

**CONFLICT SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT
REALITY OR WISHFUL THINKING?**

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis

Submitted by Marina Pevzner

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Introduction

I developed interest in this topic while working in Sri-Lanka for approximately four months during the summer of 2003. I worked with a local organization called Ahimsa that specialized in conflict resolution training and youth programs that promoted coexistence. My background was in conflict resolution, coexistence and dialogue work with young people, mainly within the Israeli Palestinian context. I went to Sri-Lanka to help a local Conflict Resolution NGO incorporate dialogue based programs, and to learn about the kind of work being carried out there within the context of the recently signed ceasefire agreement in the country. This was the first time that I was working within the context of a developing country. The need for an interdisciplinary approach to address the issues underlying development and conflict in Sri-Lanka seemed clear to me. After all, reconstruction and development efforts that were taking place would have been in vain if open violence returned. Yet in reality it looked like there was little cooperation on the ground between the numerous development and conflict resolution actors. Instead, practitioners from each area perceived the other group as incompetent and unable to understand how the problems of Sri-Lanka needed to be solved.

During my time there, the organization was asked if I could conduct a three day training in dialogue techniques for participants of a Save the Children project. The project was aimed at teachers, policemen, municipality, and local NGO workers who in their day to day work had to deal with children in areas that were specifically affected by the ongoing ethnic conflict. The dialogue techniques were supposed to provide additional tool for the participants in their interactions with children. About 33 participants across the country were present in the workshop from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds— Singhalese-- Buddhist and Christian and Tamil Muslim and Hindu. The overall purpose of this project was to learn about different ways in which children were affected by war. The participants were meeting once a month for a weekend each time. In total, they were supposed to meet for 12 months and this was their eighth weekend together.

When I began the workshop I explained that the most effective way to learn dialogue was through experiencing it. It was my assumption that after eight months together a certain level of trust must have been established between the participants to enable

sharing to take place. I did not want to simply “teach techniques” but rather have the group help define the tools that they would find most useful to take with them. Yet to my surprise, during the previous eight weekends, the participants had never been given the opportunity to discuss their own experiences in the conflict. The workshops were held in the East of Sri-Lanka which was the area most affected by the war, and many of the participants had experienced direct losses and become internally displaced refugees.

The first day of the workshop I facilitated was focused on developing listening skills. Through a series of simple exercises, the participants were asked to share personal stories with each other, in order to practice ‘good listening’ and sharing skills. This became a very powerful experience for the group, since this was the first time that many of the participants were given a chance to share their own stories with each other. The feedback I received from this particular exercise showed that the listening/sharing activity I facilitated allowed the group to not only reflect upon their own stories but also to better understand how people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds experienced the conflict differently. It also helped the participants to draw conclusions more effectively on how their own differences and commonalities could be extended to build bridges among the children with whom they were to work. I wondered how these people, who felt extremely traumatized by their own experiences in conflict situations and who were never given the opportunity to deal with these experiences, could effectively help others, especially children, without first helping themselves.

Throughout my work promoting coexistence and conflict transformation, I have come to realize that often we did not have the ability to assess the long term impact of our work, or how we should improve it. Sometimes when writing meticulous reports and taking photos of smiling youths who took part in our projects in Israel, it felt to me like I was working harder trying to satisfy donor demands rather than understanding the real needs of the people with whom I worked. The outbreak of the second Intifada in Israeli-Palestinian conflict was a tremendous disappointment. There was no doubt that a significant change has taken place in the general moods and attitude among people, yet it did little to change the political reality at the top. The underlying structural dynamics of conflict remained which eventually led to the outbreak of violence. Dialogue and conflict resolution work by itself did not seem to be enough. In Sri-Lanka, it looked like having

development and conflict resolution work together might help to address some of the challenges each of the fields were experiencing by itself.

After becoming better acquainted with the background of development, and on the theoretical connection between development and conflict resolution in my first year at the Fletcher School at Tufts I was eager to go to the field and explore this connection. As one of my native languages is Russian, I wanted an opportunity to gain experience in the Caucasus where I would be able to utilize my language skills and where there were a significant number of conflicts. The opportunity to intern with the Mercy Corps (MC), office in Georgia—a humanitarian agency that recently merged with Conflict Management Ground (CMG), a conflict resolution based organization—was exactly the experience for which I was looking. My responsibilities with MC Georgia included adopting the existing Design Monitoring and Evaluation material to the specific contexts and needs of the MC work in Georgia. This was done in collaboration with another intern from the Woodrow School at Princeton. In addition, I was asked to advise staff who faced conflict related issues in their current work and/or future assignments, and designed and led training on Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace framework that also explored the role that identity and stereotypes play in day to day work and challenges faced by the field staff. Finally, my conflict resolution background proved valuable when collaborating with the MC Director on Human Resources during a process to better understand the needs of the staff as well to analyze internal staff evaluations of their day to day operations.

When I arrived in Georgia, following the suggestion of the MC country director, I spent the first 4 weeks in the field visiting the different project sites and talking with all the field staff of MC about their day-to-day work. I also began interviewing practitioners and heads of the major international NGOs to get a better sense of whether and how conflict sensitive frameworks such as Do No Harm were being utilized in Georgia. It soon became apparent to me that while different training on conflict sensitive approaches had taken place, almost no international organization that I interviewed knew how to incorporate it into their day-to-day activities, and most had done very little in the conflict resolution area all together. My work with MC/CMG, the conversations I had with local

community members who participated in various development projects, and my interviews with practitioners from ten different organizations became the basis for this thesis.

My thesis attempts to understand what makes the seemingly natural and much needed link between development and conflict resolution fields so difficult to implement on the ground. In this thesis I use the words conflict sensitive approaches, conflict transformation, conflict resolution, and conflict management interchangeably although they do not necessarily mean the same thing. I do that with the understanding that conflict sensitive development does not refer to simply the ability of an organization to map out the various actors and their interests within the area where they work (although even this is not always done). Instead, this refers to the ability of an agency to understand the underlying dynamics of the relationships, or the root causes of conflict (power differences, cultural differences, gender relations, ethnic and/or religious tensions, structural and/or institutional capacities in terms of differences in opportunities within social, political and economic context and so forth) and the ways in which it can improve and prevent the exacerbation of these dynamics.

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first chapter provides a basic theoretical framework of reference for the rest of the chapters. In this chapter, I give a basic (but not a complete) overview of the major historical trends in development and conflict resolution theory and practice, and the few examples of how the two are linked. The second chapter uses Georgia as a case study to understand the gaps according to development practitioners in being able to incorporate conflict sensitive work. The third chapter tries to understand these gaps through structural analysis of the differences between the two fields focusing on ethics and culture, values and needs, institutional incentives, accountability mechanisms, and capacities for organizational learning.

Chapter 1

Overview: Development, Conflict and the Link between the Two

There has been a growing understanding among development NGOs and practitioners in both conflict resolution and development fields of the need to incorporate interdisciplinary approach to their practices. The rationale behind this is to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of development projects and reduce the negative effects of development aid on ongoing conflicts. This chapter provides a framework for understanding the trends and theories within the development and conflict resolution fields, and how and why the two are intertwined and the theoretical background to conflict sensitive planning. This is not in anyway a complete synthesis of the field; instead it is meant to provide sufficient theoretical background for the discussions in the next two chapters.

I. Overview on development trends:

Development theory and practice that is relevant today began in the 1950s following the end of World War II and the end of colonialism in most developing countries. The 1949 Point Four Program launched by President Truman to assist countries in their post World War II reconstruction efforts and the Marshall Plan, together with the World Bank (then called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) which was created at the same time, signified the beginning of international development¹. In its first two decades the focus of the development field was on macro economic growth and productivity. The first phase of development theory and practice emphasized the relationship between income, saving, investment, and output.² Consequently, it was believed that big industrial investment projects together with high national saving would set in motion economic growth. When in around 1960s no conclusive correlation was found between increased national savings and economic growth, another factor was added—the availability of foreign exchange as necessary for industrialization. While

¹ Pronk P. Jan. Aid as a Catalyst. *Development and Change* Vol. 32 (2001), 611-629 Institute of Social Studies, UK

² Emmerij, Louis. *Aid as a Flight Forward*

prevailing development thinking encouraged countries to industrialize quickly, they lacked the availability of sufficient foreign exchange to carry out these projects.

At the same time the policy of many Western countries was to encourage exports to developing country and to discourage imports in order to support local producers. The result was the adoption of import substitution policies (ISI) across developing countries as the prices of imports became too high and many found themselves in chronic balance of payment deficits. The focus of ISI was to produce locally what was previously imported. Much of the diversification of the economy, especially in the 1960s and the early 1970s, took the form of import substitution - producing for the local market goods that the countries could no longer afford to import and imposing heavy taxation on imports in order to encourage internal industrial growth. In many countries ISI policies went hand in hand with political nationalization trends. In Sri-Lanka, for example, the first waves of ethnic violence erupted at the end of 1970s when ISI was at its height.

Most of the countries that adopted ISI indeed experienced economic growth in its first decade. The first oil crisis and the internal unrest that followed shocked the economies resulting in high inflation rates, economic stagnation, fluctuating exchange rates, unrealistically high prices for commodities, and an inability to compete in the global market. From the start of the 1970s, assumptions that macro economic growth would cause trickle down effects to take place seemed increasingly fallacious. As a result, two trends in development thinking emerged—the first was the return to the neo-classical thinking of development that included liberalization of markets and focus on economic savings and growth as opposed to import substitution induced industrialization. The neo-liberalist thinking was prevalent in the field. It advocated that macroeconomic reforms through structural adjustment packages were the way to prevent countries from economic and political collapse.³ The economic structural adjustment policies included the following basic principles: fiscal discipline that would bring the deficits down; redirection of government spending and major reductions of government spending and subsidies; adjustments of tax regimes and devaluation of currency; liberalization of interest rates regime and trade liberalization in general, liberalization foreign direct

³ Hjertholm, Peter, and Howard White (2000). “Foreign Aid in Historical Perspective: Background and Trends”. In Finn Tarp, (ed.), *Foreign Aid and Development: Lessons Learnt and Directions for the Future*. London: Routledge.

investment flows, privatization and protection of property rights. All of the above were meant to create a favorable macro economic environment for investment and growth.

The economic theory on which development practice relied up to this point assumed that there would be a trickle down effect that would ultimately deal with poverty and improve income distribution in a country's population. Among the prominent theories to support the assumption that industrialization was necessary to lead to the trickle down effect was that of the Simon Kuznets. Kuznets' U-curve model argued that as countries became more industrialized, there was a tendency to go through a stage where income became more unequally distributed in favor of the upper income strata. However, in the long run as the country became more industrialized, the wages of the lower income strata would rise as a result of the continuous movement of labor from the traditional sector (based on Lewis model) and the overall income distribution in the country would improve⁴. These assumptions were based partially on the example of Latin America where some of these adjustment policies indeed led to more positive macroeconomic indicators, an improved fiscal deficit, an improvement in exchange rates, and improved foreign investments. However, there was no indication that macro economic reforms contributed to significant reduction in poverty as they did not take into account the micro economic effects on the distribution of poverty. In fact inequalities were often aggravated by the adjustment programs. Moreover, the adjustment programs significantly decreased local public consumption which affected local businesses. Also, the cuts in government expenditure were particularly detrimental to the poor, and resulted in cuts to health and education programs which aggravated political instability⁵. When applied to other countries, specifically to those in Africa, macro economic adjustments as a solution to poverty failed all together, asides from perhaps Ghana.

The second trend which emerged during the 1970s was those who believed that macro economic policies did not produce trickle down effects and were insufficient to deal with the underlying causes of poverty. Instead they advocated widening the scope of development by explicitly including social considerations, such as education, health, nutrition, employment, income distribution, basic needs, poverty reduction,

⁴ Emmerij, Louis. 2002. "Aid as a Flight Forward." *Development and Change*. vol. 33(2) 247-260

⁵ Peter Griffith (2003). *The Economist's Tale: A Consultant Encounters Hunger and the World Bank*, Zed Books Ltd, London, UK.

environmental considerations, gender, and so on.⁶ Central to this thinking was the basic needs argument. Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank, proposed that resources had to be allocated to improve the productivity and welfare of the rural poor⁷. In order to be successful in improving the productivity of the poor, their basic needs such as clean water, food, housing, education, and access to health had to be addressed. The basic needs approach resulted in emergence of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that undertook the mission of providing for the basic needs of the poor. In essence, the basic needs approach centered on economic concerns for productivity and growth, and needs were understood to be within this frame of reference.

Criticism of the overemphasis of development on concerns for productivity and economic growth began to be heard in the 1990s, and the Human Development Approach came to the fore. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) “human development is about much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests”⁸. In 1999 the Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen wrote in his famous book Development as Freedom that “development can be seen... as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy”⁹. He perceived growth of GNP or income as a means rather than the end of development. According to Sen—“development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states.”

In a World Bank report of 2000/2001 entitled “Attacking Poverty”, which was heavily influenced by Sen’s writing, the definition of poverty was expanded to include not only material deprivation, low achievement in education, and health but also “vulnerability and exposure to risk—and voicelessness and powerlessness”.¹⁰ The report cited Sen’s definition of freedom to illustrate how the broader definition of deprivation is

⁶ Emmerij, Louis, Ibid, 3

⁷ Ebrahim Alnoor. *NGOs and Organizational Change. Discourse, Reporting, and Learning*. 2005 Cambridge University Press

⁸ From www.undp.org

⁹ Amartya Sen (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York : Knopf.

¹⁰ *World Bank*, World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty

better able to explain the causes and characteristics of poverty as well as ways to deal with them. 'Attacking Poverty' was an indication of the increasing focus of the development field practice on empowerment and access to opportunities.

The World Bank's current definition of empowerment is "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes"¹¹. The expansion of Sen's concept of human development as freedom in terms of access to opportunities meant that the focus of development aid and practice shifted to entail democracy, freedom, and human rights or the need for "good governance". The concept of good governance implied that developing countries should work towards achieving "transparency in government expenditures, absence of corruption, integrity of business practices, and of civil service, freedom of trade unions and political parties, limited military expenditures, when human rights are guaranteed, and pursuing the 'right' economic policies"¹². Consequently 'good governance' became the focus of both non governmental projects and a new conditionality of aid and debt relief on behalf of major donors.

In 2000 the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were to be achieved by 2015 and signified the return of social goals as central to development practice. The MDGs include a set of eight targets that are to be achieved over a 25 year period starting in 1990. Each of the targets also has several indicators of progress - overall there are 21 indicators that are easily measurable and help ensure a result based/outcome oriented management style¹³. The eight goals are: 1.) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2.) Achieve universal primary education, 3.) Promote gender equality and empower women, 4.) Reduce child mortality, 5.) Improve maternal health, 6.) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7.) Ensure environmental sustainability, and 8.) Develop a global partnership for development¹⁴.

The progress towards these targets is significantly behind schedule. The overall progress has been marked by regional disparities with East Asia and Pacific showing

¹¹ World Bank, web resources-- <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/empowerment>

¹² Burnside, C. and D. Dollar (1997) *Aid, Policies and Growth*. Washington, DC : The World Bank. Referenced from Emmerij, Louis. Ibid, 3

¹³ Poston, Mark., Conway Tim., Christiansen, Karin. *The Millennium Development Goals and the IDC: driving and framing the Committee's work*. London, ODI, commissioned report by the IDC, released on 17th January 2003

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

good progress in areas such as eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (measured by the percentage of people living below 1 dollar a day) while Africa making no progress at all and even being in reverse in Sub Saharan Africa as a result of the HIV/Aids endemic. According to a Brookings Institute based research paper (Sachs et al.) published in 2004, Africa is in a persistent poverty trap which can be explained by five structural reasons: 1.) very high transport costs and a small market size, 2.) low productivity in agriculture, 3.) a very high disease burden, 4.) adverse geopolitics, and 5.) Very slow diffusion of technology from abroad. According to the authors, increased aid targeted at public sector investments is an exit strategy from this poverty trap¹⁵. While it has been difficult to make an assessment with regards to how much aid would be needed to achieve the targets (since there is no agreed relationship between the input of aid and the output in terms of development¹⁶), it has been estimated that aid would have to be doubled in many areas to come close to achieving the MDGs¹⁷. In addition, many have argued that the key to hastening the pace of progress towards achieving the MDGs is focusing more on improved ‘governance’. This would address the issue of how resources are used and who makes the important decisions¹⁸.

In spite of their wide scope and multidimensional approach, the MDGs do not include the prevention of conflicts in their agenda. This is in spite of a series of separate documents produced by the UN in the 1990s, including the UN Agenda for Peace (1992) and the Carnegie report on Preventing Deadly Conflicts (1997), which expanded significantly on the understanding of the need for peace making and conflict resolution. Post September 11th, there has been a strong trend to link development aid to strategic security goals such as the fight against terrorism and the support of democratic institutions which are in turn believed to help prevent conflicts from breaking out. The UNDP Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World declared that “for politics and political institutions to promote human development

¹⁵ Sachs Jeffrey et al. “Ending Africa’s Poverty Trap”, *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2004:1

¹⁶ Poston, Mark. , Conway Tim. , Christiansen, Karin. *The Millennium Development Goals and the IDC: driving and framing the Committee’s work*. ODI, commissioned report by the IDC, released on 17th January 2003

¹⁷ United Nations Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan address to the United Nations from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

¹⁸ Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and Richard Ponzio, Governance: Past, Present, Future Setting the governance agenda for the Millennium Declaration

and safeguard the freedom and dignity of all people, democracy must widen and deepen”¹⁹. The US National Security Strategy (2002) states that its goals are political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity. Two of the seven points to achieve these goals are “work with others to defuse regional conflicts” and “expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy.”²⁰

In summary, the major trends of development assistance, theory and practice during the past fifty plus years were as follows. The early years focused on reconstruction efforts which were then followed by aid to fill in investment gaps in the 1960s. In the 1970s, development was characterized by aid for basic human needs and the 1980s saw structural adjustments and the beginning of debt relief programs. In the 1990s following the breakup of the Soviet Union and the start of horrendous ethnic armed conflicts, aid was tied to humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation support. At the beginning of 2000, aid was channeled towards supporting human development, strategic prevention of conflicts, and the fostering of democratic governance²¹. Overall, the changes in the focus of development thinking is partly due to the changing reality of international relations and to a large extent because development has been a “process of learning by doing”²² or alternatively doing without learning enough.

II. Overview on Conflict Resolution trends:

The conflict resolution field is similar to the development field in the sense that it is rooted in both theory and practice. In a similar fashion to development, it originated from numerous schools of thoughts—social sciences (including sociology and psychology), international relations, political science, law, and economics. According to Burton, a consequence of this wide spectrum of subjects that served as the basis for conflict resolution is the absence of a theoretical framework, and even the realization that

¹⁹ UNDP Human Development Report 2002 : *Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2002/en/pdf/overview.pdf>

²⁰ The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (September 2002), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>

²¹ Pronk P. Jan. Aid as a Catalyst. *Development and Change* Vol. 32 (2001), 611-629 Institute of Social Studies, UK

²² *Ibid*, 7

such a framework is necessary to resolve deep rooted conflicts. According to Burton, this constitutes a major obstacle in conflict resolution work.²³

The main goal of development work is the alleviation of poverty with all the different perceptions of its root causes and to enable better access to opportunities and freedoms—that is human development. The main goal of conflict resolution is the alleviation of violence as means to solve disputes, and the transformation of relationships between parties.²⁴ In other words, conflict resolution works towards “changing conflicts so that they can be conducted constructively, even creatively, in the sense that violence is minimized, antagonism between adversaries is overcome, outcomes are mutually acceptable to the opponents, and settlements are enduring²⁵”. In general, the conflict resolution field of practice and theory assumes that conflict in itself is not a negative or positive phenomenon, but rather a natural part of human relations and interactions and a necessary step towards social change²⁶. It is the way in which conflict is handled and the negative and even destructive consequences it can have on a country, society, and community that conflict resolution attempts to address and change.

A major distinction between conflict resolution as a field of practice and development is in the actors doing the work and their legitimacy. While development aid is channeled through official and unofficial sources - official sources are governments and large intergovernmental organizations while unofficial sources are NGOs and private donors - the type of work carried out on the ground is often similar and actors interact with each other in the form of technical assistants for example. Thus a government body can and does often channel development aid through NGOs and hires technical assistants and advisors from NGOs to work with official parties and vice versa. This is not the case in the conflict resolution field, where the practitioners, their work, and the legitimacy of their work depend on whether they are official parties working on track one or unofficial parties working on track two. Conflict resolution on track one implies that all parties,

²³ John B. Burton, “Conflict Prevention as a Political System,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 6, no 1 (2001)

²⁴ Babbitt E. Eileen *Principles Peace, Mapping The International Conflict Resolution Terrain*, Chapter 2 Unpublished

²⁵ Kriesberg Louis. *The Growth of the Conflict Resolution Field* in Chester A. Crockett et al. (eds.) “The Challenges of Managing International Conflict” © United States Institute for Peace, Washington Dc

²⁶ Lewis A. Coser, *Functions of Social Conflict* © New York: Free Press 1964, also quoted in Babbitt E. Eileen *Principles Peace, Mapping The International Conflict Resolution Terrain*, Chapter 2 Unpublished

including third party negotiators or mediators, are “officials” which means that they are authorized representative of their countries. On track two, all parties are unofficial; they work on the grassroots level within the civil society domain. The work of conflict resolution on track two is carried out by NGOs with various goals in mind that can range from resolving community based conflicts, reaching consensus and understanding, providing training in conflict resolution or negotiation, and mediation and so forth²⁷. There is also what is commonly called track one and a half which usually implies that the parties can be either semi official (that is have significant influence on the political level) or official but the third parties, or the negotiators, are usually non official. They are private individuals or NGOs rather than representatives of the state²⁸. Since this thesis is concerned with the ability of development NGOs to incorporate conflict sensitive approaches into their operations, the conflict resolution practice and theory that is relevant is track two. This is also the conflict resolution practice that has become defined as a specialist field in the post cold war era following the outbreak of “identity” based conflicts²⁹.

The historical trends of conflict resolution theory are commonly divided into four phases, with the last phase being the coming of age of the practice as it is known today³⁰. According to Kriesberg, the four phases of conflict resolution were: 1) The Precursors 1914-1945; 2) 1946-69 the early efforts and basic research; 3) 1970-85 crystallization and expansion of the field; 4) 1986-Present: Differentiation and Institutionalization³¹.

The first phase of conflict resolution field (1914-1945) followed the outbreak of WWI and during the interwar years ideas and actions were established that prepared the path for the emerging field. These included the literature on class-based struggles and revolutions (Crane Britton 1938), analysis of war (Quincy Wright 1942), and most

²⁷ Rouhana, N. Nadim, Unofficial Third Party Intervention In International Conflict: Between Legitimacy and Disarray

²⁸ Babbitt E. Eileen *Principles Peace, Mapping The International Conflict Resolution Terrain*, Chapter 2 Unpublished

Track one and a half is the process that considered to have led to the official signing of the Oslo Accords between Itzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat in 1992 (Israel and the Palestinians).

²⁹ Kaldor, Mary. “New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era” . © Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 1999.

³⁰ Miall Hugh, et.al. “Contemporary Conflict Resolution”. Policy Press, UK. (1999)

³¹ Kriesberg Louis. *The Growth of the Conflict Resolution Field* in Chester A. Crockett et al. (eds.) “The Challenges of Managing International Conflict” © United States Institute for Peace, Washington Dc

importantly the analysis of conflicts related to organizational behavior and labor-management relations (Mary Parker Follett 1942). In her writing, Follett anticipated the problem solving and negotiation approach to conflict resolution that developed in a much later phase. She discussed what would now be called the theory of “mutual gains” and its application to disputes through using “integrative bargaining” to gain concessions as opposed to “distributive bargaining” that was the only known negotiation method then³². In addition, the first social-psychological analysis of the causes of conflicts and group processes appeared in the 1930s, including frustration-aggression theory of human conflict (Dollard’s, et al.1939). Other influential theories developed at the time came from the political science and international relations schools of thought and included Brinton’s analysis of political revolutions (1938) which he argued take place “when the gap between distributed social power and distributed political power reaches a critical point”.³³

According to Kriesberg, the second phase of conflict resolution theory took place between 1946-69 following WWII and during the Cold War, nuclear proliferation, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). During these years, most of influential scholarly forums in the field were established such as the Journal of Conflict Resolution founded in the University of Michigan in 1957, the Center for Research and Conflict Resolution in 1959, and the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) which was also founded in 1959. A very influential work on how people satisfy their needs was written by a psychologist Maslow. His book *Motivation and Personality* (1954) asserted that there is a hierarchy of human needs, from physiological needs at the lowest level, to safety, to love and belonging, to esteem, and finally to actualization. This later became known as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, and was the basis for needs based theory of conflict resolution developed by Azar and Burton in the late 1980s which led to a better understanding of intractable or protracted conflicts and the ways to resolve them³⁴. Game theory also had an influence on the conflict resolution field. Specifically, Thomas Schelling (1960) used the prisoner’s dilemma and possible alternatives to expected zero-

³² Miall Hugh, et.al. “Contemporary Conflict Resolution”. Policy Press, UK. (1999)

³³ From Miall Hugh, et.al. “Contemporary Conflict Resolution”. Policy Press, UK. (1999)

³⁴ Miall Hugh, et.al. “Contemporary Conflict Resolution”. Policy Press, UK. (1999)

sum outcomes to analyze the logic of bargaining and its alternatives. In his book *The Strategy of Conflict* he wrote that “in the terminology of game theory most interesting international conflicts are not "constant sum games" but "variable-sum games": the sum of gains of the participants involved is not fixed so that more for one inexorably means less for the other. There is a common interest in reaching outcomes that are mutually advantageous”.³⁵

At the start of the third phase of the development of the conflict resolution field (1970-85), perhaps the most significant progression was the changing assumptions in the late 1960s on the nature of conflict and power relations between parties in conflict. According to Kriesberg, during these years the conflict resolution field experienced crystallization and expansion. In classical conflict resolution prior to this, the assumptions in conflict were that there was a symmetric power relationship in which the interests of parties might be different, but which could be negotiated to obtain a win-win outcome. The new notion that conflicts are also asymmetric meant that the nature of relationships between parties and the structure of roles is such that change is possible only through conflict. There might be no possibility of a win-win outcome if power relations between parties remain unchanged³⁶.

In his book *Making Peace* (1971), Adam Curle presented a diagram which illustrated how asymmetric conflicts can be transformed into peaceful and dynamic relationship through four stages with the assistance of a third party. The four stages were: 1.) education or “conscientization” that enables articulation of grievances, 2.) “confrontation” of the power differences, 3.) “negotiation”, and 4.) “peaceful development” or the restructuring of relationships to reflect a more equitable power balance.³⁷ Another influential theory was developed by Galtung in 1969. He proposed a “conflict triangle” model which viewed conflict as a constant interaction between A, B and C, where C are “contradictions” (underlying conflict dynamics, incompatible goals and interests and differences in power relationships among the parties), A are “attitudes” (different perceptions of the parties which produce negative stereotypes fueled by

³⁵ Schelling, T.C *The Strategy of Conflict*, 1960, 1980 President and Fellow of Harvard College

³⁶ Miall Hugh, et.al. “Contemporary Conflict Resolution”. Policy Press, UK. (1999)

³⁷ Curle, Adam. 1971. *Making Peace*. London: Tavistock Publications

emotional traumas, grievances, and fears), and B are “behavior” (ways of expression such as acts of hostility and so on). Galtung saw conflict as a “dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behavior are constantly changing and influencing one another”³⁸.

By the late 1970s, there was an understanding of conflict as an interactive process with an escalatory, self-perpetuating dynamic. This understanding, as well as the experiences of track one negotiators such as Kissinger in the Israel-Egypt case, led to the argument by Zartman (1976) and others (Stedman, Haass, Touval et. al)³⁹ that a settlement of conflict is best produced when the conflict is “ripe”. In other words, there is a time when the parties are in a mutually hurtful stalemate and the process of conflict resolution can be most effective at this stage.

The non violent social movement was also a significant part of the third phase of conflict resolution. The non violent religious and pacifist movements in which Quaker was especially significant, as well teachings by Gandhi and Buddha, stressed self awareness and knowledge. In addition, during those years the conflict resolution field expanded in the legal area by the growth of the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) movement which advocated a less adversarial litigation system and alternative methods to solve legal disputes.

Utilizing the new knowledge and practice accumulated in ADR cases and the notions of international conflict resolution; in 1981 Roger Fisher and William Uri published their best-selling book of *Getting to Yes* under the auspices of the Harvard Program on Negotiation. The book offered a seemingly easy way to conduct principled, win-win (mutual gain) negotiations in all possible areas of conflict work by employing what the authors referred to as the seven elements approach. The seven elements asserted that principled negotiation to enable the best outcome should involve thinking about interests as opposed to positions, creating new options and understanding the range of options in the zone of possible agreement (ZOPA), identifying strong alternatives to agreement (BATNA), building relationships, investing in communication by

³⁸ Miall Hugh, et.al. “Contemporary Conflict Resolution”. Policy Press, UK. (1999)

³⁹ *Conflicts Unending* by Richard N. Haass ; *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* by Stephen J. Stedman ; *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* by I. William Zartman also William Zartman. *The 50% Solution* , ch. 7 ripeness and its implications for policy (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1976)

understanding partisan perceptions, and making real commitments to keep the agreement⁴⁰. The seven elements that were outlined and other ideas in the book served as the basis for numerous NGOs and individuals that began to offer consulting and training services for a wide range of domestic and international clients in negotiation techniques, communication, and conflict resolution.

The end of the cold war and the outbreak of deadly internal conflicts around the world denoted the fourth phase of conflict resolution work which was significantly affected by the international reality at the time. According to Kriesberg, the field experienced differentiation in the sense that more attention was given to the different stages of conflict such as prevention and early warning (Carnegie Report 1997), conflict escalation, de-escalation and management (Kriesberg 1997; Mitchell 2000), and peacebuilding, reconciliation, and coexistence (Weiner 1998; Boulding 2000; Lederach 1997). Conflict resolution also became institutionalized during that period with the establishment of numerous graduate programs, training courses, foundations, and new NGOs that offered conflict resolution curriculum.

New definitions of conflict and their causes emerged. In her influential book *New and Old Wars Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Mary Kaldor argued that due to the forces of globalization there had been an emergence of new wars that were based on identity. Calling it “identity politics”, she defined the new wars as “the claim to power on a basis of a particular identity—be it national, clan, religious or linguistic.”⁴¹ On the other hand, Gurr defined the new conflicts as “ethnopolitical” — groups define themselves based on ethnic or national criteria and make claims on behalf of their collective interests against the state or other actors. The ethnic criteria may include common descent, shared historical experiences, and valued cultural traits based on religion, language, race, common homeland and so forth. According to Gurr, the “ethnopolitical groups organize around their shared identity and seek gains for members of their group”⁴².

⁴⁰ Fisher Roger and Ury William “Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In”. Harvard Negotiation Project © 1981, 1991 Penguin Books Publisher

⁴¹ Kaldor, Mary, “New and Old Wars Organized Violence in a Global Era” Stanford University Press, 1999

⁴² Gurr. T. Robert, *Minorities and Nationalists: Managing Ethnopolitical Conflicts in the New Century*”.

Perhaps the most commonly referred to analysis of the causes of post cold war conflicts and the ways to resolve or manage them is Azar's theory of protracted social conflicts. Instead of ethnicity, Azar asserted that protracted social conflicts arise as a result of the denial of human needs that are essential in the development of all people and societies. Azar defined protracted social conflicts as "hostile interactions which extend over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity"⁴³. The needs are defined as security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity, and effective participation in the processes that determine conditions of security and identity, as well as others such developmental requirements.⁴⁴ According to Burton, these needs are basic human needs just like the biological needs of food and shelter, and as such they will be pursued by all available means⁴⁵. Burton made a further distinction between values, interests and needs. According to him, values are ideas, habits, customs, and beliefs characteristic of a particular social community which have linguistic, class, ethnic and other features that separate cultures and identity groups. He argued that the "defense of values is important to the needs of personal security and identity"⁴⁶. Burton defined interests as occupational, social and economic aspirations of the individual and identity groups within a social system. According to Burton, unlike needs and values, these interests are negotiable and can be traded for a social gain. While needs and values are not negotiable because they are shared by all human beings, they can be utilized as a source of connection and empathy between human beings⁴⁷.

The needs based approach to understanding conflict began to be applied as an effective conflict resolution tool by Herbert Kelman, a Harvard based psychologist, and a group of colleagues (including Azar, Burton) back in the 1970s in the format of problem solving workshops. Kellman defined violent conflicts as being driven by "collective needs and fears" and not only rational political calculations; as "intersocietal" involving

⁴³ *Beyond Intractability* Book Review by Cynthia J. Chataway, "Interactive Conflict Resolution" Ronald J. Fisher. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997

⁴⁴ Azar, E. *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict : Theory and Causes*. 1990 Aldershot: Dartmouth

⁴⁵ John B. Burton, "Conflict Provention as a Political System," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 6, no 1 (2001)

⁴⁶ John B. Burton, "Conflict Provention as a Political System," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 6, no 1 (2001)

⁴⁷ Babbitt E. Eileen *Principles Peace, Mapping The International Conflict Resolution Terrain*, Chapter 2 Unpublished

society as a whole; a “multifaceted process of mutual influence” rather than simply the assertion of power and as an “interactive process with an escalatory, self-perpetuating dynamic”⁴⁸. According to Kelman, conflicts have five common social psychological characteristics that perpetuate the violent dynamic—they tend to create public moods and national narratives on the streets; mobilize group loyalties which seek adherence to group norms; create structural and psychological commitments and vested interests; form mirror images or stereotypes; and create resistance to disconfirming information.

The problem-solving workshops sought to improve communication, diagnose underlying relationship issues, and facilitate the search toward creative conflict resolution⁴⁹. According to Kelman, the aim of the workshops was to create a political environment conducive to CR and to transform the long-term relationship between the parties through “communication that helps the parties overcome the political, emotional, and at times technical barriers that often prevent them from entering into negotiations, from reaching agreement in the course of negotiations, or from changing their relationship after a political agreement has been negotiated.”⁵⁰ The workshops were considered to have contributed significantly to the willingness of the Israelis and Palestinians to sign the Declaration of Principles in Oslo, and embark on the first official negotiation process in 1992. The theory and assumptions on which the workshops were based served as a basis for a significant amount of interethnic, intercultural, and other forms of facilitative dialogue approaches implemented by numerous NGOs around the world.

The fourth phase of conflict resolution theory and practice made a significant shift towards strategic bottom-up approaches to resolve conflicts which were aimed at involving middle level leadership in the conflict resolution process. This shift was due to, among other factors, John Paul Lederach’s pyramid which identified three levels of

⁴⁸ Kelman, H. 1997. "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict." In Zartman, I.W. and Rasmussen, L. *Peacemaking in International Conflicts: Methods and Techniques*. pp. 192-237.

⁴⁹ Keashly Loreleigh and Fisher J. Ronald. A Contingency Perspective on Conflict Interventions: Theoretical and Practical Considerations in Bercovitch Jacob (ed.) *Resolving International Conflicts* 1996 Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc Boulder Colorado

⁵⁰ Kelman, H. 1997. "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict." In Zartman, I.W. and Rasmussen, L. *Peacemaking in International Conflicts: Methods and Techniques*. pp. 192-237

leadership in society⁵¹. According to this pyramid, the top level of leadership consists of military, political, and religious leaders with high visibility. The conflict resolution work on that level consists of high level negotiations with an emphasis on cease fires and is conducted by single mediators who are highly visible. Middle level leadership consists of leaders that are respected in ethnic, religious, and academic sectors and intellectuals and NGO leaders. According to Lederach, this group is very important since it is able to create a link between the grassroots and top leadership. The conflict resolution work that is aimed at this level includes problem solving workshops, various trainings, peace commissions, and partial- insider teams. The third level of the pyramid consists of the grassroots leadership such as local leaders, leaders of indigenous NGOs, community developers, and so on. On this level, the type of conflict resolution implemented includes grassroots training, prejudice reduction, psychosocial work, and postwar trauma. This analysis of actors and the best conflict resolution approaches applicable at each level was instrumental in better understanding which methods should be aimed at different target groups.

There has been an increasing belief in the conflict resolution field (as well as development) that training emerging policy leaders such as graduate students and educators utilizing interactive learning modes (i.e. discussion, simulation) may be “the best format for long term impact” on conflict dynamics.⁵² The assumption behind such training is that if parties to conflict are more aware of conceptual and behavioral options they can employ, then they are more likely to address their differences nonviolently and feel empowered to take charge of the conflict resolution process.

To conclude the overview on conflict resolution trends, traditional conflict resolution evolved from a focus on the historical causes of war and the preservation of institutions, to the socialization of individual into certain behaviors and the role of power

⁵¹ John Paul Lederach. *Building Peace Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies*. 1997 United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC

⁵² Babitt, Eileen. “Contributions of Training to International Conflict Resolution” in Zartman, I William, and J. Lewis Rasmussen (eds.) *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997

in relationships and conflicts⁵³. A human needs theory that became central to the theoretical understanding of conflicts and ways to deal with them opened up possibilities for different policy prescriptions and interpretations of the past. Conflict resolution field is based on numerous theoretical schools of thought. It consists of different actors implementing their work with no single unifying understanding or agreement of the goals over the next decade.

III. Linking the two together:

Following the end of the Cold War and the outbreak of several major violent conflicts in the 1990s, the large development institutions began to understand that economic development and development aid by itself were not sufficient to prevent conflicts, and in fact could be one of the factors contributing to it. Due to the de facto reality on the ground, conflict resolution and development practitioners found themselves having to work in the same place and often at the same time, although often with not much enthusiasm from either side. For example, the World Bank states on its website that they are active in 40 countries affected by conflict and have continued to work with “government and non-government partners (local and international) to help people who have been affected by war, resume peaceful development, and prevent violence from breaking out again”⁵⁴. According to Azar “conflict resolution can truly occur and last if satisfactory amelioration of underdevelopment occurs as well. Studying Protracted conflict leads one to conclude that peace is development in the broadest sense of the term”⁵⁵. Most of the major armed conflicts in the 1990s took place in countries that were low on the UNDP Annual Human Development Index (which measures education, health and standard of living based on purchasing power parity--ppp.)⁵⁶. Voices from a small group of NGOs and practitioners began calling for the need to connect development with conflict resolution at least to the extent of not exacerbating conflict further by incorporating conflict sensitive planning into development aid programs.

⁵³ John B. Burton, “Conflict Prevention as a Political System,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 6, no 1 (2001)

⁵⁴ The quote is from World Bank website in the following link:
<http://www.worldbank.org/tenthings/nine.html>

⁵⁵ Azar, E. *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict : Theory and Causes*. 1990 Aldershot: Dartmouth

⁵⁶ Miall Hugh, et.al. “*Contemporary Conflict Resolution*”. Policy Press, UK. (1999)

The most obvious connection between development and conflict resolution is based on the argument that civil war and violent conflict tends to have a negative impact on growth rates and poverty reduction in low income countries. The existence of conflict or war reduces public spending on social services which specifically hurt the poor who are anyway the primary victims of conflict and war. Consequently it is difficult to make real progress on development goals such as poverty reduction and growth in the presence of war⁵⁷. Moreover, econometric research conducted by Rodrik found that between the years 1960-75 and 1975-89 during turbulent economic times, there was a correlation between the ability of countries to respond to economic shocks, and civil strife or social conflicts. Rodrik argued that “the effect of external shocks on growth is larger the greater the latent social conflicts in an economy and the weaker its institutions of conflict management”⁵⁸. The term latent social conflict implied high levels of income inequality as well as fragmentation along ethnic, linguistic and geographical lines. Conflict management institutions are institutions that function within the rule of law and that ensure democratic rights and social safety nets. The author concluded his research by stating that social conflict has played a role by inducing macroeconomic mismanagement. The already weak institutions in countries that were most affected by economic shocks were further weakened by the conflict which creates a cycle that is hard to break unless the conflict is addressed to the point where democratic institutions can be rebuild.

Similarly, the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management summarized the existing research on the causes of armed conflict by stating that poor economic conditions were the most important long-term causes of intra-state armed conflicts. Poor economic conditions contribute to other problems such as repressive political systems especially in transition periods, the degradation of renewable resources, and defined ethnic identities⁵⁹.

The differentiation of conflict resolution work into phases, with a particular emphasis on conflict prevention, led to the assumption that if the economic factors that

⁵⁷ Mansoob S. Murshed. Conflict, Civil War and Underdevelopment: An Introduction. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 39, No. 4 Special Issue on Civil War in Developing Countries (Jul., 2002), 387-393

⁵⁸ Rodrik, Dani, Where Did All the Growth Go? External Shocks, Social Conflict, and Growth Collapses, *Journal of Economic Growth* 4(4): 385-412 (1999)

⁵⁹ Smith, Dan. Trends and Causes of Armed Conflict. *Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management*. www.berghof-handbook.net

can trigger conflict were identified, it could lead to more effective prevention of these risks from escalating into a full scale conflict.⁶⁰ In his influential paper on Economic Causes of Civil Conflict, Collier argued that greed is the real instigator and incentive for many of the post cold war conflicts. He disagreed with the widespread assumption that grievances, or the expression of raw ethnic or religious hatred, economic inequality and lack of political rights, were the primary cause for modern civil wars and ethnic conflicts. According to Collier, the results of his research overwhelmingly pointed to the importance of economic agendas in instigating and perpetuating conflict as opposed to grievances. In particular, the presence of primary commodity exports that created lootable resources massively increased the risks of conflict. In addition, a country with large natural resources, many young men, and little education was more at risk of conflict than one with opposite characteristics.

According to Collier, the reason that the grievance theory disagreed with the actual pattern of conflict was that it missed the importance of what social scientists call the 'collective action problem'. Justice, revenge, and relief from grievance are 'public goods' and so are subject to the problem of free-riding. In answering his own question of who gained during conflict, Collier asserted that although societies as a whole suffered economically from civil war, some small identifiable groups did well out of it. They thus had an interest in the initiation, perpetuation, and renewal of conflict. Naturally, these interests have a tendency to remain low profile. Hence, according to Collier, the discourse of grievance was much louder than that of greed in the conflict resolution. His conclusion was that policy intervention should, however, focus rather more than in the past on these economic agendas. Effective policy should reduce both the economic incentives for rebellion and the economic power of those groups that tend to gain from the continuation of social disorder. Restricted access to international commodity markets for illegitimate exports from conflict countries and the targeting of development assistance to high-risk countries not currently in conflict were both feasible strategies for the international community according to Collier.

⁶⁰ *Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts*, "Preventing Deadly Conflicts", Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997

Collier's argument, while influential, has also prompted numerous critiques. For example, Murshed⁶¹ argued that the greed versus grievance explanation was too limiting and if greed and grievance were the only factors that drive conflict then violence would continue indefinitely. Instead, in places like Mozambique, Guatemala, and Somalia, people have resorted to creativity to try to reestablish or create a social contract with agreed rules that govern allocation of resources, rents, and settlement of grievances. This was often done by drawing on traditional community methods of dealing with conflicts. Similarly, Ballentine, K. & Nitschke⁶² asserted that the academic debate on the economic causes of contemporary armed conflict has become polarized around the greed versus grievance dichotomy, juxtaposing "loot-seeking" with "justice-seeking" rebellions, and, more generally, the significance of economic versus socio-political drivers of civil war.

According to them, there was a growing recognition of the analytical limits that this dichotomy imposed on what were in reality highly complex systems of social interaction. While there was overall agreement that economic factors matter to conflict dynamics, there was little consensus as to how they matter and how much they matter relative to other political and socio-cultural factors. Instead they suggested that key findings from case studies on the political economy of armed intra-state conflicts pointed out that combatant' self-enrichment/opportunities for insurgent mobilization were not the main cause of conflicts analyzed. Yet, self-financing complicated and prolonged hostilities, and in some cases created serious impediments to their resolution. The authors suggested that differences in the type of resources play a role in some of the conflict characteristics. For example, lootable resources such as alluvial diamonds and narcotics can be extracted and transported by individuals or small groups of unskilled workers. Thus, such resources provide direct rents for combatants and generate income for local communities. Empirical data indicates that lootable resources tend to be associated with non-separatist conflicts. By contrast, oil, deep-shaft minerals, and other non-lootable resources extracted in ethnically distinct areas are more likely to be associated with separatist conflicts. The authors conclude that resources are less a motive

⁶¹ Mansoob S. Murshed. Conflict, Civil War and Underdevelopment: An Introduction. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 39, No. 4 Special Issue on Civil War in Developing Countries (Jul., 2002), 387-393

⁶² Ballentine, K. & Nitschke. Beyond Greed and Grievance: Policy Lessons from Studies in the Political Economy of Armed Conflict. 2003.

for rebellion in themselves than a means to finance military campaigns initiated for other, non-pecuniary reasons. Particularly in separatist conflicts, and to a lesser extent in non-separatist insurgencies, the outbreak of conflict was triggered by the interaction of economic opportunities with longstanding grievances over poor economic governance (particularly the inequitable distribution of resource wealth), exclusionary and repressive political systems, inter-ethnic disputes, and security dilemmas.

In spite of the ongoing debate on whether economic interests play a more significant role in contributing to violent conflict than psychological causes, it is clear that both are important factors in contributing to the perpetuation of conflict dynamics. The questions remains though as to which factors come first and how they interact. There is no clear answer to this as both conflict resolution and development tend to focus on one of the factors and to a large extent ignore the other. The existence of conflict exacerbates poverty and weakens institutions that are needed for development progress to take place. In turn, countries with weak institutions are more prone to economic shocks and conflict.

Traditionally, the reality on the ground has been that there is little cooperation between the practitioners of the two fields. Uncoordinated peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts have not been immune from aggravating conflicts.⁶³ Yet, there have been particularly worrying findings on the role of development aid in exacerbating and directly contributing to escalations of conflict and violence. In his book *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, Peter Uvin argued that the development enterprise “contributed to structural violence both directly and indirectly, through action and inaction, through its mode of functioning and its ideology”⁶⁴. As such, development aid should be recognized according to Uvin as a form of political intervention. Similarly, Susan Woodward argued that in former Yugoslavia, the economic austerity and reforms required by international aid agencies such as the IMF and a foreign debt crisis were the

⁶³ International Alert, *Conflict Sensitive Approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding*: http://www.international-alert.org/our_work/themes/promoting_approaches.php

⁶⁴ Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. Kumarian Press (1998)

trigger of the slide towards political disintegration and the outbreak of the ethnic conflicts in the area.⁶⁵

IV. Conflict Sensitive Approaches:

The call for conflict sensitive development was a direct result of these findings. International Alert defines conflict sensitivity as “the ability of your organization to understand the context [operational environment] in which you operate; understand the interactions between your intervention and the context; and act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts”⁶⁶. International Alert suggests that conflict sensitive approaches require analysis of the interaction of the outer context consisting of profile, actors, causes, and their dynamic interaction, and the inner context consisting of planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the particular project and its intention.

The pioneers who advocated conflict sensitive development were Mary Anderson and a group of colleagues who in 1994 launched what they called a “Local Capacities for Peace Project”. The LCP project was based on fifteen case studies conducted in fourteen conflict zones with the purpose of answering the question “how may aid be provided in conflict settings in ways that, rather than feeding into and exacerbating the conflict, help local people disengage from the violence that surrounds them and begin to develop alternative systems for addressing the problems that underlie the conflict?”⁶⁷ The cases as along with twenty- five feedback workshops carried out with aid workers in a number of countries, resulted in a book entitled *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War*.⁶⁸ The book, as well as other material developed by the project, has become the basis for numerous international and local organizations doing humanitarian aid development work to understand conflict sensitive frameworks and apply them through staff training, declaration of intentions and so on.

⁶⁵ Woodward L. Susan. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*. The Brookings Institute, Washington DC 1995

⁶⁶ http://www.international-alert.org/our_work/themes/promoting_approaches.php

⁶⁷ From the Local Capacities for Peace Project Trainer’s Manual by Collaborative for Development Action <http://www.cdainc.com/>

⁶⁸ Anderson, Mary *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado 1999.

According to Anderson, in all societies there are capacities for peace and for war⁶⁹. The “connectors” are those local capacities for peace which connect people and exist in society even when it is in the midst of violent conflict and war. These are “common history, culture, language and experience; shared institutions and values; economic and political interdependence; and habits of thinking and acting”⁷⁰. Just like capacities for peace, according to Anderson all societies have capacities for war which divide people. Anderson identified five categories that are relevant to peace capacities and thus serve as connectors. The same five can act as war capacities and thus become dividers of communities and societies in war and conflict. These five categories are systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, shared values and interests, common experiences, and symbols and occasions. Examples of systems and institutions are trade and markets, or infrastructure that can serve as connectors. Attitudes and actions can be tolerance and acceptance when they serve as connectors or violence, intolerance and brutality when they serve as dividers. Values and interests can be shared to elicit mutual help across conflict divisions or be divided by different identity groups and interests. Experiences of war can be common or a reflection of conflicting narratives and histories. Symbols like art, music, or the national flag can connect communities around common experiences or serve as perpetuating fears, animosity, and negative stereotypes.

Utilizing these five categories, the DO No Harm approach suggests an analytical framework. This analytical framework requires agencies working in conflict to identify the dividers or tensions that contribute to an increase in capacities for war, and connectors or local capacities for peace. Using this framework, project planning should ask critical questions regarding the impact of their project on the preexisting connectors and dividers to make sure that it does not increase the dividers or decrease the connectors. When possible, it should plan the programs in a way that would help to decrease dividers and increase connectors. However the goal of the Do No Harm planning is to avoid

⁶⁹ Anderson, B. Mary, Ch. 3 Characteristics of Conflict Areas, in *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace –Or War* Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado 1999.

⁷⁰ Anderson, B. Mary, Ch. 3 Characteristics of Conflict Areas, in *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace –Or War* Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado 1999.

inadvertently worsening destructive interactions that do not serve to promote and strengthen justice⁷¹.

Based on this framework, international donor agencies like the World Bank, USAID, and UNDP have begun incorporating the vocabulary which supported conflict sensitive planning in its funded projects. However, in spite of the vocabulary the process of actually having projects that would successfully implement conflict sensitive planning and implementation or contribute to the improvement of conflict has not been easy. The phases of development work in violent conflict settings have traditionally been divided into the “humanitarian” phase and the “developmental” phase.⁷² The humanitarian phase involved immediate humanitarian relief, from food packages to short term employment and infrastructure repairs. The developmental phase involved long-term economic and institutional reconstruction and investments, with the assumption that with the restoration of rule of law and government, the appropriate needs of the population would be taken care of through distribution of resources from above. In practice, there have been a lot of problems with this model since in most post-conflict societies the humanitarian phase does not simply end. The programs that deal with the needs of the immediate crisis such as reconstruction of a country’s infrastructure, have often necessitated extension beyond their original planning. The humanitarian relief stage involves short-term programs that do not take into account the long-term economic, social, and political needs of the affected population. These programs, when extended beyond their original plan, often became counterproductive to long-term developmental goals.

The Community Driven Development (CDD) and Community Driven Reconstruction (CDR) approaches were an attempt to connect the long-term development efforts with the short-term humanitarian relief efforts in post conflict settings. It envisioned focusing the reconstruction efforts on local communities through small scale and large-scale projects. The CDR projects were designed, at least on paper, on the principle of partnership between local communities and governmental institutions, when these institutions have remained functional in a post conflict setting. The Community

⁷¹ From the Local Capacities for Peace Project Trainer’s Manual by Collaborative for Development Action <http://www.cdainc.com/>

⁷² Cliffe, Guggenheim, Kostner “Community Driven Reconstruction as an Instrument of War-to-Peace Transitions” CPR Working Paper No. 7 August 2003

Driven Reconstruction projects (CDR) launched in the late 1990s by the World Bank were an extension of the CDD approach in a post conflict setting such as Rwanda and East Timor. The goals emphasized straightening the institutions' capacity to work with the people and reestablish trust and participation. CDR projects also worked to identify local leadership and to encourage participation and initiatives at local levels. It anticipated that a greater decentralizing authority would encourage greater participation and provide less opportunity for corruption. In addition, the transfer of decision making to local institutions would provide more opportunities to actively encourage greater local participation with particular focus on disadvantaged groups. All together, the CDR projects expected to provide greater incentives for peace to the local population and thus to become a foundation for future CDD work⁷³. Both CDR and CDD worked towards "giving control of decisions and resources to community groups and local governments"⁷⁴. It sought to empower local leadership and encourage greater participation by the community (and women) by identifying local needs and priorities. Because the projects had strong participation values and a bottom-up approach, they became a unique niche for possibilities of development work with broader peace building efforts in post-conflict societies as well as conflict sensitive planning.

Yet, as an example, a review of 14 CDD projects in post-conflict or conflict based settings found repeated problems with ability to implement the desired goals of the projects. Five of the projects took place in Africa, six in Asia, and three in Europe, and the majority were funded by the World Bank⁷⁵. Overall, the CDD and CDR projects took a holistic approach to empower communities as a whole in the hope that the particular projects would provide incentives for stability and even reconciliation among the different factions. However, this aim proved to be not only hard to attain, but specifically it was hard to measure whether the particular projects successfully contributed to stability and reconciliation in the long term.

⁷³ Cliffe, Guggenheim, Kostner "Community Driven Reconstruction as an Instrument of War-to-Peace Transitions" CPR Working Paper No. 7 August 2003

⁷⁴ Community Driven Development (CDD), World Bank:

<http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/09ByDocName/CommunityDrivenDevelopment>

⁷⁵ Strand, Arne., et al. "Community Driven Development in Contexts of Conflict. Concept Paper, ESSD, World Bank 2003

In particular, the central aim of CDD and CDR projects was local empowerment. Yet, the objective of community empowerment in the context of conflict can be problematic. According to the World Bank, the four elements of empowerment are information, inclusion/participation, accountability, and the capacity for local organization.⁷⁶ The bottom-up approach of CDD and CDR projects implies potential redistribution of power during the process of rebuilding local capacities and institutions. This redistribution of power, especially in areas affected by violent conflict and civil wars, where the power relations have been often significantly modified by military capacities, constitutes a particularly hard and delicate process. *“The experiences of Afghanistan and Rwanda..., demonstrate that a major challenge in post-war contexts is to insure that projects will not only benefit the victors of war or the who still have access to military power , but also those who ended up on the losing side of the conflict, or who were impoverished or exploited as a result of it”*⁷⁷. Several World Bank commissioned reports mentioned that while the local structures and organizations formed to support the projects might have had a tangible success in promoting stability and cooperation among different parties, these successes did not necessarily have any effect on the official peace process or government led actions.

In addition, CDD and CDR projects often found prioritization difficult. The choice was between providing training to staff and establishing structures for local organizations to function (which were both time consuming), versus providing immediate funding for projects that would promote an immediate sense of stabilization in the affected population. An additional learning from CDD implementation showed that the projects were particularly difficult to implement in the less stable conditions of post conflict settings since local politics including local power dynamics were not always fully understood. Finding local partnerships was difficult, especially between institutions and people who were former enemies. Similarly, forming new community based organizations between communities and various institutions was difficult in the absence of trust among community members.

76 From ‘Four elements of empowerment’ (<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/empowerment/whatis/elements.htm>). Also found in Strand, Arne., et al. “Community Driven Development in Contexts of Conflict. Concept Paper, ESSD, World Bank 2003

77 Ibid, 25

These findings have demonstrated that in spite of the seeming simplicity of conflict sensitive analysis framework, the implementation of conflict sensitive work in within development projects has been extremely difficult. Many of the NGOs which have at first enthusiastically incorporated the Do NO Harm framework into their value statement, and taken part in some staff training of the LCP approaches, have not been able to actively implement the principles of conflict sensitive planning. When encountering difficulties, many have stopped trying.

Chapter 2

Georgia:

Georgia is a classic case study where underdevelopment and conflict have become intertwined. Numerous international development NGOs and humanitarian agencies operate inside Georgia. In this chapter, I explore the question of why they find it difficult to implement conflict sensitive development. This draws upon my experience working with Mercy Corps over the summer of 2005, conversations with Georgian people from diverse ethnic backgrounds from cities and villages across the country, ten interviews I conducted with individuals from World Vision, Save the Children, UNDP, OSCE, the Georgian Ministry for Conflict Resolution, the Academy for Peace and Development, and two think tanks - International Crisis Group and The Caucasus Institute for Peace and Development⁷⁸.

I. The context:

After more than seventy years under Soviet rule and two hundred years under the yoke of the Russian Empire (with the exception of a brief period of independence between 1918-1921) Georgia finally became independent in 1991. The name of the country as we know it - Georgia - is not actually what the Georgians themselves call it. They refer to their land as Sakartvelo, and themselves as Kartvelebi which is derived not from St. Georgia as commonly assumed by Westerners but rather from a pagan god named Kartlos who is considered to be the father of all Georgians.⁷⁹ Georgia has a population of around 5 million⁸⁰ consisting of 70.1% Georgian, 8.1% Armenian, 6.3% Russian, 5.7% Azeri, 3% Ossetian, 1.8% Abkhaz and with the remaining 5% being composed of others including Greek, Chechen, Ukrainian, and Kurds⁸¹.

The Georgian people's cultural traditions differ depending on which of the nine regions they originate from. These regions are Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli (of which the majority of the population is Azeri), Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Racha-Lechkhumi and

⁷⁸ Most of my interviews were conducted in Russian and later translated by me into English.

⁷⁹ Rosen Roger, "Georgia: A Sovereign Country Of The Caucasus", 2004 Airphoto Internationak Ltd.

⁸⁰ 4,693,892 according to the CIA World Factbook Estimate (July 2004)

⁸¹ CIA World Factbook Georgia

Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo and Zemo Svaneteri (which borders Abkhazia), Samtskhe-Javakheti (of which the majority of the population is Armenian population and has a disputed border with Armenia), and Shida Kartli (which includes South Ossetia)⁸². At least 11 languages other than Georgian are spoken in Georgia including Abkhaz, Migrelian and Ossetin.⁸³ During my time in Georgia, I was able to work in and/or explore seven of the nine regions. Most of my communication with people was in Russian.

After gaining independence, in May of 1991 Georgia elected its first president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who promoted a nationalist platform and became known for his “Georgia for the Georgians” rhetoric. His statements and the declaration of Georgian as the only state language quickly ignited tension and were perceived as particularly threatening to national minorities. One weekend during my stay in Georgia, I took a long train ride to Baku. During the train journey, I shared my *kupe*⁸⁴ with a Georgian- Azeri family who at that time were living on the Azeri side of the border. From this family and others I heard horrifying stories of these first years of independence; how they had to leave their houses and everything they had and escape to Azerbaijan. Several waves of ethnic violence occurred during that time which included looting of houses and even killings. Other Azeri people in Georgia told me that they felt little protection from law enforcement officials in the country and were often blamed for violence and punished when they did not deserve it. It is hard to find evidence of this in official accounts and Georgians themselves tend to deny it.

During the year of Gamsakhurdia rule, demands for autonomy in South Ossetia from the South Ossetian Popular Front were on the rise. South Ossetia had already declared its independence in 1989 with the intent to create an independent and united country with North Ossetia that remained under Russian control, but had received no international recognition. In 1991, fighting broke out and developed into a full scale civil war between Georgians and Ossetians causing 60,000-100,000 Ossetian refugees to flee the region mostly into North Ossetia, and the government of Georgia lost control of the region. In 1992 a ceasefire was established and a joint Russian and Georgian

⁸² See Appendix: Map of Georgia, Map of Administrative Units in Georgia

⁸³ UN database in <http://www.uncece.org/env/epr/studies/georgia/chapter00.pdf>

⁸⁴ Kupe is a word used for private rooms of four (sometimes more) in an overnight trains

peacekeeping force was deployed. In November 6 1992 the monitoring of the ceasefire fell under the mandate of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). While the ceasefire has remained in place, incidents of violence continued to occur with an escalation since 2004. When I was there during the summer of 2005, several incidents of bombing and kidnapping took place and there was a real concern that the ceasefire might be broken.

From December 1991 until January 1992, the Georgian capital Tbilisi became the center of civil war and Gamsakhurdia was eventually deposed. Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs under USSR, was invited to lead the State Council and later to become head of the state⁸⁵. In August 1992, fighting broke out in Abkhazia. This was caused by the Georgian government forces pursuing Gamskhurdia supporters into Abkhazia where they found themselves fighting against the Abkhazians who were assisted by Russian underground forces. The Russians meanwhile, at the same time as unofficially assisting the Abkhazian separatist forces, brokered two peace initiatives in 1992 and 1993. In spite of this, in September 1993 Georgian troops were driven out of Abkhazia thereby triggering an exodus of around 250,000 Georgian refugees and resulting in serious charges of mass killings and more than 10,000 dead⁸⁶. Only a small percentage of those refugees have been able to return since that time, and only to the Gali region. The refugees, many of whom were placed in hotels and apartments in Tbilisi, continue to be a heavy burden on the economy that has already suffered from the conflict. In 1994, after Georgia agreed to join CIS, a ceasefire was signed establishing the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and deploying 1500 Russian peacekeepers⁸⁷. Russia also established four military bases in Georgia that have since been a source of tension between the Georgian government and Russia. In 2001, Georgia and Abkhazia signed another accord where they pledged not to use force against each one another.

During the next 9 years under Shevardnadze rule, the economic and social situation in Georgia deteriorated. With the old institutions which existed under the Soviet regime destroyed, and no new institutions rebuilt, a country which was once known for its

⁸⁵ Rosen Roger, "Georgia: A Sovereign Country Of The Caucasus", 2004 Airphoto Internationak Ltd.

⁸⁶ BBC country report Georgia

⁸⁷ <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unomig/>

diverse and rich agricultural and livestock products as well as wine was on its way downhill. Externally, Shevarnadze managed to establish good relationships with the West, in particular with the United States, and enrolled Georgia in numerous international organizations. Yet internally, the government failed to collect tax revenues, let crime and government corruption rise, and permitted the shadow economy to account for 60% of country's economic productivity. Between 1990-1995, GDP in Georgia declined drastically and by 1995 it was 23.4% of its 1989 level⁸⁸. The IMF led reforms, which placed emphasis on fiscal and monetary policy contraction, enabled some improvement in macro level growth, but by 2001 it was still only around 33.3% of its 1989 levels. In addition, basic infrastructure deteriorated including schools, roads, and hospitals, and the country experienced constant electricity and heat shortages. I was told that many forests were cut down during these 9 years to heat houses. The region of Adjara was run independently from the rest of Georgia by Aslan Abashidze who headed a large criminal gang. The grave economic situation and government corruption were particularly apparent when in April 2002, an earthquake caused extensive damage to the country. By 2001, 54% of the population was below the poverty line.⁸⁹

The second war between Russia and Chechnya in 1999, caused an influx of Chechen refugees into the mountains of the northern border with Russia around the Pankisi Gorge and increased tensions with Russia. Russia remained the largest import and export partner and thus in spite of the continued tensions between the countries and the perceived negative role Russia that plays in the two conflicts, Georgia's economic dependence on Russia places the country in a difficult position. In 2001, following offers of Georgian assistance to the US in its operations in Afghanistan and later in Iraq—including an active contribution of military forces, airfields and airspace—foreign assistance from the US significantly increased.

In 2002, Shevarnadze signed an agreement which approved the construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Main Export Pipeline (BTC) and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum South Caucasus Pipeline (BTE SCP) which extended through Georgia and were suppose to give

⁸⁸ <http://www.unece.org/env/epr/studies/georgia/chapter00.pdf>

⁸⁹ CIA World Factbook, Georgia

Georgia revenues of \$508 million over 20 years in transit tariffs.⁹⁰ British Petroleum (BP), which owns 30.1% of the shares of the BTC, and ten other shareholders funded around 30% of the project cost, with the remaining 70% coming from third party financing provided by the International Finance Corporation, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, seven international export credit agencies, and a syndicate of 15 commercial banks⁹¹. Construction of the BTC pipeline has accounted for the largest foreign investment in Georgia in recent years. The main source of funding for Mercy Corps projects in Georgia during my time with them was BP. Other international NGOs that I came across or interviewed while in Georgia including Care, World Vision and Save the Children had major projects implemented with the funding from BP.

In 2003, following fraudulent elections in which Shevarnadze yet again won, street protests overtook the country and opposition supporters seized parliament. The mass protest of young people using roses as a peace symbols became known as the Rose Revolution. Shevarnadze resigned and another election was scheduled. This time the winner was a young and American educated man - Mikheil Saakashvili who led the National Movement Party. He pledged far reaching economic and political reforms and solution to conflicts.

II. Current situation:

The biggest success of the Saakashvili government so far has been its ability to peacefully reconsolidate Adjara so soon after coming to office. The progress in other areas has been slow. However, Georgia has been working on improving law and order. As the first move in that direction, the police forces were reformed⁹². Significant effort was also put into educational reforms funded by the World Bank. Mercy Corps had a project dedicated to help teachers and parents create a school board system with elected school heads. The process has not been easy. When discussing this with teachers and parents in the communities, they indicated that in many cases, the governments' requirements were only implemented on paper and not much change occurred in reality.

⁹⁰ Rosen Roger, "Georgia: A Sovereign Country Of The Caucasus", 2004 Airphoto Internationak Ltd.

⁹¹ *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, Tea Gularidze, BTC starts Pumping Oil, 05.25.2005
<http://www.civil.ge/>

⁹² November 2005 Saakashvili National Report : <http://www.president.gov.ge/others/Report.pdf>

Many of the school heads have a lot of power in their communities and were placed in that position by the communist party and people were afraid to change it. In addition the government provided little guidance on how the reforms should actually happen and the process of change was mostly implemented by NGOs in selected areas (mainly along the BTC pipeline and funded by BP). It is not clear how the actual money allocated for this purpose by the World Bank was spent. According to the community members to which I spoke, they had one or two visitors who would give them a piece of paper which had an explanation of what having a school board meant and asked them to submit a report indicating when the school would transition to this system. In reality, people had no idea what elections meant and related to the piece of paper as another bureaucratic challenge that the government was imposing and an impediment to receive funding. They complained that these reforms were not what they needed, and they would have much preferred more funding to pay teacher's salaries or rehabilitate schools.

An additional focus of the educational reforms has been the institution of standardized exams to replace the old model of corruption and bribery. During the summer I was there, students took the exam for the first time as a prerequisite for University entrance. However the exam was only offered in Georgian, which automatically denied all minorities the ability to even participate. Under the Soviet rule minorities had their own schooling system but in Universities the main language of communication and study was Russian. While the schooling system has remained divided into Georgian, Azeri, Armenian and Russian, the only permitted language of teaching in Universities in Georgia is Georgian. As a result many minorities have to pursue higher education abroad which is often impossible due to financial and visa constraints.

Georgia was eligible for the US Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) funding and it signed a Compact on September 2005 that gave the country US\$ 299 million which was designed to reduce poverty through investment in economic growth⁹³. There are two main components of the spending plan for this money. The first component is regional infrastructure rehabilitation which includes road rehabilitation in Samtskhe-Javakheti (where the Russian bases are supposed pull out by 2008), energy rehabilitation and regional infrastructure development that will benefit municipal infrastructure such as

⁹³ Information can be found at www.mcg.ge

water supplies, sanitation, irrigation and waste management. The second component is enterprise development that is intended to provide technical assistance to small and medium enterprises and agribusiness development. It is expected to benefit half a million Georgians and according to estimates, the direct benefit towards poverty reduction will be approximately 12 percent. While the money is allocated through the government formed Millennium Challenge Georgia Committee, there are numerous NGOs that are subcontractors of these projects in the implementation stages as well as expatriate technical assistants. In the context of Georgia, there is no doubt that without conflict sensitive lenses, the allocation of funding will only increase the already strained relationships with minority populations.

In terms of conflict resolution, not much progress has been achieved. In fact, since Saakashvili took office there has been an escalation both in the South Ossetian front with regards to Georgian relations with Russia,⁹⁴ and even greater concern internally with minorities, many of whom feel that they do not benefit from the reforms. There has also been an increase in nationalism among Georgians. It is hard to say exactly why the nationalism has been on the rise, but the Rose revolution, the ongoing conflicts together with the political rhetoric of the new government and the reforms have all been factors in reviving the Georgian national pride. On the South Ossetian front, after a series of open conflict incidents in the summer of 2005, Saakashvili's office published a unilateral proposition of the Road Map for Peace. The main themes of the road map included the call for continued efforts to demilitarize the region, joint policing that would be aimed at strengthening law and order, the establishment of transport connections between Tskhinvali and Tbilisi, the call for direct negotiations, a free trade zone between North and South Ossetia, the guarantee of language rights and educational rights, Parliamentary representation, support for greater engagement by NGOs, and the advancement of confidence building measures. The road map was rejected immediately by the other side without much explanation. On March 25th, the online magazine Civil Georgia ran an article which quoted the Georgian Prime Minister announcing that they are unilaterally

⁹⁴ Russia recently imposed an import ban on Georgian wine. Interfax on March 27 reported that according to a poll conducted by a popular Georgian newspaper Kviris Palitra Georgians considered Russia as the most hostile nation to Georgia. In addition visa restrictions have been imposed by both sides.

developing a road map plan for Abkhazia that should be completed by May 1 2006⁹⁵. The fact that the plan was once again developed unilaterally points out the unlikelihood its actual acceptance from the other side and thus the slim possibilities of conflict resolution in the near future.

A good outline of current concerns was given in my interview with Sven Holder, a Human Dimensions Officer from the OSCE mission in Georgia.

There are three priorities now for Georgia. The first priority has to do with the lack of capacity to implement the laws. Thus the first priority is to entrench Georgian democracy which means building institutions and developing local government that is not corrupt and transparent, independent judiciary, free media and so on. The second is economic development. This is also one of the roots problems with regards to the question of the IDPs on all sides. The settlement of conflicts in the long run will depend on that. For example the economy in South Ossetia is dependent of the trade between Russia and Georgia and this has to be developed as the primary incentive for peace. Abkhazia has great potential for tourism and economic development. Also there is a huge problem of unemployment in Georgia and a large percentage of population who lives from the shadow economy. Most of the IDPs were unable to integrate and find jobs. There is a basic lack of infrastructure such as water and electricity supply that is being rebuilt by NGOs. Third is the integration and access to opportunities of national minorities in Kvemo Kartli and Samskhe Javakheti. The situation in Kvemo Kartli with the Azeri population is that people do not feel belonging because they lack the language skills. It is an integration issue. In Samtskhe-Javakheti the situation is more politicized than in Kvemo Kartli, they demand more rights for the local government. In both areas there is a sense of lack of career opportunities and the expected dismantling of the Russian base in Akhalkalaki which provides jobs for 30% of the population is a huge concern.

There is a need to get a much better cooperation of the government in all these areas.

A particularly powerful story was told to me by Varda—a Georgian woman with black hair and big dark eyes who was displaced with her family from Abkhazia in 1993. She is the mother of one of the youths that I interviewed from the Academy for Peace and Development, a dialogue based project. She recounted, “My name is Varda, I am 58. I work as an education specialist for the Abkhaz refugees now in Georgia; I used to work in the education ministry in Abkhazia, would you like me to tell you my story?” Her story highlights the main obstacles to the resolution of the conflict with Abkhazia such as the return of IDPs back to Abkhazia and their lack of integration into Georgia even after 12 years.

⁹⁵ Civil Georgia, Tbilisi 03.25.2006 “ Development of Roadmap on Abkhazia Launched”

The story of Vardo:

"I live with the only hope to come back and dream about my house, the house I grew up. We realize that if we go back it will be very different. The house is burned and nothing will be there of what I remember. But I would like at least to be able to breathe the air, the same air that my father breathed before he was killed. My sister died there as well and we were not able to bury them.

I worked closely with Abkhazian people and had good relationship with my colleagues, 12 years ago I felt young and we were friends but when the war began we ended up on different sides. There was a man I knew who worked in the sport division of the Ministry of Education and he did not want to fight but he had to take up arms and he died when the Georgian army was approaching and he did not had time to run away. I always wondered why this person who did not want to even acknowledge that there was a conflict died. Neither Georgian nor Abkhazian wanted this war. It was the government and our "older brother" who did everything possible to contribute to the war.

On the 24th of July 1993 a peace agreement was signed and we were certain that the war was over. Georgian schools resumed classes on September 1st and all the kids came back to begin school. However, on 16th of September in the morning we heard sounds of fighting and it was becoming more and more loud. We understood that the war has started again. I lived with my family high in the mountains. I said to my husband lets take the children out of the city. He took the children out, I stayed and he came back. We saw it coming closer; we decided we had to get the children out all together. My children were 9 and 11 at the time, both boys, and we heard that Abkhazians killed boys. We had to escape through the mountains of Svaneti. This is the hardest route. We left our father and my youngest sister and my aunt. My father who fought two World Wars did not want to leave, he was sure that no one will hurt him. My sister was a doctor and she also was certain that no one will hurt her as everyone knew her as a doctor. I kept saying to them that we know what happened a year earlier to Georgians who did not leave from the fighting area. My aunt was sick and was afraid from the journey.

Shepherds helped us on our way, it snowed in the mountains and we had to sleep outside because there were so many of us and not enough place at the villages. They were kind enough to take our children inside. I got very sick on the way myself. We did not take with us anything aside from warm clothes and food and that is how we survived. We baked bread on our way. When we finally managed to arrive in Tbilisi we went to our relatives. They helped us. I owe them for the rest of my life. Soon after I received a call from our Ministry of Education in Tbilisi and was told that they will arrange a job as a teacher and coordinator of the schools for the Georgian-Abkhazian refugees. Our kids had to go to classes late in the evening since there was no place for them. We wanted to keep our children separate so that they will be with the other Georgians from Abkhazia and won't forget where they came from and be able to go back as soon as we are allowed. The Norwegian Council helped us a lot during that time. They trained us in new teaching methods and gave us a good salary.

I wrote to my family through the Red Cross and I found out that my aunt died and I don't know what happened to her. Two weeks after 9th of May my father and sister were killed. My house was burned, nothing is left now. I had an amazing library I will never be able to collect the books I had there. Now we bought an apartment and we live fine. I am sad about my books and all the family photos of my children. I had a very beautiful photo

of my son when he finished the kindergarten. I heard that they looted my house for two days and then burned it completely.

Do I see an end to this conflict? If Russians would leave Abkhazia we would be able to find a common language. I participated in training with Abkhazian teachers and we were able to find a common language. The first day we sat separately, on the second day we began to talk and on the third we were together. If Russia leaves we would have to find in ourselves the strengths to forget all the bad and remember the importance of life.

I want to burry my sister and my father. I do not want a compensation for my house that was lost, I want to go back. The only work here for young Abkhazian Georgians is trade, black market. No one wants to live here, thank God I was helped by the government. There are 65 schools now for IDPs from Abkhazia and we do not want to integrate with the Georgian children. Only if we loose our hope to return we will agree to integrate.

I realize that both people have suffered. Those who killed they killed because of the hatred in which they were brought up. We can't get rid of the Abkhazians and we have to find ways to forgive them. It is not easy. When I found out that my father was killed the Abkhazian Minister of Culture with whom I used to work came and wanted to give me a hug and a kiss. She was surprised and upset that I could not let her kiss me. She was Abkhazian but because she worked closely with Georgian officials she had to escape as well. I feel a sense of guilt every day that I did not help my younger sister Suliko, maybe I could have done something. She was 5 years younger than I.

Inside Georgia we are around 300,000 refugees all live in very difficult economic situation. I do not have hope for immediate future because of Russian position. Our hope is with America but they will not get into conflict because of us...

III. Conflict Sensitive Work?

On the ground, I found that most international NGOs doing development in Georgia did very little programming directly in the officially defined conflict areas—South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In fact, in my interviews all of them indicated that their work had no direct relationship with conflict related problems, and that their projects were aimed at addressing particular needs of the population.

In my interview with Georgi Kakulia, who coordinates the Tbilisi based dialogue project among Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia and Abkhazia, Georgi said that he saw little attempt on behalf of the numerous international development NGOs to work directly with conflict issues.

“But there is little attempt to involve youth from Abkhazia, they should try to find more ways to connect people from both sides to make the work better and more productive to

the region as a whole. Also make links with Ossetians, provide incentives to work together”

However, while Mercy Corps did not have any projects in South Ossetia or Abkhazia, World Vision indicated that they used to have a school rehabilitation project in Abkhazia, and Save the Children sponsored a version of Sesame Street that was aimed at reducing stereotypes. This included a version in Russian for use in Abkhazia, a Georgian version for Georgia, and Armenian and Azeri versions to for use in Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as in the minority areas of Georgia. In addition, according to Kellie Hynes, Deputy Director, Save the Children also had a HIV/Aids program that extended into Abkhazia because of the increase in IV drug use. Thus regardless of whether their projects were directly implemented in one of the recognized conflict areas or inside Georgia, all of the agencies I talked to worked in the conflict context.

The director of the Georgian Office of the International Crisis Group (ICG), Dr. Sabine Frener, indicated that she found overall communication with different NGOs working in Georgia particularly difficult in spite of the fact that the mission of ICG was to make an impact by distributing conflict analysis reports to the local actors. According to Frener in the areas of South Ossetia and Abkhazia where international development and other NGOs and agencies had a smaller presence, more coordination was taking place.

“We try to impact by distributing our report as widely as possible but we had communication problems with the international NGOs working in Georgia. Everyone is doing their own work it is hard to reach out since they are generally disconnected even when they work in the same area on essentially the same issues. There was some effort to do some type of coordination among NGOs but it was not really done in the end. There are almost no NGOs working in South Ossetia and all the coordination is done by OSCE with Ossetians, Russian and Georgian involvement. Similarly in Abkhazia UNDP has taken upon itself the coordination role and there is no duplication. The Norwegian Refugee Council and the Danish refugee Council are very effective in coordinating among themselves the refugee relief efforts”.

The lack of coordination among agencies is not unique in the context of a developing country that is in the midst of significant economic reforms. However the context of existing Georgian conflicts and ethnic tensions suggests that the NGOs operating in this environment are more likely to produce negative contributions and

indeed to cause Harm. In my interview with the Georgian State Minister for Conflict Resolution, Mr Georgi Khaindrava, I asked him whether his office worked together with any of the international development NGOs and about his perception of the impact these NGOs had on the conflict situation. His reply indicated that he saw no link between his office and the NGOs doing development. He also indicated that multiplicity of actors creates the known problem of undelivered results and unanswered expectations.

In terms of how I see the role of the international NGOs and particularly development NGOs we welcome them. The revolution was carried out by the civil society and we now have a special coordination commission that works with the different NGOs. The main problem is that there are too many of them and they don't always deliver realistic results. But in general economics is not my sphere and we are not responsible for the economic development, there is a separate ministry for that. On the other hand all the peace related activities such as dialogue, building trust, social education it is easier to do through NGOs as we only have 12 people working here. But I do not think that developments NGOs are doing that.

All of my interviewees, aside from Mr. Georgi Khaindrava, generally agreed that regardless of where their programs were implemented, there were three areas where conflict was part of daily interactions—South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe Javakheti. In my interview with Mr. Khaindrava, he seemed to be adamant that Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti should not be called conflict areas. He felt quite infuriated with international NGOs (and the European Commission) who have been paying particular attention to those areas. According to Khaindrava, the only areas that he as a minister works to address are Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. Throughout the entire interview the area of South Ossetia was referred to as the Tskhinvali region. Using the name of the capital to refer to this area is a common way Georgians indicate that they do not see it as an autonomous entity.

“The Kvemo Kartli region which has a large Azeri population and the Samtskhe-Javakheti which is mainly Armenian are not officially recognized as conflict area. In the regions of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti the Azeri and Armenian minorities are the majority. Until the end of the Shevarnadze 23 of November 2003 they did not deal with the question of minorities. The main problem there is the lack of language and we do not have a communication. There has not been any development of the regions and there are serious infrastructure problems. However, we do not have conflict with Azeri and Armenian; these are social problems and should be treated as such. The regions are not

part of our mandate since the only conflicts we have in the country are that in the Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali regions. In terms of the departure of Russian basis from the Samkhke Javakheti region if the local population learns Georgian they will have no problems with regards to jobs. We are planning to have Georgian bases replace the Russian and there will be jobs associated with that and the produce as well will be bought from the area”⁹⁶.

A Request for Applications (RFA) came from the USAID shortly before my departure that asked for project submissions from Georgian based NGOs that would deal with minority areas. While, attending meetings with regards to this RFA, I was told during an informal conversation that the Georgian NGOs were making a coalition that would essentially exclude any conflict resolution based organization and will focus on providing language programs for minorities instead. It seemed that the official vision of how minorities should be dealt with is shared by many local NGOs as well as USAID.

World Vision carries out a relatively large project in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti aimed specifically at reducing ethnic tensions among youth in the areas by establishing youth centers that provide computer courses, business and civic education courses, arts and crafts classes and sports. According to the organization the objective of the project is “to combat the increasing trend toward the ethnization of conflicts among Georgian citizens in Samstkhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli.”⁹⁷ The description of the project and my conversation with the Georgian project officer in the project raised some questions with regards to quality of the project in terms of its conflict management capacity and staff sensitivities to the issues. Yet overall, this was the only development agency that was willing not only to acknowledge the existence of ethnic tensions in the area, but also try to incorporate conflict mitigation component into its work in that context. The youth centers did not actually provide a space for youth to discuss their grievances and were not ethnically mixed. Instead, they assumed that through providing the youths with various enrichment programs and to a lesser extent training in conflict resolution theory, the ethnic tensions in the area will be addressed and tolerance will increase. Salome, a Georgian project officer from World Vision explained to me how she felt about the situation in the area:

⁹⁶ Exert from my interview with Mr. Khaindrava

⁹⁷ <http://georgia.worldvision.org>

I work with youth in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions and the conflict there is not ethnic but rather political. Just recently we had an incident where a group of Azeri youth from Akhalkalaki area went to an Orthodox Church in Armenian area and started a fight. The US model will not work in Georgian case as these people do not consider themselves Georgians and Georgians certainly not consider them to be Georgians. They are connected to closely to their historical homeland and want to keep their ethnicity to themselves. It is true that Georgia need to make them feel like citizens, they have terrible road conditions and communities are very poor and the government does not allocate any resources to improve it. People do not feel like they are living together. In Soviet Union they knew where they belonged. After the split the minorities decided that they feel closer to their country of origins rather than Georgia... The problem is that the policy of the government is that the minorities should not be granted language rights now because this will cause further alienation. I believe it is true. We should not grant the rights now anyway it would mean changing the constitution. The Georgian government made it clear that no body can have a state job of they are not fluent in Georgian or able to get University degree in state Universities. Language means acknowledgement of culture in which you live.

(Continue next page)

World Vision decided to do these projects with rural youth because the situation in the villages is very bad. In Kvemo Kartli where there are large percentage of Azeri minority we have 2 youth centers and in Samtskhe-Javakheti where the majority of the population is Armenian we have 4 youth centers. In these youth centers we provide computer courses, business and civic education courses, arts and crafts classes and sports. In Marneuli we also have a children's circus. We do not have a lot of activities that attempt to connect between the centers and between the youth from different backgrounds but as part of the civic education course we have offered conflict prevention and resolution training. One was aimed at Azeri youth from Marneuli and the other for Georgian youth from Azerbaijan. Also when we had youth camps we ended up having mixed couples. Art classes offer a better understanding of the united religious symbols and culture and ability to get to know each other and accept differences. The youth that go through these projects are more able to find a job because of the business and language classes. You have to understand that there is a huge problem of unemployment in these villages and among the youth who are not in schools. Somebody drops an ethnic line and all of the sudden they all have something to do. The youth clubs provide for them a different atmosphere where they can do something.

This project also has a lot of difficulties. First we are dealing with the parents who are not very supportive. They often see the youth centers as a threat to their culture especially since World Vision has a Christian association with it. We also have difficulty with Georgian communities in the area who complain why we invest in minorities and not instead offer English classes to their youth. But the most problems we get from the government. The local government is not supportive and it is very hard to get any needed documentation or anything else.

In general, all of the interviewees were very familiar with the conflict sensitive framework. Most had participated in Do No Harm training and some NGOs included Do No Harm as part of the core values. Nonetheless five main arguments emerged

repeatedly on why conflict sensitive approaches could not be actively incorporated into the programs or why the organization could not contribute to conflict resolution as part of their development work. These arguments were as follows: 1) The organization lacked time and capacities to be able to actively contribute to conflict reduction or implement conflict sensitive frameworks (UNDP, Save the Children); 2) The population had needs that were much more basic such as food security that had to be addressed immediately and they were not interested in conflict related programming and thus the NGOs could not and should not impose it on them (UNDP, Save the Children, Mercy Corps); 3) The mandate of the organization required that it be perceived as neutral and work with government officials and thus it could not afford to be perceived as meddling into the conflict dynamics without the explicit agreement of all sides (OSCE, UNDP); 4) It was difficult to measure progress in conflict reduction and thus hard to sell to donors (Save the Children, Mercy Corps); 5) The donors were not interested in these types of programs and the NGOs had to follow what the donors interests in order to receive funding and do good (Save the Children).

My discussion with the UNDP Program Manager to the Abkhazia Rehabilitation Program was particularly interesting as he genuinely felt that he made an active effort to implement conflict sensitive planning and even go one step further into actively contributing to conflict mitigation. However, he believed it became unrealistic because they lacked time and capacity, their mandate which required working with Georgian government and neutrality placed them in a difficult position, and there seemed to be no interest on the ground especially on the part of the local staff.

We tried to incorporate Do No Harm and we had an expert on conflict sensitive planning Anna Matveeva come and advice us on what we can do. We work in three districts in Abkhazia-- Gali, Ochamchira and Tqvarcheli and our projects try to help provide for basic needs. The rest of Abkhazia is under UNOMIG (United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia). Currently our main focus is on a rehabilitation initiation focuses on agriculture, health, water and sanitation, capacity-building for non-governmental organizations and coordination of rehabilitation efforts. The main conflict sensitive concerns would be distribution of resources among the provinces. In Gali there are 98% Georgians. We have been trying to work with local NGOs to bring Gali into the rest of Abkhazia. The rest of the areas are ethnically mixed with mostly majority Abkhazian and very tense relationships. We have sponsored multi ethnic camps and peace

education/mediation programs for Abkhazian ministers that taught them through games how to create a multi ethnic environment. But in reality it is too much to be able to bring all these lenses—bring Gali into things, create more links between districts, create more mixed ethnically working groups, it is all good on paper but when try to implement people do not want to do this and what can you do. For Abkhazians Georgians are the enemy and while it makes sense to have the IDPs return for Abkhazians this is the no no move. It is a joke to think that we can do something on the group beyond assisting in substantive farming. I would have liked to create more possibilities for communication, provide incentives to work together but you have to also remember that UN is in a difficult position; we have to work with the Government of Georgia so we can't be too involved in this type of things since our impartiality will be in question. We do not have a lot of interference from the Georgian government but it has been changing recently we began hearing stronger statements against the development in Abkhazia. It is not clear yet how much they would attempt to block our programs in the future.

Our projects are implemented first we do community assessment of needs and then priorities are selected by the communities based on criteria we provide. We try to do our work as transparent as possible and oversee how the money is distributed also in terms of ethnic divisions. But we work on many levels—district, through local NGOs, representatives of local authorities and we need to deal with problems quickly so we do make mistakes, there is no doubt of that.

Sven Holder from the OSCE indicated that, in a similar fashion to UNDP, the main reason for not sponsoring or implementing programs that would directly contribute to a reduction of conflict, or incorporating conflict sensitive planning into their existing projects, was mainly due to their concerns of being perceived by the sides as not neutral. When Sakaashvili presented the Road Map to peace in South Ossetia, the OSCE made an open declaration of support and stated that they were willing to assist the sides to implement the Road Map. This was an interesting move given that the plan was unilaterally presented by the Georgian side and rejected by the South Ossetians, and thus seemed to contradict the argument of neutrality.

In the last two years we have expanded our monitoring activities on the Russian-South Ossetian/ Georgian border. This is the main mandate of the OSCE is in South Ossetia and monitoring the situation. We have 10 observers. In Abkhazia it is the UN. I work in the human dimensions office and the work includes Rule of Law, Democratization and Freedom of the Media program. The development of democratic mandate is dependent on agreements with the government. The Special Representative on National Minorities is now trying to help with the language programs. Our major success in the country has been the observing of elections in 2003 and announcing that it was fraud. The long term goal in Georgia should be a state based on a rule of law. In South Ossetia there is not much progress. In Pankisi Gorge where Russia accused Georgia in military activities supporting the Chechens OSCE was able to show that this was not the case.

Our mandate is more conflict management from above but there is a need to connect much more the economic development activities in the area with conflict management within local population. We do not officially incorporate any particular theories around conflict sensitive approaches so it is hard to say how we are conflict sensitive. It depends on the context and the individual actors with whom we work. I guess we probably have both positive and negative effects. In South Ossetia we often have to deal with radicals who are in union with Russia. We need to be perceived as neutral in their eyes, as a facilitator and as working with communities on all sides without a political agenda.

Finally, Kellie Hynes from Save the Children made all five arguments as to why projects were not incorporating conflict sensitive planning, let alone actively contributing to the reduction of conflict. Save the Children ran a BP funded Small Grants Programme in Kvemo Kartli and Samskhe Javakheti in a partnership with a local NGO⁹⁸ that had a strong environmental component to it. As mentioned earlier, they also had a HIV/Aids project in Abkhazia and an extensive program aimed at deinstitutionalizing orphan children in urban areas in Georgia.

Save the Children projects are partly funded by BP particularly in Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. The staff that works in these areas comes back with different stories of non cooperation. We try not to inflame the situation specifically in the cross section projects but these projects are not targeted to deal with these issues. Georgians say that there is no conflict internally with minorities and that it is the donors who are creating the problems by placing an emphasis on these issues. Georgians need to put things in boxes because you can tell by the Georgian surnames where the person is from, rich or poor and that is very frustrating. There is a general support if the public for having one's ethnicity listed in the passport or ids. People feel close to the national heritage and when the press comes out and states that this and this was done by an Armenian or an Azeri it feeds the stereotypes.

Our best project so far had to do with street children and orphans. The main problem with implementing anything that would directly increase tolerance in the education system or address ethnic tensions is that it is hard to measure impact. How would you measure whether the children are more tolerant? There has to be work done with families then as well but then there is lack of interest.

We are donor driven to a large extent and if USAID has another agenda even if we have a good idea on how we could potentially contribute to conflict mitigation it is hard to do. Conflict sensitive agenda is difficult to sell to donors as it would have to be depoliticized. This is why the Georgian Ministry of Agriculture is very unhappy about EC agenda in their RFA on poverty reduction which involves agricultural projects that attempt to have conflict sensitive lenses.

Also, our programs try to be sensitive to what communities think their needs are and it is hard to make your agenda (meaning conflict sensitive) meet what communities see

⁹⁸ More information can be found at <http://www.assistancegeorgia.org.ge>

their needs to be. Many people in the communities we work now are worried about their daily survival and ability to provide basic needs.

Contrary to Kellie's and others' arguments regarding the difficulty of monitoring and evaluating success in conflict sensitive planning, World Vision had actually made an effort to implement a participatory monitoring and evaluation framework which included specific indicators for that purpose. They established a separate unit exclusively for monitoring and evaluation not long before I arrived in the country, and they hired a Georgian director who was solely responsible for overseeing this process. They were trying to adopt a framework for participatory monitoring and evaluation called LEAP⁹⁹ that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative indicators, and seemed much more advanced than frameworks used by other NGOs. While discussing youth center projects, Salome described how she was able to see the results of conflict reduction through monitoring:

The monitoring is done by using indicators and we saw improvement in language capacities as well as employment. We even see improvement in levels of violence and conflict in communities as a result of the youth centers which were indicated by the amount of incidents as well as from the feedback we received from teachers and peer leaders.

An interesting component of conflict sensitive planning is having an ethnically mixed staff. This seems especially important in a context where majority/minority relationships are tense and in this case there is a lack of trust between minorities and ethnic Georgians. The fact that one of the main causes of tension is the lack of knowledge of the Georgian language means that if staff does not speak Azeri or Armenian their only common language is Russian which reinforces mutual feelings of alienation. Of all the organizations I came across in Georgia and interviewed, only World Vision made an active effort to recruit ethnically mixed staff. Salome described the staff working in youth projects as follows:

We have an ethnically mixed staff working in these youth centers. There are 14 employees in each youth center who are Georgians, Russians, Armenians and Azeri. We have ethnically Armenian Georgian teaching Georgian language in Azeri youth center. In

⁹⁹ LEAP stands for Learning through evaluation with accountability and planning. Further information can be found at LEAP summary edition May 2005

Marneuli we have 2 Russians, 4 Georgians, 1 Armenian and 7 Azeri. All of them are local from the area. We have to do monitoring all the time of our projects and we have had several trainings on that.

When describing the staff who worked in Abkhazia, the program director of UNDP expressed an open frustration of the fact that it was difficult to change attitudes and perceptions of the local staff working in Abkhazia. In spite of conflict sensitive training, the staff seemed uninterested in working across ethnic lines.

...Our assistant is Russian. The Abkhazian people who went through the conflict sensitive training it was clear that they are all very nationalistic. But the facilitators tried to challenge them to work with people from different background. In Gali all the staff is Georgian. They don't intermix beyond what is required.

On the other hand, in Mercy Corps the local staff told me that there were no qualified Azeri or Armenian people to work in the communities.

IV. Working with Mercy Corps Georgia:

In 2004, after several mutual projects, Mercy Corps (MC), a humanitarian/development agency, merged with Conflict Management Group (CMG) a non profit organization specializing in conflict transformation and training skills. The merger between the two organizations was a unique opportunity to create partnerships between development and conflict resolution practitioners that would be able to address the root causes of conflict and poverty more effectively. Mercy Corps was founded in 1979 and since then has worked to alleviate poverty and oppression through community development, mobilization, reconstruction, micro credit projects, and environment and empowerment projects. It has a strong civil society unit and its programs state that they uphold the values of participation, transparency, and peaceful change¹⁰⁰. Before the merger, CMG led numerous training sessions with influential Georgian and Ossetian officials in an attempt to provide skills that would contribute to better conflict management. Since the merger, CMG has not had direct projects in Georgia and has not implemented any type of conflict sensitive training for MC staff in the country. While MC did not have direct programs in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, it worked with the

¹⁰⁰ www.mercycorps.org

communities along the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline who were ethnically and linguistically mixed. As expected, the challenges faced by the staff in their community mobilization work had clear conflict related connotations. These included the local population's lack of trust and fear of authorities, stereotypes that needed to be recognized by all sides, a particularly poor allocation of resources to minority populated areas, and a lack of educational opportunities among other problems. Thus, to effectively improve the livelihood options of these communities the process oriented approach to mobilization and empowerment implemented by MC had to take into consideration conflict sensitive lenses to be able to deal with the root causes of the problems faced by these communities.

In my work with Mercy Corps in Georgia, one of my tasks was advising management on how to incorporate better conflict sensitive approaches to the programming. In that role, I conducted a series of focus groups which culminated in training for local staff on conflict sensitive planning. The training had two immediate objectives. The first was to provide space for the staff to begin self reflection on how their values, perceptions, and stereotypes can affect the impact of their work with multiethnic communities. The second objective was to provide tools for analyzing relationships, power dynamics and community issues in order to improve the impact in the field of MC's work. Accordingly, the first half of the workshop was planned to be spent on discussing identity, values, and perceptions. During the second half of the workshop, the staffs were to be presented with a mapping technique for analysis of relationships, power dynamics, and areas of tension within their communities, and were asked to use it to map communities where they have faced difficulties. The premise of the Do No Harm framework was then explained to participants who were asked to analyze connections, dividers, and the impact of their work in these communities.

The staff members I worked with were community mobilizers in multiyear projects that were based on the CDD framework. The goal of these projects was to promote sustainable social and environmental development for the communities to produce a harmonious environment for BP operations.¹⁰¹ Mercy Corps utilizes a process oriented approach for mobilization and empowerment. The particular project sought to improve

¹⁰¹ Internal project proposal for CIP/ISP project Georgia, Mercy Corps

social service infrastructure and livelihood options through a partnership with local NGOs that utilized their technical expertise through an Action Planning Workshop that sought to identify needs, build consensus, mobilize resources and prioritize the community problems. In this process, community members were also required to choose a Community Initiative Group (CIG) consisting of 10-15 people who then participated in a series of mobilization cycles. In each cycle, they drafted proposals for projects (design, budget, implementation) and with the help of the mobilizers, worked stage by stage in achieving these projects. At each stage, the community is responsible for a certain contribution percentage which can be either financial or in-kind by volunteering labor, food and other resources. The contribution percentage from the community is required to grow with the progression of the project. The aim is to provide incentives for long term sustainability.

Based on a conversation with a Mercy Corp staff member its American headquarters, my initial assumption was that this was also a way to create connectors among members of the community. However, in my numerous field visits and conversations with staff members it became apparent that the way CIG members were selected was a direct result of the existing divisions in the communities based on ethnic tensions, pre-existing stereotypes, and income divisions. The process of electing CIG members, who lead the decision-making process, was the most difficult part of the project in all communities. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the communities in which the mobilizers were working were ethnically mixed and had villages that consisted of Azeri, Armenian, Greek, Russian minorities, all but one of the local staff were ethnically Georgian and could only communicate with the Georgian or Russian speaking population. This led to persistent mistrust and tensions from both community members and the staff towards the community members with whom they worked.

Following an exercise during training on different personal values and their implications for the day to day work of the staff, I asked the mobilizers to share what type of challenges they faced in communities. Below are several answers that were shared:

Inga "In many cases we work with communities and we only have general and statistical data and as a result their first attitudes towards us is "what these people want from us". We need to find better ways to break their first perceptions".

Lavros: When we enter a community we usually approach the school teachers to help us gather information and get other community members involved as school teachers enjoy special respect in communities. But when we first started working with an Azeri village and we tried to gather other people through the teachers we were surprised to discover when no one showed up. Later we realized that in Azeri tradition it is the elderly and not necessarily the teachers who enjoy a special respect from the community members and because we did not speak to the elderly no one showed up to our meeting.

Maya: We face distrust everywhere and we need to understand different values in order to be able to do our work.

Lavros: In one of the Svaneti villages after we identified the priorities we still did not get cooperation of the members until we realized that there was a specific cultural understanding around water resources that had to be prioritized.

Nino: People talked with different dialect in the highland and when we began working there we did not pay a particular attention to these differences. But after few meetings we could not understand why there was a lack of participation and everyone just nodded their heads instead of really responding to us. Then after talking privately with some members we realized that we simply needed to talk more slowly because they did not understand what we were saying. So we learned to adopt our way of talking to their dialect. The lesson is the need to be aware of language differences even among Georgians so need to learn associations and meanings of different dialects and also important to do cross visits among communities to have them share experiences and create links.

Gela: In the project with BP as a donor there was a problem with perception and expectation among the communities towards BP. They expected BP to simply provide resources without the communities having to do anything in return. It was much harder to get community contribution because of that and the mobilizers had to work hard to break stereotypes associated with BP.

The staff were then introduced to the LCP framework and asked to work together in identifying connectors and dividers in their projects. Examples of connectors were:

In Nadarbazeve community:

- cultural traditions around the Orthodox religion
- Location of the village near the highway united the community around selling of fruits
- School (Primary)
- Library

- Shops
 - The people have all migrated from highlands including transplanting of deceased
 - Fields
 - Irrigation system
 - Shared Water Tap
 - Roads
 - Small village only 80 households and have fairly close relationships
 - Lake (private) but used for fishing and a source of food/ activity for community
- 19th Microrayon:*
- Common religion Orthodox
 - 2 individuals who have become conflict mitigators
 - local NGO which was trained by MC to neutralize conflicts
 - School and kinder garden rehabilitated by MC
 - Rehabilitated infrastructure (yards)

The dividers or sources of tension were identified as well by a group working in an Azeri community as follows:

Karataglā (Azeri):

- Religion (Shiite, Islam) versus Orthodox religion of the neighbors
- School (in the process of construction by MC)—both a source of tension because of the fact that they did not have school funding from the government and the process have taken very long. Also a source of connection since a lot of people have participated in building it
- Lack of resources and poverty in the community
- Poor elderly mostly left by their children who work in Russia
- Lack of educational opportunities
- Language

In the same community the connectors were:

- Culture—Muslim traditions and holidays and Azeri culture is a connector
- Cattle breeding and vegetable growing as the main source of income
- Ambulatory
- Elderly people as problem solvers
- Informal community gatherings

Overall, in this particular training the staff participation was somewhat reserved. On several occasions during the training, time needed to be spent to clarify the objectives of the training and their importance. The internal tensions between local staff and expatriate management resulted in the feeling of staff that the workshop was imposed from above.

This was in spite of my attempts in the two months prior to this training to establish trust and understand the needs of the staff on the ground through my field visits and discussions. To enable a more staff sensitive training, I asked a senior mobilizer to lead a portion of the training in Georgian that had been prepared by both of us. Nevertheless, the suspicion and lack of enthusiasm in participating in the workshop was apparent.

The management was aware of some of the ethnic based tensions between the staff and communities and wanted the workshop to include a discussion on the role of stereotypes. However, when discussing identity during the first part of the day, there had been a sense of open resistance to the idea of recognizing diversity as an important aspect of the work. For example, in the middle of a heated discussion on identity several participants were trying to convince the facilitators that in Georgia there is one set of traditions and values and only one religion that unites the country as a whole. They argued that everyone around the table had the same perceptions on all of the above. There was a general reluctance among other members of the staff to dispute this argument. This was in spite of the fact that among the staff there were at least two different religions represented and many more traditions, values and perceptions as the staff consisted of people from different parts of Georgia. It was difficult in the short time frame to address some of these issues of perceptions. Because of a lack of time, the stereotypes exercise had to be omitted. It was also apparent to me that being present in the organization for only three months was not enough time to fully understand the local context and to train staff in conflict sensitive planning, let alone try to do something about the conflict. The staffs were not outside this context and in fact reflected the many dimensions of conflict that existed within Georgia.

V. Conclusions:

In the case of the Mercy Corps staff, it was clear that short term training was not going to have a real impact. Only a more in-depth and longer follow up would create a better understanding of tolerance towards diversity and consequently impact their work with communities. The experiences in Mercy Corps with regards to conflict sensitive work were similar to that of other development agencies I interviewed. While the expatriate management was interested in actively supporting staff training, the staff felt

that this was imposed on them and showed little interest in the training and even less in trying to implement their work differently. The staffs were not ethnically mixed and ethnic tensions within the organization between one Azeri employee and the rest of the ethnically Georgian staff reflected the tensions in the country. While Mercy Corps subscribed to Do No Harm as one of its guiding principles, there was no evidence that conflict analysis was implemented as part of the planning process and there was no proper monitoring and evaluation work performed even on the indicators that directly related to the project. There was a sense of resistance to include indicators of a qualitative nature because of the argument that they did not have ability or resources to measure them. In addition, just like in Save the Children or UNDP, the staff of Mercy Corps argued that the communities they worked in had immediate needs such as rehabilitation of schools and development of sustainable agriculture that would enable them to have food on the table and they did not want, nor could they afford, to waste time and resources on issues that were not of a direct and immediate concern to people. Thus, even an organization whose upper management has officially embraced the conflict management and development framework has not able to make the necessary adjustments from within, at least not yet.

Chapter 3

Conflict Sensitive Development—Understanding the Reality Gap

The case study of Georgia illustrated that many development agencies choose not to perform conflict sensitive planning despite management understanding the importance of the link between development and conflict and prior experience in Do No Harm training. Even fewer agencies choose to actively contribute to conflict transformation. Common arguments for not doing so are that they do not work on conflict related issues, lack the time and capacity, different perceptions of the needs and priorities on the ground or that they lack the mandate or donor support. We could attempt to convince them that it is in their long term interest to invest in conflict sensitive planning and work towards conflict resolution and transformation. Yet most of these folks are already convinced. So why do most of them not invest the resources and attempt harder to overcome the difficulties? And what makes some try harder and others give up when faced with other priorities?

There appears to be underlying structural reasons that make most development agencies distance themselves from the conflict agenda. These structural reasons include differences in personal ethics and values that guide the work of development agencies as well as questions surrounding accountability, lack of organizational incentives, and difficulty in instituting organizational change. Thus, instead of trying to convince the agencies of the merits of incorporating conflict sensitive development approaches, this chapter will explore the structural differences that might prevent some development organizations from incorporating conflict sensitive planning or actively pursuing a conflict management agenda. I will argue that in order to increase the possibility of real conflict sensitive development occurring on the ground, there needs to be a discussion on whether conflict sensitive planning and strategy are compatible with the ethics, values, and culture of the particular agency. In addition, accountability mechanisms should include the development and integration of relevant indicators that would enable the learning process to take place. Incentives need to exist on all levels of an organization, including those that promote the hiring of multi ethnic staff that would act as an example

of coexistence and who would be sensitive and trained in conflict management. Finally, a process of organizational learning and change would need to take place.

I. Ethics & Culture:

A colleague from CMG who supervised my first three weeks of work with Mercy Corps/CMG before Georgia told me upon my return that he found it difficult to reconcile his perception of what it meant to engage in conflict management and what he was expected to do after the merger of the two organizations. *“I feel like my job here is to help them figure out how to better avoid dealing with conflicts”* he told me, *“I wanted to unite our resources in order to work more effectively to transform the conflict dynamics, instead I am asked in many of the field offices I visited to help implement Do No Harm which as far as I see implies for many of the development practitioners not touching anything related to conflict dynamics, this is very frustrating”*¹⁰². Another colleague who heads a University based center which engages art practitioners across different conflicts in mutual projects to promote coexistence responded in the following way when I shared the topic of this paper. She said that the cultures of the two fields were very different; development remained output and results oriented whereas conflict resolution was about the process of social change. In her opinion, the gap between these two organizational cultures was too wide to bridge. On the same question, Adil Najam who has both academic and practical field experience on negotiations/conflict resolution and development shared his opinion with me that Do No Harm had different meanings from a conflict resolution perspective than from a development perspective. This difference was central to understanding the reasons behind the challenges of working together¹⁰³—

People in development don't seriously think on what conflict sensitive approach means. The underlying assumptions are not contradictory but are not exactly the same. People in development work are arrogant in the sense that they assume that good development practice already includes conflict sensitivity and thus of course is ethical. What the conflict resolution people regards as an ethical behavior may not be what the development crowd thinks. In conflict arena the guiding principle of work is—be careful what you do and your foot print should be very small—don't think that you make things

¹⁰² CMG debrief meeting, September 2005, personal notes

¹⁰³ Based on my notes from an informal interview which I conducted with Dr. Adil Najam in March 2006. The quoted is his response to the question of what he thought were some of the difficulties in pursuing conflict sensitive development in terms of NGOs that haven't previously done so.

happen. Coming in the midst of conflict for conflict resolution people Do No Harm is the highest principle. For development it is the checklist. Do No harm in development is the least, the last box to check as oppose to the first box to check.

Najam also argued that development practitioners tend to see conflict only when it prevented them from doing their work. Accordingly, un-manifested conflict is not considered to be a conflict. Conflict in this sense has a direct negative connotation to it which is different than the approach taken by conflict resolution practitioners for whom conflict is neither negative nor positive. Conflict resolution assumes that only constructive engagement on all different levels of the conflict which work to improve human relationships in society in the long term prevent conflicts from escalating to violence¹⁰⁴. While my interviews in Georgia showed that at least at the management level, development NGOs did perceive areas where “un-manifested” conflict was indeed a conflict, this was not the case for local staff. However the local staff were also part of the structural political and social reality that produced the conflict originally. If however we assume that Najam’s observation holds true, then of course that is a direct contradiction to the basic assumption of the conflict resolution field that conflict has many levels of manifestation. Until they reach the escalatory stage, these different levels of manifestation might not be directly affecting development work on the ground at least in the short term. Structural violence which Uvin (1998) defined as “consisting of the combination of extreme inequality, social exclusion, and humiliation/assault on people’s dignity”¹⁰⁵ is an important example of “unmanifested conflict” and is particularly relevant to the situation of Georgian minorities within Georgia.

Given the arguments above, it is evident that at least one explanation for the underlying differences in the different ethical schools of thought to which the development agencies belong is the overarching principles, priorities and codes of conduct to which they choose to subscribe. Hammock argued that ethics—“the application of reason to moral choices”¹⁰⁶ —is central to understand the ways in which

¹⁰⁴ Babbitt E. Eileen *Principles Peace, Mapping The International Conflict Resolution Terrain*, Chapter 2 Unpublished, used with the permission from the author

¹⁰⁵ Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. Kumarian Press (1998)

¹⁰⁶ Hammock, John. “Ethics of NGOs and Humanitarian Aid”, The Fletcher School, (2005), Unpublished Draft, used with the permission of the author.

development and humanitarian agencies, and the individuals working in them, make choices on how to behave. According to Hammock, agencies and the individuals working in them are guided by their choice of ethical framework and derive the codes of conduct and organizational principles that guide their actions and organizational culture from these frameworks. Hammock outlined four western ethical approaches. The first is what he called “duty-based ethics” which means a belief in a duty, or the intention to act in any given situation because you would have expected others to do the same if you were in this situation. Rooted in Emmanuel Kant’s principle of categorical imperative, when translated into the humanitarian/development field it implies that the ethics of organization’s action call for the duty to respond and follow its good intentions. The humanitarian imperative for action can be seen in the principle of “emergency responses” that many development agencies consider of great importance. For example Mercy Corps states that “our spiritual and humanitarian values compel us to act”¹⁰⁷. Mercy Corps then lists three ways in which it pursues its mission. The first of the three is “emergency relief services that assist people afflicted by conflict or disaster”. This is followed by sustainable economic development and the third on the list is civil society initiatives. We could infer that Mercy Corps in its core principles is guided by the humanitarian imperative to act and the intent to act is what matters the most - it is the priority. If this is indeed the case, then the culture of the organization and its priorities is such that it would place more emphasis on doing rather than on consequences of its action. This would make incorporating Do No Harm, conflict sensitive planning, and taking active steps towards conflict transformation difficult as it would clash with the basic underlying motivation for action.

The second ethical approach is what Hammock called “consequentialist ethics.” It is utilitarian—based on the assumption that there is no duty to act in a certain way but rather requires us to ask us in any given situation the consequences of our action. The decision is based on what is the best thing to do for the most people through an analysis of the results of one’s actions. According to Hammock, translated into the development and humanitarian field it would imply a “humanitarian impulse” or “figuring out how to

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.mercycorps.org/aboutus/overview>

channel the humanitarian impulse so that the results of the action benefit the most people—or at least do the least harm”¹⁰⁸. A good example of the organization that defines its mission based on the consequentialist ethical framework is Collaborative for Development Action and within it the Do No Harm project. The mission of the project is defined in wording that implies the importance of measuring the consequences of development action against the common good (overall conflict situation in the society). *“The Do No Harm Project seeks 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”*¹⁰⁹.

The third ethical framework is “virtue ethics” which stem from Aristotle. The principle of virtue ethics is “determining what idea virtues (human traits) are and living your life as if to meet this ideal”¹¹⁰. According to Hammock virtue ethics rejects duty based ethics and consequentialist ethics because of its focus of the common good and instead emphasizes the personal development and achievement of meaningful life. Translated to humanitarian and development field, this is the adherence to a code of personal conduct that spell out ethical behavior based on what is considered to be essential for the achievement of a good life. A good example of this is the code of conduct developed by International Alert (IA). According to the organization, the aim of the code of conduct is indeed “to provide an ethical framework for conflict transformation work”¹¹¹. This code of conduct begins with a definition of peace as commitment to a “just and lasting settlement” and includes ten guiding principles (primacy of people in transforming conflicts; humanitarian concern; human rights and humanitarian law; respect for gender and cultural diversity; impartiality; independence; accountability; confidentiality; partnership and institutional learning). Numerous other

¹⁰⁸ Hammock, John. “Ethics of NGOs and Humanitarian Aid”, The Fletcher School, (2005), Unpublished Draft, used with the permission of the author.

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.cdainc.com/dnh/>

¹¹⁰ Hammock, John. “Ethics of NGOs and Humanitarian Aid”, The Fletcher School, (2005), Unpublished Draft, used with the permission of the author

¹¹¹ International Alert. Code of Conduct, <http://www.international-alert.org/>

conflict resolution and human rights based agencies chose to subscribe or adopt this code of conduct. IA, among its other activities, invests in training various development and humanitarian agencies in conflict analysis and conflict management skills. Yet, the ability on the recipient side to fully embrace the conflict management framework offered by IA and adopt it into their day to day work, would likely depend on the compatibility of the ethical codes translated into their organizational culture. For example the meaning of impartiality for IA is specified as “impartial in as far as we conduct our work among different conflict parties, we are not neutral in terms of the principles and values we adhere to which we must in appropriate ways work to advance at all times”¹¹². An organization that is guided first and foremost by duty ethics and perhaps thus believes that it can be neutral towards all parties in the name of helping will probably find it difficult to work together with IA and embrace its ideology. World Vision, on the other hand, can also be viewed as guided by a virtue ethics based approach which is focused on Christian beliefs that emphasizes personal development. Their mission reads “*We are a Christian relief and development organization dedicated to helping children and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty. We serve the world's poor— regardless of a person's religion, race, ethnicity, or gender*”.¹¹³ While very different to the type of work IA and World Vision carry out, their common frame of reference is more likely to enable a better partnership. It is not surprising that World Vision has indeed been able to be more proactive than some of the other development and humanitarian agencies in incorporating conflict lenses into their projects as well as into their monitoring and evaluation mechanisms without as much of a clash from the staff.

The fourth ethical framework of reference is “feminist ethics.” Feminist ethics emphasizes relationships, responsibility for others, and care. According to Hammock the implication of this framework of reference is that ethical judgments are always relational and contextual and require an understanding of identities in addition to the relationships and socio- economic, cultural and political context. It seeks to challenge conventional

¹¹² *International Alert*. Code of Conduct, Conflict Transformation Work <http://www.international-alert.org/> (accessed in February 2006)

¹¹³ www.worldvision.org

power dynamics. According to Hammock, it approximates virtue ethics more than any other ethical framework. World Vision describes the way it serves its mission emphasizing relationship building as their core principle—

“Relationships are the starting point and the end goal of World Vision’s work. Through relationships with community leaders, World Vision’s staff help communities set goals that families can achieve by working together. By our demonstration of God’s love through our work, we hope that people will experience life in all its fullness”.

It is probably true to say that the majority of the conflict resolution and peace building agencies working on the track two levels subscribe to this frame of reference. The ethical frame of reference of organizations, and the individuals working within them, is relevant to address the question of whether principles of conflict resolution are compatible with the principles of development. According to Hammock¹¹⁴, the principles of humanitarian and development NGOs can include: neutrality, impartiality, solidarity, empowerment, transparency, independence, humanity, non partisan and/or a-political, universality, accountability, proportional, subsidiarity of sovereignty, and/or excellence. Each of these principles has different meanings for different organizations. On first glance, none of the above principles, with the exception of perhaps neutrality, appear to clash with the principles of conflict resolution, and in fact some such as empowerment are quite similar. However this depends greatly on the interpretation of these principles by NGOs. According to Babbitt¹¹⁵, there are eight normative principles that guide the practice of the conflict resolution movement (on track 2): meaningful participation, inclusion, empowerment, equity, benefit to all, repository of trust, forum for dialogue and fairness.

The first of these-- *meaningful participation* implies that decisions are made with input from relevant stakeholders. The second principle according to Babbitt is *inclusion* of as many stakeholders as possible. This is based on the assumption that those left outside of the process can become “spoilers” and thus undermine the process or

¹¹⁴ Hammock, John. “Ethics of NGOs and Humanitarian Aid”, The Fletcher School, (2005), Unpublished Draft, used with the permission of the author.

¹¹⁵ Babbitt E. Eileen *Principles Peace, Mapping The International Conflict Resolution Terrain*, Chapter 2 Unpublished, used with the permission from the author

agreement achieved by others. While Babbitt asserts that this is a normative principle, some might disagree with her. In a recent workshop I attended for conflict resolution practitioners, there was no common understanding on who should be included or excluded from conflict resolution processes. For example, some advocated that anyone who supports violence should be excluded. Nevertheless, while the context and interpretations of the principles of inclusion and meaningful participation may vary, they certainly go hand in hand with similar principles in participatory development approaches. On the other hand, while a subject of debate in the conflict resolution field, the merits of inclusion or exclusion of certain actors based on their political agenda is not part of the development discourse. This is partly because many development organizations subscribe to the standards of neutrality. The analysis of actors and the question of their inclusion are central both to Do No Harm and other conflict sensitive frameworks, and the conflict resolution work as a whole. The ability to implement conflict sensitive analysis requires a more in-depth exploration of the meaning of inclusion for both development and conflict resolution fields.

The third normative principle according to Babbitt is *empowerment*. Empowerment is thought to be achieved by conflict resolution practitioners through teaching, training, and coaching to maximize the capacities of parties. Empowerment can have different meanings for different development organizations, but it has become a central principle of participatory development work. For Mercy Corps, empowerment meant the process of community mobilization that allowed community members to make their own decisions on the prioritization of projects in their communities. This process was carried out by local Mercy Corp staff coaching community members. Mercy Corps also believed that meaningful community mobilization should involve the other two other principles mentioned above—participation and inclusion:

“Community Mobilization means ensuring that all sectors of the community participate in project selection and implementation in a meaningful way and are involved in all decisions as well as monitoring and evaluation”¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁶ Mercy Corps Project Proposal for CIP/ISP BTC Georgia 2002

Similarly, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the four elements of empowerment according to the World Bank are information, inclusion/participation, accountability, and local organizational capacities.¹¹⁷ The principle of empowerment is a unique intersection between conflict resolution and development. It could therefore be used as a basis to explore more meaningful cooperation between development and conflict resolution that would take into account their respective priorities.

The fourth normative principle according to Babbitt is *equity*. Equity implies that while acknowledging the differences in relative power, all parties should be treated with equal respect in the sense that practitioners should understand the needs and concerns of all sides. According to Babbitt, this creates a safe environment and enables protagonists to engage in a constructive problem solving discussion. While development agencies are indeed very concerned with satisfying the needs of communities, the understanding of which needs should be satisfied are different in conflict resolution and development, and will be discussed later in this chapter. Within the context of what equity means in conflict resolution development have not really dealt with these issues¹¹⁸.

The fifth norm suggested by Babbitt is *benefit to all*. The emphasis here is that the process and outcome of conflict resolution should be viewed as a win-win situation - beneficial to all sides rather than to one. In reality, I do not believe that this is applied in the field by conflict resolution practitioners. While the process of conflict resolution may strive to adhere to this principle, there are always stakeholders who see more or less benefits from participating whether because of differences in relative power or other reasons. Similarly, benefit to all is a normative principle for many development NGOs which is not easy to adhere to on the ground when many stakeholders are left out. In that sense, exploring the meaning of this principle for both sides and determining ways to improve its adherence may lead to a better understanding on how to make conflict sensitivity more appealing to communities and local staff. In addition, it can also enable

¹¹⁷ From 'Four elements of empowerment'

(<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/empowerment/whatis/elements.htm>). Also found in Strand, Arne., et al. "Community Driven Development in Contexts of Conflict. Concept Paper, ESSD, World Bank 2003

¹¹⁸ Feeney Patrecia, *Accountable Aid: Local Participation in Major Projects*. An Oxfam Publication, Oxfam GB 1998

mutual learning and improvement to take place on how to better adhere to this principle in both conflict resolution and development.

The sixth norm in conflict resolution is “to create a third-party presence that functions as a *repository of trust* for the parties in the conflict”¹¹⁹. This implies both developing a trusting relationship with the parties through adherence to standards of transparency, consistency, and integrity in the hope that by doing so the parties will begin trusting each other. Trust is another principle that is not necessarily part of development work on the ground. Although transparency and integrity are important principles, in development they usually have an attached monetary meaning. Several development NGO leaders interviewed in Georgia were concerned about how to improve the issue of trust in development. Improvement of trust in relationship of development NGOs with communities could also provide ideas for how to better address their concerns. In conflict resolution, one important way to establish trust with parties has been by having multi ethnic staff work together. This is an especially important lesson for development practice since conflict sensitive development can not take place without staff sensitivity to the issues at stake.

The two last normative principles outlined by Babbitt are construction of a *forum for dialogue*, and that the process and outcome are perceived to be *fair* in the eyes of the stakeholders. The forum for dialogue implies a creation of safe space where sustainable working relationships can be constructed between different parties. While an important priority for conflict resolution, it is rarely a priority in development. In the development field, principles such as democratic participation, informed choices, and quantifiable outcomes are deemed more important than creating relationships among parties. In fact, the investment of time and resources to create space to improve relationships among parties prolongs the work without assuring results which seems to undermine development objectives. There is no assured way to measure whether improved relationships improve the outcome and sustainability of development work. Instead this relies on a leap of faith. There is a need first to create space within development

¹¹⁹ Babbitt E. Eileen *Principles Peace, Mapping The International Conflict Resolution Terrain*, Chapter 2 Unpublished, used with the permission from the author

organizations to explore the question of why investing time and resources in creating a forum for dialogue within development work on the ground will benefit the specific projects being carried out. With regards to the principle that the process and the outcome be viewed as fair in the eyes of the stakeholders, rather than a normative principle it appears to me to be a desirable goal for both development and conflict resolution, and both need to find ways to achieve this, perhaps through better internal accountability and learning mechanisms.

The next step in examining the structural similarities and differences between development and conflict resolution, and thus their compatibility, is to look at the actual agreed upon codes of conduct. In the conflict resolution field, the only known code of conduct is the ten principles developed by IA which were discussed earlier in this chapter¹²⁰. In the humanitarian/development field, the most widely known codes of conduct are the Sphere standards which are relatively recent. The Sphere project was launched in 1997 by the Red Cross and Red Crescent with a group of humanitarian NGOs. The goal of the project was the establishment of minimum standards to be attained in disaster relief, which together with the humanitarian charter, constitute the “operational framework for accountability in disaster assistance efforts”¹²¹. The humanitarian charter calls upon states to be responsible for providing protection and assistance to its citizens. When states fail to provide protection and assistance, the charter compels them to open their doors to humanitarian organizations. There are two main parts to the Sphere standards. The first focuses on participation, monitoring, and evaluation and emphasizes the importance of the commitment to quality and accountability. The second part outlines minimum standards to be attained in disaster assistance in five sectors: water and sanitation, food aid, nutrition, shelter, and health services. The standards are quantifiable, detailed oriented, and include specific indicators to measure their attainability. For example, in nutrition and food aid it says that 2000 calories a day is the acceptable minimum.

¹²⁰ See: *International Alert*. Code of Conduct, Conflict Transformation Work <http://www.international-alert.org/>

¹²¹ The Sphere Project, www.sphereproject.org (last accessed April 2006)

The codes of conduct developed by Sphere and IA are both guided by the belief in the alleviation of human suffering out of profound humanitarian concern. Yet their approaches on how best humanitarian suffering can and should be alleviated are not the same. IA is driven by the “strive to protect the most fundamental human right of all-the right to life- by *addressing the root causes of conflicts and contributing to their peace and just transformation*”¹²². Sphere is driven by the belief that “those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore *a right to assistance*”¹²³. The scope of Sphere is much more specific and time bound. “Assistance” has limited objectives. Life with dignity implies assistance in five sectors that would satisfy the existential needs of the population. Addressing the “root causes of conflicts and just and peaceful transformation” is a process, with no specific beginning or end. These two approaches are different in their basic assumptions of the meaning of the ‘right to life’ and the responsibility of humanitarian action as a result of this meaning. My argument is not that development and conflict resolution should be guided by the same assumptions. Instead, it is that to be able to successfully embrace each other’s frame of reference, there is a need to understand these differences in order to provide a more complete way to address humanitarian concerns.

II. Values & Needs:

The ethics and principles of organizations determine their values and the philosophy¹²⁴. How do we understand what the ‘right to life’ means in development within the framework of the previous discussion? What are the underlying values that guide the development work and what are some of the tensions rooted within those values? This discussion is important to understand the origin of the difference in the perception of needs between development and conflict resolution. Des Gasper, who explored questions surrounding development ethics and values, asserted that development ethics is about choices with regards to values and strategies¹²⁵. He argued that the aim of

¹²² *International Alert*. Code of Conduct, Conflict Transformation Work <http://www.international-alert.org/>

¹²³ The Sphere Project, www.sphereproject.org (last accessed April 2006)

¹²⁴ Hammock, John. “Ethics of NGOs and Humanitarian Aid”, The Fletcher School, (2005), Unpublished Draft, used with the permission of the author.

¹²⁵ Des Gasper *The Ethics of Development, From Economism to Human Development*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd 2004

development as means for societal improvement is value relative. The path forward requires dialogue since the alternative is determination by power in which the winners are those with monetary power. Values that do not have monetary representation tend to be ignored. Similarly, Goutlet asserted that “achieving development is not a self-validating absolute goal but a relative good, desirable only with reference to a particular view of the meaning of life”¹²⁶. However according to Goutlet, all too often the fact that development is a means but not an end is forgotten—partly perhaps because the end is not clear.

The concept of human development established the understanding that the discussion of the ends should “draw its inspiration from the long-term goals of a society” and thus “development around people, not people around development”¹²⁷. In chapter one, I outlined the major trends in development thinking. In these trends, a long term conflict has existed between economists who advocate economic progress as the principle means on which development should focus, and humanists who advocate the social aspects of development. According to Goutlet, the need to accept the “lowest common denominator” that would bridge the differences among these conflicting perceptions of the meaning of development should result in the acceptance of two terms of references—*providing basic needs for all* and *fostering life*. However, these assume references to value terms that differed between those who offered to develop, and those who were on the recipient side. According to Goutlet, development still claims to be value free and bares the brand of ‘Western rationalism’—“no special mode exists which would enable one to speak non-ethnocentrically about development’s ultimate purposes”¹²⁸.

Goutlet asserted that development as a social change process places emphasis on quantitative indicators to measure productivity, output, literacy rate and occupational structure. However when it is assumed to be a goal, “development evokes an image of life deemed qualitatively better than its opposite, underdevelopment”¹²⁹. These qualitative images of life are often uncritically accepted. The question of what constitute good life for development practitioners is unclear. Although in developing countries the conditions of day to day living often appear to be less than what is considered to be

¹²⁶ Goutlet, Denis “Development Ethics: A Guide to Theory And Practice” New York : Apex Press ; London : Zed Books Ltd., c1995

¹²⁷ Human Development Report, 1992 in <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1992/en/>

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 13

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 13

desirable according to the Western standards, and thus require improvement, it has been observed that the interpersonal relationships in many of the communities living in conditions of poverty is more “closely attuned to satisfying human needs”¹³⁰. Goulet called it the “cruel choice” between achieving material wealth but neglecting life’s other meaning.

There are three common universal values which are desired by all individuals and societies, and which constitute what development claims to foster¹³¹. These values are life-sustenance, esteem, and freedom. Life sustenance as a value is illustrated by the universal goals of development such as eradication of diseases, and the prolonging of life expectancy. However, perceptions of life differ across communities and individuals. The voices of those who believe that life sustenance is in the hands of God or faith does not have a place in the development values and practices as we know them today.

Similarly esteem is a universal value that development seeks to foster based on the assumption that “every individual and every society seeks esteem, identity, dignity, respect, honor and recognition”¹³². Since material success including technological and scientific advances is a universally accepted measurement of wealth or development, as well as power, the need to achieve the universal self worth status explains the aspiration for development. On the other hand, there are many who resist the notion that self esteem of a country based on material status should define it as underdeveloped.

The third universal development value—freedom—is even more complex due to its variety of meanings. According to Goutlet “to regard freedom as a general goal of developed and non developed societies is not to assume, however, that all communities seek political freedom to govern themselves, or that all individuals wish to determine their own personal destinies”¹³³. While Goutlet asserted that it is the “freedom from, even if not a freedom for actualization of one’s self group,” the meaning of the value of freedom remains open for interpretations among the different development practices in the field. In the conclusion of his discussion of values, Goutlet stated that development posed value problems as much as underdevelopment because of the relativity of human

¹³⁰ Ibid, p.13

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 13

¹³² Ibid, p. 13

¹³³ Ibid, p. 13

fulfillment. The question on the meaning of a fulfilled human life in the development field therefore remains open. There is no ranking among the human goals of development –life substance, esteem and freedom.

The tension between western and non western based development values (and means to achieve them) is not unique to development, and although less prominent, it also exists in conflict resolution. For example Salem¹³⁴ argued that Western conflict resolution theory is influenced by the West's dominant position in the world. All successful “empires” develop an inherent interest in peace to preserve the status quo. According to Salem, conflict is necessary to build empires, and so up-and-coming areas of the world may need conflict to make progress. The idea of peace as good and conflict as bad is peculiar to the Christian worldview, and stems from the assumption that pain is bad and comfort is good. Thus they focus on the suffering caused by the conflict rather than the justice or morality of the cause. According to Salem, a serious wound is not worse than an injustice. Westerners have also internalized the value of teamwork and the costs of the prisoners' dilemma. But in more fragmented societies, life is more competitive and fewer teamwork examples exist.

Although both are guided by Western values, the assumptions underlying the factors that constitute human needs and how they should be satisfied differ between development and conflict resolution perspectives. In the development field, the Basic Human Needs theory developed in the 1970s as an alternative to the theory of development based on economic growth¹³⁵. It assumed a particular cluster of needs are unsatisfied by the poorest segments of society and include health, housing, education, and employment opportunities. There is also an emphasis on local and national self reliance, and on participation of non elites in the decision making processes¹³⁶. However, the main goal of development remained the achievement of economic welfare, improved material conditions for large numbers of people, technological efficiency, and institutional modernity. Accordingly, in order to achieve those needs scarce resources had to be targeted toward providing for the poorest as the first priority. Once the poor are fed,

¹³⁴ Salem, P.E. (1993). “A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective.” *Negotiation Journal*. Vol. 9, 361-369

¹³⁵ See chapter 1

¹³⁶ Des Gasper, *Ibid*, 13

housed, clothed and made healthy, they will be able to contribute more effectively towards achieving other development priorities.

The needs based development approach came under criticism from market liberals as well as those who believed that the ethical assumptions underlying the needs based approach might differ from the wishes of the recipients. The main critique of the needs based approach was the notion that simple models that use “descriptive-explanatory psychologies”¹³⁷ like the one utilized by Maslow (1954, 1970), do not capture the complexity of human behavior and motives. These models were interpreted as introducing a counter agenda to the development practice. According to Gasper, in response to these criticism economists such as Amarttha Sen and Frances Stewart “distanced themselves from psychological theories in terms of needs, and concentrated on clarifying the structure of needs ethics”¹³⁸. Len Doyal and Ian Gough in their book “A Theory of Human Need” (1991)¹³⁹ argued that needs should be discussed as universal goals rooted in interests rather than motivators or drivers. Drivers and motivators, according to Doyal and Gough, assumed a biological or human nature connection, or a genetic predisposition, However, human beings have a complex set of individual emotional and physical needs that interact in different ways without a pre-disposed hierarchy. There was no way according to Doyal and Gough to be able to predict the different emotional needs that are psychologically driven, and thus development should identify the needs that reflect basic aspirations of all humanity - a unifying normative framework of needs for fulfillment of human interests.

“Human needs, we argue, are neither subjective preferences best understood by each individual, nor static essences best understood by planners or party officials. They are universal and knowable, but our knowledge of them, and of the satisfiers necessary to meet them, is dynamic and open ended”¹⁴⁰.

The work of Amarttha Sen, who criticized the over emphasis of the needs based approach in the 1970s on commodities and consumption as oppose to lives, resulted in

¹³⁷ Des Gasper, Ibid 13

¹³⁸ Ibid, 13

¹³⁹ Len Doyal and Ian Gough. *A Theory of Human Need* (1991) The Guilford Press

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 16

the appearance of the Human Development approach in the 1990s¹⁴¹. The underlying assumption of Human Development approach is the importance of expanding human choices so that people can live their lives in accordance to their needs and interests. According to this assumption, in order to have choices people have to expand the things they can do in life—their capabilities. “The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community”¹⁴². Providing for those basic capabilities—access to appropriate health services, educations, alleviation from poverty, and participation—became the new mission of development agencies. The Millenium Development Goals “represent international commitment to meeting needs within the framework of human development”¹⁴³. Yet, the goals still to a large extent represent the basic physical and existential needs of human beings. Among the eight MDGs there is not one goal that would represent the need for security or the value of freedom from oppression, the meaning of the right to life or the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict, violence and injustice. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the MDGs represented the “lowest common denominator” that could be agreed upon¹⁴⁴. Regardless, as Uvin puts it, development aid has remained dominated by narrow economic-technical perspectives which do not make the connection between economic development and issues related to structural violence, racism and prejudices¹⁴⁵.

In his book, Goutlet¹⁴⁶ quoted Jeanne Hersh, a Swiss philosopher who asserted that human life includes mysterious tragic elements, and no degree of development can truly solve problems of identity and meaning. Yet, the ‘mysterious and tragic elements of life’ is exactly what the social/psychological theories of conflict management and transformation seeks to address and on which the needs based approach of conflict resolution is based. According to conflict resolution assumptions, many of the most

¹⁴¹ For more information see chapter 1

¹⁴² *United Nations Development Program*, UNDP : <http://hdr.undp.org/hd/> (accessed in April 2006)

¹⁴³ Poston, Mark. , Conway Tim. , Christiansen, Karin. *The Millennium Development Goals and the IDC: driving and framing the Committee’s work*. London, ODI, commissioned report by the IDC, released on 17th January 2003

¹⁴⁴ Goutlet, Ibid, 13

¹⁴⁵ Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. Kumarian Press (1998)

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 13

violent conflicts are often intractable and ongoing even after the major outbreak of violence has ceased. Societies in post-conflict situations have emotional needs which extend beyond the economic and civil reconstruction of the visible effects of war and violence. These include addressing mutual animosities, pervasive fears, grievances and injustices and mutual feelings of vengeance by different sides on the conflict divide. When not addressed, these needs threaten to rekindle the cycle of violence and topple the often shaky post-conflict security.

Among conflict resolution practitioners, there is a disagreement with regards to the centrality of the needs based approach to conflict. Advocates of the interests based approach stress that interests are in fact what motivate and drive people's actions, and instead of needs the practitioners to conflict management should focus to help actors to distinguish between interests and positions. "Interests motivate people; they are the silent movers behind the hubbub of positions...your interests are what caused you to decide."¹⁴⁷ The interests based approach to conflict management is perhaps more closely aligned with the needs based approach of development. First, this is due to the fact that interests based approach is not rooted in Maslow's pyramid assumptions which development has rejected. Second, interests could be narrowed down to a concrete set of basic goals, even if this has not been done. On the other hand, the socio-psychological school of thought in conflict resolution¹⁴⁸ is guided by the assumption that needs consist of a closed list of universal and non negotiable items that all people require and if not met will result in conflict. These needs are—security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity, and effective participation in the processes that determine conditions of security and identity, and other such developmental requirements.¹⁴⁹ In spite of the disagreement within the conflict resolution movement on where the emphasis should lie, the needs based approach is central to the practice of conflict management and transformation. Numerous schools of thoughts are built on it - problem solving workshops, dialogue, coexistence and so forth. Given the centrality of the needs based approaches in both development and conflict resolution fields, the different assumptions on what satisfaction

¹⁴⁷ Roger Fisher and William Ury, *GETTING TO YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving*, Second Edition, by Roger Fisher, William L. Ury, Bruce Patton (Editor) Penguin Books, 1981, 1991

¹⁴⁸ See reference to Burton and Azar in chapter 1

¹⁴⁹ John B. Burton, "Conflict Prevention as a Political System," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 6, no 1 (2001)

of needs mean are important to understand. It is one of the reasons of why development NGOs find it so difficult to incorporate conflict sensitive planning into their work. These differences and the means to bridge these differences can only be understood within the framework of the previous discussion on ethics, principles, codes of conduct and values.

III. Institutional Incentives:

The general lack of organizational incentives that would positively reward planning and implementation of projects that support peacebuilding efforts, constitute an additional structural factor that explains why most development agencies do not actively pursue the conflict agenda. A narrow definition of incentives is the rewards and penalties used to induce or deter a given behavior. Rewards are positive incentives and penalties are negative incentives¹⁵⁰. Incentives for peace are defined by Uvin as—

“ All purposeful uses of aid that strengthen the dynamics that favor peace, by influencing actors’ behaviors, by strengthening pro-peace actor’s capacities, by changing the relations between conflicting actors (ethnic groups, the state and civil society), and by influencing the social and economic environment in which conflict and peace dynamics take place”¹⁵¹.

Goutlet identified three types of mechanisms to create incentives in society. Subjective incentives have the ability to motivate people to respond to promised rewards or threatened penalties by, for example, creating solidarity around powerful ideas which galvanize people. CDA and Do No Harm urged development aid agencies to utilize their capacities to help create and support subjective incentives to promote the importance of local capacities for peace. The second mechanism to create incentives is Moral incentives which are non material honors and awards. Again, agencies could support moral incentives by rewarding local actors who serve as conflict mitigators or help to create meaningful connections among people across conflict lines. It could also create moral incentives internally by rewarding and honoring staff who work together across ethnic lines and reach out to understand the causes of conflict within the communities in which

¹⁵⁰ Goutlet, Ibid, 13

¹⁵¹ Uvin, Peter . “The Influence of Aid in Situations of Violent Conflict. A synthesis and a commentary on the lessons learned from case studies on the limits and scope for the use of development assistance incentives and disincentives for influencing conflict situations”. *Development Assistance Committee Informal Task Force On Conflict, Peace And Development Co-Operation*. Paris 1999

they work, and determine ways to constructively address their root causes. There are also objective incentives which are material benefits. Private sector companies often use stock options to increase the feeling of ownership and to motivate their staff to work harder. In this capacity the donor community could provide incentives for development aid that would work to reward funding based on the ability to show a positive impact on conflict related factors in the areas in which the agencies work.

Of course none of these three incentive mechanisms is utilized for conflict transformation. However, this does not simply mean that one can assign blame to development agencies and donors. According to Goutlet, the role of incentives in society is to promote change through social deviants or innovators by mirroring dominant values of the social system and reproducing that system's structures of production, power and wealth. Thus while agencies might have a certain space for consciously choosing how to create incentives, they function within a wider social structure framework and are often bound by its constraints. In addition, incentives for management systems are even more complex if we take into account the fact that ad hoc incentives are constantly created based on arising needs. Uni-dimensional incentives designed to create action will appear unpersuasive to actors if objective incentives don't match subjective incentives¹⁵². Taking into account this level of complexity, there is still a need to understand the role of incentives in development practice.

A useful analytical framework for the purpose of this discussion is provided by a report produced by SIDA¹⁵³ which identified the lack of incentives and the creation of perverse incentives generated by development aid itself as an important factor which undermines aid sustainability. According to Ostrom, the main author of the report, the lack of incentives discourages local actors from engaging in collective action that would enable them to achieve their common goals. This understanding is important when thinking through the arguments of some of the management staff in the development agencies in Georgia on why local staff and communities lack the motivation to engage in conflict work.

¹⁵² Goutlet, Ibid, 13

¹⁵³ Ostrom, Elinor, et. al. Aid, Incentives, and Sustainability. An Institutional Analysis of Development Cooperation. Summary Report. Stockholm, SIDA, 2002
According to report conducted by Ostrom, (et.al.)

“A successful approach to the problem of development must focus on how to generate appropriate incentives so that the time, skill, knowledge, and genuine effort of multiple individuals are channeled in way that produces jointly valued outcomes.”¹⁵⁴

Ostrom argued that organizations should be able to adopt their institutional framework to match contributions with rewards in the changing reality on the ground. Without addressing the incentives underlying the collective action problem, development aid will likely be ineffective and counterproductive. To understand the mechanisms that create or discourage incentives, Ostrom suggests that organizations should conduct an institutional analysis. This analysis involves first a need to understand the arena where the problems are being examined and the context that frames and affects this arena. Within the arena and the context, appropriate actions and incentives can be identified. Behavioral interactions and outcomes that are likely to emerge based on perceived incentives by the actors. Finally, the institutional analysis should conduct an evaluation of these interactions and actors by applying multiply criteria with an input from participants and external actors.

According to Ostrom, the factors which create incentives that do not facilitate successful outcomes include missing and asymmetric information, principle-tension tension, moral hazards, and adverse selection problems. Missing information implies that actors do not know the complete situation or the actions that they could face. Asymmetric information generates poor incentives by producing principle-agent tension, moral hazard, and adverse selection problems. This could include the lack of understanding of conflict dynamics or how to implement conflict analysis or the lack of technical knowledge of conflict resolution theory by the local staff. This explains the choice not to implement conflict sensitive work. In addition, principle-agent tension, according to Ostrom, exists in all hierarchies where subordinates will not necessarily choose the same means or ends as their managers. For example, the head of UNDP in Georgia saw the merits of encouraging inter ethnic cooperation in Abkhazia but his staff did not.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 20

Moral hazards implies that individuals are guaranteed certain benefits or protection against loss once their contract has been signed rather than based on their actions. This works on an institutional level too—once money is donated for a project without requesting that conflict sensitivity is employed, there is no incentive for the agency to employ conflict sensitivity as it is not required. On the individual level, if the staff have a limited scope of work such as in the case of Mercy Corps and their local mobilizers, there is no incentive to add additional work by trying to find ways to create relationships among parties in conflict or pay closer attention to the ethnic composition of the participants.

Adverse selection problems take place when information is hidden which leads to the selection of bad individuals or components. For example, the lack of demand from donors to implement conflict sensitive development work or to encourage development agencies to invest in conflict transformation results in projects being carried out without implementing these components. Similarly, when management do not insist that multiethnic staff are chosen or that staff understand the importance of conflict resolution in development, this results in mono ethnic staff who lack understanding of conflict dynamics working in areas where they face mistrust from communities. This only reinforces the mutual stereotypes and reduces incentives on all sides to deal with the situation.

As suggested by Goutlet, a major underlying problem to the discussion of incentives being created by organizations and institutions is the fact that the development organizations are operating within a given context that is often complex and which already has a prevailing structure of incentives or disincentives. In a country like Georgia where nationalism is on the rise, the political context disincentivises staff to address conflict related issues. Without having an in depth institutional analysis of the arena, context, actors, and outcomes of behavioral interactions, one can only accept the given reality. In fact this is what many organizations do.

There is no doubt that creating an organizational incentive system for conflict resolution, transformation, and peace, requires internal and external institutional frameworks which many organizations do not have the capacities to create. However, it

is not impossible. There are many examples in the field of development where the combination of donor based incentives and the right organizational priorities have generated development projects that provided peace building incentives on the ground utilizing subjective, objective, and moral mechanisms. One example where a development organization provided incentives for conflict sensitive work is the CMG/Mercy Corps agribusiness project in Kosovo in 1999 (which occurred several years before the merger of the two organizations)¹⁵⁵. In addition to having the right combination of incentives, it is a fascinating example of how a development project can greatly benefit by actively adopting the important principles from conflict resolution that were discussed earlier in this chapter. The project was planned and implemented immediately after war when it became clear that the return of Serbian refugees to Kosovo was threatening to reignite the cycle of violence and revenge.

During project implementation, UNMIK which was responsible for administrating the region which had approximately 500,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the height of the refugee crisis.¹⁵⁶ The objective of the project was drafted in a way that incentives for conflict management work were included. Accordingly, the objective of the project was agricultural economic development that would encourage understanding, cooperation, and interdependence between Albanians and Serbs. On the institutional level, it was understood that in order to create better conditions for the return of refugees there was a need for both development and reconstruction as well as a need to address the deep divisions and animosity in the society. The funds for agribusiness assistance were provided to community based projects which met two main criteria: 1) the applicants had to demonstrate that their projects contributed to community's involvement, benefited a large number of people, and were sustainable beyond donor's support 2) projects had to contribute to inter-ethnic tolerance, understanding, and cooperation. Although the latter is perhaps hard to measure and too abstract, the intention was to motivate local partners and community members to think within a

¹⁵⁵ The following analysis is based on the report by Preuss, S. Cavin, "Dialogical Development: A Kosovo Case Study" and Chigas, Diana and Ganson Brian, "Grand Visions and Small Projects, Coexistence Efforts in Southeastern Europe", in Chayes Antonia and Minow Martha, eds., *Imagine Coexistence, Restoring Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*, PON 2003

¹⁵⁶ Preuss, G. 2003. "Dialogical Development: A Kosovo Case Study." *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*. Vol. 1, No. 2 pp. 36-48.

framework that emphasized the importance of partnership across ethnic lines. The participants of the projects were naturally those who expressed willingness to cooperate cross ethnically. The local NGO partners provided the safe space for initial connection between willing parties who met to discuss potential cooperation based on mutually compatible needs. MC employed multi-ethnic staff and teams to work on the ground and CMG provided staff training and established forums for dialogue among the staff members to deal with cultural and ethnic tensions.

During the project it became clear to the staff monitoring the feedback from participants on conflict related dynamics, that simply encouraging former enemies to work together would not produce the desired results of increasing ethnic tolerance. Participants raised unresolved grievances of the past, fears, and stereotypes towards each other. In order to help address these feelings, there was a need to create a space for dialogue. Consequently, a series of dialogue conferences was organized by Mercy Corps and CMG, and the agenda for the dialogue forums was created with direct input from community members who had already been involved in previous agricultural exchanges. Four dialogue conferences were held in Macedonia, which was chosen by all sides to be the neutral and therefore a safe space. Around 30-50 Serbian and Albanian participants attended these conferences, each held for people in different sectors. The conferences had two objectives—building relationships and facilitating creative responses to problems and conflicts. According to the report, as a result of these conferences “relationships were strengthened, difficult topics tackled, and plans made for future expansion of cooperation”¹⁵⁷. This process in turn provided Mercy Corps with a better understanding of local needs resources and with needed skills.

The evaluation of the project showed that one of the main difficulties encountered in the project was the ability to assess the sincerity of applicants in their willingness for inter-ethnic cooperation, especially in the long term¹⁵⁸. In addition, according to the report, there were little or no process to make sure that the applicants followed their obligations once their received funding. Aside from encouraging people to attend the dialogue conferences and collecting feedback, it was therefore difficult to “enforce”

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 23

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 23

multiethnic cooperation. The project was functioning within existing social structures and the project incentives were multidimensional - economic benefits were perceived as more important to people than other aspects. This feedback also raises a question regarding the long term impact of the project which is an important problem common in projects that encourage peace building. Concerns regarding the ability to assess the long term impact of such project to reduce ethnic tensions or create multiethnic cooperation were raised by managers in the development agencies that I interviewed in Georgia. In fact it constituted one of the arguments as to why development agencies could not pursue the conflict resolution agenda more actively in their work. Only very recently have conflict resolution practitioners begun to reflect on how to better assess the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts on the ground. In this capacity, under the auspices of CDA, Reflecting of Peace Practices Project (RPP) attempts nowadays to create more effective mechanisms to evaluate the impact and learning in conflict resolution projects¹⁵⁹.

Nevertheless, according to the evaluation report the project was a success. It was able to illustrate that there was an increase in economic cooperation across ethnic lines within the targeted groups of participants. “In the first year, fifty-four businesses or associations with significant cross-ethnic linkages were developed and supported, far beyond the initial goal of twelve”¹⁶⁰. The success of this project could be attributed not only to the creation and existence of the right incentives but also to the proactive approach to monitoring and making necessary changes when needed which enabled the fostering of dialogue as a space to discuss the conflict and build relationships.

IV. Accountability:

Kellie from Save the Children raised a concern repeated by development practitioners. She argued that her organization could not invest resources to address conflict dynamics in Georgia because this was not a priority of their donors. They would therefore loose funding by investing their limited resources in this area instead of others¹⁶¹. The question that necessitate this argument is to whom development agencies

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 5

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 23

¹⁶¹ see chapter 2

are accountable and what is missing from the existing accountability mechanism that would enable conflict sensitive planning and implementation to take place. The success of NGOs is often measured through various accountability mechanisms which culminate in reports for donors. The lack of appropriate internal and downward accountability and learning mechanisms is an additional important factor that explains the inability of NGOs to include conflict sensitive analysis and strategy in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their programs.

A useful way of looking at accountability is through the conceptual framework proposed by Najam in which he offers three categories of accountability mechanisms relevant for NGOs¹⁶². The first category of accountability is towards the ‘Patrons’ implying upward accountability towards donors, foundations, and governments. Operational success in this category would be measured by determining whether the NGOs did what they said they would. Usually this is communicated through annual reports and financial documentation of the work done. The second category of accountability is towards ‘Clients’—that is downward accountability towards the people that the NGOs directly targets or the communities or regions affected by the work performed by the NGO. Downward accountability also means the involvement of the communities in the process of assessing the success of the project and deciding on necessary changes and adaptations. The measurement of success here is whether the interests and needs of the population that the NGOs pledged to represent are indeed being represented. The third category of accountability is the NGO responsibility toward themselves, or the Self as identified by Najam. Here, success of NGOs is measured through the level and mechanisms of inward accountability to its missions and staff.

Given that development agencies are driven by the cause of doing good towards the people, downward accountability (i.e. towards the people) should have primacy. After all, addressing the needs and interests of people on the ground is what most of the NGOs set out in their goals and what they strive to achieve in their different endeavors. Setting aside the discussion on the different perceptions of needs to allow a critical assessment on the success of the work performed by NGOs, requires strong mechanisms

¹⁶² Najam, Adil. “NGO Accountability: A Conceptual Framework”, *Development Policy Review*, Vol. 14, Number 1, 1996, p. 339-353

of inward accountability, meaning the ability to conduct in-depth monitoring and evaluation of work, to learn from the lessons on the organizational level to make necessary changes and adaptation in programming, and to increase the real impact of the work. The inward and downward accountability mechanisms are inherently intertwined. Yet, in terms of accountability to “clients” and inward accountability according to Najam, NGOs tend to have low levels of both. The existence of strong internal and downward accountability mechanisms is a prerequisite to implement conflict sensitive analysis and to support local capacities for conflict resolution.

On the other hand, accountability to patrons tends to be significantly higher. NGOs often use provided reporting frameworks to Patrons as a method to further publicize their successes on the ground and the activities they performed¹⁶³. The low levels of accountability in the other two categories inevitably imply that the alleged successes portrayed to the Patrons have a tendency to be overestimated and do not necessarily reflect the perceptions of the people on the ground that the NGOs are supposed to represent. This also means that arguments such as ‘people are not interested in cross ethnic cooperation’ can not be simply be taken as given. The fact that development agencies tend to invest much less in internal and downward accountability mechanisms raises ethical dilemmas with regards to the question of whose interest the work of the NGOs really serves.

The main tool to provide accountability and show success, utilized by many development agencies is the Logical Frameworks (Log Frames) which provide a framework for Designing, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DM&E) mechanisms. The Log Frame approach was developed in an attempt to address the problem of the lack of resources and time to put into conducting monitoring and evaluation reports while at the same time improve the effectiveness of the measurement of the results and outputs, and thus the impact of the work on the ground. The logical framework has been widely criticized by theorists and practitioners who argue that it does not leave space for reflection on non quantitative outputs such as changes in attitudes, behavior, and knowledge on the ground. In this sense it is not the best tool to use with regards to

¹⁶³ Ebrahim Alnoor “Accountability In Practice: Mechanisms for NGOs” *World Development*, Vol. 31, Number 5, 2003, p. 813-829

assessing the impact of development aid on conflict. Ebrahim¹⁶⁴ argued that the Log Frame approach tends to oversimplify and overemphasize the quantitative aspects of the project, and thus is not effective in truly reflecting reality.

While this has been a common criticism of the Log Frame, there is also the tendency by some critiques to dismiss it too quickly without trying to determine how to adopt it to organizational needs. Indeed, the Log Frame requires systematic thinking about a project or program as a whole which means identifying goals, objectives, outputs, activities and indicators from the beginning. Many development and in particular conflict resolution agencies tend to focus on activities and forget about the objectives and goals of their immediate actions and thus the broader impact of their work¹⁶⁵. The ability to understand the broader impact is particularly important when incorporating conflict sensitive planning in order to show that it has yielded results which contributed to the development goals of the project. When the Log Frame is implemented correctly, it requires a thorough assessment of the context and arena of the work in order to form a baseline. The design of the project should be based on this baseline, and success should be assessed by monitoring indicators against the baseline and against the objectives set out in the project.

The United States Institute of Peace just published a report on how to measure progress in stabilization and reconstruction in the context of conflict. One of the lessons has been that “a system for measuring progress requires clear and well-integrated goals that are based on accurate baseline assessment that are directly linked to strategic planning. Measurement must be tied to a clear baseline assessment that is derived from an initial analysis of the conflict”¹⁶⁶. The language of the conclusion above clearly builds on the basic premises of the Log Frame approach to DM&E. Yet, there is no doubt that when the logical framework is the only mechanism for monitoring and evaluation it leaves little room for identifying how to monitor the impact of the qualitative aspects of work. This summer while working with a team of international staff in Georgia on adopting the Log Frame approach to the organization’s needs, I tried to present it to staff

¹⁶⁴ Ebrahim Alnoor. *NGOs and Organizational Change. Discourse, Reporting, and Learning*. 2005 Cambridge University Press

¹⁶⁵ “Reflecting of Peace Practice Project”, 2004 report , <http://www.cdainc.com/> (last accessed April 2006)

¹⁶⁶ Cohen, Craig., “Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction”. *United States Institute of Peace, Stabilization and Reconstruction Series No. 1*. March 2006.

through the inward and downward accountability lenses. It took much time and effort to have the staff and the communities think about what the project they are working on means to them, how they will measure success, what their goals and objectives are, and what questions they should ask to determine whether they are getting closer to achieving those goals and objectives. The Log Frame was used simply as a means to organize our analysis rather than as an ends in itself. In that context, the Log Frame approach to accountability can indeed address some of the resource allocation challenges as it is aimed towards increasing efficiency and reducing time. However, this can work only if done with the inward and downward accountability mechanisms.

German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) is an example of an organization which has begun developing a monitoring and evaluation tool which is based on Log Frame but also includes a separate framework for assessing conflict impact in the South Caucasus, and in particular Georgia,. The framework is called Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment PCIA, and at the time when I was in Georgia it was still being developed so that it could be applied to current work rather than just assessing the past projects ¹⁶⁷. In its premise, it stressed the importance of having all person involved in the development and use of the PCIA to be sensitive to conflict dynamics. It also highlighted that the process of developing and implementing accountability mechanisms that would measure the impact of development work that is conflict sensitive is an incredibly complex task which requires time, understanding of the cultural differences between groups, and sensitivity of the different interests of local stakeholder. This of course assumes that strong accountability mechanisms and framework of DM&E already exist in an organization. When this is not the case (as in many development NGOs on the ground), the task is much more complex and requires first that the organization is willing to make the necessary adaptation and learning which in turn requires that the right institutional incentives are present. This in turn is based on the assumption that the organization's ethics, culture, values, and priorities will be aligned with such a change taking place.

¹⁶⁷ I received information on this tool from Laura Olson (Research Fellow Centre for Military and Strategic Studies (CMSS)University of Calgary) who at the time was working with Care in attempt to help develop something similar. The document she sent me was called "PCIA Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Community Unions FRCS project in South Caucasus", by Woutress, Shirley, et. al. Executive summary can be found at <http://www.agrar.huberlin.de/sle/projekte/2003/Summary%20South%20Caucasus%202003.pdf> (accessed in April 2006)

V. Organizational learning

The discussion on accountability highlighted the importance of internal organizational learning. All the issues that have been covered in this chapter require that development organizations be able to adapt to new, and for some, not very compatible frameworks of reference. Yet, organizational learning is not a simple process and requires willingness to change, open communication within the organization, and not too rigid an organizational hierarchy. The process of organizational learning is built upon good accountability mechanisms and the existence of incentives to enable the necessary change to take place. Organizations that lack the above will find it difficult to adapt internally in order to incorporate conflict sensitive planning and the implementation of these projects.

Ebrahim defined learning in organizations as “generating knowledge by processing information or events, and the using that knowledge to cause behavioral change”¹⁶⁸. According to Ebrahim, organizations can learn through two mechanisms-- by trial and error, or from direct experience by exploring new procedures and ideas without knowing the consequences of their work. In addition organizations can learn from each other by the imitation of strategies, hierarchies, and routines. Based on existing literature (Argyris 1992), Ebrahim described two levels of learning—single loop and double loop learning. “In single- loop learning, the underlying values reflected in system operation ... are not questioned or changed...double-loop learning is more fundamental in that learning leads to changes in underlying beliefs or values reflected in the operation of the system”¹⁶⁹. Most of the learning in organization occurs in the single-loop unless strong mechanisms of accountability and incentives for learning exist. Given that single-loop learning does not enable the challenging of underlying values, it is unlikely that an organization in which the underlying values are inherently different than those which underlie the conflict resolution field will be able to adapt to the conflict framework or to understand the importance of it in its own work. The basic cycle of learning include 1.) acquiring information; 2.) generating knowledge by analysis and interpretation of information or generation of action; 3.) acting by application of knowledge or through

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 28

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 28

generating new ideas; 4.) encoding of knowledge into routines or memory. As we saw from the case study of Georgia, given that the notion that development should be conflict sensitive is well accepted, most development agencies do go through stages 1, 2 and sometimes even 3, but they fail to make the knowledge part of day-to-day operation as this requires the double loop learning process to take place.

According to Roper and Pettit¹⁷⁰, over the past decade NGOs have embraced the idea of becoming learning organizations by either adapting to mainstream practices or attempting to transform in order to live up to the expectations of changing needs and realities on the ground. Yet, the idea of embracing learning is taken for granted in development agencies based on the assumption prevalent in the participatory development methods that development is a process of mutual learning and change. However in reality development has complex underlying assumptions which are often perceived and understood differently, by for example the recipients and the providers. As discussed in the previous section with regards to the Log Frame approach to DM&E, learning is often focused on quantifiable results based on objectives determined ahead of time which fail to take into account the complexity of the context.

Organizations are part of complex social systems; the pragmatic literature on learning suggests that organizations should be attuned to this environment and take advantage of the opportunities it might offer. On the other hand the normative approach to organizational learning discusses how to create a learning environment within an organization in order for it to be able to reach its full potential. This approach suggests the need to create a space for dialogue in order to encourage different ideas and creative thinking. The normative approach for organizational learning also emphasized team work, and the breaking of traditional barriers that exist within organizations, the fostering of leadership potential, and the reduction of internal hierarchies. Sociological analysis of organizational learning looks at organizations as social systems which are characterized by power differentials, conflict and politics¹⁷¹. Together, these forces tend to inhibit learning.

¹⁷⁰ Roper, Laura and Pettit Jethro. "Development and the Learning Organization: an introduction. In *Development and the Learning Organization (Development in Practice Readers Series)*, by Pettit, Roper Eade (eds.), volume 12, issue 3/4, August 2002

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 31

To make conflict resolution and development work together in order to improve the positive impact (and reduce the negative impact) on the ground requires far reaching internal learning and change. It also requires the examination of basic assumptions on which development has been built, and a significant improvement in the ability to measure concrete objectives in the conflict management field as to how salient relationships can be improved and deep rooted negative conflict dynamics can be dealt with constructively. The two fields have a lot to learn from each other - it is about time that they begin.

Conclusions

In this thesis I embarked on a journey to try to understand what makes the seemingly natural and much needed link between the development and conflict resolution fields so difficult to implement on the ground. Development has gone through different stages, from advocating large scale industrialization, to neo-liberalism, structural adjustments and basic human needs, and through to human development and the fostering of democracy. In all its different stages, it has never been able to reconcile the differences between the hard core economists who advocate that development should be focused on macro economic growth, and the humanists who advocate for more focus to be placed on people. Conflict resolution has also gone through different historical developments from focusing on the causes of war, institutions, and socialization into behavior, to the importance of understanding interests and the centrality of social/psychological theories focused on human needs. The outbreak of ethnic and civil conflicts and wars resulted in an understanding of the most obvious connection between the two fields—the negative impact conflict has on development. The role that development aid played in exacerbating and directly contributing to escalations of conflicts and violence in the 1990s led to the acceptance (at least at the outset) of the need for development to be “sensitive” to conflict dynamics and to work towards contributing to the improvement rather than the exacerbation of these dynamics.

Yet the process of accepting conflict sensitivity into development projects’ planning and implementation has been difficult for many development NGOs working in the context of conflict. In Georgia, only one of the ten agencies that I interviewed was actively pursuing a conflict sensitive agenda. The rest felt that they did not have the support of donors, or had other more urgent priorities to address and thus lacked the time and capacity to include and implement conflict sensitive work. While trying to understand the underlying causes of these arguments, I looked at some of the essential differences that exist between the ethical frames of references. Consequently, it became clear that some of the values and normative principles in development are opposed to conflict resolution. These differences partially explain the disagreement on the priorities and needs on the ground that account for some of the arguments presented by

development practitioners in Georgia. Lack of institutional and organizational incentives, ineffective accountability, and inappropriate learning mechanisms are other drawbacks that limit the ability of development to incorporate a conflict sensitive agenda.

At the end of this journey, the answer as to whether conflict sensitive development is a reality or wishful thinking lies somewhere between these two. It is clearly far from being a reality but it is more than wishful thinking given that significant progress has been made in creating the awareness and acknowledgement of the necessity to make development conflict sensitive. However, not enough has been done to understand what the challenges in doing so are, and how they could be overcome.

This thesis did not address almost at all the question of what can be done to make conflict sensitive development a reality. To answer this question much more time and research is needed that would reach out to a wide range of development and conflict resolution practitioners working in different conflict areas. Some research of this kind has been carried out by projects such as Reflecting on Peace Practices (RPP),¹⁷² Brandeis Coexistence International, and others. These efforts should be more coordinated to enable better understanding of how we can really make an impact to alleviate the causes of human suffering in the world.

¹⁷² RPP project is part of the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA)

Appendix: Map of Georgia



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