Reflecting on Peace Practice Program
Understanding Cumulative Impacts of Peacebuilding

**Issue Paper:**

**“OUTSIDER” ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS IN CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

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*We are seeking your feedback & reflections!*

*This Issue Paper is a working DRAFT.*

*As part of our collaborative process,*
*CDA’s Reflecting on Peace Practice Program*  
*welcomes your feedback,*  
*based on your own experience and insights.*

*Please e-mail your thoughts or questions regarding this Issue Paper*  
*by or before October 1, 2012*  
to Chloe Berwind-Dart at cberwind@cdainc.com.

*Thank you in advance*  
*for your observations and suggestions.*
This document was developed as part of a collaborative learning project directed by CDA. It is part of a collection of documents that should be considered initial and partial findings of the project. These documents are written to allow for the identification of cross-cutting issues and themes across a range of situations. Each Issue Paper represents the views and perspectives of a variety of people at the time when it was written.

**These documents do not represent a final product of the project.** While these documents may be cited, they remain working documents of a collaborative learning effort. Broad generalizations about the project’s findings cannot be made from a single case or Issue Paper.

CDA would like to acknowledge the generosity of the individuals and agencies involved in donating their time, experience and insights for these reports, and for their willingness to share their experiences.

For background information on the collaborative learning process and cumulative impacts, please refer to the *Understanding Cumulative Impacts of Peacebuilding* document on the CDA website by directing your browser to the following pathway:

Issue Paper:

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Many practitioners resist binary distinctions of insiders and outsiders, because “in practice there are no pure insiders and outsiders, but rather degrees of insiderness and outsiderness. Often the relationship can only be defined in relative terms—one is more or less of an insider/outsider than someone else. An NGO from Nairobi was considered an outsider while working in Northern Kenya, but less so than a Swedish activist. A Nicaraguan staff member was seen as more of an insider to a conflict in Guatemala than a Canadian activist”.¹ We make a distinction here with a view in particular to examining what kinds of relationships between international agencies and national-level partners working with them and “insiders” promote cumulative impacts of peacebuilding efforts. This paper will focus primarily on the roles of outsiders in relation to insiders, as the RPP case evidence was most robust in this area.

Insiders are widely seen as those vulnerable to the conflict, because they are from the area and living there, or people who in some other way must experience the conflict and live with its consequences personally. In terms of those actively working for peace, it includes activists and agencies from the area, local NGOs, government officials, church groups, and local staff of outside or foreign NGOs and agencies.

Outsiders are widely seen as individuals or agencies that choose to become involved in the conflict. Though they may feel a great sense of engagement and attachment, they have little to lose personally. They may live in the setting for extended periods of time, but they can leave and work elsewhere. Foreigners, members of the diaspora, and co-nationals from areas of the country not directly affected by violence are all seen as outsiders. Those working in leadership roles with foreign agencies, or local people working “in the manner of an outside organization” are also seen as outsiders.²

Confronting War Findings: Outsider Roles and Effective Partnerships

The first phase of RPP explored partnership experiences in detail to identify elements that ensure greater effectiveness. Outsiders rarely work in “other peoples’ conflicts” without some form of partnership in the setting. RPP found that outsiders add value in a partnership when they:

- Advocate and raise international awareness on causes of conflict and peace initiatives by insiders;
- Apply influence and pressure on national political authorities;
- Help increase security of insiders through on-site presence, monitoring, reporting or by exerting leverage with outside constituencies to provide security;
- Provide comparative experiences, new ideas and techniques and methods from other settings in ways that allow insiders to decide their relevance and usefulness;
- Provide “safe space” for people from all sides of a conflict to come together; and
- Mobilize or provide resources.

¹ Anderson, Mary B. and Lara Olson, Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners, 2003. P 44
² Ibid. P 40
RPP also found that, despite a widespread commitment to supporting local forces working for peace, insiders often felt undermined or weakened by outsiders. Several criteria of good partnerships emerged from the evidence:

1. “…Recognition that each partner’s knowledge and credibility are important to the effort, and that each party’s reputation will be hurt by failure. Thus, the relationship should be horizontal and based on mutual consultation; neither party should be seen as simply a service provider, financial underwriter, or subcontractor to do a job. Both parties should have equal influence on decisions. There should be joint processes for setting strategies, defining goals and evaluating results.”
2. “The agencies’ roles should not only be clearly and explicitly defined; they should also be re-negotiated and re-assessed frequently.”
3. “Partners should take time to identify shared criteria by which to evaluate and improve their relationship.”
4. “Partners should take time to understand of where their missions diverge. That is, partners should recognize explicitly that they have differences as well as a common vision, and they should clarify and acknowledge these as valid.”
5. “Even in a horizontal relationship, the initiative and definition of needs must come from insiders.”
6. “Together insiders and outsiders build a sustainability strategy for when outsiders funding and programming is phased out.”

**RPP Cumulative Cases: Evidence of Insider Outsider dynamics and adding up**

The cumulative cases inquiry sought to go beyond understanding the dimensions of effective partnerships between insider and outsider agencies to examine how the relationships and dynamics between insiders and outsiders either furthered or undermined cumulative impacts.

1. **Outsider added value in bringing parties to the negotiating table**

International and regional actors often play instrumental roles before and during official negotiation processes. There is evidence of outsiders lending legitimacy to processes, opening space, bringing parties to the table (the opposition in particular), and using different tactics (some not entirely uncontroversial) to bring about agreement. In Tajikistan, the UN played a key role in providing legitimacy to the negotiation process that brought the UTO to the table, and by neutralizing the potentially disruptive influence of international governments. One of the reasons the GAM decided to negotiate after the tsunami in Aceh was because it interpreted the international presence on the ground as a sign that the international community was committed to achievement of peace in the long term and would put pressure on the Indonesian government. In Mozambique there was strong regional support, and leaders worked to bring FELIMO and RENAMO together with the support of Tiny Rowland who helped build rebel commander’s confidence to come to the negotiating table, accelerating the peace process (in addition to baiting RENAMO’s leaders with millions of dollars to buy their compliance).

In Aceh and Burundi, the high profile status of mediators like President Ahtisaari, J. Nyerere and Nelson Mandela and their abilities to steer the process were essential factors in their success. Due to his stature, Mandela often ran the process counter to traditional mediation
techniques, putting pressure on the parties, imposing solutions and even changing the terms of the agreement without their knowledge.

Outsiders also often provided safe space for communication and interaction across conflict and lend legitimacy to internal peace agendas in ways that facilitated the creation of linkages among internal actors. Kofi Annan’s role in Kenya has been described in this way—preventing “vested interests” from driving the agenda and providing space for civil society actors to influence the process.

2. Outsider added value to civil society contributions to cumulative impacts

Outside organizations and experts often provided knowledge, expertise, and guidance that played a key role in enabling local civil society groups to grow and start their own initiatives. In many of the cases, outsider involvement in peace processes and peacebuilding work resulted in a proliferation of new, local organizations or helped increase the capacity and scope of the work of existing civil society through funding and training (for example, in conflict resolution and peacebuilding issues).

In Cyprus, outsider initiated conflict resolution trainings and bi-communal initiatives beginning in the 1970s led to increased local ownership of the work and the beginning of Cypriot-started organizations like the Peace Centre Cyprus. One interviewee said, “[The] training of trainers was a powerful step in the right direction for what would become multiplier groups, and ultimately became what some consider the beginning of the citizen based peace process itself.” This work preparing the ground is credited with helping to catalyze the dinner meetings between Clerides and Denktash to discuss the Annan Plan. These dinner meetings were widely perceived by both sides to be a step forward as they were not held in a neutral UN sanctioned or foreign-hosted meeting place.

There was a proliferation of civil society organizations funded by the international community in Burundi during and after the war that emerged to address challenges presented by the conflict. International initiatives “required local partners to implement their programs which encouraged creation of new civil society organizations. Local groups came to carry out these mandates while depending on their support. Growing awareness of the need to restore peace drove Burundians to form new associations for promoting dialogue…civil society building programs have had multiplier effects, transforming the sector into a modern civil society.” The increasingly robust and diverse civil society sector played a crucial role in restoring stability by ensuring fair elections and changing people’s attitudes at all levels.
3. **Programming processes and requirements can undermine cumulative impacts**

The case evidence suggests that outsider funding and capacity building for local civil society development (often driven by commitment to the principle of local ownership) can undermine cumulative impacts.

*Dependency undermining local ownership and initiative.* Outsider support for civil society has often caused dependency on international funding sources that undermines local initiative and development of locally-driven agendas for peace, as well as long-term planning and work. In Tajikistan, financial support and expertise in the early stages of development of local civic groups were important contributions of outsiders, but questions about the sustainability of externally funded initiatives arose. Local groups were dependent on foreign funds and wrote proposals in any new area covered by external funding sources, such as border issues, that reflected the foreign policy directions of external governments on terrorism. One head of a local NGO working on reconciliation issues commented, “If local groups are unable to present their own ideas for funding to donors, then these initiatives, however well-designed and implemented, will lack local ownership and commitment on the part of staff and participants.” In Mozambique, the growth of civil society came with international support and technical assistance, yet financial dependence leaves them at the mercy of donor agendas to sustain their operations, and they are “unable to implement what they believe is best for the country.”

*Fragmentation undermining linkages.* Financial dependence has also prevented local NGOs in Mozambique from collaborating, and has bred distrust and undermined their ability to create linkages. More generally, funding procedures foster competition between local civil society organizations, leading to fragmentation and lack of synergy among individual programs. People in aid recipient countries observe that the reliance on projects as the mode of aid delivery also leads to piecemeal interventions which are not strategic and which cannot, with limited time commitments, support systemic change. In Kenya, for example, people commented that international assistance is a series of disjointed, one-off efforts to meet isolated needs, provided in ways that left incomplete, unsustainable results, rather than holistic interventions with long-term impacts. In Aceh, agencies reported that they implemented activities on a project basis, doing whatever they could to get funding, rather than determining projects based on a comprehensive post-conflict peacebuilding strategy.

*Dependence undermining legitimacy of organizations and peacebuilding efforts.* Financial dependence often leads civil society organizations to suffer from weak levels of legitimacy or the importation of “cookie cutter” programs with little regard for context. Organizations are often unprepared for changes and, as a result, are vulnerable to shifts in international agendas. Guatemala, for example, saw a sharp rise of local organizations during the development of the Peace Accords, transforming the nature of social organizations in the country. But they are fragmented and have low levels of legitimacy in eyes of people and depend almost entirely on funding from international agencies. In a state dependent on foreign aid, civil society groups are responsible to international funders first and constituents or governments second.

In Cyprus, after referenda on the Annan Plan, funders shifted focus from dialogue, rapprochement and exploration of federalism to CSO strengthening and sustainable

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4 CDA Listening Project, Kenya Listening Exercise, P 10
development, partly in reaction to intense criticism leveled at international funders (especially UN) by the Greek Cypriot Government of biased support and inappropriate advocacy for the Annan Plan in their funding policies. Much of the peacebuilding community was left in limbo, causing further fragmentation because donors shifted their agendas in a reactionary way without considering the potential effects.

There are examples of internationally supported initiatives that managed to avoid these pitfalls. In the Solomon Islands, churches actively promoted peace activities, from psychosocial support to funding of inter-and intra-community processes. Many externally-funded infrastructure and community development processes have survived because the church has been an active participant.

3. Outsider Agenda Setting
The effects of international agendas on local dynamics are an important part of understanding insider/outsider relationships in relation to cumulative impacts. Often international agencies set the agenda entirely because they hold the purse strings, and insider participation is minimal.\(^5\)

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Tajikistan is a glaring example of outsider meddling that undermined insider peacebuilding agenda. During the first six months of the conflict, the majority of peacemaking efforts were undertaken by local stakeholders and politicians without direct involvement of third parties or external mediators, but were followed by increased outbreaks of violence. According to public opinion polls and the views of some interviewees, the failure of all locally undertaken peace initiatives is seen as the result of meddling by Russian and Uzbek intelligence services...consequently, most local conflict resolution initiatives proved to be ineffective at preventing large scale violence.

The impacts on peace efforts of outsider agendas are significant, with implications for cumulative impacts. A city official in Davao, Mindanao noted that “[t]he pervasive attitude is that beggars can’t be choosers. In many cases, we don’t have much say in what gets funded. These programs usually benefit the donors in meeting their funding priorities. What we suggest often doesn’t fit their menu of options. After much back and forth, we end up asking them, ‘What do you want to fund?’ And we adjust.” (Nonetheless, on occasion they do turn down funding because it is not consistent with local priorities.)

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\(^5\) Evidence from CDA’s Listening Project suggests that even though the international assistance community is committed to participation of aid recipients in planning and implementation of projects, and has developed procedures to encourage this, people report that they are not listened to or in any way truly involved in the critical decisions about the assistance they receive. Aid agency staff and people in recipient societies point to funding procedures as one driver of limited participation: proposal writing processes that require agencies to make critical decisions before they put staff on the ground, lack of financial resources or time to allow for meaningful participation in initial decisions about program direction and priorities, and flaws in execution of consultative processes that do not facilitate meaningful engagement by participants.
Interviewees in Mozambique offered a useful distinction between spaces that are created by insiders and those created by outsiders without insider participation. The Development Observatory is an example of a program that did not gain legitimacy in the eyes of insiders, and interviewees believe it is actually deepening divisions in Mozambique. Interviewees called it an “offered space”, created and funded by international agencies and offered to civil society to use. In contrast, the Election Observatory is seen as a “conquered space”, created by local civil society of their own accord born out of a commonly identified need. “Participation in the design and structures and rules of engagement are important ingredients for appropriation of such spaces. Civil society organizations feel strong ownership of spaces that are conquered but are skeptical of offered spaces. Perception of national appropriation and authenticity are critical for success of internationally inspired programs.”

Several patterns have emerged from the cases and feedback workshops re the negative impacts of external agendas on “adding up” of peace efforts, explained further below:

- Mismatch or lack of linkage between local and international agendas
- Shifting external (donor) priorities and agendas
  “Freezing” processes and undermining capacities to address “unfinished business”

Mismatch/lack of linkage between local and outsider agendas. There is evidence of a lack of linkage between international and local agendas in post conflict contexts that can result in missed opportunities and even undermine local CSO efforts. Lack of communication and coordination between UN and local NGO work on judicial reform in Mozambique has reduced the effectiveness of local NGO work and inhibited cumulative impacts overall. While the UN abandoned participatory methodologies in favor of more traditional, top-down approaches to development after 1994, local civil society groups focus on developing conflict management capacity at multiple levels.

Also in Mozambique, interviewees reported a lack of local ownership of UN activities, as well as a major disconnect between it and local initiatives like Justapaz’s work with police at high levels that enjoys strong national ownership. “Local peacebuilding NGO’s technical knowledge is not used or legitimized by the UN and NGOs feel that the UN might be reinforcing the propensity of the government to see the NGO sector not as a partner but as a competitor and itself not fostering cross sectoral collaboration on judicial reform.”

Lack of linkage can also result from a lack of a nuanced understanding of the context in polarized societies. In Kosovo, the promotion of the internationally defined and imposed agenda of multi-ethnicity actually exacerbated ethnic tensions. An Albanian community experienced the encouragement of interethic dialogue as “coercive and unwanted conditioning.” Since most funding required a component of multi-ethnicity, participants went though the motions of cooperation, when actually these efforts were superficial in nature. Without contextual knowledge of these dynamics, international donors heralded many of these projects as great successes and in some cases

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6 RPP Cumulative Case Study: Mozambique P 59
7 RPP Cumulative Case: Kosovo, P 35
increased funding. Similar pitfalls have exacerbated tensions in Tajikistan, due to lack of joint strategy between donors and international agencies and poor knowledge of local context. There is evidence that internal regionalism, a key driver of conflict, has not been addressed systematically or adequately in programming. One senior program staff person said, “We are not even sure how to work on this issue or around it. While we have field offices in most regions and some of our projects bring together representatives from all regions, we are not sure if this indeed addresses the clan regionalism issues and what kind of impact we are having.” The lack of a nuanced understanding of a key local dynamic has exacerbated tensions.

International actors, often in partnership with national governments, can hinder progress on addressing unfinished business by committing to “road maps” that are not adjusted to account for learning and changes in circumstances. For instance, many interviewees felt that the Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) might not be best road map for peace because, despite containing peacebuilding language, it does not provide a vision for reconciliation, rather it is more of a technical document, focused on infrastructure development and technical skills for those in power. The Government of Liberia and international agencies treat it as the key reference document for reconstruction, requiring that all efforts that are eligible for international funding must fall within the PRS framework. In Guatemala, the government, INGOs and CSOs still use the Peace Accords as a basic framework to judge the progress of Guatemalan society, despite it being defeated in a referendum and being widely regarded as too far reaching. Due to a weak state and a new explosion of social violence, the Peace Accords are increasingly irrelevant as a road map to reconstruction, yet donor funding is still largely tied to its framework.

Shifting external (donor) priorities and agendas After the tsunami in Aceh, post-conflict funding was less than four percent of the post-tsunami reconstruction budget and aid was not allowed to enter unless donors guaranteed that they would not spend funds on conflict-related programming. The resulting uneven distribution of aid caused people in coastal areas to report that the peace process was a success and people in the mountains to say that tensions remained high. “The terms “post-tsunami” and “post-conflict” were a creation of the international community and have now been adopted into local vocabulary. Such language falsely creates the notion that post-tsunami reconstruction can operate independently from conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding activities. This has enabled organizations to implement humanitarian and development programs absent of any consideration for the context of the conflict.” A local NGO director in Cambodia said that they need to change their mission every five years to keep up with donors and continue to get funding. But the danger, the leader of a local NGO in Phnom Penh noted, is that in many areas it is not possible that “the impact can be felt in just three years of support.” The NGO leader advised that “[d]onors shouldn’t change their minds frequently.”

Despite calculated UN restraint from meddling in internal affairs on the part of the international community with regards to direct advocacy for the Annan Plan, both Turkish and Green Cypriots expressed the sentiment that Cyprus is often a pawn in the self-interested agendas of international players. The Annan Plan, which was drafted largely by outsiders, was met with considerable resistance and backlash, contributing to its defeat by referendum on the Greek side. It was perceived by the leftist, AKEL party too “Anglo-American” which

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8 RPP Cumulative Case: Tajikistan, P 39
9 RPP Cumulative Case: Aceh, P 22
10 CDA Listening Project, Cambodia Listening Exercise
did not serve the interests of the Cypriot people but rather the larger interests of geopolitics. Even some Turkish Cypriots expressed suspicion about the motives of the international community concerning the Annan Plan, which is of note because of the strong support and mobilization on its behalf.

“Freezing” processes and undermining capacities to address ongoing conflict issues. When the international community declares post-conflict reconstruction a success, it is often accompanied by the end of programs and shifts in funding. Declaring “mission accomplished” not only affects a country’s ability to address persistent problems, but can also reinforce existing power relationships. In Tajikistan, the international community has failed to help the country achieve the promised democratic freedoms, because they call Tajikistan’s peace process a success and legitimize the current political regime through loans and praise for 1997 peace accords. A number of people noted that the Tajik government suppresses other political parties and disregards large parts of the peace accords, is partly because international actors wanted Tajikistan to remain a “success story” and “preferred to hush up cases of violations of rights, suppression and unreasonable prosecution of former UTO activists.” In departing from Aceh, the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) claimed that all tasks of the MOU had been completed and declared that “peace in Aceh has been reestablished and the peace process has become irreversible and self sustaining”. This assessment was very different from the perceptions of most interviewees, as many key parts of the MOU remain unimplemented. Most notably, the AMM was supposed to act as the facilitator between the parties and left no clear plan for next steps in this regard, a significant gap.

Imposition of statebuilding programs that threaten state sovereignty. In post-conflict contexts when outsiders have influence over rebuilding key functions of the government in the name of capacity building and to ensure oversight of donor funds, there is the danger that these programs will overstep their advisory roles and become invasive and unwelcome. This was the case of GEMAP, an anti-corruption program put in place by outside donors to monitor the Liberian Transitional Government. Though intended to instill good practices, and widely heralded by outsiders as a success, it was criticized by regional leaders and many interviewees as infringing on state sovereignty and failing to address the structural causes of corruption in the Liberian government.

Next Steps: Outsider Roles and Going Beyond Partnerships
Some of the most effective linkages between insiders and outsiders were made when insiders who knew local context and maintained relationships with communities worked with international monitoring groups on violence prevention at the community level. Insiders were essential gatekeepers to communities, and their quick access to high-level decision makers contributed significantly to the reduction of violence at local levels. In Mozambique, one of the many contributions to cumulative impacts of the Catholic Church was the creation of the Social Integrators, who worked out of churches in communities after the Peace Agreement to monitor the DDR process, prevent local violence through interventions and civic education campaigns and coordinated with the UN. They also linked local level dynamics to the Commission of Sixteen—a group with eight members from each side of the conflict set up by the Rome Agreement to oversee the transition of RENAMO controlled areas—and served as essential monitors during the transition.

11 RPP Cumulative Case Study: Tajikistan
Similarly, the National Peace Council in the Solomon Islands was an indigenous body made up of eminent Solomon Islanders to assist in local level reconciliation processes with no enforcement authority, relying on persuasion, advocacy and wantok relationships to facilitate confidence-building processes. They became an essential intermediary between RAMSI and communities and went on to support traditional reconciliation ceremonies which have had widespread success in helping communities deal with the past. Mindanao has also seen local level ceasefire support structures help communities resist violence in the long term. Bantay Ceasefire is an example of an unarmed and impartial civil society monitoring group that was placed in key communities that worked with the International ceasefire Monitoring team to investigate breaches of the ceasefire. They provided an essential link between field commanders and local villages and had quick access to international monitoring teams should tensions rise.

RPP Feedback workshop participants emphasized the need for new strategies to put insiders at center stage and help them obtain and maintain ownership over peace processes. Many had experiences in which partnerships and coordination failed or fell short, and called for an exploration of new ways of making the work of insiders and outsiders complementary. Outsiders are generally committed to principles of responsible and context-specific ways to support local agendas and initiatives. Evidence shows that this is easier said than done, and good intentions are not enough to ensure responsible involvement. Failure to implement these principles of responsible outsider support undermines cumulative impacts.

Ongoing Questions:

- How can external actors make the right decisions about engaging? How can they be more conflict savvy?
- How do outsiders help locals define the parameters of what outsiders can and should do (need for partnerships and colleagueship based on respect and shared decisions)?
- Are there examples of successful insider and outsider partnerships and dynamics?
- What has made these examples effective and have they gone beyond just partnerships? How have they avoided the pitfalls mentioned here?