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Conflict Sensitivity Mainstreaming Efforts

A short history of conflict sensitivity

Beginning in the mid-1990's, development and humanitarian aid workers found themselves facing violent conflicts of a different nature. Following the end of the Cold War, rather than international and inter-state conflicts, there were an increasing number of intra-state and internal civil wars. Aid workers, in particular, had considered themselves and their work to be politically neutral. However, they observed that they had a role in how conflicts developed in the contexts where they were operating. Previously, humanitarian aid and development assistance was considered to be non-political, and solely concerned with saving and improving people's lives. Particularly in the aftermath of the Rwandan crisis of 1994, however, aid workers began to question the role of assistance in contexts of conflict. Many began to ask themselves, "How can assistance be given in a context of conflict in ways that, rather than feeding into and exacerbating the conflict, help local people to disengage and establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems that underlie the conflict?"[1]

Starting in the early nineties, researchers began to explore this question. In 1998, findings began to emerge that clearly showed that aid can indeed have a negative impact in contexts of conflict.[2][3] Around the same time, scholars and practitioners began to develop methodologies, frameworks, and guidance for assessing those impacts and designing options to mitigate them and maximize the positive effects of aid on a conflict. Collectively, these approaches became known as "Conflict Sensitivity" (often referred to below as CS). Three key approaches emerged in 1998 and 1999: Kenneth Bush's "Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment" (PCIA), designed to review the project level of interventions, as well as the program and policy levels; Luc Reychler's "Conflict Impact Assessment Systems" (CIAS), which focuses on the macro/policy level; and Mary B. Anderson's "Do No Harm" (DNH), also mainly used to review programs at the project level. The near-simultaneous release of these works indicated a sea change in thinking about approaches to development and humanitarian assistance. No longer could these activities be considered independently the contexts in which they were implemented.

> **A Shared Definition**
> Conflict Sensitivity is the ability of an organization to:
> 1. Understand the context in which it operates
> 2. Understand the interaction between that context and its intervention
> 3. Act upon this understanding in order to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on the context
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> (Definition from *Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack.* Africa Peace Forum, Center for Conflict Resolution, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, International Alert and Saferworld. 2004)

In the early 2000's, conflict sensitivity was adopted enthusiastically by the international aid community. It was codified by OECD-DAC in their *Guidelines for Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*,[4] by the Sphere

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[1] Anderson, Mary B. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War.* Lynne Rienner Publishers. 1999
[2] Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda.* Kumarian Press. 1998
[3] Anderson, Mary B. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—Or War.* Lynne Rienner Publishers. 1999
[4] http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/1886146.pdf

project in its *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Humanitarian Response*,[5] by the World Bank, in the policies of bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, and in the internal policies of NGOs themselves.

In addition to the many policies and pieces of guidance promoting conflict sensitivity, the concepts and tools of conflict sensitive practice began to be adapted by NGOs for their specific internal cultures, routines, and practices. Several organization-specific tools for conflict sensitivity have been created, including Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts (World Vision), Conflict Sensitive Program Management (Swiss Development Cooperation), Benefits-Harms Analysis (CARE), Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding (Saferworld, et al.) and the Better Programming Initiative (IFRC).

CS in the corporate world

The framing of conversations about conflict in corporate circles has primarily focused on risks to the company or its operations and more recently on human rights, particularly since the approval in 2011 of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.[6] In 2000, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights[7] were introduced, which emphasized the alignment of corporate security policies with human rights principles. They include some of the concepts of conflict sensitivity and some companies that have implemented the Voluntary Principles (VPs) have seen significant reductions in their conflict risks. For the most part, companies understand the VPs as relevant to high-security environments, and in particular contexts of "hot" conflict like Colombia. In 2005, International Alert developed *Conflict Sensitive Business Practice: Guidance for Extractive Industries,[8]* which provided companies with a framework for understanding conflict contexts, anticipating their impacts, and designing options to contribute to positive impacts on conflict. In 2009, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects published *Getting it Right: Making Corporate-Community Relations Work,[9]* which was explicit in stating that, because companies can incite conflict where none existed before, corporate activities must be conflict sensitive even in contexts that are not perceived to be conflict-affected.

In 2013, the International Council on Mining and Metals, recognizing that corporations still face significant conflict risks, has commissioned further study of company-community conflict. Similarly, the UN Global Compact recently initiated a Business for Peace platform. This is suggestive of a "re-emergence" of conflict as a concern after several years of focus on human rights issues. Historically, the approach within the private sector seems to have been to focus on issues like the Social License to Operate, community relations and security. The question of conflict has often been treated as a collection of discrete issues (e.g. influx, water) that can be approached distinctly and which each have their own solution. There are few tools or approaches that look globally at project impacts on conflict.

The purpose of this paper

The propagation of frameworks, methodologies, principles, guidance and approaches has have all been efforts to 'mainstream' conflict sensitivity. A range of development, humanitarian, and peace practitioners have been trained in various conflict sensitivity methodologies. They have developed policies and codes of conduct mandating its use. Academics have written articles about best practices.

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[5] http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/
[6] http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf
[7] http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/voluntary_principles_english.pdf
[8] http://www.international-alert.org/resources/publications/csbp-extractive-industries-en
[9] Anderson, Mary B. and Luc Zandvliet. *Getting it Right: Making Corporate-Community Relations Work.* Greenleaf Publishers 2009.

Donors have required CS in proposals and reports. And yet, fifteen years after the coining of the phrase 'conflict sensitivity,' after all the training, adaptations, and research, we still find that many practitioners fail to apply conflict sensitivity frameworks. Many organizations do not integrate conflict sensitivity policies into their organizational plans and program cycles. They do not monitor or evaluate its application. Many donors do not hold organizations accountable for conflict sensitive practice. And we still see that aid and corporate activities and even peacebuilding activities can and do have negative impacts on contexts of conflict.

This paper seeks to review what has been done in an effort to mainstream conflict sensitivity over the past fifteen years and what the impacts of those efforts have been. It is not meant to be exhaustive, as indeed each organization has its own approach to incorporating conflict sensitive practice into its routines and organizational culture. Rather, it is meant to look at the types of efforts that have been made—some successful, some with limited success—in an attempt to look forward at what more could be done to fully integrate conflict-sensitive thinking and analysis into the work of aid agencies and corporations specifically.

Mainstreaming
"Mainstreaming" refers to the long-term process of incorporating a methodology, concept or practice into all aspects of an organization's programming and practice. There are five key components to mainstreaming:
1. **Commitment and motivation** on behalf of the organization. This includes dedicated policies, resources and time. Commitment and motivation are required at all levels and across all divisions of the organization, from field-level staff to decision makers, from program implementers to non-program staff in administrative, finance, and human resources sectors.
2. **An enabling organizational culture** allows for communication and information to flow in all directions within an agency. Leaders are informed by lessons of the past and by the evidence provided by their staff. Staff are motivated to utilize specific tools and to engage their colleagues in these approaches.
3. **Capacity building** is a necessary element of mainstreaming. Staff at all levels need introduction to, and time to learn how to utilize, new tools and resources.
4. **Accountability** includes developing internal systems of review and reward to reinforce motivation for going forward. Accountability should also be external, to donors and to local communities.
5. **An enabling external environment** sets the stage for the uptake of new processes. Organizations can be 'enabled' by policy or funding decisions, by shifts in conflict dynamics or other factors.[10]

Mainstreaming is an ongoing process. It requires sustained effort on behalf of donors (funding conditions, accountability, enabling external environment), organizational management (capacity building, enabling internal culture, accountability) and staff (commitment and motivation, opportunities for peer learning). If any one of these factors slips away, organizations become less likely to sustain organizational change. With conflict sensitivity we have seen this happen especially in the case of donor requirements. The requirements certain donor agencies have for their partners shift over time with the political priorities of the their parliaments, and changes in their bureaucratic importance. Partner

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[10] Lange, Maria "Building Institutional Capacity for Conflict Sensitive Practice: The Case of International NGOs" International Alert. May 2004. http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Institutions_INGOsConflictSensitivePractice_EN_2004.pdf

agencies may be required to report on conflict sensitivity one year, and gender sensitivity the next. As these reporting requirements shift, implementing agencies can interpret this as a drop in priority for the application of CS therefore place less emphasis on conflict sensitivity within their own programs when it is not being actively required by donor agencies. Staff turnover can also affect an agency's ability to sustain CS application and mainstreaming. People in key positions who actively support conflict sensitivity may leave the agency or move to new posts. New leaders may not have the same interests or capacity to motivate staff and support change, and the strength of CS fades.

Mainstreaming Efforts: What's been done?
Conflict sensitivity mainstreaming has largely been an organization-by-organization effort. There have been high-level attempts to influence conflict sensitivity practice among aid organizations by drafting guiding principles and industry standards, and while these can support organizational shifts, in themselves they have been insufficient to mainstream conflict sensitivity across entire sectors. This section lays out various mainstreaming efforts that have been made, their (probable) theories of change, and the effects of those efforts.

Training
The primary tool for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity (or, indeed any methodology or concept) has been capacity building through training. Since 1998, thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people have been trained in the application of various conflict sensitivity frameworks. This is mainly true for humanitarian aid and development workers, as conflict sensitivity training has not been widely utilized by corporations. Organizations rely heavily on training to do the heavy lifting of organizational change.

The predominant Theory of Change appears to be: *If staff gain knowledge and skill in conflict sensitivity, they will begin to apply conflict sensitivity frameworks systematically to their context analysis, program and project design, implementation, redesign and monitoring and evaluation.*

Evidence shows that training and capacity building are necessary elements for the uptake of conflict sensitivity. Alone, however, they are insufficient to generate lasting changes in practice. Staff require the encouragement of their organizational leadership to apply new methodologies, as well as the resources and time to develop competencies.

Much of the conflict sensitivity training that has been done has been with project implementers. While this is vital, staff at this level have little influence over organizational policies and practices beyond their particular sphere of influence in projects or programs. "Conflict blind" decisions made at higher levels can have the effect of undermining conflict sensitive practice on the ground.

The good news is that there has been a tremendous amount of awareness raised about the importance of conflict sensitivity. And in organizations where training has been supported through policy changes and changes in organizational practice, staff continue to use CS frameworks. However, many people receive one-off CS trainings and return to their jobs with little expectation from peer colleagues or superiors that they will use the concepts they have learned, and no support to do so. Training is necessary, but insufficient; yet it is the first, and often most-heavily emphasized, attempt organizations make to integrate CS into their practice.

Where training has worked well for uptake it has been supported by other endeavors. An organization in Cambodia trained all of its project staff by offering everyone a Field Assessment Training. As new staff were hired, they were given brief introductory CS workshops. Once enough new staff joined the

organization to hold a full workshop, they were offered an in-depth field assessment, combining a typical workshop scenario with a real-time CS analysis in the field, which went toward development or redesign of new projects. These staff were given immediate reinforcement of skills learned in the workshop, and, since all other staff had the same training experience, they were supported in applying CS by more senior staff members and organizational leadership.[11]

"Departmentalizing"

The word "departmentalizing" is used here to describe the practice of giving responsibility for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity to a specific department in the company or agency. This is true of many so-called "cross-cutting" themes like gender and M&E; these functions often face a similar fate. In aid agencies, the responsible department is typically the peacebuilding department or conflict team if one exists, or a set of conflict advisors, and in companies it is the Community Relations (CR) Department. In this model, a handful of people bear the responsibility either for training and capacity building for the entire organization, or for the implementation of conflict sensitive approaches across the organization. For corporations, those people bear the responsibility for acquiring and maintaining a 'social license to operate' by maintaining constructive relationships with local stakeholders.

The Theory of Change seems to be: *If one department is responsible for making sure that staff understand and use conflict sensitivity in their work, this department will promote it and ensure its use internally, and provide backstopping, advice, and technical support for the integration of CS into the projcts and programs of other departments.*

In companies, we often see that CR departments become "firefighters," extinguishing the conflicts that the operational arms of the company create with communities. If a construction team causes an environmental hazard that creates conflict within the community, or more likely, between the community and the company, the CR team is deployed to address the conflict. In NGOs and corporations alike, when CS is housed within a single department, its reach into the operational elements of the organization, like hiring, security decisions, and partnering, is limited. CS, in these instances becomes housed within projects, at the field level, but rarely affects the strategic operations of the organization.

Occasionally, within NGOs, specific staff are named as conflict advisors. They may be called upon to consult with projects or programs about implementation or redesign, or to do trainings or offer accompaniment for CS analyses. Here again, staff turnover is a threat to organizational CS capacity. Turnover is a two-sided coin, of course. If conflict advisors move to new organizations, they can become vectors for CS implementation, by spreading CS into a different organization, different department, or different country office.

Occasionally, we have seen departments responsible for CS or teams set up as capacity building initiatives. They are given a mandate to mainstream CS within their organization or country office. These teams can be very successful, but the efforts are often limited. While there is funding, or motivated leadership, these initiatives have a lot of traction. However, we have witnessed cases in which funding dissipates, or leadership changes and such units are be disbanded or deprioritized, staff are reassigned, and application of CS wanes. In Cambodia, World Vision brought in a core team of motivated staff to form a Peacebuilding Department, responsible for mainstreaming CS in all the projects of the country office. The funding of this department was established as a "pilot project" and after three years it was shut down. Some of the department's staff were reassigned, others left the organization. Three years

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[11] Brady, Emily and Nicole Goddard. "Do No Harm in Cambodia" DNH Reflective Case Studies. 2010.

after the department closed, CS was no longer supported by the country office management, and only motivated individual staff continued to use it.

More Tools, Smaller Tools
In recent years, a host of thematic, or micro-process tools and guidance have been released. Such tools give guidance on, for example, conflict-sensitive journalism[12] or land tenure and property rights,[13] and for companies, issues like project-induced in-migration.[14] These tools are meant to speak to new audiences—beyond traditional development or humanitarian actors—using recognizable language and framing familiar to them, or to address a certain aspect of programming that organizations find problematic.

The Theory of Change seems to be*: Specific and targeted tools and toolkits will increase the likelihood of the application of CS by addressing the conflict-sensitivity needs of their intended audiences, creating a level of familiarity and comfort with the material and demonstrating the need for conflict sensitivity in new arenas or demonstrating how to apply it to specific processes.*

Using tools for micro-processes may have both positive and negative impacts. If an organization applies a micro-process tool and is able to adequately reduce its negative impacts in a specific sector or task area, there is a risk that they ignore conflict elements in other sectors, and not adequately reduce their overall negative impact on conflict.

Overall, these tools have been embraced as positive advances, which have the potential to introduce new audiences to CS concepts or to improve CS practice in specialized processes. Additionally, many of them are paired with training courses or resource packs, which supplement guidance documents and offer practice with implementation. Many people find it difficult to utilize stand-alone tools and process guidance, without some capacity-building effort associated with them. There have also been other significant efforts to introduce new audiences in conflict sensitivity. In Kenya, Local Capacities for Peace trained journalists following the 2007 post-election violence and in the lead-up to the 2013 election. In Bolivia, government officials were trained in conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding by GIZ in order to help them work with CSOs to enhance conflict-sensitive policies and practice of the Bolivian Government with an overall aim toward conflict prevention.

Since this is relatively recent phenomenon, there has been little examination of the impact of these sector-specific or micro-process tools. Equally, there is little evidence of the impacts of application of such tools in terms of benefits for people on the ground regarding the implementation of conflict-sensitive policies or an understanding of how to measure and track these results. However, they have generated a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm for CS in among new audiences.

Standards, Principles and Policies
There have been many external pressures to mainstream conflict sensitivity. Most bi-lateral and multi-lateral donor agencies require that their partners demonstrate a conflict-sensitive approach. High-level

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[12] Howard, Ross. "Conflict-Sensitive Reporting: State of the Art." UNESCO 2009 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001869/186986e.pdf
[13] Lempke, Maureen and Nicole Goddard. "Do No Harm in Land Tenure and Property Rights Programming." CDA 2013. http://www.cdacollaborative.org/media/92483/dnh-in-land-tenure-and-property-rights-final.pdf
[14] "Projects and people: a Handbook for Addressing Project-induced In-Migration." International Finance Corporation. http://commdev.org/files/2545_file_Influx.pdf

policy making organizations and forums either specifically recommend conflict sensitivity, or utilize the concepts in drafting guidance and principles. For companies, the framing of these standards and principles is somewhat different. For a long time, discussions of effectiveness as related to community relations have focused the "social license to operate", risk mitigation, local content and community development, and, more recently, human rights issues. However, industry standards in this regard do exist in the form of the Voluntary Principles on Human Rights and Security and the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Business and most large Western multi-nationals are conscious of pressures to implement these principles stemming from some of their shareholders and from reputational and legal risks.

The Theory of Change seems to be: *The pressures meet international standards for effective practice in contexts of conflict, international principles for appropriate action, and requirements of funding bodies will motivate and provide incentives for NGOs and companies to utilize conflict sensitivity in their work.*

The external pressures provided by industry standards, principles or policies have both positive and negative effects on overall practice. As a positive, there are significant peer pressures to comply with these standards, and organizations and companies wish to be seen, at least, as compliant and at best, as industry leaders. On the other hand, there is a danger that organizations and practitioners over-subscribe to the principles, and therefore blindly apply them without understanding how that application might look in context. This may mean that organizations see little to no utility for conflict sensitivity based on their organizational mandate—humanitarian organizations, for instance sometimes state that "being conflict sensitive means I can't be a pure humanitarian." It may also mean that organizations subscribe to the "do no harm principle" without fully understanding what that means in practical terms. Companies and NGOs often perceive "conflict" as inherently political, and therefore shy away from more proactive approaches to conflict prevention.

Principle vs. Practice: The Challenge of Language
The words "Do No Harm" are deceptive in their simplicity. The language people use to describe or convey a concept affects how listeners perceive the importance and practicality of that concept. Initially, the name, being recognizable as a concept from medical ethics, and as a quick descriptor of the tool's goals, generated strong support for the ideas and methodologies of conflict sensitivity. There is evidence from the CDA's Reflective Case Studies to suggest that the practice of Do No Harm can become replaced by the principle of "do no harm." Principles have a great deal of value and convey a great deal of meaning. The principle of do no harm, however, does not offer guidance on what you are trying not to do harm to, or how to go avoiding doing that harm. The practice of applying the Do No Harm framework takes users through a conceptual framework meant to improve their work by helping them to make decisions about how to change or adapt elements of their programs that are having negative impacts on the contexts in which they operate.

At the same time, the language of "conflict sensitivity" and "do no harm" can dissuade people from applying them. Conflict is inherently political, and becoming involved or trying to influence conflicts is perceived to be beyond the mandate of many organizations. "Do no harm," is perceived as not going far enough—agencies want to do some good. New discourse for these concepts and approaches may be necessary.

Aid workers sometimes find external requirements difficult to integrate into their routines. At the strategic level, initiatives like the UN Development Assistance Framework (a 5 year planning framework with the host Government for all UN agencies in country) include environmental sustainability, human

rights-based approaches, gender equality, results-based management, and capacity development.[15] Practitioners find multi-pronged approaches difficult to implement and would prefer a more integrated package of thematic requirements. As CS has become a cross-cutting theme in aid work, people say that they are not sure how it, and the other cross-cutting themes they are responsible for, can be unified. Standards, principles, and policies can have the effect of appearing to be "add-ons" to standard practices.

This add-on element of conflict sensitivity can also potentially create a "ticking-the-box effect." Aid organizations are anxious to meet donor requirements for proposals and reporting. When donors require CS to be integrated into proposals, organizations often comply, but sometimes this is merely a "ticking-the-box" exercise, in which the proposals and reports have the right words and therefore appear to meet the donor's requirements, but there may be little evidence that the project has utilized a conflict sensitive approach in implementation or project redesign.

The Implications of Ticking-the-Box

A senior staff person at one NGO has observed DNH being used in "rhetoric only" and noted that it is often "over-inflated in reporting." Calling it the "ticking box" effect, he said it is "difficult to know how much it was integrated into the actual programming - five minutes, five hours?" A main theme that emerged from the Conflict Sensitivity Workshop was the lament that DNH and PCIA are "something we have to run our projects through." The framework is used by some not in the process of creating a program but for ensuring the buzzwords are used in the proposals. In "checking it away" the value of the framework is lost. World Vision indicated a more "active" albeit manipulative use of DNH, which occurs when, primarily field staff, make justifications for funding by saying the proposed program is "good for LCP." [LCP stands for Local Capacities for Peace, the original name of the Do No Harm program at CDA. Some organizations still refer to DNH/CS as LCP] People have also observed field staff picking and choosing which elements of the framework are not "relevant" if some problem emerges when projects are proposed or implemented. The consequences can be significant:

Our office was working on water infrastructure projects near an established IDP camp and we chose the location based on information we were getting from the local staff on the ground. We think they chose the area purposefully to buffer an STF [Special Task Force – a Sri Lankan Counter-Terrorism and Insurgency Police Unit]. To make matters worse, we also dug some wells. Later, we were doing some M&E visits and in interviewing those residing in the camps, they remarked how much they loved the wells…and so did the military.
-A senior representative at USAID Sri Lanka

(Excerpted from DNH Reflective Case Study, "Footprints in the Sand? Implementation and Use of DNH in Sri Lanka" by Isabella Jean and Maureen Lempke. 2007. Page 12)

Conflict Sensitivity Projects

From the early days of implementing conflict sensitivity, donors have supported projects to maximize its use, to promote conflict sensitivity among larger numbers of organizations, and to increase capacities within various organizations. In particular, two projects stand out in this regard: the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP)[16] and the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (CSC).[17]

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[15] How to Prepare an UNDAF Part (I) Guidelines for UN Country Teams. UNDG January 2010
http://www.undg.org/docs/11096/How-to-Prepare-an-UNDAF-(Part-I).pdf
[16] LCPP was a project of the German Church Development Service (EED)—now part of Bread for the World—from 2001 to 2005 in Nairobi. The project was tasked with providing a number of services to EED partners in the Horn of Africa, such as DNH capacity building (workshops, trainings of trainers), regular country-level forums for DNH practitioners, translation of materials into local languages, and consultancy services.

The Theory of Change seems to be: *The development of specific projects to promote, disseminate, and learn about the application of conflict sensitivity will generate innovative approaches to training and implementation of CS approaches, and increase expertise within the organizations involved and lead to greater application of CS within participating agencies.*

Following its four years of training, accompaniment, pilot projects and consultations, the legacy of the LCPP Project was mainly increased levels of conflict sensitivity at an individual level. Many former LCPP trainers are CS "champions" and others are committed users who are convinced of the utility of the tool and continue to find creative ways of using CS in their everyday work. Some have left their organizations and find themselves in new structures that do not support CS. At an organizational level, EED's partners in Kenya seem to apply DNH unevenly. Levels of understanding of DNH within each organization and levels of confidence with the tool, are mixed. Though people talk about Do No Harm enthusiastically, they are not always consistent in applying it to their work, even where the capacity to use it exists. Similarly, it appears that during the relatively peaceful period prior to the 2007 presidential elections, organizations found little space for DNH in their programming and donors directed funding toward other tools, approaches and thematic areas. Following the extraordinary violence in 2008, however, there was a rekindling of interest in DNH, particularly in areas where the conflict was acute.[18]

Recently, CS has found a new organizational home in Kenya, with Local Capacities for Peace International, which was founded by former staff of LCPP. LCPI has been revitalizing conflict sensitivity throughout the Horn of Africa.

The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium generated tremendous excitement and renewed energy for CS application among its member agencies, and even extended its outreach to non-member organizations. Each of the country-level consortia developed materials, such as case studies, the *How to guide on conflict sensitivity,*[19] and context analyses.[20] However, there were challenges to its structure. As one representative of a consortium member agency said, "It really took ages to come to a consensus to define [conflict sensitivity]. At the country levels it was relatively a bit easier…but somehow we could not come to a single definition when it came to different countries and mostly they were a bit different from country to country." Additionally, the CSC was widely seen as a "project" with timebound deliverables and specific metrics. Because of this, many of the changes seen during the three years of the CSC, such as the involvement of senior management at the country level in CS implementation, were sustained "only during the project period for almost all the organizations," according to one CSC organization staff member. Agency representatives also said that generating buy-in from senior management at the country level was a difficult process, and one that was not sustained beyond the project period.

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[17] The CSC was a three-year collaboration among 35 organizations working in four different countries (UK, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka), funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). "The project, *The Practice of Conflict Sensitivity - Concept to Impact* [was] intended to strengthen the practice of conflict sensitivity throughout and beyond a broad consortium of humanitarian, peace-building and multi-mandate development NGOs." The project consisted of four country-level consortia, one each in the UK, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Kenya, all working at a country level, with international cooperation among the four consortia.

[18] Goddard, Nicole and Benjamin Miller. "Do No Harm in Kenya: Promotion and Use by Church Development Service." 2009 Unpublished. CDA

[19] http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/sites/default/files/1/6602_HowToGuide_CSF_WEB_3.pdf

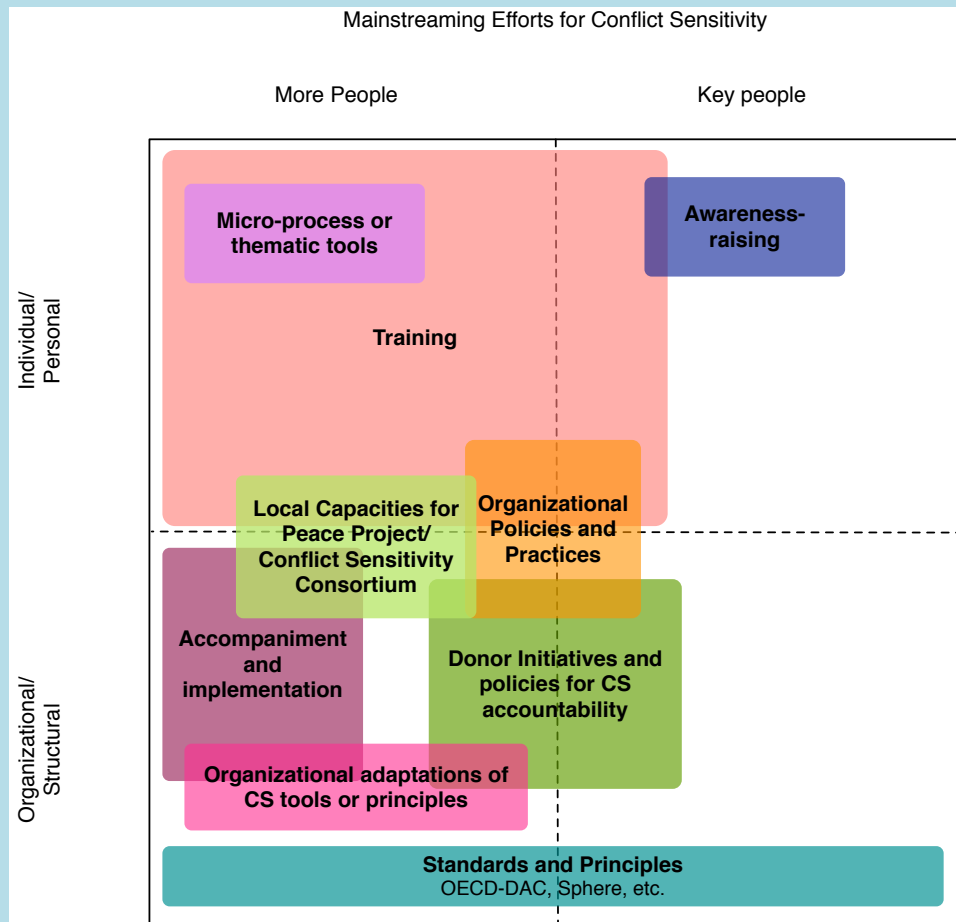[20] Key documents can be found at www.conflictsensitivity.org

These projects have been tremendously successful at generating enthusiasm and motivation for learning and using conflict sensitive approaches, but the commitment, time and funding needed to sustain such efforts is enormous. The question of how to scale up and sustain such efforts remains.

Mainstreaming Efforts Mapped on the Change Matrix
The four-cell matrix below was developed by CDA's Reflecting on Peace Practice Program as a strategy assessment tool, including testing theories of change and determining if activities or programs, as they have been defined will lead to their overall goal. We can use the matrix to visualize if activities will generate the type of change they seek to create.

The four cells of the matrix overlay types of change sought with the type of engagement used. Efforts aimed at **Individual/Personal Change** seek to shift the attitudes, behaviors, relationships or actions of individual people. Efforts aimed at **Organizational/Structural Change** attempt to change or create institutions, reform policies, change codes of conduct or create or update structures. Programs that engage **More People** operate under the basic philosophy that "the more people we involve, the more and better change we'll see." **Key People** engagements operate under the philosophy that "we need to engage influential decision-makers and force-multipliers in order to generate change."

Below, various CS mainstreaming efforts are mapped on this matrix. Over time, mainstreaming efforts for CS have touched every quadrant of the matrix. Yet, despite the broad range of engagements and types of change we have initiated, we have not yet succeeded in fully mainstreaming CS.

Mainstreaming Efforts for Conflict Sensitivity

More People — Key people

Individual/Personal

- Micro-process or thematic tools
- Awareness-raising
- Training
- Local Capacities for Peace Project/ Conflict Sensitivity Consortium
- Organizational Policies and Practices

Organizational/Structural

- Accompaniment and implementation
- Donor Initiatives and policies for CS accountability
- Organizational adaptations of CS tools or principles
- Standards and Principles OECD-DAC, Sphere, etc.

Changing Landscape of Conflict Sensitivity

Returning to the five elements of mainstreaming (commitment and motivation, organizational culture, capacity building, accountability, and an enabling external environment), most of the efforts at mainstreaming included here have focused on at least one of these five elements. According to Lange, "the characteristics and dynamics of change will vary according to the mandate, history and *modus operandi* of a particular agency."[21] But stepping back and taking a broader view, we see that while organizational efforts may work—or may work for a while—to mainstream CS, there are still large gaps in the operationalization of CS approaches, both among and within different agencies.

In the 15 years since the introduction of conflict sensitivity tools and guidance, its reach has extended far beyond its initial audience of development and humanitarian aid workers. It is now applied in corporate operations, in land tenure projects, to peacebuilding programs, and by journalists, government officials, and educators, to name only a small sampling. Many CS practitioners also train community members in conflict sensitivity, in order to help them analyze their own internal conflict dynamics and address them.

At the same time, there seem to be pendulum swings of enthusiasm and fatigue for conflict sensitivity. Donors and NGOs cycle through intensive periods of trying to mainstream CS and periods of reduced funding and doubts about its utility. Practitioners sometimes feel that the process of applying conflict sensitivity is too time consuming and delays the implementation of projects. This is especially felt in the humanitarian field, where rapid response in the face of a humanitarian crisis can take precedence over application of CS. At the same time, the *terms* "conflict sensitivity" and "do no harm" have been part of the aid industry for so long, and have become such a part of the lexicon, that there is sometimes doubt that more efforts at mainstreaming are needed, or that such efforts would have an impact.

The aid world is changing. The chief audience for CS has traditionally been agencies doing work in contexts not their own: the internationals. However, current trends in development aid have shifted the aid architecture from international delivery to local ownership (through mechanism such as The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action[22] and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States[23]). Additionally, new countries, like China, India, Brazil, and Russia, are emerging as donors. Efforts are underway to influence their thinking about operating in contexts of conflict.[24] As these new models emerge, new challenges for CS come with them. Engaging new actors, donors and governments alike, will be vital to continuing the promotion of conflict sensitive action.

As the contexts we work in continue to change, and new forms of violence and conflict become predominant, we find ourselves asking, as practitioners did in the late 1990s: what is needed to adapt to these shifting paradigms?

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[21] Lange, Maria "Building Institutional Capacity for Conflict Sensitive Practice: The Case of International NGOs" International Alert. May 2004

[22] http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf

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