

Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA):

A North-South Participatory Research Project

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Table of Contents

3	Table of Contents
4	Abstract
5	Overview and Context
7	Methodological Practices and Insights
7	Asking New Questions, from Global South and North Perspectives
8	Theoretically and Practically Informed Experience Sharing
8	Developing Effectiveness of PCIA Tool, Methodology and Effectiveness
8	Development of a PCIA Community of Practice
9	JPD Special Issue on PCIA
10	PCIA Special Issue Outreach
14	Next Steps
14	Journal Circulation
14	Conceptual and Theoretical Development
14	Practical, Methodological and Tool Development
14	Cultivation of Community of Practice
16	Partner Organizations
16	Peacebuild: The Canadian Peacebuilding Network
16	Peacemedia-paixmédia
16	Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University
16	Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD)
17	Financials
17	Concluding Thoughts

Abstract

In late-2012, the 'Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA): A North-South Participatory Research Project' (AI-PCIA) was launched with the generous support of an International Development Research Centre (IDRC) *Small Grant for Innovative Research and Knowledge-Sharing*.

Towards assessing the impacts of PCIA, a cohort of eight scholars and practitioners from the Global South were selected through a competitive application process to participate in constructing and developing a PCIA community of practice. Additionally, several scholars and practitioners from the North were invited to share their experience in a Global South-North dialogue that unfolded through a diverse host of activities over nearly two years.

Since its effective launch in late 2012, the AI-PCIA initiative has built an online database of participant experience and a PCIA bibliography, housed on the Peacebuild website. The AI-PCIA has hosted three online dialogues with participants from the Global South and North, averaging 90 minutes. Co-PI Dr. Eric Abitbol hosted a PCIA roundtable at the International Studies Association (ISA) conference in San Francisco in April 2013. In May 2013, AI-PCIA participants from the Global South and North gathered in Toronto, Canada, for a community of practice conference, workshop and dialogue process hosted by IRIS.

Subsequent to the Conference, participants from the North and Global South composed academic articles for potential inclusion in a Special Issue of the JPD for which Dr. Eric Abitbol was a Visiting Editor. Following a rigorous peer-review process, eight project participant articles, essays, and/or briefings were selected for publication. JPD's Special Issue: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (V9N1, 2014) was launched in June 2014 and continues to be circulated strategically both in Canada and in relevant international academic, practitioner and policy circles.

This Final Report of the 'Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment: A Global South-North Participatory Research Project' provides an overview of the project outputs while considering its impacts and effects. This document is a report to IDRC as the funder.

Keywords: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), Conflict Sensitivity, Conflict Transformation, Peacebuilding, Development, Evaluation

Overview and Context

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

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

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

Building on the 'Introductions' and 'Presentations', often using them as the basis of discussion, the AI-PCIA has hosted three online dialogues with participants from the Global South and North, averaging 90 minutes. These were held on March 14, March 28 and April 30, 2013. Additionally, the co-PI Dr. Eric Abitbol hosted a PCIA roundtable at the International Studies Association (ISA) conference in San Francisco on April 6, 2013. Each of these meetings created an opportunity for participants and the wider PCIA community of academics and practitioners to pursue critical and engaged experience-sharing, intent on assessing the impacts of PCIA and imagining its onward development.

In May 2013, AI-PCIA participants from the Global South and North gathered in Toronto, Canada, for a conference, workshop and dialogue event held at York University and hosted on site by IRIS. This was the first opportunity for all participants to meet and work together in person. Most project participants had already met and engaged in online dialogue, creating the context for meaningful shared work to be pursued with little need for lengthy formalities. Additional participants from within Canada (from Toronto, Waterloo, Montreal and Ottawa) merged seamlessly with the group, as might be expected of academics and

professionals in this field. The Report from the May 22-24, 2013, Community of Practice Conference, dated June 23, 2013, covers the work and methodologies used up to that time.

Subsequent to the Conference, participants from the North and Global South composed academic articles for potential inclusion in a Special Issue of the JPD, for which Dr. Eric Abitbol was a Visiting Editor. Subsequent to a rigorous peer-review process, eight project participant articles, essays, and/or briefings were selected for publication. JPD's Special Issue: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (V9N1, 2014) was launched in June 2014.

Overall, this has been a very successful initiative, from beginning to end. The current report outlines the approach taken in its implementation through a reflection on the practices, which has led to an assessment of successful implementation. It also identifies possible avenues through which this work can move forward. This report should also be read in conjunction with the 'Report from the Community of Practice Conference', which provides important theoretical, methodological and practical insights. It should also be read in conjunction with Dr. Eric Abitbol's JPD Special Issue 'Introductory Essay: Assessing the Power and Practices of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)' in JPD's V9N1, Summer 2014 (Annex 1). This introductory essay provides an overview and some detailed insights about PCIA issues and articles contained in this Special Issue.

Methodological Practices and Insights

The overall AI-PCIA project was intentionally designed along multi-methodological lines, as follows:

- Online Introductions
- Online Experience-Sharing
- Conference, Workshop and Dialogues
- Publication and Dissemination

Each of these components served a specific purpose, towards ensuring that project objectives were met. These objectives were identified as:

1. Asking New Questions, from Global South and North Perspectives
2. Theoretically and Practically Informed Experience Sharing
3. Developing Diversity and Effectiveness of the PCIA Tool and Methodology
4. Development of a PCIA Community of Practice

A few words will be shared on each of these objectives.

Asking New Questions, from Global South and North Perspectives

The multi-dimensional approach to the AI-PCIA initiative was designed in a way to encourage the asking of new PCIA-related questions. Through a methodology that saw participants from the Global South and North share virtual introductions about their own work and practice and then engage in Global South-North dialogue (both online and in person), new questions emerged about PCIA theoretically and in practice. Some questions raised include:

- What is the significance of power to the framing and practice of PCIA?
- How is PCIA pursued similarly and differently by theorist-practitioners in the Global South and North?
- What is the significance of theory and theorizing to PCIA mechanisms and processes?
- How is PCIA similar to and different from ‘peace processes’?
- How might PCIA be designed and implemented in ways that empower rather than disempower communities in conflict environments?
- What is the significance of scale in relation to PCIA processes?
- When is an appropriate time to design and implement PCIA processes?

Theoretically and Practically Informed Experience Sharing

As part of the AI-PCIA methodology, experience sharing was undertaken in a variety of different ways, creating a culture of experience sharing among participants. Given that participants were based at a number of different locations, online processes were fundamental to the success of the initiative. Before anyone met in person, participants put up personal and professional introductions on the Peacebuild website. A number of different dialogue sessions were pursued virtually.

Having been informed by these virtual initiatives, participants were already quite familiar with one another's experience, approach and practices when they finally met for the conference at York University in May 2014. This allowed for greater experience sharing to be undertaken in person. Conference participants shared their experiences yet more deeply in person, providing critique and engaging in dialogue around these issues. This then informed the composition and review of articles destined for publication in the Special Issue of JPD.

Developing Diversity and Effectiveness of PCIA Tool and Methodology

The AI-PCIA initiative has shed light on the diversity of PCIA tools and methodologies. It has also contributed to greater PCIA effectiveness. PCIA is many things to many people. It has been framed as a kind of short-term critical study of the linkages between development and peacebuilding in particular contexts. It can be framed as a peace process lasting months and even years. It has been understood as a witness-bearing mechanism for people in conflict environments. In creating greater awareness of the diversity, strengths and challenges of different PCIA approaches, each informs the others, thereby increasing the methodological diversity and effectiveness of PCIA. Further, through the different peer review mechanisms of the AI-PCIA project, each PCIA approach is both critiqued and appreciated, thereby promoting their greater coherence and effectiveness.

Development of a PCIA Community of Practice

The AI-PCIA initiative sought to catalyze a PCIA Community of Practice, notably one that brings together theorist-practitioners from the Global South and North. The initiative was successful in creating and sustaining such a Community over two years. It did so through the various project activities, with the most recent being the JPD Special Issue on PCIA. It remains to be seen how the Community develops beyond this journal publication.

Thus far, Community of Practice activities have included virtual and in-person experience sharing, conference participation and journal publication. It has developed as a critical and appreciative network, forum and community actively engaged in informing each other's work, while also creating ever new contexts for participants to engage with one another around the theory and practices of PCIA.

JPD Special Issue on PCIA

While the 'Report from the Community of Practice Conference' raised reflections up to and including the Conference itself, the current Final Project Report raises a number of important issues relating to the JPD Special Issue on PCIA. This Special Issue is the culmination of many important experience-sharing processes. The articles and briefings contained therein developed out of the academic presentations made during the Community of Practice Conference, which were themselves informed by the earlier virtual experience-sharing processes.

The list of articles in the issue is as follows:

Editorial

Revitalising Our Tools To Better Engage Local Contexts And Measure And Promote Peace
Erin McCandless

Introductory Essay

Assessing The Power And Practices Of Peace And Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)
Eric Abitbol

Articles

Localizing Transformation: Addressing Clan Fueds In Mindanao Through PCIA
Norma V. Constantino and Maria Cecilia M. Ferolin

PCIA Theory In Field Practice: World Vision's Pursuit Of Peace Impact And Programming Quality Across Sectors
Valarie Vat Kamatsiko

Mainstreaming Failure Or A Small Measure Of Success? Observations From A Large-Scale PCIA In Post-War Sri Lanka
Simona Achitei

Peace And Conflict Impact Assessment In Somalia; Opportunities For Empowerment Of Ethnic Minorities
Edwin Barasa-mang'eni

Peace And Conflict Impact Assessment Of The Palestinian-Israeli Water Case
Marwan Haddad

Briefing

Beyond The Lens: PCIA As Peace Sensibility In The Philippines
Marides Virola-Gardiola

Policy Dialogues: The New Deal

g7+ Policy Update: On the Way to Resilience
Habib Ur Rehman Mayar, g7+ Secretariat

South Sudan Civil Society Working Group on Sustainable Peace
Civil Society Analysis and Proposed Reform Agenda on Socio-political upheaval
in South Sudan

Amplifying the chances for stability and peace in South Sudan
Statement from the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
(CSPPS)

The Special Issue has been important in a number of significant ways. It contains cutting edge, state of the art analyses and reflections on PCIA, with contributions from authors in the Global South leading the way. It makes visible the great diversity in PCIA methodological approaches. It also creates a lasting embodiment of the work undertaken by the PCIA Community of Practice, thereby making it possible for these insights to have a lasting impact. It is a way for participants in the Community of Practice to continue developing their work methodologically and collectively. It also a way to demonstrate the PCIA-related leadership of each Community of Practice participant.

PCIA Special Issue Outreach

In an attempt to ensure that the PCIA Special Issue is circulated effectively at a number of levels, a multi-pronged approach was developed and pursued.

To begin with, JPD circulates hard copies to its International Editorial Advisors, which includes leading peacebuilding and development practitioners and theorists from the Global South and North. The Advisors include:

1. Amr Abdullah, University of Peace, Costa Rica
2. Eric Abitbol, Peacemedia-paixmédia, American University – School of International Service, Washington, DC, USA
3. Kwesi Aning, Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Ghana
4. Patrick Bond, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
5. Henk-Jan Brinkman, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, New York, USA
6. Kennedy Chinyowa, University of the Witwatersrans, South Africa
7. Kevin P. Clements, University of Otago, New Zealand
8. Sam Gbaydee Doe, United Nations Development Program, New York, USA
9. Comfort Ero, International Crisis Group, Kenya
10. Arturo Escobar, University of North Carolina, USA

11. Ronald Fisher, American University – School of International Service, Washington, DC, USA
12. Kai Brand-Jacobsen, PARTIR, Romania
13. Mary E. King, University of Peace, Costa Rica
14. Judith Large, Lancaster University, UK
15. Roger MacGinty, University of Manchester, UK
16. Sam Moyo, Institute for Agrarian Studies, Zimbabwe
17. Tim Murithi, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa
18. Thania Paffenholz, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, Switzerland
19. Roland Paris, University of Ottawa, Canada
20. Tore Rose, EPES Mandala and SecDev, France
21. Abdul Aziz Said, American University – School of International Service, Washington, DC, USA
22. Jerry Sanders, University of California-Berkeley, USA
23. Pamela Scully, Emory University, USA
24. Andrew Sherriff, European Centre for Development Policy Management, The Netherlands
25. Dan Smith, International Alert, UK
26. Yadira Soto, Organisation of American States, USA
27. Peter Uvin, Tufts University, USA
28. Nahla Vanji, UN Women, New York, USA
29. Susan Woodward, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA
30. Craig Zelizer, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA

The people listed above are academics, practitioners, trainers, NGO staff, and UN employees. As part of the distribution, this is a group of people who will use the publication to teach, to inform their work, and to further develop research agenda.

The project participants are also receiving copies of the Special Issue, both those who are published therein and those who participated in any component of the initiative. There include:

1. Eric Abitbol: Director, Peacemedia-paixmédia; Senior Fellow, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS); International Advisory Committee Member, Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD); Vice-Chair, Peacebuild Canada
2. Simona Achitei: Monitoring & Evaluation Senior Advisor, Austraining International; Formerly Head of Research, Applied Research Unit, UNOPS Sri Lanka
3. Zahid Shahab Ahmed: Assistant Professor, Centre for International Peace & Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan.

4. Ademola Akinyoade: Peace and Conflict Studies Program, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan and Peace and Conflict Studies Unit, College of Social and Management Sciences, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
5. Dawn Bazely: Director, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University, Canada
6. Kenneth Bush: Research Affiliate, National Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand
7. Norma Constantino: Field Monitor, United Nations World Food Programme, Iligan Sub Office, Iligan City, Philippines
8. Annette Dubreuil: Coordinator, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University, Canada
9. Tag Elkhazin: Consultant, Subsahara Centre, Canada
10. Lowell Ewert: Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel University College, Canada
11. Marides Gardiola: Mediators' Network for Sustainable Peace (MedNet), Philippines
12. Marwan Haddad: Professor and Director of Water and Environment Studies Institute (WESI), An-Najah National University, Palestine
13. Valarie Kamatsiko: Regional Peacebuilding Advisor, World Vision East Africa, Rwanda
14. Edwin Barasa Mang'eni: Food and Agricultural Organization, Somalia.
15. Erin McCandless: Editor, Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD), USA
16. Randy Pinsky: Masters Candidate in Public Policy and Public Administration, Concordia University, Canada
17. Tess Tajanlangit: Independent Consultant, Canada and Philippines
18. Rick Wallace: International Peacebuilding Consulting, Canada
19. Todd Walters: Executive Director, International Peace Parks Expeditions (IPPE), USA
20. Asaf Zohar: Associate Professor, Business Administration, Chair, Sustainability Studies Program Trent University, Canada
21. Silke Reichrath: Peacebuild Canada, Canada
22. Vanessa Gordon: Politics Instructor, Dawson College, Canada
23. Linda Corsius: International Bureau of Children's Rights, Canada
24. Peter Bauman: Independent Consultant, USA

Again, this is a network of people who will use the publication to teach, to research and to inform their projects and advocacy efforts.

In addition to the people and organizations on these lists, hard copies of the Special Issue are being circulated to the Board Members of Peacebuild, the Canadian Peacebuilding Network, as well as some Peacebuild affiliates. These include:

1. Peggy Mason, Peacebuild Canada
2. Prajeena Karmacharya, Peacebuild Canada
3. Rena Ramkay, Peacebuild Canada
4. Gerald Ramkay, Peacebuild Canada
5. Jennifer Wiebe, Mennonite Central Committee, Ottawa, Canada
6. Monica J. Scheifele, Mennonite Central Committee, Ottawa, Canada
7. John Siebert, Project Ploughshares, Waterloo, Canada

And finally, circulation of hard copies of the Special Issue has been selectively and strategically pursued to a network of some 150 theorists, practitioners and professionals in the field.

It should be noted that an additional 50 copies are in the possession of the Project Coordinators/co-PIs, to be circulated as opportunities arise.

In addition, the Special Issue is selectively made available by Taylor & Francis Publishers as an online resource. It is currently impossible to know how many people, organizations and institutions will access the whole issue or specific articles therein online. However, JPD is a popular journal and so there is an expectation that outreach and distribution will be significant through this format. Notably, it is expected that several universities will assign one or more Special Issue articles as required reading in several thematically related courses.

Next Steps

This report formally concludes the ‘Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA): A North-South Participatory Research Project’. Nonetheless, a number of project related activities will carry on beyond submission of this report:

Journal Circulation

Given the nature of the JPD Special Issue on PCIA, circulation of the hard copy of the Journal, as well as selective outreach related to the digital online version of Journal articles, is likely to go on for months and even years into the future. Particular efforts are being made so that articles from the Journal are included in related university course-packs for specific classes.

Conceptual and Theoretical Development

There remains much work to be done in the area of conceptual and theoretical development. The academic approach to PCIA involves generating new concepts and theories of PCIA, some of which will be linked to practice directly. Given the originality of ideas shared through the JPD Special Issue of PCIA, there is room for each of these to be the basis of greater research and development.

Practical, Methodological and Tool Development

The JPD Special Issue and other components of the AI-PCIA project have raised the need for further practical, methodological and tool development. Efforts have been, and are still being, made to create greater coherence in the field of PCIA. In so doing, the potential for field testing approaches already underway and in response to the articulated interest in developing new ones is significant. This should continue informing the development of PCIA tools, which contributes to the development of practice, which is itself informing conceptual and theoretical developments.

Cultivation of Community of Practice

A PCIA Community of Practice is now in existence, having come a long way towards connecting theorists and practitioners from around the world with each other. There remains much work to be done to further connect a greater number of theorists and practitioners into a dynamic dialogical community. There is also need to reach out to greater and more diverse (potential) participants. Also, this community of practice and/or its individual members may also submit proposals for grants and contracts. For the time being, a few ideas have been circulated around these possibilities.

Regarding other suggestions for collaboration that have emerged from the Community of Practice members, the following have been raised:

- PCIA Forum: Creating an online forum for sharing best practices; establishing connections between theorist-practitioners of varying

backgrounds and experience; a place to connect stakeholders of particular PCIA processes; a place to share and learn about methodologies, good/best practices, needs and lessons, as well as the challenges of PCIA. Some work has been initiated in this respect, using the Peacebuild web platform.

- Database: Building on the bibliography created as a component of the AI-PCIA initiative, a database would bring together the relevant literature, key reference points, patterns and trends of PCIA, as well as relevant experience categorized by context and situation. Some work has been initiated in this respect, using the Peacebuild web platform.
- Donor relations: A donor forum; donor mapping.
- Networking and Marketing
 - Optimizing open spaces for marketing
 - Universities, community newspapers, deal with Google ads
- South-South collaboration: Strategic seed project; collaboration
- ISA and other Conferences
- Outreach: Practitioners, policy-makers, funders, academy; building face-to-face contacts; building connections for PCIA practitioners (IAHS-AFREA), a community of evaluators in South Asia (evolving); to build capacity
- Campaign: Create a demand; Case studies
- Training: mentorship and coaching; PCIA training, course, community based, online
- Blog: List of practitioners; insights on conflict; virtual space

All suggestions are valuable and require the uptake of theorist-practitioners themselves, fundamentally developing the community of practice in so doing.

Partner Organizations

Partners of this initiative were selectively chosen in the early phases of project development. Each brought a specific strength to this initiative. Project partners are listed below. A few words about the participation, contributions and responsibilities are included as well.

Peacebuild: The Canadian Peacebuilding Network

Silke Reichrath, Coordinator

<http://www.peacebuild.ca/>

The AI-PCIA initiative was designed and submitted to IDRC through Peacebuild, the lead organisation. Peacebuild maintained primary responsibility for donor relations. It provided most administrative support on the initiative. It provided the web space for the project throughout, and it has been responsible for most financial management of the project.

Peacemedia-paixmédia

Eric Abitbol, Director

peacepub@yahoo.com

While the project has been hosted by Peacebuild, Peacemedia-paixmédia provided the primary conceptual, methodological, intellectual and dialogical content and approaches of the project. The overall multi-organisation design and multi-dimensionality of the initiative was led by Peacemedia-paixmédia. All virtual and in-person activities were facilitated by Peacemedia-paixmédia. The JPD Special Issue on PCIA saw Dr. Eric Abitbol engaged as the Visiting Editor.

Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University

Dawn Bazely, Director

dbazely@yorku.ca, www.iris.yorku.ca

IRIS played an important role throughout this initiative as a partner organization, notably around the May 2013 conference. IRIS hosted the conference, arranged for participant accommodation, and ensured that all conference-related expenses were properly managed.

Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD)

Joan B. Kroc Center for Peace Studies, University of San Diego

Erin McCandless, Editor

erin.mccandless@gmail.com, <http://www.journalpeacedev.org/>

The JPD played a key role in this initiative in generously offering one Special Issue of the Journal on PCIA. The Journal offered editorial support, printing and distribution, as well as 25 complementary copies, all as an in-kind contribution to the IA-PCIA initiative.

Financials

Peacebuild has been responsible for managing the financial components of the AI-PCIA initiative. A financial report has been appended to this report.

Concluding Thoughts

Overall, the AI-PCIA initiative has been a success. A great deal has been accomplished over 18 months, with the support of IDRC's *Small Grant for Innovative Research and Knowledge-Sharing*. In addition to the current report, an independent evaluation of this work has been conducted by evaluators Pamela Teitelbaum and Kevin Vowles. This evaluation is appended to the current report.

It is hoped that the AI-PCIA initiative is only the first of many in the field of PCIA. Several possible Next Steps have been identified in the current report, in the hopes that this initiative become foundational to the innovative and expanding field of conflict sensitivity and evaluation at the nexus of peacebuilding and development.