

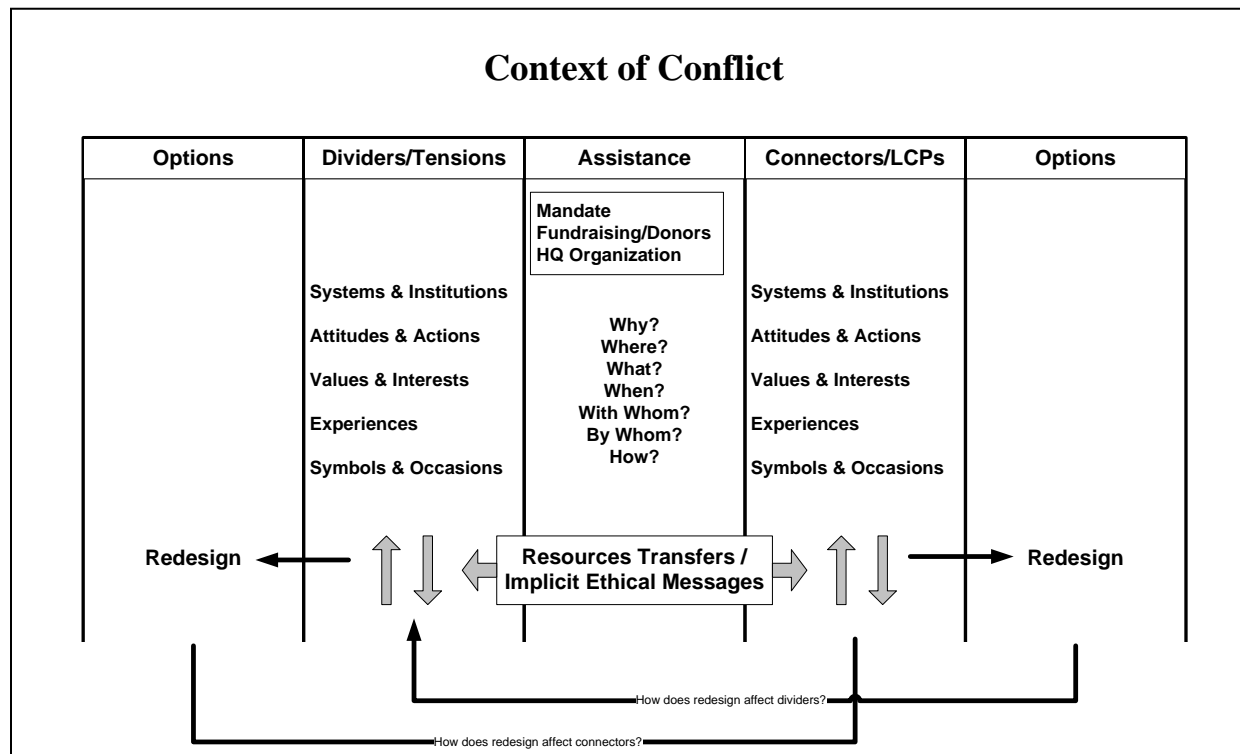
Do No Harm: Additional Model of the Framework

The Reflective Case Studies, the current phase of the Do No Harm Project, have been exploring how people use the concepts and ideas of Do No Harm. This includes asking people about the DNH Framework, how they use it, which parts they use, what is most useful and what the results of using DNH have been in their setting.

The Original DNH Framework: A Thinking Model

We have learned that while the old diagram adequately describes the interaction of the concepts, it is not widely used by people to help them look at their context, at their projects and programmes or at the impacts of their work on the conflict. The old model is useful for describing key concepts and the ways those concepts interact with one another, but we have heard that it does not accurately reflect the ways that people think about or use DNH.

Original model of the DNH Framework



Revised 2004. Substantially similar to the 1999 version in *Do No Harm*

People say that the two main strengths of this model are the clarity with which it, first, represents how Assistance becomes a part of the Context of the Conflict and, second, demonstrates that Assistance has an impact on both Dividers and Connectors.

Though practitioners recognize the strengths of the DNH framework, they also suggested that it has some weaknesses. These included

- it does not help users assess the relative importance of different elements; everything seems equally important, and it is difficult to discriminate crucial elements from those that simply provide greater insight
- it includes too many bits and pieces competing for attention
- the columns feel too much like boxes on a form which need to be filled out, and this exaggerates the structure of the Framework over the use of the concepts
- it provides no sense of how an analysis will flow when the Framework is used and, therefore, people neither know where to start nor where to finish
- it gives no sense of iteration; the image, and therefore the relationships, seem linear and so an analysis seems static and one-dimensional
- because of positioning in the columns, certain elements (such as the box containing HQ, Mandate, and Fundraising) are more emphasized than they should be and this has led to misunderstandings about what is vital and what is optional
- many people do not think in boxes.

The Action Model: An Additional Framework

Based on how we heard people describing their process of *using* the Do No Harm concepts and the weaknesses that people identified in the original framework, CDA proposes an additional framework to supplement the original DNH Framework. This model attempts to capture how people say they put the concepts in the framework into action in their work.



Some people are formal with this model and others seem to be more intuitive, but what we have seen from both can be mapped using this model.

This Framework is represented as a “loop”, meant to be understood as steps that Do No Harm users go through in order in a continuous cycle.

1. Dividers/Connectors

The label “Dividers and Connectors” to this part of the cycle indicates an analysis, or reanalysis, of the context. Most people start with D/C analysis. Because people have told us of their strong tendency to start the cycle of their thinking with D/Cs, we have placed this analysis at the top of the diagram. They look at the context with D/Cs in mind first. The most effective users also rank the relative importance of the Ds and Cs (though, in general, this is not documented, but relies on a personal understanding of the context).

2. Worse or Better

Next, people ask, “Are the D/Cs are getting better or worse?” This question introduces a sense of time and of change into the analysis process. People cannot feel confident taking the next step – looking at Options and Opportunities – unless they have sense of how D/Cs change over time in the context.¹

3. Options & Opportunities

In the third step, people develop new ways of doing their work based on their understanding of the D/Cs and the changes they have observed. People use the word “options” to discuss what they need to develop when they encounter problems (things getting worse). They use the word “opportunities” when they see things getting better and want to promote these trends.

4. Assistance (or Action)

In step four, people make actual changes to their assistance programme (the options and opportunities are implemented). Changing the programme tends to be the last point in any given cycle. It is, of course, also the beginning of a new cycle, with impacts from the redesigned assistance programme on the D/Cs showing up as changes in the context. The language of “Action” has been added here because this step is where people change their behavior.

Patterns of Impact

The evidence of DNH is that the impacts of assistance on D/Cs follow clear and common patterns. The evidence is also clear that if you can change the patterns, you change the

¹ We have seen that local people tend to be more effective in their DNH analyses than outsiders and expatriates. One reason for this is their thorough understanding of the (local) context. They have a lifetime of baselines and are often attentive to even the slightest changes in a divider or a connector. People have also told us that a key contribution that expatriates make to a context analysis is connecting the local analysis to an understanding of the wider (national, regional, global) context of the conflict.

impacts. The patterns can be affected through changing details in the assistance programme. Changes in the assistance will lead to changes in the D/Cs. These changes in D/Cs are impacts.

The patterns have been identified as falling into two broad categories, Resource Transfers and Implicit Ethical Messages.² Resource Transfers track the ways the goods brought into a situation affect the context, while Implicit Ethical Messages track the effects of behaviors on the context. Within these broad categories, DNH has identified five patterns of Resource Transfers and eight patterns of Implicit Ethical Messages.³

It is important to understand what these RT and IEM patterns are and are not. These patterns are not themselves impacts. Rather they are descriptive of the circumstances which cause changes in D/Cs to take place. The question is precisely how an impact has taken place. These patterns provide a way to understand negative impacts and approaches for changing them.

These patterns have been seen in every context. If you have a clear grasp of these patterns, you will see them in action in every context of conflict. It should be noted that as contexts differ, some patterns are more prominent in some contexts than in others.

Effective users of DNH use their recognition of the patterns to change, improve, and heighten their impacts.

Going around the cycle starting with the arrow from Assistance (Action) to Dividers/Connectors:

- The New Model observes that *impacts occur* as a result of Assistance as it affects D/Cs. *We see the impacts as changes in the D/Cs, i.e. do they get Worse/Better?*⁴
- *Impacts become visible* as we move from D/Cs to Worse/Better. This step looks at change over time in the D/Cs. We are reminded that those changes are the impacts of what some actors in the context – including us – are doing. **Some of these changes are the impacts of a project.** While an organization is not responsible for every change or every impact, it is always responsible for some of them. We need to pay attention to the impacts which occur from what we do, i.e. those for which we are in fact responsible.

² See *Do No Harm*, Chapters 4 and 5.

³ Those who have had experience with DNH will recognize that the list of IEMs has changed slightly from their earlier discussion and presentation both in *Do No Harm* and in DNH training. The new list more accurately represents the patterns as we have seen them in action.

⁴ There is always a delay between implementation and visible impact. This delay contributes to the all-too-common belief that impacts cannot be predicted and people cannot be held accountable for them. However, DNH has found, because the patterns of impact are clear and common, it is actually possible to predict impacts.

- Moving from Worse/Better to considering Options and Opportunities, we become aware of and can *recognize patterns* in how our actions affect D/Cs. Why did things change in the way they did and what can we do about it? Recognizing the patterns is the first step toward changing them. Because they have common characteristics, we can use the patterns to guide our O/Os and to make sure that we are addressing the right impact in the right way.
- As we move from Options and Opportunities to our Assistance/Action we begin to *Change the patterns* in what we do based on which patterns we recognized as linked to the impact we are trying to change. Conflict sensitivity requires that we recognize the patterns and make changes based upon them. Failure to make changes based on observed patterns, or failure to identify the patterns that are active, is a failure in conflict sensitivity.⁵ Even if our changes make a project or programme better (more efficient, more sustainable, more strategic, etc.), if the changes are not based on the patterns we have observed, those changes cannot be called conflict sensitive. It is also very likely that we will not change the impact we want to change. (If we somehow do make a positive change without thinking about the patterns, well, we all get lucky from time to time.)

The Action Framework is an effort to map out the ways people in our field have been thinking and acting in real time and in real places. This model was initially presented at a DNH Consultation in April 2009, as a replacement of the Original Framework. Participants at that consultation, as well as those in subsequent audiences were resistant to the idea of replacing the original framework. They said that the original framework was extremely useful for training and they would use the Action Framework as a supplement, but would not replace the original, in DNH workshops when they taught the concepts. In a workshop in Ecuador in September 2009, two trainers used a modified version of the Action Framework and were pleased with the results of the training.

We know that other trainers and practitioners develop their own understanding of *how* to use DNH. The Reflective Cases have been an effort to collect these perspectives. CDA has undertaken a series of feedback consultations to present the findings of the case studies to DNH practitioners in the US, Colombia, Norway and Kenya (further consultations are planned for 2010 in Asia and Australia). Participants in DNH consultations have presented alternative models of the Framework of their own design to capture their thinking and use of the DNH concepts. The Action model of the framework will continue to develop based on the feedback and suggestions gathered at these consultations.

⁵ If the pattern identified in the bottom-right quadrant of the Framework is not the pattern changed in the bottom left quadrant, the Option or Opportunity is not conflict sensitive. If the impact that occurs in the top-left quadrant is not the impact that is visible in the top-right quadrant, the D/C analysis is flawed.