

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN REBUILDING CONFLICT-AFFECTED SOCIETIES
THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROJECT WORK

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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Abstract

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become increasingly utilized in the rebuilding of war-torn countries. This thesis is a grounded-theory qualitative study of the role of NGO educational projects in re-building civil society in Afghanistan as well as other conflict-affected nations. Six NGO project directors and field officers working on project work in Afghanistan were selected as interview participants. Analysis of the interview narratives revealed several key findings. These key findings suggest that while NGO officials recognize several root causes of conflict in their work contexts, conflict's causes have limited impact on their project design. However, NGO officials believed educational project work had transformational potential. Further, NGO officials believed their project work to be successful in its development and peacebuilding goals, but suggested a need for increased project time frames. Finally, they believed their NGO project work to be but one track in a multi-track intervention into conflict-affected countries.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to
my beautiful wife Laura,
and my two precious daughters,
Jayden Reign and Savannah River.

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Exploring the Role of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Rebuilding Conflict-Affected Societies through Educational Project Work

Chapter One - Introduction

Introduction

During the second half of the 20th century, an average of one million people died each year as a result of armed conflict (Ball, 2001). The 1990s and the first years of the 21st century have witnessed a horrible spike in intrastate violence (SIPRI, 2006). Spurred on by increased support for foreign intervention into conflict, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have become increasingly utilized in the rebuilding of war-torn conflict zones (Goodhand, 2006; Carter, 1996). If motivated by a transformational view of conflict and guided by a careful analysis of local conflict dynamics, NGO educational projects can aid the educational systems in conflict-affected countries in becoming agents for peace (CIDA, 1999; Degu, 2005). NGOs involved in this type of work have varied focuses, goals, and time constraints. It is becoming increasingly evident that NGO work that incorporates both peacebuilding and development objectives is especially suited for conflict-affected settings (Anderson, 1999; Schloms, 2003). Additionally, NGO work that functions within a holistic, multi-tracked paradigm is especially crucial in today's complex conflict settings (Diamond & McDonald, 1996; Junne & Verkoren, 2005).

Purpose Statement

It is hard to imagine a more difficult and complex context in which to conduct NGO educational project work than today's conflict-affected settings such as Afghanistan. NGOs venturing into the typically chaotic devastation of countries like

Afghanistan are required to navigate numerous challenges. Extensive analysis of NGO project work in conflict-affected countries is thus required.

This thesis is a qualitative study of the role of NGO educational projects in rebuilding civil society in conflict-affected contexts. The research data gathered for this thesis serves to explore a possible theoretical framework for NGO educational project work, provides insight into what extent an analysis of conflict is guiding NGO educational projects, and explores the perceived power of educational project work to facilitate healing in divided societies. To this end, a set of six NGO project directors and field officers were interviewed regarding their NGO project work. An analysis of the participant's perceptions of and beliefs regarding their educational project work has provided data valuable for developing theory for future NGO educational project work in conflict-affected settings.

Significance of the Study

A growing amount of research is being devoted to the role of NGOs in conflict-affected countries (Aall, 2001; Ahmed & Potter, 2006; Anderson, 2001; Byrne & Irvin, 2001; Byrne & Irvin, 2002; Goodhand, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Junne & Verkoren, 2005; Scholms, 2003). Additionally, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has prepared a framework that can guide educational projects in conflict-affected settings (CIDA, 1999). However, research into NGO work in the field of education in conflict-affected settings appears to be very rare and therefore requires significantly more attention.

The theoretical basis for this thesis includes the transformational view of conflict, the inherent complexity of modern intrastate conflict, the transformative power of

education in a conflict-affected context, Lederach's (1997) integrative approach to peacebuilding, and the value of a holistic, multi-track approach to development work. This study will hopefully build upon, strengthen, or possibly evaluate and modify these valuable theories.

NGOs that endeavor to enter into the highly volatile climate typical in conflict-affected settings will be required to analyze the causes of the local conflict, provide appropriate educational strategies that lessen the possibility of future conflict, and articulate a vision as to how peacebuilding and relief/development work can work together (Junne & Verkoren, 2005; Schloms, 2003). While the value of these three requirements of modern NGOs has been affirmed and validated, more research is necessary to analyze how to actually carry out a successful educational development program in a conflict-affected setting.

For government policy-makers and international donor bodies, this study may shed some light on the manner in which NGO development work can fit into the overall peacebuilding scheme in conflict interventions. For example, the government of Canada has committed significant economic aid to Afghanistan's development and thus should be very interested in having their foreign aid arm, CIDA, make thoughtful decisions in funding NGO development and peacebuilding activities. Further, Canada has chosen to play a leading role in NATO's Afghanistan operations. The Canadian government should thus be very interested in how to best meet its military goals while working in close proximity to international NGOs.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that must be clarified. First, the study is primarily concerned with NGO work within the country of Afghanistan. Limiting the study by focusing on one location has both advantages and disadvantages. A clearer and more detailed account of development and peacebuilding work will emerge from data as participants focus on one particular geographical context. However, the reader must recognize that other conflict-affected contexts will differ significantly from Afghanistan. Thus, care must be taken when extrapolating the conclusions of this study to other contexts.

Second, because the evaluation and analysis of large amounts of interview data requires a significant amount of time, the number of interviews was limited to six. Additional interviews may perhaps have revealed a clearer description of international NGO educational project work. However, it was perceived that additional interviews might negatively affect the completion of this thesis due to time and financial constraints.

Third, my previous experience working for a development agency in Afghanistan may have influenced the data collection. Having an in-depth knowledge of issues faced by NGOs and the lingo used in the development community may have shaped the interviews quite differently than interviews conducted by someone with no experience in the NGO development field. My personal beliefs about effective sustainable development as reflected in my choice of theory presented in this thesis may have also influenced both the participants I selected and the type of data that I highlighted and reported. For example, I intentionally chose to approach organizations that I perceived as conducting effective development and peacebuilding work.

Background and Context

Despite the conclusion of the Cold War, violence continues to plague our planet. According to the Stockholm Institute of Peace Research (SIPRI), our world has experienced 57 major armed conflicts since the end of the Cold War with 17 major armed conflicts in 16 locations occurring in 2005 alone (SIPRI, 2006). Post-Cold War conflicts have been largely within, rather than between, states (Peck, 2001; Ball, 2001; Gurr, 2001). For example, neither 2004 and 2005 saw any interstate conflicts (SIPRI, 2006). However, the world's intrastate conflicts continued to devastate humanity. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict attained new levels of complexity with Hamas ascending to power in Gaza through parliamentary elections in 2005. Further, the summer of 2006 witnessed a violent conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah that destroyed much of Lebanon's infrastructure and killed hundreds of innocent civilians. Factionalism and inter-group hostilities have continued to devastate the Darfur region of Sudan where fighting has been consistently escalating despite a May 2006 peace agreement. In a similar fashion, the volatility and continued unrest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued to hinder peacebuilding efforts (SIPRI, 2006). Perhaps most worrisome is the violence in Iraq. A 2006 household survey study, published in the British journal *The Lancet* by Gilbert Burnham and his team of researchers, reported an estimated 655,000 Iraqi deaths since the onset of war in 2003 (Burnham et al, 2006).

Although participants of this study discuss educational project work in several conflict-affected countries, including Timor-Leste, Congo, North Korea, and Darfur, the majority of the interview data focuses on the devastated country of Afghanistan, which has witnessed over twenty-five years of consistent and unrelenting violence. Following

the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Afghan freedom fighters (Mujahideen) mounted a sustained violent resistance that ultimately resulted in the complete withdrawal of Soviet military personnel in 1989. Following the withdrawal, Afghanistan suffered intense civil war between the heavily armed Mujahideen militias. By 1995 the culturally and religiously conservative Taliban forces had gained control of most of the country. Following the 2001 defeat of the Taliban forces by the United States, Britain, and Northern Alliance Afghan forces, Afghanistan has continued to struggle with violence and in 2007 witnessed a resurgence of Taliban control in Southern Afghanistan.

The violent conflict in Afghanistan has resulted in a decimated infrastructure, incapacitated governmental and societal institutions, has destroyed earning potential for most citizens, and has forced widespread population displacement. A lack of essential services such as schooling, policing, communication systems, and a functional currency have required extensive foreign intervention and assistance. However, foreign intervention has been consistently hindered by an overabundance of small arms, a thriving drug trade, and lack of governmental control over its territory.

Definition of Terminology and Concepts

The following terminology and concepts are particular to this thesis and clarifying their usage and meaning in this thesis will aid the reader in understanding the meaning that I have attached to the data analysis presented in the findings and discussion chapters. The meaning of each term could be further expanded or perhaps disputed entirely.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

As international objections towards intervention in other countries have diminished since the Cold War, the role played by NGOs has been steadily growing (Goodhand, 2006). Jimmy Carter has noted that countries are increasingly turning to international organizations to assist them in resolving conflicts (Carter, 1996, ix). Commenting on the importance of this development, Elise Boulding states that, “The idea of globe-spanning associations of private citizens is scarcely a century old and is one of the most striking phenomena of the twentieth century” (Boulding, 1988, p. 35). Given that NGOs are included in virtually all modern international interventions into divided societies, it is vital that we understand the nature of NGO work (Aall, 2001; Peck, 2001).

Arriving at a precise definition of NGOs is difficult. One may define an NGO based on its common motivation – to make the world a better place. But to be more precise, many authors define the NGO as being a private, not-for-profit, and self-governing organization focused on philanthropy (Aall, 2000; Anderson, 2001). Mary Anderson (2001) divides NGO activity into four broad mandates which are: i) providing humanitarian relief to people in emergency situations, ii) long term development in the areas of education, health care, and economics, iii) promulgation and monitoring of human rights, and iv) the pursuit of peace through conflict resolution activities and non-violence (p. 638). Traditionally, NGOs have focused on one of these four mandates but increasingly the NGO community is recognizing the interrelationships of the four mandates and the requirement of focusing on more than one mandate in their projects (Anderson, 2001; Goodhand, 2006, p. 1). For example, NGOs that are committed to providing emergency food provisions are increasingly aware of how the food provisions

can hinder the pursuit of peace in a conflict-affected context. Further, NGO work in emergency relief needs to be guided by long-term development issues. For example, the injection of relief supplies can affect local market prices that can hinder community development goals.

The number of NGOs in our world is growing rapidly. It is estimated that the number of NGOs doubled between 1978 and 1998 and is now twenty times the number of NGOs in 1951 (Ahmed, 2006, p. 19). In the year 2000 there were an estimated 45,674 international NGOs of all types (Ahmed, 2006, p. 19). Most developing countries have witnessed an explosion of indigenous local NGOs such as women's organizations, human rights groups, religious bodies, legal organizations, and groups focused on education reform and training. The number of local NGOs has not been counted but is significantly higher than the number of international NGOs (Aall, 2001, p. 367).

NGO management structure varies according to its country of origin. Most North American NGOs are governed by boards of trustees and have established operational by-laws. Board members serve as trustees for the organization and are legally accountable for its actions (Anderson, 2001, p. 367). NGO decision-making structures tend to be quite decentralized and are often non-hierarchical. Employees often work independently and the organization's success usually depends on individual commitment and initiative (Aall, 2000). Field staff are regularly given authority in project design and implementation (Goodhand, 2006, p. 7). The non-hierarchical structure of NGOs allows them to respond quickly to challenges in difficult situations common to contexts of conflict.

Funding for NGO work comes from both the public and private sectors. NGO budgets range from virtually nothing to billions of dollars. For example, the American Red Cross budgeted over \$5.6 billion USD for operating expenses in 2006 (American Red Cross, 2006). Other large NGOs such as CARE, Medicins Sans Frontiers, Catholic Relief Service, and World Vision, all budget more than \$300 million annually (Anderson, 2001, p. 367).

Educational Project Work

A broad definition of educational project work is utilized for this study. For example, one can differentiate between the terms “education” and “schooling”. The walls of government sponsored educational institutions do not bound the education of youth in most conflict-affected societies. As a case in point, in developing countries such as Afghanistan the Internet is increasingly providing a rich environment in which considerable “education” occurs. The educational project work explored in this thesis is not simply limited to work in schools or projects impacting the school system of conflict-affected countries. Rather, project work involved in the education of a country’s citizens in areas such as vocational training, literacy, democracy, health education, and women’s rights - to name a few - are also explored.

Perhaps in a related fashion, this thesis explores project work in both the formal and informal education sectors within societies such as Afghanistan. Formal education is typically viewed as being situated within institutions such as public schools, colleges, and universities (Burns, 2001). Formal education is seen as “an important mechanism of socialization, cultural identity, social control, labor force production, social mobility, political legitimation and stimulation of social change” (Burns, 2001, p. 1). In contrast,

informal education is perceived as lying outside the mainstream organizations and involving informal knowledge, elicitive teaching methods, and involving the unschooled (Burns, 2001; Lederach, 1995). This study attempts to incorporate educational project work situated in both the informal and formal sectors. For example, in Afghanistan some NGO work in Kabul is concerned with the institutional capacity building of Ministry of Education structures. Meanwhile, other organizations situated in small villages rely on local structures, mechanisms, and methods to advance educational project work.

Conflict-Affected Societies

This thesis utilizes the term “conflict-affected” as opposed to “postconflict” in describing the contexts within which this study’s participants work. The term “conflict-affected” was chosen since most post peace-agreement/intervention settings are typically not void of conflict (Lederach, 1997, p. 20). Though perhaps indicating an end to active violence, the term “postconflict” is perhaps misleading since it fails to recognize that high levels of conflict will often exist following the termination of violence (Lederach, 1997, p. 20). Rather, conflict within a newly “peaceful” setting may serve to initiate much needed personal and structural change necessary for sustainable peace and development.

Framework

Development and peacebuilding project work in conflict-affected countries is a complex and fragile process requiring carefully designed strategy and an appropriate philosophy of education. This thesis intends to expand the body of knowledge available to NGO personnel and government policy makers as they intervene in countries such as

Afghanistan. To this end, I have organized this thesis into six chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, two chapters of findings and discussion, and a conclusion.

The introduction and purpose provides a general introduction to the study, justifies the study's significance, describes the context in which many contemporary NGOs work, defines and delineates between important concepts and terminology, and lays out the study's framework.

The second chapter presents an interdisciplinary literature review drawn predominantly from the fields of education, international development, and peace and conflict studies. The literature review is divided into three sections – Conflict, NGOs, and Education. The first section presents Lederach's transformative view of conflict, the social cubism conflict analysis model, and explores personal/group identity inside ethnic conflict. The second section investigates Lederach's integrated framework for peacebuilding work and surveys the literature addressing appropriate NGO mandate and structure in conflict settings. The third section explores both the potentially destructive and constructive role education can play in conflict-affected countries.

The third chapter describes a grounded theory qualitative methodology aiming to understand the perceptions of six NGO officials regarding their organizations educational project work; chiefly in the country of Afghanistan. Through semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews, an attempt was made to investigate the meaning given by NGO officials to their experiences in conflict-affected settings.

The findings and discussion is divided into two chapters. Chapter four presents the participant's descriptions of conflict in their work contexts and also reveals whether

or not an analysis of this conflict guides their educational project design. Further, chapter four explores the potential of education to ameliorate violent conflict and aid in the healing of divided societies.

Chapter five focuses more specifically on developing a typology of educational project work conducted by the interviewed study participants. First, prominent categories of educational development and peacebuilding work are discussed. Second, a framework for NGO intervention work, including descriptions of both a required level of response and time frame, is presented. Third, a report of supports and work conditions perceived as necessary for project success is laid out. Fourth, perceptions of appropriate NGO mandate in conflict-affected areas are shared.

The concluding chapter six outlines the key findings of the study and proposes important areas for future research affecting NGO educational project work in conflict-affected zones.

Conclusion

Numerous countries in today's world are struggling to gain their footing following a violent conflict. This thesis attempts an exploration into the role of NGO educational project work in facilitating healing and development in several conflict-affected countries – most specifically the country of Afghanistan.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

“To put it bluntly, the ‘add good education and stir’ approach alone will not produce the fundamental changes that are necessary in ethnic conflict-affected societies.” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000)

Introduction

A theoretical framework for an inquiry into the role of NGO educational work in the transformation of a conflict-affected society is established in this chapter. First, an inquiry into contemporary conflict is conducted by exploring Lederach’s (1995) transformational views of conflict and Byrne and Carter’s (1996) social cubism model of conflict analysis. Further, the role of identity in propagating violent ethnic conflict is studied. Next, a framework for NGO educational work is proposed using Lederach’s (1997) integrative model for peacebuilding, a discussion of the relationship between development and peacebuilding, and an explanation of a holistic, multi-track approach to development. Finally, a framework presented by Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli (2000) is used to guide an exploration of both the destructive and constructive role education can play in a divided society.

Conflict

NGOs are often situated in areas of violent conflict. NGOs may conduct their work in the midst of violent conflict or may initiate their programming as minimum security objectives are ensured following a violent conflict. Since this thesis is focusing on NGO educational work conducted in postconflict settings, a theoretical investigation of both the stance NGOs take towards conflict and the manner in which conflict can be analyzed is crucial. Exploring the stance that NGOs may take towards conflict is the transformational view of conflict proposed by John Paul Lederach. Guiding the NGO in

analyzing the conflict dynamics in their particular context is the Social Cubism model for conflict analysis proposed by Sean Byrne and Neal Carter (1996).

Lederach's Model of Conflict Transformation

John Paul Lederach, a leading scholar in the field of Peace and Conflict studies, proposes a useful model for analyzing the NGOs role in transforming interethnic conflict through education. Lederach (1995) proposes the value of the term 'transformation' as opposed to 'resolution' (p. 17). For Lederach (2003), 'resolution' seemed to imply a cover up and quick solutions while not allowing for advocacy regarding needed change (p. 3). Lederach (2003) defines conflict transformation as follows:

Transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships (p. 14).

Conflict transformation values the resolution of conflict but goes further by noting that conflict is key in transforming relationships and structures (Lederach, 1995, p. 17).

Transformation maintains a focus on future goals for healthy relationships while working in concrete ways on current relationships.

Lederach's model of conflict transformation proposes that change can be understood in two basic ways – descriptively and prescriptively – across four dimensions – personal, relational, structural, and cultural (Lederach, 1997, p. 82). Descriptively, transformation implies the empirically recognizable effects of the conflict (Lederach, 2000, p. 52). Prescriptively, transformation refers to goals that interveners have in working with conflict (Lederach, 2000, p. 52).

In the personal dimension of conflict, changes effected and desired for the individual are considered. The personal dimension may consider perceptual, emotional and even spiritual aspects of the conflict. Descriptively, individual's self-esteem, emotional stability, physical well-being, and spiritual integrity are affected in either positive or negative ways (Lederach, 1997, p. 82). Prescriptively, transformation requires intervention that will minimize damage to the individual while encouraging holistic growth in the person's physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

Relationally, face-to-face relationships are affected while issues of power, interdependence, and communication are considered. Descriptively, the relational patterns of communication and interaction are noted (Lederach, 2000, p. 52). Prescriptively, transformation represents intentional intervention in order to heighten mutual understanding through improved communication.

Structurally, transformation concerns itself with the underlying causes of conflict evident in social structures (Lederach, 1997, p. 83). Descriptively, transformation notes the social conditions that allow a particular conflict to continue. Prescriptively, transformation represents the required intervention in exposing and changing the underlying structural causes of conflict leading to widespread participation in addressing the structures (Lederach, 2000, p. 52).

Culturally, certain dominant patterns allow for violent expression of conflict. Descriptively, transformation is interested in how conflict affects the cultural patterns of a group as well as how these patterns affect a group's response to conflict (Lederach, 1997, p. 83). Prescriptively, transformation attempts to understand cultural patterns in

order to build upon inherent resources and mechanisms within a culture in improving the manner in which a group responds to conflict.

Social Cubism as a Conflict Analysis Model

Successful NGO work in areas of conflict will be driven by careful analysis of the conflict (Goodhand, 2006). When analyzing modern inter-ethnic conflict, NGOs will require a model that addresses conflict's incredible complexity. One such conflict analysis model is social cubism (Byrne & Carter, 1996). In the social cubism model, six social forces, history, religion, demographics, politics, economics, and psychoculture, "interactively and simultaneously combine to produce multiple relationships and patterns of inter-group behavior through time and context" (Byrne, Carter & Senehi, 2002, p. 731). Historical factors focus on how diverse viewpoints of past events serve to legitimate tension and conflict between groups (Byrne & Carter, 1996, p. 3). Religious factors have served to fire conflict for years in places such as Israel/Palestine where the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all consider Israel/Palestine to be their Holy Land (Weaver, 2004). Demographic factors speak of the power and control issues in relationships between majority and minority groups within a geographic area. Political factors consider the role of political legitimacy given to parties as they justify their role in conflict (Rubenstein, 2003, p. 168). For example, political legitimacy given to Israel by the United States has emboldened Israel in taking an aggressive stance towards both the Palestinians and Lebanon (Rubenberg, 2003, p. 287). Economic factors focus on the manner in which disparities in the distribution of economic resources enable domination and exploitation by advantaged groups (Byrne & Carter, 1996). And lastly,

psychocultural factors describe the manner in which ethnocentrism and stereotypical perceptions can shape a group's identity in the heat of conflict.

In any given conflict, one could argue that any one of the six factors dominated the escalation of conflict. Social cubism proposes that conflict is a system and thus, when taken alone, each of the six factors will provide an inadequate analysis (Byrne & Carter, 1996). An accurate analysis of the conflict that is helpful to NGOs and other interveners needs to consider the web of relationships between the various factors. In social cubism, each aspect of a conflict is affected by the other five aspects in the same way manipulating one side of a Rubik's cube into a single color is affected by the other five sides of the cube (Byrne, Carter & Senehi, 2002, p. 732).

Conflict and Identity

Commenting on the role ethnic and national identities played in fueling the horrific killing in both Bosnia and Rwanda, Jeong (1999) states, "Communal conflict can be investigated in a theoretical framework of identity formation imbedded in social and political practice" (p. 60). Therefore, understanding the process of children's individual and group identity formation will be crucial in studying education's potential role in conflict transformation.

a) Children's Individual Political Identity Development

A prerequisite to understanding how education is involved in conflict transformation is an understanding of children's political identity development. Importance of this task is evident in Sean Byrne's (1997a) study of Belfast schoolchildren. Byrne states, "Children in their formative years who accept political

violence and terrorism as normal will be caught-up in a vicious cycle of violence difficult to break in their adulthood” (p. 172).

Fred Greenstein (1965) focuses on the political development of children between the ages of nine and thirteen. He concludes that children rapidly move from ignorance of adult politics towards an awareness of the most salient aspects of politics during this span of years. Largely responsible for this drastic advancement in development is the education system. Greenstein (1965) names education as a “highly efficient (and, in fact, necessary) instrument of politics” (p. 2). How an individual operates inside of a political system is largely determined by learned predispositions. Individual goals, ways of looking at the world, loyalties, and views of authority are to a large degree learned. The education system plays an important role in the ingraining of political behaviors – so much so that external rewards and punishments will often not deter the individual (Greenstein, 1965, p. 2). For example, respect for and obedience to political authority is to a greater extent certain when citizens have learned it from social institutions such as schools than if respect and obedience is demanded through the use of sanctions (Greenstein, 1965, p. 2).

Greenstein points out that leaders have long realized the vitality of extensive political education. Soviet totalitarian rule found it necessary to assume much of the typical institutional and family roles in political education. According to Greenstein, Soviet writings emphasized special attention on instilling patriotism and commitment to the cause of communism (p. 5). In North America, similar intentions are all too obvious. From an early age in school, children learn about government, the value of democratic politics, and the future role that obedient citizens are to play in the adult political world.

Robert Coles (1974) found that children in elementary school have a surprisingly positive disposition towards the President, the American flag, and the government as a whole (p. 5). Through interactions with teachers, family members, television, and the Internet, political awareness steadily develops in young minds.

Robert Connell (1971) also discovered a dramatic surge in political development before the age of thirteen. By this age, children have intricate knowledge of hierarchical structures and have mastered the idea of issues resulting in conflict (Connell, 1971, p. 50-51). Connell further points out significant ideology development by the age of 16. Connell's study provides a basis for insisting that education is crucial in influencing how children understand their political environment. Children today increasingly face a bombardment of political images and messages due to increased access to information, communication, and exposure to violence – often in the classroom (Byrne, 1997b, p. 18). Today's information culture impacts children's perceptions of themselves, the manner in which they relate to each other, and their assumed position in society (Byrne, 1997b, p. 18). Political patterns established in the educational system will affect the manner in which children approach conflict and its resolution.

b) Children's Group Ethnic Identity Development

Noting that most modern conflicts are typically large-group identity-related conflicts, Vamik Volkan (1997), in his book *Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*, seeks to understand “why, beyond their individualized motivations, [do] people kill for the sake of protecting and maintaining their large-group identities” (p. 17). Further, he asks, “What happens to a group's ‘we-ness’, its distinction from others, to become so deadly?” (Volkan, 1997, p. 17). In explaining ethnic identity violence, Volkan

discusses the role of “chosen trauma” in the transgenerational transmission of identity and the concept of “time collapse” in conflict.

According to Volkan (1997), crucial to understanding violent ethnic conflict is the idea of transgenerational transmission of chosen trauma (p. 43). Occasionally a tragedy or injustice committed to a group will result in a complicated and incomplete mourning process that results in lasting damage. Following these painful group experiences, the “tissue of community” is damaged. Transgenerational transmission occurs when an older person from this damaged community “unconsciously externalizes his traumatized self onto a developing child’s personality” (Volkan, 1997, p. 43). Due to their influence in societal structures, the elders inadvertently cause the child to absorb their broken identity and communicate their expectations to the child. The elders expect the child to act regarding the painful experience. Volkan (1997) states that it now becomes the child’s task to continue the mourning and to work towards reversing the humiliation and helplessness felt in the damaged community (p. 43).

Transgenerational transmissions, communicated through stories and nonverbal messages, can be thought of as psychological DNA that are planted in the personality of the younger generation within an ethnic group (Volkan, 1997, p. 44). This psychological DNA includes a mental representation of the tragic event that caused mourning. When the mental representation of a wounding event becomes too burdensome for a group of people to bear, due to an inability to resolve the issue in healthy mourning, a “chosen trauma” is passed on to the next generation in hopes that the youth will be able to mourn and resolve what the older generation could not. Since widespread transmission of the chosen trauma occurs across the group, a group identity is shaped (Volkan, 1997, p. 45).

A second concept developed by Volkan (1997) is the idea of “time collapse” (p. 34). Using an insightful account of the atrocities committed under the banner of ethnicity in the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, Volkan (1997) illustrates how interpretations and feelings about ancient events can commingle with views of current situations (p. 77). In time collapse, an ethnic group may be able to intellectually differentiate between ancient and modern events, but emotionally the events have been merged into one (Volkan, 1997, p. 35).

Non-Governmental Organizations

Motivated by the belief that educational work is crucial for peacebuilding and development in a divided society, NGOs are increasingly intervening in divided societies. Four theories can guide NGO officials as they determine the structure and goals of their educational projects.

Lederach's Integrated Framework

John Paul Lederach (1997) provides a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an investigation into NGO educational project work (p. 80). Lederach's *An Integrated Framework for Peacebuilding* is a two dimensional framework valuable for NGOs interested in the transformation of conflict as they conduct their educational work. In his framework, Lederach links together two nested models – one on the horizontal axis, and one on the vertical. The vertical axis describing the *structure* of NGO work is drawn from Marie Dugan's (1996) *Nested Theory of Conflict*. The horizontal axis describes the *process* of NGO work and incorporates a time frame model that “links short-term crisis

with longer-term perspective for change in society” (Lederach, 1997, p.79). Together, the two dimensions form a matrix of 5 spaces into which most NGO work can be situated.

a) Marie Dugan’s Nested Theory of Conflict

Marie Dugan’s nested theory of conflict describes the continuum between immediate issues in a particular conflict and the broader systemic concerns causing the conflict (Lederach, 1997, p. 55). Her four levels inside a particular conflict are issue, relationship, subsystem, and system. As an example, the theory can be used to describe tensions faced by a development worker in a multi-ethnic village committee charged with planning the building of a new school in a village whose demographic is composed of two ethnic groups. An issue may arise when the village leaders from each ethnic group start to yell at each other and storm out of a building-planning meeting with the development worker. However, progress may not be made until it is recognized that the issue is embedded inside of a relationship that now needs reconciliation. In some cultures, a face-saving process may need to be initiated for the two village leaders. At the subsystem level, despite the fact that the relationship has been repaired, progress on the new village school may continually be hindered unless the ethnic tension within the committee as a whole is effectively addressed and dealt with. And lastly, unless systemic issues are dealt with, large portions of the village may not send their children to the new integrated village school.

b) Time Frame Model

The NGO relief and development community typically situates their work somewhere on a continuum between emergency disaster relief operations and longer-term

sustainable development (Lederach, 1997, p. 75). Lederach's time frame model adapts this language and supports the idea that an NGO's intervention should logically move a population from "a condition of extreme vulnerability and dependency to one of self-sufficiency and well-being" (Lederach, 1997, p. 75). The time frame model relates time frames for NGO activity and types of NGO activity. Lederach's four categories are crisis intervention, preparation and training, design of social change, and desired future. As an example, the model can describe a NGO's work following the signing of a peace accord ending a devastating conflict. For the first two to six months, the NGO may engage in crisis intervention as large segments of the population struggle with lack of food due to disrupted distribution systems. For the first one to two years, the NGO may engage in extensive training of the local population in an agenda of capacity building in order to help prevent an eruption of conflict. Third, efforts focused on working toward transformation within society leading to a sustainable peaceful future may dominate the first five to ten years of NGO work. Lederach's fourth level, desired future, encourages people to envision twenty or more years into the future and consider what a peaceful and harmonious future might look like (Lederach, 1997).

c) Five Categories Within an Integrated Model

As the nested theory of conflict and the time frame model intersect, Lederach (1997) suggests that five categories describing NGO activity are evident. The first category, *root causes*, describes NGO work addressing current crisis while reflecting on the systemic issues that drive the conflict. Second, *crisis management* work deals with immediate issues and is concerned with alleviating immediate suffering. This type of work does not typically allow for time in analyzing the root causes of the suffering.

Third, *transformation* focused NGO work addresses the subsystem level and is concerned with designing social change (Lederach, 1997, p. 81). At this level, a transformational view of conflict will flesh itself out. A fourth category, *vision*, would typically incorporate activities like Elise Boulding's "imaging the future" mental processes (Boulding, 1988). Last, *prevention* work will deal with immediate issues while keeping an eye on the future. Preventative development work will study the lessons of the past in order to help people better handle similar situations in the future (Lederach, 1997, p. 81).

NGO Mandate and Structure

NGOs interested in conducting effective relief, development, or peacebuilding work will likely face several important questions. What right do they have to intervene in foreign conflict zones? As they conduct their work, will development or peacebuilding project work be of primary importance in ensuring lasting peace? How does the NGO fit into the overall intervention into a conflict-affected society such as Afghanistan? Several authors propose answers to these relevant questions.

a) The Debate over Intervention

In response to violent conflicts across the globe, the international development community has been facing an increasing number of requests for intervention and assistance in "laying the foundation for renewed development in their countries and overcoming the political, economic, social, and psychological ravages of war" (Ball, 2001, p. 720). This increased opportunity for intervention has fired a debate concerning the obligation held by the international community in intervening to protect human rights and lives in conflicts (Aall, 2001; Hoffmann, 2001). A clear shift in beliefs regarding

intervention is becoming evident. Increasingly, international interventions into the affairs of a state are justified as defending individual human rights (Hoffmann, 2001, p. 275). This shift subverts the traditional international “rules” which held the right of the state – especially its right to sovereignty – above the individual rights of the state’s citizens (Hoffmann, 2001, p. 275).

b) Peacebuilding vs. Development?

The surge in violent conflict during the 1990s sparked a debate regarding the relationship between peacebuilding and relief/development activities (Anderson, 1999; Schloms, 2003; Goodhand, 2006). For example, some African countries such as Sudan, the African Great Lakes region, and Sierra Leone have emerged from the 1990s worse off than when they became independent despite the investment of large amounts of development money and energy (Junne & Verkoren, 2005; Schloms, 2003).

Organizations involved in conflict resolution will argue that peacebuilding, and not development, will ensure the avoidance of future conflict thus saving large expenditures of money in the areas of peacemaking, peacekeeping and the alleviation of humanitarian problems stemming from violent conflict (Junne & Verkoren, 2005, p. 3). Conversely, aid agencies will sometimes argue that an injection of resources and economic development will suppress the need for future conflict.

There is, however, a growing recognition of the need to reconcile these two types of organizations (Scholms, 2003, p. 42). It is becoming increasingly recognized that development work needs to concern itself with preventing violent conflict (Junne & Verkoren, 2005, p. 4). For example, the recent focus on ‘human security’ has resulted in both peacebuilding and development agencies recognizing that “human insecurity is not

only related to the existence of physical violence, but to a range of other interlocking factors which increase or decrease the risks and vulnerability of individuals, households, and communities” (Goodhand, 2006, p. 12). It has become more widely accepted that relief/development agencies need to concern themselves with an analysis of conflict, and direct their work towards conflict resolution (Junne & Verkoren, 2005).

Future NGO intervention will need to effectively incorporate both peacebuilding and relief/development work. Emergency aid cannot prolong conflicts and should help secure a sense of security. Development work needs to concern itself with creating a conducive atmosphere for sustainable peace (Junne & Verkoren, 2005, p. 6). In order to avoid a repeat of the developmental disasters evident in some African countries, relief and development NGOs will be required to re-evaluate their strategies and plans and work towards understanding the political climate in which they work (Scholms, 2003).

c) NGO Work: A Holistic, Multi-Track Approach

Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren (2005) propose a holistic view of postconflict development. Due to the enormity of the postconflict development task, NGOs will often focus on a specific sector or institution. However, effective development work recognizes its dependency on what happens in other sectors. Strong links are evident between the various sectors in development work – security, government/institutions, infrastructure, media, education, health care, environment, and financing/economy (Junne & Verkoren, 2005). For example, only as a minimum level of security is achieved can other development move forward. As another example, if government institutions are not developed and adequately financed, educational development will be hindered as teachers are not receiving remuneration for their work.

Diamond and McDonald (1996) propose a “multi-track diplomacy” that recognizes the need for contribution from multiple actors in addressing needs in a conflict zone. Traditional interventions in conflict have focused on Track One actors. Track One (T1) refers to governmental/international governmental actors (e.g. States and interstate governmental actors such as the UN, NATO, and the EU) (Sandole, 2003, p. 51). Multi-track diplomacy incorporates Track Two actors in addressing conflict. Track Two (T2) refers to local, national, and international NGOs and all other nongovernmental actors (e.g. Academic institutions, businesses, private citizens, activists, religious organizations, donors, and the media) (Sandole, 2003, p. 51; Diamond & McDonald, 1996, p. 15). Together, the numerous T1 and T2 actors form a system that can effectively address conflict and initiate productive development activities.

Education

A commonly prescribed treatment for the violent and destructive ills of our world is education. However, scholars are careful to note that, even though educational systems can have a socially constructive impact on opposing groups in a conflict-affected context, educational systems can also play a vital role in aiding oppressive systems and maintaining intractable conflict and exacerbating intergroup hostility (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 9; Curle, 1974, p. 64). Identifying the destructive potential educational agendas have will sharply clarify required educational reform for international organizations involved in educational projects in divided societies.

Education's Potentially Destructive Role

In their paper, *The Two Faces of Education: Towards a Peacebuilding Education*, Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli (2000) outline seven socially destructive roles education can potentially play in places of conflict.

a) Restricted Access to Education

By denying an opposing ethnic or social group access to educational opportunities, an oppressive group may effectively restrict access to the social and economic life within a country (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 9). If one ethnic group in an ethnically divided country can attain a higher average educational achievement, members of the oppressive group will fill a disproportionate number of influential positions in government and society. Maintaining control of these positions will ensure that a group's dominance will be carried on from one generation to the next. Further, in our modern technologically based world, education is increasingly seen as a valued commodity and thus denial of access can quickly lead to conflict.

b) Cultural Repression Inside School Systems

Ethnic or social groups have regularly used educational systems to commit 'ethnocide' in their quest to maintain strategic control in an oppressive relationship. Ethnocide is defined as the process by which an ethnic group loses its identity as a result of oppressive policies (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 10). The school system has been used in the African nation of Sudan to elevate Arab identity and destroy the cultural identity of the black non-Arabs.

c) Segregated Education Ensures Continued Stereotyping

In Northern Ireland, the education system has been largely segregated along religious lines (Fitzduff, 2002, p. 5). Sean Byrne's study of Belfast schoolchildren noted that segregated education is one of the "...most important political socialization instruments in keeping Northern Irish society clearly dichotomized" (Byrne, 1997, p. 18). In conflict-affected areas, the education system can be used to enforce stereotypes and prejudicial behavior (Byrne, 1997, p. 19). For example, according to Byrne, crude sectarian games and play are tolerated on the playgrounds of Northern Ireland's segregated schools.

d) Denial of Education as a Tactic in War

In Northern Afghanistan, stories abound relating how the destruction of school buildings and preventing children from going to school were a regular occurrences during times of recent conflict. The consequences of this military tactic are felt long after the fighting stops since the rebuilding of schools may take years and is often only possible with financial assistance from the international community.

e) Manipulating History Taught in Schools

In order to solidify control, a dominant social or ethnic group may manipulate curriculum in an attempt to construct a new version of history that serves to heighten the role or achievements of one group and ignore or suppress the culture of the oppressed (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 11). Verifiable historical events may even be explicitly erased. For example, Iran has recently attempted to deny the mass murder of

approximately six million Jews at the hand of the Nazis. Seemingly ridiculous measures such as those undertaken by Iran serve specific political ends.

f) Re-writing Textbooks

UNESCO has determined that there is a statistical relationship between the tendency of a country's history textbooks being overly nationalistic and levels of xenophobia and violence within its society (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 13). Further, textbooks may tend to be militaristic in nature while ignoring the positive aspects of peacetime. In a similar fashion as to what happened in Hitler's Germany, textbooks in Rwanda have been exposed as supporting negative ethnic stereotypes (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 13).

g) Hating Oneself and Hating Others

In order to create a population that is easily manipulated it is instrumental for leaders to use the educational system to instill beliefs of inferiority in its participants. For example, apartheid education in South Africa attempted to instill a belief in black children that God had ordained that they be the poorest of the poor (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 14). Additionally, ethnic leaders interested in firing a conflict are required to build hatred for the 'other' through provoking and encouraging enemy images concerning the opposing group. Once instilled, enemy images tend to be deeply rooted and are resistant to any change (Stein, 2001).

Education's Constructive Role in Rebuilding Civil Society

Keeping in mind the socially destructive role education can take in a conflict, NGOs involved in educational work will need a clear vision as to the positive and

socially constructive impact that education can play in restoring peace to a conflict-ridden divided society. Guided by an understanding of the identity shaping process that children within a conflict zone are faced with, an educational program can be developed that leads towards peace - not renewed conflict. Bush & Saltarelli (2000), provide a useful framework for a discussion on such an educational program.

a) The Conflict-Dampening Impact of Educational Opportunity

It is widely espoused that education is one of the crucial prerequisites for continued movement forward in sustained development (Degu, 2005, p. 140). While only true if there is a corresponding increase in job opportunities, focusing on dealing with disparity in educational opportunities has often resulted in decreased community tensions and improved inter-group relationships (Degu, 2005, p. 138; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). For example, if every child in the country is given equal opportunity for education, countrywide socially constructive socialization leading to national integration is possible (Degu, 2005, p. 139).

b) Nurturing and Sustaining an Ethnically Tolerant Climate

John Burton's "Human Needs Theory" explains why education should be focused on establishing an ethnically tolerant climate in post-conflict areas. According to Burton (1990), basic human needs are essential for an individual's growth and development and thus will be pursued by all means available (p. 36). If not satisfied, behavior that is outside the legal norms established in society will follow. In conditions of oppression, discrimination, or involving a threat of violence, the needs of personal security and identity are typically threatened (Burton, 1990). In pursuing the needs for security and

identity, individuals will form identity groups through which a sense of security can be established while forming a cultural identity. Over time, these identity groups become hardened and entrenched.

Widespread tolerance within an area of conflict allows individuals belonging to conflicting groups to pursue their personal needs for security and identity in a non-violent manner. Educational programming can initiate widespread tolerance within a society. For example, in Northern Ireland considerable resources and effort have been devoted towards “bridge-building” activities that allow children from the Protestant and Catholic religions to learn about each other (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000)

c) The De-segregation of the Mind

When writing about the state of colonized African people, Franz Fanon talked about the need for formerly colonized people to de-segregate their minds in their emancipation (Fanon, 1968). Education can play a crucial role in de-segregating a society following a conflict. For example, Belfast children who are attending integrated Catholic and Protestant schools are better able to reduce prejudice and stereotyping and initiate personal identity transformation (Byrne, 1997a, p. 184). Further, in working towards reconciliation and coexistence between two groups, ethnocentrism or feelings of superiority must be addressed (Kriesberg, 2000, p. 183). Schools may provide a suitable space for addressing these feelings and beliefs.

d) Linguistic Tolerance

In multiethnic countries, language policy, or more specifically the decision on which languages will be used as a medium of instruction, has proved crucial in an

effective post-conflict peacebuilding program (Degu, 2005, p. 131). Since language is a strong element in the formation of ethnic identity, allowing a minority language to be used as a media for instruction is both a symbolic and political statement (Degu, 2005). Because language and culture are intimately tied, allowing the use of ones language secures the continuation of ones culture. Politically, allowing the use of ones language facilitates the organization and mobilization of ethnic communities in resisting oppression and establishing justice (Degu, 2005, p. 131).

e) Cultivating Inclusive Citizenship

In her book, *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World*, Elise Boulding (1998) proposes an action plan for attaining inclusive citizenship and widespread interethnic coexistence by focusing on civic culture. For Boulding, civic culture “represents the patterning of how we share a common space, common resources, and common opportunities and manage interdependence in that ‘company of strangers’ which constitutes The Public” (Boulding, 1988, p. xvii). Civic culture is interested in building an identity as a citizen of the world. The concept of civic culture requires a shared identity for all humans. Boulding (1988) suggests that it may be possible to create a “species identity” – a common human identity that will not override but “crown” all other identities (p. 56).

Crucial to developing an educational project leading to healthy civic culture is exercising the mind in new ways. Boulding proposes *imaging* as a powerful tool for educators to use in building a better world. In the process of imaging, social imagination is used as a problem-solving faculty (Boulding, 1988, p. 108). In imaging, past human experience is taken and re-worked in envisioning an improved state. When imaging, an

individual constructs a new social reality in the mind before considering how to act on external reality.

As opposed to just an individual activity, imaging is most useful in the community context. In focused social imaging, an individual is encouraged to engage in imaging with a group of colleagues in normatively defining social goals (Boulding, 1988, p. 110). The group begins with shared concerns on a pertinent issue such as the identity tensions with another group. Each member of the group is asked to mentally move forward in time to when the problem at hand has been successfully dealt with. The images experienced by individual members are the basis for group discussion and questioning within the group. Gradually, the group members simultaneously begin to build a common picture of the desired future state. As group members dialogue and examine carefully their individual images, a set of shared imagery emerges that are then examined in detail by the group.

f) The Disarming of History

Education can serve to disarm history as children are allowed to understand and express how their personal story fits into the larger narrative of interethnic relations. Allowing students to explore their personal stories within a conflict recognizes the fact that each student has different ways of making meaning out of the situation (Cheldelin & Lyons, 2003). Jessica Senehi (2002) emphasizes storytelling's ability to "facilitate and amplify the voices of those who are not being heard (p. 42)". To this end, Senehi (2002) suggests that storytelling is an excellent methodology in attaining a peaceful global civic culture. For example, storytelling and narrative have proven instrumental in learning

about diversity and co-existence amongst Israeli and Arab students in an Israeli university (Luwisch, 2001).

g) Education for Peace Programs

Peace education is considered both a philosophy and a process (Harris & Morrison, 2003). As a philosophy, peace education teaches non-violence, love, compassion, and reverence for life (Harris & Morrison, 2003, p. 9). As a process, peace education involves “empowering people with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment” (p. 9). Because of its broad definition, some practitioners break down peace education into various categories. For example, Solomon (2002) differentiates between peace education in intractable regions such as Israel-Palestine, in regions of interethnic tension such as Aboriginals in Canada, and regions of experienced tranquility (p. 6).

Birgit Brock-Utne (1985) defines peace education’s antithesis, education for war, as fostering competition, conquest, aggression, and violence. Further, Brock-Utne (1985) believes women, and especially mothers, hold immense power in educating our youth for peace. However, since women across the world are exploited in a male-dominated society, bringing up children in a non-sexist manner proves exceedingly difficult.

h) Educational Practice as an Explicit Response to State Oppression

Though difficult and rare, there have been instances where schools have been forces for progressive change (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 21). For example, in South Africa, Roman Catholic schools openly disobeyed the government ban on integrated

education and enrolled black students. In this case, resistance on the part of the schools helped to strengthen the attack on the unjust status quo.

Speaking to how education can be used as a response to oppression is the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1970). Freire (1970) introduces two concepts to guide the educator on the difficult journey leading to resistance – banking education vs. problem-posing education, and the process of dialogue. Banking education describes “an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (Freire, 1970, p. 72). The goal of banking education is the creation of adaptable, manageable beings. Freire states emphatically that the deposit system of education must be abandoned and replaced with what he calls “problem-posing” education. Being a pre-requisite to liberation and transformation, problem-posing education “rejects communiqués and embodies communication” (Freire, 1970, p. 79). It is based on acts of cognition as opposed to the transferal of information. While banking education serves as an anesthetic in that it hinders creative thought, problem-posing education involves the “constant unveiling of reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 81). The former can be seen as submerging the consciousness, while the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness leading to “critical intervention in reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 81).

Crucial to problem-posing education is the re-thinking of student-teacher relations. Banking education requires a hierarchical relationship structure while in problem-posing education the boundaries of teacher/student role are broken down. Both teacher and student become responsible for the educational project. Through dialogue, the teacher learns from the students as well. “Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone

self-taught” (Freire, 1970, p. 80). Together, the student and teacher begin to explore the world as a process in transformation as opposed to being static.

A second concept explored by Freire is the role of *dialogue* in transformation. For Freire (1970), language, or more specifically the spoken word, has two crucial interdependent dimensions – reflection and action (p. 87). Thus to speak a true and authentic word in dialogue cannot ignore the possibility of action resulting from the dialogue. Speaking authentically allows wo/man to *name* the world. To name the world is not simply an intellectual activity inside academia, but is always tied to active transformation. As people locked in identity conflict discover the ability to name their situation, they will initiate the re-naming of their situation leading to transformation. Once named, the world and its problems become apparent to the oppressed or person locked in struggle.

Conclusion

NGOs interested in addressing the physical and social destruction evident in countries like Afghanistan will require a carefully considered philosophy and strategy. The literature presented in this chapter suggests that an NGO will increasingly ensure sustainable and effective development and peacebuilding project work if careful analysis of local conflict is conducted, if its decisions stem from an appropriate structural framework and mandate, and if its staff recognize the potentially destructive and constructive role education can play in a conflict-affected zone.

Chapter Three - Methodology

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been increasingly called upon to not only provide emergency aid and relief but also to participate in project work aimed at facilitating the long term healing of divided societies. Using a qualitative research design, this study attempts to explore the role of NGOs in rebuilding civil society in conflict-affected countries through educational projects. More specifically, a grounded theory approach was used to produce substantive theory derived from informal interview data regarding NGO practice in postconflict contexts.

Research Strategy

Qualitative Research

Establishing itself in the social sciences in the 1960s, qualitative research produces data that is rich in description of people, places, conversations, and behavior (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). As opposed to focusing on statistical procedures and operationalizing variables, qualitative research questions are designed and intended to investigate a particular phenomenon in its complexity and in its natural context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 2). In this investigation, qualitative research utilizes a certain philosophy of knowing – reality is subjective and fundamentally dependent on the context. Thus, understanding can only be gathered from the perspective of whoever and whatever is being studied (McMillan & Wergin, 2006, p. 94).

A qualitative methodology is also particularly open to critical research/theory. Greatly affected by the “post-discourses” (postmodernism, critical feminism,

poststructuralism), critical research is under girded by the belief that the citizens of Western societies (U.S., Canada, Australia, the EU nations, Australia, etc.) have been “acculturated to feel comfortable in relations of domination and subordination rather than equality and independence” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Thus, when conducting research, critical researchers are not neutral but partisan in their formation of social and cultural criticisms (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). To this end, critical researchers/theorists are particularly interested in issues of power, economics, education, religion and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics inside social systems.

Qualitative research design is well suited for inquiring into NGO practice in the area of education. Through in-depth interviewing, the perspectives of six NGO officials regarding their experiences in development and peacebuilding work in conflict-affected contexts was gathered. Qualitative research allows the researcher to investigate the meaning that these NGO officials give to their lived experience in the relief/development/peacebuilding field.

Grounded Theory Research Design

The growing role of NGOs in postconflict contexts has clarified new opportunities and therefore requires extensive cutting-edge theoretical exploration. To this end, the qualitative research tradition into which this study situates itself is grounded theory. A tradition in research can be defined as a *way of seeing*; it directs attention to the perspective taken by the researcher and the intent of the study (Schram, 2003, p. 76). The purpose of grounded theory is to develop a theory that is grounded in the data (McMillan & Wergin, 2006). Thus, the research process is intended to be inductive rather than deductive. Newly developed theories emerge from the data and requires a close

relationship between the researcher and their studied world (Charmaz, 2005). If a theory already exists concerning a particular phenomenon, but is deemed somehow inadequate or underdeveloped, the theory may be elaborated or modified as the researcher analyses ongoing instances of data (Schram, 2003, p. 77).

International NGOs working in conflict-affected contexts are particularly concerned with social justice. Kathy Charmaz (2005) believes a grounded theory approach to qualitative research is especially appropriate for studying social justice issues. She states, “Grounded theory can supply analytic tools to move social justice studies beyond description, while keeping them anchored in their respective empirical worlds” (Charmaz, 2005). Thus the researcher interested in international NGO work can use grounded theory to develop plans for future practice and policy making by examining questions regarding sustainability, empowerment, rights, equality, and power structures etc.

Bounding the Study

The starting point for this study stems from theory regarding NGO work discussed by several authors – particularly (in alphabetical order) Anderson (1999), Boulding (1988), Bush & Saltarelli (2000), Byrne (1996), Diamond & McDonald (1996), Goodhand (2006), Junne & Verkoren (2005), Lederach (1995), and Lederach (1997). Theories raised by these authors were particularly influential in the development of my interview questions. (A complete list of interview questions can be found in Appendix A.) Thus, the goals of this study are both to explore new theory and test theories presented by these authors.

Participants

In order to understand the role and impact of NGO educational projects in conflict-affected contexts, a set of six NGO directors and officials were selected for this study.

Participant's Demography

This thesis focuses on NGOs conducting project work in Afghanistan that have administrative offices in Canada or the United States. Further, in choosing the six participants, an attempt was made to draw participants from a wide variety of organizations. The following description provides a sense of this variety.

Mandate – Five organizations were involved mainly with development but incorporated peacebuilding initiatives into their work. One organization was primarily involved in peacebuilding and activism work.

Religious/Secular – Four of the organizations stemmed from a religious denomination/group and two of the organizations were secular.

Target Area – Five of the organizations conduct work across the world's developing world on several continents. One organization works solely in Central Asia. All of the organizations are at present directly conducting or indirectly supporting NGO work in Afghanistan. Thus, educational projects described by participants were chiefly from the country of Afghanistan. However, participants also described project work in Timor-Leste, North Vietnam, Sudan, Burundi, and Congo.

Administrative Location – Four of the organizations had administrative offices in both Canada and the U.S. while two were U.S. based organizations. Three participants were Canadian citizens and were contacted through Canadian administrative offices,

while the other three participants were U.S. citizens and were contacted through U.S. administrative offices.

Job description of Participants – Three of the participants were regional/country directors on the field in Afghanistan. The other three participants were senior officials in Canadian administrative offices responsible for international educational projects.

Organizational Age – Five of the organizations were between 62 and 87 years old. One organization has been in existence for 17 years.

NGO Budget – Three participants worked for organizations having budgets between 300 million to 750 million USD. Two organizations had budgets between 40 and 100 million USD, with the last NGO budgeting less than 1 million USD.

Ethics Approval and Maintaining Confidentiality

Human ethics approval was granted before participants were interviewed (See Appendices B,C). All participants in this study are adults over the age of 21 and were provided with a letter of consent (See Appendix D). All participants signed and returned a completed letter of consent. The participant's name as well as organizational name/identification remain strictly confidential and are not revealed in the transcripts of the interviews or in reports stemming from the research. Pseudonyms or generic position titles are used to identify subjects in the transcripts and presentation of the interview data. Further, an attempt has been made to conceal all identifying characteristics of both the subject and the subject's organization in the transcripts and data reports. However, because five out of six participants are presently working in the country of Afghanistan, I informed the participants that I will not conceal country locations of described NGO work. Afghanistan and other conflict-affected countries typically have hundreds of NGOs

operating within their borders. The vast numbers of NGOs will make it difficult to identify organizations by their project descriptions.

During the research period, transcripts were kept in a lockable filing cabinet in my home office. Digital voice recordings of the interviews were stored on my computer inside an encrypted password-protected hard-drive. Interview transcripts will be shredded and digital voice files erased upon the conclusion of the study.

No deception was used in conducting the research. Information was not deliberately withheld from the participants and the participants were not deliberately misled in the research.

In order to provide feedback and debriefing, participants were given the option of receiving a copy of their interview transcript. A couple of participants took this opportunity to verify and clarify information they provided in the interview. One interview conducted over the phone to Asia suffered from a bad connection resulting in many inaudible words and phrases. The participant kindly filled in the inaudible words on the provided interview transcript. Further, participants were given the option of receiving a written summary of the research study upon its conclusion. Participants could request the written summary by checking a box at the end of the written consent form.

There were no risks or benefits associated with participating in the research study. Additionally, subjects were not compensated for participating in the study.

Role of the Researcher

I took on the role of independent interviewer for the study. Since the study adopts a grounded theory approach, the perspectives of participants and the meanings that they

attach to their experiences were intended to result in the development or elaboration of theory.

Recognizing that researchers work within a particular paradigm, it is necessary that I be aware of my theoretical base as I collect and analyze data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 24). The paradigm adopted by the researcher may have implications for the qualitative study (Schram, 2003). As a researcher, I will be working out of the critical theory paradigm. Stemming from the Frankfurt School, a critical theoretical approach to research recognizes the researcher's expectations that their work will result in bringing about change (Schram, 2003). Thus, research is seen as an ethical and a political act that will benefit a certain group (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 22). Researchers working with a critical theoretical approach prefer that their research benefit the powerless and oppressed. Thus the critical approach often incorporates advocacy and activism and tends to be more confrontational and value-driven (Schram, 2003). To this end, I hope that my findings may serve to influence in some way NGO practice and policy in conflict-affected countries like Afghanistan.

Recognizing that the values and beliefs of the researcher will inevitably bias research, it is important that I clarify the theoretical framework from which I work. I definitely approach my research from a place of privilege – being a university educated white male from a wealthy Western country. I am constantly deciphering how my privileged and powerful positionality in relation to most of the world's people affects the way I choose to live. In response to my position, I have been purposeful in adopting both postmodern and feminist beliefs. I resonate with the postmodern emphasis on being skeptical of the dominant grand narrative and emphasizing the voice of the many other

stories around us – particularly of the oppressed and those who live in poverty (Senehi, 2002). The feminist concern for inequality in power relationships and access to male privilege also resonates with me. Further guiding how I live is the feminist idea of pursuing infinite power in relationships as opposed to zero-sum power relationships. The patriarchal, realist worldview insists that power is gained in a relationship at the expense of another (Taylor & Miller, 1994). A belief in infinite power in relationships allows both parties in a relationship to grow in power together through cooperation (Taylor & Miller, 1994).

Procedures

Selection of Participants

In order to recruit suitable project directors and field officers for this study, I conducted some general investigation as to which NGOs who have administrative offices in Canada or the United States are involved in educational projects in Afghanistan. I then contacted the administrative office through email or telephone and informed them of the purpose my study. I requested that the information be passed on to an appropriate NGO staff person who is able to speak to the goals of the study. If the NGO official was willing to be involved in the research, he/she was requested to contact me directly by phone or email.

Data Gathering Techniques

To conduct a study of various NGOs working in conflict-affected contexts I collected data through one face-to-face interview in Winnipeg as well as five telephone interviews to various locations in Canada, the U.S., and overseas between February 2007 and June 2007. Telephone interviewing is a reliable and relatively inexpensive means of

collecting appropriate data from geographically dispersed informants (Jenkins, 2006). All interviews were audio recorded on my computer and transcribed for subsequent analysis. The interviews were approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length.

In order to better prepare the participants for the interview, a copy of the interview questions were provided ahead of time through email. This provision allowed participants time to reflect and think about their responses, and hopefully allowed them to provide more descriptive data regarding their experiences.

In order to avoid bias in the interviews, the theory and propositions put forth in the theory section of this proposal were not brought up or discussed in the interview unless initiated by the participant.

Interview data gathered from two separate studies were combined for analysis in this thesis. Thus, the University of Manitoba Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) granted two separate ethics approvals (Appendices B,C). The first three interviews were conducted under the supervision of Dr. Charlotte Enns as well as my thesis advisor Dr. Sean Byrne and were used for a class assignment as well as this thesis. The last three interviews were supervised by Dr. Sean Byrne and were solely used for this thesis. The research questions and methodology were identical for both studies.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis describes the process of systematically searching and organizing the interview transcripts to arrive at the findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 159). The qualitative research software HyperResearch® was used extensively for data analysis.

Using HyperResearch®, I generated appropriate codes, broke the data down into manageable chunks for coding, and generated a set of organized quotations that could be

used in the reporting of data. The coding system was developed as regularities, patterns, and topics were noticed as salient in the data. Following the completion of data coding, the codes from all six interview transcripts were arranged into a concept map that reflected my interpretation of the patterns and topics deemed as important by interviewed participants. This concept map provided significant insight into theory emerging from the data. The concept map provided the structure for the logical argument presented in the data analysis of this thesis. Finally, the ideas and patterns gathered from the data were framed in relation to other scholarship and theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 159).

Conclusion

Through this qualitative research study looking into NGO official's perceptions and beliefs of their educational project work, I have attempted to gather data useful in developing theory usable for future NGO work in conflict-affected settings.

Chapter Four - Conflict and NGO Educational Projects

Introduction

The perspectives of the NGO officials interviewed for this study reveal a theoretical framework guiding NGO educational projects in conflict-affected contexts. First, participants described the complexity of modern conflict and provided insightful analysis of several interacting forces causing violent conflict in the contexts in which they work. As to whether their analysis of the causes of conflict-affected project design, the interview narratives revealed a range of practice. Second, NGO officials described conflict dynamics in their arena of operation and gave details of their educational project work's potential in either exacerbating or ameliorating violent conflict. Third, the NGO officials provided rich perspectives on the perceived role of NGO work in addressing the causes of conflict and working towards sustainable peace. The participants discussed their philosophies of education as helping to heal conflict-affected contexts.

Theme 1: Causes of Conflict and their Analysis

Modern intrastate conflict is both ugly and inherently complex. Participants attempted a description of conflict's complexity along several themes.

Conflict is Trans-National

A Canadian NGO official described modern intrastate conflict as being trans-national in nature.

...there aren't any conflicts that get to the national level conflicts that aren't actually international.

With the onset of globalization, global issues increasingly affect small isolated conflicts. Further, there is increasing danger for small isolated conflicts to “spill-over” into widespread contexts (Jentleson, 2001). For example, the Rwandan conflict in the late 1990s spilled over borders into countries like Zaire. This “spill-over” tendency greatly complicates efforts at working towards peace through educational activities. With noticeable frustration in her voice, a NGO administrator explained as follows:

It really isn't fair to demand that people inside a country only use non-violent means if there are people outside of the country supporting violent means.

NGO workers interested in building peace often live with the worry that their efforts will be undermined by a military intervention from a neighboring country or perhaps a country like the U.S.

Causes of Conflict are Layered and Intertwined

The causes of modern intrastate conflict were perceived as layered, with deeper causes hidden, sometimes intentionally, by surface expressions of conflict. For example, many identity conflicts such as religious Catholic/Protestant violence in Northern Ireland or ethnic violence in Darfur are simply surface expressions of deeper economic causes (Bew, Gibbon, & Patterson, 1995). Two of the participants perceived many modern identity conflicts as intentionally contrived to serve economic ends. One participant justified this perception in the following statement:

There are certain kinds of economic benefits that are available in a society that is unstable. There is a kind of economic opportunism that is connected with societies that are broken down and can't regulate economic activity.

Unfortunately, it appears that in some cases it is those in power positions in government who are to blame for aggravating identity conflict for economic gain.

One NGO official shared a disturbing example from Africa as follows:

In the Congo last year, there were members of the transitional government, members of parliament who would visit an area where there had been a massacre, and say things that made people angry again! And then they would leave and there would be another massacre!

Concealed aspects of conflict serve to benefit a few and conversely, maintain misery for many. A Canadian NGO administrator struggling to continue project work in North Korea provided another example of inter-locking causes resulting in conflict and suffering in that country.

In North Korea, you have a situation there that is a systemic, political, a complex situation where, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, where North Korea during the Soviet Union era, they would provide the raw materials. The Russians and the other countries would give them the food. So you had this barter system going. It collapses in 1989-1990 and you have a couple of droughts and a couple of floods in North Korea and pretty soon people are starving and you have a very complex type of situation. And you have a different political system. You have a system in the Achooli philosophy of communism in North Korea which is very aligned to Confucism in China. Plus you have that North Korea/South Korea split. There is direct conflict between them, not open fighting, but strained relationships between North Korea and many of its neighbors.

A couple of NGO directors working in Afghanistan, however, believed the incredible complexity of local conflict made analysis impossible. One NGO director lamented the overwhelming complexity:

But I have lived there for several years now. But do I begin to understand? Do I have time to understand the nuances of centuries of cultural conflict? No.

Another NGO director agreed and also felt frustrated at living in Afghanistan for so long with a deeper understanding of the conflict remaining elusive. She shared that she relied

heavily on security briefings and local rumors to determine her response to local conflict. Participant's frustrations are perhaps explained by written histories of Afghanistan that depict conflict in Afghanistan over the last one hundred years as extremely complex (Hopkirk, 1990).

Conflict has Multiple Causes

Several of the NGO officials believed that modern intrastate conflict is not typically fired by a single cause but is rather aggravated and escalated by several interlocking and inter-related causes. A NGO director working in Afghanistan summarized this process as follows:

Well maybe there is no one main reason for the conflict but several causes that are fitting together.

Together, the participants interviewed for this study identified and described six forces that feed conflict in the contexts where they work.

First, NGO officials perceived ethnicity as a cause for conflict in many contexts. One NGO director described how many villages in which his organization conducted educational development projects were divided physically and mentally along ethnic lines. To achieve project goals he believed that ethnic conflict must be first dealt with. Another NGO official described the ethnic tension in Darfur between the Arab Baggaras and several black African groups – the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massaleit:

The people of Darfur, the African people ethnic group feels very much disrespect, like second-class citizens as compared to the Arab ethnic group. They feel that's number one. They feel disenfranchised.

A Kabul NGO director listed ethnic groups in Afghanistan which have traditionally been in conflict:

Afghan culture hugely diverse. There are the Pushtoons, there are Uzbeks, Tajiks, Dari speaking Afghans, you know. There is so much cultural diversity within the country.

In many divided societies, ethnicity has been granted incredible divisive power. NGOs need to be aware of this potentially divisive power and intentionally conduct work aimed towards transformation.

Second, political forces regularly appear to drive violent conflict. One participant described the political climate in Afghanistan in which local militias vie for power and control despite efforts of the central government to establish democratic rule. She states:

Then you have another layer which is militias...You have little fiefdoms being carved out in the middle of all this.

Further, political forces interested in maintaining levels of destructive conflict often hinder NGO objectives. For example, one NGO director described how local militias frustrated his organization's agricultural development work in Afghanistan. The militia groups would intentionally divert irrigation waters to regions based on ethnicity leaving other farmer's crops to suffer.

Third, NGO officials perceived division based on religious ideals as regularly utilized in conflict. Describing ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, a NGO director in Afghanistan pointed out tension between competing ideologies and sects within Islam:

You have an ideological, secular vs. Islamic conflict. This conflict rages within. Some of the fighting is based about this. You have the guys who want to install Sharia law, and then you have the religious Sunni/Shia thing.

Another NGO country director corroborated this point in the following quote:

It's all about your various interpretations of Islam and how you choose to use Islam to articulate your cultural values. You've listened to all the debate worldwide about what is Islam. What did the Koran, the Prophet say? And the same with what does the Bible say? What did Jesus say?

They are parallel kinds of arguments and then people use scripture and faith tradition to say what they want to say. I think it's a combination of Islam and Afghan culture.

Similarly, an argument can be made that tens of thousands of deaths within the current Iraq crisis are based on religious Sunni/Shia/Kurd violence.

However, one Canadian NGO official supporting work in Darfur was cautious in crediting violent conflict in the Sudan to religion. He states:

A lot of the underlying causes of North and South Sudan...part of it was religious - although many would say it was racism. You have Northern Sudanese and you have Southern Sudanese. Southern Sudanese being African - being animist or Christian, and Northern Sudanese being Arab Muslim. And I have heard a lot of talk there about racism - Northerners thinking they are better than Southerners.

Perhaps, in some cases, religion is a convenient explanation for violent conflict when deeper issues such as ethnic privilege and oppression for economic reasons may be more to blame.

Fourth, one NGO official perceived demographic factors as creating a milieu appropriate for violent conflict in Timor-Leste. She believed that extraordinarily high populations of youth in Timor-Leste's IDP camps caused incessant problems with violent gangs.

A lot of the focus is on the kids in Timor-Leste. Fifty percent of the population is under the age of fifteen. It's unbelievable! Especially when you are stuck in IDP camps you have nothing to do but engage in what is going on around them...A lot of the research, I'm sure you've seen it - if you have a high population of young unemployed men, you've got a trigger coming because they have nothing to do. That's a risk, a huge risk factor...You go into these IDP camps and the kids have been living there for nine months and they have nothing to do, and there is a commotion outside, and they see the bigger kids throwing rocks or making these little weapons and firing them at cars and stuff. They are going to engage in that because they have nothing else to do and you want to be like the older kids.

Fifth, environmental problems are emerging as a serious social and political issue resulting in violent conflict (Jeong, 2000). One participant described conflict stemming from environmental concerns in the Sudan:

The environment is an underlying cause there. You have your farmers; you have your nomads. In a good rain year where the rain patterns were predictable, the farmers... they would farm, they would harvest... the nomads would come and there would be a symbiotic relationship. Their cattle, their animals would then eat the stubble of the farm. As rain and drought entered the equation, more and more, as the drought cycles increased, and the rain cycles decreased, you clashed over land. You clash over resources; you clash over water points.

A NGO director working in Western Afghanistan also noted conflict amongst local villages over resources – particularly water resources and scarce land suitable for grazing farm animals. Weather chaos caused by global warming is resulting in increased conflict amongst people as their traditional ways of working together are disrupted.

Sixth, economic disparities in income gaps between the rich and poor are causing conflict across our world today (Jeong, 2000). Again, speaking about the Darfur region of the Sudan, a Canadian NGO administrator illustrated the point in the following way:

Economics? Oil - the discovery of oil in the south. We hear about oil in Darfur. Who owns it? Who runs it? Who benefits from it? These are some of the underlying causes.

The following statement by another NGO official further clarified economic causes of conflict in Sudan:

In Sudan, the central government is interested in the natural resources of different areas of the country and they are forcibly moving populations off of their oil fields.

The discovery of valuable natural resources such as oil in the Sudan seems to inherently create conflict.

Is Conflict Analysis Guiding NGO Project Design?

Recognizing the complexity of conflict, the question remains as to whether NGO project design is guided by the recognized causes of conflict. The perceptions of the participants to this very important question varied significantly. Participants one and two perceived that an analysis of conflict in their work contexts *affected* educational project design but were cautious about allowing the causes of conflict to *determine* what projects they undertook. Both participants felt that there were deeper and more important principles on which to base project design. For example, participant one believed projects should be driven by a belief in the inherent value of education for development.

I would say it could affect how we would do things, but it didn't frequently determine what we would do...So, we chose to do literacy because of the perceived value and the role education could play in the future development of that village, that district, the country.

Participant two recognized the value of being aware of the causes of conflict, but perceived his organization's work as based on fundamental humanistic principles.

Aware of... Guided by? I probably wouldn't use that term. Our activities would be guided on the basis of 'who is my neighbor', the right of all people to have access to life...So I don't know if we are guided by the causes of conflict but we are definitely aware of that.

Participant three, four, and six perceived their organization's ventures being much more directly guided by the causes of conflict. Participant three stated that her organization's government policy advocacy work is directly focused on the root causes of conflict. Responding to economic causes of conflict fed by transnational mining companies, she describes a current advocacy initiative:

For instance, we are members of a working group that participated in the petition recently to encourage the Canadian government to make regulation of Canadian mining companies overseas mandatory.

Participant four believed that her educational projects in particular required a careful consideration of local conflict. For example, her organization's educational and economic-focused projects were carefully designed to address immediate conflict-related needs within Timor-Leste's IDP camps as well as attempting a response to systemic conflict related issues that continue to keep people in the camps.

Participant six believed ethnic causes of conflict as greatly affecting her organization's work. In their project work in schools, a purposeful response to ethnic separation is engaged through activities such as singing inclusive songs. Further, work in conservative Pushtoon areas of Southern and Eastern Afghanistan required creativity in educational project design since girls are typically not allowed to go to school.

Participant five, however, perceived her organization's education work as not requiring a consideration of local causes of conflict. However, in the following quote she reveals her belief that her organization's work in other development sectors does rely on conflict analysis to a greater extent than its education work.

I think that my colleagues that work in agriculture, watershed management, and natural resource management, think about it much more than we do in the education sector. Because natural resources are scarce and can cause a lot of conflict within and between villages, those programs use that lens to look at conflict. But I am not really involved in their sectors. In education we don't because we work at micro village level and so inter-village conflict or inter-ethnic conflict is not something that really comes up. As I said we are only starting to think about with this, is how to promote a culture of peace in our own schools and in our programs.

She perceived her educational work's success as not dependent on conflict analysis because of its micro-level focus.

Theme 2: Conflict Dynamics and NGO Educational Work

NGO educational work conducted in the typically unstable and volatile conflict-affected areas such as Afghanistan will require special attention and careful planning. When international assistance is given to local formal or informal educational systems, local conflict dynamics are typically affected (Anderson, 1999). International assistance is never neutral and thus may serve to prolong or exacerbate conflict dynamics, or may serve to reduce tensions and bring peace to local conflict dynamics (Anderson, 1999).

Description of Conflict Dynamics

The interviewed NGO officials described some of the conflict dynamics experienced in the locations of their project work. One NGO director noted the inherent difficulty in working in the country of Afghanistan:

It's a minefield. It's very difficult for an outsider, especially even for an Afghan who is not from that particular community to understand all of the conflict dynamics. So we have to tread very lightly and go very slowly.

Local conflict dynamics are often subtle, carefully hidden from outsiders, and can result in sudden outbursts – sometimes violent. NGO officials identified several aspects of local conflict dynamics as affecting international NGO intervention and assistance.

First, local populations often continue to live in fear and under unrelenting oppression following peace accords or foreign military interventions. For example, one NGO official described how women in Darfur face the constant threat of abuse and rape when doing their daily tasks such as going out and gathering firewood. Further, he shared how young people in Sudan face the continual fear of abduction and being forced to fight with rebel groups. As another example, a NGO official shared how large groups of people in Timor-Leste continue to live in IDP camps due to continued insecurity. Despite

the continued efforts of international military personnel, a Kabul based NGO director perceived Afghanistan's violence levels as continually increasing.

Well you know, it's a little bit dicey. Where we are there is more bad activity - improvised explosive devices, anti-government elements on the move. There is more of that now than there has been in the four years I have been there. Right after September 11th, right after the Taliban were ousted, things seemed calm and good and happy everywhere. I think pretty much almost immediately they started to slide back but no one noticed until last summer when things really started to heat up.

Second, local village power structures need to be considered. Hidden to most outside observers are intricate economic and political structures within Afghan villages and districts that are prone to conflict with the injection of outside assistance. One NGO director shared how local landowners would use their social and economic power to coerce their poor community members to provide disproportionate amounts of labor time in fulfilling contracts with international NGOs.

Third, foreign and local NGO staff are increasingly becoming targets of violence. A Kabul based NGO director described the increasing insecurity faced by NGO workers in the following quote:

Well, I would say there is a relatively constant threat of kidnap for people like me - Westerners, especially Western women. What else? I think the fact that there are tanks, trucks, and military convoys driving around the streets of Kabul is another. They are always there. They are ever present. The fact that there are improvised explosive devices and rockets lobbed here or there in Kabul, in the North, in the South, all the time.

Another NGO director noted other "point blank assassinations of development workers" as proof that foreign and local NGO workers are increasingly being targeted by insurgents.

NGO's Negative Impact on Conflict Dynamics

The interviewed NGO officials described numerous ways in which NGO intervention may in fact negatively impact local conflict dynamics. They perceived various pitfalls for NGO workers – many of them counter-intuitive.

A Canadian NGO official described how local populations could in fact face increased danger with the presence of foreigners.

But usually what is most important is that there is a strong working relationship with a local group. And then if the local group has come to a point where they're comfortable with having a Canadian with them ... in some places having a Canadian with you increases your insecurity, and in other places having a Canadian increases your security. So it's always a kind of negotiation, a feeling out of the situation.

For example, Western Christian denomination based NGOs working in Muslim contexts need to take extra precautions as local populations may associate cooperation with or employment by the foreign NGO as possible conversion to Christianity.

Foreign intervention can also create new or intensify old conflict at the community level. A NGO director believed local competition for NGO attention as detrimental.

The only kind of conflict that we might be exacerbating is inter-village conflicts, between one village who might be getting more attention from NGOs than another village which probably seems to be wealthier but is not getting the same services and attention from NGOs.

Another NGO director witnessed manipulation of the poor by wealthy community members in fulfilling labor requirements in the provision of a new community school.

Further, a Kabul based NGO director believed NGOs who do not conduct full assessments of local community dynamics face the risk of creating tension.

In Afghanistan, a lot of the discussion is on the principles of "Do no harm". You don't want to be doing something that is creating greater

tensions. Especially when you are talking about the selection of beneficiaries, you really have to think about how is that going to work out well. Because you can create tensions between groups that didn't actually have the tensions there before by identifying who you are going to work with.

By selecting individuals/groups to work with, the NGO is transferring power and privilege to certain parties and may unknowingly be creating destructive power hierarchies that previously did not exist.

NGO directors also shared regarding occasional pressure by governments to provide aid or development services to just one side in a conflict. It may be perceived by international or local government bodies to be detrimental to their political objectives to provide aid to one particular side in a conflict. A NGO official shared her thoughts on this issue as follows:

And in some instances that might be feeding people who the Canadian government might not want you to be feeding but they are starving. So as a humanitarian organization you're guided by the principles of meeting the needs of those most in need. You are not politically motivated. So you are not picking sides.

Providing resources to just one side in a conflict may create unfair advantages leading to increased oppression by the “well-fed” over the “hungry”.

NGO's Positive Impact on Conflict Dynamics

The interviewed NGO officials perceived international NGOs as carrying significant potential in reducing tensions and in aiding the creation of sustainable peaceful processes in formerly violent contexts. NGO officials described several constructive aspects to their educational work.

First, NGO educational projects sometimes served to facilitate the establishment of cooperative practices within and between local communities. For example, an

Afghanistan NGO director felt that a multi-ethnic school building project initiated increased cooperation and relationships between local leaders and residents. He described his rationale in choosing the villages to work with in the following passage:

Part of the reason we did it was it would be a school that served villages from three different ethnic groups - all educated in the same school, all working together in a, how would you say, limited way - but trying to make it work together. So as an encouragement to that, when I had to choose a location at one stage for a school, I wanted to encourage this process and speak about this process - why we were doing it to all of them involved - to help them see that this is one of the ways forward. You have to live and work well together.

He provided a fascinating example as to how providing educational development services can encourage or reward locally grown peacebuilding progress.

Second, local populations also reaped significant peacebuilding benefits from NGOs providing training in non-violent conflict resolution, facilitation, and mediation. One Canadian NGO official hoped for long-term impact in local conflict dynamics as the result of her organization's training activities.

The thing is that by helping people to engage now in the conflicts that they have using alternatives to violence, they respond to their immediate practical needs, but they also develop habits of responding non-violently - that has a long-term impact.

Further, training local leaders in mediation techniques will continue to serve the local community in dealing with local conflict dynamics long after international NGOs pull out of a country.

Third, one NGO official perceived certain educational projects as an act of resistance against destructive oppressive powers. The following quote from a NGO director provides an example:

I think that some NGOs working in Afghanistan on education are really at the forefront because they are putting schools in places where the school is about to be burned down or the teacher is about to be murdered.

The creation of schools for girls in areas typically resistant to female education may empower local residents to stand up and shed the control of destructive traditions.

Theme 3: Education and the Transformation of Conflict

All participants revealed a strong and sometimes passionate belief in the power of education to transform conflict-affected societies. Education was seen as a powerful tool in addressing causal forces that have traditionally fired conflict. The interviewed NGO officials articulated a philosophy of education and then attempted to illustrate how educational project work is serving to transform conflict-affected societies such as Afghanistan. Several themes describing a philosophy of education held by participants were salient in the interview data.

First, education was perceived to be foundational for an effective development scheme in a conflict-affected zone. Stemming from his experience with development work in a context having a decimated educational system from twenty-five years of war, a NGO director from Afghanistan stated the following:

Education is a critical process for a developing society - a developing economy. It's one of the foundation blocks for growing a successful society.

The reason for education's foundational role in development may be related to Burton's (1990) description of the basic human need for self-fulfillment and identity development. For example, a participant described the role of education in allowing female identity development. He believed that education enabled females in an African village context to:

...take advantage of opportunities there are to find ways that they can lead a more fulfilling life - a better life. A life where their basic needs are met.

Another NGO director working in Afghanistan corroborated this point in the following manner:

Oh, I think it is the key. If you look at all the information around the world about educating girls, educating women, and how that transforms - if not countries, at least families and villages - it has huge potential to do that.

Along the same lines, a Canadian NGO administrator commented on the inherent needs of people living in desperate situations:

People living in dire circumstances like that really appreciate the opportunity to grow, to have their intellect and personal life enriched - to have an opportunity to enrich it.

An individual who is not able to meet his/her basic needs will inherently turn to violent means in resolving conflict (Burton, 1990).

Crucial to meeting the basic needs of security and identity is finding appropriate employment; appropriate in that it provides adequate finances and is enjoyable and fulfilling to that person. One NGO official discussed the relationship between educational development and unemployment issues within a developing country.

People often say, "Well, are we just helping to educate a whole lot of unemployed people?" Well, maybe that unemployment lasts a year or two, but helping people help themselves and think for themselves allows them to look at an activity, then another activity, then another activity, which eventually, the longer term outcome may be that that person has a good job, enjoys what they are doing, fulfills their interests and so on. So I really feel very strongly that education is key to development...

Education is seen as a method of increasing the odds of attaining appropriate employment – even if none is immediately available in a developing context.

Second, education was perceived by participants as crucial in developing thinking skills and processes. For example, in order to transform a militaristic society into a

society that searches for peace when dealing with conflict, mental processes leading to violence must be replaced with non-violent conflict resolution processes. One participant stressed the importance of “helping people think for themselves”. Further, two other NGO officials describe the dangers in having an uneducated population – one that is susceptible to the power of rumors and bad advice. The first official had this to say on the issue:

In hot conflict situations the power of rumor is really strong and can cause escalation. Things that are not true can cause escalation. People learning how to discern whether something is true or not is an important skill to have to deescalate in the midst of very active conflict.

Similarly, the second official commented in the following manner:

I think that the value of education is in creating the mindset in how to think, to figure out how to build your community and your future. Somebody who can think isn't at the mercy of wives tales or people's stupid bad advice. It changes all of those things.

Developed thinking processes allow people in a conflict zone to break free of the power of untruth and the self-serving manipulation of leaders interested in maintaining the conflict for their own interests. Without education, critical thinking processes are easily suppressed in oppressed peoples. A NGO director from Afghanistan described education's role in empowering subversive voices.

I think it is easy for people in any environment who don't know what's going on to be swayed by rumor and to be told what they need to think – by elders, or tribal leaders, or religious leaders. And I realize that it's a particular Western view on things. But when people start thinking critically about things then there's a lot of questioning of leadership that goes on and I think that that needs to happen.

Crucial to effective transformation of thinking processes is an elicitive approach to development and peacebuilding project work (Lederach, 1995). A NGO official described the philosophy guiding her peacebuilding work as follows:

People living in dire circumstances like that really appreciate the opportunity to grow, to have their intellect and personal life enriched - to have an opportunity to enrich it. The approach is very elicitive. We just give people the space and the time and a little bit of vocabulary to analyze about their situations and so it is very very experiential. You know, "This is the situation that you are in, what is your alternative?" It's not theoretical, "Here is a theoretical situation, now what do you do?"

A third element in the participant's philosophy of education was the conflict-dampening effect of education in a place of conflict. The following quote from an NGO director from Kabul clarifies what this means:

Yeah, again, especially if you are talking about educational projects, education is a big part of hopefully breaking the cycle of conflict.

Despite working in a conflict-ridden society, another NGO director working in Afghanistan perceived the people he worked with as believing educated people would naturally avoid violence.

They perceived that being uneducated led them into all the fighting around their country. Educated people, in their view – like engineers and doctors - they weren't fighting, they were helping people. They wanted to train their children to be that type of people.

In a similar fashion, training initiatives leading to employment in the historically violent context of Northern Ireland are intended to serve a conflict-dampening role (Byrne & Irvin, 2001).

Finally, education has inherent power to transform attitudes, ideologies, and behaviors. Ingrained violent responses to conflict or transgenerationally transmitted ethnic hatreds can be addressed through educational activities. One NGO official believed focused educational work with youth in contexts such as Afghanistan and Israel/Palestine can have long-term effects.

I think its key. Again, you have to focus on the younger generation to actually change understanding, attitudes, perceptions, and you do that

through education and exposure - that's where you do some of those joint integrated activities and things. Like have people understand they have commonalities with the people they have villainized. You hear a lot about that in the Israel/Palestine context - trying to focus on the younger generation to actually provide exposure and understanding. Because the most effective form of creating your next generation of people who are going to engage in the conflict is through education as well. You hear about that all the time as well - they target the young kids to have them understand why they should hate a certain population. Education is key on both sides. That's how we all make our choices - we understand a broader context and we make our choices accordingly.

The NGO official recognized the destructive power of education and its ability to develop divisive ideologies as well.

Discussion and Conclusions

International NGOs choosing to conduct operations in conflict-affected societies such as Afghanistan face unique challenges. Educational project initiatives are believed to have significant potential in addressing causes of conflict leading to increased probabilities of sustainable peace. However, educational project design will then require an in-depth understanding of local conflict and rely on an appropriate philosophy of education in order to meet desired peacebuilding outcomes. Further, project design will need to ensure that project work serves constructive and not destructive ends in addressing local conflict dynamics. This chapter has summarized participant's perceptions of their project work within contexts saturated with conflict. Several main conclusions stem from the NGO officials' interview narratives.

NGO Officials Described Several Perceived Causes of Conflict

The end of the Cold War signaled a clear change in international conflict dynamics. Modern intrastate conflicts are driven by a fusion of causes including the

absence of suppressive Cold War superpowers, divisions created in Colonial enterprises, and corrupt power hungry leaders to name a few (Lederach, 1997, Lewer, 1999). Byrne and Carter's (1996) social cubism model attempts to clarify the complex tangle of causes by defining six inter-related social forces (history, demographics, psycho-culture, religious, economic, and politics) that interact together to escalate violent ethnic intrastate conflict.

As an aggregate, the study's participants defined a complex system of inter-related forces (ethnicity, politics, religion, demographics, environmental concerns, and economics) driving conflict in the contexts within which they work. The list of causes correlates quite closely with the social cubism model with the exception of conflict caused by environmental concerns. The environment is increasingly being recognized as exacerbating or causing conflict in several regions of today's world. However, the interview data does give significant credence to the social cubism analytical model. Further analysis may need to be done considering whether the model will be deficient in explaining conflict resulting from environmental factors such as global warming or extreme weather such as drought.

However, it should be noted that none of the individual participants attempted an explanation of modern conflict that incorporated more than two or three perceived causes. One could argue that this may suggest that individual participants did not recognize fully the complexity of conflict in their context. However, most of the participants prefaced their conflict analysis by stating their view that conflict in countries such as Afghanistan was incredibly complex. Not identifying further causes may be

attributed to several possible factors such as deficient time, energy, tools, or resources to analyze local conflict.

Conflict's Causes have Limited Impact on Project Design

NGO officials responsible for educational project design in countries experiencing intrastate conflict gave an analysis of conflict's causes wide-ranging power in determining project design and implementation. While three participants perceived conflict's causes as guiding their work, two participants believed conflict's causes as minimally affecting project design in some manner. One participant did not perceive conflict's causes as guiding project design in her organization.

The fact that only half of the participants gave significant voice to conflict analysis in project design perhaps signifies a need for further study comparing practice between organizations that do or do not incorporate the causes of conflict into their project design. The need for such a study is important since NGOs conducting strong analysis of their context are typically much better prepared to meet security threats in volatile environments (Goodhand, 2006).

NGO Officials Described Project Work's Destructive and Constructive Potential

It is a moral and logical fallacy to conclude that because aid can do harm, a decision *not* to give aid would do no harm. – Mary Anderson (1999, p. 2)

Several scholars have noted the potential destructive and constructive effects of NGO project work on local conflict dynamics (Anderson, 1999; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Goodhand, 2006, Reychler, 2001). Bush & Saltarelli (2000) propose that NGOs sometimes blindly believe that “education is inevitably a force for good” (p. v). The

aforementioned scholars produce significant and important evidence to the contrary. They propose that international NGO intervention and local conflict dynamics interact intimately in a complex relationship – sometimes producing destructive results.

The participants in this study substantiated the theory by proposing both negative and positive possible outcomes. For example, the interviewed NGO officials provided important insight indicating how their educational projects can in fact increase danger levels for local populations, can exacerbate or create new community-level tensions, and can be used by foreign governments to leverage the “good” side. Conversely, however, NGO officials described how educational project work encouraged community-level cooperation, provided training in peacebuilding practice, and was used to foster local resistance to oppressive practices.

Perhaps further assisting NGOs in determining their impact on local dynamics is Luc Reyhler’s (2001) Conflict Impact Assessment Impact System (CIAS). Useful at both the policy and local community level, CIAS enables an assessment of NGO intervention’s positive or negative effect on conflict dynamics and is also useful in developing useful peacebuilding policy by identifying weaknesses in peacebuilding approaches (Reyhler, 2001).

NGO Officials Believed in Education’s Power to Transform

Educational reform and development is instrumental in breaking the cycle of conflict because of its strong connections to the root causes of intrastate violent conflict (Degu, 2005). Education’s connection to root causes are evident in personal, community, and cultural identity development; the establishment of ideological orientation; and its power to enable access to political power (Degu, 2005).

The participants of this study also believed in the inherent power of education to transform relationships, individuals, and structures. Undergirding the project work of the NGO officials interviewed for this study is a philosophy concerning the power of education in transforming a violent society. The participant's philosophies of education concur with several prominent scholars interested in the role of education in violent contexts. NGO officials described education's central role in social and economic development. Their arguments support the writings of Stephen Lewis (2005), the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, who, amongst other issues, is intensely concerned about prohibitive school fees for hundreds of thousands of orphaned children in Africa.

NGO leaders also described education's role in developing critical thinking processes leading to empowerment. Paulo Freire (1970) also describes a pedagogy that can potentially facilitate the resistance of oppression and the escape from poverty.

Finally, NGO officials in this study believed education had inherent conflict dampening power and described its ability to transform attitudes, behaviors, and ideologies. Their views coincide with Adam Curle's (1973) suggestion that education in non-violent methods of resistance and conflict resolution can serve to eliminate oppression in many contexts.

Chapter Five - A Typology of NGO Educational Project Work

Introduction

Educational project work is being conducted in conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan, Congo, Burundi, Timor-Leste, and Sudan. It is hoped that educational work will assist in establishing peaceful processes leading to sustained peace. This chapter presents the interviewee's comments concerning a typology describing NGO educational project work being conducted today. To this end, the participants of this study described their project strategies and target groups, clarified the theoretical framework guiding their work, spelled out necessary supports and work environment, and justified their perceived work mandate and goals.

Theme 1: NGO Project Description

Respondents provided a rich description of educational project work conducted in a broad range of development and peacebuilding categories. Four salient categories of project work are discussed here in an order that reflects their prevalence in the interview data.

Schooling for Children

Project work concerned with improving schooling for children in conflict-affected areas was dominant in the interview data. Participants described schooling-centered initiatives providing an immediate emergency response, initiatives addressing long-term development concerns, and initiatives focusing on peacebuilding.

A country's educational infrastructure is typically in shambles following a violent conflict. The rebuilding of central institutions and department structures consume

resources and attention immediately following a peace accord (Herrero, 2005). Therefore, NGOs are often relied upon to facilitate the quick resumption of schooling services for children by building new schools, re-building damaged schools, and providing school supplies ranging from pencils to class-room chalkboards. The following quote by a project director from Afghanistan explains:

So the objective is to help communities build schools in places where the government isn't providing schools at the moment. And we are working with the government to develop a model whereby the community-based groups will eventually become formal government schools. That's our biggest project.

Further, the country director of Afghanistan for a NGO focused on children emphasized her focus on education as an emergency response.

So there's a lot about prioritizing education along with basic health and water and sanitation in an emergency recovery situation. Our organization always tries to do that. In Afghanistan, everywhere where we work now, in clearly what are development programs, we work initially in emergency.

Respondents also related how their NGOs have conducted school feeding programs in Darfur and provided large “school” tents for sheltering students in Pakistan and Afghanistan relief efforts.

With an eye towards long-term development, most NGOs interviewed were performing training work with schoolteachers and administrators. A Kabul NGO director elucidated by describing the grand vision of a large training project being conducted in Northern Afghanistan.

We are also a partner in a major project directly with the Ministry of Education to better support teachers and headmasters to improve the system. So that's another project that's going on that's really focused not on individual teachers per say by way of teacher training or classroom management, but on the headmasters and on the district and provincial level Ministry of Education people, to get them to be better, to get them to

know more about management, more about leadership, more about classroom management so that they can help teachers. So that as more teachers come out of training programs either from the Ministry or from NGOs, that they are better supported. We like to think that that's another project that will help build the system nationally. The idea is that they will pretty quickly evolve or devolve to a national sort of perspective.

Other NGO work is focused on increasing enrollment – particularly amongst the very poor and female students. Another Kabul based NGO director described her NGOs concern with the retention of students in school – as financial burdens mount, children are often pulled out of school.

A project director from Afghanistan noted remedial work made necessary by the ban on educating girls under the Taliban regime.

The other thing that we're working on is accelerated learning - six years of primary education in three years. That is working with younger moms, teenage girls, even some teenage boys who didn't go to school under the Taliban regime.

Female students in particular struggled under the Taliban regime and unfortunately continue to struggle in Taliban controlled areas in the South.

Concerning NGO peacebuilding initiatives, a Canadian NGO official highlighted her organization's work in Timor-Leste. A letter-writing program encourages communication and understanding between the parties to conflict.

They also have a letter writing, a pen-pal campaign. Again, because the conflict is internal to Timor-Leste, it's not an independence thing; it's internal between East and West within East Timor. So they are trying to have kids from different parts of Timor-Leste write each other and gain an understanding of each other's lives - similarities, differences, and challenges.

Further, her organization is part of a consortium of NGOs that, together with the Ministry of Education, publishes a national children's magazine with a theme of peace and peace

education. The magazine is distributed in the school system and has been integrated into the national curriculum.

Education projects in Timor-Leste's Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps also have peacebuilding goals. The Canadian NGO official explained:

A lot of the focus is on the kids in Timor-Leste. Fifty percent of the population is under the age of fifteen. It's unbelievable! Especially when you are stuck in IDP camps you have nothing to do but engage in what is going on around them. So you try and target them for the sporting events and also the peace education workshops stressing the importance of communication, educating things like that.

Peacebuilding work with the burgeoning youth population typical in many conflict-torn developing countries will surely aid the establishment of peace.

Education of Women

Large international NGOs such as OXFAM are increasingly focusing on women's issues (OXFAM, 2006). The interview narratives reflect and clarify this important focus. Five out of the six NGO officials interviewed in this study identified education work with females as central to their organization's project work. An NGO country director working in Afghanistan perceived women's work as foundational to her organization's development strategy.

Oh, I think it is the key. If you look at all the information around the world about educating girls, educating women, and how that transforms if not countries at least families and villages, it has huge potential to do that.

Another NGO director in Afghanistan argued that education work amongst women had ripple effects in women's health.

Just simple things, as you raise the education level of girls past the sixth grade, infant mortality and rates just change drastically. It's pretty astronomical. It's a barrier.

Some programming focused on women was concerned with vocational training. A Canadian NGO official explained their women's work in Kabul.

So the objective is to make the women, the most vulnerable population, which have been deemed to be the widows, to make them self-sufficient, self-reliant, and able to support their own families. Within that vocational training project, talk about educational, there is a component that is actually the training on the various skill-sets, which can be anything from, more traditional, the sewing and weaving, to welding classes, auto work, auto training, all different types of vocational training that have been deemed, if they received the training they would actually find employment afterward. They actually get the training and the skills, but they joined up with savings and credit groups, literacy and numeracy classes, basic life skills, health and nutrition, so that it is more of an all-encompassing rather than just a skills vocational training project.

Her NGO's work is a prime example of a holistic approach to women's education work.

Along the same lines, another NGO project conducted in Northern Afghanistan integrated training in vegetable and fruit canning procedures into a women's literacy project.

Women were provided a written guide to canning as part of their studies.

One NGO director recognized the long-term but instrumental nature of women's educational work in Northern Afghanistan.

But how do you have teachers if you don't have educated women? So first you have to get some girls educated so when they get older they can become teachers in the school. So everything has a generational outlook...this is the hardest generation. By the third year some of the women in the schools were our former literacy students. But you got to start somewhere. So teach some of the older girls really well and send them back to teacher training and have them be teachers and start elevating the process. Don't just look and bemoan that we don't have teachers. Look twenty years ahead and say "Ok, if we can get ten girls to the sixth grade who are pretty bright, then we have ten teachers who we can start through the process and maybe we let two of them study the higher grades if they can get permission and they can then teach some of the higher grades." You just start working that direction. But it is long term.

Addressing the widespread avoidance of political involvement by women, one NGO ran a program educating women on Afghanistan's new constitution passed in January 2004.

We had, kind of a, what would you call it... human rights, constitution education for women. Like, what does it mean to vote? What are your rights? Do you have to vote for what your husband does? We had a whole training for just how to understand the constitution and what their roles were in a democracy where they can vote.

Significant advances in women's rights will be made as women participate in democratic politics.

But despite these advances, much work is required in countries like Afghanistan.

One NGO director lamented:

In some areas, in very conservative Pushtoon areas, although there are progressive Pushtoon areas, where families absolutely do not want women and girls to have access to public health services. So yes there would be an impact on health. And it would be on education too. I mean, in Pushtoon areas girls absolutely aren't allowed to go to school.

Entrenched conservative cultural/religious beliefs and practices continue to severely hinder educational work with women and girls. For example, in 2006 there were reports that a teacher had been beheaded for educating girls in the province of Zabul, Southern Afghanistan.

Government Capacity Building

Typical post-conflict conditions involve widespread destruction of government infrastructure and decimated governmental legitimacy (Rubenstein, 2003). If groups within a society do not grant their government proper legitimacy, flare-ups in conflict are likely to follow. Further, immediately following a violent conflict, government institutions may not be able to perform their roles or even pay their staff. For example, in

Afghanistan, educational development was consistently hindered because of the inability of the Afghan government to pay schoolteachers in the years following the U.S. invasion in 2001.

NGOs interested in building a sustainable peace will need to concern themselves with building government capacity in their project work. One NGO director described how his organization's teacher training projects were specifically designed to build local government capacity.

Our teacher training programs were done with the cooperation of both the provincial government and the district education department. They participated, they were there, it was their thing as much as it was our thing. Again, if you want to have long-term education and people in that area trained well to do it instead of sending somebody from our office out there to do it, we should figure out how to equip them to carry it out.

Numerous NGOs are conducting education work in Afghanistan and thus struggle with coordinating their work in order to address crucial needs and at the same time avoid leaving gaps in important educational development. A NGO director perceived the Ministry of Education as being a crucial resource in guiding the overall educational strategy in Afghanistan.

You also invite government representatives to things like that. It's the government representatives that are always meeting with different NGOs. They are aware of the different areas and where some of the gaps are. You will have government reps and when you go to meet them and they will say, "What about this? Nobody is looking at this." So you try and keep them informed as well. They are a good resource - they are in the country.

Conducting authentic governmental capacity building work requires a carefully planned stance towards the local population. NGOs must be willing to work in the background and allow the limelight to fall on local government officials. One NGO official illustrated the point as follows:

So all of our stuff was done with the Ministry of Education involved. As their infrastructure improved, we took more of a backseat and spent more efforts equipping them to do it.

In cultures such as in Afghanistan, providing honor to those in authority is foundational to societal order. One interview participant noted that NGOs working in honor/shame based cultures must allow credit and honor to be directed towards local government officials as opposed to the NGO itself.

They could tell that we were trying to make them look good, both to their bosses and to their people who they are supposed to be serving. If they just see NGOs doing all of this, well, how does it help them gain any confidence in their government?

It may be human nature to desire deserved credit for successful development work. However, NGO centered development work will often result in the debilitating dependency of local populations on outside help.

Local Capacity Building

A salient project goal for all the participants was local empowerment through community capacity building initiatives. Empowerment can be seen as providing power ‘with’ or ‘to’ people as opposed to exercising power ‘over’ people. In the process of empowerment, people are better able to take control of their lives and become less dependant on others (Lewer, 1999, p. 3). Several examples were provided in the interviews.

An NGO director described a situation where people from various ethnic groups within a village worked together to rebuild the village school following a war. He describes the healthy working atmosphere – “There was never a “we/they”, it was all “we”. In a second village, the local people decided, together with the development

agency, to use a portion of their school building construction monies to build some satellite schools in neighboring villages for young girls unable to walk the distance to the central school.

A senior NGO official described two more fascinating examples of local capacity building through educational activities. In the Congo, her NGO held workshops to train leaders in the various districts of the capital city in mediation skills. Following the workshop, the trained participants formed an association in which they strategized about how to use their new mediation skills to help the people in their communities resolve conflicts non-violently. The NGO director described the local Congolese project organizers' response when asked whether the newly trained mediators are paid for their services:

You don't need to pay them because they see every day how their skills and their role in their community benefits their community.

She also summarized the project's perceived success to date in the following quote:

So, there is still war in the Congo but those people in those communities feel that their situation is better then it would be if they didn't have the mediation.

A second project initiated by the same NGO involved working with an indigenous South East Asian group in organizing visitations between residents of various villages that have been in conflict.

What they are doing is called a self-reliance community based peace program...they are a local organization who invite people in the village to analyze where violence comes from in their village. They do that and then the villagers try to do something about it. Its entirely local problem-solving. Then to spread the capacity that they build from that experience what they do is organize exchanges with other villages.

Her organization appears to value providing local people and communities the opportunity to assume leadership and control over peacebuilding project work.

Theme 2: A Framework for NGO Educational Projects

John Paul Lederach (1997) proposes that NGO peacebuilding work should be guided by an integrated framework incorporating an analysis of a project's level of response along with an analysis of project time frame. All participants in this study described in detail the perceived level of response and time frame for their respective project work.

Level of Response

Each of the study's participants described their NGO educational project work as addressing systemic issues. A senior NGO administrator within its Canadian office perceived education work as lending itself naturally to a systemic response:

Well, education of course works on a systemic level; is more long term by its very definition as opposed to some of the relief projects that we do.

Echoing his statement, a NGO director from Afghanistan perceived a belief amongst the people of Northern Afghanistan that education has had a dampening effect on violence in the conflict zone.

They perceived that being uneducated led them into all the fighting around their country. Educated people, in their view, engineers, doctors, they weren't fighting, they were helping people. They wanted to train their children to be that type of people. The commitment to education was very high at that time and women and men were willing to participate in that stage.

To that end, he perceived education work as addressing systemic issues in his context.

However, each of the participants described a further aspect to the level of response achieved and practiced by their NGO work. They each perceived, within their NGO work, an attempt to incorporate a response to immediate needs with a focus on systemic issues. The participants justified an integrated response as necessary in effective development and peacebuilding work. A NGO director from Western Afghanistan clarified this stance:

I think both are happening at the same time. That is something that has changed a lot recently. We have much more contact with the Ministry of Education now and we are much more involved in policy and planning and really looking towards the future. At the same time the needs in Afghanistan are completely overwhelming and everything that you do will have immediate impact. So I think that we are actually working at both ends of that spectrum.

For example, NGO training in conflict resolution and community mediation skills were perceived as addressing immediate conflict issues while assisting in the creation of a culture of peace in the Congo. The following quote from a NGO official explains the situation:

The thing about our work is that by helping people to engage now in the conflicts that they have now using alternatives to violence, they respond to their immediate practical needs but they also develop habits of responding non-violently - that has a long-term impact.

As another example, a NGO official responsible for NGO work in Timor-Leste's IDP camps described in her interview the necessity of a broad response.

You are doing the immediate, the food distribution in the IDP camps, but in the same conversation you have to be talking about what are we doing to actually, in the long term, to get people out of the IDP camps and provide opportunities for these people. They can't be there forever, and the only way they are going to leave an IDP camp is if they have an opportunity. You have to meet the immediate needs. But how can we actually alleviate the more systemic reasons why people are in those camps?

Other NGOs recognized that unstable conflict zones typically birth unforeseen emergencies and conflict flare-ups. These emergencies must be effectively dealt with before sustainable development activities can resume.

Time Frame

The beliefs of the study's participants were quite varied regarding the time frame envisioned for their respective educational project work. However, the long-term "generational" nature of their work was noted by several participants. To build a fuller picture, I have created summary descriptions of each of the six participant's views.

Participant one clearly argued for long-term educational work in conflict-affected countries.

It all kind of fits together. I kind of looked at time frame. They all had a time when they can end. Some of the projects, the more tangible things like school building, supplies, that stuff, the end framework for that would be when the government is capable of doing it. I saw that as a shorter-term infrastructure building thing until the government infrastructure is ready to take over this. The other ones, the main goal which I said is laying the foundation of an educated populace who can be the ones to construct a civil society, I would have said that one generation...there's too many things in there that need a generation to change...at least one. ...This is the hardest generation. It all grows and builds on that. The first generation - maybe twenty years. Not that our projects have to go on that long. But the real benefit and change will be so gradual that you will need twenty years to judge it I would think.

He was quite skeptical of witnessing significant systemic change during his years working in Afghanistan.

Participant two stated that his organization's policy was to engage in a project for three to five years.

Well, I would say, time frame, we work in three-year time frames as much as possible, sometimes in five year-time frames. Every year we receive

reports, we look at other revisions that need to be made. So these are long-term engagements that we like to have with countries.

His description of a three to five year engagement as “long-term” may stem from his organization’s traditional focus on emergency disaster relief.

Participant three’s organization focuses heavily on conflict resolution, mediation, and policy reform work.

In terms of administrative time frame, we work from the very short to the medium term, and medium term is three to five years. But we don't assume that our relationship is going to end after a three to five year contract. But we don't want to make a contract for longer than that because things change and it is better to set yourself up to do some evaluation periodically to figure out what's the right thing to do next.

She did, however, mention that her organization has been involved in one educational project in Palestine on an ongoing basis since 1900.

Participant four perceived her organization’s project time frames in Timor-Leste being dictated and coerced by donor agencies.

So we are bound, when you are talking about time frames, obviously to have change somewhere you would obviously want to be looking at a longer time frame, but you are always bound by donor regulations, donor time frames, with no guarantees of funding beyond that initial three years - so that can make it challenging.

She lamented the impossibility of authentic evaluation in such short time frames. She revealed that evaluation is often not incorporated into project funding.

But then they will be gone and in five or ten years down the road when its time to evaluate that amazing project that everyone's so interested in, its changed to something else. So to actually get the funding at that point in time, the government is changed, the project is done, so people are like, "Well its done so why bother" really can be the attitude because they have a million more things they are working on. I think that can be part of it. Because you are never going to commit that type of money up front to say, "OK five years down the road you are going to look at this.”

She blames quickly shifting political interests, funding fads, and donor fatigue as preventing much needed project evaluation.

In a similar fashion, participant five's organization typically works in three to five year time frames.

Participant six's organization had a longer time frame of ten years for their educational activities. She too echoed the belief that Afghanistan is a couple generations away from deep rooted transformation.

I think Afghanistan is at least two generations away from being transformed by education. There is just so much that has to be done around the edges before that transformation can occur.

As evidence, she provided an example from her past experience in the United States:

And you know how there is all this conversation about abuse and violence in families in the West - how many generations does it take to change a family dynamic where abuse and violence...I think the third or fourth generation where you might get a family out of that cycle of violence.

She viewed transformative processes as having substantive time requirements

Theme 3: Necessary Supports and Work Environment

NGOs venturing into the troubled waters of conflict-affected countries will require extensive supports and a favorable work environment to increase the odds of achieving organizational goals. Most NGOs hold limited political or military "hard power" and instead rely on "soft power" (Aall, 2001) – "the ability to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion" (Nye, 2001). The study's participants attempted to elucidate necessary support structures for their organization's work. First, they noted that effective NGO project work often depends extensively on networking and coordination with other NGO work as well as complementing educational work with

efforts in other sectors of development. Second, they pointed out that NGOs often rely heavily on non-NGO interventions into conflict zones. They identified support from the military, the UN, local governments, local people and organizations, and donors as crucial in establishing a working environment allowing project work to flourish.

Supplementary NGO Projects and Supports

a) Coordination amongst NGOs

Several of the study's participants noted extensive coordination and cooperation between NGOs working in the same city or region. In the following passage, a Kabul based NGO director rationalized working together with other NGOs:

That's another reason why there is always a lot of coordinating with the Ministries, with other NGOs that are working in the area. You are trying to figure out who's targeting who, what are the initiatives, where are the gaps that our project can fill?

Development needs in conflict-affected zones are often enormous. Suffering due to chaos within government institutions can be mitigated with intentional planning by NGOs together with government officials. One NGO director worker in Afghanistan provided an example:

For example, there are vocational training project implementing partners and they will meet and have a coordinating committee – “Whose working on what? Where? Who are you targeting? Where? What's missing?”... You also invite government representatives to things like that.

Several of the NGO directors interviewed emphasized a strategy of working with local indigenous NGOs. International NGOs, such as those interviewed, frequently work alongside or fund local NGO groups (Aall, Miltenberger, & Weiss, 2000). One NGO director described her vision of building capacity amongst local NGO groups:

So the idea at this point is to run a concurrent project where, whenever you are doing training for your staff on how to train the trainer, or how to manage a project, you're training the people from the local NGO as well because you want them to be able to take over the project. So they need to be able to understand how to do the project but also how to access funding, writing proposals, things like that. So we have different initiatives where we are actually trying to build the capacity of a local NGO.

Further, by providing training for local NGO staff in conflict hot zones, international NGOs make it possible to continue their work even in the event of their sudden withdrawal in the face of violent conflict.

b) Complementary NGO programming

Several essential development activities were highlighted in the interview narratives as complementing NGO educational work. While a significant portion of educational development work is considered “formal” (education within the institutional state schooling system), the interviewed project directors focused on “informal” educational development activities in four sectors - economics, health, vocational training, and food/nutrition.

First, when asked to identify essential development work needing to run concurrently with educational projects, most participants suggested projects focused on economic development. The Afghanistan director for a large NGO focused on children suggested micro-finance work is crucial for economic development in a region relying heavily on illegal poppy income.

There's a lot of micro-finance work going on in Afghanistan. There are lots of big organizations that are globally recognized. A lot of it is focused on agricultural credit and alternative livelihoods. I'm sure you're well aware of the situation with poppies, which is the cash crop of choice and will continue to be until the world sorts out its addiction to heroin. But

meanwhile there are lots of agricultural micro-credit projects focused on getting farmers to not grow poppy.

She goes on to suggest that as people's income needs are met, increased school enrollment will likely ensue.

Second, a couple of participants argued that the delivery of informal health education was a necessary add-on to traditional educational development. One participant described an informal health education project in Afghanistan.

So we do this out-of-school child focused health education. It includes school-going kids but it also gives kids who aren't school-going to join in if they want. And it is child focused health education in nutrition, hygiene, basic health, dangers of common disease - you know flies are a vector of disease. Some very simple health education messages, and what we do is work with older kids - they learn the material, they play games to reinforce what they have learnt, they get a volunteer trained who we have supported, then they go home with their homework to convey the messages to their younger brothers and sisters and to their parents and grandparents. Then they circle back around and we have about six or eight units of lessons that take anywhere from two to four months to implement because the kids come maybe twice a week for the session – it's not an everyday thing.

Another NGO director described projects in remote mountainous regions of Afghanistan focused on reducing commonplace fatalities during child-birth by training local midwives.

Third, some participants suggested the futility of educational work while ignoring practical vocational projects aimed at increasing productivity and income. For example, agricultural development activities may increase household incomes, thereby allowing children to attend school regularly. One NGO director working in Northern Afghanistan emphasized this important consideration:

I think the key is the vocational - especially in the time of need. You had people who simply didn't have enough money. So whether that was improving their farming, by irrigation, by whatever means, by plowing techniques, or planning techniques, or whatever.

Another NGO official responsible for work in North Africa noted efforts to teach agricultural skills right within the school system. Students were given the opportunity to grow garden produce within the walls of the school compound.

Non-NGO Supports

NGO officials described the necessity of five non-NGO supports in creating a milieu appropriate for development and peacebuilding work. The military, the United Nations (U.N.), local governments, local people and organizations, and donors were perceived as working together with NGOs in a multi-track intervention into conflict zones.

a) International Military Forces

The interview respondents were virtually unanimous in their belief that minimum security levels were necessary for effective educational development work. A NGO director in Northern Afghanistan described societal benefits within a secure state:

At some level if you don't have security, nobody is going to think about anything but today. You will have a society that is stuck. Why plan, why go get an education, why plant my fields this year if I think somebody is going to steal it. It halts everything. During the former Taliban regime times, when there was no sense of peace or security, nobody got married! There was a rash of weddings after the old ruling regime left.

A NGO director from Kabul echoed this belief and further explained safety benefits in a secure situation for both school children and development workers.

The security situation will determine everything. Because if there is peace, a modicum of security, people will be willing to look at things other than fighting. They will be able to think about sending their kids to school. It will be safe for the kids to go. It will be safe for our teams to go out into the field.

However, the interviewed participants revealed varied NGO practice in working within insecure environments. One NGO official revealed her organization's willingness to even support appropriately prepared expatriate NGO workers in the volatile country of Iraq. At the other end of the scale, a NGO director in Afghanistan explained her organizations cautious stance in insecure environments:

We are one of the more careful NGOs that I have seen. Frequently we don't travel to a place where something has happened. We take threats very seriously, sometimes its specifically a threat against Internationals and the Internationals will hide out for a little while - not hide out but lay low for a little while. Other times there is a general threat and our staff remain in the office for a week or two. We are very cautious but it does affect our work. Even though we work in parts of the country that are generally considered to be safe, the security situation still affects us frequently.

NGO practice in insecure contexts such as Afghanistan appears to be quite varied.

The NGO directors perceived the international military forces as being the primary agent establishing security in Afghanistan. The NGO director's description of the military forces had both positive and critical elements. In the positive sense, they perceived the international military presence in Afghanistan as establishing a sense of stability allowing needed development to move foreword. The following quotes from two NGO directors in Afghanistan give details of this view:

The intervention of the foreign forces provided a much greater level of security that allowed people to start moving foreword.

I think that having an international military presence there is a good thing at the moment. I'm not saying that I approve of or appreciate when the military tries to act like an NGO in order to win hearts and minds. I'm not interested in that at all. But I do think that having an international security force in the country allows us to do our work at this point.

However, the interview narratives revealed substantive criticism of military forces in Afghanistan. Criticisms did not focus on traditional military practice but rather were

concerned with the “blurring of the lines” between military forces and international NGOs. The NGOs were quite concerned that they be viewed in the eyes of the local people in Afghanistan as a distinct entity with no ties to the international military forces. Two items were identified as working against this desire. First, Canada’s foreign policy has incorporated a 3D (Diplomacy, Defense, Development) vision on the ground. Currently a 3D foreign policy strategy is being piloted in Haiti, Afghanistan, and Sudan. It is an attempt at a more integrated and coordinated political response to conflict (Canadian Ministry of National Defense, 2007). The following quote from a Canadian NGO official justified widespread concern within the humanitarian community about Canada’s policy.

So for example in Afghanistan, where our government is saying, "We want NGOs to come and be a part of development and we will provide defense." We are saying that that blurs all the lines we ever know. An NGO should be responding on the basis of need. Therefore, if we are active on one side of the conflict as armed forces, how are we then perceived by large parts of the population that may not be on that warlord's side, or that so-called government side? And so there are many NGOs who are saying that we should stay as far away from the 3D approach as we can...That's the blurring of the lines. Especially when your military is, one block smashing doors down, another block handing out candy, another block they are helping the local police do security. We are all being lumped into that general quagmire.

In a similar vein, funding from the international funding arm of the US government – USAID, was perceived as pressuring NGOs into a role as an arm of the US government. One NGO official lamented by stating the following:

Local population does not always distinguish between the people killing them and the people helping them.

This was perceived as feeding the growing practice of targeting development workers by opposition forces and insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus, one respondent described

her organization's efforts at maintaining a strictly enforced distance from military personnel in the following quote:

We have a practice of avoiding them at all costs. We have a practice of not being identified with them. For example in many places these PRTs, these Provincial Reconstruction Teams, imagine themselves natural partners of NGOs and development organizations. They want to be hand in glove with us. Basically we are saying, "We don't think so! Thank you very much." But we know what we are doing and we have been here a long time and quite frankly to be partnered or identified with you is more of a risk than a benefit to us so thanks a lot.

However, despite the perceived pressure to align NGO work with political/military initiatives, two NGO leaders emphasized that their organization's actions were guided by a humanitarian code of conduct; not Canadian or U.S. foreign policy.

A second criticism voiced by the study's participants focused on the military's attempts at development activities. The development arm of the U.S. military forces, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), were perceived as ineffective and as pretending to understand development. A NGO director from Kabul advised the military to not stray from training activities with the Afghan military and police.

"Do what you need to do with the Afghan military and police to keep the peace or build the peace but don't try to delve into development work." And that message doesn't resonate very well with some people because they think they can do development work - but actually what they do is charity and its not really great. You know they build schools and clinics and wells but they are not necessarily where they should be or they are not built with community consensus so there is sometimes controversy.

She reveals her belief that the foreign military in Afghanistan has a specific role from which it should not wander.

b) United Nations

Because of its wide-reaching influential positionality in conflict-affected countries, the United Nations appears to be a valuable ally for the international NGO in countries like Afghanistan. The NGO directors interviewed gave details of various degrees of coordination and cooperation between their organizations and the UN.

Several NGO officials noted that the UN had inherent capabilities for working in conflict-affected countries like Afghanistan. With its large number of personnel on the ground, substantive monetary resources, and authority granted by the world's nations, the UN serves an important role in stabilizing both the civil and statutory sectors of conflict-affected countries. These NGO officials believed it necessary to work alongside the UN and make use of some crucial services. For example, the UN takes a lead in providing up-to-date security information to NGOs. A Kabul NGO director explained the UN's role as follows:

We go to meetings where the UN is debriefing on the security situation. All the NGOs are there and you need to know what's going on. If there is a serious security risk you have to pull your people back from the field and they can't go there.

The UN provides leadership and coordination services in other areas as well. Another NGO director perceived the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) as facilitating crucial connections between important civil, statutory, and international groups.

UNAMA, they were tasked with the administration of it all. They dealt with more the high government people, the commanders, the liaison between the international donor community and the government. I thought they did a pretty good job.

Several participants described collaboration with the UN on project work. For example, one Canadian based NGO leader described working together with the World Food Programme (WFP) on school feeding projects in Darfur. Other shared work among NGOs and the UN included building temporary school shelters in post-conflict settings such as Afghanistan and Darfur. Another NGO worked together with the UN on foreign policy issues such as addressing the international arms trade.

Other participants, however, voiced criticisms regarding the UN's methods of operation. One NGO director described certain UN agencies as a "bloated bureaucracy that has more corruption in it than the government did". To illustrate, he compared two similar teacher training projects in Afghanistan – one run by UNICEF, and one by his organization.

UNICEF trained two hundred teachers on a, I think, a two million dollar budget. And we did it on ten thousand. And we actually did it out in the villages. We would do one training for three or four villages at one of the schools that we had built. They had to have everybody come into the city to do it. It was very inefficient. There was just a death trap of money. It was vanishing left and right. There were things they did that I don't know a NGO could have done. But I wouldn't have organized it like UNICEF did. They wasted a lot of money at it.

With increased institutional size often comes inefficiency and unfortunately, in some cases, corruption.

c) Local Governments

NGO project success is intimately tied to local government support. Even in countries such as Afghanistan that have significant deficiencies in governmental control, small amounts of governmental support can exaggerate potential achievements. Three governmental supports were salient in the interview data.

Perhaps sounding obvious, but in fact quite a challenge in many contexts, governments need to allow entry for essential expatriate workers and provide suitable work visas. A Canadian based NGO director emphasized the need for governmental support:

In the case of people going to the place we have to have the permission of the government for them to enter the country. So, a certain amount of consular services, basic diplomatic relations between that country and Canada is helpful.

Following a conflict, relationships with certain foreign countries can sometimes be in shambles and can potentially block well-intentioned NGOs from entry.

Second, local governments need to supply a minimal level of infrastructure for NGO operations to function. One NGO director described necessary communications and banking infrastructures:

Communications infrastructure is really important. It's really hard to support a local group if you can't get through to them. I have been having all kinds of trouble the last six months getting through to Burundi. Something happened to their telephone system and that was one of the things that we tried to do over the last six years where all our workers in Africa to get so that they had communications technology in their national offices. In the case of sending funding, the key is our communications and banking infrastructure. Because we have to have the communications in order to have the accountability for the funds.

Her organization works closely with a local implementing partner and thus project success is married to good communication.

Third, NGO leaders believed development and peacebuilding activities will flourish as principles of good governance are followed and the rule of law is established.

A NGO director from Afghanistan argued the point:

The most critical thing for a nation to develop, and it's hard because there's not a whole lot that an NGO can do in this, you have to have some combination of good governance, good laws, and the rule of law. So how

do you do irrigation projects when the government is not strong enough to enforce the rule or they are so corrupt that they can be bought? Even so, there is enough water in theory for the farmers out in the districts, if the governance isn't good, it is still irrelevant, you can't do it. The most critical thing for a post-war country to develop, any country, even if it is rich, is good rules, good laws and justice; the enforcement of those laws.

For example, the presence of powerful armed warlords in Afghanistan was perceived as hindering development efforts. Further, lack of good governance was seen as exacerbating natural ethnic or religious divisions within society. In the following quote, a participant lamented Iraq's post-invasion woes:

You always thought of Iraq as one country until it falls apart and all of a sudden the only thing that was keeping those people together calling themselves Iraqis was Saddam Hussein by sheer force and fear but as soon as he's gone the Kurds are saying "We hate Arabs", we don't want anything to do with those guys, and the Sunnis and Shiites just keep killing each other. There are some things that good governance can kind of cover over and when its gone, and I'm not saying that Saddam did good governance, but in a sense his power limited these other things, whereas I think good governance can do the same thing.

Not all NGOs, however, require high levels of good government to operate. One participant described her NGO's work in setting up schools in the middle of active warfare in Burundi. Other NGOs have as their mandate human rights work or aid work in the midst of active warfare.

d) Local People and Organizations

Several interview participants identified the support of local populations and local organizations such as local NGOs, community groups, and indigenous churches as imperative to peacebuilding. A Canadian based NGO official revealed that a non-negotiable issue for his organization was the pursuance of local support and control.

Local ownership. Still needs to be firmly controlled, envisioned, involvement of local people and so on. I think its key.

Another NGO director corroborated the point:

The main thing is to have a good working relationship with a local organization. They really make all the choices. They can work with very little in terms of infrastructure - almost zero.

Further, a Canadian NGO official stated that his organization relied heavily on its local relationships to guide them through the tangle of security issues in post-conflict settings. For example, in the potentially volatile milieu of Sudan immediately following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, expatriate staff from his organization depended on local relationships in making decisions regarding their security.

e) Donors

Participants described a unique relationship between NGOs and donors. With their not-for-profit status, NGOs are often fully dependent upon donors if operations and much needed project work are to continue. But donors will often use their provision of resources to push forward a particular agenda or desired method of operation. One NGO director from Afghanistan expressed concern over perceived pressure from donors as follows:

That's some of the negative nature of the work. It's really not the NGO workers who decide what's the best thing to do. If the donor is good, well, that can be good. If the donors got some other agendas, well, or if they just want to get out the money which is sometimes the case, "Look we got to spend this! We need to spend it by the end of the year!" Well, is it more important to spend it well, the NGOs want the money, so they are going to say "Yeah, we can do it". You have some problems with that. There are some NGOs out there that do that.

Other NGO officials also perceived a lack of NGO control over project design and inappropriately high levels of control over project work by international donors. For example, one NGO director theorized that minimal peacebuilding/conflict resolution

project work was happening in Afghanistan since “people were involved in whatever they could get money for.”

Further, a couple of NGO directors felt restricted by donor time frames. A Kabul based country director voiced concern in the following quote:

You are always bound by donor time frames. A donor can't really fund anything for more than three to five years maximum. But you are always bound by donor regulations, donor time frames, with no guarantees of funding beyond that initial three years - so that can make it challenging.

She believed that inappropriate donor time frames prevented her organization from conducting much needed evaluative research on its completed project work.

Theme 4: NGO Mandate

NGO officials identified four broad mandates within which they located their project work. Participants viewed a definite majority of their project work as fulfilling either a peacebuilding or a long-term development mandate. A distinct minority of described project work fell within the mandates of emergency help/aid and human rights/advocacy work.

Emergency Help and Aid

NGOs have taken a lead role in responding to humanitarian calamities stemming from natural disasters and violent conflict. During the 1990s, NGOs increasingly became the preferred conduit through which foreign aid flowed to struggling regions and nation-states (Ahmed & Potter, 2006). The interview narratives, however, revealed a limited amount of project work as providing an emergency response.

A Canadian based NGO administrator described his organization's work in Aceh province, Indonesia, following the massively destructive tsunami of 2004.

Well, take Banda Aceh, the tsunami. When we came there three weeks later, some of our initial work was with the nursing school. Hiring a lot of local people, cleaning the thing out, it took us a couple weeks to do that so that they could open the school, realizing the importance. A number of teachers had died of course, and a number of students were missing. But they wanted to get that up and running as soon as they could.

Other emergency response work included food distribution in Afghanistan and Darfur, school feeding programs in Darfur, the building of emergency home and school shelters following the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, and refugee camp work in Timor-Leste.

Human Rights Work and Advocacy

Human rights NGOs have played a key role in exposing human rights issues for the international policymaking arena (Ahmed & Potter, 2006). Only one of the six interviewed NGO directors described a focus on human rights work. One official highlighted her organization's policy work in Canada.

Well on the Canadian foreign policy side, there is a concept which has recently come into usage, which is called "responsibility to protect". The idea of this policy is that every state has the responsibility to protect their own citizens from human rights violations. But sometimes that responsibility breaks down. In cases where their individual state is unwilling or unable to protect the civilians the international community has the responsibility to protect them. And in the last resort to do so with military intervention. Our work on that front is to specify all of the things that can be done before you get to the last resort - and in fact how to intervene in the last resort with absolute minimum force. We have been consulting with people overseas as well as with people here in Canada.

Her work is particularly relevant considering Canada's involvement in post-Taliban Afghanistan and the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Further, she described an initiative in conjunction with a working group petitioning the Canadian government to increasingly regulate Canada's international mining industry. Canadian mining companies have

destructively impacted social, environmental, political, and economic sectors in countries such as the Philippines, Chile, Peru, and Ghana (Mining Watch Canada, 2005).

Long-Term Development Work

Study participants described extensive work in the field of sustainable long-term development – mostly in the context of local communities. Most NGO leaders attempted to place their current practice on a continuum ranging from pure emergency response to pure long-term activities. For example, in Afghanistan many NGOs were interested in an emergency response following the tumultuous American invasion of 2002. Since that time, most NGOs appear to be increasing project time frames and focusing on sustainable practice. A Kabul based NGO director explained the situation as follows:

In Afghanistan, we work now everywhere in clearly what are development programs. We worked initially in emergency. In fact we worked in many more cities but when you whittle down, what do we have resources to do now in a development situation, we went with the communities - a) that we could get too, b) that were willing, most interested to work with us and see where the Ministry of Education was also interested to work. So that's where we are in terms of the emergency to development continuum. So in terms of education we are basically in a development mode right now.

NGO directors justified labeling the majority of their current project work as long-term development by defining several parameters of sustainable development work. First, sustainable practice will likely require a long-term vision and placement. For example, repairing Afghanistan's decimated public schooling systems is hindered by inadequate numbers of appropriately trained teachers. A NGO director recognized that a solution will likely require increasing literacy levels amongst Afghan women all the while directing more women into teacher training initiatives; truly a long-term venture.

Second, sustainable community development will avoid practices leading to local dependency on foreign resources. An unhealthy reliance on foreign aid can cripple communities when international NGOs are required to leave a region. The problem is particularly acute in conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan where security issues regularly hinder NGO project work and travel. A Canadian NGO official described the philosophy behind her organization's work in Afghanistan in the following manner:

In all of our development it is crucial that this is owned and operated by local institutions. The very essence of development is that people own this and get to a point where people can help themselves. So those are very important aspects of us engaging with any project anywhere in the world. Who owns it? Whose vision? Who runs it? Is this widely owned by the community? Is it their idea?

Another NGO director gave details of their intentional work with local groups in developing income generation possibilities.

We really do try to help organizations think about how they can have local income and local sustainable resources so that they don't have to depend on us forever.

Third, NGO directors described the necessity of careful cultural analysis in their development work. For example, an analysis of local Afghan culture will reveal numerous potential pitfalls leading to ineffective work. In Afghanistan NGO workers need to consider the honor/shame social codes governing relationships within communities and amongst their local staff. Further, properly navigating traditional family dynamics inside a conservative patriarchal society will increase success in convincing local women to attend training events. A NGO director from Afghanistan described how cultural observation greatly affects her project design.

What I find particularly fascinating about it, when I started doing this work in a country like Afghanistan, is how it's a different mindset that

people use to approach it and the different goals that they want at the end. I think that explains a lot of people's behavior.

She clearly identifies analysis of local culture as key to NGO success.

Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Work

The participants of this study described a wide variety of project work focused on peacebuilding – with levels of involvement ranging greatly from one organization to the next. Of the six organizations surveyed, two were involved extensively in purely peacebuilding activities. Three organizations were quite aware of peacebuilding activities that were built into their development activities, and one organization was hesitant to describe its work as fitting a peacebuilding mandate.

Two particular facets of effective peacebuilding project work were salient in the interview data. First, some participants viewed effective peacebuilding work as locally grown. Peacebuilding strategies are elicited from local contexts and incorporate local processes and empower local people (Lederach, 1995). A Canadian NGO official described locally gleaned conflict resolution processes in Sudan:

Peacebuilding is promoting and supporting village elders in discussions of what this conflict is doing to them - how can they stay out of the war, how can they be in contact with even other groups, whether they are rebel groups, non-government groups, government groups, and discuss what is happening to them. Build peace through that kind of discussion workshops and support that kind of activity.

Another Canadian NGO director believed it expedient to have a hands-off relationship with local groups in South East Asia and provide support for village level problem solving processes leading to reduction of conflict.

Second, participants noted their peacebuilding goals of reducing violence and increasing levels of peace. In the following passage, a NGO official for an organization conducting work in Timor-Leste describes creative work focused on local youth:

They go into a particular community that might be in conflict and they focus on appealing to the youth in that area to sort of promote peace and strengthen the communications between the various groups. They do peace education workshops using theater or they may help the community meetings - they need logistical support for their actual community meetings. We might offer that support or hold a supporting event. They also did a peace mural where they had the kids come and paint a big mural. Tree planting, things like that. You are actually trying to get the kids that are apart of the different gangs to actually come and participate in events that are not confrontational or based on conflict.

In some cases, intentional training in alternative methods to conflict resolution is attempted. A Canadian NGO director explicated an “alternatives to violence” project carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo:

Something that we support in different parts of the world is the Alternatives to Violence project. It’s carefully inviting people to an ‘encounter’ kind of workshop. But with our alternatives to violence there is almost always a case of people who are on different sides of the question together. In Canada most of the Alternatives to Violence projects work is encounters between people in prison and people outside prison. In our overseas work, it’s often like that because there is justice work to be done in every country of the world, but also when a country is just emerging from war or could still be in the midst of war - so that the people that they invite are from different sides of the actual armed conflict. So they gather people specifically; they spend quite a bit of time determining who to invite to the initial training because they want to have people who have a certain standing in the community - certainly a positive reputation. They also want to have a really good cross section of the community. They start with a three-day workshop - what is conflict, where the definition of conflict is something that is inevitable in life because everybody has a different point of view but the key freeing way to think about conflict is that you always have choices about how you respond.

The participant resonates clearly with Lederach’s (2000) view that conflict cannot be viewed as a strictly negative process.

NGO Work In More Than One Mandate

Despite the fact that NGO directors described project work in one or more individual mandates, most participants argued that their organizational mandate could not in fact be easily pegged into one slot but rather purposely focused its activities in two or more of the previously mentioned mandates. In many cases, individual projects addressed concerns from at least two mandates.

The majority of participants argued that peacebuilding initiatives could naturally be incorporated into development projects. One NGO official noted that some NGOs are now providing training to their staff so as to enable better judgments as to whether their project work is in fact promoting peace in local communities. Another Canadian NGO official described how their health care work in Burundi had peacebuilding goals.

In fact, showing compassion for both sides in a situation is one of the key ways that we find that we have to have an impact. The hospital that we run in Burundi was the only hospital in the country that treated people from all sides of the conflict and people from all sides of the conflict felt safe going there for treatment. So they have that reputation that they are trustworthy.

A NGO director responsible for work in Sudan provided another relevant example of combining peacebuilding and economic development. The project assisted an integrated community of artists from Sudan comprised of members from both sides of the civil conflict. The artists were displaying their art locally as an example of coexistence and cooperation. However, with the assistance of the Canadian NGO, the local artists were also able to export their art to Canada for sale providing significant amounts of income.

Economic development work can also instigate 'preventative' peacebuilding work. A NGO official gave details as follows:

Without opportunities, economic, educational, these type of things, conflict will continue. But I think in Timor-Leste, and again when you've got severe levels of poverty, Afghanistan, you've got poverty levels, people can be recruited to different sides depending on opportunity.

It was perceived that providing opportunities for economic development could curb recruitment efforts by groups such as gangs and paramilitaries.

A couple of NGO officials provided evidence of peacebuilding efforts inside of educational development initiatives in schools. This is what one official had to say on the issue:

Well I think peacebuilding, and that's a piece - no pun intended - of everything we do. Because I think its pretty clear that education in itself is a protective activity for kids...we have another technique called "Child to Child" where kids learn, its sort of democracy 101, they come together, they identify their shared problems, they prioritize. Usually the number one problem has something to do with some kind of danger - fighting at the well, the older boys pushing them out of line at the well where they go to collect water... it gives kids a way to learn how to behave better, to make group decisions, to make presentations to talk to their parents and teachers about what they need and want in their lives. So I think using that methodology which we have encouraged other organizations to use as well is again, its consensus building, its decision-making, and its sort of a peacebuilding activity unto itself.

Students are learning valuable decision-making and conflict resolution skills intended as part of a wider cultural transformation towards peace.

Discussion and Conclusions

International NGOs have a unique opportunity to impact conflict-affected countries like Afghanistan through development and peacebuilding project work. Backed by substantial resources provided by international donors, NGOs believe it is possible to initiate transformation processes within war-affected countries like Afghanistan leading to sustainable peace and sustainable economic and social development. To this end,

NGOs have undertaken educational project work addressing Afghanistan's needs. This chapter has attempted to access the perceptions of NGO officials regarding their educational project work. Several main conclusions stem from the participant's interview narratives.

Educational Project Work is Successfully Engaging in Development and Peacebuilding

Despite only representing a small fraction of the total number of NGOs working in Afghanistan, the interviewed NGO officials described diverse project goals aimed at a wide array of important and essential target groups. Project success in development and peacebuilding is evident in two ways.

First, educational project work is successfully engaging with all levels of society – the upper-level policy makers, middle-level leadership, and the grassroots level of society. Engaging upper-level policy makers typically involves finding representative influential leaders inside government (Lederach, 1997). One NGO director from Kabul revealed some attempts at including upper-level Ministry of Education officials in planning educational development strategies for Afghanistan. However, another NGO director described an unorganized and ineffective leadership within the Ministry of Education. Continued engagement with upper-level leaders is essential.

NGO officials noted significant engagement with middle-range leaders – people holding leadership positions who are known by upper-level members and who have connections to the grassroots level of society (Lederach, 1997). Participants described project work involving local government officials, community leaders and elders, local NGOs, and local church groups. Lederach (1997) believes a focus at this level is key. He

proposes that middle-range leaders are key to fast-tracking peacebuilding processes. The volume of project work focused at this level supports this proposition.

Grassroots leaders have access to the majority of people within society.

Widespread healing will occur only when the masses engage in ‘bottom-up’ development and peacebuilding processes. Participants revealed many initiatives focused at the grassroots level. For example, projects in local schools for children or projects interested in literacy and vocational training for women engage significant portions of the grassroots level.

Second, educational project work is engaging marginalized groups normally excluded from power. Most of the NGOs interviewed for this study were concerned with issues relating to females in war-torn countries like Afghanistan. Several projects aimed to provide the populations of small rural villages and communities with a voice. Other projects attempted to support the powerless displaced peoples within IDP camps. The international NGOs represented in this study appear to be typically mandated to empower those suffering the effects of violence and destruction but without the opportunities for healing or access to resources needed for development.

Current Project Time Frames May be Inadequate for Transformation

John Paul Lederach (1997) proposes an integrated framework for international NGO work incorporating project time frame and project work’s level of response. Participants commented extensively regarding their perceptions of project time frame and level of response. The participant responses can perhaps shed some light on whether Lederach’s model in fact reflects reality.

Regarding a project's level of response, Marie Dugan (1996) defines responses ranging from addressing immediate issues to engaging in systemic change. Lederach believed that the most effective development and peacebuilding work would "connect 'systemic' and immediate 'issue' concerns" (Lederach, 1997, p. 59). To this end, he proposed peacebuilding work at the subsystem level as ideal for transformative processes. All the interviewed NGO officials perceived their organization's work as addressing systemic issues. However, at the same time, several NGO leaders believed their work to be addressing immediate issues as well. The interviewed NGO directors revealed an intentional movement from 'immediate action' towards longer-term educational development and peacebuilding work. Their description agrees closely with Lederach's model. Development and peacebuilding practitioners are attempting a response that addresses systemic concerns while keeping an eye on the immediate issues at hand.

The ability of today's hyper-accessible and high-speed media to dramatically highlight conflict situations and disasters from around the world has influenced international donor and NGO project time frames (Howard, 2005). Both donors and NGOs are tempted to reduce their time frame for operations in conflict-affected regions in order to have the capacity to aid the numerous emergencies highlighted by the media. However, in order to engage in sustainable development and effective transformation processes in resolving conflict, both NGOs and their donors will need to lengthen time frame expectations. Lederach (1997) suggests a minimum of one year, with ideally five to ten years, being committed to transformative educational projects.

NGO directors perceived the majority of their project work as having time frames and funding of one to five years. It can be suggested that an approximate average time frame for project work in Afghanistan is three years.

While this timeframe corresponds closely with Lederach's model, NGO directors generally seemed skeptical of achieving sustainable and authentic transformation within Lederach's suggested timeframe. They believed transformation for peace could require generations. This may have implications for NGO practice. Project work may in fact require much longer engagement in order to achieve the desired transformative results.

NGO Educational Work is Only One Part of a Holistic Multi-Track Response

Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren (2005) suggest that post-conflict educational project work is but one aspect of holistic development and societal healing. Educational project work is not a panacea and requires numerous co-laborers if countries like Afghanistan are going to attain sustainable peace and development.

The interviewed NGO leaders argued for extensive coordination with other NGOs. Further, participants believed their project work to be co-dependent on project work in other sectors. In particular, participants named economic development, informal health projects, and vocational projects such as agricultural development. Ignoring one sector will have ripple effects in other sectors. For example, if communities are not provided credit to finance development activities leading to higher incomes, children may be required to drop out of school and provide labor for the family business. Further, work in the health sector will reduce sickness in communities and lead to stabilized attendance at school and training events.

Corroborating holistic development theory is Dr. Louise Diamond and Ambassador John McDonald's (1996) proposal that effective intervention in countries of conflict will need to be multi-track in nature. NGO project work is but one track inside a systems approach to attaining peace (Diamond & McDonald, 1996).

The interviewed participants believed effective NGO work required support from international military forces, the UN, local governments and populations, and from international donors. NGO officials believed that international forces, the UN, and certain major donors such as CIDA and USAID, were providing essential Track One interventions. Track One interventions were seen as complementing NGO work since NGOs typically struggle with gaining access to upper-level policy makers and do not have the mandate or capacity to ensure a secure work environment for development and peacebuilding activities.

The role of international military forces, however, posed a special dilemma for NGO officials. On one hand, especially in the context of Afghanistan, NGO officials believed the presence of U.S. and NATO forces provided a sense of security in which development and peacebuilding initiatives could thrive. On the other hand, NGO officials were virtually unanimous in their belief that NGO humanitarian work should remain distinct and separate in function and practice from military activities. Increasingly, international NGOs are perceived as an instrument of governmental foreign policy (InterAction, 2007). Therefore NGO officials felt the need to re-exert the code of conduct governing most NGOs that states that NGOs operate independently of any government and therefore can refuse to be implementation partners with military groups (ICRC, 1992).

Further, participants believed that the safety of NGO staff was greatly compromised when the military undertook project work similar to project work undertaken by humanitarian NGOs. It has been perceived in several conflict zones that local populations and insurgents will understandably have difficulty differentiating between the mandates of each group (Abiew, 2003). For example, many NGOs have had to evacuate their staff from Iraq due to insurgent strikes aimed at humanitarian workers. Hopefully providing relief to the tense relationship will be the 2007 joint publication of *Guidelines for relations between U.S. armed forces and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in hostile or potentially hostile environments* by InterAction, a coalition of over 165 U.S.-based NGOs, and the United States Institute of Peace (InterAction, 2007).

Some NGOs not only resisted association with international military forces but avoided association with other representatives of foreign governments. In hot conflict zones such as Afghanistan or Darfur, perceived relationships to governments such as the U.S. can greatly hinder development and peacebuilding work. For example, two participants voiced strong criticism of the Canadian 3D (Diplomacy, Defense, Development) foreign policy and argued for strict separation of NGO and governmental influence. Since many NGOs stem from religious groups including the historic peace church groups (Mennonites, Quakers), the practice of separating Church and State may greatly influence NGO policy and practice.

While not negating the multi-track approach to international intervention, these criticisms should result in careful consideration of the multi-track approach to peacebuilding suggested by Diamond and McDonald (1996). Perhaps a healthy tension can exist within a systems approach to development and peacebuilding. Perhaps, while

retaining distinct mandates, both Track One and Track Two groups may temper each other and complement one another in conducting effective interventions into places of conflict.

NGOs are Experiencing Peacebuilding Success in their Development Projects

The interviewed NGO officials believed it possible to reconcile the traditionally tense relationship between the development and peacebuilding fields of work. Several participants seemed to recognize that successful interventions by their organization into the affairs of Afghanistan would require an incorporation of effective community development and peacebuilding work. This is indeed encouraging news given several failures of post-conflict development programmes. For example, Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have at some point spiraled back into violence despite massive injections of development money and resources.

Educational development work seems especially suited for initiating peacebuilding activities. This is perhaps explained by the fact that educational activities often require and instigate personal transformation along with systemic transformation. Further, since educational activities often inherently require dialogue, the classroom or other training settings may be natural and safe spaces for engagement with ‘the other’.

However, it could be argued that after surveying the project work carried out by the participant’s organizations, there is a noticeable shortage of pure peacebuilding initiatives. Only two of the six organizations described any activities whose main focus was healing and relationship building between groups or individuals in conflict. One NGO director explained that the lack of conflict resolution projects was due to the fact that NGOs are simply “involved in whatever they could get money for.” Further, some

NGOs may feel bound by donor expectations requiring noticeable short-term results. For example, educational infrastructure projects such as school reconstruction will produce immediately conspicuous results while messy peacebuilding work may take years before adequate levels of trust between former enemies have developed enough to even start healing processes. As another example, it may be tempting to impress donors with sizeable training sessions with large numbers of attendees as opposed to holding peacebuilding workshops involving small groups of people and allowing the significant time required to build relationships.

Chapter Six - Conclusion

Introduction

As NGOs venture into areas that have been devastated by conflict, NGO leaders will be required to make insightful, purposeful programming decisions (Anderson, 1999). Through this qualitative study of NGO officials' perceptions of educational work conducted in conflict-affected settings, I hope to add to the knowledge base guiding NGO leaders in their difficult decisions.

Influencing the theoretical framework undergirding this study was a volume of literature drawn from the education, development, and peace and conflict fields of study. John Paul Lederach's (1995) transformational view of conflict along with Sean Byrne and Neal Carter's (1996) social cubism model speak to NGO conflict analysis practice. Fred Greenstein (1965) and Robert Connell (1971) explore identity-shaping processes in children. Concerning the propagation of group identity, Vamik Volkan (1997) explores the concept of transgenerational transmission of chosen trauma. Lederach (1997) provides a useful integrative model for NGO educational peacebuilding work. Gerd Junne and Verkoren (2005) along with Diamond and McDonald (1996) address appropriate NGO mandate and structure in conflict settings. Keeping in mind the potentially socially destructive role education can take in a conflict, Kenneth Bush & Diana Saltarelli (2000) provide a useful framework for a discussion of the positive, socially constructive impact that education can play in restoring peace to a conflict-ridden divided society.

I have utilized a grounded-theory qualitative research strategy in this study. Qualitative research design is well suited for an inquiry into NGO practice in the area of

education. Through semi-structured interviews of six officials working for international NGOs, I attempted to investigate the meaning that NGO officials give to their experience in the relief/development/peacebuilding field. Several emergent themes and categories were stood out in the interview narratives and were instrumental in shaping the logical report presented in the findings of this thesis.

The findings gleaned from the qualitative interview data were presented in two chapters. Chapter Four, *Conflict and NGO Educational Projects*, summarized the participant's perceptions of the causes of conflict and revealed whether conflict analysis guided project design. Further, participants described the conflict dynamics in their contexts and postulated as to the effect of their NGO's work on the dynamics. Lastly, a summary of the participant's philosophy of education guiding their work was presented. Several important conclusions emerged from the findings.

First, the interviewed participants perceived the causes of conflict in countries such as Afghanistan to be incredibly complex. Together, the six participants identified a list of six causes - ethnicity, politics, religion, demographics, environmental concerns, and economics. With the exception of environmental causes this list corresponds closely with Byrne and Carter's (1996) list of social forces in the social cubism analytical model. Environmental forces are increasingly being recognized as causing significant conflict in several locations around the world. Individual participants, however, did not describe more than two or three causes in their particular contexts – thus suggesting the need for increased education regarding conflict analysis for NGO staff.

It appeared from the interview data that the causes of conflict had only a limited effect on NGO educational project design. The theory reviewed for this thesis would

suggest that this is an area of concern since a simplistic view of conflict will consistently hinder project success (Goodhand, 2006; Byrne & Carter, 1996).

Second, participants agreed with Bush & Saltarelli's (2000) proposition that education can serve both constructive and destructive ends. Thus, participants believed NGO educational work must be carefully planned so as to "Do no harm" (Anderson, 1999) as well as wield its potential power to build peace.

Third, the interviewed NGO officials revealed their personal philosophies of education; explaining their belief in the power of education to transform. Participants believed education to be crucial in postconflict development programmes, described education as crucial for developing and altering thinking processes among local people and governments, and felt that education of a country's citizens naturally had a dampening effect on local conflict dynamics.

In Chapter Five, *A Typology of NGO Educational Project Work*, I summarized the participant's education project descriptions, established the perceived framework guiding NGO educational work, described the participant's desired supports and work environment, and clarified the perceived mandate for the participants' respective organizations. Again, several significant conclusions stem from the findings.

First, through creative and intentional project work in the areas of public schooling, education of females, and governmental and community capacity building, NGO officials believe their educational project work to be successfully achieving sustainable development and peacebuilding goals. They perceived their work as engaging the grassroots level of society (including the marginalized and oppressed), as well as the middle-range leaders and upper level policy makers.

Second, the interview narratives confirmed Lederach's (1997) integrated framework guiding NGO peacebuilding work as matching reality but, perhaps, suggest possible revisions to his suggested time frames. Regarding level of response, most NGO officials perceived their project work as addressing both immediate emergency issues (conflict flare-ups, natural disasters, etc.) as well as long term systemic concerns. Regarding time frames, most participants believed the time frames they were expected to work under as problematic and perceived transformation as requiring "generational" planning.

Third, the interviewed NGO personnel believed their project work to be very dependent on local and international NGOs working in other sectors, the military, the UN, local governments, local people and groups, and international donors. They described the necessity of a multi-track approach intervention involving Track One and Track Two actors. However, the NGO officials pointed out significant concerns regarding the coexistence of NGOs along with military operations in contexts such as Afghanistan. They called for increased clarity and separation between humanitarian and military interventions. Along the same lines, several NGO officials also expressed concern regarding their relationships with the Canadian and U.S. governments. Governmental foreign policy was occasionally seen as hindering NGO work. These findings perhaps suggest that the relationship between Track One and Track Two actors is extremely complex and therefore requires constant evaluation in each context.

Fourth, NGOs seem to be attempting reconciliation between the two fields of peacebuilding and development in their project work. However, beliefs regarding the relationship between peacebuilding and development appear to vary widely with a wide

range of practice. Overall however, educational development work was perceived as particularly appropriate for implementing peacebuilding objectives and goals.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings, discussions, and conclusions presented in this thesis, there are several noticeable areas requiring further research in order to further elucidate the role of NGO educational work in conflict-affected societies.

Participants in this study believed in the peacebuilding potential of their educational project work. Further, participants described a wide range of types of educational work. However, to my knowledge, very little if any comparative research has been done exploring the efficacy of various types of educational work in protracted and ongoing ethnic conflict milieus. For example, are there certain sectors of educational project work, certain strategies, or particular target groups, which are consistently facilitating extraordinarily high levels of peacebuilding success? Donors and policy makers wanting the most “bang for their buck” may also benefit from such research.

Salient in the interview data was a concern over the relationship between development and peacebuilding. Having significant import for international NGO strategy, increased research into the relationship (or lack thereof) between NGO development projects and peacebuilding initiatives is of crucial importance. If the practitioners interviewed for this study are representative of the NGO population as a whole, significant questions and high levels of uncertainty exist. For example, this study noted a perceived lack of pure peacebuilding initiatives. Is this worrisome, or is it a reflection of good practice in incorporating peacebuilding goals into development project work?

Much more research is needed in considering appropriate time frames for NGO development and peacebuilding work. Participants perceived funding timelines as too short, with consequences such as inferior project quality and a lack of proper project evaluation. Evidence from research into suitable educational project time frames will hopefully affect donor policy, resulting in longer time frames allowed for funded project work. This may be a hard sell in today's "quick fix" political and economic atmosphere.

A methodological study into the relationship between military forces and international NGOs in conflict-affected countries is urgently needed. In numerous ethnic conflict interventions, such as those in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Darfur, the coexistence of NGO and military personnel has created acute problems for NGO organizations. The NGO officials in this study felt it important that the visible roles and activities of both groups be significantly clarified for local populations. Many NGO officials believed their security concerns are currently heightened because of military practice. For example, one participant voiced criticism regarding the Canadian government's 3D foreign policy. Is there a better approach? Is it possible for NGOs and military operations to complement each other?

Further research is needed to understand conflict analysis procedures conducted by NGOs. Conflict analysis appears to be a struggle for some NGOs. Research may reveal whether NGO leaders have the necessary time, energy, tools, and resources to carefully analyze conflict and its causes in their work arenas. Further, research may reveal supports available to NGOs; perhaps from the academic world. In addition, research into NGO conflict analysis may also expose benefits to considering causes of conflict or destructive results when causes of conflict are ignored.

Mary Anderson (1999) has attempted to educate the NGO world in the principles of “Do no harm” – strategies concerned with avoiding the exacerbation of ethnic conflict dynamics through NGO intervention. However, some NGOs officials appear to have minimal or no awareness of the potentially destructive role their educational projects may play in local conflict dynamics. Further research may clarify awareness levels across the NGO community and propose strategies for educating NGO project workers in constructive project design.

Finally, further research into why NGO officials perceive educational development work as especially suited for initiating peacebuilding activities would be beneficial. A study sensitive to psychological, cultural, and social forces causing conflict may reveal details of education’s ability to transform both individual minds and systemic problems.

Epilogue

This thesis provided me with the very enjoyable and satisfying opportunity to delve into the NGO world and explore NGO policy and practice. I found the study enjoyable and satisfying because I perceive the topic to be of great importance, and also because of my personal interest and experience in NGO project work.

Further, I believe, along with Elise Boulding (1988), that the role of NGOs in today’s world will continue to increase and develop. NGOs are structured appropriately to be crucially involved in the movement towards peace in our world. NGOs can effectively model democracy, non-violence in resistance and in addressing conflict, and can model servant leadership in the often power-hungry and violent world of

international politics. NGOs are also in a position to aid countries destroyed by violent conflict in regaining their foothold in areas such as education and economics.

However, NGOs are facing increasingly complex challenges. NGOs are finding it difficult to work alongside international military forces, are being increasingly targeted by extremists and insurgents, and are being forced to deal with the seemingly unstoppable control and power of international criminal organizations. Further, it is becoming increasingly evident that NGO intervention can produce undesirable side effects such as increased local conflict and dependency on foreign funds and resources.

Thus, NGOs will need to be increasingly reflective as they conduct operations in conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan. I hope that in some small way this thesis may add to the knowledge base guiding NGO workers as they navigate through the maze of complex issues in their quest for sustainable development and effective peacebuilding.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Research Questions

Theme 1: A framework for NGO educational projects

Sub-theme A: A Typology of NGO educational projects

- a. What types of educational projects has your NGO undertaken in postconflict societies?
 - i. What are the objectives of these projects?
 - ii. What is the time frame envisioned for these projects?
 - iii. What is the level of response for these projects (are they responding to immediate issues or working toward systemic change)?
- b. What additional types of educational projects are NGOs doing in the places where you work?
- c. Are your NGO's educational projects geared toward i) peacebuilding/conflict resolution, ii) emergency help/aid, or iii) longer-term development?
- d. In your opinion, are some of your NGO's activities situated in more than one of the three categories from the previous question?

Sub-theme B: Required supports and context for NGO educational projects

- e. What other types of NGO activities/projects are necessary to run alongside your educational projects in order to meet your NGO's objectives?
- f. Aside from NGO activities, what additional types of activities/interventions are necessary for your NGO to meet its objectives?
- g. In your experience, what conditions are required for educational projects to be effective in a postconflict context?

Theme 2: Conflict and NGO educational projects

- a. In your opinion, what are the underlying causes of the conflict in the contexts where your NGO works?
- b. Are your NGO activities guided by the causes of the conflict? Explain why or why not.
- c. Describe the conflict dynamics evident in the context where your NGO works?
- d. In your experience, does your NGO's educational work have an impact of the local dynamics of conflict and, if so, what kind of impact?
- e. From your experience, what potential does education have in rebuilding/transforming civil society in a post-conflict context?
- f. In your opinion, are your NGO's projects in some way transforming the conflict in your context?