Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment: A North-South Participatory Research Project

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Introduction
Towards assessing the impacts of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), a ‘community of practice’ conference, workshop and dialogue event took place on May 22-24, 2013 in Toronto, Canada. The current report narrates the event and outlines the activities undertaken while attempting to capture some of the innumerable insights that were shared. The overall project has been pursued with the generous support of an International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Small grant for Innovative Research and Knowledge-Sharing. This document is a report to the IDRC funder.

Overview and Context
In late 2012, the Assessing the Impact (herein AI-PCIA) initiative was launched with IDRC funding. A cohort of eight scholars and practitioners from the Global South were selected through a competitive application process to participate in constructing and developing a PCIA community of practice. Additionally, several scholars and practitioners from the North were invited to participate in sharing their experience in a Global South-North dialogue that would unfold through a diverse host of activities over sixteen months or so.

This initiative was structured as a partnership between Peacebuild Canada, Peacemedia-paixmédia, York University’s Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), and the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD). Each of these organizations has maintained a clear mandate, with a generous disposition towards favouring the success of the overall initiative. The co-Principal Investigators (PIs) on the project are Eric Abitbol and Silke Reichrath.

Since its effective launch in late 2012, the AI-PCIA initiative has built an online database of participant experience, housed on the Peacebuild Canada website. AI-PCIA participants from the Global South and North created 3-8 minute video and/or audio introductions of themselves, their work, research questions they bring to this project, and their ambitions and aspirations in participating. Participants also created theoretically structured and/or practically informed video and/or audio presentations of their work, averaging some 20 minutes in length. These ‘Introductions’ and ‘Presentations’ have meaningfully contributed to the community of practice’s development, and continue to be used as practical and educational tools by participants.

Building on the ‘Introductions’ and ‘Presentations’, often using them as the basis of discussion, the AI-PCIA has hosted three online dialogues with participants from the Global South and North, averaging 90 minutes. These were held on March 14, March 28 and April 30, 2013. Additionally, the co-PI Eric Abitbol hosted a PCIA roundtable at the International Studies Association (ISA) conference in San Francisco on April 6, 2013. Each of these meetings created an opportunity for participants and the wider PCIA community of academics and practitioners to pursue critical and engaged experience-sharing, intent on assessing the impacts of PCIA and imagining its’ onward development.
In May 2013, AI-PCIA participants from the Global South and North gathered in Toronto, Canada, for a conference, workshop and dialogue event held at York University and hosted on-site by IRIS. This was the first opportunity for all participants to meet and work together in person. Most project participants had already met and engaged in online dialogue, creating the context for meaningful shared work to be pursued with little need for lengthy formalities. Additional participants from within Canada (from Toronto, Waterloo and Ottawa in particular) merged seamlessly with the group, as might be expected of academics and professionals in this field. The remainder of this report provides a reflection of the May 2013 event held in Toronto, Canada.
Methodology
The event was planned in ways that drew together experience and insights from diverse fields of practice, notably:

- Community Development and Popular Education
- Academic Presentations
- Dialogues and Workshops
- Additional Activities

A few words will be shared about each, as relevant to the AI-PCIA event.

Community Development and Popular Education
The event was premised on creating visibility and valuing the contribution of participants in the room, while also ensuring that the experience of those who could not be present in person was also valued, as per the tradition of Community Development (CD). CD is a field of practice that invests significant efforts in creating the context for meaningful experience-sharing. In this sense, participants were picked up at the airport, housed at York University dorms, and provided with the means of healthy sustenance throughout. Ahead of formal proceedings, participants were guided on a ‘Sustainability Walk’ of the York University campus, a world leader and innovator in university design and operations sustainability. This provided a valued opportunity for participants to get to know one another informally.

The overall structure and design of the event was informed by CD principles, from beginning to end. The first point is to value where people are at, and to create opportunities for participants to make this visible and then move forward from there collectively and collaboratively. As such, beyond the PI’s introductory remarks in setting the stage, participants introduced themselves and shared some of their key questions for the event and wider initiative. This aspect of the process was directly informed by the ‘problem-posing education’ methodology of Paulo Freire, in the tradition of Popular Education. Further, throughout the 3-day process, ample opportunities for dialogue and participation were made available, as discussed below. A closing circle provided space for participants to leave their insights with the group, while sharing parting insights and aspirations for follow-up (more on this below).
Academic Presentations
Ahead of the May event, all participants from the Global South and a few from the North were invited to prepare draft academic papers. These papers were also restructured into presentations for the benefit of all participants at the May event.

The list of thoughtful, reflexive and informative papers and presentations shared over the full three days is as follows:

Kenneth Bush
A Genealogy Study of PCIA: Setting PCIA within the Context of its Constitutive Evaluative Practices

Ademola Akinyoade
Peace and Conflict Impact Theory

Vat Kamatsiko
PCIA Theory in Field Practice: Reflections on World Vision's Pursuit for Peace Impact through Quality Programming

Erin McCandless
Peacebuilding Design and Measurement in the UN and in the New Deal

Edwin Barasa Mang’eni
Promoting Empowerment and Accountability in Conflict Affected Environments through PCIA

Norma V. Constantino
Localizing Peace and Development Through PCIA

Zahid Ahmed Shahab
A Critical Analysis of PCIA’s Theory and Application in Pakistan

Marwan Haddad
Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of the Palestinian-Israeli Water Case

Simona Achitei
Mainstreaming Failure or a Small Measure of Success? Observations from a large-scale PCIA in post-war Sri Lanka

Marides Gardiola
Beyond the Lens: PCIA as Peace Sense
Eric Abitbol
From Project Symmetry to Political Equality? A Discourse Analysis of the Conflict and Peace Effects Study of the Red Sea Dead Sea Water Conveyance

Asaf Zohar
Peace Education Towards Sustainability: Peacebuilding and Environmental Leadership Seminar (PELS) at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES)

The purpose of having asked participants to make academic-style presentations was two-fold. First, this provided one context for participants to reflexively theorise their PCIA practice, sharing this analysis with the group. Second, these presentations amounted to the first drafts of papers that participants would eventually submit for consideration and peer-review for the PCIA Special Issue of the JPD. Thus, participants received appreciative and critical feedback on their presentations, analysis and nascent papers.

The presentations were followed by a traditional academic Q&A session, where three questions were generally fielded by presenters at a time. Subsequently, the chair for each session would facilitate a discussion process that creatively, appreciatively and critically engaged with the panel theme (as outlined in the Event Agenda, provided in the appendix). It should also be noted that the chair rotated with each session, such that five different participants of the Global South and North assumed this role.

The presentations have been made available on the Peacebuild Canada website, at: http://peacebuild.ca/en/pcia-assessing-impacts/pcia-final-program

Dialogues and Workshops
The AI-PCIA event set out to create ample opportunity for participants to share experience meaningfully through diverse methodologies, including the use of dialogue and workshops. Throughout the three-day event, numerous dialogues were pursued, creating the space for knowledge and experience to be constructed and to cross-fertilize participants’ work throughout. Overall, subsequent to presentations and Q&As, dialogue was meaningfully pursued with the guidance of skilled facilitators. Indeed, several AI-PCIA event participants are also professional facilitators. A few moments are noteworthy.

On the first night of the AI-PCIA event, drawing on the public conversation methodology of the University of the Streets Café (Institute in Management and Community Development, Centre for Continuing Studies, Concordia University), a PCIA-related film was screened, which served as the basis for a group dialogue. The film, Transcending Boundaries: Perspectives from Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park (Canada-US border), was produced by International Peace Parks Expeditions (IPPE). This organization undertook and published a PCIA analysis about the Peace Park in tandem. The organization’s Executive Director, Todd Walters, was video-conferenced in from
Washington, DC to introduce the film. He then participated in a Q&A and discussion subsequent to its screening. This led to a discussion about Peace Parks and PCIA.

At the end of the second day, a mapping exercise and dialogue process was undertaken, affording participants an opportunity to capture and advance their collective insights thus far. This process was designed and skillfully led by Marides Gardiola and Asaf Zohar; both of them experienced facilitators and educators.

On the morning of the third day, Erin McCandless delivered a recap of the previous days’ insights to the wider group, outlining also some of the challenges that lay ahead. Together, these provided important feedback mechanisms to the group, informed by Bohmian dialogue methodology, enabling and sustaining the group’s practice of thinking, imagining and concretely working together.

On the afternoon of the third and final day, a workshop space was made available to participants for imagining and strategizing next steps. In the tradition of participatory development, participants assumed control of the session and decided on how best to use this time. Participants broke out into three groups for further dialogue and to strategize areas for continued development, as follows:

1. Conceptual/Theorizing
2. Practical/Methodological/Tools
3. Community of Practice

In small thematic and intentional groups of 5-8 people, and drawing on the immense experience in the room, participants deliberated theoretical underpinnings and frameworks of PCIA. They analyzed the merits and applications of different methodological approaches to, and tools of PCIA. They also strategized and outlined opportunities for the continued development of the PCIA community of practice clearly in evidence. Drawing on the World Café dialogue method, participants were invited to circulate and participate in more than one group if they so wished, while a gavel holder remained to capture group insights and report back to the wider collective. Thus, each group was given approximately 5-8 minutes to report their insights back to the wider group. A final circle was then hosted where participants shared final insights with the wider group before bringing the AI-PCIA event to a close.
Notable Insights
Given the incredible diversity, breadth and depth of PCIA variations and experiences shared over three days of formal proceedings and additional informal conversations before, during and afterwards, it is impossible to do them justice in a few words. Nevertheless, the following section seeks to highlight a few notable insights that speak to the project title, bringing to light the insights of most project participants. A Special Issue of the JPD in early 2014 will provide another important context for insightful analysis, critique and experience-sharing.

Diversity of PCIA
It has become very clear that PCIA is many things to many people. It is a methodology, a tool, a framework of indicators, a brand, a political intention, a practice and a process. It has been used by communities to frame peacebuilding interventions over many years, just as it has been used as a rapid assessment tool for professional peace and development consultants.

PCIA is at the root of several still-related and evolving traditions, including Do No Harm, Conflict Sensitivity, and Aid for Peace. And it is still used, in its original PCIA moniker, to refer to a vast range of efforts and initiatives. Such epistemological and methodological diversity has contributed to its meaningful longevity, if also to some confusion and conflation in the field and literature.

To make sense of this diversity, understand where PCIA has come from, and assess what PCIA has become, Kenneth Bush proposed the following framework for PCIA, which he refers to as a “lens and sensibility”:

- Methodology
- Politics
- Logistics
- Ethics

This framework informed the analysis and assessment of PCIA undertaken by the community of practice at the AI-PCIA event in Toronto, Canada.

Theory, Practice and Practitioners of PCIA
As a group, we grappled with the question of whether a unified PCIA theory was required or helpful, informed by Ademola Akinyoade’s presentation, which itself proposed a Peace and Conflict Impact Theory (PCIT). Recognizing that theory is generally framed as varyingly descriptive, explanatory, exploratory and/or emancipatory, we deliberated on the merits of appreciating PCIA as a practice of “generative theorizing”.

Vat Kamatsiko shared experience on practices, merits and challenges of integrating PCIA in project and organizational programming, considering World Vision East Africa’s IPACS and IPIP methodologies, themselves informed by PCIA. Among other things, reflection
was pursued on community-based PCIA analysis, on the uptake of assessment findings, on moving from analysis to design, and on continued PCIA training at all levels of society.

An important tradition, strand and practice of PCIA has seen the use of indicators, themselves shorthand technologies for translating theory into assessment methodologies and practices. Drawing on multilateral experiences, Erin McCandless guided our reflection on the use and politics of indicators, notably with a North-South analysis and as related to the explicit expression of theories of change.

Participants expressed great concern for translating PCIA processes into meaningful gains on the ground. Edwin Barasa Mang’eni posed the following question in this respect: “Can we build PCIA as societally-based rather than project-based processes?” His work examined the value of PCIA as analytical tool as compared with PCIA as political method. He further emphasized the fundamental necessity of understanding and working with local drivers of conflict, and ensuring that contextual, appropriate and effective accountability mechanisms are built into PCIA processes.

Similarly, Norma Constantino examined the possibilities and practices of community-building and capacity-building through PCIA. Contextualized in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), her analysis framed PCIA as a kind of agreement between parties on points of departure for political actors in conflict with each other, in articulating their responsibilities towards the future. It has also been used as a fundamentally constitutive element of peacebuilding processes over many years, in the form of training, capacity-building and consensus-building, providing the political technology and ‘control mechanism’ for communities to define and own processes.

PCIA has never been a ‘requirement’ of development/peace initiatives, but has found its way into interventions at the discretion of donors, at the behest of communities, even as a result of the dogged determination of PCIA theorist-practitioners. Zahid Ahmed Shahab argued that PCIA should become a non-politicized practice, incorporated into development/peace interventions as matter of course rather than as a result of the political efforts of diverse actors. He also emphasized that PCIA processes must recognize and build on local capacities for peace rather than circumvent or undermine them, building meaningful interactions between them rather than creating a context for competition, threat and distrust.

As a lens and a consciousness, PCIA affords the many actors in conflictual environments an opportunity and means of analysis and reflexivity. An eminent Palestinian water engineer, Marwan Haddad leveraged the PCIA to re-examine the overall Israeli-Palestinian water case, with 20 years hindsight. Mindful of PCIA as a means of circulating values, notably those shared by political parties and actors, he argued that PCIA could be a means of ‘humanizing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’, including, but also moving beyond, the narrow interests of conflict parties.
The diversity of PCIA and related processes cannot be over-stated. Simona Achitei shared experience of PCIA as baseline analysis, as intelligence gathering to inform program development, as a means of supporting community-driven processes, etc. She discussed PCIA processes through her work as comprised of four elements: multi-stakeholder workshops, thematic assessments, background research, and capacity-building processes. In highlighting these powerful mechanisms, she emphasized that PCIA processes allow communities to speak about, bear witness to, and articulate truths about experiences and understandings of conflicts. She also brought to light challenges of linking findings to outcomes, and of translating reports into organizational policies and practices on the ground.

The culture of peace has been combined with PCIA as a framework for assessment and module-building for training in the Philippines, as articulated by Marides Gardiola, who focused on the work of practitioners in conflict environments. She explained that PCIA provided the grounded approach for a reflexive practice that has transformed the work of theorist-practitioners. She also brought insight to the ‘Bibingka Approach’ from the Philippines of working both in a top-down and bottom-up approach that favours societal, community and practitioner transformation at all levels.

Drawing on experience from the Middle East, Erin Abitbol turned the critical and reflexive lens on his own work in providing a discursive analysis of ‘peace’ evident in particular PCIA documents. He argues that PCIA theorist-practitioners, and indeed all those constructing and implementing PCIs, must be mindful of the universal and contextual discourses of peace they are circulating through their work, critically engaging with the immanent politics of peace.

Less a PCIA theorist-practitioner than a sustainability and peace educator and researcher, Asaf Zohar brought a valuable gaze to the collective PCIA inquiry. Drawing on vast experience from the Middle East, he argued the importance of creating linkages between environment and peacebuilding in constructing PCIA. He suggested that informal and non-structured processes are more powerful than closed and formal ones. He suggested that dialogue could play an important role in PCIA processes. He also argued that PCIA could benefit from incorporating education, particularly youth-focused education, programming and dynamics for greater lasting impacts.

Drawing on complex systems theory, Annette Dubreuil and Asaf Zohar similarly argued the merits of establishing a core set of ‘minimum rules’ of PCIA, giving greater freedom to customize the PCIA methodologies and practices. Drawing on BOIDS and dialogue theory, a tentative list of ‘minimal and critical specifications’ was drawn up that includes:
This list may include another minimal and critical specification or two, and is open to revision and update.

**Technical Essentials of PCIA**
Recognizing that PCIA is incredibly diverse, the group shared experience on the technical essentials of PCIA. The following is a basic outline of these essentials:

- **Expression of need**
  - Clearly articulated need
- **Terms of Reference**
  - Contractual clarity on mandate, terms, knowledge ownership, findings and dissemination agreement, negative findings, confidentiality clauses, conflict resolution mechanisms
- **Methodological clarity**
- **Preliminary and preparatory work**
  - Desk study
  - Informal discussions with contacts
- **Analytic framework development**
  - Conflict and peace analysis: Making ‘peace’ visible
  - Theoretical framework
  - Contextualizing the analysis
  - Setting the indicators
- **Participatory processes**
  - Local input in design
  - Participatory dialogues – multi-sectoral and multi-level
  - Data gathering
  - Interviewing and focus groups
  - Accountability mechanisms
- **Analysis**
  - Infrastructural analysis
  - Social, political and economic analysis
  - Governance analysis
  - Institutional analysis
- **Transparency and accountability mechanisms**
- **Findings**
- **Linking PCIA to practice**
  - Strategic Implementation
- Risk assessment
- Follow-up after report
  - Transference to local control and leaders
  - Additional processes
  - Exit strategies

It should be noted that, while much of this appears in linear form, PCIA in practice often does not proceed as such. There is in fact much cycling back through various components of PCIA (e.g. to pursue participatory processes at different stages, to ensure accountability to communities, etc.), which must be recognized and acted upon appropriately.

**Regional Dimensions of PCIA**

Through their presentations, experience-sharing and dialogues, participants predominantly shared PCIA experience from the following countries and contexts:

- Somalia
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- Liberia
- Rwanda
- The Philippines
- Sri Lanka
- Israel/Palestine
- Jordan
- Pakistan
- Canada
- USA
- Bosnia-Herçgovina
- Guatemala
- Peru
- Others

It need also be noted that participants shared multilateral experience from within the UN context, the multilateral and national ODA contexts, multiple grassroots communities, as well as more generally in relation to a host of countries not specifically listed above. Having such a rich comparative base of experience informed both the contextual analysis of PCIA impacts and also the similarities and differences notable between them.
**Positive Impact and Effects**

This section outlines some of the positive impacts and effects of PCIA overall and in practice, without claiming to be in any way comprehensive.

*Clarifying peace*

PCIA creates the opportunity for those who intervene and engage in peacebuilding processes to pursue discursive clarity on the meaning of peace in context. In this way, they contribute to the diversification and decolonization of ‘peace’ vision and practice. It is clear that theorist-practitioners are becoming aware of the politics of peace, in ways that are related both to universal and contextual framings of peace.

*Promoting justice*

At its best, PCIA constructs and engages in normative and justice-seeking processes.

*Transforming power relations*

From its very origin, PCIA has been a tool of empowerment. It has been situated to transform power relations through participation mechanisms and practices.

PCIA does this by recognizing that communities are primary stakeholders of PCIA processes, outcomes and effects. At its best, PCIA has made explicit theories of change, while providing processes and political opportunities for testing them.

*Meaningful political processes*

PCIA has been used to create and support protracted peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, as in the case of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in the Philippines.

As a political technology, PCIA has created linkages between specific projects/programs and wider conflict environments. It creates the platform for constructing and pursuing meaningful political processes; e.g. community-based analysis and multilevel training. In the process, it creates multi-sectoral and multilevel alliances for peace. It is also a strategy and practice of benchmarking and participatory development through dialogue processes built into PCIA practice.

PCIA contributes to the humanization of conflict, helping parties move beyond narrow interests and towards the articulation of shared peaceable considerations and aspirations. It provides the means for the collective ownership of political processes and of peace.

As part of larger, conflictual societal processes, PCIA creates ‘bubbles of processual possibilities’ (as articulated by one participant), thereby extending the ‘shadow of the future’, an important peacebuilding mechanism.
Narrative and voice
In hierarchical political environments, PCIA has contributed to the diversification of conflict narratives, giving voice to marginalized communities and actors. PCIA is also a means of collecting experiences, memories and aspirations of diverse actors in conflict environments.

Organizational transformation
There are many instances of PCIA being used as a fundamental framework for planning and operationalizing the transformation of organizations and organizational practices within diverse communities (e.g. East Africa).

Transparency and accountability
PCIA processes are opportunities to create transparent and accountable peaceable political processes. For example, this has been done where knowledge generation mechanisms and analysis have been pursued in participatory ways, and where results are shared directly with implicated communities in culturally and technologically appropriate ways.

Levels of analysis
There is some debate about the ‘best’ level at which to pitch and situate PCIA to maximize effectiveness. Micro-level and project oriented PCIA has been suggested as more effective than PCIA that runs the risk of getting lost in the machinations of massive national or international bureaucracies. Nonetheless, there is strong evidence to suggest that PCIA has also contributed to the transformation of country-specific UN agencies.

Peace education
As a ‘lens’ and ‘sensitivity’, PCIA has been used to shape Peace Education efforts. It has accompanied film-making and documentary processes in relation to peace parks. This can be developed through art, theatre, and other popular education forms.

Academic/practitioner/community synergies
There is evidence from the field (e.g. in the Philippines, East Africa) to support the claim that theoretically-informed PCIA training for community members and facilitators results in the integration of a PCIA analysis and practice into their work. Further, in working with practitioners and community members, theorists are better able to develop PCIA theory, ultimately contributing to the reflexive practice of theorist-practitioners and community members at all levels.
**Challenges of PCIA**

This section outlines some of the challenges to PCIA overall and in practice, without claiming to be in any way comprehensive.

**Context**

PCIA work is by definition contextual, given that conflicts are in many ways unique. This creates theoretical and methodological challenges for PCIA practitioners and communities themselves. The one-size fits all PCIA is to be avoided, or at least, approached with extreme caution.

**Discursive**

Multiple and sometimes incongruent discourses of ‘peace’ must be taken seriously in conflict environments, notably by PCIA theorist-practitioners. Further, an ongoing and changing politics of peace must be recognized and acted upon, given that PCIA is a discursive intervention in conflict environments and changing political moments.

**Organizational and institutional**

It is challenging to meaningfully integrate PCIA into institutions and organizations at all levels.

The qualitative penchant of PCIA is sometimes at odds with major institutions that tend towards positivist preferencing and valuation.

Among other things, PCIA is sometimes perceived as ‘interference’, interfering with and complicating people’s work. It is perceived as an add-on that gets in the way, notably by people who have little training in PCIA or conflict and peace analysis more generally.

**Commodification**

There is evidence that PCIA has been professionalized and commodified in ways that alienate already marginalized and conflictual communities from peace and conflict assessment processes. It is not the professionalization of PCIA per se that is problematic, but the ownership over knowledge claims that PCIA commodification has entailed.

The project focus of PCIA has contributed to the depoliticization of some PCIA practice. For instance, there is evidence that ‘output’ indicators are used as ‘outcome’ or ‘impact’ indicators (although this is not unique to PCIA).

A memorable phrase from one of our participants, Ademola Akinyoade: “It’s not about version, it’s about values.”
**Indicators**
The development of indicators is a process fraught with challenges. At one level, indicators of output versus outcome and impact must be defined. There are ontological and epistemological dilemmas related to the building of indicators, particularly in a North-South context. Finally, indicators can also be very specific to particular communities, such that importing previously defined ‘universal’ indicators, though tempting, can be detrimental to communities themselves.

**Culture**
Processes and recommendations constitutive of, and deriving from, PCIA must be sensitive to the local context and culture, appreciating rather than circumventing or undermining culturally specific capacities for peace. PCIA is often perceived as one dimension of interventions that threaten local cultures, actors and political economies. PCIA must be mindful of the way it can be perceived from this ‘cultural’ perspective.

**Politics and power**
PCIA was recognized as both a ‘harmonizing’ and ‘divisive’ practice, in that it can bring diverse actors together while also alienating actors who have a political stake in maintaining asymmetric relations.

PCIA processes can be sanctioned and closed, in some ways reflecting the politics of conflict environments, and the power of conflict parties and actors themselves. It can be seriously challenging for PCIA theorist-practitioners to ensure they are not constrained or handled in designing and pursuing PCIA processes. Of course, PCIA documents and processes may also be subject to political manipulation at the level of implementation, notably where transparency and accountability mechanisms are not in evidence.

**Exclusions**
While PCIA is often understood as a practice of peace or peacebuilding, the processes and outcomes of PCIA development sometimes create and perpetuate exclusions of some of the most marginalized community members; e.g. persons with disabilities, youth, etc.

**Accountability**
PCIA invokes multiple accountabilities for theorist-practitioners and all involved in the process. There are accountabilities to donors and commissioning organizations, to the governments involved in the processes, to the interviewees derived from research ethics, and to communities implicated in PCIA analysis and processes. It can be challenging to reconcile these multiple accountabilities, notably as the power of these diverse actors is frequently asymmetric.

On a related matter, it is not always clear to which community (and its values) a PCIA must be accountable, given that ‘communities’ sometimes uphold values and practices
that are themselves conflict-ridden (e.g. gender-based violence, structural inequalities between communities, etc.).

**Donors**

It is evident that donors each have different priorities and intentions in supporting PCIA-related work. This has implications on the transparency of PCIA efforts, itself understood as generally desirable (at least, in principle).

By definition, donors hold the purse strings, thereby shaping the contours and duration of PCIA processes and matters that may or may not be congruent with local, national and regional actor priorities.

Participants noted that donors are sometimes interested in fragmentary or limited PCIA, which runs counter to the more comprehensive intentions and desires of communities and PCIA theorist-practitioners.

It was made evident that donors and commissioning organizations sometimes use PCIA not as a means of shaping projects to peaceably effect communities, but rather to avoid implementing projects in threatening conflictual environments altogether.

It was suggested that PCIA theorist-practitioners could address these matters in one of two ways: either pursue ‘stealth assessments,’ which keep donors in the dark until the very end of report submission, or involve donors more in the process of situating and shaping PCIA towards meeting the needs and aspirations of communities and all involved parties.

**Monitoring**

It can be very challenging to monitor PCIA processes beyond those that are narrowly project-specific. The question was asked: “When do PCIAS begin, and when do they end?”

**Quality management**

Given the diversity of PCIA methodology and practice, the general lack of transparency in the field, and the absence of PCIA standards, it is challenging to measure, maintain and ensure high quality PCIA.

**Expectations**

PCIA processes run the risk of raising expectations of justice and accountability beyond their mandate.
Follow-Up

On the afternoon of the final day, participants engaged in a keyword identification and development exercise, until it was understood that ‘data saturation’ had been achieved. Reflecting key questions and thematic areas that had been discussed over previous days, the keywords were as follows, in the order in which they were shared:

*Purpose and objectives of PCIA; transparency, accountability, ethics; reflective practice vs. reflexivity; dynamics; culture, sensitivity, humility, clans; assessments; hydro/ha- hegemony; lenses; benefits, impacts; sensibilities; top-down vs. bottom-up PCIA, Babingka – rice cake; discourse; identity; interactions, meaningful dialogue, active listening; training and mentorship; power and relationships; assumptions; contexts’ intervention; interaction; training; cooptation; community of practice; outcomes, effects, impacts; constructive evaluation practices; satisfaction; subversive; empowering; functional, practical, do-able; pedagogy; capacity-building; process, sustainability and success, vision, common vision, criteria; measure, limits, failure, point C (environment, peace, personal, common ground, triangulation); lessons; opportunities; risks; capabilities; emancipatory politics; community; case studies; world class peace; building literature; institutions; politics; ethics; time; methodology; logistics; meta-evaluation.*

Subsequently, participants broke out into three groups, having identified the following areas for continued development:

1. Conceptual/Theorizing
2. Practical/Methodological/Tools
3. Community of Practice

Many of the insights and recommendations from each of these groups have been captured below, by area. It should be noted, of course, that there is significant overlap between them. In the interest of expediency, mention of each point has only been included where it has been deemed of primary relevance.

**Conceptual/Theorizing**

- PCIA as a lens and sensitivity.
- Is a unified theory of PCIA possible, valuable, emancipatory?
- PCIA as a process of “generative theorizing and practice/action”; contextual, ongoing, diverse; self-generative critical pedagogy.
- What is the relationship between social justice and PCIA?: Empowerment.
- What is the relationship between Human Rights, International Law and PCIA?; rights-based approach to PCIA; UN Resolutions and PCIA; undervaluing of Human Rights in the emergence and formulation of PCIA.
• Bridging the gap between theory and practice in the very process of theory development and political translation.

• Is ‘Governance’ equivalent to PCIA? Is PCIA a practice of governance; Participatory development, participation; accountability; transparency.

• Power and PCIA: What is the relationship between power and PCIA?; context, asymmetry, empowerment, conflict transformation.

• What is top-down vs. bottom-up PCIA?; Problematizing top-down vs. bottom-up PCIA; policy-level, community level; analysis and engagement; engagement and impact; methodology; Babingka approach (the rice cake, cooked from the top and the bottom).

• Ethics – PCIA and the pursuit of accountability and transparency: Cultural relevance and contextuality; participatory development; reporting back.

• Responding to ‘negative’ adaptations of PCIA: Ethics and purpose of PCIA?; establishing minimal critical specifications.

• Localising Peace: Supporting and/or disrupting local processes.

**Practical/Methodological/Tools**

• Standard Methodology: Start with standard methodology of PCIA as guidance, based on a consensus of the standards and minimum steps; benchmarking the use of PCIA approaches, as a means of charting progress (noting that PCIA can mean everything and nothing)

• General Principles: The standard methodology must also be flexible and adaptable.

• Less is More: Do less but do it well; do not overextend and create unrealistic expectations; threat of losing credibility.

• Institutionalization: The standard methodology of PCIA should be institutionalized as a guide or a guiding set of principles and approaches, but should not serve as a constraint; peacebuilding is a process and not a concept, so PCIA should build onwards from this.

• Indicators (of peace and conflict): Agreeing on the ‘measurement’ of ‘what is peace’?; capturing the drivers of conflict, fragility and peace; incorporating these drivers mindful of different levels of analysis.
• Methodology: Avoid being mechanistic; favouring generative processes.

• Determining exit strategies

• A good question: What are shared and separate domains of key elements of PCIA, within specific tools/approaches vs. PCIA as a lens?

Community of Practice
• Principled Culture: “Support, Promote, Work, Learn” and Reflexivity

• Journals
  o Journal of Peacebuilding and Development – Special Issue on PCIA: This is already underway, with an anticipated publication date of early 2014.
  o Journal of Evaluation Practice
  o Canadian Journal of Development

• Other Publications
  o Horn of Africa Bulletin
  o Funder focused publications

• PCIA Forum: Creating an online forum for sharing best practices; establishing connections of theorist-practitioners of varying backgrounds and experience; a place to connect stakeholders of particular PCIA processes; a place to share and learn about methodologies, good/best practices, needs and lessons, as well as challenges of PCIA. This could be a LinkedIn Group.

• Database: Building on the bibliography created as a component of the AI-PCIA initiative, a database would bring together the relevant literature, key reference points, patterns and trends of PCIA, as well as relevant experience categorized by context and situation.

• Donor relations: A donor forum; donor mapping

• Collaboration in PCIA Projects/Evaluations

• Networking and Marketing
  o Optimizing open spaces for marketing
  o Universities, community newspapers, deal with Google ads

• South-South collaboration: Strategic seed project; collaboration

• ISA 2014 (Toronto) and beyond
• Outreach: Practitioners, policy-makers, funders, academy; building face-to-face contacts; building connections for PCIA practitioners (IAHS-AFREA), community of evaluators in South Asia (evolving); to build capacity

• Campaign: Create a demand; Case studies

• Drop Boxes

• Open Access, Institutional

• Training: mentorship and coaching; OCIA training, course, community based, online

• Blog: List of practitioners; insights on conflict; virtual space
  o Peacebuild website, IRIS website, wiki (open/close), social media

All suggestions are valuable and require the uptake of theorist-practitioners themselves, fundamentally developing the community of practice in so doing.
Financials
A financial analysis has been appended to this report.

Partner Organizations
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Conference Participant List

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2. **Simona Achitei**: Monitoring & Evaluation Senior Advisor, Austraining International; Formerly Head of Research, Applied Research Unit, UNOPS Sri Lanka
3. **Zahid Shahab Ahmed**: Assistant Professor, Centre for International Peace & Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan.
4. **Ademola Akinyoade**: Peace and Conflict Studies Program, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan and Peace and Conflict Studies Unit, College of Social and Management Sciences, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
5. **Dawn Bazely**: Director, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University, Canada
6. **Kenneth Bush**: Research Affiliate, National Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand
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9. **Tag Elkhazin**: Consultant, Subsahara Centre, Canada
10. **Lowell Ewert**: Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel University College, Canada
11. **Marides Gardiola**: Mediators’ Network for Sustainable Peace (MedNet), Philippines
12. **Marwan Haddad**: Professor and Director of Water and Environment Studies Institute (WESI), An-Najah National University, Palestine
13. **Valarie Kamatsiko**: Regional Peacebuilding Advisor, World Vision East Africa, Rwanda
15. **Erin McCandless**: Editor, Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD), USA
16. **Randy Pinsky**: Masters Candidate in Public Policy and Public Administration, Concordia University, Canada
17. **Tess Tajanlangit**: Independent Consultant, Canada and Philippines
18. **Rick Wallace**: International Peacebuilding Consulting, Canada
19. **Todd Walters**: Executive Director, International Peace Parks Expeditions (IPPE), USA
20. **Asaf Zohar**: Associate Professor, Business Administration, Chair, Sustainability Studies Program Trent University, Canada

Regrets

1. **Silke Reichrath**: Peacebuild Canada, Canada
2. **Vanessa Gordon**: Politics Instructor, Dawson College, Canada
3. **Linda Corsius**: International Bureau of Children’s Rights, Canada
4. **Peter Bauman**: Independent Consultant, USA
Appendix: Event Agenda

PCIA Conference Program / Toronto, Canada – May 22-24, 2013

Day 1 – 22 May 2013 519 Kaneff Tower (Formerly the York Research Tower)

2.00pm  Sustainability Walk at York University
4.30pm  Registration
5.00pm  Introduction and Welcome: Eric Abitbol
5.15pm  Kenneth Bush – A Genealogy Study of PCIA: Setting PCIA within the
         Context of its Constitutive Evaluative Practices
5.40pm  Roundtable Conversation – Setting the Stage
7.00pm  Participant Dinner – on campus
7.45/8.00pm  Film Screening on PCIA and Peace Parks, with Todd Walters,
              Executive Director of International Peace Parks Expeditions (IPPE)

Day 2 – 23 May 2013 519 Kaneff Tower (Formerly the York Research Tower)

8.30am  Breakfast
9.00am  Unifying Theory and Practice of PCIA/Panel Presentation and
         Discussion (1 session, 3 panelists): Chair – Eric Abitbol
         Ademola Akinyoade – Peace and Conflict Impact Theory
         Vat Kamatsiko – PCIA Theory in Field Practice: Reflections on World
         Vision’s Pursuit for Peace Impact through Quality Programming
         Erin McCandless – Peacebuilding Design and Measurement in the UN
         and in the New Deal
11.45am Break for Lunch
1.00pm  Critical Perspectives of PCIA/Panel Presentation and Discussion (1
         session, 4 panelists): Chair – Simona Achitei
         Edwin Barasa Mang’eni – Promoting Empowerment and
         Accountability in Conflict Affected Environments through PCIA
         Norma V. Constantino – Localizing Peace and Development Through
         PCIA
         Zahid Ahmed Shahab – A Critical Analysis of PCIA's Theory and
         Application in Pakistan
         Marwan Haddad – Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of the
         Palestinian-Israeli Water Case
3.15pm  Coffee Break
3.30pm  Dialogue (Small Groups and Reporting Back): Chair – Marides
         Gardiola and Asaf Zohar
5.00pm  Closing
7.00pm  Group Dinner in Toronto
Day 3 – 24 May 2013 Room 313, The Student Centre

8.30am  Breakfast
9.00am  Recap of previous day’s insights: Chair – Erin McCandless
9.30am  Practitioners in the Field/Panel Presentation and Discussion (1 session, 4 panelists): Chair – Zahid Ahmed Shahab
        Simona Achitei – Mainstreaming Failure or a Small Measure of Success? Observations from a large-scale PCIA in post-war Sri Lanka
        Marides Gardiola – Beyond the Lens: PCIA as Peace Sense
        Eric Abitbol – From Project Equality to Political Symmetry?
        Asaf Zohar – Peace Education Towards Sustainability: Peacebuilding and Environmental Leadership Seminar (PELS) at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES)
1.00pm  Break for lunch

Day 3 (continued) – 519 Kaneff Tower (Formerly the York Research Tower)

1.30pm  Dialogue Process and Workshop: Chair - Eric Abitbol
3.30pm  Insights and Recommendations
4.00pm  Closing
7.00pm  Group Dinner in Toronto