**Berghof Research Center
for Constructive
Conflict Management**

Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) Five Years On: The Commodification of an Idea

(Response Paper)

By: Kenneth Bush

Contact Address:
Info@berghof-center.org
Berghof Research Center for
Constructive Conflict Management
Altensteinstraße 48a,
D-14195 Berlin, Germany

Kenneth Bush is a Geneva-based Research Fellow with the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University. He received his Ph.D. in International Relations and Comparative Politics from Cornell University and has held teaching positions at Queen's University, Carleton University, and Bilkent University (Ankara, Turkey). He has developed and taught courses on "Post-Cold War Security," International Relations Theory, Conflict Management, Forced Displacement, and Foreign Policy. Dr. Bush has worked with such organizations as UNICEF, OECD DAC, the World Bank, DFAIT, CIDA, IDRC, and a host of NGOs on the challenges of peacebuilding. He has published widely on issues of peacebuilding, identity-based conflict, and bad governance. Current activities include: developing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation framework on the peace and conflict impacts of development projects in conflict zones; research on the impact of militarised violence on children; and work on the commodification of peacebuilding or the peace-destroying impacts of "peacebuilding" initiatives. He is a member of the Consultative Board of the Butterfly Garden in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka; the Advisory Board of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee; and an Expert Advisor for the U. of Washington Project on Girls in Militaries, Paramilitaries, Militias, and Armed Opposition Forces.

Address: 5 Avenue de la Foretaille, Geneva 1292, Switzerland
Tel: (41-22) 758-0632 e-mail: kbush@iprolink.ch

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) Five Years On: The Commodification of an Idea

A Response by Kenneth Bush to Mark Hoffman, "Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Methodology: Evolving Art Form or Practical Dead End?" for publication in *The Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2001).

Hoffman's chapter for the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation offers a timely opportunity to examine the idea and set of practices in an evolving area of activity sometimes labeled Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment or "PCIA." More broadly, the chapter presents an opportunity to enter into a *critical* discussion of the practice and politics of peacebuilding -- a discussion that has been conspicuous by its absence despite the rush of international donors into self-described peacebuilding projects, programmes, and "operations."

The structure and content of the Hoffman paper is straightforward. It consists of a general discussion of traditional donor evaluation, followed by brief overviews of the methodologies employed in: *A Measure of Peace*; the INTRAC study; and the ARIA project. It concludes with a one-page conclusion containing four relatively technocratic points to bear in mind in the subsequent development of PCIA.

While the Hoffman paper does a fine job summarizing some of the methodological details of a number of studies, I cannot help but be struck by the question: where are the politics? PCIA, in its origins and implications, is fundamentally political. To treat it in a non-political, technocratic, manner is as dangerous as treating arms control mechanisms in a non-political, technical manner. A full examination of the evolutionary path of PCIA, as an idea or as an evolving methodology, must be placed in the very political context of the "Development Industry." Once this is done, then analysis turns towards issues of power and control, and the question of whether the empowering potential of PCIA can be realized through developmental structures which have been known to have net dis-empowering, anti-peacebuilding, impacts.[1]

While my comments below address some of the specific methodological issues raised in the Hoffman paper, it employs a broader analytical focus in order to consider a larger set of political issues inherent in the ways the Development Industry, as it is currently construed, conditions -- and often neutralizes the transformative potential of -- new ideas whether this is gender, the environment or peace and conflict issues. It will become clear that I consider methodological issues to be the least important dimension of the development of PCIA when compared to the homogenizing impact of the Development Industry.

The Origin of PCIA

It is worth reviewing the origins of "PCIA", in order to provide a point of reference for examining the process by which ideas are introduced, appropriated, adapted, and often adulterated by mainstream development (read "political") institutions. Such a historical glance also responds to the Hoffman paper's (valid) observation that my Working Paper, *A Measure of Peace: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of Development Projects in War Zones* (Bush 1998) is, in some areas, lacking in specificity.

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[1] Two examples discussed at greater length elsewhere are the international response to Kosovo and the hundreds of international donor sponsored conflict resolution workshops (so-called) in the Republika Srpska of Bosnia Herzegovina. See Bush (2001, forthcoming). "The Commodification, Compartmentalization, and Militarization of Peacebuilding," in Andy Knight and Tom Keeting, eds., *Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Societies* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press).

In 1996, CIDA asked me to, among other things, develop a discussion paper for the OECD DAC Working Group on Conflict, Peace, and Development Cooperation on what I labeled Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of development projects in war zones. The Evaluation Unit of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) pushed the idea to the next step of development by supporting me to undertake field work on PCIA in Mozambique, Uganda, and South Africa in 1997. *A Measure of Peace* was the result of over a hundred interviews and meandering conversations in the field -- conversations often undertaken within a thin cocoon of candle light, ears cocked for untoward sounds outside barred windows.

While *A Measure of* Peace employs the painfully honed language of an un-recovered academic, any utility (or legitimacy) that it might possess derives directly from the experiences and insights offered by those development and humanitarian workers on the front lines of contemporary dirty wars. The objective of the study was to sketch out the conceptual parameters of PCIA. After this first step, the intention was to create the space for those *in the South* to re-engage the idea so that they *themselves* could develop appropriate, practical, and more user-friendly tools[2] to monitor and assess the broader peace and conflict impact of their projects. *A Measure of Peace* was never intended to be a full blown kit bag of PCIA tools. It was an invitation into an open-ended and on-going conversation. Up to that point in time, there had not be the *recul* necessary to hear (let alone listen to) the voices in the field -- especially non-English ones outside the footprint of the international development industry. At best, there was the usual ventriloquism or tokenism, followed by *ad hominem* appeals for considering the conflict context in development programming.

After the publication of *A Measure of Peace* something interesting happened. Instead of returning to the field, the idea of PCIA was seized upon by bilateral and multilateral donors. Emphasis shifted from the original organic Southern-led learning process to a mechanistic Northern-led quest for mainstreamable products ("tools," frameworks, manuals, indicators -- especially indicators -- *etcetera*). In some cases, Northern-based NGOs saw this as an opportunity to bag some quick funding by starting up PCIA or PCIA-like ("or PCIA-lite") projects -- projects which were funded despite their conceptual incoherence or the questionable capacity of the implementing organization.

The ultimate result in most cases was the limitation, rather than its expansion, of PCIA as it was forced into the constrained pre-existing bureaucratic structures and standard operating procedures of the Development Industry.

Indicators

The Hoffman paper takes particular issue with the fact that *A Measure of* Peace lacks a hard set of indicators to measure peace and conflict impact. Further, it calls for a "convincing case for alternative approaches is the articulation of useable criteria and indicators."

This is a common criticism of *A Measure of Peace*. However, a close reading of it provides a response:

> If the PCIA is to be user-driven and relevant, then ″users″ should choose their own indicators - whether they are evaluators for multilateral organizations, or

[2] In the interim, a fascinating simulation exercise was developed and tested at IDRC with the help of , Rob Opp a research officer in the Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Unit at the time. The exercise assembled a wide mix of policy makers, development and humanitarian NGO workers from the North and South, and researchers which helped to refine our understanding of the PCIA respective needs of each of these groups as well as some of the modalities to be considered in PCIA development and implementation. In January 2001, this was tested again in Sri Lanka under the auspices of the in the Swedish Mission in Colombo.

> local partners, or the communities within which projects are undertaken. This goes against the grain of most conventional approaches to evaluation, which typically specify indicators in advance. However, conventional evaluations focus more clearly on a project or programme in a certain sector. Ostensibly, this approach has the advantage of allowing for greater comparability between projects by identifying and standardizing suitable indicators within projects. There is a danger however, that the *a priori* identification of indicators may obscure as much as it reveals by highlighting (and thus legitimating) some features of a project, while simultaneously burying (and thus delegitimating) others.

In essence, *A Measure of Peace* calls for a "kaleidoscopic" set of indicators that can accommodate the different needs, interests, and worldviews of the different project stakeholders (in the broadest sense) and participants in an assessment process.[3] This is essential if PCIA is to stand a chance of having an empowering impact on communities affected by outside interventions. That you might have different -- even incommensurable -- indicators within the same monitoring/ evaluation system certainly goes against the logframe logic that the Hoffman paper rightly criticizes. The willingness to accept such methodological messiness highlights the paradigmatic difference between, on the one hand standard evaluation tools which create, and then capture, a single reality, and on the other hand, PCIA as an approach that *interprets multiple realities.*

The use of *competing indicators* is founded upon the understanding that there is not a single socio-political reality or impact, but a multiplicity of realities and impacts that co-exist and often clash. The choice of different indicators by different "stakeholders" allows for a clearer examination and understanding of these multiple, overlapping realities. Is this a problem *for* traditional evaluation approaches? It certainly is. However, it is also a major problem *with* traditional evaluation, because the a priori identification such indicators almost always says more about the evaluation system that it does about the impact of a project -- and, hegemonically imposes the world view and implicit interests of the evaluator's system over those on the ground. Is it possible to come up with a genuinely common set of indicators acceptable to all stakeholders? Maybe, but I suspect that the compromises involved in such an exercise might result in an erroneous, or at least one dimensional, slice of impact-reality.

The suggestion in the Hoffman paper that PCIA be developed further through a "project similar to the SPHERE project in the humanitarian field " elicits reservations similar to those applied to indicators. I am worried about large-scale proselytizing missions that descend on capital cities in war-affected countries around the world to hold workshops run by non-country experts with huge frequent flier accounts. I recall briefing an apostle of the Do No Harm Project on the ABCs of inter-group and intra-group politics in Sri Lanka only days before his "mission" and workshop there. This leads me a position which allows for multiple efforts at multiple levels with variable (if any) linkages between them in the initial stages of PCIA development.

A final note on indicators: The Hoffman paper suggests that they might be "articulated on the basis of the theories that lie behind particular types of interventions as well as from experience and case studies." In my experience, I have found that "interventions" at an international level are driven primarily by interests, rather than by theories. In some cases, "theories" have become useful screens for underlying political economic motivations for interventions. While I believe that some interventions are justified, any attempt to assess them would be better served by looking at interests, rather than at theories.

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[3] Here, it is worth noting that on-site-generated indicators are already being used by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) in evaluations of environmental impact. See: IUCN International Assessment Team, Assessing Progress Towards Sustainability: Approaches, Methods, Tools, Progress,@ Strategies for Sustainability Programme, March 1996.

Linkages and Interconnections Between Different Types and Levels of Evaluations

> "But the real limitation is that [the *Measure of Peace*] framework as it stands at the moment is that it provides no basis for looking at the dynamic *interaction between sectors*. It is not only what is unfolding within a particular PCI area but what are the implications of the interaction of these differing areas. How does 'social empowerment' inter-relate with, re-enforce or undermine 'military and human security'? How do different areas dynamically inter-react? What is the relative weight we should give to each sector at any particular juncture." (Hoffman, pp. 16-17)

My sense here, is that it is the case itself -- the thick details and specificities of a case -- that will provide the glimpses into the dynamic interaction between these "sectors." I do not believe that this can be specified *a priori* because it will vary so widely both between *and within* cases. So too, will it vary over time. If we understand PCIA to be a set of interpretive tools, then its utility will be evident (or not) only in its application. And it is *in the application* that the nature of interaction will become apparent (static, dynamic, inter-related, independent, whatever). More importantly, a case-driven approach opens the space for going beyond the description of interactions, to an examination of how and why these change over time -- a prerequisite to any genuine effort to nurture lasting peacebuilding. Further, I fear that efforts to specify the "basis for looking at the interaction" may in fact limit the utility of PCIA by inhibiting its interpretive flexibility-- indeed, by doing what "logframes" were criticized for earlier in Hoffman paper. Namely:

> Many view [logframes]as being overly restrictive, compelling implementing agencies to think 'in the box' rather than being innovative and thinking 'out of the box'. This results from their tendency to re-enforce linear, 'if-then' causal relationships between inputs, activities and outcomes. It is this that tends to lead to an emphasis on the 'quantifiable' when it comes to measurable indicators.

Comparing Conflict Early Warning Systems and PCIA

The Hoffman paper correctly notes that efforts to develop conflict early warning systems (EWS) "have fallen out of favour and into decline." It continues: "At the conceptual level there may even be agreement about what such an approach should try to do in broad terms. But, as with early warning, the translation of these worthy aims into a practical, useable tool has so far not materialised. The gap between theory and practice has not been closed."

The comparison with the floundering efforts to establish conflict early warning systems and PCIA is a good one. But not for the reason that the Hoffman paper asserts. The explanation for EWS "falling out of favour" is *not* to be found in the so-called "gap" between theory and practice. The failure of EWS was not due to technical problems, but to political obstacles. Indeed, when a problem is defined as a technical gap (whether in EWS or PCIA), then the logical response is to fill that technical gap with technical polyfilla©. In the case of EWS it entailed countless proposals from "entrepreneurial" oganizations seeking to develop (often duplicate) more sensitive monitoring mechanisms and systems. Thousands of donor dollars were frittered away into extravagant Buick Road Master visions of EWS in the unstated, politically naïve, belief that the "right" information and the "right" channels of communication would compel early action to early warning. But Rwanda in 1994, the now-classic point of reference, clearly illustrates that the inaction of the International Community (like the refusal of the US representatives of the UN to label the systematic massacres a

"genocide" -- because it would require action under the Genocide Convention[4]) was due fundamentally to political failures, *not early warning failures.* That this has been so well documented, only underscores the bafflement at continued technocratic discussions of "gaps" in EWS.

For the record: one of the main findings of Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR)[5] was that "[d]etailed intelligence reports were passed to New York [UN] and Belgian authorities by the unofficial UNAMIR [United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda] intelligence unit documenting the military training of the militias, hidden arms caches, and plans for violent action. Unequivocal warnings reached the UN Secretariat in January regarding a planned coup, an assault on the UN forces to drive them out, provocations to resume the civil war, and even detailed plans for carrying out genocidal killings in the capital" (JEEAR 1996, p.19) Thus, in the months immediately preceding the genocide (beginning April 1994) there was every indication that massive and systematic violence was being planned: extremist rhetoric dominated the radio, public rallies, and the Rwandan cocktail circuit; assassinations and organized violence were already taking place; weapons flooded into the country;[6] militias were being trained and fed on a diet of extremist hate. In Rwanda, inaction by the international community enabled a civil war and genocide in which an estimated five to eight hundred thousand people were killed within a period of three months. Hundreds of thousands more were physically and psychologically scarred for life through maiming, rape and other trauma. Over two million people fled into neighbouring countries and around one million were displaced within Rwanda.

So, how is this related to the discussion of PCIA? Just as Early Warning gets bracketted by larger political issues of national interest of the major powers, so does PCIA get "compartmentalized" in order to allow donors to continue with foreign policies and trade practices which are patently peace-destroying or conflict-creating.

Without the compartmentalization of our Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, we would have to confront the big, and uncomfortable, contradictions (*not gaps*) between peacebuilding rhetoric and standard international practices. How, for example, can we take seriously the peacebuilding rhetoric of the permanent members of the UN Security Council when they are also the world's largest arms traffickers?[7] Or the US in East Timor, when it supported training programmes for the Indonesian military forces implicated in the recent atrocities (following in the US tradition of the School of the Americas in the United States which similarly trained the military and paramilitary arms of human rights abusing regimes throughout Latin America)?[8] Or the US in the Middle East in Fall 2000, when it sat mute as the Israeli State used its helicopter gun ships, tanks, and full military force against Palestinian children, women and men. Or the UK, when it's "Ethical Foreign Policy" allows for the sale of military equipment to Pakistan (only ten months after it condemned the military regime

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[4] The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. See Diane F. Orentlicher, "Genocide," in Roy Gutman and David Rieff (eds.) *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1999), pp 153-157.

[5] Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda,"Synthesis Report," *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons From the Rwanda Experience* (March 1996). For detailed discussion of information and early warning, see "Study 2: Early Warning and Conflict Management," by Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke (with Bruce Jones).

[6] Former Warsaw Pact countries appear to have supplied both sides. Key suppliers include France, South Africa, Egypt, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, as well as the Czechs and Slovaks. F. Goose, "Arming Genocide in Rwanda," *Foreign Affairs* (September/ October 1994), 86-96.

[7] A recent study from the International Institute for Strategic Studies reports that the West's three permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, UK, France) account for 80% of the World's weapons sales with the US increasing its share of the international arms market to almost 50%. "US Takes Lion's Share of World's Arms Exports," *Guardian Weekly*, October 26 - November 1, 2000, p.7.

[8] "US Trained Butchers of East Timor, *The Guardian Weekly,* 23-29 September 99, p.2.

that overthrew the elected government) and to the Mugabe Regime in Zimbabwe while it is embroiled in military adventurism in the Democratic Republic of Congo -- not to mention the viscous attacks on internal political opponents and White Farmers?[9]

What are the implications of this discussion for PCIA methodology? Methodology -- all methodologies -- are perforated by politics. Whatever methodological conveniences we hope to fashion for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, must be placed in this political context.

Peacebuilding as Impact: A Justifiable and Necessary Bias

> … although Bush notes the need to distinguish between development projects that have a peacebuilding potential and those projects that explicitly concerned with peacebuilding, his framework is still biased towards the former. While Bush might well argue that much if not all of what he has outlined would be relevant to explicit peacebuilding activities, the need to explore whether the particularities of such programmes or projects requires a distinctive PCIA approach. (Hoffman, p.17)

The Hoffman paper is correct that original study contains this "bias." The bias derives directly from the study's understanding of peacebuilding as an impact or outcome, rather than a type of activity.

As discussed in *A Measure of Peace*, over the last few years, peacebuilding instruments have typically focussed on such activities as human rights projects, security sector reform, democratic institution strengthening, public sector reform, and more nebulously, "good governance" projects. While these activities *may have* had positive impacts on the peace and conflict environment, there are also cases where they have had negative impacts. As importantly, it is essential that we also consider (even emphasize) the peacebuilding and peace-destroying impacts of those *development* activities that are not conventionally framed or analyzed in this context -- for example, activities and initiatives in agriculture, irrigation, health, education, and so on. Not only are such initiatives or instruments far more prevalent than "peacebuilding" projects, but they are less likely to be viewed as being as overtly "political" and therefore are less likely to encounter political flak. If we understand peacebuilding as an impact, then it is necessary to delineate the "peacebuilding impact" of an initiative, from its developmental impact, economic impact, environmental impact, gender impact and so on. When we do so, we see that positive humanitarian or developmental impacts are, at times, coincident with positive peacebuilding impact, but disturbingly, sometimes they are not.

The Hoffman paper is quite right that the idea of PCIA, as sketched out in *A Measure of Peace,* can *and should* be applied quite directly to so-called "peacebuilding projects." The first step in assessing the peace and conflict impact of such projects is the refusal to accept them at their self-described face value. When we adopt this critical perspective, and cast a glance towards so-called peacebuilding projects, we see that there are (many) instances where they have had negative peacebuilding impacts. This observation, along side the fact that there are other "non-peacebuilding" activities which nonetheless have had positive peacebuilding impacts, should alone be sufficient to evoke a much more self-critical examination of so-called peacebuilding projects and programmes. However, this has not been the case.

How do we know that any self-described peacebuilding instrument/initiative even works, aside from anecdotal stories shared over warm beer in generic bars in war-prone regions around the world? An unsettling characteristic of proliferating self-described peacebuilding

[9] "Call for Tighter Arms Control," *The Guardian Weekly,* 17-23 February 00, p.8.

programmes and projects has been the failure to systematically evaluate them -- a situation not unique to this particular set of international activities, by any means. There are many reasons for this, but three in particular need to be highlighted in the current context. One is political; the other two are technical.

The political reason is tied directly to the need for Northern donors to be seen by their domestic constituencies to be programming in the area of peacebuilding -- a need heightened by (1) the public-ness and the scale of post-Cold War massacres of civilians (epitomized in the hyper-violence of Rwanda and the Balkans) and (2) the conspicuous failure of Northern States to intervene effectively in such dirty militarized violence -- or worse to implicitly fuel it through acts of commission and omission. For this reason, in the mid- and late 1990s, Northern donors became quite desperate to be seen to be funding anything that could plausibly be construed as peacebuilding in intention. In such circumstances, the profile of an initiative was more important than the potential impact. Accordingly, we saw the rise of high-profile, media-savy, low-impact-on-the-ground, projects like the War-Torn Societies Project (WSP) and the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. In some of these projects, a bizarre funding dynamic appeared to set in whereby the very lack of substantive impact by the project encouraged some donors to continue funding it, so as not to be seen to have been backing a loser -- classic cases of good money following bad. The absence of independent audits and evaluations of these projects, in effect, served the interests of both the donor and the recipients.

The technical obstacles to the evaluation of self-described peacebuilding projects are the principal subject of the Hoffman paper. They are two-fold. The first is simply the absence of the appropriate methodological tools and the means to apply them. The second is the application of inappropriate, existing, programming and evaluation tools. Thus, some efforts to examine peacebuilding-related programmes, such as governance programmes, using conventional evaluation methods have generated rather bizarre indicators -- such as the World Bank's use of "length of time it takes to have a telephone line installed" as a governance indicator.[10]

Contextualization and Under-contextualization

The Hoffman paper notes correctly that there is a "need to further develop an understanding of contexts, conditions and circumstances and how these affect the likelihood of positive impacts." In all places wracked by militarized violence, these are the essential "thick details" necessary for effective development and peacebuilding programming. However, pointing out that such contextual understanding is necessary still leaves open the question of how exactly this might be done. The brief answer is: through *immediate contact* and experience *over time*. Yet problematically, when we examine the situation of donors and international aid agencies in the field, we tend to see a rapid turn-over of personnel, and a general lack of prior country-specific experience. This poses huge obstacles to the incorporation of context into donor and operational decision-making in conflict-prone areas -- let alone policy making in OECD Capitals around the world.

When I reflect on what I have seen over the past few years in Sri Lanka (the country with which I am most familiar), there appears to be a trend among agencies to hire field staff with experience from other conflict zones around the world (the Balkans, the Great Lakes, and so on). These noble souls face the two-fold challenge of first, *unlearning* what they acquired in other "complex humanitarian emergencies" around the world, and second, *learning* a very different reality in Sri Lanka. Some have succeeded, albeit with considerable effort; others have not. At the risk of appearing trite, it needs to be said: Sri Lanka is not Bosnia; it is not

[10] See World Bank, Governance and Public Sector Reform -- Institutional and Governance Reviews (IGRs). http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/igrs.htm

Rwanda; it is not Nicaragua. Sri Lanka is Sri Lanka. And this is what sets the parameters, the possibilities, and the limits on development programming on the island. This is not to suggest that there is not a lot to learn from systematic comparative studies between Sri Lanka and other violence-prone countries (comparisons of child soldiers in Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, for example). But, it is to say that the applicability and utility of such efforts will be dependent upon our ability to fit those experiences into the very particular and very specific reality of Sri Lanka, *not the other way around*. To do this, requires an acute appreciation of the significance of details -- political, economic, historical, biographical, anthropological, sociological, cultural, and so on. While the failure to appreciate such details will certainly hamper development programming, it should also be emphasized that this "thick understanding" is still only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for successful development programming.

More generally, there appears to be a "gap" between the country-specific background of personnel and the need for specificity and contextual understanding. The obvious response to this short coming is to put a priority on hiring personnel with appropriate country experience and training, and perhaps to limit rotation regionally, so that cumulative learning can take place at an institutional and personal level. It also means seeing hiring nationals *in positions with genuine decision-making authority,* instead of using ex pats. This is not an especially novel suggestion, but one which must be made repeatedly. More problematically however, it requires donors to make a *long-term* commitment to communities and governments in War-Torn (or War-Born) societies. Longevity and commitment has not been a characteristic of the Development Industry. As a colleague of mine asked a UN official as he alighted from his blue-flashing monster jeep in Eastern Sri Lanka: "Are you here for good? Or are you here as usual?"

The Commodification of Peacebuilding

We are at a critical moment in the evolution of PCIA. Not however, because of the cumulative efforts of different groups to fashion suitable assessment tools, but because of the growth of a developmental "sector" or "field" that has come to be known as peacebuilding. When I survey this field, I cannot help but notice the rise of a phenomenon I've called the commodification of peacebuilding -- initiatives that are mass-produced according to blue prints that meet Northern specifications and (short-term) interests, but that appear to be only marginally relevant or appropriate for the political, social, and economic realities of war-prone societies. In the worst case scenario, this leads to a process in which peacebuilding as an idea and as a set of practices is (to be churlishly provocative) simply stuffed into the standard operating systems of the standard international actors who do the same old song and dance. When "new monies" are found, or existing monies are reallocated, to support "peacebuilding activities," the old wine-new bottle syndrome is as prevalent as the faces at the funding trough. And in this process, PCIA has the potential to be used by donors as a mechanism of obfuscation (*e.g.* by compartmentalizing development initiatives from anti-developmental foreign and trade policy or military practices) or worse domination (*e.g.*, the imposition of projects and programmes that are not wanted or endorsed by local communities). The empowering potential of PCIA which is one facet of *A Measure of Peace* will be snuffed out unless such politics are placed front and center of our discussions and analysis of methodology.

Can PCIA be "Mainstreamed" Without the Restructuring of the Development Industry?

The idea of mainstreaming is an interesting one. It highlights the question of the degree to which the existing development structures shape the ideas being mainstreamed. It highlights the question of the how the integrity of a new ideas is affected by the mainstreaming which includes, as Hoffman notes, straining them through logframe logic. However, can, for example, our mechanistic checklists for the participation of women (which are employed in

this form because it is deemed to be standardized and efficient) really assess the impact of a project on women -- and gender relations more broadly?

It is becoming increasingly clear that there is a fundamental mismatch between the planning, implementation and evaluation tools at the disposal of international actors in conflict settings on the one hand, and the types of challenges they are ostensibly meant to address, on the other.[11] The current focus on so-called "gaps" by many within the academic, policy and operational communities[12] may inhibit us from critically assessing the structures, processes, and standard operating procedures, that currently define and limit bilateral and multilateral developmental, humanitarian "institutions"/organizations. The logic and rules of the conventional humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding "game" often undercut peacebuilding impacts/outcomes. The conventional programming logic of efficiency, product-over-process, linearity, "results-based management," Northern-control (under the guise of monitoring and accountability) are at odds with what is often required for sustainable, effective, humanitarian/developmental/ peacebuilding initiatives e.g., approaches which are organic, process-oriented, community-controlled, responsive, and non-linear. If our current approaches -- our standard operating procedures -- are at odds with our peacebuilding objectives, then we require an new and different approach to our work in conflict-prone regions -- an approach which is very different to our standard operating procedures -- an approach which may be antithetical to our current methodologies and tools.

SOPs vs DOPs/ Standard Operating Procedure Versus Desired Operating Procedures

It seems that we may require a new and different approach to our work in conflict-prone regions -- an approach which is very different to our standard operating procedures. An approach which may be antithetical to our current methodologies and tools.

The starting point for the casting of a new approach/instruments is to subvert/ reverse the principles that, so far, have been guiding our work. This is suggested in the list below:

Principles Guiding Present Approach	*Principles to Guide Future Approaches*
Structured	Unstructured/ Less Structured
External Control	Local controlled
Predictability	Unpredictability
Mechanistic Product-Obsession	Organic Process-Orientation
Time Limitedness (Bungee Cord Interventions)	Open-Endedness
	Sustained Presence
Absence	Responsivity
Rigid Planning	Creativity
Routinization	

We find ourselves at a unique moment in the development of PCIA and the peacebuilding discussion more broadly. On the one hand there are many allies within gatekeeper organizations that are committed to genuine peacebuilding impact. On the other hand, they frequently find themselves stymied by rigid and unhelpful bureaucratic structures and internal political feuding. One colleague at the World Bank, explained that his biggest battles in the area of post-conflict reconstruction are the daily fights within his organization -- leading him

[11] This is a conclusion drawn from interviews conducted from 1998 to 2000 with: development workers in War-Zones in Sri Lanka, Bosnia, and Russia; policy makers in Ottawa, New York, and Geneva; and Northern donors in various fora.

[12] For example, the Brookings Process in 1999 which focussed specifically "on the gap between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation" by convening an action group leading up to high level meeting at the Brookings Institute convened by High Commission of Refugees and the President of the World Bank.

to describe himself as bureaucratic guerrilla. Thus, despite the obstacles, there are the opportunities to work both within and outside the "peacebuilding establishment."