should include DNH principles in future RPP training where this is not already the case.
6. Relationships/events with actors having limited capacity should be phased out as they have limited impact on the participants. Instead CDA should focus attention on fewer "key" stakeholders, possibly with activities focusing on one organisation at a time, as is the case with NURC. An alternative suggestion would be to focus on such an organisation plus its partner network.

Recommendations (to Sida)

1. Inform Rwanda office about CDA activities.
2. Consider technical support to NURC and other related *relevant* CDA partners in applying findings from RPP/DNH analysis in practice.

Summary of Key Findings from Sri Lanka²⁹

CDA has been working in Sri Lanka since 1998, first with Do No Harm followed by RPP and STEPS. A range of Do No Harm (DNH) training activities were undertaken until 2000, after which there were visits relating to RPP work with the Berghof Foundation. The work of DNH has however been extended by a very strong relationship via programming with CARE and World Vision, and more indirectly through GTZ. STEPS has carried out a review of the manner in which the religious sanctuary of Madhu managed to preserve its role as a haven in the war, although this material still remains to be exploited in terms of learning.

As regards efficiency, the overall conclusion is also good. After an extensive input before 2000, DNH continues to be taught and applied in the country. There are centres where such training is perpetuated alongside other forms of learning, and demand for inputs from CDA is still high.

The qualification to this judgement is the relatively critical reception given to DNH, and to a lesser extent RPP, in Sri Lanka. The importance of conflict sensitivity in the country means that many other methods are applied and increasingly appreciated by donors and by agency personnel. The CDA analytical tools are perceived as being light to apply, but not very tight. They do not trigger a questioning of agency practice, and consequent shifts in policy.

Effectiveness is to be found in the ease with which DNH and RPP are discussed within the small audience of conflict sensitivity specialists. Some agencies have applied the tools extensively. Yet outside this circle there is very little familiarity with the learning, beyond the general principle of Do No Harm. Local NGOs in particular have not been exposed to it. The agencies that have applied DNH extensive-

²⁹ The field mission to Sri Lanka was undertaken 9 to 15 April 2007 by Tony Vaux and Emery Brusset. The team conducted the field interviews in Colombo following the methodology set out in the Inception Report.

ly in their work tend to do so at the level of the field, hence intervening at the specific stage of implementation and delivery in the project cycle. The knowledge has become slightly passive, and neglected at the higher levels of agencies.

The findings on relevance conclude that the programmes, especially DNH, have been relevant to the nature of the conflict and the role of aid organisations in that it has allowed for a more extensive reduction of the risks of delivery than would otherwise be the case.

On the other hand the types of issues which the partners of CDA deal with (inter-ethnic relations, cleavages in development, the use of civilian assets for military purposes) are not the key issues identified in conflict analysis. In particular the seminal report funded by a number of donors identified the regional context, governance, and particularly the militarization of society, as key issues. These are better addressed through bilateral relations with donors, or through local NGOs. CDA has predominantly worked with large international NGOs (the evaluation identified three of those in the country).

Extent of impact is concentrated on the agencies that work in humanitarian aid. These are increasingly restricted in their room for manoeuvre by the emerging political climate, which is highly suspicious of NGOs. The peace-building agencies (in particular the Berghof Foundation) are seeing their work severely curtailed by the current high intensity of conflict, and it was not possible for the evaluation to identify any extent of impact since 2005.

Duration and sustainability offer a contrasted scene. On the one hand the DNH tools are part of the body of knowledge of conflict sensitivity in the country, and even if some scepticism is expressed, it will continue to be used for the near future in spite of the fact that CDA has ceased its visits for this programme since 2000. On the other hand the tsunami highlighted the fragility of quality assurance and risk minimisation guidelines in aid agencies in general. There is a broad consensus that, under institutional pressure to implement, all agencies failed to apply DNH learning at a critical moment in the history of the country, contributing to the current inflammation of violence.

Appendix 4 Terms of Reference

1. Background

Donors are facing increasing demands regarding efficiency and the reporting of the results of development cooperation. As part of its financial responsibility, Sida is required to ensure that its funds are used efficiently for the purposes intended regardless of how the funds are channelled.

In order to be able to monitor how its partner in peace and security, *CDA Collaborative Learning Projects*, is fulfilling its contractual obligations, Sida will conduct an evaluation of CDA. The evaluation will look at CDA's internal systems in general and at the performance of three programs in particular, namely Reflection on Peace Practice, Do No Harm and STEPS. It will be initiated by the first quarter of 2007 and a final report will be presented by June 2007. The conclusions and recommendations in the report will be followed up by CDA 2007 onwards.

CDA collaborates and receives funds from several agencies. Sida believes that other agencies could benefit from joining in the conducting of this evaluation, as a whole or in parts. If interested, please contact Julia Ekstedt, Advisor in Peace and Security: julia.ekstedt@sida.se.

The terms of the evaluation

The evaluation will combine aspects included in a capacity study and a system audit, two types of evaluations that sometimes overlap. Generally, we can say that: a capacity study has a broad, comprehensive focus and examines standard organizational issues such as, goal fulfilment, planning, administration, resources and other similar matters, as well as, the peacebuilding dimensions which focus on the direct and indirect impacts on peace and conflict dynamics, in order to determine the *quality of the aid activities* that the organisation operates; a system audit has a narrower and more in-depth focus, and analyses *how* the organisation works (rather than *what it works with*) by examining the routines and systems of the organisation that ensure reliability in its work and reporting.

2. Purposes

The purpose of the evaluation is to analyse whether CDA's internal control and system ensures the quality and accuracy of its documentation (in the form of annual accounts, operations planning, applications, financial and narrative reports and other materials presented to donors), and from a broader perspective, whether the organisation have the appropriate systems and routines needed to ensure the quality of, and direct, the activities toward the goals established for the operations, and to contribute to the fulfilment of the Swedish development cooperation objectives. It shall also look at the quality of the activities, and analyse how CDA works by examining the reliability and relevance and aspects of impact. It should contribute to ongoing learning and be presented as a continuous real time evaluation (not only in retrospective). The conclusions and recommendations will provide material for its internal development efforts.

In particular, it will include a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) in order to examine further the direct and indirect impacts of: (i) CDA programmes on the conflict-prone regions under consideration; and (ii) the impact of the conflict-prone regions on the CDA programmes. This aspect of the evaluation will focus on two dimensions: (i) the Peacebuilding Impact: those factors which strengthen the chances for peace and decrease the opportunities for violent conflict to breakout, continue or start again; and (ii) the Conflict-creating Impact: those factors that increase the chances that organised violence will be employed to 'manage' the conflict. This assessment will evaluate the peacebuilding aspects of the CDA as it works to support affected populations and local communities in: (i) the con-

struction of the structures of peace and cultures of constructive conflict management; and (ii) the deconstruction of the structures of violence and cultures of belligerence and hostility. Peacebuilding is not about the imposition of solutions by external actors, but rather, the creation of the space within which indigenous actors can identify problems and formulate their own solutions. CDA will be assessed on how well it has assisted in this task.

3. The Project

The evaluation shall include the entire organisational chain at CDA, both at its headquarters (Board and office), and via staff and partners linked to it in different countries through different activities and projects. The project therefore includes visits in three countries. The project includes an inventory in which routines and systems for financial and business management shall be documented and analysed. In addition, the consultant shall supply recommendations for improvements in CDA's management of its operations. Finally, the consultants shall complete a thorough Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of the CDA in the three countries to determine the direct and indirect consequences to their peace-building efforts. After consultation with Sida the consultant may also include or exclude topics, in order to ensure a high-quality and feasible study.

3.1 Inventory and documentation: business management

In the inventory of business management systems and routines, the following must be documented: CDA's mandate; the office staff's relation to the Board of CDA; the process of garnering support from the member organisations; the organisation and work methods of the main office staff; the organisation and work methods of the regional and national work; the choice of partners (criteria); operational planning and analysis; policies and strategies; goal formulations; result measurement; organisational and contribution evaluation; monitoring of contributions; deviation reporting; feedback and final reports; evaluation; decision-making procedure

3.2 Financial management

In the inventory of financial management systems and routines, the following must be documented: agreements and monitoring of contractual obligations; fund transfer and bank and cash management; delegation principals; budgeting/monitoring; audits at all stages and levels, quality of audit certification; promotion of good administration, transparency in financial management, and opposition to corruption.

3.3 Other areas that Sida wants clarified

- Follow-up of training and case studies among partners
- The partner's relation to CDA
- The partner's roles and responsibilities
- Partners integration of CDA's working methods and learning processes

3.4 Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA): Three Country Case Studies.

- (a) Assessing the Environment & Mapping the Conflict(s) and the Peace(s);
- (b) Completing a Risk and Opportunity Assessment (i.e., locations; timings; political contexts; military-security contexts; socio-economic issues; partners – stakeholders; and other factors.); and
- (c) PCIA during project design, implementation and evaluation (i.e., conflict management capacities; militarized violence and human security; political structures and processes; economic structures and processes; and social empowerment.).

3.5 Analysis and evaluation

The inventoried areas should be analysed and evaluated regarding reliability and relevance, and a general evaluation should be made of CDA's internal communication and reports to Sida. This analysis should also include the organisational structure of the office staff, and staff sizing in relation to functions and tasks.

The PCIA component of the evaluation provides the specific qualitative evaluation at the core of CDA's work to support beneficiaries as they seek to build peace and reduce violent conflict.

3.6 Recommendations

The project should result in recommendations and an action plan regarding the above-mentioned matters, the organisational structure and functions, systems and routines and the peacebuilding dimensions of their core mandate.

4. Implementation of the project

A team of consultants procured by Sida and approved by CDA shall be responsible for the project, and enjoy the support of contact persons from CDA and Sida.

5. Method

The project shall be conducted by means of studies of available documentation at the office of CDA in Cambridge, USA, office of partner organisations and CDA consultants' documentations in three countries and at Sida. In addition, there should be interviews of personnel at the Cambridge office, consultants and, a number of partner organisations in each country, and the auditor of CDA. Further definition of the methods for conducting the project shall be left to the consultant(s).

6. Schedule

The objective is to begin work by the beginning of 2007 and present the final report to Sida by June 2007.

7. Consultation

In order to guarantee that the report will serve as a good basis for improvement, the consultation meetings with CDA and Sida shall take place as follows:

- When a first inventory and the initial drafting of the evaluations have been completed, the scope of it shall be discussed with CDA and Sida in order to determine what is realistic given the time constraints, and to decide where the emphasis should be;
- Before a final report is prepared, a draft of the report shall be presented and discussed jointly with CDA and Sida.

8. Reporting routines

The project shall be reported in a written report, and submitted to Sida by email and on a CD. In order to provide an opportunity to comment on any errors of fact or misunderstandings, a preliminary draft of the final report shall be received by CDA and Sida by 30 April 2007. The final report shall be submitted to Sida no later than two weeks after Sida and CDA has submitted their final comments and views (after presentation at CDA head office- see below).

8.1 Format and composition of the final report

The final report shall be written in English and shall not exceed 30 pages, not including appendixes. The final report shall also be summarised in an English version consisting of no more than 5 pages.

8.2 Presentation/reporting

As part of this project, the consultant shall make a presentation of the results for CDA's and Sida's personnel in CDA's office in Cambridge in April/May 2007. The presentation will be a full day in workshop form. CDA may invite partners and its own consultants to participate. The consultants should place appropriate emphasis on the future learning's and capacity building which could take place within and between the CDA, Sida and partners. A brief outline of appropriate post-evaluation communications-dissemination and capacity-building strategies should also be presented as part of the final report.

9. Miscellaneous

Upon the request of CDA or Sida, the consultant shall make himself or herself available for discussion of the recommendations and conclusions. For the purpose of Sida's internal skills development, there should be an opportunity for Sida personnel to participate in the ongoing work, including being present at field visits. Sida and CDA will be consulted to comment on choice of countries, partners and consultants to interview, content of interviews and in setting up other meetings.

Terms of Reference Consultancy

The requirements of the consultant/team of consultants to carry out the system audit and capacity study (evaluation) are the fulfillment of the following qualifications, knowledge and experiences:

- a. Organizational development
- b. Programme management
- c. Conflict resolution/peace and security/peace and conflict impact assessments
- d. Development work /humanitarianism assistance
- e. Processes of organizational learning and systematizing knowledge
- f. financial accounting/systems.
- g. experience from regional and national work in Asia/ Latin Africa/ Asia (specifically the countries to be used in the evaluation)
- h. evaluations, codicted system audit and institutional capacity evaluations

The applying consultancy shall state:

- *Availability* for conducting the evaluation assignment;
- *Time frame (when)* according to the tasks mentioned in the terms of reference, the assignment is to be done;
- *Methods* employed in order to complete the assignment and secure the quality of the completed work;
- the total cost of the assignment, specified as per each category, any reimbursable costs, any other costs and any discounts.

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