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A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding

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Introduction

Are peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity the same thing? Different but related? Completely separate? Increasingly, practitioners and policy makers give different—and often opposing—answers to these simple questions. Part of the difficulty arises from the "migration" of the terms, as both have shifted their meanings over time, each coming to embrace more and more conceptual territory. Also, the various actors involved have shifted their roles. Development and humanitarian agencies have expanded from their traditional roles and increasingly attempt to address conflicts more directly. At the same time, peace practitioners recognize the need to address structural causes of conflict—which often requires development modes of programming. In the process, many people have become increasingly uncertain about what these two concepts mean and whether the distinction is even important. Why should we care about this confusion? is it causing harm?

Experience shows that conflating the two concepts or treating them as entirely distinct and unrelated, results in poorly conceived programming and reduces effectiveness. This article examines the damage done by this conceptual confusion, and proposes some ways to distinguish peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity that, evidence suggests, may lead to more effective peacebuilding and conflict sensitive practice. First, let us look at specific problems within the notions of conflict sensitivity and of peacebuilding.

Evolving Misunderstandings of and Gaps in Conflict Sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organization to: a) understand the context in which it is operating, b) understand the interaction between the intervention and that context, and c) act upon that understanding, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on the conflict.[1] Over the years, many staff members of donor agencies, UN entities and larger development NGOs have come to use tools and frameworks that were developed to make development or humanitarian assistance programs conflict sensitive as a basis for peacebuilding policies and planning. They have also come to operate under the (false) assumption that conflict sensitive programming is the same as peacebuilding. At the *headquarters level*, policies and programming concepts that address conflict sensitivity have come to include what many consider to be peacebuilding approaches. Conflict analysis frameworks have proliferated, as many agencies have developed their own frameworks for conflict analysis—from UNDP to the World

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[1] *See* International Alert *et al.*, 2004. *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: a resource Pack*. London: International Alert (available for download at www.conflictsensitivity.org).

Bank to bilateral donors, such as USAID, DFID, SIDA or GTZ, as well as large NGOs. DFID's Guidance Notes on conducting conflict assessments describes the aim of understanding the impact of development actors on conflict and peace as identifying "conflict related risks that need to be mitigated and opportunities for programmes/policies to better contribute to peacebuilding."[2] Conflict-sensitive practice has come to mean not only adjusting existing development, humanitarian, human rights and other activities to avoid or minimize negative impacts and promote positive impacts on the conflict context, but also the design of initiatives to address conflict causes. It is a small conceptual leap then to assume that if one is engaging in good "conflict sensitive programming," one will accomplish peacebuilding goals.

The expansion of the concept of conflict sensitivity has led to gaps in conflict-sensitive practice. First, the focus on developing conflict analysis frameworks and methods has led to a relative neglect of practical guidance for conflict-sensitive program implementation. While donor agencies (and others) have adopted policies that enshrine the principle of conflict sensitivity, they fail to follow through to provide practical guidance regarding how to implement such policies—both in terms of priorities and the broadest articulation of program approaches and with regard to field operations. Donor policies seldom provide any consequences for neglecting to perform the necessary assessments to ensure conflict sensitive programming or penalize activities that actually caused harm. CDA's Do No Harm project has not yet encountered any donor that has taken action (withdrawn funding, issued a rebuke, warned of impending harm…) with respect to implementing agencies that have even flagrantly violated Do No Harm principles.

Thus, at the *field level* of program implementation, development, humanitarian and peace agencies regularly neglect the practicalities of performing the necessary analyses and program adjustments to ensure true conflict sensitivity. As the Do No Harm project has been finding, when agencies do perform an analysis, they often use the analysis only for initial program design, but seldom monitor the subsequent impacts to identify unintended consequences or adjust programming to address these consequences. For example, an international agency in Nepal did a brilliant initial Do No Harm analysis, nicely bound and placed prominently on the shelf in the office in Katmandu. Thereafter, there was no systematic analysis of the positive or negative program effects on conflict, although local staff in the field did make minor day-to-day adjustments as they could, but did not communicate their observations to the office in the capital.

In addition, little attention has been paid to how conflict sensitivity works at the *policy level*. Most of the learning about conflict sensitive practice has been at the operational level in the field, with respect to program design decisions about what assistance to provide, to whom, why, by whom, using what methods, etc. A challenge remains as to what conflict sensitivity might mean at the policy level. For example, how do we assess whether donor decisions to start or stop whole areas of programming have had positive or negative effects on conflict? Similarly, as some donors have shifted to a greater reliance on budgetary support, ways of analyzing the implications and actual impacts of such approaches on conflict and ensuring that such assistance is conflict-sensitive remain to be developed.

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[2] DFID, 2002. *Conducting Conflict Assessments: Guidance Notes*. London: DFID, p. 22. Available at http://94.126.106.9/Documents/publications/conflictassessmentguidance.pdf.

Evolving Misunderstandings of and Gaps in Peacebuilding

The notion of peacebuilding has undergone expansion similar to conflict sensitivity, with similar consequences. Originally, the peacebuilding term came into popular usage as a result of a report by Boutros Boutros Ghali, then Secretary General of the United Nations. He delineated several types of work for peace: *preventive diplomacy* designed to prevent the outbreak of war, *peacemaking* aimed at ceasing war making and bringing warring parties to the negotiation table to forge a peace settlement; *peacekeeping* dedicated to providing security through the presence of peacekeeping forces; and *peacebuilding* focused on consolidating peace in the aftermath of war and violence and preventing a further round of bloodshed. Peacebuilding, referred to "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict."[3]

Over time, the peacebuilding concept has broadened. In 2001, the UN Security Council noted that peacebuilding efforts are "aimed at preventing the outbreak, the recurrence or continuation of armed conflict and therefore encompass a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms."[4] Peacebuilding now often refers to the entire field of peace practice, without respect to a stage of conflict or a particular set of activities or goals.[5] The recent OECD DAC Guidelines on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities include socio-economic development, good governance, justice and security sector reform, reconciliation, and truth and justice activities in the domain of peacebuilding.[6]

Not infrequently, practitioners now consider their work during an active war to be peacebuilding. For instance, an unofficial process of dialogue aimed at supporting an official peace negotiation process or a program of peace education intended to transform social norms regarding tolerance might each call themselves peacebuilding, whether carried out during periods of violence or in its aftermath. We also see peacebuilding activities touted as conflict prevention, in periods before violence escalates. Many organizations that work on conflict transformation, conflict resolution, reconciliation (and a string of other titles) consider themselves as part of the broader "field" of peacebuilding, and use the term in their names, such as the Alliance for Peacebuilding.

While the expansion of the meaning of "peacebuilding" reflects the realities of building and consolidating peace, it also has created confusion and gaps in practice. The lack of definitional specificity and intellectual rigor about peacebuilding has allowed an attitude of "anything goes." Thus, anything that anyone chooses to call peacebuilding is embraced as part of the field. Many

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[3] Boutros Boutros Ghali. 1992 "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping." UN Doc. A/47/277—S/24111 (17 June 1992).

[4] Presidential Statement, UN Security Council. United Nations Doc. S/PRST/2001/5, 20 February 2001.

[5] In a possible exception, the UN still differentiates somewhat, though inconsistently. For instance, the UN Peacebuilding Commission restricts its work to the so-called "post-conflict" period (which is really post-violence, as the actual conflict usually continues).

[6] OECD-DAC. 2007. *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*. Paris: OECD DAC, p. 18. Available at www.oecd.org . *See also* Smith, D. 2004. *Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting Their Act Together* (Overview Report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding). Oslo: PRIO, pp. 22, 27-28 (Smith groups peacebuilding activities under four headings: security, establishing the socioeconomic foundations for peace, establishing the political framework, and generating reconciliation).

policies, programmes and even conceptual frameworks for peacebuilding, for example, do not make conceptual distinctions between state building, peacebuilding, governance and development. While clearly all of these phenomena are related, and activities in all domains— socio-economic development, governance, justice and security, and reconciliation and culture— are needed, they are not all the same. State weakness is not the same as conflict, nor its only cause, even when it may be a contributor to its escalation. Similarly, conflict can be seen as a result, a symptom or a cause of fragility.[7]

Many peacebuilding programs are poorly conceived, demonstrating unclear goals, fuzzy theories of change about how their activities will in fact contribute to peace, vague indicators, imprecise accountability mechanisms and faulty evaluation measures—all stemming, *in part,* from the lack of clarity about the boundaries and aims of peacebuilding. (There are, of course, many other reasons not covered here.)

Here again, the conflation of peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity undermines the effectiveness of peacebuilding practice, as agencies in the field think that they are accomplishing peacebuilding as long as they are being conflict sensitive. On the one hand, conflict sensitivity has provided agencies a way to assuage their discomfort with the fact that peacebuilding is about change—a fundamentally political process. It is easier and less threatening to talk about "conflict-sensitive programming" in circumstances where a host government will resist any reference to peace, especially where it is a party to the conflict. The use of conflict sensitivity in place of peacebuilding is, in some cases, a tactic for avoiding awkward political interactions with host governments and other parties in conflict zones. A consequence, however, is often that the dynamics that drive the conflict are not addressed.

The Consequences: Common Myths and Misconceptions

Having discussed some of the issues with both terms, we now turn to the negative consequences of the confusion of peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity for the effectiveness of both.

Conflict-sensitive humanitarian assistance will help bring peace. Some organizations try to adhere faithfully to principles of conflict sensitivity (or Do No Harm) as they conduct their relief efforts. Some of them have assumed that doing so will also contribute to peace. It should be clear that such efforts are not sufficient for peacebuilding. A few examples illustrate the point.

Consider the case of an international agency that provides assistance to returning populations affected by conflict, both housing reconstruction and livelihood support. The assistance is provided initially mainly to returnees of one ethnic group who had been displaced by ethnic cleansing by the other, and only later to returnees from the other group who were displaced by revenge-motivated violence that followed. The agency adopts a practice of providing "balancing grants" to return communities, in recognition of the potential harmful conflict effects of targeting the neediest. The agency also seeks to support bridge-building in these communities by sponsoring inter-ethnic sports events, community development projects, and cultural activities (drama, music).

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[7] Fabra Mata, Javier & Ziaja, S. 2009. *Users' Guide on Sources Measuring Fragility and Conflict.* Oslo and Bonn: UNDP and German Development Institute, p. 7.

All of this might constitute good conflict-sensitive humanitarian practice (one would need to do a thorough analysis of the impacts on dividers and connectors in the communities to assess this accurately), but the initiatives do not constitute a robust peacebuilding strategy, as they do not address the driving factors of conflict. For instance, the program does not address the continuing feelings of injustice and grievances expressed by members of both communities as a key obstacle to peace. Indeed, in some cases, resentment by one group regarding the amount of aid directed to returnees from the other, who had oppressed them, increases and worsens tensions between the two. Moreover, while the bridge-building activities do help bring people together, few of the resulting relationships extend beyond the level of personal or business contact. The activities provide a valuable support to existing connectors (personal relationships and friendships that had existed before the war), but without further effort and attention to internal dynamics that affect inter-ethnic relations, the activities will not "add up" to improve relations at an inter-group level.

In another example, an international agency provided assistance to displaced people in an area plagued by chronic battles among rival militias, with weak government presence and ineffective security operations. Following conflict sensitive principles, the agency ensured that local populations, as well as the displaced people, received assistance. They also negotiated with the dominant warlords to prevent expropriation of aid goods by militias—as families receiving assistance were vulnerable to attacks. As in the previous example, this program may well have been conflict sensitive, but while the negotiations with warlords may have increased local security in the short term, there is no evidence that these measures would address the key drivers of conflict in the area. Depending on the causes of conflict, it might be possible to add program components that constitute peacebuilding goals. For instance, careful analysis might reveal that the warlords represent disaffected populations that feel they have been excluded from access to decision making and development programs over many years. A strategy could be developed to address those inequalities, which could add important peacebuilding dimensions.

A caution: Relief and reconciliation assistance can make victims more vulnerable. Following conflict-sensitive principles in program design not only does not ensure positive peace effects; it does not ensure that a program will do no harm. For example, a local NGO was helping displaced people to return to their communities, in the wake of post-election violence in Kenya, during which many homes had been burned. They organized a process of dialogue between the displaced groups and their neighbors. They helped people to rebuild their homes, providing new roofing sheets and building materials and recruiting neighbors from other ethnic groups to help in rebuilding (part of the healing/reconciliation process). However, it soon became obvious that all of the rebuilt homes had shiny new roofs, essentially making them visible targets if violence were to flare up again! The new roofs also brought attention to the fact that the displaced people were receiving direct assistance, while their neighbors, many of them also poor, were not. Ongoing analysis of dividers and connectors and the program impacts on them is needed.

Peacebuilding equals conflict-sensitive development. Many practitioners believe that if they undertake development programs in a conflict sensitive manner, they will contribute to peace. This is possible but not inevitable. Whether conflict-sensitive development programming actually contributes to Peace Writ Large will depend on the nature of the conflict, the precise program design and the resulting actual impacts. Again, three examples illustrate the point.

Example 1: In the wake of war and violence, the national government makes job creation a top priority. In cooperation with the International Labor Organization (a UN agency) and the Ministry of Agriculture, an international NGO and several local partner agencies undertake an agricultural training program for ex-combatants. To ensure it is conflict-sensitive, the program plans to recruit ex-soldiers from all of the formerly warring factions and all of the competing ethnic groups and provide them with intensive training in farming skills, emphasizing high-value cash crops and cooperative group efforts in the production process.

Even if this program were sufficiently conflict sensitive (there might be issues regarding the availability of arable land for the trainees, and others which could exacerbate conflicts at the local level), it is not at all clear that such a program would actually contribute to peace. It might be possible to add peacebuilding objectives to the program—which would then turn it into a hybrid development and peacebuilding program. For instance, during the training in farming techniques, participants might also be given skills in communication and dialogue—and provided opportunities to address ongoing inter-ethnic tensions. Such an initiative might, over time, begin to reduce mutual distrust—at least among direct participants. Whether such positive effects on participants would extend to their communities or to larger social dynamics would remain a question. The program designers might have identified continuing command structures among ex-combatants as a threat to peace and assumed that the program would contribute to the breakdown of those command structures—that is, by engaging in productive agricultural activities the ex-combatants would be less closely tied to their former military leaders and fellow soldiers. Again, that is a possible outcome, but not guaranteed, and is not likely to occur automatically.

Example 2: In another program, an NGO implements a program to support communities to develop and implement sustainable income-generating and capacity-building activities at the community level. Undertaken in a post-war context, this project is framed as a community-level peacebuilding project. The program provides training in conflict management in the communities, and then provides a block grant for projects to support income-generation. The community, through its Community Development Council and broader community-wide meetings, establishes the priorities for allocation of the grants, with the condition that the process must include all groups in the community, that is, priorities cannot be decided by the leadership alone.

In this way, the NGO hopes to maximize the potential that the grants benefit the entire community, and to promote coexistence amongst the groups by bringing them together across conflict lines to make decisions jointly. It ensures that no group is left out, and that the program integrates system to ensure that the aid is not captured by any one faction. In terms of results, it provide some livelihoods assistance, and helps improve relationships among some community members. Some disputes, such as marital disputes and land disputes, are referred to those trained

in conflict management. However, the community dialogues and the resulting projects are a simple aggregation of individual preferences in the community, and do not analyze or address the causes of conflict or barriers to coexistence. While the project succeeds in strengthening connectors in the community, as well as mitigating potentially divisive issues such as land, without further work to address the drivers of conflict, it is not effective peacebuilding.

Example 3: An agency rebuilds destroyed homes and provides small income-generation grants to returning refugees and IDPs. As part of the program, the agency sponsors inter-ethnic dialogue between returnees and host community members and provides "balancing grants" to the host communities for priority community infrastructure or income-generation projects. Inter-ethnic community reconstruction committees are formed to guide reconstruction efforts and determine priorities. In addition, the agency sponsors a number of sports and cultural events in the community to bring together people from both groups, especially youth, for positive interaction.

This program is quite conflict-sensitive. The agency recognized that its returns program would benefit one ethnic group in the community and not the other, and created mechanisms for ensuring that all would benefit from assistance. They also tried to foster positive inter-ethnic interaction and cooperation, both at a social level and on issues of common concern (such as infrastructure). It is not clear, however, whether and to what extent the program would contribute to peace. While it avoided exacerbation of tensions that could result from the distribution of aid to refugees and IDPs, and did foster some positive inter-ethnic social interaction, it did not address the driving factors of conflict—which community members described as injustice and impunity related to oppression and violence by each group against the other, security and opposing visions of the future.

Another caution about the conflation of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding is warranted here: there are times when promotion of connectors and reinforcement of bridges across conflict lines can reinforce the conflict status quo. A powerful—and counterintuitive—example occurred in Kosovo, where donors and NGOs supported cross-ethnic economic activities, to promote economic interdependence as well as contacts and cooperation across ethnic lines. Peacebuilding through economic cooperation tended to mirror existing, implicit "rules of the game" for inter-ethnic interaction amongst Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, which permitted interaction for economic but not for social or political purposes. The programs therefore added little to the existing quality of interaction. And, the "rules of the inter-ethnic game" limited the depth and breadth of relationships that could be developed, ensuring that any inter-ethnic engagements that did occur would not challenge the polarization of Kosovo Serb— Kosovo-Albanian relations.

When Conflict Sensitive Practice Promotes Peace: In the experience of Do No Harm practitioners in the field, it is sometimes possible to use tools for conflict sensitivity (like Do No Harm) not only to mitigate dividers and support connectors, but also to promote positive impacts on peace. That is, in some situations, people have used conflict sensitivity tools to do peace work. Because this experience is not the norm, it is important to be clear about why and under what conditions this can occur.

First, using conflict sensitivity tools and frameworks to design and implement peacebuilding seems to occur primarily at a local level, by local actors. In part, this is because local people know their contexts well and can identify precisely, at any given time, which dividers are most likely to cause violence, and which connectors are most important. They are then able to figure out how to design development or humanitarian initiatives in such a way that they reduce dividers and reduce violence or reinforce connectors.

Moreover, as RPP has found, the very fact that local actors are taking their own initiatives to resist violence or address conflict constitutes a contribution to Peace Writ Large, as it reflects local ownership and initiative for peace. In this way, the use of Do No Harm conflict sensitivity frameworks can have greater impacts on Peace Writ Large than their use by international agencies or outsiders.

Second, experience also shows that, when conflict resolution requires efforts at a higher political level, a more thorough analysis of driving factors and a more robust strategy that addresses these factors are required. This evidence reinforces our basic caution that conflict-sensitivity models and tools are insufficient for peacebuilding at most levels.

Development will promote conflict prevention. Perhaps the most persistent myth among international aid workers is that development efforts of nearly all types will contribute to peace (and the prevention of violent conflict), particularly if they are implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner. Early and incomplete evidence shows that there is only a weak association between "normal" development programming and conflict prevention, at best.

For instance, many assume that any advance in reducing poverty will contribute to peace—but this is not supported by the experience in the field. Here again, a thorough conflict analysis might reveal that development dollars aimed at poverty reduction have been distributed in a distorted manner, causing deeper and deeper resentment among excluded groups. If poverty reduction strategies actually started to achieve greater equity, they might contribute to peace. But note that simply reducing poverty would not achieve peace; equity, fairness and inclusion are key factors that must be addressed.

Similarly, special types of programming developed for post-conflict situations—such as demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR)—also often assume that restructuring of the armed forces or changes in police operations will support peace. Of course, both DDR and SSR programs *can* contribute to peace—as physical security and perceptions of security are important dimensions of peace. But many SSR and DDR programs do not even ask themselves whether they have contributed to Peace Writ Large; they *assume* that they have. Their measures of success are often associated with the number of

soldiers demobilized or reintegrated, the effective functioning of command structures, the ability to respond to threats, or numbers of police trained in human rights. They do not ask—either at the program design stage or during evaluation—whether any of these accomplishments actually result in improved physical or psychological security. Again, issues of equity (who is hired, who is in command, who makes decisions) and treatment of the population may have a strong association with conflict issues, and undertaking SSR with a conflict-sensitive lens may improve the likelihood that the program can reduce vulnerability to violent conflict. Pushing beyond conflict sensitivity to a more thorough understanding of conflict dynamics will increase the potential contribution of SSR programming to true prevention of violent conflict.

Peacebuilding is conflict-sensitive by definition. Many peacebuilding practitioners assume that, because they are working for peace, they are, by definition, conflict sensitive. This is not so! Peacebuilders are just as capable of acting in ways that are *insensitive* to conflict as other field workers. For example, they can inadvertently hire people from one ethnic group—because all of the available English-speaking (or French-speaking…) candidates happen to be from the economic/socially favored group. SSR programs can improve the delivery of justice or the performance of the policy in general, but the aggregate statistics (numbers of convictions, recorded crimes, police, perceptions of effectiveness of the courts and police, etc.) may hide deep inter-group inequalities in policing and justice. Peacebuilding activities can also increase danger to participants in peace activities, and they can disempower local people and initiatives.[8]

Many peacebuilding programs assess the conflict-sensitivity of their programs only at the design stage or, more often, not at all. If conflict-sensitive programming is peacebuilding, and peacebuilding is by its nature designed to address the causes of conflict, then the program is *ipso facto* conflict sensitive and requires no further analysis—or so the theory goes. The bottom line: peacebuilding programs must pay attention to the intended and unintended consequences on conflict dynamics from their programs, just as other program types do.

Clarifying Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity: Definitions and Dimensions of Difference

The chart below shows the differences between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding along a series of dimensions: definition, main aim, applicability to whom and what kinds of programming, analysis requirements, and standards/measures.

The establishment of hard and fast boundaries between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding will always be elusive—and unwise. The soft boundaries between the two reflect the complexities of working both *in* and *on* conflict, and the reality that peacebuilding in practice has come to incorporate development, humanitarian, justice and human rights modes of programming. However, conceptual clarity, even in the face of blurry boundaries, can strengthen both the effectiveness of peacebuilding practice and the ability of development, humanitarian and other programming to minimize negative and maximize positive impacts on conflict. We propose the definitions and distinctions below, as a basis for more robust peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive practice.

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[8] These and other inadvertent negative impacts of peacebuilding programs were discussed in Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olson, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Cambridge: CDA, 2003).

COMPARISON OF CONFLICT SENSITIVITY AND PEACEBUILDING

Conflict Sensitivity	Peacebuilding
Definition:[9] Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organization to: ■ Understand the context in which it is operating, particularly intergroup relations; ■ Understand the interactions between its interventions and the context/group relations; and ■ Act upon the understanding of these interactions, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts.	**Definition:**[10] Peacebuilding refers to measures designed to consolidate peaceful relations and strengthen viable political, socio-economic, and cultural institutions capable of handling conflict, and to strengthen other mechanisms that will either create or support the necessary conditions for sustained peace.
Main aim: Work **IN** the context of conflict to minimize negative and maximize positive impacts of programming (on conflict, but also on other factors).	**Main aim:** Work **ON** conflict, seeking to reduce key drivers of violent conflict and to contribute to Peace Writ Large (the broader societal-level peace).
Applied to Whom/What Programming: All programmes, of all types, in all sectors, at all stages of conflict (latent, hot, post-war) must be conflict sensitive, including peacebuilding efforts themselves.	**Applied to Whom/What Programming:** Peacebuilding programmes are those that articulate goals or objectives aimed at securing peace. Such goals/objectives can be integrated into other programming modes (development, relief) and sectors—or peacebuilding can be a standalone effort.
Required Analysis: Requires an adequate understanding of the conflict (e.g., dividers and connectors analysis) to avoid worsening dividers or weakening connectors; to reduce dividers and support existing connectors.	**Required Analysis:** Requires a deeper understanding of the key drivers of conflict and dynamics among factors and key actors, in order to ensure program relevance.
Standard/Measure of Effectiveness: At a minimum, the program/project does not make the conflict worse—and usually also makes a positive contribution.	**Standard/Measure of Effectiveness:** Programme/project reduces the power of key driving factors of conflict, contributing to Peace Writ Large.

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[9] Definition adapted slightly from International Alert, *et al.* 2003. *Conflict sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: a resource pack.*
[10] Definition from International Alert, 2003, as quoted in the *resource pack* (see *op. cit.* in above footnote).

There are two significant implications of these distinctions. *First, conflict sensitivity is a fundamental principle of good and responsible practice that is applicable to ALL programs.* In this way, it is most useful in an adjectival form: "conflict sensitive," rather than as a noun, which implies that it is a type of programming in its own right. As an adjective, it can (and should) be applied to humanitarian assistance, development efforts, peacebuilding, peacekeeping operations, human rights advocacy, security sector reform, demobilization of combatants, work with women and youth, and so forth.

> *ALL programs in ALL contexts, regardless of sector, program type, conflict phase or constituency, should be conflict-sensitive. That is, they must take account of the potential for violent conflict, and adopt measures to minimize the negative effects and maximize the positive effects of program efforts.*

This continues to be the main insight from CDA's Do No Harm Project,[11] and the tools and frameworks from that project remain among the best and most widely-used approaches for ensuring that humanitarian and development programming is conflict sensitive.

Second, we can be clear about what peacebuilding is:

> *Peacebuilding is a type of programming with particular aims. It includes a wide range of programming modes with a common aim: they all aim explicitly to address the key drivers of conflict and, ultimately, change the conflict dynamics, with particular emphasis on reducing or preventing violence as a means of addressing political, social and economic problems and injustices.*

Some argue that peacebuilding has become its own academic field and programming sector. Others assert that it is a cross-cutting set of considerations that should intersect with all sectors and work with all constituencies. This is one source of confusion with conflict sensitivity, as it is also a cross-cutting lens. *Conflict-sensitive principles must be applied to various types of programming as noted above—they do not stand on their own. Peacebuilding programs can and do stand alone.*

Classic peacebuilding programs include dialogue efforts (at various levels and engaging a range of different types of stakeholders), negotiations, mediation, transitional justice, peace education, and training in conflict resolution skills. These program modes can be applied in a wide range of sectors—to address key conflict drivers. For example, one might engage in public dialogue to enhance a police reform effort or organize a negotiation process to develop a new constitution. Classic development, human rights, justice reform and other programs can also be critical for peacebuilding—if they are relevant and address key driving factors of conflict. Economic development programs or education reform can be equally important peacebuilding efforts, where, for example, horizontal inequalities or unequal access to education (and jobs and political power) are underlying causes of conflict. As peacebuilding programs, however, they must be designed and implemented quite differently than they would be if their aims were purely developmental. (In practice, however, they often are not.) They must also be assessed for their capacity to address those factors, not only for their development success.

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[11] See CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and its Do No Harm Project at www.cdainc.com.

Conclusion

The distinction between conflict sensitive practice and peacebuilding matters, because the lack of clarity and prevailing confusion are now weakening many programs. People are uncertain about why their peace efforts are failing. All too often, one reason is that they are working on false assumptions about conflict sensitivity or peacebuilding or both. Mixing them up leads to flawed program design.

It is time to clarify these terms and articulate the practical consequences in the field—in order to strengthen both conflict sensitive programming and peace practice.