

CDA Collaborative Learning

Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Values

Vision Statement

CDA strives for a world in which people in poor, fragile and vulnerable societies agree on their own development directions and resolve conflicts without resorting to armed violence.

Mission Statement

CDA facilitates collaborative learning processes between humanitarian, peace, development and corporate practitioners and policy-makers on how to make their support of people in poor, fragile and vulnerable societies more effective and accountable.

Guiding Principles

1. We maintain relationships of *respect, accountability, fairness and transparency* with those affected by international presence and actions, as well as with our learning partners and donors.
2. We listen, record and report the views and perspectives of *people and communities* in poor, fragile and vulnerable societies, as one important source of guidance for practice.
3. We keep in mind that policies and practices that identify and build on *local capacities* for economic development, social change and peacebuilding are more effective and more sustainable than practices that rely on external actors.
4. We take into account that *context matters* and that *outsider engagements* always have effects on the societies and people involved.
5. We preserve CDA's *independence and integrity*, while working *with* but not *for* international organizations that engage in poor, fragile and vulnerable societies.
6. We are not an implementing agency in order to sustain our *impartiality* with multiple interest groups participating in collaborative learning processes.

CDA's Collaborative Learning Values

1. People learn best—and incorporate learning into policy and practice—when they are directly involved in the learning process.
2. Direct field experiences provide a rich source for evidence-based learning that tests assumptions and informs future policy and practice.
3. Joint reflective practice—across fields, sectors and organizations—provides opportunities for mutual sharing and for stimulating changes in practical operations.
4. Learning is most valid when it is based on a wide range of perspectives.
5. Open-ended inquiry (rather than seeking proof of a hypothesis) can produce compelling findings.

INTRODUCTION

June 2009-May 2010

This Annual Report outlines the accomplishments of all projects of CDA Collaborative Learning Projects for the period June 2009 to May 2010. Each project can justifiably claim to have influenced key practitioners and policy-makers within the multiple constituencies with whom CDA works. This is a product of our inductive approach to learning through which we engage our partners as collaborators in evidence-gathering, analysis and sharing of lessons.

In October, we were pleased to welcome several of our key contacts within donor agencies to Cambridge for two days of brainstorming on CDA's strengths and opportunities. These were invaluable in providing not only insights into the challenges confronting our partners but also clarifying the expectations of CDA in helping to resolve them. We heard, in particular, about the obstacles to closing ubiquitous gaps that CDA has observed in all of our projects between policy and practice; between analysis and strategy; and between evaluation and learning. The Listening Project has heard how these gaps have frustrated attempts to improve the well-being of recipients and the Do No Harm Project has, for years, countenanced the consequences of inappropriate policies and incomplete analyses.

The gaps are systemic and not limited to the contexts that CDA has been traditionally involved in (i.e. conflict-affected and fragile situations). Nevertheless, we believe that addressing them is integral to achievement of CDA's vision of more effective international assistance in all contexts. With "*development effectiveness*" looming prominently on the agendas of international donors, CDA will bring its observations and experience to bear to help bridge these gaps. As with all of our endeavors, our approach will be to work *with*, rather than *for*, key stakeholders in a spirit of collaborative partnership as we seek insights into these dilemmas.

Key Messages from Donor Consultations, October 2009

- The policy-program gap is real, and is driven by the lack of alignment between the principled thematic policies to which donors have committed and the operational guidelines and unwritten codes and cultures that pervade within many donor organizations. This gap contributes to thoughtful policies not being translated into sound development outcomes.
- Most results-based frameworks for humanitarian and development programming do not capture four important perspectives important for understanding the impacts of assistance, i.e. *perceptions, relationships, unexpected impacts/effects* and *adding-up factors*.
- Recipient communities expect donors to be more present and engaged.

Cross-project learning is another theme that emerged during the donor consultations. Like many, we were appalled at the loss of life and suffering during the destructive earthquake in Haiti in January. But, amidst the devastation, we saw opportunities to reverse the scourge of chronic instability and lawlessness that had beleaguered the nation for so long. CDA projects compiled a package of information that aimed to draw on our collective experience and knowledge of Haiti to highlight opportunities to increase social cohesion even as the massive relief and recovery effort got underway. It is an initiative that we hope to repeat in the future where we believe that CDA has compelling evidence and advice to offer. However, our plans to deploy a Do No Harm team to Haiti to assist agencies to integrate conflict-sensitivity into their relief and recovery programs had to be

shelved through lack of funding. We will continue to explore options for more direct support to agencies responding to future crises.

In Autumn 2010, we plan to host a gathering of partners of the Corporate Engagement Project (CEP) with the view to identifying how CDA can best support companies and governments to realize global commitments to conflict-sensitive and rights-based business practices. Many of these commitments were inspired by *Getting It Right: Making Corporate-Community Relations Work* (Greenleaf, 2009). Company managers often encounter internal obstacles when attempting to translate these corporate commitments into operational practice. A key priority now is to work with companies to identify ways to overcome these obstacles so that the lessons from the first decade of CEP can be put into practice.

In May 2010, CDA's total staff was just twelve – one less than the corresponding time last year. But our networks of affiliates, learning communities and other collaborating partners provide CDA with a global reach that belies our size. It was also a year of change with the founder and Executive Director, Mary Anderson, retiring in October. Luc Zandvliet resigned as Director of the Corporate Engagement Project although he remains an advisor to the project. Needless to say, the departure of Mary and Luc was felt by our small team but the transition does not appear to have weakened the confidence of our partners in CDA's competencies and expertise, or our ability to convene stakeholders and deliver sound and practical advice to practitioners and policy-makers.

The CDA Board of Directors has worked tirelessly to guide the organization through this transition. They have provided invaluable guidance and advice on a range of administrative, financial and operational issues. The Board has also recently approved revisions to the by-laws to enable it to further maximize its contribution to CDA's ongoing success. We are very grateful to Jonathan Moore (Chair), Roma Mayur, Larry Minear and Don Remick for volunteering their time and energy to serving on CDA Board.

CDA Board and staff are proud of our reputation but we do not take it for granted. We know that overseas development budgets and company budgets are under stress. We also recognize that the way institutional donors conduct business is rapidly changing. These trends have important implications for CDA and, looking to the future, we will need to be nimble to capitalize on our strengths while calibrating our work to contemporary challenges. However, we will also have to be alert in order to preserve the independence that is integral to our ability to convene partners from across the spectrum of humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and business communities.

None of CDA's achievements would have been possible without the generosity of our donors. There are many organizations and individuals who have contributed funding, time, resources and intellectual capital that have underpinned our work. CDA's success has been built on their contributions. Work has already begun to install a more robust system to verify our accomplishments and improve reporting of the impacts of our work. This results-oriented system will be linked to our planning processes in order to maintain the efficient and effective use of our resources. The individual reports that follow aim to harness ongoing support so that CDA can continue to bring fresh perspectives to discussions about what really makes a difference to the lives of poor, vulnerable and disempowered communities in developing countries.



THE CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT PROJECT Narrative Report, June 2009-May 2010

Project Description

The Corporate Engagement Project (CEP) assists companies to analyze their impact on local stakeholders and develop practical management options to build positive, constructive relationships with the communities where they work. The findings of the first decade of CEP were published in *“Getting it Right: Making Corporate-Community Relations Work”* (April 2009). The book has received widespread acclaim for its practical approach to improving the complex and often difficult relationships between companies and communities in the vicinity of their operations.

The mission of CEP is to provide guidance on improving these relationships so that companies have a positive impact on the communities where they operate. In this respect, CDA works *with* - rather than *for* - companies in the spirit of collaborative learning to bring sustainable and beneficial changes in company practices. In particular, CEP provides practical options for participants in the UN Global Compact to achieve the ten principles¹ to which they have committed in order to contribute effectively to sustainable development of their neighbors.

Project Highlights and Activities

During FY 2009-2010, CEP focused on disseminating the findings outlined in *Getting it Right* to a breadth of different actors and forums. To this end, CEP has developed tools, trainings, publications and guidance documents. For example, CEP worked with the UN Global Compact to develop the guidance document *“Guidance on Responsible Business in Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas: A Resource for Companies and Investors”*. CEP authored the chapters on Local Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Social Investment. The document was eventually launched at the UN Global Compact Leaders Summit in New York City in June 2010 with follow-on dissemination activities scheduled to take place over the coming year. It is available for download from the CDA website and has also been translated into Chinese by the UN Global Compact.

CEP, in collaboration with World Vision Canada and the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC), is developing a field tool for mining exploration and developers. *Understanding Conflict: Field Tool for Exploration* is a simple and practical analysis tool that enables companies, on their own or in collaboration with NGOs, to identify and address complex issues that arise in settings of conflict, that existed prior to industry presence or as a result of resource extraction. The Field Testing version of the Tool will be piloted this year and will be launched during FY 2010-2011.

From Canada to DRC

Development of the draft *Understanding Conflict Tool* included an open consultation process in Toronto in April 2010, during which we received constructive feedback from key Canadian mining companies. Company representatives commended the Tool for providing step-wise guidance on performing rapid analysis of the existing social context where exploration teams are operating. They indicated that analyzing contexts is least understood by company staff, and that the Tool provides important guidance on *what* questions companies should be asking as well as *how* they should be asking them. The Tool is equally applicable across a variety of settings, from Canada to the DRC.

¹ <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/aboutthegc/thetenprinciples/index.html>

CEP has also begun to expand its work to the associated field of business and human rights. CEP was invited to test the practical application and robustness of the rights-based remedy principles developed by the UN Special Representatives on Business and Human Rights. Over two years, CEP will undertake three visits with two of the five companies involved in the pilot project (Sakhalin Energy Investment Company in Russia and Carbones del Cerrejon in Colombia). Lessons are being gathered and will be fed back to the Special Representative for inclusion in his 2011 report to the UN.



Company-Community Consultation, Colombia (2009)

Presentations and Trainings

During the year, CEP presented findings to hundreds of individuals and organizations at conferences, workshops, and roundtable events, e.g. the 2009 annual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) conference of Business for Social Responsibility, presentations within the World Bank Group, and a keynote presentation at an Oxfam Australia Mining Symposium. CEP has also designed a training program based on the evidence gathered from the last ten years of field work. The training program provides participants with practical tools and skills in managing community engagement, developing social investment strategies, and understanding the company's relationship to contexts of conflict.

This year, CEP made the following presentations:

- Business Humanitarian Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, *Rethinking Cross-Sector Partnerships in Times of Economic Crisis* (June 2009)
- Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) Conference, San Francisco, *Corporate Stakeholder Engagement: Time to Evolve Our Language and Approach?* (October 2009)
- World Bank, Washington DC, *Presentation to the World Bank Community Development Strategy & Coordination Unit* (November 2009)
- The United States Institute of Peace, *Private Sector-Community Engagement Roundtable* (December 2009)
- World Bank, *Presentation to Compliance Advisor Ombudsman and International Finance* (December 2009)
- International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) *Round Table on Corporate Activity in Conflict Prone Markets*, hosted by NIR and Sida. (January 2010)
- Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Nampula City, Mozambique, *Extractive Resources Development: Opportunities and Challenges and the Relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility* (February 2010)
- Rights and Democracy, Montreal, Canada, *Foreign Investment and Human Rights: Are Impact Assessments the Solution?* (March 2010)
- MIT Sloan School of Management, Cambridge, Massachusetts, *Making Strategic and Responsible Business Decisions on Community Engagement in New and Complex Contexts* (March 2010)
- Total S.A., Paris, *CEP findings for Total Societal Performance* (March 2010)
- Arcelor Mittal, Washington DC, *Expert Group Meeting Advising on formation and implementation of company-wide Human Rights Policy* (April 2010)
- Oxfam Australia, Melbourne, Australia, Mining Symposium *"Getting it Right" in Social Performance; Key Elements of Effective Grievance Mechanisms* (April 2010)
- The Institute for Human Rights and Business, Bogotá, Colombia, *Beyond Red Flags Project. Opportunities and Challenges for Business in Conflict Settings; The Business Context in Relation to Land Appropriation* (May 2010)

Publications

- *Guidance on Responsible Business in Conflict-Affected and High -Risk Areas: A Resource for Companies and Investors*, produced by the UN Global Compact (June 2010)

- Update to *Opportunities for Synergy; Conflict Transformation and the Corporate Agenda* in Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin (Publication forthcoming)
- *Understanding Conflict: Field Tool for Exploration*, co-produced by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, World Vision Canada, and The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (July 2010)
- EcuaCorriente S.A. Copper Mine Report - Ecuador. The site assessment took place as the company prepared to re-initiate mining operations in light of new mining legislation and regulations. The company has reported that initial steps have been taken in implementing options generated during the CEP visit. (September 2009)

Next Steps

In the coming year, CEP will continue to generate and encourage use of CEP learnings, by working in partnership with, and influencing good practice among a breadth of actors (companies, governments, civil society, investors, multi-stakeholder initiatives, and regulatory bodies). In particular, CEP will engage in the following activities over the coming year:

- The CEP Consultation will be held in October 2010 in Cambridge, MA. The Consultation will bring together colleagues from across the extractive industries with the purpose of sharing lessons and experiences of implementing CEP findings and recommendations as well as achieving rights-based business practices.
- *Understanding Conflict: Field Tool for Exploration*. CEP will lead field testing of the tool with exploration companies across regions of Latin America, Africa and Canada. The final tool will be launched at the PDAC conference in March 2011.
- *Community Perspectives on the Business Responsibility to Respect Human Rights*. In collaboration with the Institute for Human Rights and Business in London, CEP will conduct field based research on community perceptions around business' responsibilities while operating in conflict-affected areas in Colombia, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Mindanao, Philippines. CEP hopes to expand this workstream in the future.
- CEP will continue to partner with individual companies, such as Total S.A, to assist them to adopt good practice and due diligence guidelines through provision of trainings and conducting independent site visits, where appropriate.

"A strategy of community relations and community development has been set up with the help of CEP, benefiting from [CEP's] experience with the extractive industry. This has consisted in developing a planning of community relations and meetings, as well as reinforcing partnerships with international NGOs and Community Based Organizations to develop community programs in the field of education, water, sanitation, and access to sustainable energy."
Community Relations Staff of a CEP Partner Company

CEP will continue to respond to requests for presentations, speeches, and trainings where these will further our dissemination goals. We will look for new ways to work with our long-standing partners, engage with new companies, NGOs, and government partners. We will also seek to develop partnerships in new industries to test the lessons of CEP in different sectors.

CEP Staff

Dost Bardouille-Crema assumed directorship of the Corporate Engagement Project in 2010. **Ethan Schechter** is Project Associate for CEP. Former Director, **Luc Zandvliet**, continues close involvement with CEP as an advisor.

Corporate Engagement Project

The objective of the Corporate Engagement Project is to ensure that companies have a positive, rather than negative, impact on the local communities where they operate. CEP collaborates with companies, governments, civil society, and bilateral and multilateral agencies towards this goal.

CEP Today:

The Corporate Engagement Project gathers evidence on the impacts of corporate activities on local communities through visits to company operation sites around the world. CEP fieldreports and issue papers present people's experiences, reflections and analyses, as well as their practical suggestions, for company to achieve constructive relationships with communities.

Getting it Right—Making Corporate-Community Relations Work, presents an analysis of patterns of corporate activities around stakeholder engagement, across industries and regions. The project currently works with several initiatives, sharing experiences and lessons learned to aid in the development of rights-based business practices and industry standards for achieving successful social performance.

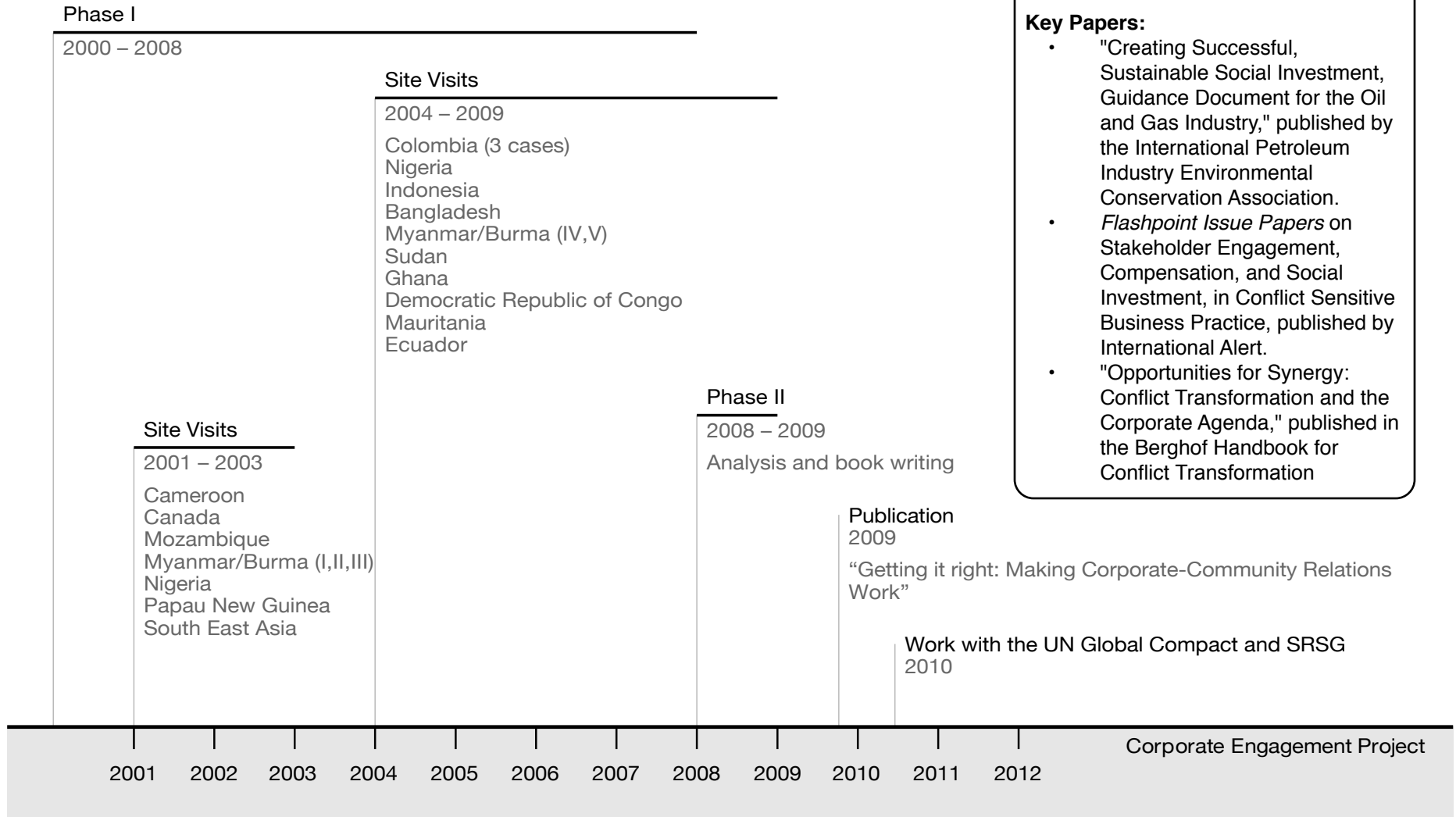
CEP Tomorrow:

Upon the publication of *Getting it Right*, CEP entered a new phase. The project is focused on a combination of continued evidence gathering and on disseminating lessons learned. The main activities of this phase of CEP are:

- Collaboration with companies and industry associations to design practical tools for analysis and action
- Contributing CEP knowledge and lessons to overarching private sector initiatives such as the UN Global Compact
- Consultations with company partners, government representatives, industry consortia and academics
- Training courses for company management, community relations staff and others, based on practical field-based lessons learned and evidence gathered in the current phase of the project
- Book presentations at industry meetings, company consortia, government ministries and individual company offices
- Targeted marketing of *Getting it Right* to schools, specifically those with curricula focused on corporate management

What have we learned?

- Relationships matter to local people. *How* companies distribute benefits, behave and manage the unintended side effects of their operations are just as important as *what* benefits they distribute to local people.
- Companies have more control over the context in which they operate than they realize. They can modify their assumptions, policies and daily practices to lead to a more positive impact on local communities.
- Company-community tensions and conflicts are most often caused by an accumulation of unmet expectations and small grievances over time.
- Internal management issues—like production-focused reward incentives—can undermine community relations efforts and cause negative impacts on the community.
- With a strategic and rigorous approach to social performance, in line with the company business case, it is possible to it is possible to positive and constructive community engagement and investment.



Publications:

Getting it Right: Making Corporate Community Relations Work

Stats:

- 25 Site Assessments
- Partnered with over 60 international companies

Key Papers:

- "Creating Successful, Sustainable Social Investment, Guidance Document for the Oil and Gas Industry," published by the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association.
- *Flashpoint Issue Papers* on Stakeholder Engagement, Compensation, and Social Investment, in Conflict Sensitive Business Practice, published by International Alert.
- "Opportunities for Synergy: Conflict Transformation and the Corporate Agenda," published in the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation

THE DO NO HARM PROJECT

Narrative Report, June 2009-May 2010

Project Description

Begun in 1993, the Do No Harm (DNH) Project seeks to identify the ways in which international assistance given in conflict settings may be provided so that it helps local people and communities to disengage from fighting and develop alternative systems for settling the issues that have prompted conflict within their society. DNH concepts and frameworks have subsequently percolated throughout the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding communities and now involve international and local NGOs, bilateral and multi-lateral donors, agencies of the United Nations and, increasingly, governments in aid recipient countries. Importantly, 'do no harm' has also been recognized as one of the ten principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations by the OECD DAC.

"DNH is good for analysis, planning, design and evaluation—it opens people's eyes and sensitizes them."
NGO staff, Kenya

Expansion of DNH into these varied constituencies has yielded further valuable lessons that provide additional insights into how DNH concepts can be applied – not only in fragile or conflict-affected situations but also in more stable contexts to reduce the risk of harmful impacts. In order to capture these experiences, CDA has undertaken a series of reflective case studies with colleagues who have been using the concepts and frameworks over the years. These case studies have examined how organizations have used the DNH tools and lessons, how the tools have spread and been shared within and beyond organizations, and what structures and systems have helped or hindered the uptake of DNH at both an individual and organizational level. The lessons from these case studies will be distilled to improve and broaden future uptake, use, and training of the DNH concepts.

Project Highlights and Activities

During FY 2009-2010, the DNH Project completed the final visits for the reflective case studies. DNH teams visited Kenya, Sudan, Cambodia and Philippines, bringing the total number of DNH reflective cases to nineteen. In April 2009, CDA held a Consultation in Boston, USA to analyze the findings of these reflective cases. A follow-up series of smaller regional consultations were also held to bring more practitioners and trainers of DNH into the evidence analysis - in Bogotá, Oslo, Nairobi, Colombo, Davao City, Manila, and Phnom Penh. With the completion of the case study series, the DNH Project has begun to produce issue papers based on the evidence. Three issue papers had been produced by May 2010.

"Myself I have made this tool part of my life to an extent that I use it even at home and in office individually by always asking myself whether I might be doing any harm to my family members or to my clients. This has shaped my perspective and by and by it is also penetrating into my family members and workmates. So my point is that DNH works at all levels, and it will be more effective should we bring it down at individual person's level because it shapes ones life and actions."

Local NGO staff, Uganda

A new training module for the DNH Framework has been formulated. It will be further tested and revised in the upcoming fiscal year. CDA also worked closely with officials from government departments in Afghanistan, Liberia and Sudan who had expressed interest in DNH or conflict sensitivity training. DNH staff made two trips to Afghanistan to assist the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in mainstreaming DNH in the Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development. DNH staff also made two trips to Liberia to provide training and follow-up for the Liberia Peace Building Office within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is tasked with mainstreaming conflict sensitivity throughout the Government of Liberia.

CDA has also taken steps to strengthen its networks of DNH collaborating partners:

- In autumn 2009, the first edition of the quarterly DNH Newsletter was distributed. Two further editions were distributed in February and May 2010 respectively. The newsletter collects tools, stories and lessons from colleagues working in the field and shares them among the broader DNH community. In each edition, lists of trainers from a specific country or region and contact information for various DNH networks are provided. Feedback from the first three newsletters has been universally positive and many colleagues have sent tools and stories they wish to share in future editions.
- In May 2010, the DNH Project began a weblog of project activities, publications, stories and observations at www.donoharmproject.wordpress.com. Each DNH Project staff member contributes posts to the blog and we have invited colleagues to contribute guest posts as well.
- Reaching out to DNH trainers and tracking usage of DNH concepts has been a particular challenge over the years. The project has initiated a semi-annual survey, which asks trainers to supply information on the training and consulting activities in which they use DNH tools. The results of the survey are compiled and published on the CDA website and in the DNH newsletter.

"I am very impressed by this newsletter, DNH has become an instrumental tool in all sectors: government, humanitarian and development organisations and I welcome the proposal that we link up all DNHers such that those still finding a problems using this tool may get chance to learn from others how to better use this tool.

I look forward to more and more DNH Newsletters."
Local NGO staff, Uganda

Presentations and Trainings

Over the course of the fiscal year, DNH Project Staff gave presentations at the following events:

- United States Institute of Peace; Washington, D.C. *Conference on using new Technologies for Peacebuilding* (July 2009)
- Universidad Nacional de Colombia, GTZ, Deza; Bogotá, Colombia. *Acción Sin Daño y Construcción de Paz* (September 2009)
- University of Copenhagen and Global Doctors; Copenhagen, Denmark. *Global Response 2010 International Conference on Violent Conflict and Health* (January 2010)
- The Charity Law Information Program of Capacity Builders (CLIP); Toronto, Canada. *Being Good at Doing Good Conference* (February 2010)

DNH staff also hosted or facilitated several trainings at the request of partner agencies:

- American University Summer Course, "Linking Conflict, Aid, and Development" (with Reflecting on Peace Practice and Listening Projects); Washington D.C. (June 2009)
- DNH introductory workshop for Diakonia Partners; Colombo, Sri Lanka (February 2010)
- DNH workshop; Jakarta, Indonesia (February 2010)
- DNH workshop for students of Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies; Phnom Penh, Cambodia (March 2010)
- DNH Training of Trainers at AusAID; Canberra, Australia (April 2010)
- DNH Training of Trainers at CDA office; Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA (May 2010)



DNH Consultation Participants, Davao City, Philippines (2010)

Publications

- *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War* (1999) was translated into Spanish. *Acción Sin Daño y Construcción de Paz* is available as a PDF upon request.
- Three issue papers - “*Barriers and Supports for the use of DNH*,” “*DNH and Peacebuilding*,” and “*The Action Model of the DNH Framework*” - were released on the CDA website for comment and feedback.
- “*DNH and Peacebuilding*” was also published in Spanish in the February-March issue of *Hechos de Callejón*, the magazine of UNDP in Colombia.

Next Steps

In FY 2010-11, the DNH Project will finalize and publish the remaining reflective case studies and write additional issue papers. CDA will also host an additional consultation to examine the completed issue papers and cases.

The DNH Project will continue to reach out to colleagues working around the world to expand the global network of DNH practitioners, through our newsletters, weblog, surveys and publications on the CDA website. At the same time, CDA also intends to intensify efforts to expand DNH concepts to new agencies, including government departments in aid recipient countries. CDA will continue to work with the governments of Liberia and Afghanistan as well as identifying other opportunities where DNH training would be beneficial and well-received by aid recipient governments. For example, there have been several requests for assistance from the Southern Sudan Administration as well as agencies working alongside it.

DNH Staff

Marshall Wallace is the Director of the DNH Project, supported by Field Associate **Nicole Goddard** and Project Associate **Candice Montalvo**.

The Do No Harm Project

An effort to identify the ways in which international humanitarian and/or development assistance given in conflict settings may be provided so that, rather than exacerbating and worsening the conflict, it helps local people disengage from fighting and develop systems for settling the problems which prompt conflict within their societies.

DNH Today:

The current set of DNH Reflective Case Studies has, in a very real sense, evaluated DNH's effectiveness. These cases have gathered direct evidence about usage, or lack of it, of DNH concepts and tools and the results of use/non-use. The set also gathers evidence about the linkages (or lack of them) from donor policies on conflict sensitivity in general and DNH in particular, to agency policies and programmes, to field implementation, to community-based results.

DNH Tomorrow:

In its second decade of field-based evidence-gathering about how international assistance can either exacerbate, or help reduce, intergroup conflict, Do No Harm finds that informed analysis of intergroup relations (Dividers and Connectors) is largely missing from programming focused on "good governance" or "support of civil society." As a result, aid provided in post-conflict settings often feeds into the negative intergroup dynamics of suspicion, mistrust, competition, jealousy, stereotyping and/or corruption that led to or characterized the war.

What do we know?

Assistance brought into a context becomes a part of the context

- Organizations can be neutral, but aid is not
- Assistance can contribute to a sense by people in that context that outsiders are choosing winners and losers

All contexts can be analyzed through Dividers and Connectors

- D/C analysis is especially effective at local levels, done by local people
- Locals prioritize quickly and effectively based on their analysis, while outsiders often have difficulty determining which factors are the most important
- A simple analytical tool or framework encourages analysis.
- Simple analytical tools will be expanded by users to cover additional topics
- D/C analysis is useful even where there is little or no violence

Assistance has an impact on Dividers and Connectors

- Impacts can be negative, especially if there is no analysis or failure to link analysis to programming
- Impacts can be positive, but usually only where analysis of D/C is used
- A whole project is seldom to blame for negative impacts

The What matters (Resources and how they are distributed)

The How matters (Messages given through behavior)

There are always Options and Opportunities

- Projects can be changed while keeping the goals the same
- Admitting mistakes and making changes is appreciated by communities
- Connectors cannot be built. Supporting Connectors only works if assistance is building on existing Connectors. ("Existing" can mean inactive, but used to be active. "Existing" can also mean "created by the conflict".)

Books:

Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War
Options for Aid in Conflict

Key Papers:

- "Indications" for Assessing Aid's Impacts on Conflict
- The Implications of Do No Harm for Donors and Aid Agency Headquarters
- The Learning Process of the Local Capacities for Peace Project

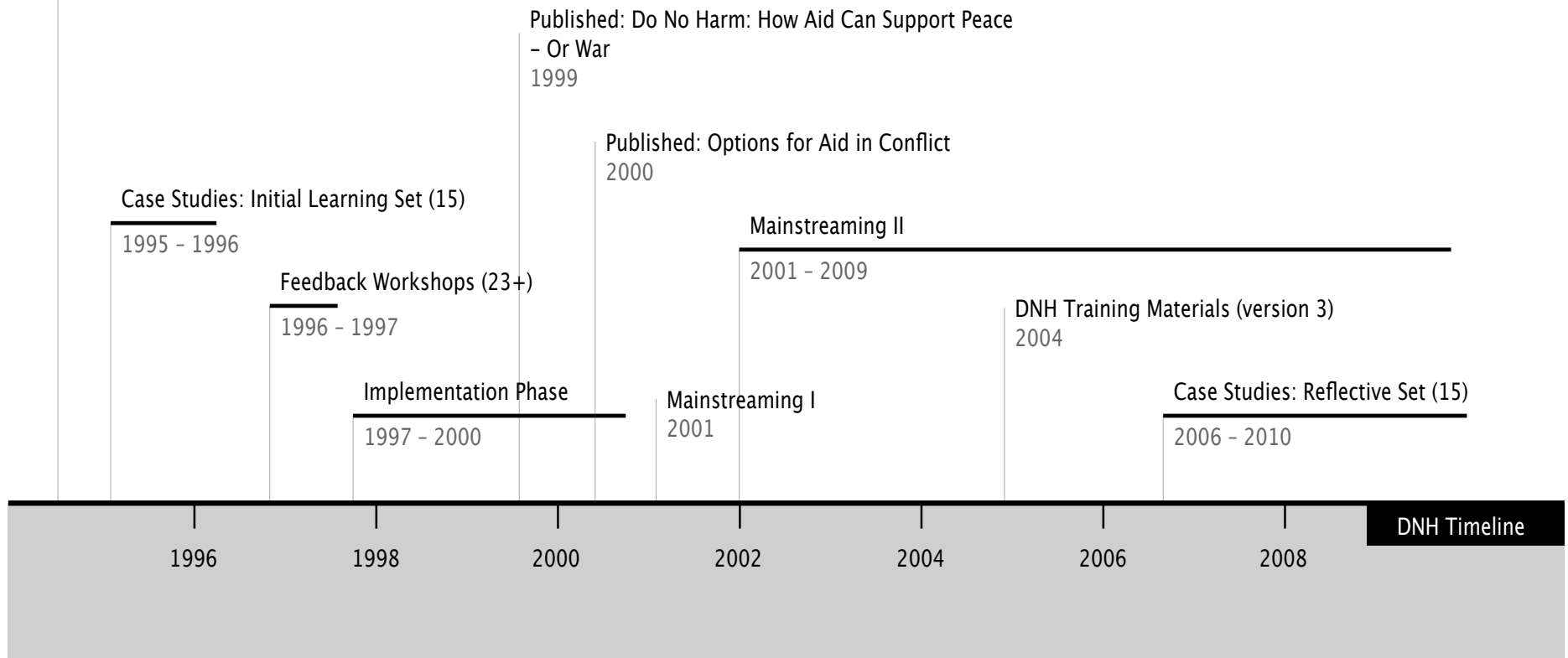
DNH Trainers:

Over 150 in 30 countries

DNH taught in Universities:

Over 35 syllabi include DNH materials

First Issue Paper: "International Assistance and Conflict: An Exploration of Negative Impacts"
1994



THE LISTENING PROJECT

Narrative Report, June 2009-May 2010

Project Description and Objectives

The Listening Project (LP) is a comprehensive and systematic exploration of the ideas and insights of people who live in societies that have been on the recipient end of international assistance efforts (humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, peace-building activities, human rights work, environmental conservation, etc.). Since 2005, more than 130 international and local organizations have participated and contributed more than 400 staff members to the Listening Teams, which have held conversations with nearly 6,000 people.

The LP aims to bring the voices of aid recipients to the attention of key decision-makers and to support the development of more rigorous systems for listening to people affected by international aid efforts. It enables donors and aid agencies to monitor community perceptions about the overall impacts of their work, and acts as a barometer for the implementation of several donor commitments – enshrined in the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative – that aim to provide recipient communities with increased opportunities to be heard and to participate in decisions affecting their lives.

Project Highlights and Activities

During FY 2009-2010, CDA organized four further Listening Exercises in Mindanao (Philippines), Burma/Myanmar, Solomon Islands, and Mali respectively, marking the conclusion of this evidence-gathering phase. CDA has now held over 20 Listening Exercises in a variety of contexts and geographical regions, including: Aceh (Indonesia), Afghanistan, Angola, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Thai-Burma border area, Timor Leste, Zimbabwe, and an exploratory visit to New Orleans (US). Each Listening Exercise produced a report (English versions and translations are available on the CDA website) that captures what people have said about international assistance efforts.

“INGOs should come directly to the communities and understand their needs first. They should discuss rather than bring formal documents. It should be similar to what you [the listening teams] are doing today.”

Farmer in Sri Lanka

CDA has already received positive feedback and encouragement to share the initial findings in ongoing discussions about improving the effectiveness of international assistance. LP Field Visit Reports and Issue Papers have been utilized and referenced in a number of prominent studies and reports, including the ALNAP's State of the Humanitarian System Report, HAP Annual Reports and the ELRHA Study on Professionalizing the Humanitarian Sector. CDA has also shared the voices and concerns of people on the receiving end of aid efforts in policy discussions and document reviews on the reform of US foreign assistance and aid effectiveness through InterAction and the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.

In the past year, the LP held five Feedback Workshops in Bonn, Bamako, Dakar, Manila and Bogotá. During these workshops, Issue Papers based on the evidence gathered during Listening Exercises have been discussed by representatives of donor agencies, international and local NGOs, governments, academics, and others. The purpose of these workshops is to “test” the ideas that have come out of the Listening Exercises and to gather the perspectives of people on the providing end of international assistance. By May 2010, a total of six Issue Papers and thirteen Feedback Workshops had been completed.

Condemned to Repeat

One of the most striking findings from LP so far is that how people experience international assistance and the aid system that they describe is remarkably similar across geographical areas and contexts. And while most donors and aid agencies have committed to improving participation, local ownership and accountability (through the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, etc.), CDA has found that, in practice, they do not spend much time listening to local people's perspectives or reflecting on the impacts of their work, much less the *cumulative* effects of their interventions. Several people in different places said, "no one has ever asked us our opinion of aid before." The inference is that the persistent gaps between policy and practice, between analysis and strategy and between evaluation and learning remain intact despite these laudable global commitments.

Presentations

As awareness of the LP has grown, CDA has been asked to present emerging findings and to share the methodology with a range of audiences. LP staff have participated in numerous presentations or panel discussions, including:

- InterAction Forum, Washington, D.C. (July 2009)
- Faith- Based Organizations Forum, Toronto (October 2009)
- ALNAP Annual Meeting, London (November 2009)
- George Washington University, Washington, D.C. (December 2009)
- George Mason University, Virginia (March 2010)
- Oxfam America Aid Effectiveness events, Washington, D.C. (March 2010)
- USAID, Washington, D.C. and Manila (April 2010)

The LP Director has also participated in meetings on quality and accountability with other initiatives in the humanitarian sector.

Publications

CDA has continued to analyze the evidence from these *Listening Exercises* and to write *Issue Papers* that highlight the common themes that are raised across the various contexts. Two new *Issue Papers* have been completed during this reporting period:

- ***Structural Relationships in the Aid System*** highlights that while there has been more focus on supporting and building local capacities, people complain of the growing number of intermediaries who are seeking funds for projects, but who may not have a local constituency. People raised concerns about the lack of information, accountability, and coordination, and the competition and duplication between these intermediaries.
- ***The Importance of Listening*** notes that people want aid agencies to "invest the necessary time", "go more slowly", and "listen to people" in order to "learn about the real circumstances", "get to know people", and "show respect for people's ideas and opinions." People raised concerns about whose voices are (and are not) heard. The paper discusses why aid agencies seem to have a hard time listening, as well as some good practices and recommendations to improve their ability to listen.

Other publications:

- **LP Newsletter.** The LP produces an electronic newsletter that is sent to over 670 subscribers. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the number of subscribers continues to grow.

- **Articles.** The LP was invited to submit articles for publication by the *Forced Migration Review*—“Listening to the Experiences of the Long-term Displaced”— and the German Working Group on Development and Peace (FriEnt) Newsletter—“Listening to People on the Receiving End of Assistance.” Both articles are available on the CDA website.

Next Steps

The LP will continue to analyze and write up the findings from the Listening Exercises and Feedback Workshops in over 10 additional Issue Papers. A final Consultation is planned for early 2011 to get feedback on the draft of the final report from people who have collaborated with LP and others involved in efforts to improve the effectiveness of aid efforts. CDA plans to publish the book in mid-2011, ahead of the Fourth High Level Forum (HLF4) on Aid Effectiveness in Busan.

CDA will develop a dissemination strategy to best get the voices of aid recipients heard and to facilitate uptake of the lessons and recommendations. Given that there are different audiences who want and need to hear the findings, CDA will use several means to present the findings and recommendations including (but not limited to) presentations, briefings for policy-makers, participating in workshops and panel discussions, writing articles or papers for other publications, and writing and/or participating in blogs and other web-based fora.

Several organizations have expressed interest in the listening methodology and have praised it for its innovation and ambition. CDA has begun to adapt the guidance manual produced for Listening Teams for broader application by other agencies. The forthcoming *Guide to Effective Listening* will harness our experiences to suggest how agencies can systematically listen better to those affected by their efforts and to build the skills of their staff to do so.

CDA will also consult partners about the scope and interest in a follow-up phase tentatively focused on three strategic priority areas: 1) working with agencies to improve their systems, policies and practices for listening to people in recipient communities; 2) influencing policy discussions, particularly those on improving development effectiveness; and 3) facilitating listening efforts on additional topics that aid recipients, practitioners and policy makers consider to be important for improving the quality, effectiveness, and accountability of international assistance efforts.

Listening Project Staff

Dayna Brown is the Director of the Listening Project and is based in Washington, D.C. She is supported by Field Associate **Isabella Jean** and Project Associate **Candice Montalvo**, both based in the CDA main office in Cambridge, MA.

“The Listening Project has been really helpful and really built my confidence as an NGO officer. The peer-to-peer approach taken in this exercise relaxes people to talk openly and freely about their opinions. Joining LP makes me realize that as NGO workers, we talk a lot and never listen. This teaches us to take another approach: talk AND listen.”
 NGO Staff, Solomon Islands

The Listening Project

A comprehensive and systematic exploration of the ideas and insights of people who live in societies that have been on the recipient side of international assistance. This project is motivated by our sense that if we could ask for and listen carefully to recipients' judgments of what has been useful (and not useful) and why, over the years of their experience on the receiving end of international assistance efforts, then aid donors and providers would learn a great deal about how to make their assistance more effective.

What have we learned?

- The systems of international assistance bias the ways that agencies and aid workers listen and do not listen, what they listen to, where and when they listen, and to whom they listen.
- External agendas, priorities, fads, and trends determine the types of assistance people receive and are able to access, and are often disconnected to the realities of the situation on the ground.
- Relationships matter to people on the receiving end of aid efforts. They want to have much more interaction with those who are making decisions regarding international assistance and they see this as key to making it more effective.
- Money is not the problem, but *how* it is spent is. If donors and aid agencies slowed down and were more careful about who they worked with, people believe that aid efforts would be more effective.

LP Today:

The Listening Project has been gathering evidence on the cumulative effects of international assistance through Listening Exercises in various contexts and geographical regions. Listening Teams (made up of staff from international and local aid agencies with facilitators from CDA) listen to the reflections of people in recipient societies (women and men, community members and leaders, government officials, civil society and religious leaders, teachers, health workers, business people, academics, NGO staff, etc.) to assess the effects of international aid efforts. Each Listening Exercise produces a report that captures what people have said as they reflected on and analyzed the effects of international assistance on their lives and their societies. The Listening Project has also produced Issue Papers which identify some of the emerging issues that seem most important to people across the locations visited so far. These Papers are being discussed and tested against the experiences of donors, NGOs, government representatives and others involved in the delivery of international assistance in Feedback Workshops.

LP Tomorrow:

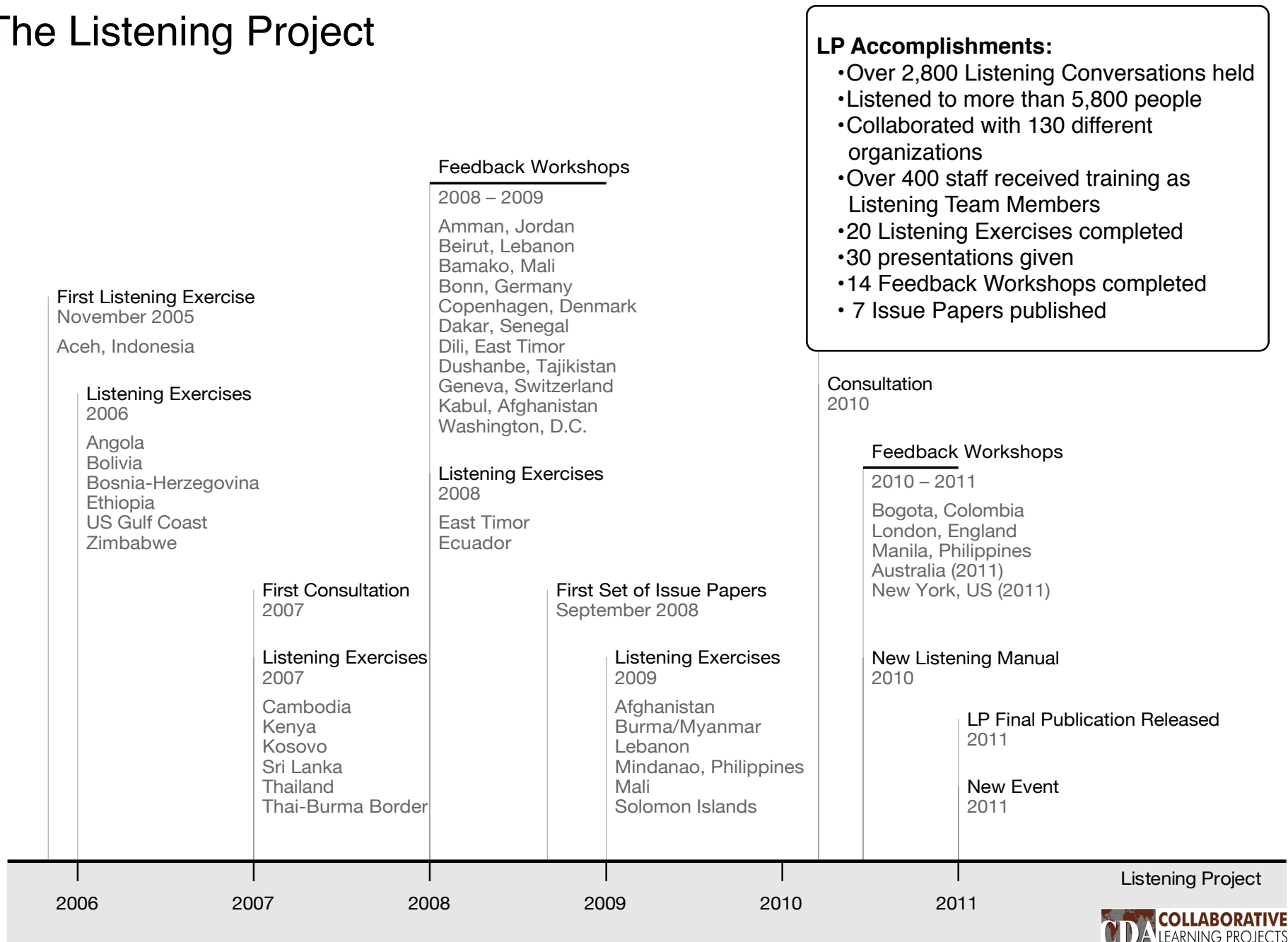
Upcoming *Feedback Workshops* include:

- New York City
- Australia

More *Issue Papers* underway: The additional Issue Papers, which highlight patterns, themes, and lessons that are emerging, will be used in upcoming Feedback Workshops for further discussion and analysis of LP findings. A final publication will be released by mid 2011. It will include examples of the evidence, the analysis and lessons learned, recommendations and, if they emerge from the evidence, tools for improving international assistance efforts.

Online Discussion Group: LP has created an online discussion group to provide a forum for sharing Issue Papers and to elicit feedback and further discussion from our partners and collaborators on these papers.

The Listening Project



LP Accomplishments:

- Over 2,800 Listening Conversations held
- Listened to more than 5,800 people
- Collaborated with 130 different organizations
- Over 400 staff received training as Listening Team Members
- 20 Listening Exercises completed
- 30 presentations given
- 14 Feedback Workshops completed
- 7 Issue Papers published

REFLECTING ON PEACE PRACTICE Narrative Report, June 2009-May 2010

Project Description

Begun in 1999, the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP) works with agencies whose programs aim to prevent or transform conflict. CDA published the lessons from the first phase in *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* in 2003. These lessons helped peacebuilders to develop strategies and to monitor and evaluate their programs. In Phase Two, RPP project has worked with practitioners in the Balkans, Central and West Africa and Asia to refine those lessons, as well as develop tools, educational materials and processes to make them more accessible.

The goals of this second phase have been to

- Improve the effectiveness of existing peace programs through application of the RPP learnings;
- Gather the experiences gained through using the RPP lessons in order to improve the impacts of subsequent peace practice;
- Gather experience and identify lessons in four additional areas: conflict analysis, improving cumulative impacts of peacebuilding, linking peacebuilding at “micro” and “macro” levels effectively, and monitoring and evaluation of impacts on Peace Writ Large.

Project Highlights and Activities

During FY 2009-2010, RPP’s activities were concentrated in three priority areas: building a Learning Community of RPP-trained practitioners able to use the RPP tools; concentrated work with a small number of agencies to apply RPP findings; and completing case studies of the cumulative impacts of multiple peace efforts in a single conflict zone.

RPP Learning Community: The range and number of people disseminating and supporting the use of RPP tools and concepts has been expanded through training programs for consultant/advisors. During FY 2009-2010, the RPP Project conducted five trainings of consultant/advisers, bringing the membership of the Learning Community to 58 members based in Europe, Southeast and South Asia, Central Africa and East Africa. New training and resource materials, including two new resource manuals, two new training manuals and several training simulations, were developed and are available to Learning Community members. Trainers and Participant Manuals are also available in French.

Following the trainings, participants were invited to become members of the RPP Learning Community, which brings members together to exchange ideas, solicit advice on challenges, share stories, publicize training needs and opportunities, and get feedback on reports and publications. RPP Learning Community members have expanded the reach of CDA by providing training, advice and ongoing mentoring support to agencies, both with CDA support and alone.

Putting RPP into Practice

“I have come up with questions, mostly from RPP, which we are using for scanning most of our partners peace plans for the countries in West Africa. Consequently, [our organization] is working on adopting RPP concepts in all of its peace plans world-wide. As a result, [we] are introducing the tool to all [our] regional peace coordinators and all [our] country Reps... Due to the differences in the time zones, we have to plan several sessions to accommodate everybody around the globe. It's quite interesting. Last week I introduced RPP tool to peace practitioners in Jos, and then used the tool to apply it to the Jos conflict which has proven to be stubborn. The process is still on-going but I am so hopeful. Many questions from practitioners continue to challenge me to learn and appreciate RPP more.” NGO Regional Representative

The RPP Learning Community: Expanding the Reach of CDA

Training for United Nations Framework Team on Conflict Prevention. Learning Community member, Anita Ernstorfer, co-presented a four day training program for UN staff from a wide range of agencies associated with the UN Framework Team on Conflict Prevention. (New York City, July 2009)

Workshop for the Norwegian Development Network. Learning Community members, Eva Østbye and Arne Sæverås who were participants in the RPP Training of Consultant/Advisers in Switzerland, facilitated a workshop for a network of Norwegian civil society organizations involved in development cooperation (November 2009)

Training for AusAID trainers. Learning Community member, Rebecca Spence, a participant in the 2007 Training of Consultant Advisers, co-presented a program in RPP tools and concepts for AusAID trainers (Bangkok, December 2009).

Training for peacebuilding practitioners in the Middle East and North Africa. Learning Community members, Siad Darwish and Koenraad van Brabant, organized and conducted an RPP training for 15 participants from NGOs in the region working on peacebuilding, evaluation. As a follow up to this training program, the RPP manuals will be translated into Arabic.

Training with swisspeace. Learning Community member, Cordula Reimann, co-facilitated a two-day introductory RPP training for Swiss NGOs and government officials (Bern, June 2009). Cordula has provided ongoing support to the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

Work with Individual Agencies: In FY 2009-2010, RPP has worked with a small number of organizations to support application of RPP tools and concepts. Several organizations have begun to integrate RPP tools and findings into their design, monitoring and evaluation processes.

- UNDP/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR): RPP conducted an assessment of conflict prevention initiatives supported by the BCPR, including programs in Ecuador, Kenya, and Ghana. The assessment was used in a management review of BCPR.
- UN Framework Team for the Coordination of Conflict Prevention (Framework Team): RPP was commissioned to perform an evaluation, which provided the basis for discussion regarding revisions to the structure and procedures of the Framework Team.
- Interpeace: RPP supported Interpeace to incorporate RPP tools and concepts into their program design and reflection processes. Two senior staff participated in RPP Consultant/Advisor trainings and conducted internal reflection sessions with RPP support.
- CARE-UK: The RPP Co-Directors serve on the Advisory Committee for research on theories of change, a joint research project of CARE-UK and International Alert, and provided workshops for field teams in Uganda, DRC and Nepal.

Cumulative impact case studies: The RPP collaborative learning process aims to gather lessons about what contributes to the “adding up” process and, consequently, how practitioners can work to improve the cumulative impacts of all peace efforts in a particular conflict zone. In January 2010, CDA held a Consultation bringing together case study authors and other RPP colleagues to examine the new cases. CDA has begun to collate the preliminary findings into Issue Papers that will form the basis for feedback workshops aimed at deepening, refining and adding to our understanding of common themes. The first workshop was held in Nepal in May 2010 with a multinational group of practitioners from Southeast and South Asia.



RPP Consultation Participants, Boston, MA (2010)

Presentations

- *Evaluation Jamboree*. RPP staff organized a workshop in association with the Alliance for Peacebuilding to consider evaluations either performed by members or done on member programs, examining both substantive learning as well as lessons regarding how to do good evaluations.
- *RPP systems group* in Zurich and Washington, D.C. CDA convened groups in Zurich and Washington, D.C. to consider the application of systems thinking to peacebuilding.
- *USAID*. RPP staff presented at a workshop organized by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) in connection with efforts by USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation to develop a catalogue of the conflict theories of change and associated indicators.

Publications

- In FY 2009-2010, eight cases were researched and written, bringing the case study development phase to a conclusion. Fifteen case studies have now been completed - in Aceh, Burundi, Cambodia, Cyprus, Haiti, Israel/Palestine, Kosovo, Liberia, Mindanao, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan – and most are posted on CDA website. An additional case on Guatemala is in development. These cases examine whether and how multiple peace efforts have had cumulative positive impacts at particular moments even if “full peace” has not been achieved, and how activities and successes at the local level and at the national level have or have not been linked to provide sustainable changes and momentum toward peace.
- *A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding*. This paper examines the conceptual confusion between peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity. It proposes ways to promote more effective peacebuilding and conflict sensitive practice by better distinguishing between them (Available on the CDA website).

Next Steps

In FY2010-2011, the RPP Project plans to expand the Learning Community to include adviser/trainers in West Africa, North America and Latin America, while continuing to support existing members.

The RPP Project will continue to provide support to agencies in the field to improve their design, monitoring and evaluation processes. As part of these efforts, CDA plans to develop guidance and tools to integrate RPP findings into monitoring and evaluation practice by spring 2011. CDA also hopes to expand its direct work with donors and international organizations to assist them to integrate relevant RPP findings and tools into their strategic planning, policies and practices.

Finally, the RPP Project will continue to analyze and write up findings from the Cumulative Impacts cases. Issue Papers resulting from initial cumulative case findings will form the basis for in-depth discussions with practitioners, policy makers and donors through a series of feedback workshops. A draft report is tentatively scheduled for the second quarter of 2011.

RPP Staff

RPP is co-Directed by **Diana Chigas** and **Peter Woodrow**. **Ethan Schechter** is Project Associate.

Reflecting on Peace Practice

The Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP) works with agencies whose programs intend to prevent or transform conflict to address the question: “How can international agencies engaged in peace practice make their efforts more effective?” RPP helps peacebuilders develop strategies to monitor and evaluate their programs

RPP Today:

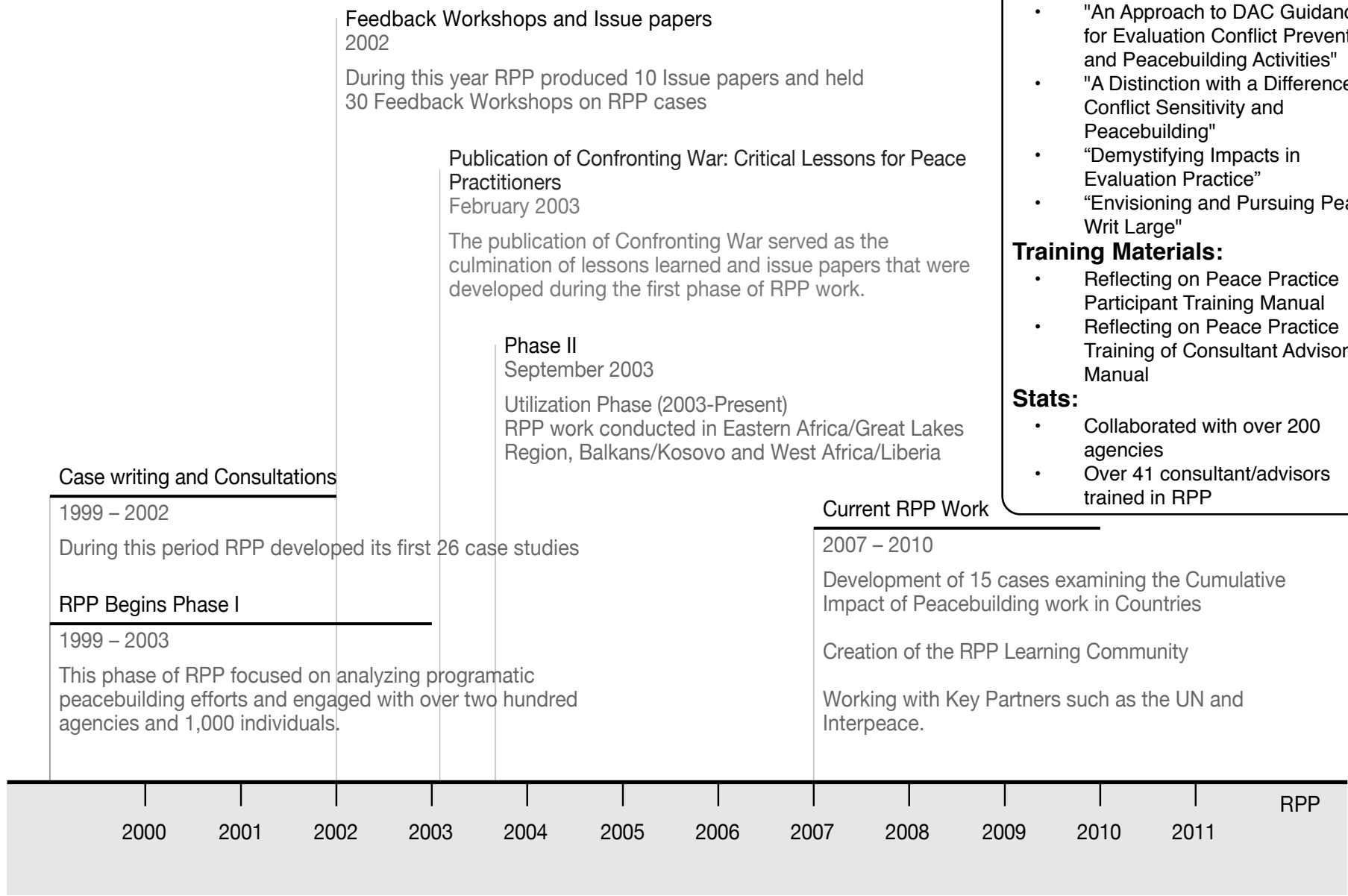
Begun in 1999, RPP published the lessons from its first phase in *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*. Since 2003, staff have been working with practitioners in the Balkans, Central Africa and Liberia to test and refine those lessons and have been exploring four key questions: (1) How can practitioners best perform conflict analysis and connect it to program design? (2) How can multiple peace efforts in the same conflict zone “add up?” (3) How can effective linkages across levels, sectors and program constituencies be forged to help programs better “add up” to affect Peace Writ Large? (4) How can we monitor and evaluate the impacts of peace programs? Conflict analysis lessons have emerged and are being tested in the field. RPP also contributed to the development of the OECD/DAC Guidance for the evaluation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs. A follow on collaborative learning process is underway to study cumulative impacts and linkages.

RPP Tomorrow:

RPP will continue to train and support trainer/advisors as they work with their own and other agencies in the field. RPP staff is working increasingly with donors and international organizations to adapt and integrate relevant RPP findings and tools into their strategic planning, policies and practices. RPP will continue collaborative learning on cumulative impacts of peacebuilding with fifteen cases, a number of feedback workshops and a book or final report on the findings. Finally, RPP is developing a new collaborative learning effort focused on early conflict prevention, to derive lessons about what works, and how agencies can adapt or focus their work to support effective structural prevention.

What have we learned?

- Peace efforts can and should be accountable to Peace Writ Large (the broader peace), not simply to their own program goals.
- Conflict analysis is crucial, and must be connected to program design and integrated into ongoing program routines.
- Good analysis identifies and prioritizes key driving factors of conflict and the dynamics among them, key actors and their connection to key driving factors, and points of leverage for interventions.
- A key link between conflict analysis, programming and Peace Writ Large is the theory of change.
- Many efforts fail to affect Peace Writ Large because they do not address key drivers of conflict, have fuzzy goals or have weak theories of change.
- Two kinds of linkages are essential for programs to make a contribution to Peace Writ Large:
 - Efforts that promote change at the individual/personal level must be linked to change at the socio-political level.
 - Efforts aimed to engage the broader population (“more people”) in peacebuilding must be connected with efforts aimed at “key people”.
- It is important to engage the “hard to reach.”
- It is possible to assess impacts on Peace Writ Large, with good conflict analysis, a well-defined and robust theory of change, and well-articulated goals.



Publications:

- *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*
- *Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo?*

Key Articles:

- "An Approach to DAC Guidance for Evaluation Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities"
- "A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding"
- "Demystifying Impacts in Evaluation Practice"
- "Envisioning and Pursuing Peace Writ Large"

Training Materials:

- Reflecting on Peace Practice Participant Training Manual
- Reflecting on Peace Practice Training of Consultant Advisors Manual

Stats:

- Collaborated with over 200 agencies
- Over 41 consultant/advisors trained in RPP

STEPS TOWARD CONFLICT PREVENTION PROJECT
Narrative Report, June 2009-May 2010

Project Description and Objectives

The Steps Toward Conflict Prevention (STEPS) Project aims to contribute to the learning about conflict prevention by identifying possibilities where humanitarian and development assistance can be helpful in preventing conflict. The concept behind the STEPS Project stems from the observation that most work on conflict prevention focuses on how things go wrong—what motivates or induces societies to go to violence. By contrast, the STEPS Project looks at what can and is being done to counteract these negative forces.

Conflict prevention occurs when people do not opt to resort to war or violence even though the context is one that, in other circumstances, would seem likely to precipitate intergroup violence. That is, conflict prevention occurs at the level of the context and is accomplished by people living in that context. To gain greater insight into conflict prevention strategies, CDA produced fourteen case studies that took a systematic and structured look at areas where prevention actually occurs—that is, at communities that have successfully avoided being caught up in violence.

Project Highlights and Activities

During FY2009-2010, the STEPS Project focused on re-examining the evidence gathered through case studies and consultations and outlining the final publication. CDA is now focused on analyzing and documenting what has been learned. The process of writing the final report is ongoing with a launch planned for mid-2011. Following release of the final publication, we anticipate that the STEPS Project will conclude. However, CDA will continue to work on structural conflict prevention issues through the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project.

The Steps Toward Conflict Prevention Project

People are not committed to war. Even in the midst of terrible conflicts that seem to sweep up entire countries or regions, there are often communities that exempt themselves – successfully – from the violence and the modes of the conflict around them.

STEPS today and tomorrow:

STEPS has conducted fourteen case studies of diverse communities, to learn how people under pressure to participate in conflict manage to prevent doing so, even though war or conflict raged around them. CDA staff are preparing a book reporting on the findings and the analysis. Of particular interest will be translating these findings into useful lessons for the international peacebuilding and conflict prevention communities. The book will be finished by late 2010 and ready for publication by early 2011.

What have we learned?

- **There are many, many options for avoiding conflict.** The cases show that there is a very wide range of choices that people (and their leaders take) to stay out of conflict.
- **Strategies can be initiated by leaders OR by larger communities.** It is not only leaders who have power to keep groups out of conflict. People have power as well. Together, the two reinforce each other when communities successfully avoid entering conflict. Either leaders or people can initiate the directions that they ultimately follow.
- **There is no need to invent new strategies to prevent conflict: people use what they have.** The experiences gathered in these case studies show that people built on what they already had and made it work. They did not come up with brand new identities or brand new strategies and approaches.
- **The leadership that avoids conflict is old leadership – not new leadership.** The leaders who led or reinforced the non-conflict option were not new. In all cases, the leadership was already in place, often traditional, with established patterns and modes of interacting on which they built.
- **People's identities are not rigid and fixed.** The cases show that identities are porous, negotiated, and multi-faceted. This reality provides one way of finding – and understanding – the range of options open to conflict prevention programmers.
- **Communities are pragmatic in nature, not ideological.** Local conflict prevention communities are largely motivated by pragmatic rather than ideological forces.
- **Breathing space.** The international community can provide “breathing space” for local leaders/groups to develop their strategies for avoiding conflict.
- **Context matters.** Many international attempts have failed to take adequate account of, and relate adequately to, the actual conditions of the specific context. International pre-set or pre-packaged programming approaches have not been effective in conflict prevention precisely because they do not link adequately to existing leadership as it is and to the multi-faceted identities of people.

