

# Evaluation of Peace, Conflict and Development (PCD) Research Support in Countries and Regions affected by Violent Conflict.

## *S Asia case study*

Commissioned by the Peace, Conflict and Development (PCD) program - International Development Research Centre (IDRC).



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**Channel Research is pleased to submit the S Asia case study report, presenting the findings of the field visit, interviews and survey of documentation that took place from June to October 2008. This report is part of the evaluation of the Peace, Conflict and Development (PCD) Research support in countries and regions affected by violent conflict, commissioned by the Peace, Conflict and Development Program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).**

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# 1 Background of the evaluation

## 1.1 Contextualized need for the evaluation

Despite widespread research activities in conflict-affected areas around the world, there has been limited attention paid to the actual process, methods and challenges of conducting research in these contexts. There is substantial literature on research methods in general, but little addresses the ethical and methodological challenges of researching in societies experiencing violent conflict – particularly from the perspective of researchers from the ‘global south’ conducting research on conflicts in their own societies<sup>1</sup>. Yet, researchers working in such circumstances often face difficulties in connecting with the mainstream research community and do not receive adapted support, in terms of research design and ethics, required by these specific contexts.

For over a decade, through its Peace, Conflict and Development Program (PCD), IDRC has supported applied research and capacity-building on peace and conflict research in Latin America and the Caribbean, in sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East – often with a view to advance global norms and learning on cross-regional analysis of peace and conflict processes. Since 2004 it has also been supporting such research in South Asia.

IDRC works in partnership with institutes, universities, policymakers, civil society organizations, as well as networks of researchers. Recognizing the non-linearity of conflict, and the complexity of conflict situations and peace dynamics, IDRC aims at proactively impacting these situations through its support to applied research and policy-influence. PCD is a thematically focused research program that remains responsive to the priorities of Southern partners and also seeks to develop south-south research programs and networks. The four broad thematic areas covered by PCD are the following:

- Democratic Processes in Governance and Peacebuilding;
- Political Economy of Peace and Conflict;
- Security and Insecurity;
- Violence, Trauma, Justice and Reconciliation.

### *Specific context for South Asia*

While IDRC as a whole has had a considerable programming presence in the region, PCD has not had a long or deep history of support to research activities in the South Asia region. An initial impetus and backdrop to PCD funded research in the region was the political violence in Gujarat, India in February 2002 leading to the emergence

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<sup>1</sup> To date there are only a handful of volumes specifically addressing methodological and ethical issues surrounding research on and in conflict situations: AGC Nordstrum, *Fieldwork under Fire* (University of California Press, 1996); M Smyth and G Robinson (eds), *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues* (Pluto Press, 2001); O Hargie and D Dickenson (eds), *Researching the Troubles: Social Science Perspectives on the Northern Ireland Conflict* (Mainstream Publishing, 2003); EJ Porter, G Robinson, M Smyth, A Schnabel and E Osaghae (eds), *Researching Conflict in Africa: Insights and Experience* (UN University Press, 2006) and E Dauphinee, *The Ethics of Researching War: Looking for Bosnia* (Manchester University Press, 2007). Most of these pieces of work are limited to reflections on experiences from the point of view of the researcher from the ‘global north’.

of two strands of PCD's work - one on violence, trauma, justice and reconciliation; the other on democratic governance – along with a number of specific projects.<sup>2</sup>

Against this background a decision was made to increase PCD's profile in the region.<sup>3</sup> As noted in the 2005-2010 strategy document, PCD programming in Asia in the period under review was 'exploratory', building on IDRC's explorations and initial foray into Sri Lanka as well as investigating the opportunities for a regionally focused research programme. The hope was that the research programmes would bring together researchers from across the region to explore particular issues and thematic areas which would not only generate knowledge to inform and influence policy but to build capacity that could be mobilised in support of peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts along the lines of several of the key thematic areas identified by PCD: the political economy of peace and conflict, democratic processes in governance, and violence, trauma, justice and reconciliation.

The programmes under review took place against the backdrop of the aftermath of the tsunami of 26 December 2004 and the post-2002 Norwegian facilitated peace initiative in Sri Lanka. While there was some initial optimism that the post-tsunami context might create a space in which the peace process could be consolidated and extended, this rapidly dissipated as the government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and LTTE attempted to assert control over the disbursement of the vast sums of aid that flowed in to support reconstruction and rehabilitation.<sup>4</sup> By late 2005 the peace initiative was foundering. In December 2007 the ceasefire completely collapsed with the LTTE abrogating the terms of the ceasefire and the GoSL adopting an explicit policy of the primacy of the military defeat of the LTTE as a preliminary to a political solution.

Conversely, in Aceh the government of Indonesia (GoI) initially continued military operations against the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM or Free Aceh Movement) in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami and was reluctant in allowing unfettered access to the affected region by humanitarian INGOs.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, an agreement was reached and a Memorandum of Understanding signed in August 2005 between GAM and the GoI that brought an end to hostilities and significant autonomy arrangements short of complete independence for Aceh. Over the next several years the situation stabilised with an international presence monitoring the implementation of the agreement and supporting the processes of post-tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation.

This study seeks to shed some light on lessons learnt from the challenges of conducting research in such contexts and on the adaptability and responsiveness of PCD/IDRC's modalities to conflict situations.

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<sup>2</sup> In particular, Project Number 103496 'Understanding Trauma and Reconciliation following Mass Violence of a Political Nature (India)' and Project Number 104788 'Understanding Impunity: the Right to Truth, Justice and Reparation'.

<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing, PCD has or is providing support to 16 research projects in the region. The official start date for two-thirds of these projects is post-2004. However, given the lead time from initial project submission to final agreement, a number of the post-2004 projects are likely to have pre-dated the post-tsunami context. It is also worth noting that strong reservations on the part of the Indian government place considerable constraints on PCD's ability to fund projects which entail field work in Kashmir and the Northeast.

<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that the volume of post-tsunami aid significantly dwarfed the official assistance agreed at the Tokyo donor conference in support of the peace process.

<sup>5</sup> Indonesia in general and Aceh in particular have not been a focus of PCD's work.

## 1.2 Intended users and uses

According to IDRC's *Evaluation Guidelines*, "an evaluation user is one who has the 'willingness', 'authority', and 'ability' to put learnings from the evaluation process or evaluation findings to work in some way. The primary intended users are those particular individuals or groups who are affected by the outcome of the evaluation, are in a position to make decisions about the evaluation, and intend to use the evaluation process or findings to inform their decisions or actions."<sup>6</sup>

The intended users of this evaluation are PCD program staff (primary intended users), IDRC senior management, IDRC program staff and PCD's partners (secondary users). The audience<sup>7</sup> of the evaluation also include other agencies/donors working in conflict contexts.

The evaluation seeks<sup>8</sup> to improve PCD (and other IDRC)'s programming approach (project and program identification and development, programming modalities, monitoring, reporting and evaluation) in contexts of active conflict where PCD already programs. Building on lessons learnt from previous and current programming experience, it also assesses how, when, and under what conditions PCD could expand programming.

The evaluation also aims at increasing PCD partners' understanding of the value, utility and reach that research might have in contexts of conflict, as well as clarifying PCD and IDRC's role, and the expectations of what PCD and IDRC can and cannot do to support partners in conflict contexts.

## 1.3 Objectives and evaluation questions

As stated in the revised Terms of Reference (ToR)<sup>9</sup>, the main objective of this evaluation is to identify the factors (conditions and programming modalities) that facilitate or hinder the research process for PCD-supported projects in countries and regions affected by violent conflict, and the advantages and disadvantages of PCD programming modalities in achieving PCD objectives in those conflict settings.

This evaluation is not an accountability evaluation, but should be considered as a **learning exercise**. Four specific objectives guide the evaluation which focuses on:

- 1) **The Conflict Context:** Get a better understanding of what conditions (security, research infrastructure, community of researchers, etc.) need to be in place, especially when a return to violence seems imminent, so that 1) PCD can feasibly support research and 2) partners can feasibly conduct research in line with PCD's program objectives. Each case study, here S Asia, outlines the actual conditions the researchers are working in and sheds light on lessons learnt.

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<sup>6</sup> IDRC, "Identifying the Intended User(s) of an Evaluation", *Evaluation Guidelines*, p1.

<sup>7</sup> "It is important to distinguish between the intended audience and the user(s) of an evaluation. An audience is a group, whether or not they are the client(s), who will or should see and may react to an evaluation. The audience is interested in the evaluation but has a more passive relationship with it than the primary intended user(s)." *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> For more details on the intended uses of the evaluation, see ToR here attached as Annex 4.

<sup>9</sup> The ToR have been adjusted following the methodological workshop that was held in Ottawa on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2008 with IDRC staff and Channel Research team.

- 2) **“What Happened” - the Partners’ and PCD’s Intents and Achievements:** Build a body of learning around the contributions PCD supported research can make in influencing policy, building research capacities, and increase domestic ownership of peace processes when taking into account the prevailing environmental conditions surrounding the research process and ethical considerations.
- 3) **The “How”- Programming Modalities:** Increase learning around the strengths and weaknesses of PCD programming modalities and its relationships to its research partners in contributing to the achievement of PCD objectives in countries and regions affected by violent conflict.
- 4) **Forward Thinking:** With a better understanding of prevailing conditions, challenges and opportunities surrounding PCD supported research as well as PCD’s programming modalities: explore the implications (in terms of resources, security, institutional risks, policy influence, how we partner, etc.) of potential expansion of PCD programming into countries and regions affected by violent conflict.

#### 1.4 Values and principles guiding the evaluation process

This evaluation is guided by the **international recognized standards** for evaluation quality, which include impartiality, independence, credibility, transparency and usefulness. The evaluation has been conducted under the standards of **ethics for social science research** (e.g guaranteeing the integrity of data or ensuring that there is no conflict of interest with the evaluator).

Given the complexity and high sensitivity of the conflict context, the evaluation has been conducted from a **conflict-sensitive approach**, at two different levels:

- First, attention has been paid to the *interaction between the evaluation process itself and the research process*, and/or context: e.g the process of interviewing researchers involved in the research projects has been assessed together with the principal investigators and project leaders, trusting their judgement call on the negative unintended effects it could have on the researchers and research process itself.
- Secondly, the evaluation examines the *interaction of the research process with the context setting*, including policy influence, but also unintended negative and positive effects of the research process.

As stated in the guiding principles of IDRC's Evaluation Unit, the "*evaluation should be an asset for those being evaluated. Evaluation can impose a considerable time and resource burden on partner organizations (...)*"<sup>10</sup>. Whereas this evaluation does not aim to evaluate IDRC's partner organizations against results and is strictly orientated towards learning, the process required time from their staff and from the researchers. The evaluation team has taken this parameter into account when it has planned and conducted the field visit.

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<sup>10</sup> IDRC, Guiding Principles of IDRC's Evaluation Unit, [http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12095810441Evaluation\\_Unit\\_Guiding\\_Principles.pdf](http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12095810441Evaluation_Unit_Guiding_Principles.pdf)

It should be noted, however, that the distinction between an evaluation of the context and conditions in which research is conducted and how this may impinge upon or create opportunities for research and an evaluation of the projects themselves was not readily apparent to the many of the researchers and institutes themselves. While the boundary between the two endeavours is no doubt blurred, it is also the case that the distinction was not effectively communicated to them by PCD/IDRC. This resulted in an initial hesitancy and even defensive attitude in terms of responding to emails, agreeing to interviews, and giving access to documentation. In many but not all cases this reluctance was eventually overcome. However, it was equally clear that there were lingering concerns that the projects themselves were being evaluated by the 'backdoor'.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Case study approach

According to Robert Yin (2003), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In other words, you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study”<sup>11</sup>.

This report reflects the finding of the South Asia, primarily Sri Lanka case study. Through a detailed contextual analysis of two IDRC funded research projects, this case study aims to understand what is achievable in contexts which are similar to those in South Asia and in Sri Lanka in particular.

From an initial pool of four research projects, two were selected in consultation with PCD/IDRC staff in Ottawa and the IDRC Regional Programme Director in New Delhi. The two projects were selected as they represented ongoing research (whereas the other two had more or less reached a point of termination or at least non-follow-up) and were seeking to develop new ‘paradigms’ for exploring their respective topics. The two selected projects had the added advantage of the principal investigator and lead researchers being associated with the same research institute in Colombo, the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES). Both also had unique and distinctive elements in their organisation and management modalities that differed from IDRC’s articulated ethos of primarily supporting South-South research projects and networks.<sup>12</sup>

The two projects selected for review are:<sup>13</sup>

***Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Contexts of War: A Grassroots Study of the Geo-Politics of Humanitarian Aid in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka & Aceh, Indonesia [103614]***

**Partner:** Dr Malathi de Alwis, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo

Initially a two-year project, it examines and compares the consequences for existing political conflict of the post-tsunami international humanitarian interventions in Sri Lanka and the Aceh province of Indonesia. Through a multi-sited, micro-level, grass roots-based, long-term study, it examines from the point of view of the affected communities themselves, how material (infrastructural reconstruction and livelihood rehabilitation) and non-material (psycho-social) interventions are actualised. From

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<sup>11</sup> Yin, Robert K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd ed., Applied social research methods series, vol.5, London: Sage Publications, p13.

<sup>12</sup> PCD’s primary aim is to develop southern research capacities. It does this primarily but not exclusively through south-south networks. It also supports north-south and south-north networks to deepen learning and capacities in both sectors through interaction with each other.

<sup>13</sup> The two projects which were not selected were: **Kashmir: New Voices, New Approaches [102633]** and **Human Rights and Peace Audit Exercises on Partition as a Method to Resolve Ethno-National Conflicts in South Asia [103989]**. Although not the direct subject of this evaluation, where relevant, insights from these two projects will also be drawn on.

this vantage point, the research will study how these programmes carried out by the GoSL, the LTTE and INGOs in partnership/competition, exacerbated or alleviated existing fissures within and between communities. The project seeks to understand the resulting divergent trajectories these dynamics took in Sri Lanka and Aceh and to suggest better articulations and configurations for INGOs intervening in existing zone of political conflict affected by natural disasters with high humanitarian costs.<sup>14</sup>

***Diasporas, Transnationalism and Global Engagement: Tamil and Sinhala Transnational Communities and Networks in Canada and Their Nexus in Sri Lanka [103776]***

**Partner:** Dr R Cheran, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo and University of Windsor, Toronto

This project entails a study of Tamil and Sinhala transnational networks in Canada and their nexus in Sri Lanka. The project explores the transnational community in one location and how this impacts on their linkage with other locations in the homeland and host country. Through an examination of political organisations, a mapping of formal and informal remittance mechanisms, and an investigation of informal or irregular migration networks it explores the various dimensions of the role of transnational groups in ‘host’ and ‘home’ countries and the extent to which different groups within the diaspora communities identify strongly with ‘homelands’ and ‘homeland’ politics. In particular, in the context of Canada’s post-9/11 anti-terrorism measures (including the proscribing of the LTTE as a ‘terrorist entity’ in April 2006), it examines how policies in both Canada and Sri Lanka may facilitate and/or impede the engagement of the Sri Lankan transnational communities in civil conflict transformation and post-conflict reconstruction and development in their homeland.<sup>15</sup>

The evaluation particularly examines if the goals/objectives of the selected projects have been or are hampered or enhanced by the context in which they are being carried out. Although the two projects have a substantial Sri Lanka empirical focus, they both focus on a number of issues relevant to the wider South Asia context – ethnic nationalism, the role of diasporas, the possible peacemaking and peacebuilding openings created by an acute humanitarian crisis. While the two projects were not formally constituted as an integrated research programme, there are areas of overlap and intersection regarding the opportunities and difficulties of supporting research in differing ‘politically difficult’ contexts that offer possibilities for approaching the projects in a comparative fashion - while also noting the dynamics and issues that are particular to each project.

This study covers the period from 2005/06 (when the projects covered were first considered) to October 2008 (the cut off point for the review, though it is worth noting that at the time of this review both projects are ongoing with the Post-Tsunami project nearing completion).

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<sup>14</sup> IDRC, *Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Contexts of War* Project Approval Document Funding and Appraisal, June 2006

<sup>15</sup> IDRC, *Diasporas, Transnationalism and Global Engagement: Tamil and Sinhala Transnational Communities and Networks in Canada and their Nexus in Sri Lanka* Project Approval Document Funding and Appraisal, December 2006

## **2.2 Sources and data collection method**

Data for this study was collected from a variety of sources. Prior to the field visit and to acquire background on the research projects, a desk review of key documents was conducted. These included IDRC internal documents, project technical reports, drafts of articles and papers produced by the research teams, as well as articles and reports on the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Aceh.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with PCD/IDRC staff in Delhi and a number of the principal researchers involved in the projects. These interviews were conducted through face-to-face meetings in Sri Lanka in the course of a field visit in October 2008, in London or via telephone. Interviews were also conducted in Sri Lanka and London with individuals who were familiar with the situation in Sri Lanka and knowledgeable about the constraints faced in carrying out research in the context of ongoing political violence or post-conflict situations.

During the course of the evaluation it was not possible to conduct interviews with external stakeholders or potential consumers of the research outputs of the projects as both projects were ongoing and neither had reached the point at which the project outputs had been finalised, made public or formally circulated to external parties.

## **2.3 Validity of the evidence and ethical considerations**

In order to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, the consultant has applied the data triangulation method, comparing the views of researchers against each other, the views of the PCD/IDRC programme officers and the primary and secondary documentary sources.

As noted earlier, in some instances the researchers were reticent about participating in this study and in providing access to documentation as they misunderstood the nature of the review misinterpreting it as an evaluation of the projects themselves.<sup>16</sup> Once the nature of the exercise became clear, many were very cooperative and showed a considerable degree of interest in the study and its findings (along with those of the other three associated studies and the synthesis report). It is worth noting that some were concerned about the confidentiality of their comments and the possibility that they might be identified as the source of critical commentary. Every effort has been made to maintain the confidentiality of the interview processes.

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<sup>16</sup> The reticence of researchers may also have been a product of their specific circumstances: the atmosphere of mistrust surrounding the upheavals at ICES, as well as the difficulties and tensions surrounding the conduct of research in the context of an escalating conflict in which the Sri Lankan state becomes suspicious of research activities.

## 3 Evaluation findings

### 3.1 Conflict Context: Sri Lanka and Aceh

#### 3.1.1 *The Conflict Context*

*'In violently divided societies...often there is no consensus about policing, law and order, the impartiality of the state apparatus in dealing with the violence or indeed about the legitimacy of the state itself. This lack creates particular phenomena that are at one and the same time the subjects of inquiry, whilst simultaneously creating obstacles in the path of such inquiry...obstacles that are inevitably linked to the conditions of the violent conflict itself'.<sup>17</sup>*

For over two decades Sri Lanka has been embroiled in a protracted, often violent social conflict largely though not exclusively confined to the northern and eastern provinces. The conflict has resulted in an estimated 65,000 deaths, the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands and a similar number of individuals fleeing the country either seeking refugee status or taking up residence in other countries – notably Canada, the UK and Norway – resulting in a significant, predominantly Tamil diaspora.

Over the course of the conflict there have been a number of concerted peace initiatives. The most recent of these were the six rounds of talks in 2002-03 between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) facilitated by the Norwegian government with significant support from the US, EU and Japan. In the aftermath of the ceasefire agreement and follow-up talks there was a greater freedom of movement and a resurgence of economic activity and livelihood development in the north and east with the international community initiating programmes providing support to basic services, small-scale infrastructure projects, health and education facilities, and re-establishment of agriculture and fishing.

With the rejection of the LTTE's proposals for an Interim Self-Governing Authority in early 2003, the LTTE withdrew from the peace process. Also at stake was who controlled the international resources flowing into the north and east. It is from this point onwards that the LTTE became hostile towards the involvement of the international community in the peace process. Over the course of 2003-2004 the situation further deteriorated with fears that there would be a return to full scale war.

In Indonesia, the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM or Free Aceh Movement) had been fighting for Aceh's independence since 1976. Forcibly incorporated in the Republic of Indonesia in 1949, there had been building resentment against the abuses perpetrated by the Indonesian military. There was also widespread discontent over the failure of the Indonesian government to share the proceeds from the provinces rich in

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<sup>17</sup> Marie Smyth, 'Introduction' in M Smyth and G Robinson (eds), *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), p.3

natural resources, notably oil and gas, with the Acehnese. In 1989, the Indonesian government designated Aceh as a 'Special Military Operation Zone' and military reprisals against GAM intensified. In May 2003, the Indonesian government declared a state of emergency in Aceh and deployed 40,000 troops to forcibly relocate insurgents.

In both of these cases the dynamics of the conflict were fundamentally altered by the tsunami on 26 December 2004 which in the space of 48 hours left thousands dead and displaced as many people as had the previous decades of political violence.

In Indonesia, military operations against GAM continued in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami with considerable reluctance on the part of the government of Indonesia (GoI) in allowing unfettered access to the affected region by humanitarian INGOs. Eventually, an agreement was reached and a Memorandum of Understanding signed in August 2005 between GAM and the GoI that brought an end to hostilities and significant autonomy arrangements short of complete independence for Aceh.

In Sri Lanka, political differences were momentarily forgotten. The LTTE did not return to war as the north and east were too badly affected by the tsunami. But this respite was fleeting and within weeks the divisiveness at the core of Sri Lanka politics reasserted itself. A joint GoSL-LTTE mechanism for managing the delivery of aid in the north and east had been agreed, but proved highly controversial in the south and in the end never functioned properly. The considerable amounts of international assistance, competition for partner organisations and staff, and the issue of who controlled and got the kudos for the disbursement of funds and rehabilitation programme exacerbated the existing contours of the conflict. Discontent with the international community grew as in the south the tsunami assistance was seen as bolstering and legitimating the LTTE's control of the north and east, while the LTTE saw it as a potential trap allowing the GoSL to reassert its authority in the provinces and regain through the control of the provision of international humanitarian assistance what it had never been able to regain militarily.<sup>18</sup>

Over the course of 2006 the peace initiative deteriorated even further with escalating acts of political violence on both sides short of a return to full-scale war. It became evident that neither the GoSL nor the LTTE were serious about the CFA and the Norwegian facilitated peace process. By 2007/08 both sides were set on the recourse to the use of political violence and armed conflict to achieve their political objectives. In the case of the GoSL this was conveniently linked to the US-led discourse on the 'global war on terror'

By 2007, the ceasefire and peace process had collapse completely with both the GoSL and the LTTE abrogating the CFA. The LTTE had failed to make the transformation from a military to a political organization. The Rajapakse government had moved away from the post-1994 consensus on the need for negotiations with the LTTE and instead adopted an explicit policy of the military defeat of the LTTE as a prerequisite to a political solution based on provincial government arrangements well short of federalism. Along with this, the government embraced and enabled a Sinhala nationalist discourse linked to national state security discourse that mobilized a

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<sup>18</sup> This analysis of the Sri Lankan conflict and peace process is deeply informed by the analysis provided in Liz Philipson, Philipson, Liz, 'Whose war? Whose peace? The LTTE and the Politics of the North East' (draft manuscript January 2009) and the views expressed in the course of the interviews in Colombo.

‘patriot-traitor’ dichotomy. The result has been heightened insecurities for communities in the north and east in particular, but across the whole of Sri Lanka.

The combined effect of these dynamics has been a significant closure of ‘political space’ which offers little room for pluralistic politics or the articulation of alternatives to a military solution to the conflict and a profound shift away from Sri Lanka as a locus of enlightened cosmopolitanism in South Asia.

### **3.1.2 *Timing and Sustainability***

The timeframes of both of the projects considered as part of this review overlap with the latter half of the deterioration and collapse of the post-2002 peace process. In 2005-06, the point at which the projects were going through the processes of formulation and revision, there was still a degree of optimism about the contexts in both Sri Lanka and Aceh in which the research would take place. The political situation in Aceh continued to improve dramatically with the monitoring and implementation of the 2005 MoU between the GoI and GAM. In the case of Sri Lanka there was still the hope that projects and programmes supported by the international community could make a positive contribution to maintaining momentum in the peace process.

By the time the projects were approved it was evident that the situation in Sri Lanka was deteriorating. The project approval documentation for both projects notes the risks posed to the projects by the changing conflict dynamics. At the time, these were not deemed significant enough to fundamentally rethink ‘green lighting’ the projects. The eventual trajectory of the deterioration of the situation in Sri Lanka is not something that could have been foreseen by the PCD/IDRC programmers.

Part of the decision to support the projects was the lead partner institution in both projects, ICES. IDRC had a long standing working relationship with ICES. It was seen as a valuable partner as it was one of the few organisations in Sri Lanka that had both a practical arm (doing reconstruction and humanitarian work) and a research/policy arm. In terms of PCD/IDRC programming criteria it was a logical partner organisation. This, along with the substance of the projects and the quality of some of the lead researchers on the projects – who were also ‘know quantities’ to PCD/IDRC programme officers – added to PCD/IDRC confidence about the sustainability of the two projects. As is discussed later in the report, the faith in ICES may have been misplaced, especially in the area of financial management.

### **3.1.2 *Effects of conflict dynamics in the research processes***

By the time both projects were up and running, the changed dynamics in Sri Lanka and Aceh had an impact on the research processes.

In the case of Aceh, while the situation on the ground continued to improve creating a more positive environment in which to conduct the field work, it was not without difficulties. As will be discussed in the next section, there were persistent difficulties in identifying a capable, indigenous research capacity, necessitating a heavy reliance on external researchers. There were also problems in obtaining visas for some of the externally located researchers working on Aceh, as well as lingering suspicions on the part of local populations regarding the nature of the questions being posed, the reasons they were being asked, and by whom.

In Sri Lanka, the eventual return to full scale war in the north and eastern provinces, as well as the collapse in the 'political space' had a sizeable impact on both of the projects. As one interviewee commented: 'In such a context, all research becomes "politically charged" and the production of knowledge is shaped by the violence'.

Of particular concerns was the personal security of those conducting field research. The overall political climate also had an impact with the lead researcher on the diaspora project eventually relocating to Canada.

The conflict dynamics made field work in the northern province almost but not completely impossible. In the case of the post-tsunami project this component of the project was completely abandoned. In the diaspora project it was pursued but with some difficulty and concerns about the reliability of the information gathered. Research in the eastern province also proved difficult and problematic. Even in the southern provinces, local populations were in some cases hesitant about initially engaging with the field researchers as a result of apprehensions about who was gathering the information and what it was to be used for. There were also difficulties encountered in accessing information from government sources – primarily in Sri Lanka but also in Canada after the proscribing of the LTTE as a 'terrorist organisation'.

In both projects, these obstacles were dealt with by adaptations to the research projects (particularly the agreed timelines for research), through the research methodologies deployed (particularly the participant observer method in which researchers lived for a length of time in the communities they were researching), and the use of local researchers who were familiar with community dynamics and who could establish a level of trust with the local populations.

While the conflict dynamics adversely affected the conduct of the research in both projects, they did not fundamentally derail either project. As more than one interviewee noted, while these risks posed by the conflict situation need to be taken seriously, it is often the case that they look worse to external observers than they do to internal researchers. Using common sense and detailed knowledge of the situation, the lead and field researchers were able to make judgement calls on when and where to allow the research to proceed.

## 3.2 On "What Happened" – Partners, Intents and Achievements

The following section discusses a range of practical, methodological, financial, political and ethical challenges encountered in the two research projects as a consequence of the conflict dynamics.

### 3.2.1 *Theories of change*

Neither of the two research projects sets out an explicit theory of change in the project proposals or in the subsequent research documentation. This is hardly surprising as this is not a formal requirement of PCD/IDRCs project approval process. However, it is possible to distill elements of a theory of change in both projects.

One element of this connects to the policy relevance component of each project. In the course of project development with partner organizations, PCD/IDRC emphasizes the importance of such a component with the intent that the research will be of value in informing 'policy and programming decisions on root causes of violent conflict, the prevention of conflict and equitable and sustainable development'.<sup>19</sup> Arguably, this creates a degree of tension between the interests of partners in pursuing academic research and the desire for policy relevance and influence on the part of PCD.

In the course of the development of the post-tsunami project, the incorporation of a policy component was a major element of the modification to the initial proposal which was viewed as too oriented towards pure academic research. In the diaspora project there was also an explicit commitment to 'engage with policy makers and decision makers in both Canada and Sri Lanka' to assist in providing 'greater clarity in the formulation of policies dealing with transnational communities'.

The policy component of the post-tsunami project underscores the need to move away from a traditional linear view of the process by which research findings are translated into policy influence and instead recognize that it is a much more chaotic, messy, complex and dynamic process drawing on a range of reservoirs of knowledge.<sup>20</sup> This connects to a distinction it draws between technical and political policy making processes with the former linked to problem-solving approaches to implementation

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<sup>19</sup> 'Evaluation of PCD Research Support in Countries and Regions Affected by Violent Conflict: Terms of Reference', p.2 The ToRs further note that one element of these evaluations is to 'build a body of learning around the contributions PCD supported research can make in influencing policy...'. Similarly the PCD website states that one of its programme objectives is 'to generate evidence-based findings that can be used to inform policy and programming decisions', while another is 'to influence global and national policies and practices'. ([www.idrc.ca/peace](http://www.idrc.ca/peace)) Similar language is to be found in the 'Prospectus for the PCD Programme Initiative for 2005-2010 (Draft 3, 2 November 2004). This also notes that 'PCD has traditionally engaged in issues relevant to larger Canadian foreign policy' and that the 'program initiative is mindful of Canadian foreign policy priorities' (p.9) and that PCD 'prioritizes support to research projects designed to foster evidenced-based policy making, or that are mean to promote debate over peacbuilding policy and program issues' (p.20).

<sup>20</sup> This resonates strongly with many of the arguments developed in IDRC's 2005 strategic evaluation on how its funded research influenced the policy-making process. This identified three different types of influence: expanding policy capacities; broadening policy horizons; and affecting policy regimes. See 'Capacities, Contexts, Conditions: The Influence of IDRC-Supported Research on Policy Processes' March 2005

issues and the latter linked to more fundamental questions regarding the basis assumptions informing policy itself.

This political dimension connects to an additional element within both projects. In the project documentation and in the course of the interviews, researchers within both projects stressed that they sought to deploy theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks that were outside the dominant discourses in their respective areas of research and to engage in field work with communities often marginalized in dominant analysis of the conflicts. Although there is no explicit theory of empowerment at play, there was the intention of documenting the histories, the experiences of those marginalized within the ongoing political and economic dynamics. The intention was that the research itself would be disruptive of and destabilizing for these dominant discourses, fostering a rethink of the very categories of 'diaspora', 'refugee', 'internally displaced' and 'rehabilitation' themselves. In doing so, it would contribute to opening up the space for critical dialogue on these issues with the donor community and within the two societies.<sup>21</sup>

However, it is worth being cautious about what can be expected in this arena. As one interviewee noted, research in a conflict context will rarely have a significant impact in bringing about change in those dynamics. Moreover, whatever positive dynamics may be created by the research process itself tend to be nullified by the resurgent conflict dynamics. Expecting conflict dynamics to be ameliorated as a direct corollary of a research project, the research process or of research outcomes is probably overburdening the extent of the short and medium term impact of the research. Viewed in this light, direct political transformation as a consequence of funded research remains an elusive outcome.

### **3.2.2 *Methodological orientations***

The methodological orientations of both projects was an admixture of fairly standard research tools and techniques (questionnaires, surveys, small focus group discussions), along with some important underlying orientations that were responsive to the conflict situation (participant observation making use of local research capacity to generate local knowledge) and some challenging theoretical orientations (largely post-structuralist and post-colonial). The core methodological orientation of both projects were that they were to be 'grounded', looking at identifying and capturing aspects of living in/with/through conflict that escaped the lenses of governments, NGOs and mainstream research.

The development and articulation of these orientations was primarily a product of the researchers involved. However, there was also input from PCD/IDRC staff over the course of negotiating and agreeing the research projects themselves, particularly in stressing the importance of training workshops on methodological issues for those conducting field work. Both projects put such training workshops in place.

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<sup>21</sup> It is worth highlighting that many of the researchers involved in both projects are involved in a range of societal interventions in addition to their research – theatre, poetry, contributions in public media – with the intention of challenging authority and subverting coercive power relations. Their roles as 'public intellectuals' constitutes another important contribution to the generation of critical knowledge of and spaces in the conflict in Sri Lanka which technically fall outside the remit of this review.

In the case of diaspora project, the lead researchers participated in two training workshops in Canada and the US on methodological issues involved in researching diaspora communities and remittances and then replicated the insights from these for members of the research team at a workshop in Colombo.

In the case of the post-tsunami project it was noted that having such a workshop at the start of a ‘multi-disciplinary, multi-sited research project taking place within a fragile political context was absolutely crucial to the success of the project’. However, while instrumental in suggesting the workshops, there was only marginal substantive input from PCD/IDRC staff. This may partly be due to the mismatch between the broadly post-structuralist leanings of both projects and the more traditional sociological and anthropological leanings of PCD/IDRC staff.

Both projects had a comparative component. Indeed, this was a major attraction of both projects in PCD/IDRC’s decision to fund them. In the post-tsunami project this entailed the comparison between the differing post-tsunami trajectories in Aceh and Sri Lanka, as well as a comparative focus within the Sri Lankan component in comparing the experiences in the south, east and north of the country. In the diaspora project there is a comparative focus on the differing experiences and roles of the Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim diaspora communities in Canada and their relationship with different communities in Sri Lanka.

To date, the Aceh-Sri Lanka comparative element of the post-tsunami project has not generated the intended comparative insights. There are several different explanations for why this is the case. One is the research design itself. One researcher associated with the project felt that the research questions themselves were never formulated in a way that would generate real comparative analysis. A second is that the methodological orientation with its focus on the local makes difficult the generalizations necessary for comparative analysis. A third is the composition of the research teams. While each contained individual who were knowledgeable about their respective country of research, it didn’t contain researchers who were deeply knowledgeable about both. There was an effort to compensate for this in the two workshops where the researchers presented drafts of their research findings. The format was that the research team of one country would make presentations while the other country team served as discussants. While this did foster some shared insights, the general consensus of both participants and the PCD/IDRC programme officers is that there are essentially two parallel projects which have yet to intersect – but may well do by the time the project draws to a close.

At the time of writing, the diaspora project has yet to produce substantive output that would allow an assessment of the extent and nature of its comparative analysis.

### **3.2.3 Challenges confronting the research process**

*‘Everyone is affected; everyone is struggling as a researcher in the current context’<sup>22</sup>*

The changing conflict dynamics had an impact on the conduct of research in both projects, though it had a differential impact linked to the nature of the topics being researched as well as the location in which research was being pursued. The more overt political nature of the issues being explored in the diaspora project meant it encountered more difficulties than the seemingly less contentious topic of post-

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with a member of the post-tsunami research project.

tsunami rehabilitation.<sup>23</sup> Both projects had to make changes in light of deteriorating situation. Compromises had to be made in where and how research was pursued without compromising the research itself. The leitmotif of both projects could be characterized as ‘adaptability’.

In the case of both projects, the deteriorating situation and the return to full scale war created a range of problems. The most profound impact was on the personal security of some researchers, particularly those from or working on or in the northern province, resulting in the lead researcher on the diaspora project having to relocate to Canada.

It also created problems for access to the northern and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka. The changing dynamics determined whether researcher could or could not travel to these regions. In the case of the post-tsunami project a decision was made to completely abandon this component of the project. To that extent, it place limits on the projects ability to capture an important range of post-tsunami experiences. The project responded by extending its research into other areas.

In the case of the diaspora project a decision was made to continue with this element of the project but to delay sending researchers to the north until the situation was deemed safe. This meant waiting for small openings in the conflict dynamics in which field research in the north could be conducted. It was also able to keep the project rolling by focusing on the Canadian/non-Sri Lankan component of the project.

Another important element in being able to carry out research in a conflict context is overcoming the suspicions of the communities being studied. Both projects encountered a certain wariness regarding what questions were being asked, how they were being asked and by whom. In some areas, researchers were viewed as potential agents of the LTTE; in others as potential agents of the state. In other instances some one who was Sinhalese asking questions in Tamil (or vice versa) encountered suspicions.

Two area areas that proved particularly sensitive for both projects were issues surrounding the disbursement and use of post-tsunami funds and the issue of remittances – these raised suspicions not only of local populations, but also the Sri Lankan and Canadian governments. In the case of remittances, this lead to a reworking of the focus of the survey work, looking at those who used the systems rather than those who provided it. It also lead to a rewording of the questionnaire being used in the diaspora project so that the information being gathered could not be used to identify whether particular individuals or organizations were doing anything illegal.

Another example is the difficulties the post-tsunami project encountered in its effort to photographically document tsunami memorials in the southern provinces. The lead researcher offered advice to those conducting this piece of work suggesting that they seek to explain why the memorials were being documented, that they do not this work alone and that they do it in a fairly conspicuous manner so as not to arouse suspicions. There was also mentoring response with the lead researcher accompanying one of the researchers in carrying out this piece of research.

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<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that the Kashmir project also used the natural disaster of the earthquake in Kashmir as a point of entry for some of its research. This highlights how the nature of a project and its associated point of entry may have a bearing on how a project is received.

To a limited extent there were suspicions attached to ICES as an organization and perceptions of it as linked to the ‘international community’ – itself widely viewed with suspicion in Sri Lanka. Frequently this potentiality was dealt with by simply not characterizing it as an ICES (or for that matter IDRC/Canadian funded) research project. Quite often researchers simply introduced themselves as graduates of Colombo University with an explanation of the project without providing additional institutional details. Rarely was IDRC or Canadian backing for the research mentioned as this would not have been helpful in the current climate. It wouldn’t have meant much to local populations, would not have provided any additional gravitas and could have proved problematic as INGOs and the international community as a whole is not viewed very favorably in Sri Lanka at the moment. Rather than presenting ‘research credentials’ it was more important that the researchers built up a relationship with the local community.

A key component of the projects abilities to respond to these challenges was the shift away from Colombo based researchers and the use of researchers from or with connections to the locations in which the research was being conducted. These local researchers had the advantage of knowing the local dynamics, sensitivities and social networks. In combination with the use of a participant observer methodology, it allowed the researchers to build relationships of trust that significantly mitigated the risks posed to the research by the suspicions and mistrust of the local populations towards researchers from outside - though it did not prevent them completely from encountering difficulties.

A further challenge that confronted both projects but which seemed to loom larger for the diaspora project was access to reliable data particularly around sensitive issues. State and private institutions in both Canada and Sri Lanka were reluctant or unwilling to provide information relating to remittances. There were difficulties in accessing data on gender and family dynamics in relation to the diaspora communities. As a consequence of the Canadian government proscribing the LTTE in April 2006, any research in Canada on tacit, direct or indirect support for the LTTE within the diaspora communities had to be very carefully phrased so as not to endanger the researchers or those being surveyed.

Both projects had to deal with the financial impact of deteriorating exchange rates with the escalation in the conflict. This had an effect on the overall budgets for the projects and the curtailment of some activities. Both research teams commented favourably on how responsive the IDRC regional office was to this particular issue, enabling adjustments to be made in budget allocations within projects. The other way in which the projects responded to this issue was to use non-PCD/IDRC funded research trips to carry out research for the PCD/IDRC projects.

During the course of both projects, the lead research institution, ICES, had a difficult time as management issues and financial difficulties moved into the public domain. There was some spill-over on financial issues entailing late payments to some of the researchers on the Aceh component of the post-tsunami project. Although the government attempted to use the controversy as a way of discrediting the institution and its research, by and large the institutional difficulties ICES encountered did not negatively impact the research component of the project.

#### **3.2.4 *Research team composition and capacity building***

One of the central aims of PCD/IDRC funding is building 'local capacity in developing countries to undertake research and create innovations, believing that people from developing countries must take the lead in producing and applying knowledge for the benefits of their own community'.<sup>24</sup> It aims to do this by supporting research projects developed and implemented primarily through south-south partnerships, through working with partners in developing training modules and through its project monitoring.

The composition of the research teams and the capacity building components of both projects under review have produced an uneven realization of this stated objective.<sup>25</sup>

ICES is an established research institute with a sizeable research staff, but it does not have a pool of permanent junior research staff to work on its projects. The Centre's standard modality is to hire project staff and/or consultants as and when a project has been approved and received funding

In both the post-tsunami and the diaspora project, the principle investigators made explicit decisions to go outside the ICES in putting together their respective research teams. The rationale for this was that the pool of researchers associated with ICES had become 'institutionalised', working primarily in an elite language (English) and in an elite, Colombo-centric mind-set. They tended to be people 'stamped' with an overseas MSc and were not as 'street wise and smart' as some of the 'homegrown' researchers were. As one interviewee wryly noted: 'Their primary skills seemed to be an ability to function in English and socialize easily at ICES events with the international community'.

The lead researchers were also disappointed in the quality of the research produced by the available pool of ICES researchers. In addition there were language considerations. Due to the nature of the field work it was essential to find researchers who could function in Sinhalese and/or Tamil as well as English. Finally, there was a need to ensure that they were informed in and sympathetic to the post-structuralist/post-colonial social and political theory that informed the project.

Each of the lead researchers on both projects used a number of local researchers to conduct the field work. For the most part, they were identified via the personal, professional and social networks of the lead researchers. Most were recent university graduates so they were intellectually capable of understanding the research project itself. Not all had a disciplinary or subject background that included training in participant observer methodologies, so this training was provided to them by lead researchers on the projects. In addition, the lead Sri Lankan researchers would accompany some of the researchers providing an additional mentoring role.

In the post-tsunami project the biggest difficulty encountered was the lack of research capacity in Aceh.<sup>26</sup> As a consequence of the years of neglect and marginalization by the Indonesian government, there was not the institutional base to develop a

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<sup>24</sup> IDRC Prospectus (2007), p.2

<sup>25</sup> It is worth sounding a note of caution regarding the findings on capacity building of the two projects under review. They may be a response to a specific context – the institutional turmoil that characterised ICES at the time the projects were being carried out – and any wider generalisations would need to await a review of some or all of the 14 other PCD funded projects in the region.

<sup>26</sup> Weak institutional and analytical capacity was also a major issue confronting the Kashmir 'new voices' and the peace audit projects

significant indigenous research capacity. Any Acehnese with decent research skills had left the region and was working for the international community or INGOs elsewhere in Indonesia, the region or overseas.

As a consequence, this element of the project was put together on a slightly ad hoc basis and was highly reliant on outsider researchers. The lead researcher was based in Oxford and another senior researcher based in Syracuse. There was one senior researcher from Indonesia and another based in East Timor. And although several of them employed Acehnese researchers to assist in the conduct of the field work, the composition of the team meant that none of the senior researchers was indigenous to Aceh. This meant that from the very beginning there was a significant deviation from the PCD/IDRC preferred model of fostering south-south collaboration.

All of these individuals had detailed knowledge of the Aceh situation in some cases having been researching the area for 12+ years. As a consequence, they had pre-existing research networks to tap into and were not simply 'parachuting in' to do the research, and that they were familiar with the difficulties of researching in such an environment.

The reliance of the Aceh team on outside researchers had a number of consequences. It had an impact on the management of the team as this had to be carried out long distance and electronically via email and phone. Some felt that this was disadvantageous as removed the lead researcher from being fully informed about the day-to-day dynamics confronting the researchers. It was felt by some that this affected the cohesiveness of the team and the internal comparative learning on the Aceh component of the post-tsunami project. In the view of some connected with the project, it also adversely affected the overall quality of the research outputs.

Most problematically, it engendered concerns about reinforcement of the 'north-south power-knowledge nexus'. This is discussed in greater detail in the section on 'programming modalities' in the following section. In broad terms it is linked to the presumed superiority of 'first world researchers' in the training and mentoring processes with regards to research agendas, questions, methodologies and dissemination processes with the expectation that researchers from the global south would need to attune themselves to first world analytical framing devices. There was also a perception that the risks of doing research were disproportionately placed on younger, more junior local researchers.

In the end, the presence of outside researchers may have been important to the integrity and quality of the research process and output for the Aceh component. But this may have come at the expense of sustainable capacity building in Aceh. While there may have been the enhancement of the research capacity of some of the individual researchers, the reliance on 'outsiders' meant that there was little or no indigenous research capacity created or enabled in the course of the research at either the institutional or individual level.

In the case of the Sri Lankan components of both the post-tsunami project and the diaspora project there has been significant development of research capacity through the network of local researchers each put together. There was significant training in research methodologies, particularly on participant observation, and substantial mentoring by senior researchers on how to actually do this in the field. On both projects, the lead researchers commented on the considerable time and energy that

needed to be invested in these processes and that these were not always fully accounted for in agreed programme budgets.

Lead researchers on both projects argued that the resulting quality of the researchers was such that they would stand up to the rigours of post-graduate and/or doctoral programme in the US, Canada or the UK. Testimony to this is the number of researchers associated with both projects who have since done so. The only downside to the process by which the researcher teams were put together is that the resulting enhancement of research capacity has not been institutionalised to any great extent. In the end it has been a highly individuated process.

At a broader level, it is worth noting that in conflict/post-conflict settings such as Sri Lanka and Aceh, the ability to sustain any research capacity is adversely impacted by the pressures created by the international community – donors, INGOs, external think-tanks and policy institutes – all of whom are looking for relevant, capable local staff for their short term consultancies. Over time this entices and draws people away from pursuing primary research which slowly undermines the structural capacity for long-term, critically engaged research. This is exacerbated by a new, younger generation of researchers who have been trained overseas but who have no research profile per se and are only capable of doing short term consultancy work.

Furthermore, the deteriorating conflict conditions and the associated collapse of political space in Sri Lanka, or the lack of developed institutional bases in Aceh, has led to the flight of intellectual capital in both societies. The dilemma for PCD/IDRC emphasis on capacity building is that once developed it does not necessarily stay in place.

### **3.2.5 Dissemination and policy relevance**

Both projects entailed dissemination strategies. These took the fairly standard form of workshops, papers at conferences, articles in journals, special issues of journals and edited volumes.

In both projects there is also a commitment to engaging with policy and decision makers in governmental, intergovernmental and/or nongovernmental organisations.

As one interviewee noted, ‘The policy relevance element is always the most dispiriting part of a research project. You always approach it with a sense of disillusionment’. There was also the sense that this component of a project was about filling a need for PCD/IDRC that wasn’t a core concern of the researchers themselves.

In the case of the post-tsunami project, there was an attempt for an innovative approach to handling the policy relevance issue by making it a self-standing component of the project. A particular member of the research team was given the sole task of gleaning and pulling together the policy insights from the research produced by the other members of the team. Setting up a distinct policy strand was meant to allow the researchers to do their research without feeling constrained to produce ‘tacked on’ policy relevant insights.

There are several different elements of the policy analysis that are worth highlighting. The first is the argument that policy relevance is asking a different set of questions from those being asked by the research. There is a need to be conscious about the shift in gears that you need to make in moving from one to other. The second is the

need to distinguish between the ‘technical’ and ‘political’ aspects of policy making. The third is that it is important to think about the audience you are trying to influence – policy makers in government, in NGOs, in international organisations – and that different audiences needed different kinds of outputs. You need to write in ‘their language’ so that the research insights are accessible to them.<sup>27</sup>

However, this innovate design doesn’t seem to have worked out as intended. One problem with separating policy and research in this manner is that only one member of the research team is really interested in the policy agenda – thereby marginalising within the project. In addition the policy paper was meant to draw on insights from both the Sri Lankan and Aceh research but ended up being fairly one-sided as the researcher had a limited knowledge of Aceh and no real access to the Aceh policy environment.

On the Sri Lanka side, it did produce some interesting insights. However, there were several difficulties in getting anyone to pay attention to the findings. The first was that the conflict context itself meant that there is no time or space for deeper reflection on deeper issues by policy makers. In the current circumstances there is a reluctance on the part of the key actors to ask the hard questions regarding their models, their underlying assumptions.

Secondly, by the time the policy insights paper was drafted, the ‘post-tsunami moment’ had passed and neither the government nor the donors seemed particularly interested in the findings and insights. One way of the project sought to deal with this was by pitching the findings beyond the post-tsunami context on the basis that many of the findings and insights had a wider resonance. In particular, it was felt by the research team that many of the insights on rehabilitation and post-conflict peacebuilding were of direct relevance to the situation in the eastern provinces after the government had regained control of the territory from the LTTE.

The third challenge was getting access to the relevant individuals in the policy and decision-making community. A half-day workshop to present some of the initial findings was organised as part of the first interim workshop on Aceh. While generating a stimulating discussion, those attending were not really in a position to make policy or decisions. The lesson drawn was that it would be more effective (but also labour intensive) to present the policy findings in informal, face-to-face briefings with policy makers. However, such a strategy is then highly reliant on a researcher’s network of contacts.

### **3.2.5 Ethical challenges**

The most pronounced ethical challenge confronting both projects related to the security of individual researchers. While less of an issue in Aceh, in Sri Lanka both projects necessitated conducting research in the context of an active conflict where the situation was deteriorating. So there was a real concern about putting lives at risk for the purposes of generating knowledge and whether those risks were too high.

Though not a pronounced concern at the point at which the projects were initially being developed, it became so by the time they had been agreed and funding approved. At that time the situation on the ground in Sri Lanka had deteriorated

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<sup>27</sup> These resonate with some of the findings of IDRC’s strategic evaluation on policy influence. See ‘Capacities, Contexts, Conditions: The Influence of IDRC-Supported Research on Policy Processes’ (March 2005)

significantly – though not into full scale war and with the CFA still notionally in place. From this point onwards, the issue was a concern of PCD/IDRC staff in the regional office and raised on numerous occasions with the lead researchers for both project.

The mitigation of this risk took place on several levels. The first and most obvious was suspending or abandoning research in the most insecure areas. The second was the use of local researchers who would have a better read on the situation and who would not be viewed as suspiciously as someone from Colombo or outside of Sri Lanka would. The third was ensuring that mature researchers with considerable experience of doing research in conflict situations were running the projects and in a position to make informed judgements on whether or not to proceed with a particular piece of field work and possibly work alongside younger, less experienced researchers in difficult circumstances.

### **3.3 On the "How" – Programming Modalities**

#### **3.3.1 *PCD Criteria for Involvement***

As indicated in the previous sections, over the last several years research in Sri Lanka has taken place in a difficult, at times dangerous context, while in Aceh there has been a general improvement. In terms of PCD's criteria for involvement,<sup>28</sup> the two country situations cut across the categories of conflict and post-conflict contexts without fitting neatly into either.

In terms of the broad criteria, both contexts and both projects considered in this review resonate with a number but not all the criteria. However, the extent to which they mapped on to the criteria has changed over time and, in the case of Sri Lanka, has varied geographically over different parts of the country.

As noted earlier in this report, PCD did not have a particularly deep profile in South Asia prior to 2004-05. In the case of Sri Lanka, in the post-Oslo context there was not an initial commitment to any serious profile and that which did exist was largely directed at the NGO community and not engaging with the government or other formal, state actors. In the immediate aftermath of the 2002 CFA, PCD/IDRC was not best placed to play a major role in supporting the peace process as it didn't have access to the institutional support funds it now has. It was only in the post-tsunami context that levels of funding became available to allow it to provide advice and guidance on research strategies and agendas that it would be able to follow up with funding. Initial expectations were that this funding would build research capacity, open space for dialogue thereby contributing positively to the wider peace processes and produce useful evidence-based findings that could inform Canadian policy and programming as well as that of national governments, international organizations and agencies and NGOs.

It is not possible to fully assess the extent to which these aims have been achieved as both projects are still ongoing. However, as the previous sections indicate, preliminary assessments would indicate that it has been variable with mixed benefits on research capacity in Sri Lanka and negligible benefits in Aceh and with some impact on maintaining space for dialogue in Sri Lanka, albeit in very difficult circumstance in which to achieve this outcome. In terms of impact on policy it is too early to tell if the desired impact has been achieved as at the time of writing key parts of the dissemination process have not taken place. However, the initial draft policy paper does make some interesting points about the need to make a distinction between research and policy discourses, as well as the different audiences within the latter and develops interesting substantive points on the myths of local empowerment, the transformation of aid projects from their original intentions, and how and why they produce unintended consequences.

#### **3.3.2 *PCD Programming Modalities***

The two projects considered in this review have different histories and different trajectories, as well as some similarities with regard to PCD/IDRC programming modalities. Both projects developed out of a process by which IDRC staff in the

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<sup>28</sup> IDRC, *Prospectus for the Peace, Conflict and Development Programme Initiative for 2005-2010* Annex 1 (2004) pp.47-54

regional office as well as PCD staff were able to recognize the merits and potential in project proposals submitted to other IDRC funding streams but which were unsuccessful in gaining funding. In both the Post-Tsunami and Diaspora projects, PCD/IDRC staff worked with the lead researchers and institutes to develop projects of a scale that were both fundable and doable within a reasonable time frame, and assisted in honing the articulation of key research questions and in the identification of appropriate research methodologies.

The diaspora project had a fairly long gestation period. It was initially submitted in response to a PCD/IDRC call for proposals on the theme of 'globalisation, violent conflict and peacebuilding' in 2004. It received favourable reviews but did not make it to the final round. It was subsequently followed up by the New Delhi based programme officer and after two years of development and refinement was given a green light in 2006.

The post-tsunami project came out of the IDRC response to the tsunami itself. Several months after the tsunami, CIDA/IDRC held a meeting in Ottawa to discuss a range of reconstruction/humanitarian aid projects. PCD expressed an interest in exploring the conflict and peacebuilding dimensions of a post-humanitarian situation. The PCD/IDRC staff in the Delhi office then approached staff at ICES with whom they had previously worked on IDRC funded projects suggesting that they put in a proposal on how the humanitarian aid affected the conflict and peace dynamics. Coincidentally, several staff within ICES had themselves been discussing a large scale comparative project on similar themes looking at Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India and Thailand. After several drafts and rounds of consultation between the ICES staff and PCD/IDRC a project was agreed focusing on a comparison of Sri Lanka and Aceh. This process shifted the proposal from one that was predominantly academic and theoretical in nature to one that had a significant policy focus.

This resulted in a unique and interesting conceptualization of the policy dimensions of the project in which it was conceived of as a discrete component. The 'de-linking' of it from the research component was meant to allow the researchers to get on with producing the research without having to worry about shifting gears and producing a set of policy recommendations. The intention was that the policy research consultant connected with the project would distill the policy implications from the research and act as an intermediary with the policy community in the dissemination of the research findings. The intention was to provide a conduit to the policy makers in the metropole that would get them to think deeply about the need for change in the way aid, humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation were conceptualized and implemented.

The timing of the project was important. It was formulated about six months after the tsunami when the initial shock and the initial wave of international response had started to subside. It was a point at which it was possible to move away from immediate and urgent humanitarian demands and needs and to start asking deeper questions about the differing contexts, trajectories and impact of the rehabilitation processes in Aceh and Sri Lanka.

The initial trajectories of the two projects demonstrate the different modalities which PCD/IDRC has at its disposal to be proactive in initiating projects. What both share is the feature of a fairly intensive project development process with PCD/IDRC playing a very significant hands-on roll in the development and design of the research projects and their methodologies. They also demonstrate PCD/IDRC's interest is supporting

research projects that set out to develop theoretical and conceptual perspectives that differed from those in the mainstream.

What is interesting about both South Asia projects under review is their divergence from the PCD/IDRCs preferred modality of supporting and enabling ‘south-south’ research. In both projects there was or has developed over time a significant ‘global north’ component to the research.

In the post-tsunami project this has taken the form of the lead researcher and one of the key researchers, on the Aceh component of the project being from institutions in the global north. This was to some extent configured in the initial project proposals. It was partly a product of a previous working relationship between the Sri Lankan principal investigator and academic based in institutions in the global north. It was partly necessitated by the paucity of research capacity in Aceh itself both at the level of research institutions (the Aceh Institute was a relatively new entity and many of its lead researchers had additional commitments which meant that they were not able to give it their full commitment) and individual researchers (who often lacked the level of research skills deemed necessary to produce the quality of research demanded by the project). To this extent, the PCD/IDRC view was that there was not an adequate research base in Aceh, necessitating and justifying the major role played by researchers from the north.

In the diaspora project changes were necessitated in the management of the project as a result of changes in personnel and the political climate in Sri Lanka. In between agreement on the substance of the project and the signing of the contract, the original principal investigator took up a post with the UN. This resulted in Dr R Cheran taking over as the lead researcher responsible for managing the project. As a consequence of the political climate in Sri Lanka, Dr Cheran ended up relocating to the University of Windsor initially on a temporary and then on a full-time teaching and research post. This meant that the lead researcher was no longer based in Sri Lanka, but in Canada.

This created initial concerns regarding project management and financial reporting. It also necessitated further changes in the structure of the project management team in Sri Lanka as well as the composition of the research team itself.

In the end, the liminal status of the lead researcher on the diaspora project has been largely beneficial to the project. Sound project management was maintained via the regular visits of the lead researcher to Sri Lanka for extended periods of time and through the Sri Lankan-based country coordinator.<sup>29</sup> The presence of the lead researcher in Canada has actually helped the project as once the project was up and running the Canadian government proscribed the LTTE as ‘terrorist organisation’. This had to be accommodated into the project and Dr Cheran’s location in Canada and his links to the Tamil community there meant that the Canadian component of the project was able to go forward.

The ‘south-north’ structure of both projects opens up interesting possibilities for programming modalities – principal investigators from the global south who are institutionally located within the global north while maintaining institutional linkages with the global south or the lead role for researchers from the global north being managed by researchers and institutes from the global south - which PCD/IDRC may

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<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that he, too, has relocated to Canada to pursue doctoral research.

wish to think about and explore with regards to extending programming into other conflict/post-conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

However, there are also important negative externalities associated with the inclusion of the global north in PCD/IDRC research projects, particularly with regard to what several interviewees characterised as the ‘north-south power-knowledge nexus’.

For some involved in the project this was linked to the presumed superiority of ‘first world researchers’ with regards to research agendas, questions, methodologies and dissemination processes with the expectation that researchers from the global south would need to attune themselves to first world analytical framing devices. This led to a sense of disempowerment among some of the researchers both in their ability to steer the direction of the research and to raise concerns about the processes by which the research was being managed.<sup>30</sup> What was interesting was that this view didn’t pertain only to those researchers located in the global north but was sometimes attributed to senior, established researchers located within the global south but perceived as articulating the perspectives and practices of the global north.

There was an element of resentment on the part of some researchers from the south towards researchers from the global north who didn’t actually live with, in and through the conflict on a daily basis, who were free to jet in and jet out and ‘use’ the researchers in the global south in what they felt was an instrumentalised fashion for their own research needs. There was a sense that the risks of doing research were disproportionately placed on younger, more junior local researchers. As one interviewee commented, ‘In the end, the researchers from the global north rely on the researchers in the global south to take the risks for them’.

For some researchers, a third element of the power-knowledge relationship between the north and south played itself out in aspects of the project management. This manifested itself in terms of who was deemed the ‘senior researcher’, who was ‘mentoring’ whom in research methods and techniques, and the presumption that it was the ‘established’ scholar from north who would provide guidance to those who had lived in/with/through the conflict on how best to conduct research in a conflict or post-conflict situation.

Additionally, some felt that it was disadvantageous that lead researchers were based outside the region and that this locale was too distant to be able to have knowledge about the day-to-day dynamics confronting the researchers. Such a project management set up was based on a flawed premise that email and other forms of electronic communication were an adequate substitute for first hand knowledge and experience of living and researching in/through/with violent conflict.

A fourth manifestation was the view that researchers from the global north were simply updating and peddling previous research but were not bringing any fresh insights or new thinking to the research.

There was also an element of discontent regarding the constantly changing first world academic and policy discourses, each mobilizing new buzz words or concepts. There was an element of frustration at having to keep up with these constant linguistic, semantic, conceptual changes which didn’t always match changes in practices on the

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<sup>30</sup> Several interviewees commented on the fact that PCD/IDRC had commissioned a group of consultants from the global north rather than researchers from the global south to carry out this particular review project.

ground. These were seen as part and parcel of professional enhancement for researchers from the global north, but were seen as placing researchers from the global south at a disadvantage and marginalizing their contributions to global research and policy discussions. The researcher from the global north is part of and has access to a wider academic audience and circle that leaves the researcher from the global south in a position of subjugation in which they should feel 'honoured' to be part of a research team and project with eminent north academics participating.

In the end, the projects were seen as running up against asymmetrical power-knowledge structures. As one interviewee noted:

*Even within the IDRC ethos of promoting and funding 'south-south' research, there needs to be a recognition that this itself is located within a wider global policy discourse and agenda that is still decidedly 'north-south'. Part of the problem with the 'global north' attempting to foster 'south-south' collaboration is that the north reads itself as 'absent' when it is in fact still a very powerful, perhaps the most powerful 'presence' in the research and policy discourse.*

### **3.3.3 Procedures for institutional assessment**

One element of PCD/IDRC programming modalities which didn't seem to work well was the assessment of the robustness of institutional capacity to manage research projects. The assessment of capacity is done by IDRC regional offices. It is not a straightforward process, and is usually done as a part of country reports which contains sections on 'research settings' and 'research capacity' via reports from local programme officers in dialogue with regional directors, gaining views from their attendance at workshops or conferences. Every PCD/IDRC research partner is looked at for financial risks, to assess their internal management processes, and to assess their human resources. There is a technical, instrumental audit of the institution alongside the assessment of its research profile. If there are particular problems identified, IDRC will offer whatever assistance it can.

In the case of the two projects covered by this review, there are very favourable comments in the project planning documents regarding ICES as the partner institution. PCD/IDRC had a long standing working relationship with ICES. It was seen as a valuable partner as it was one of the few organisations in Sri Lanka that had both a practical arm (doing reconstruction and humanitarian work) and a research/policy arm. The dual character of ICES as an organisation gives it a very strong edge. In terms of staff, it has a sizeable core of senior fellows and regularly attracted prestigious visiting fellows from overseas. Research is embedded in its ethos and it has a strong record on research. It also has a high profile in 'public debate'. In terms of PCD/IDRC programming criteria it was a logical partner organisation. As PCD/IDRC programme officers noted, 'At the time of the project proposals and approval there were no qualms about it'.

The reality seems to have been otherwise and many of these weaknesses came to the fore in the course of an unseemly public dispute revolving around a newly appointed Director. It transpired that institutionally it lacked tight administrative and financial management processes. Its capacity for financial management was deemed by PCD/IDRC staff to be 'surprisingly weak given the amount of funding it was receiving and controlling'. Senior researchers on the two projects noted that the

institute would regularly use funds from one project to cover costs on another. Some of these problems were known to PCD/IDRC as it sent in a financial control to provide assistance and staff training in the area of financial control.

It is clear that as a result of the revelations, ICES's reputation within Sri Lanka has been tarnished and senior staff are slowly disengaging from it, which over the medium term may undermine its research credentials. While most of the field research on the post-tsunami project had been completed before these problems could adversely affect the research, it did encounter difficulties in making timely payments to some researchers because of the inadequacies in ICES's financial management practices.

These failings do not apply solely to ICES. Instead, ICES's problems may be fairly typical for a number of the older, more established Sri Lankan research institutes. The implication for IDRC partnering is that it may need to turn to some of the newer institutes which tend to be staffed by a younger generation of scholars with better management skill and who are more resourceful in responding to changes in the political and funding environments.

### **3.3.4 Responsiveness/Flexibility of PCD**

In both projects under review there is a largely positive view regarding PCD's responsiveness and flexibility. This operated on several levels.

The first was at the level of programming itself. It was noted by several interviewees that many funders and donors come with a fixed agenda. In the case of Sri Lanka, the focus is always on the conflict, the violence, the peace building process. The assumption is that there is no other aspect of Sri Lankan life that is worth exploring, or if there is that it has to be explored through the prism of the conflict. This is rather limiting, 'cookie cutter' approach to research agendas that tends to produce poor quality research. There is also a tendency to fund short term consultancies which are detrimental to sustaining a research culture and capacity, particularly in the younger generation of scholars.

PCD/IDRC are seen as relatively unique as funders in that they allow space to do something different, something alternative, ambitious, to look at topics away from the standard categories of funded research on peacebuilding. They are also seen as offering longer time frames on research projects which means that researchers are able to avoid the dangers associated with the pressures to turn around short term research projects with quick outcomes/outputs. As one interviewee commented, 'IDRC's continued funding of academic research in the context of the deteriorating situation is itself the coping strategy for dealing with such a context'.

Secondly is PCD/IDRCs responsive approach in the formulation of the project proposals, particularly on research methodologies. Although it is seen as a fairly heavy process, it was largely seen as being a mutually beneficial dialogue.

Although lengthy, there are some advantages to the PCD/IDRC project approval process in that it serves as a litmus test of the level of commitment on both sides: that PCD/IDRC will devote a considerable amount of staff time, resources and energy to the development of a project is a solid indicator of its interest in the questions, issues and thematics which the proposed research intends to explore and its commitment to providing support to particular researchers and/or institutes which it considers of value in developing constructive peacebuilding capacities. Conversely, the extent to which

individual researchers and institutions will continue to engage in such a labour intensive process can also be taken as an indicator of their level of commitment to the project and that they are not simply 'chasing the money' or hopping on faddish research bandwagons. In the end, the extensive and intensive process can be seen as a positive element of PCD programming modalities.

Similarly, once the projects were up and running, members of both project teams were grateful for the support provided by the regional offices and programme directors, their empathy towards the difficult circumstances in which the research was being conducted and for the flexibility they often showed with regard to timelines and in budgetary matters. This allowed the teams to make adjustments to the research projects themselves (including project deadlines), to composition of the research teams, to research schedules and to finances. The only issue raised by both projects was the limitations on top up funding to cover costs associated with over-runs in the timelines for the completion of projects – this was particularly an issue surrounding staff costs.

The overall sense was that PCD's interests were in getting good research rather than rushing work to meet deadlines. It was also felt that because PCD/IDRC staff in Delhi and Ottawa themselves had backgrounds as researchers and scholars this meant that they understood the pressures that the researchers were under and the difficulties they were confronting.

There were differing views on the reporting and monitoring processes. On the one hand, they were seen as a time-consuming, bureaucratic imposition that needed to be done. On the other, they were seen as for providing useful benchmarks against which to measure progress, as a means of engaging in a process of self-reflection about the direction and quality of the research project as a whole and its individual components, and as a mechanism for flagging up issues, challenges, obstacles and impediments to carrying out the research to the initially agreed timeline. In the case of both projects they received useful feedback after submission of the reports, in several instances being asked to revise, improve and resubmit the report.

PCD/IDRC staff, however, noted some difficulties and ambivalence towards the monitoring process. Part of it was subject to the conditions on the ground in the project countries where the deteriorating situation limited the ability to make site visits to monitor field work. This meant that the process was reliant of visits by researchers to Delhi and/or Ottawa and on the written interim reports. There was a sense that the latter were too focused on the technical and financial project management processes and not enough on the substance of the research. The 'Rolling PCRs' were seen as a useful means for providing reflection on the projects by the programme officers.

Finally, there were interesting views about the profile of the projects associated with PCD/IDRC and Canada in general. Researchers were able to play this card selectively in situations where doing so provided some leverage. In others, it was viewed as helpful that PCD/IDRC had a low profile in the project, particularly given the currently negative attitudes in Sri Lanka towards INGOs, donors and the international community as a whole.

### **3.4 Forward Thinking**

As the previous discussions indicate, the situation in Sri Lanka is complex. The ongoing protracted political violence overlaid with the post-tsunami dynamics constitutes a difficult but not impossible environment in which to foster, enable and sustain research. In thinking through the insights gleaned from the South Asia projects and their implications for the opportunities, challenges and obstacles to PCD programming in countries or regions affected by violent conflict a number of issues areas are worth highlighting: the importance of flexibility; institutional capacity; capacity building; the importance of local knowledge and the relative merits balance between ‘insider’ vs ‘outsider’ researchers; ethical surrounding issues of security and power-knowledge structures; expectations regarding policy relevance; and the nature and extent of external commitment and support.

#### **3.4.1 Flexibility**

The fluid dynamics of conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian contexts and the manner in which they adversely impact on the ability to carry out the research according to the plans, timetables and budgets set out in initial documentation is a constant challenge encountered by researchers. Throughout the discussions with research on the South Asia projects, PCD/IDRCs flexibility in terms of deadlines, adjustments to the details of the research project, and on financial and budgetary issues was constantly referred to as an important component of enabling research to be conducted in difficult circumstances. While providing important elements of structure to the research project and process – notably in the initial rigour of the project design and agreement phases as well as in the reporting mechanisms – there was a general view that PCD/IDRC provide ‘space’ in which researchers could get on with their research.

#### **3.4.2 Institutional capacity**

Ensuring that there is adequate and capable institutional capacity to both enable the successful implementation and completion of a research project and to provide a basis for building and sustaining long term research capacity is an important component in enabling programming in the context of violent conflict. It is also a major challenge in that the very context of ongoing political violence and its underlying causes militate against the establishment and ongoing viability of this capacity.

Opportunities exist in the form of identifying and supporting key individuals, groups of individuals or organisations as they attempt to develop this institutional capacity and in identifying fledgling organisations which would benefit from external support. Possibilities exist in developing strategic partnerships between stronger, more established organisations and institutions in the region as well as with those outside the region elsewhere in the global south and in the global north. This mentoring process could include areas related to the research process (research design, methodologies, and dissemination strategies), project management (monitoring and reporting processes, financial oversight, budgetary accounting and reporting) as well as the substantive research itself.

This would allow PCD to explore new researcher partners outside the ‘usual suspects’ while maintaining links to existing partners and geographically expand outside the ‘metropole’ and the dominant country locales. It would also allow researchers from

different conflict settings to share and compare their experiences, but also add a new comparative dimension to the research being conducted. While this would obviously have to be counter-balanced by the need to ensure quality research output, it would enhance capacity at both the institutional and individual level. In doing so, however, PCD/IDRC would need to be attentive to the power-knowledge dynamics and structures at play in any such mentoring process – particularly any arrangements linking institutions in the global south and north [see the section below]

Even where institutional capacity exists, auditing mechanisms and procedures need to be in place that ensures that the research institutes have the appropriate capacity and procedures to provide adequate financial oversight and budgetary management of large multi-year, possibly multi-location projects. PCD/IDRC needs to be able to reassure itself that research partners are robust enough to manage the project and manage the risks surrounding research in the context of an ongoing conflict. This may mean that PCD/IDRC needs to be slightly more hands-on in the monitoring of the ‘sub-contracted’ elements of funded projects as well as have in place a robust, regular review process of existing partners’ capacities and potential new institutional partners.

### **3.4.3 *Capacity building***

The development of sustainable research capacity is crucial to enabling and sustaining both small-scale and larger research projects. The challenges here are several: the concentration of research capacity and resources in a few institutions in the metropole; the multiple institutional obligations that the most able researchers will have constraining their ability to devote their time and energy to a particular project; the financial lure of lucrative short-term consultancy work; and the flight of academics, researchers and intellectuals to more secure research posts outside of the conflict.

The development of research capabilities need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner at different levels. There is the need to build up an indigenous, non-metropole research capacity which has access to and the trust of local populations, fostering an awareness and understanding of local dynamics, able to interpret information/findings within a local context, and to assist in giving voice to the local as a counter-balance external and/or, metropole-centric view of the societal dynamics at play. There is also the need to develop and sustain indigenous institutional capacity so that the development of young scholars does not simply add to the growing ranks of researchers at the service of northern institutions. In pursuit of its capacity building objectives, PCD may need to develop a closer monitoring role with regard to how extensive it is, how deep it is and how sustainable it is rather than leaving this to reporting by lead researchers and lead research institutes.

The opportunity exists in the very presence of PCD/IDRC funding itself. Its support for more academically oriented research and its willingness to fund multi-year, large scale project is seen as providing an important counterweight to the attraction for younger scholars of working for NGOs or doing short-term consultancies.

There are obvious tensions between PCD/IDRC wanting good quality research outputs and capacity building where research skills are weak. The overall aim should be real capability development – researchers who are able to theorise and think critically, conduct solid field work, and are able to articulate their finding clearly and intelligently in reports. The emphasis on methods training and the embedding of the mentoring of younger scholars into research projects will help to develop and sustain

this capacity. Again, there may be opportunities to develop linkages within and across regions in the global south in these areas.

However, there is the need to develop other strategies for identifying appropriate researchers. Opportunities might exist in conducting regular reviews and audits of individuals located at universities or other educational institutions, within the NGO sector, within government or international agencies or by asking established researchers with solid research track record to identify those with relevant and appropriate research skills, producing interesting pieces of work and working with them to develop viable research projects.

#### **3.4.4 *Local knowledge and ‘insider’ vs ‘outsider’***

In conducting research in the context of conflict and post-conflict situations, the advantages of using indigenous researchers are fairly self-evident. They will have detailed knowledge of local contexts and dynamics, a network of contacts that they can draw on, as well as often being able to establish the level of trust necessary to get individuals to respond to questionnaires, surveys, or participate in focus groups in an open and honest manner. They will have a sense of when the timing is right to push forward with the project and when the context is such that proceeding with the research might put individuals and/or the research project at risk.

The challenge that confronts PCD/IDRC is how and whether to proceed when this local capacity is limited and weak. One option, as discussed above, is to put in place mentoring mechanisms where the research is closely overseen by a more senior, established and capable indigenous researcher. The other is to draw in researchers from ‘outside’ – either from within the region or from the global north – who are knowledgeable about the country and conflict context.

In the South Asia projects under review both strategies were mobilised, with the latter producing more mixed results. A range of difficulties were encountered from language issues to long-distance project management to logistical problems surrounding travel and visa arrangements to the possibly limited nature of an outside researcher’s network of contacts and access. These can have the effect of necessitating a rebalancing of a project to those areas where research access is possible rather than desirable. More problematic is the issue of the perceived legitimacy of outside researchers and the north-south power-knowledge nexus (discussed below).

#### **3.4.5 *Ethical: security issues***

A major challenge of conducting research in the context of ongoing conflicts is the personal security risk to individual researchers. While these risks need to be taken seriously, it is often the case that they look worse to external observers than they do to internal researchers.<sup>31</sup> In the case of the South Asia projects covered by this review,

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<sup>31</sup> To an extent, this is not surprising as risk is always going to be different for locals as compared to foreigners/outside. In some situations, they will be more vulnerable due to lack of local connections or language skills. Conversely, there may be situations where their status as outside provides them with a degree of security not available to locals. This means that the whole issue of what constitutes as ‘safe’ area for research and for whom is highly contextual. Just because an area is ‘safe’ for locals does not necessarily mean it is ‘safe’ for outsiders and vice versa.

the operating modality which seemed to work was for PCD/IDRC to make the lead researchers aware of their concerns, but to allow the lead researchers to use their common sense and more detailed knowledge of the situation to make judgement calls on when and where to allow the research to proceed. The use of researchers with detailed knowledge of the locales in which they were being asked to conduct research and the research methodology of participant observation where the researcher lived for a period of time amongst the community she/he was researching developing adequate levels of trust with the community also went some way towards mitigating these risks

### **3.4.6 *Ethical: power-knowledge structures***

In funding research in the global south, and particularly on projects where research institutes or researchers from the global north are significant components of the project, there is a need to be cognoscente of the power-knowledge dimensions in the setting of research parameters. Simply because a project is south-south does not mean it has necessarily overcome north-south power-knowledge dynamics.

The view from some within the global south is that conceptual thinking is still being driven by and dominated by Ottawa, Sussex, Cornell or wherever, while the empirical work is being carried out in the south, on the south, sometimes instrumentally using research and researchers from the south. A further dimension of this is the associated problem of the constantly shifting academic and policy discourse in the north – from empowerment and building social capital, to good governance then to security sector reform – which leaves researchers in the global south disadvantaged, in a ‘second class’ position and potentially marginalised in global research and policy discourses.

Opportunities need to be mobilised to foster a deeper conversation on the setting of research parameters in which the south plays an active role rather than merely being ‘consulted’ and ‘listened to’. This needs to entail a conversation on what is entailed in the very idea of a research community and on research partnerships which are open to critical engagement with the north-south power-knowledge nexus built into the current ideas and practices of research.

### **3.4.7 *Policy relevance and influence***

The transmission of academic research into policy insights and influence is a challenge that characterises much of academic research – not just in the global south in the context of violent conflict. There are, however, particular tensions that pertain to PCD/IDRC funded projects. In PCD/IDRC policy documents and in the project approval process and documentation there is an expectation that the funded research will deliver policy relevant insights for a range of actors with an interest or involvement in the conflict situation – donors, international agencies and organisations, national governments (including Canada), local and international INGOs and even non-state military actors.<sup>32</sup>

There is, however, a tension in this aspiration as it may be difficult to meet the policy needs of such a diverse range of consumers of the research findings. The pressure to produce ‘policy relevant research’ can lead to generalised findings loosely disseminated to a poorly defined group of organisations and individuals which is unlikely to foster processes of change. In line with IDRC’s own strategic evaluation on the influence of its research on policy processes, this points to the need to dampen

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<sup>32</sup> See reference 19 above.

expectations regarding the likely policy impact of the research, the degree to which such impact is contingent on an ‘interplay of capacities, contexts and conditions’ (some of which are manageable, others not) and to think through the differing means of dissemination of research findings as well as the meanings of ‘policy influence’ and ‘policy relevance’.<sup>33</sup>

Drawing on the experiences of the post-tsunami project, it would be useful to explore strategies which develop a more targeted approach, identifying key individual policy and decision makers and articulating the research findings in an institutional and policy discourse that makes sense to them. It is also important to recognise that the research findings themselves need to be sensitive to the wider context – as is the case with the post-tsunami project which recognised that the focus on the ‘post-tsunami moment’ may be passing but that there are other contexts concerning rehabilitation where their findings may have some resonance and relevance. This, in turn, means that successful dissemination and policy influence may be as reliant on the network of personal contacts that researchers and institutes have as on the quality of the research findings themselves.

There is also the need to recognise the importance of research itself without a significant focus on ‘policy’ impact. For many interviewees, this was seen as one of the real strengths of PCD/IDRC funding – that it provided the space to explore questions, ideas without pressures to produce anodyne policy statements; that there was a recognition of the importance of, a shift away from a ‘project orientation/mentality’ that produces poor research and is of limited value in developing policy insights.

### **3.4.8 External commitment and support**

Given the difficult political context in Sri Lanka, as well as the financial and managerial issues surrounding a number of Sri Lankan research institutes, PCD/IDRC could be forgiven for thinking about putting its limited resources to better use in other locales in South Asia. Given the current government, political and research climate, such a move would be detrimental to research, researchers and research capacity in Sri Lanka.

In the current context, what researchers and institutes are looking for is continued support from external bodies in order to stay afloat and weather the current situation, as well as provided a degree of solidarity in efforts to maintain some kind of political space in which critical voices can be heard. Recognising that this is a particularly adverse phase that many such conflicts go through, PCD/IDRC needs to continue to play a modest role with a level of funding that will keep things ticking over and be in a position to move quickly and build on this capacity when the opportunity arises. In the longer term, it needs to help maintain a robust research community that is not overly reliant in funds from short-term consultancies which, over time, can be corrosive of such capacity.

Because no two situations are exactly the same, PCD/IDRC will need to be flexible and adaptable in working with in and around these issues and constraints with partner organisations in different stages of institutional development and variable capacities.

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<sup>33</sup> See ‘Capacities, Contexts, Conditions: The Influence of IDRC-Supported Research on Policy Processes’ March 2005

Each situation will have to be strategised. In some contexts there will be existing local capacity which can be sustained and enhanced. In other contexts where there is no intellectual social capital to stay connected to, where there is no institutional capacity, and where there are only limited skills to build on, PCD/IDRC may need to look for opportunities to locate research project within a regional or multi-country project as a way of capacity building over time and use these as a means of identifying individuals with potential as researchers. In other contexts, there may be the need to engage support from independent, external researchers and organisations.

All this need to be based on a fundamental starting principle, frequently articulated in the course of the interviews: that conflict situations may be difficult, but that it is not altogether impossible to work in such an environment. And as long as external research funding is sensitive to the conflict context, it will prove beneficial in developing and sustaining indigenous research capacity.

## **4 Annexes**

Annex 1. List of Acronyms

Annex 2. List of People Interviewed

Annex 3. Bibliography

Annex 4. Terms of Reference

Annex 5: Biography of the evaluator

#### **4.1 Annex 1. List of Acronyms**

CFA	Ceasefire Agreement
CPA	Centre for Policy Alternatives, Colombo
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement)
GoI	Government of Indonesia
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ICES	International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
PCD	Peace, Conflict and Development Program
ToR	Terms of Reference

## 4.2 Annex 2. List of people interviewed

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## 4.4 Annex 4. Terms of Reference

### Evaluation of Peace, Conflict and Development (PCD) Research Support in Countries and Regions affected by Violent Conflict

#### REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE (April 2008)<sup>34</sup>

##### 1. Background:

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC)'s Peace, Conflict and Development (PCD) program initiative has a long history of involvement in countries experiencing active violent conflict or war-to-peace transitions, including Guatemala, Colombia, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Sudan, Uganda and South Africa. In many cases, PCD initiated programming during a time of war-to-peace transition, but the violent conflict did not always cease. In fact, PCD's name change from "Peacebuilding and Reconstruction" in 2005 is a recognition that "the peace-to-conflict is not linear, and frequently sees recidivism to violence and uneasy, unstable and partial peace". Currently, PCD is "programming in select contexts marked by armed violence (Palestine, Colombia), and will carefully consider engagement in additional such contexts"<sup>35</sup>.

With this in mind, PCD wants to learn more on how PCD-supported research can be effectively conducted, managed and communicated in environments in which the effects of violent conflict have a significant impact upon the research process. This evaluation was first outlined in the 2005-2011 Prospectus. Also, the 2003 external review for the program initiative, then called Peacebuilding and Reconstruction (PBR), noted: "While the review found no research ethics problems in any of the projects reviewed, there is a need for PBR to develop guidelines, procedures, or "lessons-learned" addressing the particular ethical challenges of research programming in conflict-prone areas."<sup>36</sup> This evaluation will address some of those ethical challenges as well.

This evaluation also reflects IDRC Centre-wide programming and policy. In recent years, IDRC has become increasingly concerned about reflecting on the complexities of supporting researchers and their research institutions in politically difficult environments, including contexts where there is unstable peace or risks of recidivism to political violence. In 2005, the Centre examined its involvement in countries in transition<sup>37</sup>. The transition study invited Centre staff to assess the prospects for change in transition contexts and to consider "the wider political, research and institutional environments [...and] to think strategically on how changing contexts may impact programming and require responsiveness and flexibility"<sup>38</sup>. This concern is, in part, a reflection of the Canadian Foreign Policy community's increasing humanitarian, military and development assistance in conflict contexts and "fragile states".

This calls for more careful reflection on the conditions in which the diverse types of research support -typically provided by IDRC- is appropriate and viable, as well as determine how, when, and under what conditions PCD's programming can extend to

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<sup>34</sup> The ToR have been adjusted following the methodological workshop that was held in Ottawa on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2008 with IDRC staff and Channel Research team.

<sup>35</sup> PCD Prospectus 2005-2011, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Brynen, Fox-Decent, and Brown, 2004

<sup>37</sup> Smyth, Nancy and Maggie Gorman (2005). Corporate Assessment Framework: Strategic Intelligence Performance Area "Understanding Local Realities in Countries in Transition", Policy and Planning Group, IDRC.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35

additional countries where conflict is ongoing. The broader topic of IDRC support of research in conflict settings will be explored as part of IDRC's next environmental scan; and the PCD evaluation will feed into this Centre-wide discussion. The evaluation of PCD Research Support in Countries affected by Violent Conflict will also explore questions of security and risk management to staff and project partners, which is a key concern for IDRC. Finally, the evaluation will explore some of the ethical issues involved in supporting peacebuilding research in violent conflict contexts. This evaluation should assist PCD in managing the tension between the need to be responsive in areas affected by violent conflict and being realistic in terms of both financial and human resources and political capital required.

### **Principles and Approaches to Programming**

The **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)** is a public corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face. Support is directed toward developing an indigenous research capacity to sustain policies and technologies that developing countries need to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.

In carrying out its mission, IDRC provides funds and expert advice to developing-country researchers working to solve critical development problems. IDRC:

- **funds applied research** by researchers from developing countries on the problems they identify as crucial to their communities. Most projects supported result from direct exchanges between the Centre and developing-country institutions;
- **provides expert advice** to those researchers;
- **builds local capacity** in developing countries to undertake research and innovate.

**Peace, Conflict and Development (PCD)** is an IDRC program initiative which supports research *for* specific peacebuilding processes, as well as research *on* key peacebuilding challenges. PCD mainly responds to requests from research institutes, universities, policymakers, South-South and North-South networks, and civil society organizations. PCD encourages multidisciplinary approaches, encompassing economics, political science, anthropology, law, and social and gender analysis, as well as participatory/action research and other qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

PCD aims:

- to generate evidence-based findings that can be used to inform policy and programming decisions on root causes of violent conflict, the prevention of conflict, and equitable and sustainable development
- To build domestic ownership of peace processes
- To open spaces for discussion and dialogue
- To influence global policies and practices
- To build capacity for more rigorous, methodologically creative, and collaborative research.

## **2. Objectives:**

### **General Objective:**

The main objective of this evaluation is to identify the factors (conditions and programming modalities) that facilitate or hinder the research process for PCD-supported projects in countries and regions affected by violent conflict, and the advantages and disadvantages of PCD programming modalities in achieving PCD objectives in those conflict settings.

### **Specific Objectives:**

1. On the Conflict Context: Get a better understanding of what conditions (security, research infrastructure, community of researchers, etc.) need to be in place, especially when a return to violence seems imminent, so that 1) PCD can feasibly support research and 2) partners can feasibly conduct research in line with PCD's program objectives.
2. On "What Happened" - the Partners' and PCD's Intents and Achievements: Build a body of learning around the contributions PCD supported research can make in influencing policy, building research capacities, and increase domestic ownership of peace processes when taking into account the prevailing environmental conditions surrounding the research process and ethical considerations.
3. On the "How"- Programming Modalities: Increase learning around the strengths and weaknesses of PCD programming modalities and its relationships to its research partners in contributing to the achievement of PCD objectives in countries and regions affected by violent conflict.
4. Forward Thinking: With a better understanding of prevailing conditions, challenges and opportunities surrounding PCD supported research as well as PCD's programming modalities: explore the implications (in terms of resources, security, institutional risks, policy influence, "how we partner", etc.) of potential expansion of PCD programming into countries and regions affected by violent conflict.

### **3. Users and Uses of the Strategic Evaluation:**

#### **Primary Intended Users:**

- PCD program staff

#### **Secondary Users:**

- IDRC senior management and IDRC program staff
- PCD's partners
- Other agencies/donors working in conflict contexts

#### **Uses**

PCD program staff can use the evaluation to:

- Learn how to improve its programming approach (project and program identification and development, programming modalities, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.) in contexts of active conflict where PCD already programs;
- Build on previous and current programming experience to assess how, when, and under what conditions PCD could expand programming;
- Identify PCD's comparative advantage in supporting the management and dissemination of research in conflict contexts, including capacity building;
- Assess how and when can PCD-supported research can influence policy, and what particular capacities PCD can/should be supporting in such environments;
- Identify the ethical issues surrounding programming in conflict contexts, as well as assess security and risks for PCD staff and its project partners.

IDRC senior management and other IDRC program staff can use the evaluation to:

- Learn about programming in conflict contexts with a wide variety of programs, IDRC's comparative advantages, and "lessons learned" from PCD's experience;

- Assess security and risks for IDRC staff and its project partners with any project in a conflict context;
- Assess how IDRC can/should address the particular challenges of working in a conflict context, including risks to IDRC's partner organizations, in particular when expanding programming into countries affected by violent conflict.

PCD partners can use the evaluation to:

- Increase their understanding of the value, utility and reach that research might have in contexts of conflict;
- Assess the utility of different programming modalities and better understand the strengths and limitations of PCD;
- Clarify PCD and IDRC's role, and the expectations of what PCD and IDRC can and cannot do to support partners in conflict contexts.

Other agencies/donors working in conflict contexts can use the evaluation for:

- Reflection on their own programming in conflict contexts.
- Get a better understanding of PCD's comparative advantage in programming in countries and regions affected by conflict.

#### 4. Range of Issue and Evaluation Questions to be considered

##### Specific objective 1: On the Conflict Context

*Get a better understanding of what conditions (security, research capacity, institutional strength, ethical considerations etc.) need to be in place, especially when a return to violence seems imminent, so that 1) PCD can feasibly support research and 2) partners can feasibly conduct research in line with PCD's program objectives.*

**Lead questions:** What kind of challenges and opportunities did the conflict context present to the research project? What kinds of dynamics were present at the political and institutional level? What were the capacities on the ground?

##### **Range of potential sub-questions:**

- What is/was the nature of the conflict context at the time of the research? Did PCD staff and/or partners conduct a conflict and/ or risk assessment as part of the project design process?
- Was the timing of the research assessed in terms of the political context, the policy environment, etc.?
- Did the conflict context change significantly during the course of the research? If so, did this affect the research process and how?
- Was there an assessment of the sustainability of the project's objectives and/or sustainability of the institution/network?
- Did the research project encounter potential or actual ethical and/or security risks, including: risks to the researchers, including differential risks to team members in regions with varying levels of conflict, and interference or pressure by political or armed entities; risk to the research participants, including participants' right to maintain anonymity, informed consent, the safe storing of data, and the use of tapes/filming.
- Are there particular issues regarding institutional risks that are particular to conflict context, including institutional fragility, uncertain resource flow,

excessive workloads, and staff turnover? How are these addressed by PCD and PCD's partner organizations?

- What kinds of challenges, if any, are present in getting country clearance for a project, and what is the effect on the research project?

*Specific objective 2: On “What Happened” - the Partners’ and PCD’s Intents and Achievements*

*Build a body of learning around the ways in which PCD research partners adapt to the prevailing environmental conditions in conflict settings and address ethical considerations, and what contribution PCD-supported research can make in these conditions to influencing policy, building research capacities and increasing domestic ownership of peace processes.*

**Lead questions:** What did the research partners and PCD set out to do (intents)? What did actually happen? Why did it happen that way? What were PCD and its partners’ coping strategies? In which ways did the research partners and PCD develop and adapt research questions, methodologies and approaches, capacity building and dissemination in a conflict setting? Are there particular strategies which were more successful?

**Range of potential sub-questions:**

- What kind of change in the environment is envisioned in the project (i.e. the project’s theory of change)? For example, would change occur through individual change? Institutional change? By addressing root causes? By withdrawing resources for the conflict, etc?
- How did the suggested research methodology take into account the conflict context? Was the methodology adapted or modified if the context changed? What is PCD’s role in developing the methodology? What is the research partners’ role?
- Were there difficulties in accessing and collecting primary and secondary data? Did the research methodology include gender and/or generational analyses, multidisciplinary or comparative approaches, and/or worked with marginalized communities?
- Were there risks highlighted (institutional, personal security, objectives maybe not attainable), and if so, in which ways were these handled by PCD and its partners?
- During the course of conducting the research, what were the other practical, financial, political, methodological and ethical challenges related to the conflict context? These could include risks and challenges associated with potential unintended uses of research findings, for example.
- Was there an aspect of capacity building (individual or institutional) build within the research project, and what was the research partners’ and PCD’s role in developing that capacity building element?
- What has been PCD’s role in dealing with research ethics challenges from the outset of the project? How have ethical challenges (if present) affected the research process?
- How was the research team composed? Has the conflict context affected the research composition? If it was composed of researchers both in and outside of the conflict context, was there a different level of risk between the researchers?

- How was the research disseminated and communicated? Were policymakers part of the target group? What kinds of challenges and opportunities in dissemination and policy influence were present because of the conflict context? What political sensitivities existed, and how were those dealt with?
- Were there unintended consequences of the research process?

*Specific objective 3: On the “How”- Programming Modalities:*

*Increase learning around the strengths and weaknesses of PCD programming modalities and its relationships to its research partners in contributing to the achievement of PCD objectives in countries and regions affected by violent conflict.*

**Lead questions:** What are the different programming decisions that PCD and its partners make regarding research taking into account a context of violent conflict? What modalities seem more successful, and under what conditions? What can PCD learn about this?

**Range of potential sub-questions:**

- How do PCD criteria for involvement in conflict contexts fare in terms of feasibility and flexibility in conducting, managing and disseminating research, especially considering the potential “instabilities” in the context?
- How does the research team assess the strengths and weaknesses of PCD’s programming approach?
- What kind of programming modalities were considered and chosen by PCD partners and PCD staff (e.g. supporting an institution inside or outside of the conflict zone, composition of research team, research project vs. research support project, working in networks, capacity building, etc.). What adaptations have been/need to be made in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of results? Does it differ from programming in any other contexts, and if so, how? What modalities seemed to be more successful, and under which circumstances?
- To what extent did PCD partners and PCD staff act with flexibility and responsiveness under changing circumstances? What institutional tools, mechanisms or constraints (e.g. financial constraints, institutional policies, etc.) were taken into consideration?
- During the course of managing the research, what practical, financial, political, methodological and ethical challenges came up? How were they dealt with? Are there particular strategies which were more successful?

*Specific objective 4: Forward Thinking*

*With a better understanding of prevailing research conditions as well as PCD’s programming modalities, explore the implications (in terms of resources, security, institutional risks, policy influence, how we partner, etc.) of potential expansion of PCD programming into countries and regions affected by violent conflict.*

**Lead questions:** What conclusions can be drawn from how external dimensions affect the research process? What are the manageable factors, through the partnership between PCD and its research partners? What are the strengths and weaknesses of PCD programming approaches to research in conflict settings? What lessons can be

drawn in terms of the opportunities, challenges, and obstacles to potentially expanding PCD's programming into context of violent conflicts where it has not previously programmed significantly?

## **5. Methodology**

The evaluation will consist of two components:

- Four case studies that examine the challenges and opportunities of PCD's programming in countries or regions affected by violent conflict;
- A fifth paper consolidating case study findings and providing strategic forward planning on the feasibility of expanding PCD's programming, both in countries where it already programs and in new countries/regions.

### **Case Study Sampling:**

**Case study countries/regions** are selected to reflect:

- Significant recent PCD involvement: several projects ongoing or approved in those regions since the start of the 2005-2011 PCD Prospectus
- Balanced geographic coverage to the extent possible
- Selected case study countries/regions: **Colombia, Palestine/Middle East, East Africa, and Sri Lanka**
- 

**Case study projects** are selected based on:

- Ongoing or approved in current Prospectus period
- Research was managed or conducted, all or in part, in a country or region with violent conflict
- Projects that present learning opportunities on the development, conduct, management and dissemination of research in conflict contexts
- NOTE: A list of selected projects will be available to the selected consultants once hired

### **Evaluation Methodology:**

The evaluation methodology and instruments will be developed in discussion with PCD staff and the consultants, and this will be the focus of a methodology workshop (to be held before the start of the evaluation – date TBD).

Case study authors are expected to use qualitative methods as the primary source of data collection, including semi-structured interviews with staff, partners and beneficiaries. Document review of key project documents will also be critical to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem and of PCD/PCD partners' perceptions of how peace can best be supported through research. The case study methodology will include a desktop review of relevant project documentation, interviews with relevant PCD staff, project leaders and relevant stakeholders.

A final workshop will bring together relevant project participants to discuss the draft report and exchange experiences and insights gained from conducting, managing and dissemination research in conflict-affected countries.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Consultants Will:**

- Be available for a Methodology workshop (before the beginning of the study, date TBD) **and** a Results workshop (date TBD, after the study is completed) in Ottawa
- Develop and use high quality methods:
  - Well done surveys, interviews that follow protocols, outputs that are insightful and well-written; these instruments/methods should be detailed in the workplan developed by the author for review by the evaluation manager.
  - Conduct all communications including interviews with respect for our partners and their work.
- Produce high quality outputs:
  - Workplan (with instruments/methods, survey questions, etc.)
  - Iterative process with report draft
  - Full report and a short summary/brief of findings
- Be resourceful:
  - Search for:
    - Additional documentation
    - Additional potential interviewees
  - Get general information on:
    - The case study organization
    - Its other donors
    - Its other projects
    - On capacity development and organizational capacity

### **Evaluation Manager (PCD):**

- PCD will provide:
  - A list of case study project
  - An initial list of contacts and documents (Project Completion Reports, project proposals, etc.)
  - Support on travel logistics
  - Input on workplan and drafts of report
  - Background documentation

## **7. Expected Outcomes and Outputs/Report Requirements for Complete Evaluation:**

- Participation of all consultants in a methodology workshop with PCD staff and other consultants (early 2008);
- Four case studies, 20-25 pages in length each;
- A 25-30-page paper to consolidate case study findings and provide strategic forward planning assessing the feasibility of expanding PCD's programming, both in countries where it already programs and in new countries/regions.
- A total of five briefs (2-4 pages each) on studies – one for each of the four case studies and a fifth summing up the findings of the consolidating/strategic planning paper;
- Participation of all consultants in a results workshop with IDRC staff, project partners, and other donors.

**9. Estimated timeline and activities (in 2008 – dates TBD with availability of hired consultants):**

Case Study Authors (Per Case Study – 4 case studies total)

Activity	Timeline (by month from beginning of contract)	Billable days per activity
Methodology workshop	1 <sup>st</sup> month	Days, as follows: -1 day of workshop -1.5 days in transit
Workplan	Submitted in 2 <sup>nd</sup> month	2 days for workplan development
Background research	2 <sup>nd</sup> month	3 days
Field Work	3 <sup>rd</sup> month	7 days, as follows: -5 days in field -2 days in transit
Writing report and summary/brief	3 <sup>rd</sup> and/or 4 <sup>th</sup> month	6 days
Submission of report and brief/summary	5 <sup>th</sup> month	
Revision of report and brief/summary	6 <sup>th</sup> month	2 days
Participation in results workshop and submit final report	8 <sup>th</sup> month	2.5 days, as follows: -1.5 days in transit, -1 day of workshop
Total Billable Days per Case Study:		25 days

**Author writing consolidating/strategic planning paper**

Activity	Timeline (by month from beginning of contract)	Billable days per activity
Methodology workshop	1 <sup>st</sup> month	Days, as follows: -1 day of workshop -1.5 days in transit
Workplan	Submitted in 5 <sup>th</sup> month	3 days for workplan development
Developing and Writing report and summary/brief	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> month	20 days
Submission of report and brief/summary	End of 6 <sup>th</sup> month	
Revision of report and brief/summary	7 <sup>th</sup> month	2 days
Participation in results workshop and submit final report	8 <sup>th</sup> month	2.5 days, as follows: -1.5 days in transit, -1 day of workshop
Total Billable Days:		30 days

**10. Quality of the Evaluation Report**

The quality of the evaluation report produced by the evaluators will be judged by IDRC’s Evaluation Unit on four internationally recognized standards: utility, feasibility, accuracy, and propriety. A copy of IDRC’s Evaluation Guideline 3 “Formatting Evaluation Reports at IDRC” and Evaluation Guideline 4 “Quality Assessment of IDRC Evaluation Reports” will be provided to the evaluator/evaluation team.

#### 4.5 **Annex 5. Biography of the evaluator**

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Mark Hoffman teaches in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics. He served as Dean of Undergraduate Studies from 2000-2006. His research and teaching has concentrated on two connected areas: conflict and peace studies, and contemporary international theory. He has also served as Director of the Conflict Analysis and Development Unit, which engages in policy research, evaluations, provides support to facilitated peace dialogues and contributes to training in conflict prevention and peacebuilding for a range of intergovernmental, governmental and nongovernmental organisations. His scholar-practitioner work has focused on the former Soviet Union, particularly Moldova, and south Asia, particularly Sri Lanka and Nepal.