

Project Evaluation Report

Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIAs): A North-South Participatory Research Project

By: Pamela Teitelbaum, MA, Lead Evaluator and Kevin Vowles, Evaluator

External Evaluation Report

Date: August 22, 2014

Published by: Peacebuild/Paix durable

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

IDRC Project Number: 107108-0020103-019

IDRC Project Title: Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA): A North-South Participatory Research Project

Country/Region: Global

Full Name and Addresses of Research Institutions:

Peacebuild: The Canadian Peacebuilding Network
406-575 Byron Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2A 1R7
<http://www.peacebuild.ca/>

Peacemedia-paixmédia
peacepub@yahoo.com
Tel: 514-513-3476

IRIS/Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability, York University
349 York Lanes and 4700 Keele St.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3
<http://iris.info.yorku.ca/>

Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD)
Joan B. Kroc Center for Peace Studies, University of San Diego
5998 Alcala Park
San Diego, CA 92110, USA
<http://www.journalpeacedev.org/>

Names and Contact Information of Researchers:

Eric Abitbol, PhD
Director, Peacemedia-paixmédia
Vice-Chair, Peacebuild Canada
Senior Fellow, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS)
International Advisory Committee Member, JPD
peacepub@yahoo.com; Tel: 514-513-3476

Silke Reichrath, Coordinator, Peacebuild/Paix durable
prevention@peacebuild.ca

Dawn Bazely, Director, IRIS
dbazely@yorku.ca; Tel: 416-736-2100 ext. 33631

Erin McCandless, Editor, Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD)
erin.mccandless@gmail.com; Tel: + 1 347 227-7633

This report is presented as received from project recipients. It has not been subjected to peer review or other review processes.

This work is used with the permission of Peacebuild/Paix durable.

Copyright 2014, Peacebuild/Paix durable.

Table of Contents

3	Table of Contents
4	Abstract
5	Project Background
5	Research Project Aim and Objectives
6	Global Participation and Areas of Knowledge
6	Project Methodology and Activities
7	Evaluation Methodology
8	Implementation of the project
9	Monitoring and follow up plan
9	Evaluation Findings and Conclusions
15	Linkages to the wider context of PCIA practice and research
17	Overall project achievements
18	Future Considerations
19	Successes and Lessons Learned
19	Concluding remarks
20	Appendix 1 - Full list of participants in the project
21	Appendix 2 - Peacebuild website

Abstract

An independent evaluation of ‘Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA): A North-South Participatory Research Project’ was conducted by Pamela Teitelbaum and Kevin Vowles, two evaluation professionals. Using a mixed-methodological approach, the evaluation team found that the project achieved and surpassed its goals and objectives.

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

Project Background

Since it was first coined by Prof. Kenneth Bush in 1998, in a working paper published by the International Development Research Centre's (IDRCs) Peacebuilding and Reconstruction (PBR) program, Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) has been widely adopted by stakeholders and experts in the field of peacebuilding and development, from academics to practitioners, living and/or working in various contexts of conflict. In 2012, following more than 10 years of research and implementation, a new PCIA initiative was created through 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).

Launched with the support of funding from the IDRC in 2012, the main aim of this initiative, entitled *Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA): A North-South Participatory Research Project*¹ was to put PCIA at the centre, using an evaluative approach. Using participatory and evaluative methods, PCIA would be examined and deconstructed both critically and reflexively, by a selected group of scholars and practitioners engaged in PCIA-related work, in a North-South participatory research and dialogue initiative. 'Assessing the Impact' also intended to contribute to the development and improvement of PCIA tools and their effectiveness.

Research Project Aim and Objectives

The overall PCIA project aimed to answer the following central questions:

- How widely used is PCIA as a methodology in Northern and Southern research, and international peace and conflict and international development environments?
- What is the wider effect of PCIA as a methodology in the Northern and Southern contexts?

The project aim and rationale implies that debate remains a part of the PCIA within the international development community, as people try to prevent multilateral organizations or other actors with influence from ignoring or sidelining the results PCIA has to offer towards contributing to peaceful change. The reflective focus being echoed relates in part to PCIA's strengths, limitations, utility and place within conflict and peacebuilding, with the intention that an active and focused community of practice strengthen the way PCIA is applied to conflict sensitive contexts. *"Often supported by specialists in the North, there is a continued need to assess the significance, value and use of PCIA. Amplifying the political voice of actors from the Global South in dialogue with Northern actors, 'Assessing the Impact' builds upon a tradition intent on promoting global cooperation anchored in peaceable and equitable development practice"* (PCIA Project Proposal, 2012, p. 1).

¹ Herewith will be referred to either as "the Project" or 'Assessing the Impact'

The Project objectives are to:

- Evaluate the use and practice of PCIA given that the international development community still hesitates using this approach in support of conflict sensitivity.
- Contribute to the improvement of the PCIA tools and their effectiveness.
- Build a PCIA community of practice.

What follows is an independent evaluation of ‘Assessing the Impact’, conducted by Pamela Teitelbaum and Kevin Vowles. Using surveys to gather data, with methodologies expounded upon in this paper, the evaluation team found that the project achieved its goals and objectives.

Global Participation and Areas of Knowledge

‘Assessing the Impact’ included eleven (11) Northern and eight (8) Southern scholars and practitioners, as well as four (4) organizing partners. There was very good country representation from regions in Africa, the Middle East, South East Asia, and North America. Participants' backgrounds ranged from water, land and resource management, and included knowledge and expertise in peace and conflict dialogue, as well as gender analysis. Affiliations ranged from humanitarian and development to academic, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local governance institutions.

To support this North-South global cooperation structure, 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. Participants from the Global South received a stipend for their involvement. In addition, several leading and active scholars and practitioners from the Global North were invited to participate in sharing their experience through a North-South dialogue, structured through several activities.

Project Methodology and Activities

The project was designed and pursued through a mixed methodological approach to the study, experience-sharing and development of a community of practice around PCIA. The project sought to engage scholar and/or practitioner participants in reflective processes, leading to dialogue and then publication, in assessing the impact of PCIA as a methodology and practice. To achieve this goal, the organizing partners implemented four (4) main components of the project:

Online component (A): A space created for the eight (8) Southern participants and ultimately seventeen (17) Northern participants to communicate in an online community of practice that was newly established.

Online component (B): A space created for pre-conference dialogue and knowledge sharing to begin building a community of practice. The organizers posted presentations and a series of other materials online where participants could access them and then participate in facilitated dialogues in preparation for the Community of Practice Conference.

Face-to-face dialogues: A Community of Practice Conference took place in Toronto, Ontario, from May 22-24, 2013, where members of the community of practice were brought together to critically present and discuss PCIA methodology, diversity, positive impacts, effects and challenges.

A Peer Reviewed Publication: A special issue of the *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* was published in the summer of 2014 (V9N1). The eight (8) articles contained are outputs of the project. Of these, six (6) are composed by Southern project participants. In the JPD tradition, all articles were submitted by authors and then blindly peer-reviewed. With the support of JPD's committed editorial staff, authors addressed comments and then re-submitted articles for reassessment and final approval before publication. Eric Abitbol assumed the role of Visiting Editor for this Special Issue of JPD. He also wrote an introductory essay on PCIA in this publication.

Evaluation Methodology

The current evaluation of 'Assessing the Impact' was implemented to assess the success of the overall project, and specifically to assess whether and how project aims and objectives were met.

Methods for data collection were both quantitative and qualitative. As part of the evaluation methodology, a **participatory approach** was employed through the use of structured online interviews and a survey aimed at collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Data was gathered both from organizing partners and from Southern and Northern participants. By engaging an approach based on principles of participation, organizing partners had an opportunity to contribute to the decision-making and design of the research and assessment model used for this project evaluation. To satisfy expectations, an open channel of communication was maintained throughout, thereby ensuring the success of this evaluation.

Document and online materials review: This review was conducted at the beginning of the evaluation process to collect information about 'Assessing the Impact'. The research included a review of academic (journal publication) as well as organizational reports (grey literature), and analysis of the structural components and features available through existing online community environments. Documents reviewed included the project proposal, the report from the Community of Practice Conference, online materials from the Peacebuild website and detailed lists of participants (for further details see the Appendices section of this report).

Online survey tool: With the support of a PCIA project team member, the evaluators designed the online survey tool. It consisted of sixteen (16) open-ended and multiple-choice questions. The open-ended questions gave space for respondents to elaborate on their perspectives and experiences, and allowed the evaluators to collect qualitative data. The survey also included multiple choice questions with strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly agree options, as well as significantly/somewhat significantly/not really significantly/not at all significantly questions to gauge the learning and experiences of 'Assessing the Impact'.

Online email interviews: Online email interviews were sent out to a select group of organizing partners and Northern and Southern participants. These interviews provide understanding about

the process of learning, sharing, network building and growth, which occurred as a result of the implementation of the activities of ‘Assessing the Impact’.

In applying these methodological evaluation approaches, the goal is to collect and analyze data to understand the results of this project. In doing so, the evaluation report will detail the main findings from the data analysis, in accordance with the objectives of the project (as indicated in the first section). The report also outlines the successes and limitations of ‘Assessing the Impact’. Additionally, it provides some future considerations for the organizing partners. Unintended consequences and benefits are also detailed. Learning documented by participants in surveys will be shared as “quotes” in the evaluation report when supporting the findings. Finally, how ‘Assessing the Impact’ can be understood to have contributed to the development of a PCIA community of practice, will be elaborated upon in this document.

Key evaluation activities/inventory of tools

This section describes the key activities undertaken to carry out the Project Evaluation. The table below maps out the rationale for the design and delivery of each activity as well as the number of respondents (N=) and number of participants (P) to each data collection tool.

Table 1: Descriptive list of evaluation activities

Evaluation Activity	Description/Rationale	N=(r) of P R=Respondents P=Participants
Online survey	Collect data from all stakeholders of the Project (i.e. participants from Global South and North, organizing partners) to assess project implementation, project process and content, and capacity and knowledge sharing	N =11 of 30 (37%)
Email interviews	Collect data from selected participants from the Global South and North and organizing partners to gain a more in depth understanding of the Project implementation, design and content	N = 4 of 6
Document review (peer-reviewed, grey lit)	Establish a strong foundation of knowledge about the ‘Assessing the Impact’ to ensure that triangulation of data shows evidence of achievements, and challenges from the project as originally defined in projected outcomes.	N/a

Implementation of the project

Execution and implementation of components

All the components were executed and implemented as the organizing partners indicated in the application for funding. The online dialogues were implemented in January-March 2013. The conference took place in May 2013, and the Special Issue of the Journal for Peacebuilding and Development was subsequently produced in the following year and recently published this past June 2014. According to the data, no significant challenges or factors caused interruptions to the delivery of the overall project.

Project management arrangements, including organizing partners' participation

Project implementation for 'Assessing the Impact' began with the identification of participants from the South in April 2012. Subsequently, three rounds of online discussions occurred from January-March 2013 to build a theoretical framework and discuss the topics of the papers planned for publication in the *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*.

Finding 1: According to data collected, 63% of the online survey respondents were from the Global South. There was full collaboration and participation by Southern selected participants in the implementation of the project.

The papers were subsequently written in rough draft for the conference in Toronto, ON, Canada, held in May 2013. In June 2014, the *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD)* published a special issue bringing together the articles and reflections of participants in the 'Assessing the Impact' initiative. The journal can be accessed by following this link:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjpd20/current#.U7bmXlaVv5k>.

Finding 2: It is evident from respondents and project leaders that all components that Peacebuild agreed to implement and execute in the Memorandum of Grant Conditions were completed more than satisfactorily.

Monitoring and follow up plan

Leaders indicated that they intend to keep contact with participants, reconnecting in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 to determine how much the JPD has influenced practitioners' work. During this process, leaders also intend to explore and discuss ways of further collaborating with a follow-up project, and possibly a collaborative consultancy work initiative. At present, such follow-up is beyond the scope of the current project (ending August 2014).

Evaluation Findings and Conclusions

Attainment of the immediate project objectives and outputs as per proposal

'Assessing the Impact' achieved the immediate objectives and outputs as per the proposal. Seeking to evaluate the use and practice of PCIA, focusing on the relevance and diversity of practices, the project illuminated the most innovative practices globally, with significant learning and suggestion for how this community of practice can move this topic even further in the future. One southern participant summarizes this point very well in response to a question in the Online Survey:

"The idea of assessing PCIA was a great milestone in putting together scattered thoughts on the subject and providing a platform where the south could present its perspectives on PCIA. There is need to consider a follow up process to the special issue of the journal especially gauging how the different PCIA theorists and practitioners

received the journal. This could be the beginning of a great dialogue that would yield more methodologies and theories on PCIA.”

All of the respondents also **agreed and strongly agreed that the processes implemented throughout ‘Assessing the Impact’ (i.e. the online and face-to-face conference components) afforded them successful opportunities for reflection and dialogue** concerning the usage of PCIA methodologies in conflict contexts.

According to the data, **88% of respondents agree and strongly agree that a gendered approach to assessing PCIA was pursued throughout the project** components (i.e., during the online dialogues, in the online resources shared, during the conference, representation in the publication).

Finding 3: As a result of participants’ engagement in the online community of practice discussions and its use for dissemination of documentation, respondents reported receiving new knowledge and good practices to “assess the impact and significance of PCIA,” as specified in question #7 of the Online Survey.

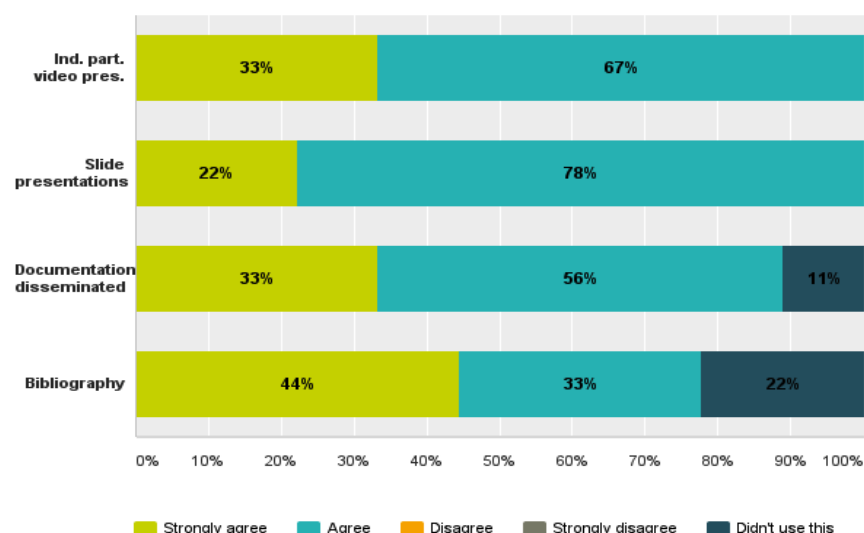
Below is a summarized list of respondents’ feedback exemplifying key areas of new knowledge contributing to better understanding of PCIA good practices:

- *The history, genealogy and theory of PCIA*
- *The application of PCIA and PCIA practices in other contexts, in different circumstances and for different purposes*
- *Location and existence of current gaps in PCIA theory and linkages to PCIA practices*
- *How PCIA is an integral part of the process that needs to be considered at each stage of any project focused on conflict sensitivity*

Finding 4: Overall, online sharing of multimedia and presentation materials, as well as Skype dialogues achieved their intended results, and were valuable to the online community of practice process. The majority of respondents thought this component of ‘Assessing the Impact’ prepared them for the conference in Toronto.

A high percentage of respondents (82%) acknowledged that using the online tools made available through the community of practice web pages of Peacebuild was valuable to the overall project. The majority of respondents (59%) indicated **that engaging with these online materials, and multimedia contributed to their participation in the project**. Few reported that they did not use these tools. The table below provides a visual representation of results. What was apparent from the data, was that most respondents appreciated access to the bibliographies of their colleagues in this project, followed by the individual participants’ video presentations, and then disseminated documentation. The slide presentations, although still considered valuable, were not the most popular.

Table 2: Question 5 of the Online Survey – “The following multimedia and presentation materials shared online increased my ability to effectively contribute to each component of this PCIA project”.



Of those respondents that participated in the **online Skype dialogue component** of the project, an average of **35% strongly agreed** that the elements covered during these calls were valuable to the online community of practice process. The **majority, 42%, agreed** that this was a valuable piece contributing to this process. The other **13% indicated that they did not participate** in this project component.

Finding 5: The Community of Practice Conference in Toronto achieved remarkable results in two specific areas: first, it contributed to increased networking, knowledge sharing and strengthening the community of practice, thereby enabling a unique comparison of tools; second, it was a successful event for critical analysis, knowledge sharing and reflection for bridging theory and practices focused on PCIA. With this success, respondents noted that dedicating more time to defining PCIA and understanding how PCIA theories influence practice would have been helpful and valuable.

All of the respondents clearly identified that participation in the conference had *significantly or somewhat significantly increased their knowledge of PCIA methodologies and practices*. Furthermore, all respondents indicated that it was applicable to their work. As exemplified in one southern respondent's reflections:

"The conference brought together the theory and the practice, and this greatly contributed to how my researched theme changed and how I framed my PCIA thoughts in the paper. It was also an opportunity to interact with practitioners and [learn] how they have practiced PCIA in their situations.... This will be rolled out in the resilience programme in Somalia in 2015. I have also lobbied to have a training session for staff, both at the country office and field office level, an idea that has been positively received. The process of integrating PCIA in programme design is slowly taking root in FAO Somalia...[following the presentations] I made [sic] after the conference on the importance of integrating PCIA in all steps of programming. Currently am in discussions with the M and E Unit at FAO Somalia on possibilities of developing an evaluation framework for PCIA. Discussions are still at the infancy stage." (Online Survey)

Through dialogues among participants, it was indicated that there has been an improvement in the effectiveness of the use of and analysis of PCIA's since their inception in the field of peacebuilding and development. Such development was pursued through the multi-faceted

experience-sharing and collaborative research of theorist-practitioners from the Global South and North.

As one respondent noted, “The project was a resounding success given the quality of the dialogue and how this shaped the articles that have now been published.” (Interviewee, Southern Participant)

“Amazing variety of practitioners and speakers, dynamic, enthusiastic, and amazing people who are determined to change the way things are done in order to make outcomes more meaningful, and peace more sustained.” (Online Survey, Northern Respondent)

Participants unanimously indicated the conference provided the opportunity to network and build relationships. Furthermore, an informal PCIA network emerged for participants to engage in future undertakings. One of the leaders noted that “networking opportunities had emerged which had already led to new project prospects and grant applications”.

Although it was reported that the online work was important in establishing the basis for people to get to know one another (including the video and audio introductions and the online dialogues), the **conference was an exceptional component of the project in further developing this community.** As one respondent from the Global North noted:

“This was a space where people shared their experience with one another, notably bringing together their theory and practice. We learned a great deal from one another, from the political challenges to the methodological divergences and diversities. And we also made plans for moving the community of practice forward.” (Email Interviewee)

Dr. Eric Abitbol completed a conference report, which is on the Peacebuild website. This report was previously submitted to IDRC. It includes the conference itinerary. The full report can be read by accessing the following link:

<http://peacebuild.ca/en/166-conference-report>

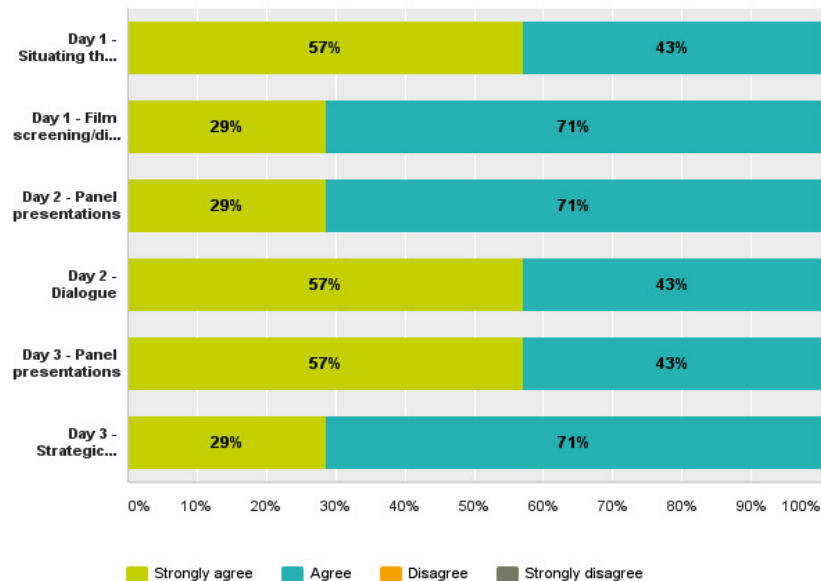
Another participant noted the **health and vitality of the relationships and network** that emerged out of the initiative:

“A whole new form of respect and solidarity emerged from this work and will inform the type of work these people pursue together and with others into the future.” (Email Interview, Global North)

Overall, it is clear that the conference component of ‘Assessing the Impact’ met the objective of building a network and community of practice. The Journal of Peacebuilding and Development was a successful output of this network and community building as noted by Dr. Eric Abitbol in a conducted email interview.

In the Online Survey **all respondents strongly agreed, or agreed**, that a balance was struck between PCIA theory and PCIA practice. The table below highlights that some of the conference activities were more successful than others at achieving this balance.

Table 3: Question 9 of the Online Survey – “Each of the following conference events struck a good balance between theory and practice”.



Finding 6: The process and distribution of the Special Issue on ‘Assessing the Impact of PCIA’ of the *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* was reported as a resounding success. The majority of respondents reported that they successfully collaborated in producing the Special Issue of the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, and briefly explained what they intended to do with it. This will be continued with a follow up in Fall 2014 by the organizing partners to assess further the impact of this project.

According to the data collected in the Online Survey and through the email interviews, there was successful collaboration among the participants from the South and North and the organizing partners in developing and publishing this Special Issue of the JPD.

In the Online Survey, **80% of respondents expressed satisfaction with this process.** Of those who strongly agreed that the collaboration was successful, they attributed this success to:

- Strong leadership;
- Dedication to the publication process as seen in the high level of commitment displayed through time and energy spent on perfecting the publication articles by the organizing/editing team and the participants; and,
- Desire for a high quality final production of the Special Issue

One respondent indicated that, although they, too, thought the participatory approach was applied, they disagreed that this part of the collaboration was successful because “*we were only focused on our own piece of work and did not get to review other participants’ papers.*”

Finding 7: A number of emergent themes, ideas and changing perceptions evolved out of the dialogues, both online and offline, among members of the community of practice regarding PCIA theory and practices.

Through the email interviews and the online survey data, a number of emergent themes, ideas and changes in perceptions of what PCIA is and how it can be applied were identified. In particular, it was noted that discussions emerged regarding linkages between power relations, politics and peace processes. Further, a number of interviewees highlighted a new understanding of how PCIA can be applied and how it can be explained. It was noted that interviewees now understood PCIA characteristically different.

For instance, one participant from the Global North noticed changes in his perceptions of PCIA as “a witness-bearing mechanism” and used “retrospectively”, as well as a “planning tool”. *Its value is “long-standing rather than as a one-time assessment tool”* (Email interviewee).

As already noted in the online survey data, another Northern participant indicated in the interviews that further debates are needed around the definition and ownership of PCIA, in particular that the “place and role and extent of engagement of external actors should be further analyzed and appreciated” (Email interviewee).

Finally, another notable comment from an email interviewee focused on the role of gender and women in peacebuilding. This participant thought that this topic was less of a focus and felt that it requires further assessment. Comments from the interview indicate that discussions around the role of women in peacebuilding emerged as a result of participants’ involvement and expertise in mainstreaming gender in the practice of PCIA. As one Northern respondent states:

“There was an expressed need that PCIA’s future directions include the emerging visibility of women in the practice and theory of PCIA. This direction was grounded in the participants’ rich experiences in mainstreaming gender but lacking in terms of focus in the context of PCIA.” (Email interviewee)

Finding 8: The Global North-South collaboration that occurred during the program was highly successful. Not only has it been attributed the effect of encouraging stronger networks and inter-organizational relations, but it was also a key factor in the richness of the project’s high quality of discussions that took place throughout each project component, as well as the publication output.

Data collected from the email interviews strongly suggest that this Global North-South collaboration added an invaluable texture to the participation. As a result, it can be assessed that this organized PCIA North-South element of the collaboration was a significant contributing factor to the:

1. Participants’ individual learning; and,
2. Quality of the dialogues; and,
3. Editorial process for the publication as reported by an organizing partner.

Some of the comments below highlight and support these views regarding these key factors influencing success:

“The mentorship that was provided when writing articles for the Journal exposed participants to a different style of writing and helped them explore alternative thoughts that further enriched their publications.” (Email Interviewee, Global South)

“The South-North relationship building has successfully contributed to achieving the goal of the project.” (Email interviewee, Global South)

“The North-South interactions also strengthened the theoretical discourse of PCIA, particularly with participants who were largely theorists and those who were theorist-practitioners.” (Email interviewee, Global South)

“I now strongly believe in a people-led PCIA more than ever before. The central thinking and research work revolved around the participation of development beneficiaries in PCIA... The North-South dialogue also enriched my analytical abilities and I now critically review the role of each and every actor and how they are placed in the complex whole.” (Email interviewee, Global South)

Linkages to the wider context of PCIA practice and research

Participants were asked to describe how they intend to use the publication once they have received it and had time to formulate a plan. In some cases, examples of activities already being implemented are reported. The following list is a summary with examples illustrating their responses:

- Dissemination to international, regional and local networks

For example: One Southern respondent already disseminated it among their network: *“I am already disseminating it through the network. To local and international development agencies as well as in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The IDRC regional office in Nairobi received the paper positively, encouraging me to pursue the subject further and engage in building local capacity.” (Online survey)*

- Apply good practices to professional work contexts
- Read and disseminate to established network members
- Use as reference materials for articles published in newspapers/other media
- Use as a reference for training and formal education (i.e. university undergraduate and post-graduate studies)
- Establish social media group(s) dedicated to PCIA as a platform for further discussion and widen participation

For example: One respondent indicated that they *“already created a LinkedIn group on PCIA and will try to use the issues raised in the discussions and get some wider views and answers---and spread the word around to over 430 members so far.” (Online survey)*

Overall, according to the results of the evaluation, ***Assessing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA): A North-South Participatory Research Project has proven to be a success.*** It has achieved its objectives and produced a publication, which will be used more broadly by the members of this community of practice and beyond. The project components were well executed and within budget. As one organizer noted, “with a fairly limited budget, we managed to do quite a lot” (Email interview). As another email interviewee stated, “the project was a resounding success given the quality of the dialogue and how this shaped the articles that have now been published”. As indicated throughout all of the data collected, this comment is accurate. There were no significant challenges in its implementation.

The theoretical discourse helped participants address issues that were contextual in their practice and research. All respondents indicated that the conference either significantly or somewhat significantly increased their knowledge of PCIA methodologies and practices in ways that are

applicable to their work and/or research. The question of whether PCIA was a necessity for development emerged at the conference in Toronto. Through discussion, participants gained the experience of participating in a discourse in which they unanimously agreed that PCIA is a necessity.

Questions remained about universal definitions, the influence of power and politics, and whether or not PCIA is complimentary to peace processes. As one participant noted, “PCIA runs the risk of being an elite process unless pursued with significant intentionality, ensuring that impacted communities are also engaged in PCIA processes from beginning to end, empowering rather than disempowering them” (Online survey, Global South). However, despite these questions, there was an agreement that an improvement in the conceptualization and methodology of PCIA took place.

Project implementation approach

Respondents of the Online Survey indicated a high level of satisfaction and success with the implementation of project components, specifically mentioning the success with the selection of participants and the conference. Eighty three percent (83%) of the participants indicated the hotel accommodations were excellent. Communications pre and post conference were found to be excellent. As one Southern respondent stated:

“Amazing variety of practitioners and speakers, dynamic, enthusiastic, and amazing people who are determined to change the way things are done in order to make outcomes more meaningful, and peace more sustained. Thank you so much again to the organizers for this opportunity!” (Online Survey)

Stakeholder participation

Stakeholder participation in ‘Assessing the Impact’ made it successful. As one Northern participant noted:

“Regarding the Global South-North dimensions, the whole initiative could not have succeeded without this. There were diverse forms of solidarities shared and supports offered throughout (for example, during the editorial process). A whole new form of respect and solidarity emerged from this work and will inform the type of work these people pursue together and with others into the future” (Email interviewee).

Participants indicated that Peacebuild Canada was responsible for making the conference a productive and successful activity. Leaders of the project indicated that the balance created through scholar and practitioner participation allowed for theory and practice to balance each other out. As one Southern participant noted, “the balance created harmony in defining the concepts, methodologies, tools and processes” (Online survey). The interactions strengthened the theoretical discourse of PCIA, making the experience sharing a rich and diverse process.

Collaboration/partnership among partner organizations

Project leaders reported extremely positive results from the partnerships with various stakeholders. Dr. Eric Abitbol noted, “This is in part due to the clarity with which roles were defined from the outset.” What follows below are the notable contributions each organization made towards an effective partnership, according to Dr. Eric Abitbol:

- Peacebuild hosted the project, provided administrative support, provided the technological outreach platform, and also part of the Canadian network. The financial reporting is all undertaken through Peacebuild.
- Peacemedia-paixmédia managed much of the project, providing project management and leadership experience. It was also the organization that facilitated the entire partnership, provided event facilitation, and partner relations. The project reporting is all undertaken through Peacemedia-paixmédia.
- IRIS provided conference services, a venue in which we could host the conference, management of the conference event, and some administrative support surrounding the conference.
- JPD provided the editorial experience, the special issue itself, some distribution, and a complementary 25 copies for circulation.
- All partner organizations conducted outreach, and were very generous with their time and resources. This was the spirit of the collaboration. Every one of the organizations was able to deliver on its commitments to the highest degree of professionalism.
- All funding for this project was managed under the auspices of Peacebuild. The project fell within expected budget, and all expenses were managed as per the agreement with IDRC. Furthermore, there were no financial irregularities or shortfalls to report. A full financial report will be forthcoming as part of the project's final reporting requirements.

Overall project achievements

Overall, it is clear that the ‘Assessing the Impact’ initiative achieved what it set out to do.

- The conference and journal did in fact evaluate PCIA practice.
- A ‘community of practice’ was built around PCIA forming a global community of practitioners; many are considering partnerships to undertake future PCIA projects.
- Many of the unintended consequences, which pleasantly surprised Southern practitioners, focused on how project allowed people to grow connections with one another to deepen the content and quality of work.
- The only critical comments remained constructive, focusing on not having enough time to go even further in depth.

As one Southern respondent noted in the individual interview:

I felt the project lacked time and rigor to thoroughly critique PCIA practice. It served good purpose of sharing how PCIA has morphed in different contexts, but since the participants' understanding and experiences on PCIA were varied, a higher level of conceptualization and analysis was not addressed. Perhaps another level of sharing among those who are engaged in similar fields of application would be a good venue in the future. But I was happy to be in a group that aimed to apply PCIA in their diverse contexts and I was just as happy to reunite with our mentor, Ken Bush (Online Survey).

Surely though this desire for greater depth and opportunity to further engage in dialogue to improve practice can only be seen as a constructive critique.

The contribution of the project to the capacity development of project stakeholders was virtually unanimously indicated in surveys. Numerous participants indicated that they had become more reflective practitioners, indicating an increase in capacity. Most importantly, 100% of

respondents indicated that the conference increased their knowledge of PCIA methodologies and practices in ways that are applicable to their work and/or research.

Project achievements beyond the planned project outputs

Beyond the project achievements and the planned project outputs, the most significant achievements included the desire to partner with other organizations to do PCIA projects. The significance of PCIA as a tool became most apparent during the conference. The PCIA community of practice was recently approached by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) South Sudan desk to offer perspectives about PCIA, and to determine the application of findings and practices to the Canadian government's efforts in South Sudan.

Sustainability of the results achieved

Leaders indicated that they intend to follow up with conference participants in Fall 2014 and again in Spring 2015, to ascertain the extent to which the Special Issue has informed their work.

They also intend to explore ways of further collaborating together, with a follow-up project, as well as possible collaborative consultancy work. No new policy frameworks furthering the project objectives were developed during the project. However, despite this, it is clear from the projects and initiatives emerging that 'Assessing the Impact' had a deep impact in terms of the creation of a wider global community that will embrace PCIA.

Future Considerations

- The question of defining PCIA is still outstanding.
- Theories on PCIA and how they influence the practice may need further discussion.
- The question of ownership of PCIA also needs to be further debated.
- There was an expressed need that PCIA's future directions include the emerging visibility of women in the practice and theory of PCIA.
- There is need to consider a follow-up process to the special issue of the journal, especially gauging how the different PCIA theorists and practitioners received the journal. This could be the beginning of a great dialogue that would yield more methodologies and theories on PCIA.
- The network built in the PCIA Conference in Toronto should be sustained to further hone and strengthen the PCIA framework, theories and experiences.
- The popularization of the Journal can be useful visibility material by the practitioners in the field. If this can be packaged into a popular education module or guide, it could influence more.

- PCIA still needs more in-depth clarification and regulation--there is still a remarkable gap between theory and practice.

Successes and Lessons Learned

One evident lesson is that more time is needed to share and disseminate the base of knowledge and expertise possessed by seasoned practitioners and theorists. This time, if allocated, may have the effect of expanding the presently strong and growing network of dedicated professionals who utilize PCIA. Additionally, such time may allow practitioners and academics alike to become increasingly reflective, making PCIA practice more effective and real and making the ultimate objective of building peace in the world possible.

Despite lack of definition, ownership and further discussion needed to clarify the influence of theories in practice, the acknowledgement of the use of PCIA as a tool to structure peace processes gives reason for optimism and is a strong indicator of consensus that the future of PCIA is durable and integrative and that it is playing a more significant role.

Concluding remarks

In a world increasingly characterized by violence, often in the form of armed conflict at the expense of innocent civilians, PCIA practice is one critical way of moving humanity towards a state of peace and has great potential to do this. 'Assessing the Impact' not only met all of the goals it set out to achieve, it has laid the foundation for a continued strengthening of a Global North-South community of practice to engage in continuous dialogue, knowledge sharing and good practice exchanges as well as opportunity for future collaborations and partnerships in furthering PCIA as a theory and practice worldwide. This project experienced a high degree of success. It was able to successfully respond to the learning needs and engage a high level of participation. Furthermore it saw the successful production of three key deliverables: an online space for a community of practice to engage, a community of practice conference, and a journal publication dedicated to the knowledge production and sharing of the PCIA field. Overall, it was a remarkable contribution to the PCIA community.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Full list of participants in the project

PCIA Partners
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
Dawn Bazely: Director, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University, Canada
Annette Dubreuil: Coordinator, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS), York University, Canada
Erin McCandless: Editor, Journal of Peacebuilding and Development (JPD), USA
Silke Reichrath: Peacebuild Canada, Canada
Funded participants from the Global South as part of the grant
Simona Achitei: Monitoring & Evaluation Senior Advisor, Austraining International; Formerly Head of Research, Applied Research Unit, UNOPS Sri Lanka
Zahid Shahab Ahmed: Assistant Professor, Centre for International Peace & Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan.
Ademola Akinyoad: 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
Norma Constantino: Field Monitor, United Nations World Food Programme, Iligan Sub Office, Iligan City, Philippines
Marides Gardiola: Mediators' Network for Sustainable Peace (MedNet), Philippines
Marwan Haddad: Professor and Director of Water and Environment Studies Institute (WESI), An-Najah National University, Palestine
Valarie Kamatsiko: Regional Peacebuilding Advisor, World Vision East Africa, Rwanda
Edwin Barasa Mang'eni: Food and Agricultural Organization, Somalia.
Northern participants - partially funded (conference attendance)
Kenneth Bush: Research Affiliate, National Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand
Northern participant - volunteer
Vanessa Gordon: Politics Instructor, Dawson College, Canada
Canadian participants - self-funded participants in the conference
Tag Elkhazin: Consultant, Subsahara Centre, Canada
Lowell Ewert: Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel University College, Canada
Randy Pinsky: Masters Candidate in Public Policy and Public Administration, Concordia University, Canada
Tess Tajanlangit: Independent Consultant, Canada and Philippines
Rick Wallace: International Peacebuilding Consulting, Canada
Asaf Zohar: Associate Professor, Business Administration, Chair, Sustainability Studies Program Trent University, Canada
Linda Corsius: International Bureau of Children's Rights, Canada
US participant - self-funded
Todd Walters: Executive Director, International Peace Parks Expeditions (IPPE), USA (Skyped into the conference from the US – we showed his film on Peace Parks and PCIA)
Peter Bauman: Independent Consultant, USA (only participated in early online dialogues)

Appendix 2 - Peacebuild website

The Peacebuild website contains the following:

- 1) Key participant introductions: <http://www.peacebuild.ca/en/pcia-assessing-impacts/introductions>
- 2) PCIA Conference Program
<http://www.peacebuild.ca/en/pcia-assessing-impacts/pcia-final-program>
- 3) Information about the conference:
<http://www.peacebuild.ca/en/pcia-assessing-impacts/pcia-conference>
- 4) PCIA Presentations
<http://www.peacebuild.ca/en/pcia-assessing-impacts/pcia-presentations>
- 5) PCIA Bibliography
<http://www.peacebuild.ca/en/pcia-assessing-impacts/pcia-bibliography>
- 6) Information about the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development special issue on PCIA.