# About CDA Perspectives & Submission Guidelines

The CDA Perspectives blog is maintained by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA). It is intended to share reflections, present information and provoke debate and conversation. On the blog, we share personal experiences of working towards improving impacts of interventions in contexts of conflict and fragility, and findings from collaborative learning projects.

In most cases, we discuss issues related to CDA's practice areas: accountability and feedback loops, Do No Harm, peacebuilding effectiveness, and responsible business operations. In addition to our staff contributors, we invite colleagues and partners to share their experiences, and host blog post series.

These are the most common blog post types we feature on CDA Perspective:

- **Personal reflections** in response to recent activities or learning events (a new case study, training workshop, analytical process, assessment...) that might encourage other practitioners, or policy makers to share their own reflections, and might serve to enrich their practice.
- **An exploratory discussion of an emerging lesson or set of lessons**—to invite further dialogue or insights from colleagues. Sharing thoughts from a Collaborative Learning Process-in-progress would be a good example.
- **A semi-formal presentation of findings** from CDA collaborative learning projects, or related work done by partners, such as a final report or publication, which encourages reading the publication, or sharing it with key people.

## Become a Contributor / Guest Author

Any of the above blog "types" may be written by a colleague, who either offered to write or has been asked by CDA to write a post, on a topic of interest and relevance to CDA.

### Expectations

As a contributor, you will be responsible for responding to comments made on your post to maintain the Blog as a convening space for conversation and debate. Author responses to comments are not limited in word length, but rather serve the purpose of engaging with individuals expressing interest in the blog content to foster a sense of community.

To contribute to expanding the conversation we ask that all contributors use the means at their disposal (e.g. LinkedIn, email, newsletters) to notify interested parties of the posting.

### Submission Process

Email your blog post to CDA's Communications Email (comms@cdacollaborative.org). Note that CDA's review and approval process takes ten working days on average. CDA will copy edit and review the formatting of the submission. If there is an agreed publication date, then please be conscious of the timeline:

1. Submit to CDA for first review 10 business days before intended date of publication. This review will include technical review by the appropriate CDA staff, and quality review by the Communications Associate to optimize the post for sharing on a blog media outlet. The CDA technical review includes compliance with Do No Harm conflict-sensitivity principles.

2. Submit final version 2 business days before intended date of publication (e.g., Submit Friday morning for the copy-edit if the intended posting is Tuesday morning.)

## Submission Guidelines

### Writing the Blog

*Content:* The most effective blog posts offer something substantive and new. They challenge, inspire, share lessons or question practice in a way that advances the field. They illustrate a new way of thinking, offer reflections, explain research, suggest a new model or illustrate work in progress.

*Keep it lively and graphic:* You are encouraged to include photos, charts, or graphics. Supporting data and expert quotes are very useful. If possible, submit pictures that complement your post, including due credit. (see *CDA Photo Policy*)

*Give careful consideration to the title of the post:* Try for something catchy, humorous or provocative, if appropriate. This is a key variable in whether anyone will read it.

*Tone and style:* In many cases, it will be advisable to write in the first person and in a friendly yet professional tone—although there may be exceptions. Draw from your personal experiences! And include a short introduction about yourself and a headshot. Posts can be written in English, French or Spanish (with an accompanying English language version).

*Focus on key points:* Keep in mind the key points you want the readers to remember from your post, as well as what they are interested in learning. Two of the strengths of a blog as a publishing platform are conciseness and interactivity. Therefore:

1. A shorter post should be 250 - 500 words long, and include about 2-4 hyperlinks
2. While a longer post should be 400- 1000 words long, and include about 3-5 hyperlinks

*Keep it positive and focused on behavior and policies:* CDA does not "name and shame" or publish strong critiques of specific individuals or organizations. Critiques of general practice or common patterns of behavior are acceptable, couched in terms of desired results rather than harsh criticism.

*Be Clear about who you are speaking for/not:* If you are expressing your personal observations or opinions, be sure to state that. If you are expressing accepted CDA principles and evidence-based learning, state that as well.

*Add Links:* Hyperlink a sentence in the post to another blog that discusses a similar topic to the one you address, or even better, link to a visual presentation that either supports or enriches the topic you are addressing. Please also feel free to embed 1-2 links in your author bio (e.g., to your professional Twitter or LinkedIn page).

*Call to action:* It is often useful to include a call to action; either through a question, suggested next step, etc. This can help achieve your post's goal.

*Edit!* Don't forget to edit and spell check your post before submitting for review.

*Give credit and be transparent:*

1. Cite materials by providing hyperlinks to original sources. By approving your blog for uploading on CDA Perspectives you agree to be the sole accountable party to be held liable to accusations of plagiarism.
2. Ask for permission from the relevant parties involved before:
    a) Writing about private conversations
    b) Writing about possibly confidential information
    c) Publishing content that will affect colleagues
    d) Sharing content that is under a third party's copyright
3. Disclose professional or personal connections that you have or CDA has with organizations and individuals mentioned.

## Disclosure, Intellectual Property, and Liability

1. Remember that the information you are sharing will be public. Even though posts can be deleted retroactively, other parties may have already downloaded or seen it.
2. CDA will not be held liable to any consequences of a blog post, which was not authored by CDA staff, that is uploaded to CDA Perspectives. By approving the blog post for publishing on CDA Perspectives, a guest author agrees to be the sole party to be held liable to the consequences of publishing the blog on CDA Perspectives.
3. A blog contributor retains final sign off on all aspects of the post until it is made public; CDA will not post a submission before the author approves the final text.
4. CDA reserves the right to make minor corrections to the post's grammar, spelling, or formatting after posting. The author is welcome to propose changes or contest edits.
5. CDA reserves the right to remove the blog post after it has been posted without requesting prior permission of the contributor.
6. You may republish the content as long as you acknowledge it was first shared on CDA Perspectives, provide a hyperlink to the post in its original location, and inform CDA's Communications Associate.
7. Though all posts are reviewed and approved by CDA before they are made public, each post is a personal reflection by its author, and is not a statement of CDA's policies, findings or views – unless stated otherwise. For example, a blog post may challenge one of CDA's findings, as long as it makes a good argument. A guest blog post may introduce opinions or findings that have not been thoroughly researched by CDA – but are a relevant expansion on topics that CDA does research.

CDA is a non-profit organization committed to improving the effectiveness of those who provide humanitarian assistance, engage in peace practice, support sustainable development, and conduct corporate operations in contexts of conflict and fragility.  We combine rigorous analysis with pragmatic field-level work and deliver practical guidance and services to field staff and policymakers alike.

Browse our resources on cdacollaborative.org/publications.