Enhancing Local Capacities For Peace: A Case Study of the Implementation of the Better Programming Initiative in a Red Cross Project in Honduras

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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Abstract

The 1990s saw a growing awareness of the relationship between aid and conflict, which included a better understanding of the potential impact of aid in terms of ameliorating or exacerbating conflict. Recognizing that aid, at a minimum, should 'do no harm', the challenge now exists for humanitarian aid organizations to apply and mainstream this understanding.

This thesis presents a case study of the implementation phase of such a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) methodology, the Better Programming Initiative (BPI), as applied by the Honduran Red Cross in a situation of high social violence in the community of Ciudad España. Several months were spent in Honduras in order to develop an understanding of the implementation of BPI through participating in and assisting with the facilitation of BPI training and a program analysis of the project. The study was based on individual interviews, participant feedback from written workshop evaluations, participant observation, and participation in NGO training and evaluation activities as well as secondary data sources including research and project reports.

Lessons learned during the implementation process are outlined, as well as suggestions for enhancing the BPI training and program analysis process are provided. Areas for further research are also identified.

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ACROYNMS COMMONLY USED

BPI	Better Programming Initiative
Federation	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
HRC	Honduran Red Cross
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
LCPP	Local Capacities for Peace Project
MONC	Mano de Obra No Calificada / Unskilled Labour (community planning and work-for-home monitoring)
NS	National Society
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
RC	Red Cross
ToT	Training of Trainers

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Olga and Jim McGeean,
Who opened the doors to the world for me.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Does humanitarian aid cause more harm than good? Rather than alleviate suffering, can humanitarian aid actually increase harm or prolong wars and armed conflicts? With the changing face of the world since the end of the Cold War, along with humanitarian disasters such as the genocide in Rwanda, humanitarian aid has come under increasing criticism from the media, questioning from the public, and scrutiny from international donors.

Nevertheless, the last decade has also seen a growing understanding of the links between conflict, peace and aid, as well as some insight regarding the impact of aid on conflict, both in terms of ameliorating and exacerbating conflict. This new awareness has highlighted the need for humanitarian and development organizations and donors to become more sensitive to the conflict environments in which they operate and consequently to more systematically assess the impact of their interventions, so that the negative impacts are reduced and positive impacts are enhanced. These insights have led to the development of methodologies to help understand the connections between humanitarian programming and conflict, including Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA) tools. One method, called Do No Harm, formed the basis for the Better Programming Initiative (BPI), a new tool being piloted by the Secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) since 1998.

Through contacts and collaboration with the Red Cross, along with the financial assistance received through a CIDA Innovative Research Award, I was able to accompany the implementation of the Better Programming Initiative in Central America from November, 2002 to April 2003. The project involved two levels of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – the Central America and Caribbean Regional Delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) and the Honduran Red Cross National Society.

At a broad level, I was interested in exploring the relationship between aid and conflict. I wanted to further my understanding of peace-building and the role of a humanitarian aid agency in contributing to a culture of peace: how can aid projects enhance local capacities for peace in communities that have been impacted by conflict and violence? More specifically, I was interested in gaining an understanding of the challenges in implementing the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) and the "Do No Harm" concept in Red Cross programming in Central America. By broadening the existing knowledge base of BPI, as an example of a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment methodology, a better understanding of the challenges and limitations, in implementing such a tool or methodology can be developed as well as overall improvement of the BPI. This is especially relevant given the relatively recent understanding of the connections between aid and conflict, as well as the recent development of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment processes.

The purpose of this thesis is to present a case study of the implementation phase of the BPI methodology with the Honduran Red Cross as it was applied in a

situation of high social violence in a community called Ciudad España. Some of the challenges, limitations, and lessons learned in the implementation process are identified, as well as suggestions for enhancing the training and program analysis process.

In order to develop an understanding of the implementation of the BPI process in Honduras, several months were spent in Honduras, attending and helping to facilitate BPI training and a program analysis with a specific project (Ciudad España). The study used individual and group interviews, participant feedback from written workshop evaluations, participant observation, and participation in NGO training / evaluation activities as well as secondary data sources including research and project reports.

My hope is that the research project provided space for trainers and staff to reflect on this new methodology (BPI), and in some way, will assist in enhancing ongoing work with the methodology/tool. For the staff at the project site, I hope a useful opportunity was provided to step outside of their daily routine and reflect on their project, the context that they are working in, as well as gaining some insight into the potential impacts of their work on the conflict. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, I hope that, in some way, the lives of the people who live in the community, can be a little more peaceful.

The thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 gives an overview of a new humanitarianism as well as conflict sensitive approaches to development and humanitarian assistance, including an overview of PCIA tools. Chapter 3 provides a general background of the case – the Red Cross organization and Honduras – bringing both together through a description of the involvement of

the Honduran Red Cross in the project community, Ciudad España. Chapter 4 outlines the methodology and research methods used, identifying some of the challenges, issues and limitations of the inquiry. Chapter 5 describes the case study, the implementation of BPI in Ciudad España. Finally, Chapter 6 presents lessons learned as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

AID AND CONFLICT

> *Of course natural disasters, such earthly things, these things are beyond our control, but other kinds of problems are essentially our own creation. So here, certainly if we humanity have a different, more open, more compassionate, more far-sighted, and more holistic approach or way of thinking, I think certainly we can reduce these manmade kind of problems.*
>
> *The Dalai Lama, Words of Wisdom*

This chapter presents an overview of the changing context of humanitarian aid since the 1990s, with particular attention to the debate regarding the link between aid and conflict[1]. Some of the challenges facing humanitarian aid in integrating a new humanitarianism as well as conflict sensitive approaches to aid are explored.

Humanitarian Aid

Whether providing assistance to those impacted by natural disasters (such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, droughts), or man-made ones (such as wars or armed conflicts), the traditional role of humanitarian aid has been the alleviation of human suffering. Depending on the situation, assistance can range from the provision of food relief to drought victims, temporary shelter to those whose homes have been destroyed in an earthquake, or refugee camps for those displaced by armed conflict or war. While humanitarian aid can be emergency or preventative in nature, it is generally directed toward those who are most vulnerable in the disaster situation, with the priority for international donor countries and organizations given to those most in need in developing countries.

[1] Given that the focus of this thesis is humanitarian aid, a review of development literature has not been incorporated.

Many, however, believe that the international humanitarian system is in crisis. Since the mid-1990s humanitarian action has been accused of ignoring human rights and prolonging conflicts[2]. The principles of humanitarian action have been questioned and challenged, while the relationship of humanitarian aid to conflict is being rethought.

Humanitarian Principles

There is no precise definition of the term humanitarianism. Minear and Weiss state that "the core meaning of the 'humanitarian' has to do with activities undertaken to improve the human condition"[3]; however they also note that neither the Geneva Convention nor Additional protocols, nor the International Court of Justice provide precise definitions of the term 'humanitarian'. The elucidation of humanitarian principles has its roots on the battlefields of Solferino in 1859 through Henri Dunant's intervention in the aftermath of the battle, which lead to the founding of the Red Cross[4]. Based on the work of the Red Cross as well as highlighted in International Humanitarian Law, the four main principles of humanitarian action consist of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. These main principles are represented in the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, which currently has 289 signatories, including, among others, major NGO's such as Care, Oxfam, and Médecins Sans Frontières.

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[2] Leader, Nicholas. 1998. Proliferating Principles; Or How to Sup with the Devil without Getting Eaten. *Disasters* 22 (4):288-308.

[3] pg. 18, Minear, Larry, and Thomas G. Weiss. 1995. *Mercy under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community*. Boulder: Westview Press.

[4] Moorehead, Caroline. 1998. *Dunant's dream: War, Switzerland, and the history of the Red Cross*. New York: Carroll & Graf Pub.

Developed in 1994, this Code of Conduct is the most widely acknowledged of various codes of conduct that have appeared in recent years[5].

Humanity

Humanity is generally viewed as the core principle of humanitarian action or disaster relief as it underscores what is known as the humanitarian imperative: the prevention and alleviation of human suffering. Fundamentally, the principle of humanity implies that all people have the right to receive humanitarian assistance and a right to offer assistance. Nicholas Leader observes that the principle of humanity is undergoing interesting transformations, such that it is being "broadened beyond its traditional goals of assistance and protection in conflict to include responsibility for peace building, capacity building, empowerment and even development"[6]. He also notes that while this approach can be seen as essential for work in 'natural' disasters, it becomes more problematic if the same rhetoric is applied to work in conflict.

Impartiality

The principle of impartiality signifies that humanitarian aid is given to all those who are suffering, regardless of race, nationality, or religious beliefs; and that the aid is provided according to the greatest need[7]. Here Leader[8] observes that in most humanitarian organizations' statement of principles, impartiality is universally accepted and uncontroversial.

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[5] Terry, Fiona. 2002. *Condemned to Repeat?: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
[6] Leader, Nicholas. 1998. Proliferating Principles; Or How to Sup with the Devil without Getting Eaten. *Disasters* 22 (4):288-308, pg. 296.
[7] Terry.
[8] Leader.

Neutrality

Neutrality is one of the more complex and contentious principles. Basically neutrality means that sides are not taken in a conflict, and "denotes a duty to refrain from taking part in hostilities or from undertaking any action that furthers the interests of one party to the conflict or compromises those of the other"[9]. For the Red Cross Movement this means that "the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature"[10], thereby securing the humanitarian space which allows agencies to gain access to affected populations. Leader notes that "the most significant discussions, disagreements, confusions and conceptual developments have been around the idea of neutrality i.e. of non-interference".[11]

Independence

The fourth humanitarian principle is independence, which simply underscores the need for humanitarian agencies to maintain their autonomy, to be free of political or religious influences in determining humanitarian action.

While these humanitarian principles are not the only ones, they still remain the cornerstone of the Red Cross movement[12]. Given the changing nature of humanitarian aid over the last decade, there is a growing concern by some[13] that humanitarian principles may be at risk. Joanna Macrae, of the Overseas

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[9] Terry, pg. 19.
[10] Principles and Values, from www.ifrc.org
[11] Leader, Nicholas. 2000. The Politics of Principles: The Principles of Humanitarian Actions in Practice. London: Overseas Development Institute, pg. 24.
[12] Fiona Terry notes that the remaining principles apply more to Red Cross's role of international functioning. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (www.ifrc.org) outlines the following three additional principles which are unity (only one Red Cross in any one country), voluntary service (not prompted by desire for gain) and universality (equal status of each Red Cross/Red Crescent Society and equal responsibility and duty in helping each other).
[13] Joanna Macrae, et al from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) which has most consistently written regarding concerns to the potential risk of humanitarian principles.

Development Institute, in her 1998 article entitled *The Death of Humanitarianism?: An Anatomy of the Attack* expresses her concern not only of the critique of the humanitarian system, but also at the growing critique of humanitarian principles – particularly impartiality and neutrality. These principles are particularly being questioned due to the linking of aid and conflict, that is, a belief that humanitarian or relief aid fuels war.

The Changing Face Of Humanitarian Aid

Since the end of the Cold War following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, there have been increased discussions of the role of aid in humanitarian contexts. During the Cold War era, aid was clearly used by the superpowers as a means to support governments or causes which reflected their specific ideology. The US support and provisions for aid to the Contras in order to undermine the Sandinista government in Nicaragua is but one example of aid being used to meet a specific ideological goal.

However, in the post cold war period there has been a global increase in conflicts whose nature has dramatically shifted from wars between nation states to internal armed conflicts or civil wars[14]. This change has been attributed to the collapse of a bipolar global order with the resulting resurgence of nationalism and ethnic identity[15]. Increased internal conflicts have also been attributed to the fuelling of tensions and conflicts due to economic liberalisation, as Fisher observes:

> "...the increase of internal conflicts, along with the globalisation of conflicts beyond the control of individual countries, has also

[14] Fisher, S., Ludin, J., Smith, R., Williams, S. Williams, S. & Dekha Ibrahim Abdi. 2000. *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action.* London: Zed Books.
[15] ibid.

> resulted from the growth of associated trends such as warlordism, political corruption and criminal economies. In a sense, the ending of the Cold War opened a valve for many global tensions that had previously been forcibly repressed"[16]

Due to the shift in the type of conflicts, traditional diplomacy has been challenged to cope with conflicts which are "characterized by deep social divisions and weak governance"[17]. Into this new arena there has been an increasing role for humanitarian relief and development organizations. This increasing role has prompted a debate whether humanitarian organizations should limit themselves to the relief of suffering (keeping neutral) or whether they should be involved in conflict transformation. Minear notes that in comparison to the 1970s and 1980s, "emergency aid efforts in the 1990s operated under detailed scrutiny, both from relief and rights agencies and outsiders"[18]. Basically, for the international humanitarian aid community, there has been a growing concern in the following areas – what are the best ways to deliver and monitor emergency humanitarian assistance, mitigate disasters, make a transition towards sustainable development assistance, and perhaps most importantly, how to respond to conflict.

Aid & Conflict – Various Perspectives

The subject of many debates, the discussion of the link between aid and conflict has arisen for several reasons. One reason is the impact and negative effects of humanitarian relief efforts in Rwanda and Somalia. For example, in the

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[16] ibid, pg. 7
[17] Galama, Anneke, and Paul van Tongeren, eds. 2002. *Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice: On Lessons Learned, Evaluation Practices and Aid & Conflict*. 1st ed. Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Resolution, pg. 160.
[18] Larry Minear, Jan Eliasson, John C. Hammock. 2002. *The Humanitarian Enterprise: Dilemmas and Discoveries*. Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, pg. 8

relief camps in Rwanda during the genocide, food aid was provided to Hutu militia who remained safe in refugee camps outside of Rwanda until they were able to return and commit more atrocities. It was what Fiona Terry calls the "paradox of humanitarian action" in that the "humanitarian aid intended for the victims, strengthened the power of the very people who had caused the tragedy"[19].

Since the 1990s there has been a more systematic analysis of the relationship between aid and conflict. Providing a useful schema, MacFarlane identifies four general positions (see figure 1.1) on a spectrum of the connection between conflict and aid[20]. This becomes important when looking at the case study of this inquiry as it helps in locating the positions of both the Red Cross perspective on aid as well as the 'Do No Harm' methodology that has been adapted.

Figure 1.1 – Positions regarding aid and conflict

Traditional	**Consequentialist Positions**		
Classical Humanitarian (Red Cross)	Damage Limitation (Do No Harm)	Transform Conflict	Aid as a Weapon

The first position is termed *classical humanitarianism*, a position which does not acknowledge the impact of humanitarian aid, advocating that assistance be provided "regardless of the consequences"[21]. While allowing for some recognition of the notion that aid can influence conflict, the classical humanitarianism position argues that taking into account the influence of aid in a

[19] pg. 2, Terry, Fiona. 2002. *Condemned to Repeat?: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action:*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
[20] MacFarlane, S. Neil. 2001. Humanitarian Action: The Conflict Connection - Occasional Paper #43. Providence: Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies.
[21] MacFarlane, pg. xi.

decision to help would unacceptably politicize humanitarian response. This perspective is shared by the Red Cross, and can be found in the 1994 Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief, where the principal commitment is that "the humanitarian imperative comes first"[22].

The remaining three positions accept the idea that the consequences of aid matter, differing in how they adjust humanitarian assistance in order to take the impact into account. Furthermore, these three positions clearly depart from the classic humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality; impartiality is replaced by the possibility of shaping the processes of a conflict, and neutrality is traded for the possibility of encouraging those in conflict to suspend it[23].

The first of the three positions which MacFarlane has termed "consequentialist" is d*amage limitation.* This perspective focuses on identifying potential negative impacts of humanitarian aid, thereby adjusting programming so that it does not worsen a conflict. Examples of this position range from Mary Anderson's[24] *Do No Harm* concept to the extreme of withdrawing humanitarian assistance from a conflict situation when the aid organization determine that they are making the situation or conflict worse.

Challenging this position that aid can do harm, Borton states that while there are cases where aid has been hijacked to benefit warring parties, the "empirical evidence is simply not available to warrant a focus upon humanitarian aid 'doing no harm' as against the harm done by, say, other states, business interests, illegal

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[22] IFRC. 2003. *Code of Conduct* International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Available from http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/index.asp
[23] MacFarlane.
[24] ibid.

and semi-legal trading activities (tropical hardwoods, drugs, precious stones, etc.) and arms traders"[25]. He suggests that in most conflicts the role of humanitarian aid as a source of support for warring parties has been minor, and that often the failures or shortcomings are more related to failures of the political and military responses. Other authors such as Macrae would concur with Borton contending that it is overly simplistic to say "reduce food aid and you will reduce violence"[26]. However despite the lack of empirical evidence, the concept has gained widespread usage and "acquired axiomatic status in discussions of humanitarian assistance"[27]. Borton finds that the concepts have become useful to "those seeking to limit aid expenditures and bring humanitarian activities under closer control"[28].

The third position on this spectrum is that of *conflict transformation*, which proposes that the design of humanitarian action can and should be to shift societies toward political settlement and sustainable peace[29]. Seen as a more ambitious view of the conflict-aid connection, this perspective is interested in transforming conflict into more constructive forms. This can be done by using aid to restore authority structures and local decision-making capacities or at a more macro level by using conditionality of aid as a means to encourage disarmament or to move parties back to peace talks. Challenging this

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[25] pg. 5 Borton, John. 1998. *The State of the International Humanitarian System* Overseas Development Institute. Available from http://www.odi.org.uk
[26] pg. 315, Macrae, Joanna. 1998. The Death of Humanitarianism?: An Anatomy of the Attack. *Disasters* 22 (4):309-317.
[27] MacFarlane.
[28] ibid.
[29] ibid, xiii.

perspective, Nick Stockton[30] points out that the perspective of conflict transformation assumes that the 'root cause' of a conflict can be locally found and resolved, ignoring the deeper roots of conflict such as colonialism, imperialism, economic globalization, or the international arms trade to name a few. Borton observes that "increased use of the term 'conflict management' appears to be coinciding with an increasingly selective and conditional approach by some donors in their funding of NGO humanitarian activity"[31].

Another concern is the argument that aid should not be neutral, the "belief that relief can and should serve a political function"[32], that since aid can fuel conflict, it can also be used to reduce conflict. The argument here is that rather than keeping aid neutral in a conflict, it can and should be used to actively promote peace. Macrae argues that there is an ethical question underlying this belief, that is "whether relief aid workers ought actively to influence the course of a political conflict"[33]. She would say no, that while aid workers need to be politically informed, they should not be politically driven.

The final and most extreme view is that of *aid as a weapon*. This position is more reminiscent of the Cold War era, although not going as far as to suggest that humanitarian aid be given on the basis of sympathy for one side, it puts forward the opinion that assistance could be used by the international community to punish the guilty and provide for the innocent. Here there is no pretence of neutrality or impartiality. This perspective is the most vehemently challenged. Stockton argues that international aid is miniscule in relation to war

[30] Stockton, Nicholas. 1998. In Defense of Humanitarianism. *Disasters* 22 (4):352-360.
[31] Borton, pg. 6.
[32] Macrae, Death of Humanitarianism, pg. 315.
[33] ibid, pg. 315.

economies. Citing the example of Afghanistan in 1998, he observes that while the total annual international aid was $120 million, the value of the drug economy was an estimated $15 billion – suggesting that cutting humanitarian aid would have little impact of the capacity of Afghans to wage war.

While the debate has raged over the impact of aid on conflict, whether aid supplied in a context of conflict exacerbates or ameliorates the conflict is not easy to ascertain. It is difficult to exactly determine whether humanitarian action has in fact prolonged or escalated conflict, done more harm than good. It is hard to know what would have happened if the aid had been absent. So while it is easy to understand in theory the negative impacts of aid, it seems harder to establish in reality.[34] MacFarlane suggests that rather than deciding not to implement aid projects in order to avoid having a negative impact, it is more useful for organizations to look at where they might make programming changes, without jeopardizing their missions so that the impact of aid on conflict is minimized. He proposes that the best way that adjustments to aid programming can occur is through a better understanding of the local context, including cultural, social and economic realities, as well as the conflict context. He makes similar conclusions regarding the role of humanitarian action in conflict transformation such that "efforts to encourage reconciliation and sustainable peace appear to work best at the local level, where there is substantial community participation and ownership"[35].

[34] MacFarlane
[35] ibid, pg. 65

Paul van de Veen, on the other hand, writing for the European Union Centre for Conflict Resolution in 2002, observes it is now generally accepted that "it is impossible to be a neutral external actor providing aid and resources in a conflict setting"[36]; that aid given in a conflict situation becomes part of the context and part of the conflict. So that although aid agencies intend to be neutral towards the outcome of a war or conflict, as Mary Anderson, author of the Do No Harm approach which has profoundly influenced thinking and debate in the area of aid and conflict, notes that "the impact of the aid is not neutral regarding whether conflict worsens or abates"[37]. Aid then can "reinforce, exacerbate and prolong conflict"[38] or enhance people's capacities to find peaceful options to solve their conflicts.

Ways That Aid Impacts Conflict

What are, then, some of the specific ways that aid impacts conflict? From their research with various projects in multiple settings, the Local Capacity for Peace Project (LCPP) notes that it has been possible to identify predictable patterns of how aid affects conflict[39]. The two basic ways that this occurs are through transfer of resources and implicit ethical messages[40].

Transfer of Resources

Providing aid involves bringing in additional resources into a conflict situation, potentially creating a situation where the groups in conflict either attempt to get

[36] Veen, Hans van de. "Feeding Armies and Militias or Supporting a Path to Peace?" In *Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice: On Lessons Learned, Evaluation Practices and Aid & Conflict*, edited by Anneke Galama and Paul van Tongeren, 155-78. Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2002, pg. 157.
[37] Anderson, Mary B. 1999. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pg. 1
[38] ibid, pg. 1
[39] ibid.
[40] ibid.

their share or try to keep others from getting any access to them. The LCPP[41] identified five predictable ways that resource transfers affect conflict, such as:

- *Theft* – aid resources are stolen by belligerents and then used to either directly support their forces or sold to provide funds to procure more weapons.
- *Distribution inequalities* – if aid is directed towards a specific subgroup in a conflict, it can further exacerbate existing tensions and jealousies.
- *Substitution* – the provision of aid can allow the shift of resources towards military or conflict-related activities, as external aid can act as a substitute for local responsibilities. For example, providing external aid to fulfill civilian needs for food, clothing, or shelter, can free government or rebel resources for military supplies.
- *Legitimatization of conflict groups* – this can happen in several ways, through the redistribution of resources through theft or substitution, as well as through payment of 'legitimate' taxes or fees paid to whoever controls the area.
- *Market effects* – aid impacts the local market through the wages paid to local staff, influencing local prices and increasing profits for some members of the society. In a situation where the economy is totally disrupted due to a conflict, the profits or wages aid provides can act as incentive to the continuation of the conflict.

[41] ibid.

<u>*Identifying Thieves*</u>
In a West African country, one agency worked with women on public health issues. As part of this programme, they distributed inexpensive radios to village women so they could tune in to a weekly series of programmes designed to focus on rebuilding the civil society. Soon, all these radios were stolen. So, the agency staff thought again. They reissued radios--this time painted a bright pink. Any man seen with a pink radio was immediately accosted by others and challenged. No one could get away with stealing these radios.
Vignettes: LCPP examples from the field

Implicit Ethical Messages

Along with the delivery of resources, aid also delivers 'messages'. While the explicit message of aid is that victims of warfare, regardless of sides, should have access to assistance, aid also carries implicit messages. These implicit messages are, of course, unintended by aid providers, however they are transferred through the actions of staff and the manner in which aid is provided, possibly affecting the context of the conflict. The LCPP has identified seven patterns of implicit ethical messages, as follows:

- *Arms and power* – when aid agencies use armed guards to protect goods or staff, an implicit ethical message is the legitimacy of arms.
- *Disrespect, mistrust and competition among aid agencies* – a lack of cooperation as well as competitive behaviour between aid agencies for beneficiaries or partners that may be a result of religious, political or personal differences can send a message that differences can't be handled cooperatively, that differences are really not tolerated, thus reinforcing negative attitudes that exist between existing inter-group conflicts.
- *Aid workers and impunity* – when aid resources are used by aid workers for their personal enjoyment or pleasure (for example, using the agency vehicle for a 'well-deserved' weekend away, even though gasoline supplies are limited), here

the message can be that "if one has control over resources, one can use them for personal purposes and pleasure. Accountability is unnecessary"[42]. However, warlords act the same way.

- *Different values for different lives* – often polices are adopted by aid agencies that apply differently to local and expatriate, such as salaries, access to vehicles and other equipment, as well as plans for evacuation in the case of emergency. Here the implicit ethical message is one of inequality; the different value of expatriate versus local lives. Even worse can be the message that imported goods have a higher value than the lives of local people as radio equipment will be evacuated but not local staff.
- *Powerlessness* – when international aid agency staff claim they are powerless and not responsible for the impacts of their aid as "those decisions are made in headquarters", the implicit message is one of powerlessness, reinforcing the message that it will always be someone else who can change things, improve the situation, or to make peace and reinforcing a denial of accountability.
- *Belligerence, tension, suspicion* – when aid workers, who can be nervous about the conflict they are in the midst of and concerned for their own safety, often act in a manner which increases tension and suspicion, becoming belligerent and defensive; they reinforce a message of provocation and an atmosphere of aggression.
- *Publicity* – when aid agencies, in an effort to increase fundraising and publicity, rely on gruesome pictures, the implicit message can be the demonization of one side in the war and innocence of the other – implying a simplicity to war which

[42] ibid, pg. 57.

is seldom accurate. Anderson also suggests that there is some evidence of atrocities being committed by unscrupulous fighters against their own people in order to further their cause through the often accompanying publicity.

> *An aid worker recounted how hard he and his fellow staff worked in an emergency situation. He remembered the stress they felt from constant pressures of jobs to be done. When he returned home and had his film developed, however, he noted how many pictures depicted scenes where he and his colleagues were enjoying a large meal together, leaning on their cars drinking beer, lounging with food or drink under a tree. He was both amused and amazed. He concluded that the atmosphere of constant pressure was, in part, a mindset rather than a full reality. He declared that he would never again claim that there was "no time" to think, discuss, plan and consider options.*
>
> Vignettes: LCPP examples from the field

Anderson, and the LCPP, have provided examples of how these impacts can be mitigated, through improved training of staff, the use of local actors for distribution of resource commodities, or in the choice of relief commodities (e.g. using locally produced sorghum rather than imported wheat as part of food relief packages). While it is imperative that there is a sufficient research capacity by the humanitarian aid organization to develop a substantial knowledge base of the conflict itself, as well as the political and socioeconomic context; it is also important to share the results and the insights of that research at the field level along with sharing experiences across particular conflict areas and across cases of conflict.[43] The challenge, as will be presented in this case study, is how this can happen, given limited resources and other organizational priorities. MacFarlane, however, cautions that one must not overstate the impact of these various patterns on conflict; that there is a danger of over exaggerating the effects of humanitarian activities and, in most cases, "humanitarian action tends to be only

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[43] MacFarlane.

one part of a broader economy of war, and rarely the most significant part"[44]. So while humanitarian aid may fuel conflict and be an exacerbating factor, its effects appear to be more marginal, rarely the fundamental cause for the prolongation of a conflict[45].

The New Humanitarianism

From a recent review of the literature, it appears that the debates regarding aid and conflict, and the various attacks on humanitarian aid and values have abated somewhat since the heated contestations in the mid to late 1990s. The dust seems to have now settled, and a 'new humanitarianism' has emerged. Described by various authors[46], this 'new humanitarianism' appears to be guided, in part, by the following principles or underlying assumptions, such as:

- the recognition of the risk that aid can do more harm than good, and that at a minimum that aid should "do no harm";
- the expectation that humanitarian assistance contributes to conflict resolution and peace-building, implying that aid might be used to exert leverage over conflicts;
- the importance of analysing the underlying causes of poverty and conflict;
- the need to actively address both the immediate alleviation of the effects of conflict and the promotion of self-reliance or goal-oriented 'development relief'.

The choices available in this new humanitarianism are not easy. For now the alternative seems to be for humanitarian organizations to either become (or

[44] MacFarlane, pg. 30.
[45] ibid.
[46] see for example - Macrae & Leader, 2000; Fox, 2001;Longley and Maxwell, 2003.

remain) 'purists' or to "accept the compromises inherent in the logic of conflict management"[47]. This option was more clearly stated in the proceedings from an International conference in 2001 entitled "Towards Better Peace Building Practice" where the consensus was that NGOs working in conflict situations "had to choose between either sticking their heads in the sand or confronting the issues directly"[48].

Challenges Integrating Aid And Conflict

If it is accepted that aid given in the context of conflict becomes a part of that conflict, the question then becomes "What are the implications for NGOs?" What are some of the challenges for aid organizations in incorporating this new approach to linking aid and conflict, to this new humanitarianism? And finally, how, for example, should NGOs with a primary mandate of neutrality deal with conflict? This is especially relevant for an organization such as the Red Cross, given its long-standing and strong adherence to humanitarian principles, including neutrality and impartiality.

Some of these questions were discussed at the "Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice" European conference in October 2001 where it was noted that there has not been a noticeable shift in attitude and working in regard to impact of aid on conflict. Two of the major problems identified were the resistance towards change at both a field and headquarters level and a lack of funding. The answer to these concerns was the need for better conflict training for both field workers and headquarters staff. The necessary training identified

[47] Borton, pg. 6.

[48] Galama, Anneke, and Paul van Tongeren, eds. 2002. *Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice: On Lessons Learned, Evaluation Practices and Aid & Conflict*. 1st ed. Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Resolution, pg. 163.

was training in conflict dynamics, analysis and indicators in order for staff to have the appropriate tools and understanding of the potential impact of their actions. However, the resistance towards such conflict resolution training was generally seen to be enormous, resulting from the perspective of humanitarian field workers who resisted the idea of having to incorporate yet another issue (and trend) into their work. As Nick Lewer[49] of Bradford University reflected during the aforementioned conference, resistance also comes from a reluctance of people in the humanitarian field to adapt to change, either by "arguing that they already knew what the conflict they were confronted with in their work was about" or because of the contrast between the long-term nature of peace-building and the short-term nature of relief work.

The long-term nature of peacebuilding and conflict resolution also impacts funding. The results of peacebuilding activities are not immediate nor concrete, which is a challenge in regard to securing funding; unlike development impacts, assessing the impact of interventions in a conflict or a conflict prone environment is not as simple and easy as counting the number of latrines built at the end of a certain period.

Hence, one of the challenges identified is 'mainstreaming' these ideas into humanitarian aid organizations. It has been argued that this is 'easier said than done'[50], and that caution needs to be exercised in the process of doing so. The first caution is for organizations to be cognizant of how far they want to integrate or mainstream peacebuilding concepts. They need to determine how far they

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[49] Lewer, in Galama and van Tongeren, pg. 160.
[50] Lewer and Goodhand, as referenced in Galama and van Tongeren.

really want to extend their mandate towards peacebuilding activities. This has particular relevance for the Red Cross, as traditionally the humanitarian principles of the Red Cross do not include peacebuilding[51], but rather a concern with relief and protection alone.

Lewer and Goodhand[52] make two additional warnings, the first being that organizations need to be watchful of moving beyond their responsibility and getting involved directly in the conflict dynamics. The second caution is a reminder that NGOs need first to ensure that the experiences and views of the conflict need to be heard through the voices of those directly engaged. So as Leader observes, while solidarity or peace building can be viewed as a natural extension of humanitarian aid, it is not a neutral and impartial action, it becomes a more explicit political activity.

Finally, along with the challenges of capacity-building, resource allocation, and political commitment, there needs to be appropriate and effective tools or instruments available. The following section outlines the recent and on-going development of such tools and methods.

Developing Conflict-Sensitive Approaches To Aid

As mentioned previously, following the debate of the potential negative impact of aid interventions, the conclusion drawn by most aid agencies was that at a minimum that aid should 'do no harm' in the conflict context. In order to be able to assess the links between conflict, peace, and aid, many agencies began to look for strategies and tools. During the late 1990s academics and organizations

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[51] Leader, 1998.
[52] Lewer and Goodhand, in Galama & Tongeren.

began to develop methodologies and tools that could assess the impact of aid on a conflict. Some of the early foundational work includes research by Ken Bush, Luc Reychler, and Mary Anderson's Collaborative for Development Action. Depending on the needs of the organizations, these approaches have ranged from the introduction of a broader conflict sensitive approach at an organizational level, to particular conflict analysis approaches at a national level, to approaches suitable for use at the local project level.

Given the emerging nature of this field, a clarification of terms is important; however, this is not an easy task. From a review of the literature, it is clear that no common definition of terms exists. So while the term Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) has been, until recently, the most commonly used, how it is understood and applied differs. As well different terms for the same idea can be found, such as Luc Reychler's Conflict Impact Assessment System (CIAS), Kenneth Bush's PCIA, and Paffenholz and Reychler's updated term Peace and Conflict Assessment (PCA) . Although all look at assessing how conflict and aid interventions relate, differences exist in whether approaches to peace are considered and whether the tool specifically looks at the impact of aid or is applied more broadly.

Recently a comprehensive and practical handbook published by Fewer, International Alert, and Saferworld in collaboration with their partners in Africa and Sri Lanka[53], proposed a shift in approach towards the use of the core concept of conflict sensitivity rather than a generalized use of the term PCIA. While this

[53] Fewer, Africa Peace Forum, Center for Conflict Resolution, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, International Alert, Saferworld. 2004. *Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (A Resource Pack)* [cited 2004] Available from http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack.html

has some merit in utilizing conflict sensitivity as an overarching principle for work in a conflict context, I would suggest, that Fewer et al's use of the term conflict analysis in lieu of PCIA is problematic. This is because many of the PCIA tools that are reviewed by Fewer et al. do more than analyze conflict, several include impact assessment as part of their framework. As Paffenholz and Reychler[54] correctly articulate, a conflict analysis is often just one step within a PCIA framework or a conflict sensitive approach.

The intent in this section is not to review or fully compare the many PCIA models or conflict sensitive approaches, nor to go into depth into aspects of the various approaches, but rather, to provide an overview that situates the Do No Harm and Better Programming Initiative approaches.

A Conflict Sensitive Approach

From the Fewer et al perspective, developing a conflict-sensitive approach to aid means an organization needs to be able to understand the conflict context, the interaction between the context and the intervention, as well as being able to make the necessary changes so that the negative impacts are avoided and positive impacts are maximized. I would suggest that this approach is useful as it broadens the perspective beyond that of assessing impact. As well, it may assist in mainstreaming the concept as it is a broader approach than what may be seen mainly as the application of a tool. They also suggest that conflict-sensitive approaches can be incorporated into interventions that range from very small projects at the local level to large peace processes, from a project to the sectoral

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[54] Paffenholz, Thania, and Luc Reychler. 2004. *Introducing the Peace and Conflict Assessment Model (PCA).* Field Diplomacy Initiative. Available from http://www.fielddiplomacy.be

level, and used in development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding interventions. The term now seems to have gained some currency as one can find reference on the web to conflict-sensitive journalism and conflict-sensitive business practices[55], as well as conflict sensitive research methods[56].

The definition of conflict is, understandably, viewed as an important aspect of the concept of conflict sensitivity. While the term conflict has multiple meanings, it is commonly understood as being negative, often synonymous with violence. According to Fewer et al., as well as authors such as Fisher et al., conflict is defined as occurring when two or more parties believe that they have incompatible goals or interests[57]. Conflict occurs then when parties collide in the pursuit of their goals – although depending how the dispute is resolved, it can either lead to constructive change or destructive violence. Conflict, however, is also part of a normal and healthy change process – and can be positive if the process of change is managed peacefully. Conflict is viewed as a dynamic process which can range from latent to violent conflict. Violent, open, or direct conflict describes situations where there is open hostility or physical acts of violence are manifest. Latent conflict refers to situations where conflict remains below the surface, the places where conflict may escalate into violent conflict. One form of latent conflict is structural violence, a term coined by peace researcher, Johan Galtung. Structural violence refers to unequal, unjust, and unrepresentative

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[55] A new resource manual (Companies in Conflict: A Resource manual) is scheduled to be published in late 2005 by the Collaborative for Development Action, the FAFO, and International Alert. This manual will cover some of the linkages and interactions between business and conflict.
[56] See Smyth, Marie, and Gillian Robinson, eds. 2001. *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
[57] Fisher et al and Fewer et al.

political, social, economic structures that prevent people from achieving their full human potential[58].

Conflict Analysis

Fewer et al suggest that the central component of conflict-sensitive practice is a conflict analysis, and define it as "the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict"[59]. A conflict analysis is seen to provide the foundation that informs conflict sensitive programming through the development of an understanding of how the specific intervention interacts with the context of the conflict. This entails an analysis of the issues and dynamics at various levels, and an understanding of the linkages. For example, in the case of youth violence, this would involve looking at the larger regional issues and dynamics, those at the national level and the project (local) level, and developing an understanding the linkages between them.

Approaches to doing a conflict analysis are varied. In all conflict analysis, though, similar concepts apply: understanding the causes of conflicts (for example, the structural and proximate causes, as well as triggers), the actors, and the conflict dynamics. Many different tools can be used in analyzing a conflict, such as conflict mapping, the conflict tree, force-field analysis, identification of stages or timelines of the conflict, among others. Excellent and easily accessible resources exist such as Fisher et al's *Working with Conflict* and International Alerts' *Resource Pack for Conflict Transformation.*

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[58] definitions derived from Fewer et al, Fisher et al, and Galtung.
[59] Chapter 2, Fewer et al, pg. 1.

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)

What then is a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) methodology? Bush defines a PCIA as "anticipating, monitoring, and evaluating the ways in which an intervention may affect or has affected the dynamics of peace or conflict in a conflict-prone region"[60]. A PCIA is basically designed to look at the impact of a project on the peace and conflict environment. So, in reality, a humanitarian or development project may successfully meet its stated objective, goal or outcome while having an adverse or detrimental impact on peace. Conversely, a project may not meet its stated outcomes, but have a positive impact on the conflict in the project area.

OECD-DAC suggests[61] that "Peace and conflict impact analysis, and risk and vulnerability assessments, should be mainstreamed to become as common as cost-benefit analysis". Bush[62] also points out that PCIA can be viewed in a similar manner as a Gender Analysis or an Environmental Impact Assessment. It has also been noted that not all aid projects require a PCIA, and that it can really be used only in those areas deemed 'at risk', in conflict or violence prone regions. It is most appropriate to use a PCIA in "settings characterized by latent or manifest violent conflict"[63].

In Fewer et al's recent review of various PCIA & conflict sensitive approaches, while most approaches are applicable at both the program and

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[60] Bush, Kenneth. 2003. *Hands-On PCIA: Part 1 A Handbook for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA).* Federation of Canadian Municipalities, pg. 3.
[61] OECD-DAC. 1997. Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century. Paris: OECD-DAC.
[62] Bush, 2003.
[63] Bush, Kenneth. 1998. *A Measure of Peace: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Development Projects in Conflict Zones.* The Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program Initiative, pg. 10.

project level; the vast majority are mainly useful to consider macro issues, focusing more on policy issues and strategic conflict analysis. Out of fifteen approaches reviewed, six can be used at the local level, the remainder are primarily for analysis at national and/or regional levels. The manner of the approach varies from a tool kit approach where the user can pick and choose the most appropriate tool or methodology for their specific situation (e.g. Fisher et al) to a step-by-step approach, such as Do No Harm.

Do No Harm And Local Capacities For Peace Project

In 1994, working with a large group of international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and United Nations agencies, the Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. began an initiative called the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP). Using an inductive approach, learning from local field experiences, the LCPP looked at fifteen different cases to understand the interactions between aid and conflict. As noted on the project website,

> "the Project seeks to identify the ways in which international humanitarian and/or development assistance given in conflict settings may be provided so that, rather than exacerbating and worsening the conflict, it helps local people disengage from fighting and develop systems for settling the problems which prompt conflict within their societies". [64]

Developed through the work of Mary Anderson and her colleagues, the Local Capacities for Peace approach, as the name suggests, focuses on identifying and working with the capacities for peace inherent in the local context. This is, of course, particularly important for external humanitarian or development organizations involved in post-conflict situations. As Anderson notes,

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[64] see http://www.cdainc.com/dnh/

> "when given in conflict settings, aid can reinforce, exacerbate, and prolong the conflict; it can also help to reduce tensions and strengthen people's capacities to disengage from fighting and find peaceful options for solving problems...in all cases aid given during conflict cannot remain separate from that conflict".[65]

While Anderson notes that while international assistance has been recently criticized for doing more harm than good, she remarks, however, that it is important not to condemn aid for failures. Rather, she states that

> "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... [rather] a decision to withhold aid from people in need would have unconscionable negative ramifications".[66]

Since its inception in 1994, LCPP has involved four phases. The first consisted in conducting the fifteen field-based case studies in conflict zones around the world from 1994-1996. The resulting lessons learned were compiled in a booklet entitled *Do No Harm: Supporting Local Capacities for Peace through Aid.* The second phase of LCPP from 1996-1997 was the process of feedback workshops with aid workers and agencies to "test" lessons learned. During the feedback workshops, an analytical framework was developed which has become the basis of the LCPP work. The third phase during 1997-2000 was implementing the "do no harm" framework with specific projects in conflict areas with 14 participating agencies, through working with the framework in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and re-designing of the related projects. Mainstreaming is the fourth phase, which began in 2001, and involves

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[65] Anderson, 1999, pg. 1.
[66] ibid. pg. 2.

several organizations participating in learning about integrating the 'do no harm' framework organizationally.

The goal of LCPP is to improve aid delivery in ways that do not fuel conflicts and is not primarily designed to be a peacebuilding project. However, Anderson suggests that

> "aid agencies have a new and profound opportunity to shape their relief and development work so it accomplishes its intended goals of alleviating human suffering and supporting the pursuit of sustainable economic and social systems and at the same time promotes durable and just peace"[67].

Do No Harm, then, refers to the conceptual framework that is used to assess the impact of the aid on the conflict context. The primary purpose of the framework is to assess the impact of the program on the conflict at the project level through a micro (versus macro) conflict analysis, and is applied during the implementation phase of the program. The process itself involves five steps, which will be reviewed in detail in the case study. According to Fewer et al[68] the positive benefits of the Do No Harm framework include an approach that is compatible with community-based participatory processes, whereby the process of using it can strengthen local capacities for peace; the underlying concepts are easy to understand in a short period of time; and the descriptive nature of the process provides the opportunity for participants to conduct their own analysis. At the same time, Fewer et al. identify one of the major challenges in the use of the framework as integrating the concepts into longer-term analytical lens for staff to assess their humanitarian and development work.

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[67] ibid, pg. 2.
[68] Fewer et al.

Although "Do No Harm" has been criticized for being a 'consequentialist' approach[69], the concept has been widely applied across the humanitarian aid sector in programs, as noted, "because they acknowledge the pragmatic choices that operational agencies are forced to make, and because they offer a principled approach to making these choices"[70] Gaigals and Leonhardt[71] note that the Do No Harm framework has shaped the conflict impact assessment policies and practices for several international NGOs. Organizations such as Care-US, World Vision, and the Red Cross have been able to develop organizational appropriate tools linking their experience to the Do No Harm conceptual framework, for use in both emergency and development settings. The Better Programming Initiative is the Red Cross's version.

The Better Programming Initiative Framework

The following is a brief outline of the Better Programming Initiative framework, which is almost identical to the Do No Harm/LCP framework. In the section involving the specific use of the framework in the case study, I will outline some of the findings or challenges found with the framework. The analytical framework developed in conjunction with aid workers is a tool that can be used to analyze the relationship between aid and conflict in a particular context, with the goal to review the aid program itself to determine the impact of the aid program in the particular conflict context. Figure 2 depicts the BPI framework.

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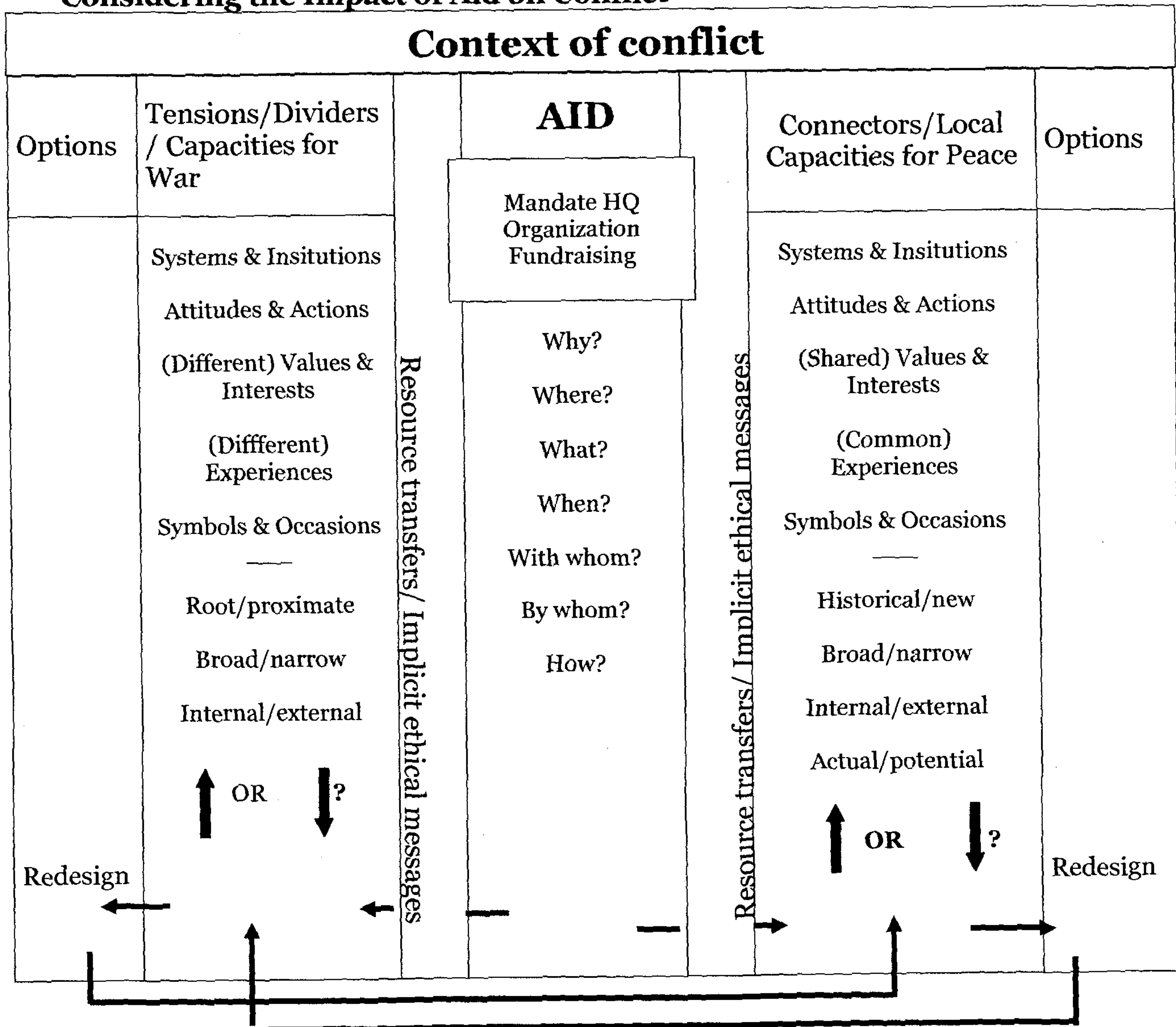
[69] Duffield, 2001 and Fox, 2001.
[70] Longley, Catherine, and Daniel Maxwell. "Livelihoods, Chronic Conflict and Humanitarian Response: A Synthesis of Current Practice." London: Overseas Development Institute, 2003, pg. 32.
[71] Gaigals, Cynthia and Manuela Leonhardt. 2001. *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development.* International Alert, Saferworld and IDRC.

The framework outlines several steps, which are briefly as follows: The first step involves doing a three part analysis of the context in which the aid is being delivered – first, a description of the context situation, including identifying the groups in conflict; second, identification of the tensions and dividers in the conflict; and third, the identification of the connectors or factors that unite and connect people in the conflict environment. In the second step, participants go through a detailed description of the specific aid agency and program with a detailed description of the program planned or underway, as well as institutional issues. Step 3 involves an analysis of the impact of the aid program on the connectors and dividers. Step 4 of the framework identifies programming options. And finally a periodic review of the analysis is suggested in Step 5.

Figure 2 - Better Programming Initiative (BPI) Analytical Framework for Considering the Impact of Aid on Conflict[72]



There are 5 integrated steps to BPI Framework:

1. Analysis of context, including
   - identifying tensions/dividers
   - identifying connectors/ Local capacities for peace
2. Description of Aid program
3. Analysis of the Impact of aid program
4. Identify options
5. Repeat the steps of the framework

[72]Anderson, pgs. 69-70.

The Framework in Detail

Step 1 - The Context of the Conflict

The first step of the analysis is to develop an understanding of the context of the conflict[73] situation, including the geography, language, culture, economy, history of the conflict, and most importantly, clearly identifying the groups who are in conflict. At this stage it is useful for agency staff to understand some of the motivations that underlie the conflict, as well as to analyze the various interests in perpetuating or ending the conflict[74].

In the Do No Harm framework, the context of the conflict is analyzed from what characterizes two things - what divides groups and creates tensions in the conflict setting, as well as those things that continue to connect people in conflict, what has been termed local capacities for peace.

It is in this step that the Do No Harm framework and analysis is simple, yet so powerful, as it counters what we generally look to in conflict environments. While we generally expect conflicts to have divisions and tensions, we normally do not expect to find, nor look for, connections and capacities for peace. So what has often occurred is that assistance or aid provided in conflict settings is directed so that it reinforces the divisions, and undermines the connections due to a lack of awareness. Once there is an awareness of both the dividers and connectors in a conflict context, it allows more clarity in thinking about how to

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[73] While the term conflict has multiple meanings, in this situation I am using it to denote conflict that has a degree of violence. The Do No Harm framework generally refers to war, or post-conflict (civil war) situations. The Red Cross broadened it to look at situations of high social violence. So while conflict at times can be construed as positive, in this context the term is being used in a negative sense.

[74] Anderson, Mary, ed. 1999. *Trainer's Manual, Local Capacities for Peace Project.* Cambridge: The Collaborative for Development Action.

design aid programs. In many ways it is the simplicity of this concept – of dividers and connectors - that makes the framework so profound – It is here that people most intuitively and positively respond – perhaps because it suggests a way forward in what seems often a dense, constricted, and unmovable challenge of conflict.

Fisher et al. define a conflict analysis as a "practical process of examining and understanding the reality of the conflict from a variety of perspectives"[75],which then forms the basis from which strategies and action plans can be developed. They further suggest that a conflict analysis is useful because it helps in understanding the background, history and current events of the situation, by identifying the relevant groups involved as well as providing an understanding of their perspectives and relationships to each other, as well as to assist in the identification of various factors and trends which may underlie the conflict.

Tensions, Dividers, and Capacities for War

The second part of the context analysis is to identify the dividers, tensions, and war capacities in the conflict, as well as assessing their importance. This is based on the premise that in every conflict there are factors that separate and divide people, many of which may be obvious. For example, wars or conflicts may have root or proximate causes, or be the result of a desire to address issues of systemic injustice or historical inequalities, or again result from more recent manipulation by leaders to promote inter-group tensions for their own benefit. Is

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[75] Fisher, S., Ludin, J., Smith, R., Williams, S. Williams, S. & Dekha Ibrahim Abdi. 2000. *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*. London: Zed Books, pg. 17.

the conflict one that affects only a small group of people or is its impact felt across a broad spectrum? Are the dividers and tensions a result of a situation within the community, or are they more influenced and promoted by outside or external influences? As Mary Anderson notes, "aid's actual and potential impacts on dividers and tensions will vary depending on the depth and breadth of the commitment to war within the society in which aid is provided"[76].

Once the dividers and tensions are identified, their importance needs to be assessed. Dividers may be categorised as: systems and institutions, attitudes & actions, values & interests, experiences, symbols & occasions. They may be root/proximate, broad/ narrow, internal/ external.

> *Aid's profit and wage effects can also reinforce inter-group tensions. Ownership of the assets that aid needs is often differentially distributed among local groups. Thus, the profits to be gained from aid are also unevenly distributed. When aid agencies hire local people who can speak the foreign language of the agency, these benefits can be biased because foreign language ability (and other skills needed by aid agencies) is often related to educational access that is, in turn, correlated to patterns of privilege and discrimination. Uneven benefits from aid, if realized according to sub-group identities, can exacerbate and feed tensions between groups.*
>
> Vignettes: LCPP examples from the field[77]

Connectors and Local Capacities for Peace

The third part of the context analysis is the identification of connectors, those factors that unite and connect people in any conflict environment, the local capacities for peace. Anderson cautions that connectors or capacities for peace are generally not as readily apparent as dividers are in the context, that connectors and capacities for peace also vary widely and are dependent on the context. Important categories for identifying and assessing the importance of

[76] ibid, pg. 71.
[77] Anderson, 1999. *Trainer's Manual,* Appendix II.

connectors and capacities for peace include whether the connector is something that is broad based or inclusive or narrow, something historical, long-standing or something relatively new, internal or external, and actual or potential.

Connectors can be found in shared systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, values and interests, experiences, symbols and occasions. Connectors may also be: root/proximate, broad/narrow, internal/external, actual/potential.

I stood on the border of southern Tajikistan and Afghanistan and saw overhead an enormous and complex grid of electrical wires. All around me were large craters in the ground, created when shells fell during the recent fighting. I asked how they had rebuilt the electricity so quickly.

"The electricity was never destroyed," they responded.

I laughed. "So, the aim was not so good," I joked, thinking that the shells had simply failed to reach their true target."

"Oh no," they said, "we never intended to destroy the electricity. We agreed that we all needed it."

Later, when I drove from Split along the road to Sarajevo, I saw a destroyed village—completely burned out—and overhead the wires for electricity. Not mentioning my Tajikistan experience, I asked the same question about how they had rebuilt it so soon. The answer I got was the same. "No, we never destroyed it; we agreed that we all needed the electricity."

Vignettes: LCPP examples from the field[78]

Step 2 & 3 – Description of the Aid Program

The second step of the framework involves an analysis of the aid agency and program. The third step provides an analysis of the impact of the aid program. It is easier to conceptualize these two steps together.

One of the major premises of the framework is that aid will <u>always</u> have an impact on the context. In that sense then aid can never have a neutral impact on conflict. So in order to understand the impact of the aid program on the conflict, it needs to be described and understood in detail.

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[78] Anderson, 1999. *Trainer's Manual*, Appendix II.

The centre column of the framework (see Figure 2) represents the initial intervention of the aid agency. It needs to be remembered that aid programs do not stand in isolation; rather an aid program reflects the mandate of the organization it represents, its structure and style, its fundraising approach and donors, as well as policies. In addition, an aid program involves decisions about whether to intervene in a given situation and *why*; *when* it would be appropriate to do so, and for *how long*; about *where* to work; *with whom* to work; *what* the specifics of the program will be; and finally, about *how* to carry out the program. Of course, each of these decisions made will have its own effect on the dividers and connectors in the context; the question is not if, but **how**. Will this action aggravate a division or lessen one? Will this action reinforce a connector or weaken one?

Basically this step in the framework "involves identifying the characteristics of an aid program according to the categories outlined and relating them to the analysis of the context (dividers or connectors) to anticipate how each programmatic choice will affect the context"[79]. So, for example, in the case of staffing a program with local staff, one can consider who one might hire – all the parties to the conflict?, only one side?, men?, women?, etc.

Step 4 – Identifying Programming Options

To continue with the example of hiring local staff, if a decision has already been made to hire people from one side on a conflict, it may have become clear in the last step that this choice may be actually reinforcing divisions and tensions. If this is the case, it is now appropriate to look again at a range of staffing options as

[79] Anderson, 1999, pg. 73.

described above and examine how each option would impact both the dividers and connectors identified. Does one option actually help to reduce the dividers and reinforce a connector? Here one needs to carefully look at both dividers and connectors to make sure that by reinforcing a connector one is not inadvertently fuelling tension.

> ***"Not Worth the Effort"***
>
> *In Somalia, the Red Cross distributed blankets to families. Theft was common as blankets were scarce and profits could be made. Agency staff began to cut each blanket in half. Families could easily sew their blankets back together for use. Resale value dropped.*
>
> *In other situations, aid agencies have ceased delivery of high priced grains and substituted sorghum or other less valuable but equally nourishing products. The food sustains recipients' health but, because resale is not lucrative, there is no incentive for theft.*
>
> Vignettes: LCPP examples from the field[80]

Step 5 – Repeat the steps of the framework

Not really a final step, this step acts as a reminder that the analysis needs to be reviewed on a continual basis – as the conflict changes, as circumstances change, new connectors or tensions may appear. Anderson notes that the process of following the framework is less complicated than it seems at first glance, and that it becomes increasingly less so as one becomes more familiar with the tool. Once the idea of dividers/tensions and connectors/capacities becomes internalized, it becomes the lens from which choices are viewed, and the process becomes second nature.

The framework of the tool is important for three reasons – (1) it provides the most important categories in the ways that aid interacts with conflict; (2) it provides a way to organize the information; and finally, (3) there is a focus on the

[80] Anderson, 1999. *Trainer's Manual*, Appendix II.

relationships between the categories. But it is important to remember that it is also just a tool, and the success of using the tool is dependent on the skill of the user to be most effective.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of some of the recent challenges faced by humanitarian aid providers in grappling with and developing an understanding of the relationship between aid and conflict. Now there is an emerging acceptance of the relationship between aid and conflict, that aid at a minimum should "do no harm"; the challenge is clearly how that understanding is applied and mainstreamed into humanitarian aid organizations. This is especially important for an extremely large and complex international humanitarian organization such as the Red Cross; this case study will provide a view of the challenges the Red Cross faced in its application of a particular conflict sensitive tool.

CHAPTER THREE

RED CROSS AND HONDURAS

This chapter provides a general overview of the Red Cross, the organization involved in the case study, and a background of Honduras. These contexts are important as they offer a view of the country and organizational environment that the case study is embedded in. The first section offers a brief description of the Red Cross organization. The second section gives a brief background of Honduras, with a particular focus on the situation related to youth in Honduras. This perspective provides a context of the conflict that was being looked at – the violence related to youth gangs in the community of Ciudad España.

Overview of the Red Cross Organization

From its humble beginnings as a humanitarian response by Henri Dunant on the battlefield in Solferino, Northern Italy in 1859, the Red Cross, now known as the International Movement of Red Cross and Red Crescent (The Movement), is today an extremely large and complex international humanitarian organization[81]. Made up of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation), and over 178 National Societies (NS) of the Red Cross or Red Crescent, the Movement is sustained by over 100 volunteers[82] the overall general focus of the Movement has historically been to deal with disasters – those natural or human-made disasters or events (i.e. wars) which threaten the security,

[81] Moorehead.
[82]IFRC. *Strategy 2010*. Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. pg. 10.

welfare, and lives of the most vulnerable members of society. The mission of the Movement, which encompasses the ICRC, the Federation, and National Societies is to:

> "prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, to protect life and health and ensure respect for the human being, in particular in times of armed conflict and other emergencies, to work for the prevention of disease and for the promotion of health and social welfare, to encourage voluntary service and a constant readiness to give help by the members of the Movement, and a universal sense of solidarity towards all those in need of its protection and assistance"[83]

However, each part of the organization has its particular mandate. While at the root of all Red Cross activities are the Geneva Conventions, the focus of the ICRC is the promotion and development of International Humanitarian Law and war-related disasters and its victims, while the Federation focuses on natural disasters and broader development activities. The particular focus of specific National Societies (NS) depends on their respective size, capabilities and resources; the larger NS such as the American, Japanese & Spanish Red Crosses are not only involved in specific activities in their respective countries but also work on projects directly with National Societies in the south, at times seemingly in competition or overlapping with the Federation's mandate.

The Movement's efforts have had two broad foci. Initially, it was the provision of a wide range of medical services, which has been generally in response to gaps in health or welfare systems and included hospitals, HIV/AIDS clinics, first aid training, and blood banks. Secondarily, a major thrust has been

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[83] Barrena, Iñigo. 2002. "Better Programming Initiative (BPI): The International Federation Approach to LCPP." 5. Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, pg. 1.

in regard to disaster relief, with services which can include "food aid, provision of blankets and clothes, the building of cyclone shelters, temporary shelters in tents, the rebuilding of houses, tracing missing persons, setting up water supply project and constructing flood protection structures"[84]. Over time this has also included disaster prevention, preparedness training and systems support, etc, as the Red Cross realized that it is important to focus both on preparedness and prevention, rather than always dealing with the outcome of disasters. McAllister[85] observes that there has also been a shift over the years from relief efforts to development, especially given the emergence of National Societies in the south and their considerably different realities and priorities than Northern National Societies. However, McAllister also identifies the Red Cross as having 'largely unbureaucratic and decentralized structures'[86] and having a great capacity to respond to change – a definite plus given the many changes which have occurred globally during the century of its operations!

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

As an international humanitarian organization, the Federation works to prevent and alleviate human suffering resulting from natural or human made disasters. Founded in 1919, the goal of the Federation is to:

> "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity and to provide assistance without discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions".[87]

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[84] McAllister, Ian. 1993. *Sustaining Relief with Development: Strategic Issues for the Red Cross and Red Crescent*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, pg. 9.
[85] ibid.
[86] ibid, pg. 16.
[87] IFRC website: http://www.ifrc.org

Basically, the role of the Federation is to assist National Societies in their work with the most vulnerable, promoting cooperation between them and strengthening the Federation's potentials. The Federation has 14 regional offices, 63 country delegations, six sub-delegations and two regional logistics centres. The Federation's Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean is located in Panama City and the role of a field or country delegation is to assist and advise National Societies with relief operations and development programmes; it also encourages regional cooperation.

The section of the Federation that is responsible for the development and integration of the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) is Disaster Preparedness. This department's main focus is to reduce the impact of disasters, to predict and, if possible, prevent disasters from occurring. Along with BPI, other planning processes include Vulnerabilities and Capacity Assessment, which is a analytical tool used by National Societies, and the Well Prepared National Society which is a global checklist for disaster preparedness in a Red Cross country context.

Disaster response and preparedness have been identified as two of four core areas of activities for both the Federation and National Societies in the recent strategic planning process entitled Strategy 2010. This is due to the increasing frequency of disasters over the last decade, and the reality that vulnerable populations often do not have the opportunity to recover from one disaster before another one strikes. The two remaining areas are promotion of

the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values and health care in the community[88].

The Honduran Red Cross National Society

Similar to the work of other National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Honduran Red Cross (HRC) embodies the work and principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Founded in 1937, an essential aspect of the mission of the HRC is to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable. The HRC has a network of 49 branches throughout the country. The recent national development plan of the HRC clearly defines its strategic priorities in six areas, including governance, management, volunteer management, humanitarian values, disaster management and health, along with specific strategic plans for each program and a yearly plan of action. Responding to youth violence has been identified under the strategic priority of humanitarian values through the objective of "identifying strategic alliances and a pilot project addressing violence amongst the youth"[89].

Recent activities of the Honduran Red Cross have included disaster response assistance to the 2001 drought, Hurricane Mitch in 1998, and post Hurricane Mitch rehabilitation plans implemented with the assistance of the Federation and the Spanish and American Red Cross. Since 2002, the Honduran Red Cross has also been working on strategies to reduce the problems of youth violence in Honduras.

[88] IFRC, Strategy 2010.
[89] Ferrari, Giorgio. 2003. Focus on Honduras 2003. Tegucigalpa: International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, pg. 2.

The Federation perspectives on aid and conflict

The perspective of the Red Cross on aid has, of course, changed over the years. In an identification of strategic issues for the Federation in the early 1990s, Ian McAllister[90] observed that the Red Cross's development perspective has broadened policy development and considerations to include the roles of women in development, the importance of including recipients as participants in their own development process, the necessity of institutional capacity building, and environmental sustainability.

Since the early 1990s the Red Cross has come to increasingly understand the importance of placing more emphasis on prevention and preparedness and the recognition that unless the root problems of the disasters are addressed, that is those problems at the root of the vulnerability, there will be repeated disasters. Critical then, is the need to address underlying causes of disasters, such as extreme poverty, environmental degradation, and rural to urban migration. Effective strategies to address the underlying causes must include the importance of building on capacities and addressing vulnerabilities. Rather than assume that survivors are passive and helpless, there is a recognition that there needs to be a deliberate seeking out and working with capacities, skills, abilities and organizational capacities of the disaster survivors. And finally, there has been an increased understanding of the critical value of participation – the importance of involving disaster survivors in the decision-making process, empowering them to have some control in their lives. While this is the ideal, there is a recognition that

[90] McAllister.

the importance of participation has be to balanced with the reality of the situation.

While the Red Cross has been influenced by the various movements in the development field, it has also been impacted by the changing context of conflict in the world. During the 1990s there has been an increase in Federation post-conflict programming through increased humanitarian operations in post-conflict relief and rehabilitation programming. By 1999, the ICRC was dealing with a record number of conflict situations, and in 2003 the Federation was assisting in 26 post-conflict or conflict-affected countries[91]. Given this situation, it was determined that there was a need for a programming strategy in order to learn from Federation, ICRC and National Societies experiences in post-conflict situations, to raise awareness of how recovery and reconciliation processes can be positively or negatively impacted by aid programmes, and finally to respond to the need for a systematic approach for use by Federation delegations and National Societies.

Red Cross and the 'Do No Harm' Methodology

On one hand, there is a natural fit between the development perspectives of the Red Cross and those of the Do No Harm methodology. Both share similar approaches to capacity building, participation, as well as analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities. However, there also exists an incompatibility between differing perspectives of the principle of neutrality. The Do No Harm approach clearly defines aid as not being neutral, while the Red Cross still

[91] Saenz, Juan. 2002. *Better Programming Initiative: Background, Purpose and Principles*. Geneva: IFRC. Powerpoint Presentation.

enshrines neutrality it in its seven basic principles. How does the Federation reconcile these two perspectives? While the position of the Red Cross, particularly the ICRC, is clear in relation to neutrality in conflict, how the Federation applies neutrality in relief, rehabilitation or reconstruction is unclear. While the notion of neutrality is reiterated often, a deeper conceptual understanding seems to be lacking. Reference is made that the Red Cross adaptation of LCPP "moves away from [the] perception that LCPP is a 'peace building' initiative, looking for a more empirical approach"[92] so that BPI is focused according to the Federation mandate and Fundamental principles (i.e. Do Better vs. Do No Harm). However, what is missing is a theoretical background to these statements, and a clear explanation of how issues such as neutrality are addressed.

Better Programming Initiative at the Red Cross

> *BPI is an initiative born of the conviction that in communities affected by violence, well-planned aid programming with alternative and creative implementation options can support local capacities for recovery and reconciliation*
>
> *BPI Training Materials*

The Better Programming Initiative (BPI) is a Red Cross adaptation of the Do No Harm methodology originally developed through the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP) in 1994. BPI was launched as a pilot by the Federation Secretariat in 1998. The Red Cross, through the ICRC and the Federation, was involved early on in the LCPP process. Two case studies involving the Red Cross

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[92] slide 5, Jackson, Peter. 2002. *Better Programming Initiative: Background, Purpose and Principles*. Geneva: IFRC. PowerPoint presentation.

had been developed for LCPP in 1995, one involving the ICRC in Burundi[93], the second with the Federation and National Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina[94]. The Red Cross, ICRC, Federation and 13 National Societies, are identified as collaborators with Do No Harm and LCPP.

The stated aim of BPI is to provide Federation delegates and NS staff "with a simple tool to support planning, implementation and analysis of aid programmes"[95] in contexts either of post-conflict or high social tension or violence. Basically a peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) methodology and training initiative, BPI can provide Federation delegates and National Society staff and volunteers with a tool that allows them to analyze the potentially positive and negative impacts of their programs. BPI thus "provides an analytical approach to programming which helps program staff avoid the possible negative consequences of aid in such sensitive situations"[96].

As mentioned previously, the impetus and dissemination of BPI took place under the auspices of the Disaster Preparedness Department of the Federation, the department that oversees post-disaster and recovery situations. While the tool may be used in ICRC programming or activities, my focal interest was regarding both the Federation and National Society's use of the tool. Iñigo Barrena, a Senior Officer in the Post-Disaster Recovery at the Federation Secretariat, writes why the Federation was interested in the Do No Harm methodology: rather than being an inaccessible theoretical model, it was viewed

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[93] ICRC in Burundi: A Case Study. Lena Sallin, June 1995. available from http://www.cdainc.com
[94] Reconciliation within the Local Red Cross through Functional Cooperation: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Bosnia-Herzegovina. October 1995. Helene Holm-Pedersen.
[95] Barrena, pg. 1.
[96] ibid, pg. 2.

as a practical tool, that provides "a simple way of helping staff and volunteers involved in programming to understand the potential and real impact of their activities in those politically and socially complex situations that surround them"[97]. The development of BPI was seen as a way to adapt the practical and empirical approach of the Do No Harm framework to the specific characteristics, capacities, and operational context of the Red Cross.

BPI was adapted from the Do No Harm model by the Red Cross for several reasons. Barrena suggests that a difference between the Red Cross and other NGOS is that NGOs normally do not have a permanent presence in the conflict-affected country, nor do they have the same auxiliary status to the government like Red Cross National Societies. The second reason for the adaptation of the LCPP to BPI was that the Do No Harm methodology was developed for and used by organizations in conflict situations. The Federation does not operate in 'live' conflict situations, only in post-conflict ones (the role of the ICRC takes over in live-conflicts). Hence, the tool's adaptation to post-conflict situations, especially those of reconstruction and rehabilitation. From my perspective, however, it was not clear how exactly BPI had been adapted from the Do No Harm model. The framework itself was almost identical, the only minor difference was that the number of steps had been separated from three into five. The training document used in Honduras was a Spanish translation of the LCPP trainer's manual. While for some of the sessions specific powerpoint presentations were clearly prepared by the Red Cross, they were substantially the Do No Harm material in a Red Cross dress.

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[97] Barrena, pg. 2.

Mainstreaming BPI – The Global Strategy

Between 1999 and 2002, the BPI methodology was introduced in at least 13 countries where the respective National Societies, generally in conjunction with the Federation, have been working in communities recovering from armed conflict or experiencing high levels of social tension or violence. However, aside from one case study on the use of BPI with a project in Colombia, documentation regarding specific case studies where BPI was used or reports regarding implementation strategies were not generally available.

From reading the various concept papers which came from the Post-Recovery unit in the Disaster Preparedness Section at the Federation Secretariat in Geneva and that were produced during the initial stages of the mainstreaming strategy for BPI, the initial expectations regarding integration of the methodology were high. Proposed in 2002, the Federation's Global Mainstreaming Strategy outlined the steps to mainstream or institutionalize the BPI concept and methodology within National Societies and with Federation Delegations. The goal in introducing BPI to National Societies was threefold: first, to raise awareness of the impact of aid programs in influencing recovery and reconciliation; secondly, to support analysis and improve programming through the systematic use of a particular tool; and thirdly, to learn from Federation, ICRC, and National Societies experiences in post-conflict situations.

The major focus of the strategy was to create a network of BPI facilitators among Federation delegates and National Society staff in each region, so that they would be able to assist in disseminating the concept and methodology in their respective National Societies, take a lead role in analyzing existing and new

projects using BPI, along with facilitating the training of other National Society and Federation delegation staff.

The first phase of the strategy was to introduce BPI, through information workshops to National Societies affected by or recovering from violent conflict, in order to develop an understanding of the concepts and to build a consensus on the utility of BPI. Regional BPI focal points (generally Federation staff who have a role in the training of trainers) would conduct a series of these introductory sessions / workshops to disseminate the concepts. The second step of the strategy was to develop National Society mainstreaming plans, through the identification of a person to be trained as a trainer, as well as agreeing to training and program analysis. The third step was to facilitate a nine day regional training of trainers' workshop, thereby developing the regional network of facilitators.

There has also been some discussion of whether BPI could be used in contexts other than post-conflict or high social violence situations, a perception which appears common to both Federation field delegates and National Society staff. As of 2002, there also seemed to be examples of how BPI methodology was used in analyzing the impact of the National Society institutional capacities, as well as the impact of Disaster Response, Disaster Preparedness and Development projects.[98] Barrena also notes that BPI "could be an element of analysis that links the emergency to the longer term response" and that BPI could actually be used as a capacity building mechanism along with being a planning and impact assessment methodology. During my fieldwork, there was some impetus to work

[98] Barrena, pg. 3.

on strengthening the links between BPI and other Federation planning tools, although it had not been developed much prior to my departure.

BPI Training in Latin America

The first BPI Training of Trainers (ToT) in Latin America took place in Quito, Ecuador in March 2002, and involved nine participants and three trainers. Two of the trainers came with a background, interest, and training in BPI (including conflict analysis), with the third trainer contributing expertise in adult education methodologies. A total of nine facilitators were trained, seven of the participants selected for the training came from 5 National Societies throughout Central and South America – from Honduras, Panama, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Two additional participants were Federation delegates in Latin America – one from El Salvador, and one from Argentina (Buenos Aires). Participants were selected in consultation between the respective National Society and the Federation Regional Directors in Buenos Aires (for South America) and Guatemala (for Central America).

The training, which took place over a nine day period, involved an introduction to the methodology of BPI, training in adult education methodologies, as well as an opportunity to practice (where participants in pairs developed and implemented a portion of the BPI training) by training colleagues at the Ecuadorian Red Cross National Society. At the end of the training, each National Society staff submitted plans, made in conjunction, with their National Society, regarding their country specific implementation of BPI, including training schedule and programs or projects to be analyzed using the BPI

framework. The specifics of the implementation process in Honduras will be presented in Chapter 5.

THE HONDURAN CONTEXT

> *Honduras is, indeed, a different country, with a unique history and development. No other Central American state has had the same dedication to agrarian reform, the same high level of peasant and union activity. No other Central American state has experienced such stability of traditional liberal and conservative parties. At the same time, no other nation has suffered from such corruption and dependency.*
> Alison Acker. *Honduras: The Making of a Banana Republic,* 1988, pg. 12

While there has recently been relative peace in Central America after several decades of political instability, civil war and guerrilla conflict, the continued economic inequities and substantial gap between rich and poor has been, and continues to be, a root cause of conflict in the region. In the case of Honduras specifically, the root causes of conflict include the historical influence of the U. S. economically and politically, the extreme poverty, the impact of neo-conservative economic policies, repressive government – all which continue to deepen poverty and citizen insecurity. The following is an expansion of each of these areas.

Located in the heart of the Central American isthmus, Honduras shares its borders with Nicaragua to the south, Guatemala to the north, and El Salvador to the west. The second largest country in Central America, the geography of Honduras is generally mountainous with narrow coastal strips of land. Honduras is considered one of the continent's least developed countries socially and economically and is considered the third poorest country in Latin America, after Haiti and Nicaragua. With a 2003 population of 6.6 million people, Honduras

ranked 115th out of 175 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index[99], with over 53% of the population living in poverty (although other sources indicate that the poverty level is closer to 65% of the population[100]); 44 % of the population lives with less than $2/day, and 21% of the population is undernourished[101].

A Brief History of Honduras

Prior to European contact in 1502, with the arrival of Columbus, the Lenca peoples populated the central highlands, the Mosquito tribes the southern portion of the country, and the north-western part of Honduras was once part of the Mayan civilization. It was not until the 1520's that Spanish conquistadors and settlers began to explore and settle the area. Unlike its neighbours, Honduras never produced a powerful landholding oligarchy; the lack of natural resources and a rugged, mountainous topography unsuitable for plantations have resulted in a less rigid class structure than neighbouring Central American countries[102].

The Original Banana Republic – US influence in Honduras

Even prior to Honduran independence in 1840, the US's economic involvement has been central. Honduras has the dubious distinction of being the country for which the term Banana Republic was coined – a term used to describe not only the reliance on the one export commodity, bananas, but also to

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[99] UNDP. 2003. *Human Development Report 2003* United Nations Development Programme, Available from http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/
[100] sources such as CIDA in a 2002 report and Save the Children Honduras
[101] UNDP.
[102] Merrill, Tim L., ed. 1995. *Honduras: A Country Study*. 3rd ed. Lanham: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress.

describe as Alison Acker put it "complete political dependency, and, moreover, a country that is politically unstable, corrupt and backward"[103].

The year 1899 began with the first peaceful transfer of presidential power in decades, even more importantly perhaps, it was the year that the first boatload of bananas was shipped from Honduras to the United States[104]. With a US market readily available, the banana trade grew rapidly. This resulted in the construction of railways and roads by the United States-based banana companies, and, more significantly, the attention of the US government. As early as 1913, two thirds of banana exports were held by the United Fruit Company[105]. With growing investments by US companies in Honduras, the watchful eye of the US turned to internal Honduran politics. While the US never formally occupied the country, there were frequent dispatches of US warships to Honduran waters as a warning of possible intervention should US business interests be threatened. It clearly remained in the US's interest to have a stable government in power – even if that political stability was not based in democracy. By the mid-1900s rule by dictators resulted in a period of relative political calm, albeit generally through repressive means. As Merrill points out, "for a century and a half after independence, Honduras was ruled by dictators and subject to a constant series of coups and coup attempts. The combined impact of civil strife and foreign

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[103] Acker, Alison. 1988. *Honduras: The Making of a Banana Republic.* Toronto: Between The Lines, pg. 12.
[104] Merrill.
[105] *Timeline: Honduras* BBC News UK Edition, Saturday, January 3, 2004. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk

intervention kept Honduras in a position of relative economic and social backwardness"[106]

The economic influence of the US continued throughout the 20th century, and the US currently remains Honduras's major trading partner. The US influence included the US-run camps for training Salvadorans in counterinsurgency and support for the Contras (US backed Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries) in their efforts to bring down the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Although there were anti-American demonstrations in Tegucigalpa in 1984, resulting in the deposing of the armed forces chief, General Gustavo Alvarez, the lure of substantial economic aid from the US was sufficient to allow the government to cooperate with the US anti-Sandinista activities.[107]

Repression and Impunity

During the 1980s, death squads were allegedly used to eliminate "subversive" elements in civil society, from increasing political unrest by trade union activists and left-wing sympathisers. Amnesty International reports that impunity still prevails in Honduras for the members of the security forces that were involved in the officially recognized forced disappearances of at least 184 people during the 1980s; as of 2003, there still has been no adequate investigation of those human rights violations by the government.

Impunity appears to remain the norm in Honduran society –murders of indigenous leaders, human rights activists, and homosexuals over the last 10 years have either gone uninvestigated or known perpetrators have failed to be

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[106] Merrill, pg. xxv.
[107] *Timeline: Honduras* BBC News UK Edition.

brought to justice. Perhaps even more distressingly, in the last few years there has been a dramatic increase in the murder and extra judicial killing of children and youth; from 1998 to 2002, it has been estimated that more than 1,500 such deaths occurred in Honduras.

It is not until the early 1990s that the last Nicaraguan Contras departed Honduras; the consequences of the numerous civil wars in the region, especially in Nicaragua, continue to be felt in the huge quantity of arms and military supplies that were left in the hand of civilians. Amnesty International cites the Honduran National Congress estimation "that 600,000 weapons of war are circulating illegally and that there are on average six weapons per family"[108], a response to the high degree of perceived public insecurity or a desire by some civilians to take justice into their own hands.

Uneven impacts of capitalism

The current economic model of trade liberalization implemented in Honduras, like in many other countries, is "essentially concentrated and excludes the great majority of the people [and]...has not been able to attenuate the Hondurans' extreme poverty"[109]. In Honduras, the discrepancy between the rich and poor is one of the greatest in Latin America: in 1970 the richest 20% of the population received almost 69.7%[110] of the national revenue, while by 1998 this had only slightly been reduced to 61%, with the poorest 20% receiving only 2.0%

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[108] Amnesty International. 2003. *Honduras Zero Tolerance... For Impunity. Extrajudicial Executions of Children and Youths since 1998*. Amnesty International. Available from http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engAMR370012003, pg. 12.
[109] Diaz, Efrain. "The Model in Crisis." In *Honduras Confronts Its Future: Contending Perspectives on Critical Issues*, edited by Mark B. Rosenberg and Philip L. Shepherd, 1986. pgs. 121-25. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, pg. 122.
[110] ibid.

of the share of the income[111]. The United Nations Development Program's 2003 Human Development Index reports inequality measures ranking the ratio between the richest 10% and poorest 10%. This indicates that at 91.8 Honduras is one of the highest of the 151 countries ranked, rivalled only by Namibia at 128.8 and Lesotho at 117.8, compared with Canada at 9.0 and the United States at 16.6. As Diaz noted in 1986,

> "the process of industrialization, impelled by economic integration, has been directed towards a market that depends on attention to upper- and middle-class demands; generates little employment; is highly dependent on foreign resources; and, lacks real possibilities of providing better wages for the workers"[112] .

Echoing this is a study on youth violence in Honduras[113] which notes that since the beginning of the 20th Century, capitalist development in Honduras has tended to concentrate the population, production, services, and vital infrastructural projects in the central corridor of the country, including the capital, Tegucigalpa. It is in the more prosperous areas of the country that exists the larger urban centres, such as Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, El Progresso y Choluteca.

Tegucigalpa is the administrative centre of the country, while the second largest city is San Pedro Sula, the industrial capital of the country. It is in San Pedro Sula that the majority of maquilas (assembly plants for re-export, primarily in the clothing industry) are located, although there are a few in areas

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[111] UNDP.
[112] ibid, pg. 123.
[113] Andino, Tomas, and Roberto Bussi. 2002. *Las Maras En Honduras: Investigación Sobre Pandillas Y Violencia Juvenil*. Tegucigalpa: Save the Children UK / Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes de Honduras.

outside of Tegucigalpa. These maquilas have certainly influenced the rapid growth of San Pedro Sula, and have grown exponentially since the 1990s.

Rapid urbanization

Like so many other countries worldwide, Honduras has also experienced a massive urbanization movement. For example, in 1970, 71% of the population was rural, and 29% urban, but this has since dramatically shifted so that in 2000, 51.8% of the population continued to live in rural areas while 48.2% was urban[114]. It is projected that by the year 2015, close to 65% of the population will be urban dwellers.

Again, like so many other Third World countries, this rapid urbanization process has occurred erratically, has not been well planned, so that major cities like San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa have developed extensive marginal urban areas, neighbourhoods called "barrios populares" which are made up of poorly constructed, precariously built, homes. Many of these barrios are situated on marginal land on the hillsides of the mountains/hills that are part of Tegucigalpa.

Alongside the rapid rural-urban migration, a significant international migration for work is taking place predominantly to the United States. Estimates indicate that approximately 400,000 Honduras are currently working in the United States, through both legal and illegal migration processes. The money sent back to family members in Honduras now makes up a substantial portion of foreign income coming into the country and has a substantial impact on the national economy[115].

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[114] Andino and Bussi.
[115] *Timeline: Honduras* BBC News UK Edition.

Of course, as authors Andino and Bussi observe in their landmark study on youth violence, there are serious problems of unemployment and underemployment in both Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, with the rate of unemployment / underemployment of at least 27% in Tegucigalpa in 1998. The principal source of income is the informal sector. Barely 28% of workers are able to find work in companies with 10 or more employees, with only 19% employed in the more modern manufacturing sector and service production. Only 47% of the population earn a regular wage, while 60% of the unemployed are youth between the ages of 18 to 24 years, even though they represent only 30% of the population that is economically active. Subsequently, there has been an increase in the number of what are termed "vendors ambulantes" or travelling vendors, which is one manner for the unemployed to hopefully gain some marginal income. These travelling vendors sell a small, seasonally appropriate stock of items to car drivers or pedestrians at major intersections. It is these vendors who live in the poor barrios.

As part of a global phenomenon, economic restructuring through structural adjustment policies in the 1990s brought drastic changes. Prompted and monitored by international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank, and implemented through a series of laws and government decrees, the level of poverty remained high in Honduras throughout the decade. According to Andino and Bussi, 65% of the Honduran population continued to live below the poverty

line[116], suggesting that the structural adjustment policies have not generated economic growth with equality. While Andino and Bussi remark that the discussion in Honduras remains ongoing on whether the structural adjustment policies have accented or alleviated poverty, it appears clear to them that the neo-conservative logic upon which structural adjustment policies are based has clearly succeeded in enhancing the traditional inequality that has existed in Honduras between the rich and the poor – so Honduras joins in a familiar refrain heard throughout most of the globe – the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, and the gap between them continues to widen. And while the rich get richer, the poor have fallen into extreme poverty or misery, and the urban middle class has fallen into poverty. Those most stricken by poverty are those under 14 years of age and those over 65; one is more likely to live in poverty if one is a woman and has little education[117].

Andino and Bussi also suggest that Honduras is living a "revolution of expectations" which has been fed by a form of free trade that has provided a plethora of consumer goods and services for those who can afford them. There has been a rapid influx of consumer goods and the media delivers a constant message that consumption of certain goods and services will bring a certain social prestige. There is thus the constant lure to have the "right" pair of runners, that certain cell phone, etc, which has had catastrophic effects on economically marginalized youth and adolescents – many who can only look to illegal means to obtain the goods and services of the "good life".

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[116] Andino and Bussi.
[117] ibid.

Increasing Sense of Public Insecurity

> *Between prisoners of opulence and the prisoners of destitution are the children who have quite a bit more than nothing but much less than everything. They too are less and less free...The freedom of these children is confiscated by societies that venerate order as they generate disorder. Fear of fear: the floor creaks under their feet and there are no guarantees. Stability is unstable, jobs evaporate, money vanishes. Just to make it to the end of the month is a feat...Middle-class people still live as impostors, pretending to obey the law and believe in it, pretending to have more than they have. But never before has it been so difficult for them to keep up this exhausting charade. Suffocated by debts and paralyzed by fear, the middle class raises its children in a state of panic. Fear of living, fear of falling, fear of losing your job, your car, your home, your possessions, fear of never having what you ought to have in order to be. In the widespread clamour for public security, imperilled by lurking criminal monsters, the members of the middle class shout the loudest. They defend order as if they owned it, even though they're only tenants overwhelmed by high rents and the threat of eviction.*
>
> Eduardo Galeano. *Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World*, pg. 18-19.

In general, the perceptions of most Hondurans is that their lives are increasingly insecure. This is in part due to the unstable economic situation, including the impact of Hurricane Mitch, the unabated and increasing extremes of poverty, and a lack of confidence in the police and legal systems. In fact, the current President, Ricardo Maduro, was elected on a platform of providing for increased citizen security, advocating a policy of 'zero tolerance' for crime through the increased use of soldiers on the streets.

This generalized civilian fear or insecurity has lead to an increase in private security firms, the hiring of private security services and monitoring services, carrying of arms, training in personal self-defence. Increasingly scared people are looking for ways to respond to their fear. The predominant public perception, reinforced by the Honduran media, is that growing public insecurity is blamed on either youth gangs, (termed 'maras' in Honduras), street children or

youth. In order to deal with this perceived problem, the government passed a law in August 2003 making it illegal to be a gang member.

The impact on children and youth

Over half the population of Honduras is under 19 years of age. As Save the Children notes, many children live in extreme poverty, face exclusion and abandonment; they live in a country mired in poverty and unemployment. As mentioned previously, there has been an unprecedented increase in murders and extrajudicial executions of children and youth; according to Casa Alianza, an NGO which works with street children, the number of cases has risen from 97 cases in 1998 to 556 cases in 2002, totalling over 2,200 murders of youth under the age of 23 between 1998 and 2004[118]. The victims tend to come from the most marginalized sectors of the society, those who live in extreme poverty in the barrios or the streets of the cities. Youth gangs or street children and youth are often blamed by the media for the growing public insecurity – reinforcing the perception that the majority of crimes are due to street kids and gang members. As noted by Amnesty International in a recent report on these extrajudicial executions, "Honduran society has viewed the deaths of these children and youths with indifference and apathy, some newspapers even suggesting it is a possible solution to the problem of public insecurity"[119].

In 1999, Dr. Martha Lilian Boteraz, a consultant for UNICEF in Honduras, conducted a study into the involvement of youth in reported crimes in Honduras

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[118] from the Casa-Alianza website – www.casa-allizana.org

[119] Amnesty International. 2003. *Honduras Zero Tolerance... For Impunity. Extrajudicial Executions of Children and Youths since 1998.* Amnesty International. Available from http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engAMR370012003, pg. 1.

from 1996 to 1999[120]. This was in part to gather some real data, especially given the broad popular perception that youth were becoming more and more involved in criminal activities, the increasing concern regarding youth involvement in crimes, generalized to all youth, particularly those of more marginalized backgrounds. In her study, of the approximately 42,000 reported crimes to the Dirección General de Investigación Criminal (General Director of Criminal Investigation -DGIC) between January 1996 and May 1999, only 5.5% of the cases involved youth under 18 years of age. Of those cases, the major infractions committed were robbery and theft which made up 55%, injuries occurred in 18%, threats in 7%, property damage in 7% and what is termed crimes against sexual modesty in 3%. Homicides only accounted for a minor 0.2% of all of the infractions. As Boteraz notes, her study's findings revealed that adolescent participation in delinquent acts is minimal, with the majority of acts committed being robbery or theft.

However, since the 1990s, there has been a continuing creation of a very negative image of Honduran adolescents. Boteraz contends that this negative image of youth is very different from the reality and positive perception of youth that exists in other countries. She finds that marginalized or poor youth are particularly stigmatized as criminals. In Honduras, adolescents are continually accused in the media as being responsible for the degree of insecurity felt by citizens – and such is the stigmatization that the general opinion now exists that all poor youth belong to a gang and all gang members are delinquents. These

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120 Boteraz, Dr. Martha Liliana. 1999. "Los Adolescentes No Son La Causa De La Inseguridad Ciudadana - Estudio Exploratoria." 22. Tegucigalpa: UNICEF.

opinions seem to naturally justify the increasing application of harder social control, increased sentences, etc.

Today, people in Honduras also live with a sensationalized general sense of insecurity. It is normal to find pages of the daily newspaper dedicated to reporting crimes supposedly perpetrated by youth and youth gang members. This negative portrayal of youth and adolescents in the media has helped to reinforce the public's impression that many youth, particularly poor or more marginalized ones, are somehow involved with gangs, and that gang members are irredeemable and that the only solution is jail or death. Even jail has become a deadly place for gang members: in April 2003, 68 inmates affiliated with the '18 street gang', were killed in a fire in La Ceiba prison, although it was later determined that 51 of those had been summarily executed by police officials who set up the fire to cover their tracks. Another fire subsequently took place on May 17, 2004 in a prison on San Pedro Sula, killing 103 members of the 'MS gang', officially due to faulty wiring, although survivors alleged that the police failed to open the gates, thus leaving them there to die[121].

Criminalization of poverty

> *"...two thirds of all children and youths who die violently do not belong to gangs and have no criminal background. It is suggested that they have been "labelled" because of the way they dress or their appearance, which is similar to that of members of maras, and that it was for this reason alone that they were murdered. This would give credence to claims of the existence of a "social cleansing" campaign being undertaken by various sectors of Honduran society, in collusion with the government authorities."*
> Amnesty International. *Honduras Zero Tolerance... For Impunity. Extrajudicial Executions of Children and Youths since 1998*, February 2003, pg. 5.

[121] BBC news from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3724221.stm

Many Honduran Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) believe that extrajudicial executions during the 1980s and early 1990s were politically motivated, they are more recently attributed to social or economic factors, what has been described as the criminalization of poverty.[122] A January 2002 report by the Honduran National Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights, challenged the official and popular explanation that many of the deaths of children and youth were a result of inter-gang violence, instead arguing that the deaths were a result of 'social cleansing'. The report also noted that, contrary to public opinion, the majority of the children and youths killed did not have criminal records[123]. Casa Alianza, a NGO which works with street children, also echoed this concern of this epidemic of violence as a 'social cleansing', noting that the deaths are often viewed by both vigilante groups and the police as the removal of vermin[124].

So who is committing the murders? It is estimated that at least 10% of the killings are carried out by "los carros de la muerte" or death cars, most likely, given that cars are unavailable to most gang members, involving on or off-duty police officers or hired guards. A recent study by the National Commission of Human Rights[125] observed that of the total number of youth killed violently, over 66% neither belonged to a youth gang, nor received prior convictions. As noted, it is worth considering if they were labelled or "tagged" due to their clothing, haircut, tattoos, etc.

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[122] Amnesty International.
[123] as cited in Amnesty International.
[124] Campbell, Duncan. 2003. Murdered with Impunity. *The Guardian (UK)*, May 29.
[125] cited in Andino and Bussi

Maras in Honduras

> *In Latin American countries, the hegemony of the market severs ties of solidarity and tears the social fabric to shreds. What fate awaits the nobodies, the owners of nothing, in countries where the right to own property is becoming the only right? And the children of the nobodies? Hunger drives many, who are always becoming many more, to thievery, begging, and prostitution. Consumer society insults them by offering what it denies. And then they take vengeance, united by the certainty of the death that awaits them...gangs [then] are indeed the violent response of young people to a society that excludes them, and they flourish not only because of grinding poverty and the absence of any hope for work or study but also out of a desperate search for some sort of identity.*
> Eduardo Galeano, *Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World*, pg. 18 & 316.

It is important not to leave the impression that there isn't a problem with youth gangs in Honduras, as it is becoming one of the most critical challenges facing both Honduras and the remaining countries of Central America. It is difficult to ascertain the specific origins of youth gangs in Honduras. Andino and Bussi note that while in the 1980s youth gangs surfaced in two barrios in Tegucigalpa, it was during the 1990s that there was an explosive growth of youth gangs, suggesting that it was taking place within the context of structural adjustment policies in Central America paired with an increase of legal and illegal migration to the United States; all seems to indicate that both of these factors have been influential sources in the development of youth gangs. As discussed earlier, some suggested reasons for the increased gang activity is the endemic poverty in the region, the breakdown of the family structure, unemployment, and a continued lack of opportunity for those that live on the margins of society[126]. Others cite the root causes of youth gangs as the traumatization of extreme poverty, family violence, and sexual abuse, whereby the gang life and structure

[126] Amnesty International.

provide a sense of solidarity and belonging. Like other sectors of the population, adolescents and youth are exposed to continuous messages from the media that promote the consumption of goods. Living in a society that is characterized by relatively low salaries, this consumer lifestyle can only help to stimulate the adoption of illict conduct in order to obtain the money needed to acquire the desired objects.

Several authors (such as Andino and Bussi) and NGOs (such as Casa Alianza) suggest that the gang problem results from globalization – as many thousands of youth have illegally migrated to the US, and more specifically Los Angeles, where they have become part of street gangs there. In the mid-1990s, the US began deporting illegal immigrants, particularly youth associated with gangs, who then brought their gang insignia, names, involvement and activities back to Honduras. While initially not involved with drug traffickers, more recently developments seem to indicate that this is on the increase.

There has recently been an increase in the number of youth involved in "maras" or gangs that deal with drug trafficking, armed robbery, rape, theft, threats, and kidnapping[127]. It has been estimated that in Honduras there are more than 30,000 members of youth gangs, with approximately 60,000 supporters[128] in a population of just over 6 million; estimates of the number of gang member have been as high as 100,000[129]. This endemic problem has some of its roots in the extreme poverty and marginalization of youth. Young people, who represent the majority of the population in Honduras, have inadequate

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[127] Honduras Appeal 2002-2002, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
[128] Andino and Bussi.
[129] Ferrari.

schooling, little or no access to jobs, limited recreational opportunities and often live daily with family violence, alcoholism and drug addiction. This problem is further exacerbated by insufficient state resources to respond to the problem, and differing perspectives on how to deal with the crisis.

Dennis Rodgers[130], a British doctoral student in anthropology, spent at least a year as a gang member in a barrio in Managua, Nicaragua, as part of his doctoral research. Some of Rodgers' findings also relate to the situation of gangs in Honduras (even though the genesis of the gangs are different between the two countries). Rodgers identified several reasons why gangs had formed in the area, which include that gang membership provided a way to forge a social role, provided youth with a role as defenders of their neighbourhood, was an expression of macho culture, and a source of solidarity. Gangs were seen as a "manifestation of having nothing to lose in a society that has very little to offer them"[131].

With an approximate total of 35,000 youth involved with the world of gangs, based on the total youth population of over 2 million, this number represents only 1.7% of the total youth population. While the numbers are therefore not very significant in terms of total numbers the general impact in both the population at large and on the perception of youth overall, represents a social problem of major dimensions.

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[130] Rodgers, D. 2003. *Dying for It: Gangs, Violence, and Social Change in Urban Nicaragua, 1997-2002*, LSE-DESTIN Development Research Centre Crisis States Programme Working Paper no. 35, London: DRC. Available from: http://www.crisisstates.com/download/wp/wp35.pdf
[131] Rocha, José Luis. 1999. "Pandilleros: Armados sin utopía". *Envio.* Mayo.

The Impact of Hurricane Mitch

In addition to the social problems embedded in the phenomenon of youth gangs, Honduras has also faced natural and environmental challenges. On October 28, 1998, one of the worst natural disaster in over 200 years hit Honduras – Hurricane Mitch, causing major setbacks for the whole country. As noted by Howard LaFranchi[132] of the Christian Science Monitor, Hurricane Mitch "dumped a year's worth of rain over much of Honduras and Nicaragua and parts of Guatemala and El Salvador in less than a week, killing more than 8,500 people, leaving more than 1 million Central Americans homeless, and destroying more than $5 billion worth of economically vital infrastructure."

In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, the degree of devastation became clear – in Honduras alone more than 5000 people were killed, almost 70% of the country's crops were destroyed, including banana production. It has been suggested that the impact of the storm and the devastation to the country's infrastructure set back the development of the country by several decades. The Red Cross World Disasters Report 1999 stated that Hurricane Mitch:

> "was an example of a human disaster in which a natural cataclysm and modern development collided. It combined the deadly impacts of perverse weather, long-term climate change, environmental degradation, poverty, population growth, social inequality, international debt and unfair trade. To learn the lessons will require asking important questions about the nature of development"[133].

Many international NGOs, including Oxfam International, strongly endorsed the goal of long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction, alongside emergency

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[132] LaFranchi, Howard. 1999. Rebuilding Central America. *Christian Science Monitor* 91 (157), pg. 1

[133] Walter, Jonathan ed. 1999. *World Disasters Report 1999*. Geneva: IFRC, pg. 42.

response, advocating for debt relief as well. Organizations such as the Red Cross, continue to push for improved disaster preparedness in order to mitigate the impact of such a disaster in the future.

The Red Cross Role Post-Mitch

Following Hurricane Mitch, the Honduran Red Cross, with the support of the Federation and seven Red Cross societies[134], took a central role in providing humanitarian assistance and emergency support to the hurricane's victims. This support to more than 60,000 families included food aid, shelter assistance and first aid materials. In keeping with their mandate, the Honduran Red Cross was committed to helping the most vulnerable, including survivors from some of the impoverished, poorly constructed squatter settlements on the hillsides of Tegucigalpa that were hardest hit during Hurricane Mitch. These 5,500 people, primarily single mother families, were housed in three major temporary shelters in Tegucigalpa supported by the Red Cross, known as macroalbergues, until the Red Cross could build permanent housing on safe land outside of the risk zones[135]. Support to these families included temporary housing, food, primary health care and schooling, alongside community development workers who worked with "the beneficiaries to strengthen the participation of the community and raise community awareness"[136].

In the fall of 2002, after four years in temporary housing, families were beginning to be resettled in the Colonia Ciudad España. Ciudad España was one

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[134] supporting the relief operations for Mitch victims were American, Canadian, Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish and Swiss Red Cross societies
[135] Bergseth, Olaug. 2001. *Honduras Annual Report* (May). IFRC. Available from http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual00/01192000an.pdf
[136] ibid, pg. 3.

of two major reconstruction communities built by the Red Cross in conjunction with support by the Honduran government.

Colonia Ciudad España

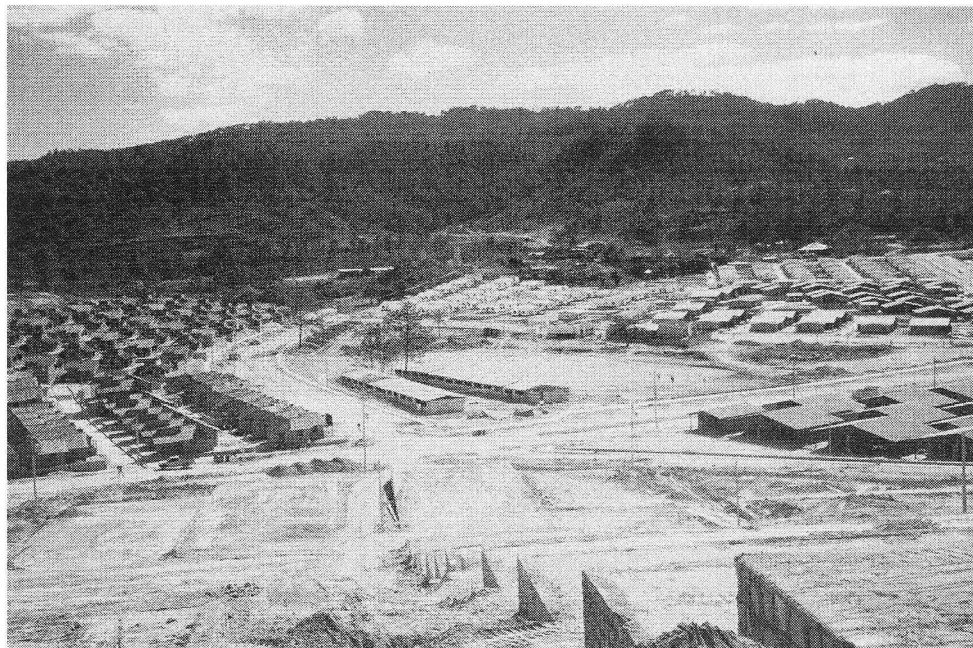

Figure 3- Photo of Ciudad España, with schools in the centre (Kathy McGeean)

Located in the Valle de Amarateca, 32 km. from Tegucigalpa, Plan Habitacional Colonia Ciudad España (Ciudad España) is one of two post disaster rehabilitation communities newly constructed for approximately 541 families (approximate population of 3,500) who were victims of Hurricane Mitch. Built in conjunction with the Honduran Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, and funding through the Cooperación Española (Spanish equivalent to CIDA), and some assistance from the American Red Cross, Ciudad España was built on land donated by the Honduran government, to house some of the most vulnerable displaced from Hurricane Mitch. In order to receive a home in the community, each family has to contribute 25 weeks (about 6 months) of work to the community. With the amounts closely monitored by the community workers

employed by the Red Cross, the required work is mostly manual labour, and can be done by any member of the family.

Based on information from the Red Cross community workers in Ciudad España, the community profile is mostly made up of female headed households, with women making up approximately 65% of the population and approximately 58% of the population being under 18 years of age.

The Honduran Red Cross, supported by funding and two delegates from the Spanish Red Cross, have begun work on projects in the following areas: economic community development, including micro-enterprises; community health, including a health centre; education, including adult education, childcare, and working with the Ministry of Education to ensure the set up of a temporary school. Committees made up of community members and supported by Red Cross staff, include the following: health, environment, women's committee, youth, education, security, children's network. As well there exists a police station, military presence, water committee, daycare, and soccer fields. According to the Proposed Territorial Plan for the Valley of Amarteca [137] the economic activity in the valley is made up of an informal subsistence economy and what is referred to as the dynamic and modern economic activity in the national and foreign markets, which includes maquilas. At this moment however, the opportunities for employment or income generation in the community are extremely limited. Given that many of the community members used to make a marginal living as travelling vendors in Tegucigalpa, which is now

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[137] Estudios, Proyectos y Planificación, S.A. 2002. "Plan De Ordenamiento Territorial Para El Valle De Amarateca Propuesta." Tegucigalpa, pg. 51.

32 kms. away, there continues to be an unanswered question of how income will be generated.

Aside from the question of economics, from the perspective of the newly arrived inhabitants, there are many positive aspects to the community. Compared to their previous homes and, especially, the crowded conditions of the macroalbergues or post-Mitch temporary housing, in Ciudad España there are public services, important elements for community organization that favour the increasing bonds of solidarity within the community such as churches, offices for the Red Cross, seniors centre, community centre and spaces for recreational activities. What is noteworthy is that people feel much safer than in their old homes, especially with the presence of police and military in the community, in spite of incidents of violence.

Youth Violence and Ciudad España Housing Project

Ciudad España Housing project has already dealt with problems related to youth gangs, unlike other nearby rehabilitation communities. There had been some violence, including rape, high frequency of delinquency, and several gang related deaths in the temporary housing projects (macroalbergues) causing the Honduran Red Cross to maintain a curfew and request police and military presence both in the temporary housing and in Ciudad España. While the situation in Ciudad España has remained relatively secure in the first months since its opening in the fall of 2002, there have been on-going threats to Honduran Red Cross project staff members and an armed robbery of project funds in April 2003.

In a recent study conducted in 2003 for the Honduran Red Cross[138] which involved focus group discussion with inhabitants of Ciudad España, the opinion was expressed that the violence in Ciudad España was essentially assaults on houses, robberies and assaults on people. Another type of violence was family violence, particularly violence against women, and child abuse. Nevertheless, the study emphasized that community violence generated by youth gangs does occur; this was seen to be confirmed by the fears expressed by people, along with the various precautions taken by people in the community and professionals and Red Cross staff members working in the community. Data from this recent pre-diagnostic study[139] regarding gang related youth violence indicated that there are approximately only ten youth gang members living in Ciudad España along with about 40 sympathizers between 16 to 25 years of age.

It was the previous gang related problems in the macroalbergues, the increasing threats to project staff, and the desire to respond effectively to gangs, that prompted the Honduran Red Cross to identify the Ciudad España Housing project as a good candidate for BPI analysis. Given the acknowledgement of the problem of youth violence as a priority issue for Honduran society, the recent inclusion of the issue of youth violence in the Honduran Red Cross development plan, and on-going concerns in the Ciudad España Housing project related to youth violence and gangs, the application of the BPI training and methodology was very pertinent.

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[138] ibid.

[139] Ordoñex, Alexis. 2003. "Creación De Oportunidades Para Prevención De La Violencia Juvenil En La Colonia San Francisco y Ciudad España 2004-2006." 60. Tegucigalpa: Cruz Roja Hondureña.

Therefore, given the potential situation of high social violence in Ciudad España, it was hoped that using the analytical approach offered by BPI would provide project staff with the opportunity to analyze the positive and negative impact of their aid or development programs on the situation in the community. It was also hoped that a study of this particular case could be developed to share with other Red Cross National Societies, along with lessons learned from the implementation of the BPI training and program analysis.

Summary

In this chapter, the background and context of the case study is developed, including the specifics of the country and organization in which the study is rooted. By considering some of the complexities of the Red Cross organization itself along with the complicated process of mainstreaming a new programming strategy such as the Better Programming Initiative at a global level, one can better understand the challenges and limitations involved in implementing BPI in a specific project such as Ciudad España. By exploring some of the various historical and present day challenges facing Honduras, our understanding of the various factors that have lead to both the development of the community of Ciudad España is broadening and insights into the problems related to youth gangs are offered. This examination helps to provide both a rationale for the selection of the project, along with an introduction to the context of the participants involved in the implementation process.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

> *...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them...Many a researcher would like to tell the whole story but of course cannot; the whole story exceeds anyone's knowing, anyone's telling.*[140]

This chapter presents a description of the inquiry's research design, by providing a review of the methodology undertaken, the context of the study, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis. I will also share some of the challenges posed by the inquiry process as well as the limitations of the research.

Methodological Perspectives Informing the Inquiry

A positivist paradigm, as Guba and Lincoln observe, assumes that there is an objective reality, making it possible to observe that reality "neither influencing it nor being influenced by it"[141], thereby allowing for the claim that research findings can present things 'the way they truly are'. I would suggest that this perspective is problematic in general, and even more so when one researches conflict. I would concur with Tamar Hermann and her reflection that "simply by being members of the human race, researchers of a conflict become part of it"[142], implying that it is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a sense of separateness from the suffering and pain that generally accompanies conflict. Nor is it

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[140] Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. "Introduction: Entering the Field of Qualitative Research." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 1994. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., pg. 2

[141] Guba, Egon G., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 1989. *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, pg. 12.

[142] Hermann, Tamar. 2001. The Impermeable Identity Wall: The Study of Violent Conflicts by 'Insiders" and 'Outsiders'. In *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, edited by M. Smyth and G. Robinson. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, pg. 79.

possible or desirable in conflict to ascertain 'the way things really are', or the 'truth'; rather it is more helpful for one to understand the multiple realities and perspectives which inform it.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, whereby the intent of the researcher is to "make sense of (or interpret) the meanings that others have about the world"[143]. As such, a qualitative or naturalistic perspective informs this inquiry as it allows for the study of "real-world situations as they unfold naturally"[144], the flexibility of an emergent design, in-depth inquiry into people's perspectives and experiences, and recognizes the influence of the researcher in the inquiry process.

A CASE STUDY APPROACH

Case study is a familiar and often popular approach; each of us at some time through our own studies and inquiries have read case studies, perhaps even used it as an approach. As Creswell[145] notes, case study has a long and distinguished history across many disciplines – whether that be in medicine, law, or psychology.

Case study has been defined as "an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context"[146]. Bill Gillham defines a case as

> "a unit of human activity embedded in the real world;
> which can only be studied or understood in context;

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[143] Creswell, John. W. 2003. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pg. 9.
[144] Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pg. 40.
[145] Creswell, John. W. 1998. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
[146] ibid, pg. 61

> which exists in the here and now; that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw[147] "

A case study tries to help us make sense, to understand through the stories that people tell of the issues that make up a particular research question. A case study is used to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and the meaning for those who are involved[148]; it can be a strategy, a method, or a result.

Lincoln and Guba[149] identify three major purposes for using a case study, which include that it is ideal for providing a portrayal of a situation through "thick description", allowing for the complexities of the context to emerge. The second purpose is that a case allows for multiple realities to be communicated, including the interactions between the researcher and the participants, the values of both the investigator and the context. The third purpose is that the case provides a way for the researcher to communicate with the reader, so that they are able to bring their own tacit knowledge to bear on the case, in a way to make the reader feel as if they have vicariously been there.

A case study approach was the strategy chosen for this inquiry. It was deemed to be the most useful approach as it provided the possibility of exploring the implementation process of the BPI with a specific program in Honduras over a period of several months. A case study approach was also seen as the most appropriate way of reporting on the various facets or phases of the inquiry process. Furthermore, the case study approach has been the favoured method of

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[147] Gillham, Bill. 2000. *Case Study Research Methods.* London: Continuum, 2000, pg. 1.
[148] Merriam, Sharan B. 2001. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pg. 19
[149] Lincoln, Yvonna S., and Egon G. Guba. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

presenting the lessons learned from both the various LCPP studies done, including with implementation of BPI within the Red Cross. This approach also provides a way to understand the uniqueness of the specific case, its particularity, through an understanding of the many complex factors that make up the case. This is especially pertinent in dealing with either a post-conflict or high social violence situation, where the intent is not necessarily to be able to generalize to other such situations, difficult given the complexity of each situation, but rather to understand the specifics of a particular situation, and thereby allow for a deeper understanding of the context of the specific situation. Furthermore Stake notes that in order to study a case, researchers gather information on both the commonalities and particularities of a case, through understanding the nature of the case, its historical background, the physical setting, other contexts such as economic, political, and through informants who can shed light on the case.

As a qualitative method, case study has an emphasis on interpretation. The aim is always to understand thoroughly. In terms of a case study, understanding the specifics is the key – rather than extrapolating to other situations, understanding the specifics is fundamental– that is, the details of the stories of the case at hand. Thick description, experiential understanding, and multiple realities are expected in qualitative case studies. Qualitative inquiry is oriented toward personal interpretation and holistic treatment of phenomena, but researchers are also non-interventionist. Merriam[150] notes that some of the important assets of a qualitative researcher are good communication skills such as a capacity to listen well, write clearly and descriptively, as well as a high

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[150] Merriam.

tolerance for ambiguity. It is interesting to note that these are some of the same qualities identified for a good cross-cultural intervenor.

Bounding the Case (setting, participants and events)

While the initial intent of the research project was to study the implementation phase of BPI across three countries in Central America, the boundaries of the case took several turns due to changing circumstances and the reality of the context. The case being studied ultimately became the implementation of the Better Programming Initiatives with the Honduran Red Cross, specifically as it is applied to the situation of high social violence with youth gangs in the community of Ciudad España.

This included the following events – being involved with two BPI trainings, the first as an observer, the second in the role of facilitator; as well as assisting with the design, implementation and facilitation of a Program Analysis workshop with project staff from Ciudad España.

Overview of Research Methods

With a case study, the usual methods of data collection are observing, interviews and document analysis. This case study employed all of these methods, as well as others. Overall my aim was to work together with trainers, participants, and staff involved with BPI, in order to understand, examine and share learnings in regard to implementation of BPI training and methodology. The study used participant observation, participation in the training /evaluation activities, participant feedback from written evaluations of workshops, individual interviews, and secondary data sources including research and project reports. Data was collected through flip charted and computer notes taken during the

program analysis workshop session; individual interviews were audio taped with the intent to be transcribed; and field notes and observations were recorded.

For additional perspective on the effectiveness of the training, written evaluation questionnaires were collected from ten individuals who completed a general BPI training. I also observed two BPI trainings, co-facilitated a program analysis, including translation and development of additional training materials in collaboration with a BPI trainer at the Honduran Red Cross.

Participant Observation & Participation

Stake[151] indicates that a good case study is a patient, reflective process with a willingness to see another view of the whole – a method that is also non-interventive and empathetic – in a way using the least obtrusive manner of gaining the necessary information . So much so that Stake suggests that if one can get the information one wants by observation and use of records only, it would be good not even to interview. However, he also states that while the interpretations of the researcher are emphasized more than those of the people being studied, the researcher needs to try to preserve the multiple views of what is happening.

Taking a role of participant-observation connotes taking a more active role within the case study situation, and as Yin[152] remarks, it may mean that one participates in the events being studied. This is particularly true in this specific case study as I became increasingly more involved in the day to day work life at the Federation office, more specifically with the meetings and work related to the

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[151] Stake, Robert. 1995. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
[152] Yin, Robert. 1994. *Case study research: Design and methods*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

study regarding youth violence. This type of participation was crucial as it allowed me to more fully understand the BPI training and implementation process first hand.

Gillham[153] describes observation as having three main elements – watching what people do, listening to what they say, and sometimes asking them clarifying questions. While two kinds of observation were identified – participant and detached/structured, what I employed for this case study was primarily participant observation. Of the four possible stances of observation identified by Merriam[154], the stance I took shifted from 'observer as participant' to 'participant as observer'. Merriam states that taking the stance of 'participant as observer' means that the observer activities take a secondary role to the researcher's role as participant, while conversely, as a "observer as participant' ,the role of observer predominates over the researcher's role of participant.

This shift took place for me over the period of the research project as my role changed; initially, I took more of an observer role, both in the daily operations of the office as well as in the initial BPI training sessions. Part of the reason for taking this role was that in such a new situation, both in terms of the reality of the Federation responsibilities with the Honduran Red Cross, the workings of the Honduran Red Cross itself, as well as a need to become more familiar with the "lay of the land" of the BPI training process (and BPI as well), it was necessary for me to just observe what was going on. I think that at this stage I would have had what Adler and Adler would term a "peripheral membership

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[153]Gilham, pg. 45.
[154] Merriam.

role" such that I was able to "observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership"[155]. During the initial stages of the research project, this would appropriately describe my role as a researcher – both within the office as well as in being involved with the BPI training. My initial discussions with staff as well as visits to Ciudad España were more in that role – my participation was more as an outside observer, it seemed clear that I was just there to get a sense of how things operated.

I am not sure when my stance changed to that which Adler & Adler call an 'active membership' role, when I became "more involved in the setting's central activities, assuming responsibilities that advance[d] the group, but without fully committing [myself] to members' values and goals"[156]. Over time, however, I noticed that as I integrated more into the daily operations of the office, I became more of a part of the functioning of the office – perhaps it started with the sense of necessity of answering the ringing phone (once I got over the terror of understanding and being understood with my limited Spanish) when no one else was around. Wherever the start, at some point I began answering the phone on a more regular basis as well as participating more openly and constructively in planning meetings regarding an upcoming Honduran Red Cross national conference on youth violence. In both the planning and facilitation of the program analysis with Ciudad España, I was actively involved in collaboration

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[155]Adler, Patricia A., and Peter Adler. "Observational Techniques." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 377-92. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994, pg. 380.
[156] ibid, pg. 380.

with my Honduran Red Cross "counterpart" in designing the program and tools to be used, as well as in helping to facilitate the workshop process.

Did I finally move toward a role which Merriam identifies as 'collaborative partner', a role which is identified as being close to a complete participant with one's role as an observer clearly known to all involved? This role, I believe, more clearly falls into the role one would take in action research or PAR, where the researcher and participants are co-constructing the research process – "including defining the problem to be studied, collecting and analyzing data, and writing and disseminating the findings"[157]. I would venture to suggest that I was at times able to take on that type of role. In terms of collecting and analyzing data – excluding the conversations that my counterpart and I did have about what we felt was part of the process and issues regarding BPI, the interviews were conducted and subsequently accessed only by myself. Finally, in terms of writing and disseminating the findings, unfortunately that has been my responsibility alone.

Yin discusses the major problems related to participant observation as being the potential biases produced, such as bias toward the organization being studied or bias toward the tasks at hand rather than the research project. However he also notes that there remain trade-offs between the opportunities of participant-observation (ability to gain access to events or groups otherwise inaccessible), the ability to perceive reality from the "inside" - having an insiders perspective; and access beyond a passive investigative role. However, in my situation, given my short sojourn, I would not identify this as a major problem; in

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[157] Merriam, pg. 101.

fact, participating allowed me to develop a far richer understanding of the context.

Interviews – Talking with People

Contrary to Stakes' insistence that observation is the primary method, Yin[158] identifies interviews as being the most important source of information for a case study. Interviews are in many ways opportunities to talk with people and, according to Bogdan and Biklen, interviews are defined as "...a purposeful conversation usually between two people... that is directed by one in order to get information[159]". Ely[160] characterizes interviews in two ways – formal and informal. As this inquiry used both forms, I will discuss them separately.

Unlike formal interviews that tend to be more planned and generally take place in a quiet and secluded location, informal interviews are those that take place more spontaneously, when questions and discussions arise in the moment out of a situation that occurs during participant-observation and there is both time and energy. This type of interview happened on a regular basis and included conversations with key contacts at various stages during the research project in order to gather information, or to clarify expectations, process, or details regarding the specific context; conversations with my 'counterpart' and another colleague about their perspectives on the challenges in Honduras, as well as working for the Red Cross, during a three hour car ride to visit an office; informal debriefings that took place with my two co-facilitators after facilitating the program analysis workshop; or in a pre-workshop planning meeting with two of

[158] Yin.
[159] as quoted in Ely, Margot. 1991. *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*. London: Falmer Press, pg. 58.
[160] Ely.

the staff from the Ciudad España project. These on-going conversations proved invaluable to my understanding of various aspects of the project as well as the perspectives of the people involved.

However, in order to develop as complete a view as possible regarding the Better Programming Initiative and its implementation, in addition to the aforementioned informal interviews as well as my day to day observations, a total of thirteen semi-structured formal individual interviews took place with various people involved at various levels and in various ways with BPI and the Red Cross. Individuals interviewed included key informants - two International Federation Delegates familiar with BPI; two BPI trainers; both co-facilitators for the BPI training and Program Analysis. Seven of the nine project staff from Ciudad España who participated in the BPI training and program analysis were interviewed either individually or in pairs.

Formal interviews all took place near the end of my sojourn in Honduras. This was intentional as it was important for workshop participants to have both completed the training and have had some time back at their work project; in the case of my co-facilitators, it made more sense to conduct the interviews after having facilitated the training and program analysis workshops.

A semi-structured interview format was used; a list of open-ended questions were asked of each respondent. All participants were asked several questions in common, then, depending on their perspective of BPI (e.g. BPI trainer vs. participant) and their responses, additional questions were included. Interviews ranged from 30-90 minutes. All but three interviews were conducted in Spanish. Two of the interviews were conducted over the phone, the remaining

were conducted face to face. A list of the general questions can be found in the appendix. All formal interviews were audio-taped with the agreement of participants. Key informant interviews were transcribed in full, and where applicable translated from Spanish to English, while interviews with workshop participants were reviewed on two separate occasions and key comments were noted for further reference and analysis.

Documentation & Archival Records

Documents played a critical role in this inquiry, both as a source of information to understand some of the complexities of the organization as well as the particulars regarding the application of the BPI methodology, and training in a larger organizational context. Documents used include the following: various BPI training materials (workshop manuals, power point presentations, handouts, etc); administrative documents such as planning proposals, training reports, strategic plans, among others; as well as general background information on the Federation and Honduran Red Cross activities. Having access to these documents, particularly those related to BPI, were important in helping to develop my understanding of the process.

Field Writing

This took the form of personal notes that were kept over the period of my research. Unfortunately, my diligence in keeping a regular record of events/ impressions was sporadic – fluctuating with the intensity of my schedule. I was initially able to find time to write while at the office each day, but as my involvement in the daily operations of the office and the pace of the research increased, the time and effort available for writing decreased correspondingly.

Ethical Considerations

An ethical review of this research was conducted and approved by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Committee. As part of the ethics requirement, participants interviewed signed a letter of consent, which had been translated into Spanish.

Challenges, Issues & Limitations

The following section outlines what I feel were the major challenges and issues which arose for me during the research process.

Time Constraints

One of the greatest constraints that I worked with was the limited amount of time that I was able to spend in Honduras overall. This meant that there was only a limited timeframe available to conduct the BPI training, program analysis, and any follow-up process, such as interviews. The impact of this was threefold: first, the requirement for a speedy approval from the Spanish Red Cross Head of Delegation to do a BPI training and Program Analysis with the Ciudad España project staff did not allow sufficient time to bring the Spanish delegates and all of the project managers into the approval process. Their lack of involvement will most likely mean that there will be a more limited possibility of the on-going use of the BPI tool in the project. While there may have been various reasons for their lack of involvement, more time would have allowed for a greater building of rapport, hopefully countering their resistance to the process.

The second impact was that the shortened period between the day that the training was approved and the actual BPI training and program analysis left insufficient time to be able to incorporate other stakeholders in the process.

Ideally, aid recipients or beneficiaries would have been involved, bringing another valuable perspective to the process.

The final impact of time constraints was that there was only a short period of time between the program analysis workshop and the follow-up interviews conducted with workshop participants. This limited the time available for participants to both reflect on their learning and on ways to apply it.

Working Cross-Culturally

Working in a different cultural context strongly influenced my access to data and information in the research process. I would suggest that there were two different cultural contexts – Latin American (Honduran) and the organizational culture of the Red Cross.

While one of the philosophical assumptions of qualitative research is that research is always value laden and that biases are present, I would suggest an additional caution working in a cross-cultural context. Perhaps it goes without saying that my reflections and observations were always from my own cultural viewpoint, that is, from the values, beliefs, and biases that I hold. Having some familiarity with crossing cultures through having worked in international contexts for several years, I was aware of the many challenges of working cross-culturally, including the challenge of making ethnocentric interpretations of behaviours, events, etc. So I made a conscious effort to reflect on my own reactions, trying to remain mindful that my initial response to a challenging situation was most likely ethnocentrically based; generally second guessing my initial responses, continually reflecting on the various possible interpretations of my own and others comments and behaviours. Unfortunately in this context I

did not have a cultural informant, that is, someone from the cultural context who was able to assist with an appropriate cultural interpretation. This is where my daily mindfulness meditation practice was particularly useful, as it assisted me in being able to not hold tightly to a particular viewpoint or emotional response.

A second limitation of working cross-culturally was that there were times when I was not able to read the cultural context appropriately. For example, during the training workshops, it was difficult to read the context between the two facilitators, identifying what were individual versus cultural influences. The implication of this was important in two ways – either by my hesitation to act as I either wasn't sure of the context, or blundering ahead in my culturally specific manner, unwittingly causing a reaction to my behaviour.

Working in a Second Language

While it has already been noted that I was working in another culture, I was also working in my second language, Spanish, in which I have an intermediate level. In order to improve my Spanish language capabilities, I intentionally began the research project with a month of Spanish language immersion in Antigua, Guatemala. This definitely helped to increase my capacity and comfort with the language. However, even given this period of learning, I remained at an intermediate plus level, not achieving fluency.

Practically, this meant that while I was generally able to understand or comprehend most of what went on around me, some conversations, rapid-fire dialogues, idiomatic expressions, acronyms, slang, and technical words were beyond my capacity to understand. I responded to these situation in two ways, first by accepting to have only a partial understanding in conversations which I

perceived as being less critical or superficial. So that I did not have to continually ask for clarification or slow discussion and conversations for my benefit, I chose not to understand everything. However, for conversations or discussions that I deemed more critical or pertinent to the research I would ask for clarification /re-phrasing in order to understand fully. I made a moment-to-moment decision on what I needed to understand completely.

My language level resulted in two major impacts. The first impact was that in some cases the interview process was hampered. This took place particularly with the staff from Ciudad España, whom I did not stop to ask for clarification during interviews in order not to stop the animated flow of their ideas or points. Given that I was taping the conversations, I knew I could re-listen to the audiotape later. However, this approach had the limitation that I probably was not able to follow up on potentially interesting avenues of discussion, having missed those leaps of mind.

The second impact of my language level was the occasional frustration of people or colleagues in having to slow down their dialogue or discussion in order to ensure that I understood. This was partly due to language and perhaps also to not 'getting' a cultural nuance, especially for those with less experience in working with a second language person. In one particular instance, this was important as it seemed to shut down or narrow communication. One of the people I worked most closely with on the project, after a period of trying to explain a crucial point to me, became rather frustrated as he perceived that I was not understanding what he was trying to convey. As a very busy person, where his time was of the essence, my lack of understanding was frustrating, as he

needed to take the time to 'make' me understand. The impact, evident here, is that if I didn't get it right away, helping me to understand was dependent on whomever I was talking with, and whether they were interested and capable of 'taking the time' to help me to understand. I suspect that at times conversations or ideas were cut short, due to lack of available time for clarification.

Reflections on My Role as a Researcher

As mentioned earlier, circumstances were such that I had to negotiate the process of my research in a more solitary manner than I would have liked. This occurred for several reasons: physical distance of the Federation Regional Office, a lack of interest and agenda of others to engage in process, and unfamiliarity in working with a student. I suspect there was an inclination to view someone like myself (white, northern, middle-aged woman) more in a consultant role than that of student researcher. It was more comfortable to slot me into the more familiar paradigm of delegate/consultant, which was a role familiar to most staff from the Honduran Red Cross given the lengthy involvement of foreign delegates during Hurricane Mitch relief efforts.

I did not come with a rigid agenda or set of objectives. This was both problematic and helpful. It was problematic in that it gave neither a solid place to come up against, nor a secure place to stand – so it was a particularly ungrounding space for me. I often felt the push / pull of needing to have something concrete – feeling responsible to accomplish something to account for the funding received, yet not wanting to impose my perspectives or ideas. It was a constant balancing act –trying to find a balance on a teeter-totter between uncertainty, not imposing a particular viewpoint, and a sense of responsibility.

Finally, I am not sure that I was ever comfortable or clear in my role as a researcher or inquirer. Perhaps this is a common occurrence for most novice researchers, these feelings of discomfort or conflict, neither wanting to maintain a position of outside observer, or even worse yet, being in a position of 'the expert' and using data gathered for my own purposes, yet feeling the pull in the situation which placed me in more or less that situation. Unfortunately in my case, neither the situation nor the interest of those involved allowed for a particularly participatory process. It was perhaps a useful, yet unintended, strategy to put me in the role of 'consultant' as the separation inherent in this role allowed for a modicum of disengagement on the part of those around me, so my 'counterpart' didn't really have to fully engage in the process. By viewing me as a consultant I could be seen as working independently on a separate agenda. He could remain distant, not having to fully commit (which has its advantages in a busy schedule) nor take full responsibility, therefore, in my view, seeming only to superficially engage in the process.

The Inquiry Process

Making Initial Contact and Gaining Entry

> *It seemed a rather auspicious beginning. After an all night flight, having waited for the customs officials to scramble to their posts in the pre-dawn light, it was rather heartening to see the hands holding the piece of paper with my name written on it. I had arrived in Guatemala and my research journey had truly begun. A few days after settling in, I negotiated my way to the Federation Regional Red Cross office from Antigua to Guatemala city by local bus; arriving only to find out the person I thought I was supposed to meet had never been told I was coming... it was then that I began to wonder perhaps if this beginning was not as auspicious as I had hoped.*
>
> Reflections from the field

As Lincoln and Guba[161] describe, the key to gaining access to an inquiry site lies with the gatekeepers, both formal and informal; and often the inquirer must deal with multiple gatekeepers. This aptly describes the situation with this case study.

The process of gaining access while initially quite simple, became fraught with many complications. My original contact with the Federation was through previous work colleagues from an organization called Canada World Youth, where I had worked both in the field and in the Prairies Regional Office for close to fifteen years. A good friend and colleague from my time with Canada World Youth, Robert[162], had left Canada to work with the Red Cross in South America several years previously, and when the possibility of a project arose, we discussed the potential of doing a project with the Red Cross. Given my interest and studies in the field of conflict resolution, he suggested that it would be most worthwhile for me to look at a new initiative within the Federation called the Better Programming Initiative (BPI). Over several weeks of discussion, and contact with another Canadian colleague who was working with the Federation Regional Office in Guatemala, it was decided that it made the most practical and logistical sense for me to focus my project in Central America for several reasons. John, as the BPI trainer having just returned from facilitating the BPI training of trainers for Latin America, would most likely still be with the Red Cross in Central America and could support my research there; from his perspective there seemed to be a greater number of Red Cross National Societies that were interested and

[161] Lincoln and Guba.
[162] in order to maintain confidentiality pseudonyms are used, except where noted.

able to take on the implementation of the BPI strategy in their respective countries. Finally, working in Central America made more logistical sense, given my funding limitations, particularly in terms of ease of travel throughout the region.

In retrospect, some of the warning signs of upcoming challenges were evident during the funding application process. Requests for information, proposal drafts, and contact in general were already an effort – whether due to impending disasters, computer technology communication issues, or having a low priority in the mountain of work that seemed evident for an organization with a primary task of responding to disasters. While waiting to hear about the fate of the project funding, I found out that John, my main contact in the Federation Regional Office, was leaving his position for another position in Panama and that the new Regional Disaster Preparedness Delegate would begin her new position in late August; I also learned at that time that the Federation Regional Office would be moving from Guatemala to Panama by year's end.

Prior to arriving, I consequently needed to re-negotiate the process of my entry to the organization with new players, the same old unreliable email system, and a certain uncertainty of who knew about my proposal, their level of interest, or support. With each passing day, and emails that were either not answered or cursorily responded to, my questions and doubts grew stronger – what was I getting into? What would I arrive to? Would I arrive only to be ignored?

Negotiating Organizational Access

After several weeks of complicated negotiations to determine if and where the project could take place, it was decided that it would be with the Honduran

Red Cross. Having had a brief visit to Honduras to determine if it was possible to conduct the research there, I had already made some contact with some of the people who would be involved with and support the research. During my initial days there it was important to build relationships. So in order to get to understand the context of organizational culture, I felt it important to spend the first week or two (even though I knew I had just over 6 weeks to do everything) to get to know who did what, to understand the rhythm of the office, etc.

However, like many new beginnings, while the Head of Delegation had welcomed and even encouraged my coming – finding me a place in the office was not something that anyone had anticipated. In contrast to my earlier three day trip in January which was highly organized, where almost every minute was accounted for, this time it seemed that I had to find my own way in. The first couple of weeks were thus spent on the periphery of the office – arriving late, hoping that would ensure that someone would be there ahead of me to unlock the office door, trying to find a desk to work when I was there, generally trying not to be in the way too much...always feeling like I was trying to fit in.

Building and Maintaining Trust

It is "recognized that building and maintaining trust is an important task for the field inquirer"[163], such that it is important for the process of building trust to be focused on from the beginning of the inquiry. I spent a total of nine weeks in Honduras, and although this seems like a relatively short period of time, in fact, the original project design had me spending a month in three countries. Living in Tegucigalpa, Honduras for an extended period of time permitted me to

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[163] Lincoln and Guba, pg. 256.

develop a routine of "going to the office everyday", which in turn allowed me to become familiar with and take part of the daily routine of the office – whether it was answering phones or volunteering to collect resources related to youth violence. Staying longer in one location also assisted in building trust and deepen relationships with the people I was collaborating on the project with, as well as helping me find additional ways to share my interests, skills, and abilities – such as planning and facilitating a training workshop for Red Cross Youth in conjunction with another Canadian volunteer. I also had time to develop a more profound understanding of the reality of Honduras and to strengthen ties to a country I knew little about. I believe that deepening my knowledge of the context also helped to strengthen my understanding of BPI.

Identifying and Working with Informants

Lincoln and Guba argue that many of the problems that arise from gatekeepers, social and cultural differences can be "short-circuited...through the selective use of informants"[164]. Making a distinction between informers, those who may have an axe to grind, and informants, they go on to identify a useful informant as a person "who is a legitimate, committed, and accepted member within the local context, but who is, at the same time, willing to act as member of the inquiry team, even if only informally"[165].

For me, this person was the Federation's Head of Delegation to Honduras, Fabio[166], who had been working in Honduras for several years and had for many years worked as a Federation delegate. Fabio brought, and was willing to share,

[164] ibid, pg. 258.
[165] ibid, pg. 258.
[166] pseudonym

his perspective and understanding of the norms, attitudes, and culture of the larger Federation context as well as the local context with the Honduran Red Cross. Given the complexity of the both organizations, and the limited time I had available, his advice and understanding were invaluable to the process. Fabio was also invaluable as a guide and facilitator within the labyrinth of permissions needed for the research to move forward, which included the initial approval of the President of the Honduran Red Cross for the research to begin, as well as the negotiations with the Head of Delegation for the Spanish Red Cross that needed to take place in order to work with Ciudad España staff on a program analysis. A needed legitimacy and credibility was conferred to both myself and the project through Fabio's interest and support. Without that support, the project would probably not have happened. Finally, it helped immensely that he spoke English, providing a willing ear to help me unpack any linguistic confusions, as well as a welcome opportunity to communicate in my first language.

Summary

In presenting a description of the inquiry's research design, this chapter reviewed the methodological approach, a qualitative case study, as well as the methods employed in the data gathering process. Hopefully, through the exploration made of the inquiry process the reader has been able to develop a deeper understanding of the many challenges, issues and limitations which were part of this research journey.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BETTER PROGRAMMING INITIATIVE IN HONDURAS: A CASE STUDY

"What could this possibly have to do with me or my work?" The question could almost be seen hanging in the air as the workshop began that morning; a sense of confusion evident as the participants began to settle in the meeting room. At first I thought it was the usual moments of adjusting to a new space at the start of the day. It was only later, through an informal conversation during the mid-morning break, that I understood the initial reluctance and resistance that permeated the room that first morning. It seemed that the staff from Ciudad España had thought they were coming to a workshop on conflict resolution techniques. So when the review of the agenda included something about what was happening in Tajikistan, there was, I think, a collective sigh of disappointment.

It was fascinating to watch, then, as the day progressed, the rising interest of the participants – the cacophony of increasingly excited voices – participants no longer sitting back in their chairs, rather the staff from Ciudad España were now leaning forward, eager to add their comments to group discussions. Compared to the slow, measured movements and voices that had characterized the first session of the morning – you could almost see the spark of ideas and connections leaping around the room. While part of this was due to the dynamism of the BPI trainer and his capacity to adapt the training to a Red Cross context, in was later clear from the participants' feedback that it was the simplicity and relevance of the tool itself that was a major factor.

Reflections on the first BPI training

Introduction

This chapter presents the implementation process of the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) in Honduras. My intent is to take the reader through the process in some detail – so that some of the complexities and layers of the inherent challenges of such an implementation process become evident. It begins with an introduction to the Honduran BPI trainer, followed by an overview of the BPI implementation in Honduras; regional challenges are then explored. The BPI training itself is then described in the specific context of Ciudad España – where

comments from participants and trainers are included to give a deeper, more layered analysis.

The Honduran BPI Trainer

Ricardo Espinoza[167] had been trained as a trainer in the Red Cross's Better Programming Initiatives in the spring of 2002 at the first trainer for trainers workshop held in Latin America (Quito, Ecuador). Although he had been involved as a volunteer with the Honduran Red Cross for many years, he had only become a staff member in the previous year. I first met Ricardo in February during my initial trip to Honduras, almost a year after he had taken his training. I had visited the Honduran Red Cross to explore the feasibility of implementing a BPI training and program analysis in Honduras and, in the affirmative, whether I could be involved. I was hopeful, because as mentioned previously, the Honduran Red Cross was alone in Central America in having made at least a small step forward in implementing the BPI training.

It was clear to me that the role of the BPI trainer was critical in the mainstreaming of the concept and tool. Much depended on his understanding of the training, his capacity and comfort as a trainer, his ability to adapt the training to a local reality, and perhaps most importantly, his interest in the tool and willingness to champion its implementation in a National Society. While this process can be impeded by multiple factors outside of one's control, such as changing National Society priorities, the National Society has in theory accepted that a program will be implemented by sending someone to attend the training. As the training is given to one person, it is that individual's responsibility to

[167] Pseudonyms are used for all of the participants involved in the study.

disseminate it at the national level, and this can often be challenging given the many other tasks and priorities.

Ricardo had taken his commitments made during the training in Quito seriously, although by the time I had arrived, he was farther behind in his implementation schedule than he had anticipated. As is often the case, other priorities had intervened. Of the four people trained from the Central America region, he was the only one who had been able to apply what he had learned – one person had left the Red Cross; another, a Federation delegate, had left the region for another posting; the final person had not found a way, given other priorities, to incorporate BPI into his work.

Ricardo was frustrated that the many other plans made during the training in Quito that had not been followed through, the most important of which was the lack of a Regional Federation BPI focal point. The role of the BPI focal point was viewed as crucial in terms of providing support, access to funding from the Federation Secretariat Office in Geneva, and linkages with other BPI trainers. It was also the trainer's role to organize a follow-up and evaluation in Central America, where the relevance of BPI in the region could be discussed, materials could be reviewed and updated. However the role of the focal point seemed to have disappeared with the replacement of the Disaster Preparedness Delegate at the Federation Regional Office. While the previous staff person was one of the BPI trainers for the Training of Trainers in Ecuador, his replacement did not appear to have the same level of either understanding or commitment to the BPI process.

Beyond the support provided at a regional level, the situation for a person being trained in a National Society is much more complex, as the following reflection from a BPI trainer outlines:

> *I think we've given people, National Societies, lots of tools, but then we may train one or [several] people in National Societies, but then not much support in their application. Sometimes that support is in terms of follow-up, accompanying them in doing it, financial support. The sheer number of tools that we are expecting them to use – all which are very good you know – but each one (Sphere, PPP, BPI, VCA) there are all these globalized Federation tools, and meanwhile National Societies are scraping by on the barest of resources – so I think there is a problem in that sense that there isn't enough follow-up or resources...the other thing, for instance, someone goes to a workshop and then comes back, there is a lot of competition or a certain jealousy – so someone may say "just because you went to Quito for a workshop doesn't mean that I am going to listen to what you have to say about BPI"...[so] an individual might go to a workshop and is trained by a couple of people who are passionate about the subject...and then they come home to a bunch of other directors who are maybe a little jealous that this person got to go away for 2 weeks, maybe he wasn't really the right person to go, maybe he was, maybe he doesn't have the right ability to sell it and then he is thrown back in there and he needs to try and move it forward and then he is with five other directors who perhaps have also been away for training on one of the five other tools...*

Implementing BPI in Honduras

Ricardo's initial step in disseminating BPI was to provide a one day orientation for senior managers and coordinators at the Honduran Red Cross. While this training had taken place in September 2002, further BPI training had stalled since then. My arrival in the region and interest in the implementation process of BPI was fortuitous. It provided an opportunity for Ricardo to further the implementation process in Honduras, allowing him to fulfill the commitments he had made in Quito. While my presence provided an opportunity to highlight BPI in the region, the focus on the project also meant

access to a small allocation of funds from Geneva for the training and program analysis planned. My principle contact, Ricardo, was extremely busy, so I often felt like he had to squeeze me into his schedule. BPI was only one of many tasks he was responsible for. This was often a source of frustration for me, although over time I came to appreciate some of the constraints he faced.

Two weeks after my arrival, the first BPI training was held. The training was planned and facilitated by Ricardo and one of the national coordinators who had attended the orientation in September. Rather quickly put together, the training involved several staff from the Ciudad España project and several young people who volunteer with the Red Cross youth. Not only was it a very welcomed chance for me to observe and participate in a BPI training, it also seemed a useful opportunity for the one of the project managers from Ciudad España to determine how useful it could be in their context. While he had already been interested in utilizing a BPI analysis, the experience in the workshop furthered his interest. Following this training, the process of negotiating to apply BPI with the Ciudad España project formally began.

Negotiating Access

The wheels of bureaucracy move ever so slowly, so much so that for several weeks I worried that the BPI training and program analysis would never happen. And it was a challenge to wait as there was little I could do to intervene – the possibility depended on a number of key players – from the head of the Spanish Red Cross, the Honduran manager of the project, to the Spanish Red Cross delegates. Yet, even after the case had been formally presented, and had been accepted by the appropriate person, even then we had to wait again for the project manager to see when we could meet with staff. My frustration and concern growing, as even after having met with staff the process seemed to get inevitably delayed. But, I also had to remember that the only one with a pressing timeline was me...

Reflections from the field

...[one of the project managers] is between a rock and a hard place...he is trapped. He understands that BPI is important, he told me this, and he said also that the problems in Ciudad España are not really understood by many – one knows that there are maras – he said that it is important to get to know more than the context... but also the interior of the programs, the weaknesses of the processes – [some of the other managers], I suppose, are not going to like this very much and there is a lot of resistance. *BPI trainer*

An on-going challenge was my inexperience with the complex structure, inter-relationships, and functioning of the Red Cross organization. The negotiation and decision-making process in applying BPI to the Ciudad España project was, for me, complex and often incomprehensible. So while it was clear that my involvement had been 'approved' by the Federation delegate, and more importantly, by the President of the Honduran Red Cross, permission also needed to be granted from the head of the Spanish Red Cross delegation in order to move ahead with a training and program analysis in Ciudad España. It was here that one entered the complex relationships between the Honduran Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross, and the intricacies of where power was located. Even though we had been approached by the Honduran Project Director of Ciudad España and received formal approval by the Head of the Spanish Red Cross, there still was no guarantee that the Spanish Red Cross delegates would agree to the training. These internal team dynamics were complex. Furthermore the complex issues of bilateralism between the Spanish Red Cross and the Honduran Red Cross arose, as well as a sensitivity in the relationship between the Spanish Red Cross and Geneva. As one of the BPI trainers observed, "*the delegates have their own hierarchy, no delegate is ever under a Honduran...they are all incredibly territorial...this is my territory and no one enters here.*" It seemed then to me that one of the consequences that (my) short timelines imposed was that it limited

the capacity to engage in the process of 'buying in' all of the staff from Ciudad España; on the other hand, more time may not have made a difference given the complexities of the relationships.

Another perhaps less graspable layer in the process of negotiating access was the sensitivity of the issue of youth violence in Ciudad España. It was a known situation that was not really talked about openly in the Red Cross environment. While the Project Director and several staff had received threatening phone calls from gang members, and project staff had been given walky-talkies so that they could communicate quickly in the case of a problem, the situation with youth gangs did not seem to be fully acknowledged. Nor was it openly discussed in the community, as the perception was that if gang members knew that there was something being planned to respond to them, they would actively resist it.

Not only was it sensitive in terms of the people's acceptance of the problem, but also in terms of their assumptions of how best to work with the conflict or violence. In private and rather whispered conversations with one of the project managers during the negotiation process, I learned of some of the various perspectives of how the 'problem' should be responded to or dealt with. The responses could best be framed in terms of 'working around conflict', 'working in conflict', or 'working on conflict'[168]. One perspective consisted of working around the situation of youth violence, assuming that the project could continue without being negatively affected by the conflict. Others felt that,

[168] These terms are adapted from a guide to conflict assessment found on pg. 168 in Galama and van Tongeren.

although acknowledging that youth violence both impacts the project and is impacted by the project, it would be best to work in the conflict by finding ways to minimize the negative impact of the aid. Or finally, one of the project manager's perspective was to work on the conflict, using the project to positively affect the situation for youth through refocusing the program to address the root causes. While this project manager was actively supporting the application of the BPI process, he was simultaneously secretly negotiating with a group experienced in working with youth gangs to begin working in the project.

BPI Training with Ciudad España Project Staff

After several weeks of negotiations, the BPI training with the Ciudad España team took place about two weeks before I was scheduled to depart Honduras; it was facilitated by Ricardo and a colleague, and was attended by nine staff from Ciudad España: seven community workers, one coordinator, and one of the project managers. Citing busy schedules, none of the remaining managers from the Ciudad España project participated. The objectives for the BPI training and program analysis workshop were:

a. To improve the capacity of the team from Ciudad España in using the BPI methodology;
b. To put the BPI methodology into practice, through an analysis of the Ciudad España project, including the specific projects in Community Health, Social Education and MONC[169] (community planning and work-for-home monitoring);
c. Based on the program analysis, identify programming options and strategies;

[169] MONC is an acronym for Mano de Obra No Calificada which translates as unskilled labour.

d. To establish a follow-up mechanism to continue the analysis of BPI within the Ciudad España project.

Introducing BPI

The format of the LCPP/BPI training[170] is simple, straightforward and involves a participatory methodology of small and large group activities and discussions, as well as lecture format, primarily using powerpoint presentations. As mentioned previously, the BPI training utilized the LCPP format and materials. The agenda (see Appendix C) included an introduction to the LCPP, with participants then working through a case study (involving Save the Children in Tajikistan) to assist participants in both analyzing the relationship between aid and conflict, as well as for them to consider the potential negative and positive impacts of aid on a conflict. Following the case study, the BPI framework was presented, a lecture that included a review of dividers and connectors, elements of the aid program, as well as examples of ethical messages and resource transfers relevant to the situation. The focus was on the case study as well as examples from the Red Cross. The training ended with a creative "options game" that helped to simulate some of the creativity needed in looking for new programming options.

It was a long and intensely packed day. The training was held in the meeting room at the Honduran Red Cross office, located down the hall from the Ciudad España team office. This location was a problem. There were constant interruptions from the 'missing staff', the senior manager and delegates,

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[170] The following section is adapted from the *Trainer's Manual, Local Capacities for Peace Project* (1999) edited by the Local Capacities for Peace Project. See appendix for the agenda used for the BPI workshop.

requesting that participants leave the workshop to respond to queries. Along with the interruptions, the absence of the delegates and managers was of particular concern to the program staff who were in attendance, as they expressed concern of how suggestions for changes to their work or to the project arising out of the workshop would be accepted. As one of the facilitators privately mentioned later, "*the delegates are not going to very much like the first results that have been made. There will be a resistance*".

Those that did attend the training were unanimously positive in their feedback. Participants found the BPI methodology "*very important and necessary to apply to our area of work, now we have a guide to support our work*" and that "*it is an important methodology because it will help us more effectively plan and obtain better results in the projects*". The overall tool was seen to be "*practical*", "*very clear*", "*uncomplicated*" and "*easy enough that it could be utilized with whatever work group in the project*". The participatory nature of the training was appreciated as well as the clarity of the process. As this was the first day of a three-day workshop process, basically the orientation to the tool that would be applied shortly to their specific context, it was a very good sign that participants left feeling energized and excited to continue with an analysis of their particular project.

The Program Analysis

After yet more delays and challenges in finding a suitable date, the program analysis finally took place ten days after the initial BPI training. Along with the logistical aspects, such as identifying workshop date and location, the preparation for the program analysis workshop was more intensive. The main

focus on training materials prepared by the Red Cross had been on the dissemination process. It was not until late 2002 that Red Cross specific materials were made available to provide training at the national level. Prior to this, all the training materials, which had been translated into Spanish, were from the LCPP project. Although updated training materials from the Federation were available in English as of December 2002, nothing had yet been translated into Spanish.

While the training materials for the general BPI session were well thought through and prepared, there was a noticeable lack of materials or documentation regarding the facilitation of a program analysis. So while the session outlines were detailed for BPI, it was assumed that a trainer would follow the same outline for a program analysis. This oversight, however, proved to be a serious stumbling block. While Ricardo and I met briefly to develop a general agenda, the lack of materials meant that each facilitator was left to prepare his or her own sessions. As many of the ancillary materials were only available in English, I assisted in identifying and translating the most pertinent materials. Frustrations were the limited time, two to three hours, available for us to plan the workshop and the accompanying sense of a disjointed workshop that resulted.

Overview of the Program Analysis Workshop

The goal of the program analysis workshop was to analyze the impact of three specific projects in Ciudad España – Community health, Social Education, and MONC on the situation of youth violence. Our workshop followed a similar format to the BPI/LCPP training. An outline of the proposed and amended workshop can be found in Appendix D. It is also worthwhile to note that the

program manager was not able to attend the program analysis due to an emergency that had arisen.

Step 1 – Analyzing the Context of the Conflict

As noted earlier, one of the first steps in the process of the conflict analysis is clearly identifying who are the groups in conflict. It was a challenge to construct the specific situation with the maras in Ciudad España as a conflict. Both BPI and LCPP were developed to deal with post-conflict situations, not situations of high social violence as is the case with the maras in general and Ciudad España in particular. One of the problems that this posed was in determining who the groups in conflict were – was it the youth gang members (and their supporters) 'versus' community members of Ciudad España? Or was it the youth gang members 'versus' the Honduran Red Cross? Or was it the community 'versus' the project? In some ways, it might have been some or all of the above. This was never clarified between the three trainers, nor explicitly discussed during the workshop; the analysis instead began to focus more generally on the community as a whole. I struggled with this for much of the workshop, feeling like we were all going in slightly different directions. I later realized during a conversation with one of the other trainers that we had different perspectives. While I was feeling that the focus of the analysis should remain related to youth or maras, he did not, as he reflects here:

> *I can't see Maras vs. the community, because they are part of the community. So, if you are talking about the dividers or the connectors in the community – it isn't the dividers between the maras and the community or the connectors between the maras and the community, rather it is the dividers between the community and the project ...what divides or unites*

> *the project with the community. It is another way to view the dividers and connectors.*

Notwithstanding our lack of clarity, the workshop began with a lecture by the primary BPI trainer, Ricardo, consisting of an overview of the situation of youth and youth gangs in Central America and Honduras. For most of the participants, it was an enlightening session as they shared that it was the first time that they had a sense of some of the underlying issues related to the situation with gangs and the extent of the problem with maras in Honduras and throughout the region. Participants later reflected that "*the development [of the national context] was excellent as it located us in the situation that we are living in our country*" and "*it helped to see the root of the problem and gave us some guidelines*". Analyzing the local context was also equally well received. It was "*very concrete and easy to understand*" as "*the whole group was interested in learning and clarifying doubts about the situation*" in the community. Here the group collectively identified current project related issues as well as those stemming from the period spent in temporary housing or in macroalbergues.

After building a common understanding of some of the issues facing the community, the group split up into their three respective program working groups – community health, social-education, and MONC (community planning and work-for-home monitoring), identifying dividers and tensions in the community from the perspective of their project. Unfortunately, the series of questions that had been put together as a guide and stimulus for discussion generated more confusion than clarification. Too many of the questions were of a similar nature. At the same time, each group's discussions were intense,

productive, and required several hours more than had been originally scheduled. The analysis of dividers and connectors carried over to the second day of the workshop, which began with a collective review of the three groups' identified commonalities from their separate discussions on the previous day. In order to deepen understanding of the connectors and dividers, each group worked again with the material to categorize and prioritize them.

Even with the additional time taken, some participants felt that "*too short a time*" was available for the small group identification of connectors and dividers and subsequent sharing in the large group. They also remarked that the sessions were very useful and provided the "*opportunity to see the positive that they have and all the good that there is in the population*"; the analysis "*intensely clarifying the problem and permits us to see all of the negative we give story to*".

Step 2 – Describing the aid program.

It was in the next step of the process, that the process became slightly more unfocused. Whereas there had been an on-going challenge to focus the analysis on the conflict context, given that the project was in its initial stages, it was easier for staff to evaluate their project in general. This 'confusion' was further enhanced by the facilitators' lack of experience in conducting a program analysis using BPI.

It was also challenging for participants to move beyond a superficial written description of their project, to view their project from a broader and more critical perspective. So, for example, rather than critically identifying where and who they were reaching in their work, they identified the physical location of their work as Ciudad España. It was at this point, I think, that the lack of

presence of managers was most acutely felt as the managers could have helped to provide that broader and deeper perspective. Given a general lack of detailed knowledge of the project, the facilitators were not able to offer much assistance.

The lack of familiarity and coordination between the three facilitators further complicated the situation. As we had not worked together much, there was a tendency, certainly on my part, to let the facilitator responsible for the session to take it where he wanted it to go, rather than intervening to 'correct' the course of things. And as mentioned earlier, we all had a slightly different perspective on what the 'correct' direction was. So while we tended to look to Ricardo as the lead facilitator and 'expert' on the process, he had to leave the workshop early, as he had to make a flight to a meeting in another country. So we continued to stumble, a little blindly, along.

Step 3 & 4 – Identifying impacts and options

When participants moved into identifying the impact of the program, the focus of their work became more of an evaluation of their program to date, rather than specifically looking at the impact of the program on the conflict. This continued in the next step the process, identifying options, as the options identified were related to their specific projects and how they could respond to the general dividers and connectors identified in the community. Participants were very satisfied with the direction the workshop had taken. They were engaging with the concepts in ways that were meeting their needs, as it was the first time that they had been able reflect on the work they had been doing since the community members arrived four months ago. They were also learning about the challenges and realities of the other project areas, building a common

understanding and a sense of team that they had not experienced to date. They considered the workshop a success given where we were able to get to. For them, BPI was a tool to look at how they could reflect on and work with connectors and dividers in the community.

For me, as a facilitator, we seemed to have lost our way in regard to understanding the impact of the project or 'aid' on the situation of youth violence. So to ease my discomfort, in the final plenary, we reviewed each option that had been identified to see whether it could enhance connectors or diminish tensions in regard to youth violence or maras. It was a superficial solution, but one that seemed useful at the time.

Follow-up and evaluation

The workshop ended with a brief discussion regarding where things could go from this point. As there was no one in the room who was in a position of authority to ensure that a follow-up would take place, no follow-up was scheduled, rather it was left in the hands of the participants to negotiate a follow-up as they could.

Outcome of the Program Analysis

While I would have hoped that the result of the program analysis workshop would have led to a clear identification of how the projects impacted the situation of youth gangs in Ciudad España, it did not. Feedback from the participants however indicated that a positive result was the development of a more unified work team.

At another level, the BPI process had highlighted the need to better understand the reality of the situation of youth gangs in Ciudad España as well as

to identify ways to work with the situation, with both the Federation and the Honduran Red Cross. So that one result of the National Red Cross Forum on Youth Violence, held shortly after the program analysis workshop, was to allocate funds from the ICRC and the Italian Red Cross to further study and work in relation to youth violence in Ciudad España[171].

Prognosis for BPI in Honduras

> *I foresee one of the difficulties who is going to be in charge of this? Who is going to be responsible for the follow-up of what has been done so far? If it is too diffused nobody will take responsibility, if it is too centralized we even risk that a person goes one day and then we lose the experience and the historic memory of what was done in the past. I don't know how to best consider that.*
>
> *BPI trainer*

As already mentioned, there were many challenges in the implementation of the BPI process, such as the difficulties in gaining access, the lack of training materials or guides, insufficient timelines. At the Federation level, there is a need for a stronger role of the Federation in supporting and guiding the mainstreaming process, including identification of a regional focal point, along with the development of appropriate training guides. More detail regarding how these can be improved is presented as lessons learned in the following chapter.

Given all of these on-going challenges, it is hard to be optimistic about the prognosis for 'life' of BPI in the Honduran Red Cross and Central America. While plans existed on paper for mainstreaming the tool in National Societies, there has been no identified Federation focal point, or contact person to assist in the dissemination, support, and coordination of BPI activities in the region. Funding

[171] The study has taken place during the summer of 2003, drawing a clear picture of the problem with maras in Ciudad España, and identifying prevention projects to be put in place for a three year period.

for BPI activities from Geneva had been all but used up in Honduras with the workshops we had completed. No plans were in place for continued training, nor for Spanish translation of updated training materials, nor for the development of additional materials to assist staff in the program analysis process. And perhaps most importantly, the passion for the tool, critical to its continued use, seems to have been lost with the departure of the Federation's Regional BPI trainer.

I was left with the impression that in the Honduran Red Cross interest had waned not long after the program analysis was scheduled. The work schedule and other priorities of the primary BPI facilitator had intensified and would remain that way for several more months. With the program analysis 'completed', commitments to the BPI process that had been made in Quito were satisfied. I suspect that without some type of continued support, including funding by either the Federation Regional Office or the Federation Secretariat in Geneva, the tool will unfortunately be relegated to a shelf.

The next chapter outlines some of the lessons learned during the implementation process, as well as provides suggestions for enhancing the training and program analysis process. Areas for further research are also identified.

CHAPTER SIX

LESSONS LEARNED AND CONCLUSION

Through the case study of the implementation of BPI in Honduras, what has been learned about BPI that might inform similar efforts in the Red Cross? The following lessons learned are derived from an analysis of the data collected including: review of participants' written evaluations, review of the transcripts from the key informant interviews, review of the workshop participants audio taped interviews, and a rereading of my field notes.

Prior to reading this section it should also be noted that the recommendations are based on an incomplete application of BPI to a project. While the lessons learned are based on experiences from the workshops and in the field, the analysis of the lessons learned has been filtered through my own experience and understanding. Given my very limited experience and exposure to the Red Cross operations, a caveat is necessary, as I remain cognizant that what I experienced with the Honduran Red Cross only provided a limited view of the realities and functioning of the larger organization. The lens through which I viewed the Red Cross is that of the Honduran Red Cross and those involved. Of course, a view from another National Society or another level of the organization would provide a different lens from which to view BPI and its application. While limited, the lessons learned can hopefully be used as a reminder of things that would be useful to consider, as well as highlight questions or areas still to be clarified and further explored.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section outlines specific lessons learned from the implementation process of the BPI methodology in Ciudad España. The second section provides reflections on the BPI methodology itself, including ways that the training and analysis could be enhanced. The final section describes lessons learned and challenges for Red Cross in mainstreaming BPI.

Lessons Learned Implementing BPI with Ciudad España

The lessons learned have been grouped under four themes: engaging full participation, ensuring full commitment, building capacity, and ensuring accessibility.

ENGAGING FULL PARTICIPATION

Involving all team members

"In regard to the training, it needs to involve everyone...all of the team, including bosses, community workers, so that everyone knows how to manage it...so that not just some people know it"

Community worker, Ciudad España

In order to facilitate the full integration of the methodology and use on an on-going basis, as well as understanding the rationale for modifications to project design arising out of a program analysis, it is important for all team members, including senior decision makers to participate in and support the process. As mentioned in the previous chapter, given various circumstances it was not possible to secure the participation of all project staff in the BPI training and program analysis that took place regarding Ciudad España. The impact of this was that only one of five project managers was able to attend the training and analysis, which has an impact on the implementation and on-going use of the

tool. The desire to include "*the whole team, including bosses*" was noted by most of the participants in the process.

As already mentioned, part of the challenge was involving one of the Honduran managers as well as both of the Spanish Red Cross delegates in the process. The reason for their resistance to the BPI process was not clear, and likely the result of a multitude of factors. One BPI trainer suggested that it might have been helpful to have done a short orientation to the methodology, allowing an opportunity for questions and concerns to be addressed. Also, having sufficient time to build relationships and trust, may have helped to deal with, or at least respond to, some of the factors underlying their resistance. This was made clearer to me during a Red Cross workshop related to youth violence, where I was in a small working group with one of the 'resistant' managers from Ciudad España. After spending two days working and sharing meals together, the manager approached me during the final lunch and asked me if I could share information and resources on the BPI process.

Including beneficiaries

"the training and program analysis process also needs to include community members...for me, I think for community members it would be very easy to do, and the people will understand. BPI is something that people that have a lower academic level can understand and is easy. They don't have to be well studied, they can bring their experience with the reality that they have lived.

Community worker, Ciudad España

Unfortunately, given time pressures and issues related to the perceived sensitivity of the issue of youth violence, it was not possible to involve beneficiaries during the initial training and program analysis process. However, it was clear from group discussions and participant feedback during the project analysis process that inclusion of beneficiaries would have had multiple benefits

– as members of the community, project beneficiaries would be have been able to provide a more profound contextual analysis of the conflict, various connectors and dividers, as well as potentially empowering beneficiaries/ community members with strategies for recognizing and activating their own capacities for peace.

Other organizations, such as World Vision, which has adopted the Do No Harm approach found that it is a simple but powerful conflict sensitive lens. They have also found that it has been useful to adapt the training to suit local realities, working with training methods which utilize alternatives to text based instruction, such as visual art and role-play[172]. This is an area that could be further explored by the Red Cross as well, and along with alternative training methods, could ensure that relevant materials are produced in a low-tech format. Currently most of the presentations are in PowerPoint, which necessitates a computer and projector at a minimum – neither of which are likely to be available in more rural conditions.

However, one must be cautious and ensure that the participation of beneficiaries or local stakeholders is well thought out and sensitively applied. In a conflict situation, participatory processes will need to be handled carefully; it is not simply a matter of people presenting their perspectives, but rather a safe place needs to be constructed for participants to share differing positions. As well, it is essential that participation be authentic and not tokenistic.

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[172] Page, Brett. 2003. World Vision and Conflict Sensitive Programming. *Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance & Peace-building Newsletter* 1 (4).

Working across sectors

It was noted that the BPI tool could be shared and used across sectors different from the Red Cross. Working across sectors was identified as more and more important, particularly by a BPI trainer who noted that *"given the increasingly complex nature of humanitarian emergencies that we are now facing"* and that the strength of BPI is that it *"involves the participation of all parties that are involved in the conflict – beneficiaries of the aid, aid / program staff, indirect beneficiaries as well as representatives of other organizations – not just a tool for those who are doing the project, but all involved who can be part of the analysis of the conflict"*.

ENSURING FULL COMMITMENT

Committing sufficient time and space for the process

Based on feedback from various participants involved in the program analysis, as well as all of the trainers, the importance of having sufficient time and a quiet location to do the training and program analysis was seen as crucial. It was suggested that spending several continuous days outside of regular work and project setting would allow for a more profound analysis, with the additional benefit of team building.

Committing Adequate Funds

Primarily a concern for BPI trainers, it was noted that adequate funding needs to be allotted in order to facilitate dissemination of BPI. Funds need to be available for on-going training and, perhaps more critically, facilitation of program analysis. Funding is also required for logistical needs such as meeting

space, food and accommodation, as well as the development of additional trainers and training materials as noted below.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Long-term process

BPI needs to be viewed not as a one-time process, but as a new way of approaching and working with situations of conflict. It is useful to view conflict analysis as an on-going process – for example, given the dynamic nature of the situation in Ciudad España, the newness of the community, and as the extent of the problem is not completely known – using BPI on a regular basis can assist in mapping the changing elements of the situation. MacFarlane suggests that the use of aid to transform conflict needs to be a long-term strategy and that

> "the process also requires willingness on the part of the international community to stay the course without obvious indicators of success, not only because it is likely to be slow, but because the principal impacts are likely to be subjective rather than material, and this is difficult to measure[173]".

Training project staff for on-going use of BPI

It was suggested, in order to facilitate the on-going use of a BPI analysis on a project level, that it would be valuable for additional staff at a regional and country level to be trained as trainers of BPI. Several of the participants were excited with their program's inclusion with the analysis and were interested in receiving information, materials, and potentially additional training in order to continue using the methodology. This can encourage the process of capacity building for National Society and project staff, enabling project staff to build the skills to incorporate the process into their on-going work. However, in order to

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[173] MacFarlane, pg. 66-67.

achieve this, the Federation needs to invest in the development of appropriate resources. One of the BPI trainers suggested that a "*a manual for participants*" should be developed, in order for participants to leave a session with "*something in their hands*" which they could refer to later.

Monitoring impact

Given the dynamic nature of conflict, especially in an unpredictable context such as Ciudad España, it was suggested by the Federation Delegate to Honduras that it "*would be interesting to have a follow-up in some months time, and see if this tool has been properly used, if it has been valid for the HRC, and in which situations.*"

ACCESSIBILITY

An effective and simple tool to use

Participants commonly remarked on the ease of the tool: that it is practical, easy to understand and use, and that "*the steps and framework are both clear and easy to work through*". Citing the logical structure of the methodology, with four very clear passes – analysis of the conflict, factors of divisions & connections, analysis of program & impact of the conflict – it was viewed as a very simple tool, "*so it is easy for all people who are involved in a humanitarian project to be able to use it*". Furthermore, BPI was seen to be "*an additional tool to help us think about what we are doing and which gives us a wider range of options*".

Incorporating BPI with existing RC planning and evaluation tools

It was felt that the efficacy and use of the BPI methodology could be furthered by incorporating it into other existing Red Cross planning and

evaluation tools, through its integration into common approaches or training packages for Federation delegates, National Society staff, and volunteers.

Increasing accessibility

Participants and trainers suggested that the accessibility of BPI could be further increased through the following: including specific organizational and regional examples or case studies; availability of training materials and documents in Spanish; the development of training materials for conducting a program analysis; the development of participant manuals, allowing for greater participant access and understanding, especially critical in contexts where post-training contact with trainers is difficult to maintain.

Reflections on the Training

...one of my critiques of the whole BPI thing is that we need to look more seriously at what we understand as conflict and causes of conflict ...a bit more not so much theoretical, but to add some concepts. It doesn't seem that BPI or LCPP for that matter gives you much about conflict.

BPI trainer

Two major adaptations to the BPI model are recommended. The first adaptation is to include a brief overview on conflict, as is mentioned by a BPI trainer in the above quote. This should include various assumptions about the nature, causes, and dynamics of conflict. Both the training of trainers and BPI training currently have no discussion of these assumptions for the Red Cross. These need to be clearly identified and presented in an easily accessibly format.

The second adaptation recommended would be to further develop the conflict analysis section. As outlined in an earlier chapter, the conflict analysis is central to a PCIA. I would suggest the same applies to BPI. While the analysis of

connectors and dividers in the 'Do No Harm' and BPI framework is a unique and powerful aspect of the tool, it would be further enhanced through the inclusion of another conflict analysis process. With the Ciudad España situation, an analysis of the gangs and youth violence was basically presented to the participants. While this was a useful approach in providing a broader and deeper analysis of the situation, I would suggest that, had they also analyzed their context in relation to youth violence, they would have constructed another level of analysis. This would have the added value of building their capacity and skill level. A simple conflict analysis tool, such as a conflict tree (which helps to identify causes, core problems, and effects) could be easily integrated into the training. As there are many such tools available[174], the trainer or facilitator could identify the tool most appropriate for the group or context.

Mainstreaming BPI

What is important is that BPI does not become an additional checklist. What we want with BPI and other tools is that it helps the thinking process in regard to planning.
BPI trainer

...but if we are going to talk to about working about non-violence and non-violent conflict resolution and violence reduction in society we need to have more than one BPI tool, and more than humanitarian law principles. We need to really understand what social, economic, political, conflict are and then we need to design programs to address those professionally, thoroughly, and we are not at that place. And the ICRC model of neutrality and humanitarian law and protection is an arcane structure which doesn't apply in those situations, but that is what we think of conflict in the Red Cross we think of dissemination of humanitarian principles and values and we don't think much beyond that. We are very much stuck in an 18th century model...
Federation Delegate

The process of mainstreaming a new concept and tool obviously takes time. It also requires allocation of resources and, most importantly, the organizational will to carry it through. A risk inherent in a mainstreaming

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[174] See Fisher et al for an explanation of at least nine different conflict analysis tools

strategy is that there will not be sufficient will for the integration to happen beyond a superficial level. This danger certainly is relevant to the Federation's current mainstreaming strategy for BPI. As the first quote above notes, there is the possibility that BPI will become yet another checklist. To guard against this, there has to be a greater effort to support and coordinate BPI activities. This will mean providing adequate funding in the short term, whether to allow National Societies to train staff and analyze program or to develop language and participant appropriate BPI resources. Federation staff working in the area and acting as BPI focal points need to be at least trained in the process.

However simply training more BPI trainers is not sufficient. As one of the BPI trainers reflected...

> *I think that we need to work with National Society in its application – its not enough to do ToTs (Training of Trainers) ... I am starting to think that this might be the wrong strategy. We are doing a 10 day ToT and half the time is spent on adult education models as if they are going to go back to train other people. And then none of them are trained in depth enough in application of BPI...they get a cursory look at the instrument and the theory and then they get adult ed and then they are supposed to go in and train people, [rather] we need to train analyzers – applicators if you will, people who can [apply the training] before we start training them to train others. The reason that it doesn't get applied is that fundamentally, besides all the other stuff, is that people aren't confident, is that people feel they don't know enough to apply it and then that's where they don't have enough support. The kind of support that I think they need is [someone] to come in and work with them– probably that is what we should do – before we do ToTs.*

There also needs to be a deeper commitment to do more than training; the capacity needs to be built to analyze programs, which is, after all, the intent of using BPI. Reflections from trainers, academics, and field workers at a Peacebuilding conference in Europe suggested that better training is crucial;

"without exception, all participants of the working group on Humanitarian Aid and Conflict at the Soesterberg conference agreed... [that] one can discuss for many hours ways to include peace-building efforts in humanitarian aid, the most practical step to be undertaken is to ensure that field workers and staff at headquarters receive conflict training"[175]. This is useful advice for the Red Cross.

With the adoption of BPI, there is an acknowledgement that aid impacts conflict, that aid is not neutral. The question that remains for me is how the Red Cross understands this, given their adherence to the principle of neutrality. From my perspective the Red Cross has not adequately dealt with this in the training, and while this incongruency may not have a dramatic impact in implementing BPI at the field level, it would be interesting to know if and how the organization struggles with this. This articulation process could also include Red Cross perspectives on integrating peacebuilding concepts.

At a more fundamental level there may need to be a rethinking of the Red Cross approach, at a Federation and National Society level, to working with conflict. While this is not likely to happen any time soon, it does seem that that the door has been cracked open with the acceptance of a methodology such as BPI. That is, if it is to become more than "an additional checklist". However, this would require a willingness by the Red Cross to integrate a conflict sensitive approach to programming, and perhaps to move beyond an analysis of the impact of humanitarian aid, to more deeply analyze conflict issues and how conflict can be transformed.

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[175] Galama and van Tongeren, pg. 158.

Conclusion

Along with not feeling particularly optimistic about where we had ended the process when I departed Honduras, I still had many questions remaining in terms of BPI itself. The most basic question being "Was it really useful?". However, during the months of reflecting on and writing about this experience, I have come to re-view BPI as a simple but powerful conflict sensitive lens. It is a process which can work well at the project level, with the potential to engage local community in a participatory process, where the process of using it can strengthen local capacities for peace.

However, if we want to truly engage local community, it is necessary to have sufficient time available to ensure the full participation and commitment of all the stakeholders. Given the long-term nature of peace-building, it is also essential that the overall organizational view is that of capacity building at a project, national, and regional level. By empowering local staff to work with such a process on an on-going basis, understanding the impacts of the project aid on the conflict context can hopefully become a reflexive process. So rather than exacerbating those things which create tension in the community, aid can strengthen what connects them.

It is also incumbent on those who seek to train workers in this type of program analysis or PCIA methodology to have the skills and capacities to work effectively in the complexity of this milieu. Aside from having an in-depth understanding of conflict dynamics in general, trainers or facilitators need an analysis of both the macro and micro elements of the conflict context.

Additionally they must bring the awareness and sensitivity to adapt the training and tools to the specific cultural and educational context.

The organizational will and commitment is also essential to move an initiative such as BPI forward. This includes a commitment beyond short-term training and funding, but rather a full commitment to integrating a conflict sensitive approach. It would be beneficial to explore the challenges and successes of other organizations in regard to mainstreaming similar PCIAs or conflict sensitive approaches. Identifying strategies that have led to a successful integration of the methodology would be extremely helpful, while understanding the various challenges can help to determine in which situations or contexts PCIA can and cannot be useful.

And finally, personally, I end this study with a richer understanding of some of the challenges inherent in the intriguing unpredictability of the research process – the fragility of plans, the frustration of not knowing and not being understood, and the tyranny of time. However, in the same moment there exists new potentialities - a renewed learning to compose with constant change, the reminder of the openhearted generosity of strangers, and the nascent wisdom of learning how to stand in groundless space. I also come away with a deeper appreciation for the complexities of those conflicts in which we human beings engage, yet at the same time the desire for connection and peace which abides in us all.

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APPENDIX A:

University of Victoria - Human Research Ethics Committee

Certificate of Approval

Principal Investigator	Department/School	Supervisor
Katherine McGeean **Graduate Student**	**IFDR**	**Dr. Ted Riecken**

Co-Investigator(s):

Title: Enhancing local capacities for peace: Assessing an analytical tool in Red Cross humanitarian assistance development projects in Central America

Project No.	Approval Date	Start Date	End Date
463-02	**16-Jan-03**	**16-Jan-03**	**15-Jan-04**

Certification

This is to certify that the University of Victoria Ethics Review Committee on Research and other Activities Involving Human Subjects has examined the research proposal and concludes that, in all respects, the proposed research meets appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Subjects.

J. Howard Brunt
Associate Vice-President, Research

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the procedures. Extensions/minor amendments may be granted upon receipt of "Request for Continuing Review or Amendment of an Approved Project" form.

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APPENDIX B: Sample Interview Questions

General questions

When you think of BPI, what main things come to mind?

What do you see as the strengths of BPI?

What have been the limitations of BPI?

Have you been able to apply the BPI methodology/training? If so, how? If not, why not?

How effectively do you feel you have been able to apply the BPI methodology to your specific project?

What are some of the challenges you have encountered?

What obstacles, if any, prevent you from integrating the tool into the project (e.g. time, training, lack of clarity)?

In what ways has the training provided assisted you (and the project) in analyzing the ways in which the aspects of the project contribute to enhancing local capacities for peace or exacerbating the conflict?

Upon reflection, what was most useful about the BPI training? What was least useful?

What do you feel would be important to change / modify for another training?

Specific questions (e.g. for BPI trainers)

If you are familiar with the BPI training manual, what aspects do you think need to be updated?

From your point of view, apart from the training manual, what additional tools would you consider necessary to mainstream BPI and develop program analysis in your region?

What support would be useful from the Federation in regard to implementing BPI in the region? nationally?

Can BPI become a sustainable process of program analysis in the NS (mainstreaming)? What needs to take place in order for it to happen?

What do you see your role being as either trainer or focal point in order to mainstream BPI in the NS? What is the specific role of the Federation? Regionally? Geneva?

Agenda: Better Programming Initiatives Workshop

Day One: Friday, March 21

Time	Topic	Duration	Resources required	Expositor
08:15 am	Welcome	15 Minutes	None	Logistics Team.
08:30 am	Introduction to Local Capacities for Peace Project and the course.	15 Minutes	Data Show, Computer, Screen, Flipchart	
08:45 am	Case Study: Tajikistan	1 hours 15 min	Photocopies, Map, Flipchart Markers, Cards	
10:00 am	Refreshments	15 Min		Logistics Team.
10:15 am	Case Study: Plenary	45 Min	Fotocopias, Mapa, Flipchart Markers, Cards	
11:00 am	Better Programming Initiative Framework	60 Min	Data Show, Computer, Screen,	
12:00 pm	Lunch	60 Min		Logistics Team.
13:00 pm	Divisions and Tensions	50 Min	Cards, Framework chart.	
13:50 pm	Connectors and Local Capacities for Peace	50 Min	Cards, Framework chart.	
14:40 pm	Aid Program Aid and the conflict	60 Min	Data Show, Computer, Screen	
15:40 pm	Refreshments	10 Min		Logistics Team.
15:50 pm	Options Game	40 Min	Flipchart (2), Markers	
04:30 pm	Evaluation of the day	40 Min	Evaluation forms	

AGENDA - BPI PROGRAM ANALYSIS

DAY 1

Proposed Agenda – Day 1			Revised Agenda	
Time	Topic	Resources needed	Time	Topic
8:00 am	Objectives and Agenda	none	9:20 am	Objectives and Agenda
8:15 am	Analysis of the National Context	Data Show, Computer, Screen, Flipchart	9:30 am	Analysis of the National Context
9:00 am	Analysis of the Local Context	Photocopies, Flip chart, Markers	10:30 am	Refreshments
10:30 am	Refreshments		10:45 am	Analysis of the Local Context
11:00 am	Identifying Dividers Group work	Flipchart (2), Markers		
12:00 pm	Lunch		12:15	Lunch
1:00 pm	Plenary – Dividers	Flipchart (2), Markers	1:00 pm	Analysis of the Local Context – con't
2:00 pm	Identifying Connectors Group Work	Flipchart (2), Markers	1:45 pm	Identifying Dividers
3:00 pm	Refreshments		3:00 pm	Refreshments
3:15 pm	Plenary – Connectors	Flipchart (2), Markers	3:15 pm	Identifying Connectors
4:15 pm	Resume and Evaluation of the day		4:15 pm	Evaluation of the day
4:30 pm	Return	Vehicle	4:45 pm	Departure

AGENDA - BPI PROGRAM ANALYSIS

DAY 2

Proposed Agenda – Day 2			Revised Agenda	
Time	**Topic**	**Resources needed**	**Time**	**Topic**
8:15 am	Project Description	Flipchart (2), Markers	8:30 am	Introduction
9:00 am	Impact of the Projects – Group Work	Flipchart (2), Markers	8:45 am	Plenary – review of dividers & connectors; identification of common areas
11:00 am	Plenary – Impact of the Projects		9:45 am	Connectors & Dividers - categorize & prioritize
12:00 pm	Lunch		10:30 am	Plenary
1:00 pm	Identification of Options	Flipchart (2), Markers	11:20 am	Program Description
2:00 pm	Plenary		12:30 pm	Lunch
2:30 pm	Strategies – Group Worl	Flipchart (2), Markers	1:00 pm	Program impact
3:30 pm	Future follow-up	Flipchart (2), Markers	2:30 pm	Break
4:00 pm	Evaluation		3:00 pm	Identifying Options
4:30 pm	Return	Vehicle	4:00 pm	Plenary
			4:45 pm	Follow-up & Evaluation
			5:15 pm	Departure