



MADE TO MEASURE

Analysing the results of NGO
peace practices: experiences from
the Kivu provinces, DR Congo

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PREFACE

This report is the outcome of a three month research project initiated and commissioned by the former Great Lakes team, now represented by the Reconstruction and Reconciliation sector of the Dutch development organisation Cordaid. The study focuses on exploring and analysing the practical experiences of non governmental organisations with regards to the result measurement of peace practices in eastern Congo. Without the help of many people, the work would have been impossible to achieve.

Firstly, I thank the Cordaid partners and the other organisations working in eastern Congo that were approached for an interview or participated in the working sessions that were organised. Your willingness to share information and to reflect on some of the challenges involved in 'measuring' the results of your work were invaluable for the analyses presented in this report.

Also, I thank Mathijs van Leeuwen of Disaster Studies, Wageningen University, for his suggestions on interview topics during the fieldwork and his contributions during the preparation of this report.

The Cordaid office in Bukavu has facilitated the work greatly by the provision of logistical support where needed. Thank you.

Last but not least, the research could not have been completed without the devotion, commitment and hard work of my co-researcher Jean-Baptiste Safari Bagula. Apart from his role as active interviewer and group work facilitator, he has helped to contextualise the findings and contributed in an excellent manner to the composition of this report and the translation of the French version. In all respects you have a personality and professional attitude to be proud of.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The support of organisations in (post)conflict areas across the world has for many years been an important intervention strategy of Cordaid, a Dutch Catholic co-financing agency.

Just like clothing is ‘made to measure’, peace practices should be made to ‘fit’ context-related challenges and opportunities, as well as (local) organisational capacities. A parallel development is that peace practices of non governmental organisations (NGOs) have increasingly become subject to notions of cause and effect, whereby questions are asked on their results in terms of forging changes within specific groups of beneficiaries and society at large. This has led to a development where peacebuilding projects should also be designed in such a way that they not just create a certain result, but are also geared towards the measurement of results. Although, in literature, the interventions of NGOs in conflict and post-conflict settings are described by many different concepts: peacebuilding, conflict prevention, reconstruction, conflict transformation, etc., this report mainly refers to peace building or peace practices.

In order to create more insight in how such processes of result measurement take shape in a concrete (post)conflict context, this report looks into the peace practices of NGOs in eastern Congo, their experiences with regards to the analysis of the results of their interventions, and the difficulties and challenges they face in this respect. Throughout the report, the word ‘results’ is used to refer to changes that occur on immediate (output), intermediate (outcome) and longer-term levels (impact).

The report should not be seen as a scientific document that aims at developing theoretical arguments on result measurement methods in a post-conflict setting. Neither does it provide a blueprint on how to measure results. Rather, the issues raised with regards to measuring the results of peace practices form a basis for further reflection and aims at aiding Cordaid and its partners to refine or reform existing practices in the field.¹

Because most organisations that were contacted during the fieldwork period acknowledge the importance of reflecting on the results of their interventions but do not always know exactly how to, this research, in their words, “comes at the right time.”

1.1. Description of the research

In order to explore and analyse the practical experiences of NGOs working in (post)conflict settings with regards to the result measurement of peace practices, Cordaid commissioned a research in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The study took place between January and April 2007. It focused on organisations working in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, and more precisely those based in Goma, Bukavu and Uvira. In order to visit some projects, fieldtrips were made to Walungu, southeast of Bukavu and Baraka, south of Uvira and their surroundings.

The study was coordinated and carried out by Nynke Douma from WHYZE Communications & Research, consultant for Cordaid, and co-researcher Jean-Baptiste Safari Bagula. Although Bagula took on a neutral and independent role in the light of the study, he

¹ The term partner is used to make reference to organisations that have some sort of financial or strategic relationship with Cordaid. This does not necessarily correspond to the different categories of explorative, project and partner organisations that Cordaid identifies.

also coordinates the NGO *Innovation et Formation pour le Développement et la Paix*, IFDP, a partner organisation of Cordaid.

The study largely focused on the perceptions, perspectives and actions of local organisations with regards to result measurement. The fieldwork has been organised in such a manner that the active participation of these organisations, and in some cases their beneficiaries, was indispensable.

The research project had beforehand identified several integrated objectives:

- To identify and analyse the experiences and best practices with regards to result measurement of peace practices;
- Formulate and propose possibilities (instruments/pathways/scenarios) for furthering and improving result measurement of peace practices;
- Contribute to a capacity building process of the Cordaid partners with regards to result measurement of peace practices by stimulating reflection and mutual exchange.

Also some secondary objectives were formulated for Cordaid and its partners :

- Provide input for the implementation and concretisation of Cordaid's strategic plan (2007-2010), in particular with regards to the reconciliation and reconstruction programme;
- Implicate several key partner organisations in the monitoring process of the progress made with regards to Cordaid's strategic plan 2007-2010;
- Provide input for Cordaid's monitoring and evaluation system;
- Contribute to a more profound understanding of the characteristics, types and results of peace practices in eastern Congo with the aim to refine Cordaid's approach in the area;
- To facilitate learning among and between partner organisations as well as between Cordaid and its partners;
- Contribute to the integration of risk management strategies in the planning of peace policies and practices.

The choice to focus on the eastern part of DR Congo has been motivated by several considerations. First of all, the end of the political transition process, marked by the first democratic elections held in 2006, makes the need for sustainable peace in Congo a priority; a process that NGOs can reinforce. Also, for Cordaid the country at large is a 'concentration' country, meaning that a long-term commitment in terms of support to civil society by Cordaid is guaranteed.

The partners that are funded under the Reconstruction and Reconciliation programme are mainly based in the eastern part of the country. Additionally, in the east of Congo, but also in the Great Lakes region at large, several interesting innovative approaches with regards to peacebuilding and reconstruction work have been launched by Cordaid and its partners. An operationalisation of the linkage concept, where relief and development are seen as interlinked practices and impossible to separate from one another in a (post)conflict setting, has been introduced since 2003. Also, the cooperation of (peace) NGOs through various exchange and coordination structures is increasingly being explored. Most recently, with several partners Cordaid is looking into the possibility to reconstruct the social fabric by integrating a sociotherapy approach to several peace programmes.

Finally, but although not officially, this study forms a follow-up to the Beyond Conflict study completed in 2003 as the present-day context of peace work in eastern Congo, and changes that took place, can be analysed against the background of the observations made

in 2003. This, it is hoped, can inspire the implementation and pursue of the Cordaid strategy plan (2007-2010), in particular against the background of its reorganisation in January 2007, and provides programmatic input to the Emergency Aid and Reconstruction sector.

1.2. Methodology

In order to gather a variety of information several research strategies were used, which were complemented by a short analysis of relevant project material, Cordaid policy documents, and (scientific) literature relevant to the topic of result measurement in peacebuilding programmes.

Before the fieldwork in DR Congo began, several Cordaid staff members as well as some external informants were approached to give their opinions on the subject of impact measurement. They were identified on the basis of the core focus of their work: the Great Lakes region/DR Congo, monitoring and evaluation, post-conflict reconstruction, disaster risk management, peacebuilding and organisational management, and sexual violence. They were also asked to express what they hoped to get out of this research. Where possible, their specific questions and considerations will be addressed in the remainder of the report.

During the fieldwork, a multitude of organisations were approached on the basis of several criteria, which ensured a broad representation of experiences, orientations, views and activities:

- Type of initiative: community based initiative (asbl), non governmental organisations, network organisations, church-based initiatives;
- Intervention level/origin: village, '*groupements*', provincial, national, international (note that the intervention level is not necessarily similar to the origin);
- Orientation of initiative: media, human rights, peace education, conflict resolution, socio-economic development and reintegration, etc.;
- Characteristics of the activities they have developed from a peacebuilding perspective: juridical assistance, lobby, denunciation of human rights violations, integrated projects, leadership training, traditional conflict resolution;
- Partnership: Partners of Cordaid that are financed under the Reconstruction and Reconciliation programme as well as non-partners. The latter often had, in some way or another, a link with Cordaid partners because of their mutual engagement in networks or other exchange formats.

Also, some initiatives and individuals that do not qualify as NGO were integrated, notably a network of provincial authorities and several local experts with experience in the field of monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding practice.

The majority of the above mentioned informants were interviewed in a semi-structured way. Although several discussion topics were prepared that served as general guideline, following the 'atmosphere' or the course of conversation not every interview covered the same topics. By diversifying the focus of each interview a much larger base of information could be established and this degree of flexibility also permitted the incorporation of unforeseen subjects or examples raised by the interviewees.

In addition, the task to gather information on the basis of a questionnaire with pre-defined statements that aim at evoking approval or disapproval and some open questions was confined to a local consultant. The consultant was instructed to gather additional qualitative information by asking why a certain response was given. This method targeted organisations that have a focus on peacebuilding but could not all be interviewed by the key researchers due to time restrictions. Because of the relative weight and diversity of the qualitative

explanations given by the respondents, the data gathered through the questionnaire were hard to isolate for quantitative statistical analysis. Rather, it was used to confirm and enrich the qualitative analysis.²

Another method used for information gathering, which served at the same time as capacity building method, was the organisation of working sessions, or *journees de reflexion*, mainly with Cordaid partners. Some of these sessions were organised with the staff of individual organisations, others with networks and thus representatives of various organisations. In all cases, concrete projects were used to shape the debate and to reflect on concepts and the practical experiences of result measurement. The working sessions reinforced the information gathered through interviews.

According to the Terms of Reference, a network analysis formed also part of the proposed research methods. By clarifying the position of organisations within civil society in relation to other stakeholders, points of intersection, exchange networks and possibilities for collaboration could be identified – also with regards to identifying participants for the research. But although such an analysis was completed for a few organisations at the beginning of the research, it proved to be a very time consuming exercise. Apart from that, conversations and interviews gave sufficient information on which to base the choice of whom to implicate.

Finally, two reflection workshops were organised. The first was held with 11 Cordaid partners on March 28th in Bukavu.³ Apart from sharing and discussing the main observations and analyses of the research with the participants, the workshop aimed at stimulating reflection and exchange on the challenges involved in widening and deepening learning internal strategies with regards to result measurement of peace practices. Discussions were also held on the possibilities to establish a mutual engagement of Cordaid and its partners in the follow up of this results-based learning process, also in relation to the progress made with regards to Cordaids' strategic plan 2007-2010. The second meeting took place at the Cordaid office in The Hague on May 7, 2007 and had as aim to reflect on the findings with Cordaid employees of the sector Emergency Aid and Reconstruction.

1.3. Reading guide

Chapter two presents some general thoughts on the impact of peace practices. It begins by arguing that peace practices include a multiplicity and combination of actors, strategies, target groups and activities. Thereafter some key aspects that, within the NGO sector, determine the need to measure results of peace practices are highlighted. Also, the chapter briefly reflects on why it is difficult to quantify and qualify peace. This is followed by a description of some monitoring and evaluation methods, notably the 'most significant change theory' and 'outcome mapping', that offer possibilities to further the measurement of the results of peace practices. The chapter finalises with a description of some issues that guide Cordaid's engagement in Congo, notably the adoption of a multi-sectoral strategy, the need for capacity building and the organisations recently adopted programmatic approach.

In chapter three a background is given to the Congo conflict, starting with a chronicle of Congo's political history in which attention is paid to the regional determinants of the conflicts that affected the country since 1996. Thereafter, some particular issues that challenge the reconstruction process in eastern Congo are described. These include land conflicts, the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, sexual violence as human rights violation, and the reintegration and return of refugees and internally displaced.

² See annexe III for the main topics, questions and statements covered by the questionnaire.

³ A report of this workshop is separately available.

Although this presents by no means a complete and detailed analysis of the conflict, those are recurring issues when looking at the interventions of civil society organisations in eastern Congo.

Chapter four, with a focus on Congolese NGO practices, looks at peacebuilding as a process of change. It begins with a description of the orientations, or areas of intervention, that can be identified when looking at the organisations working for peace in eastern Congo. This includes some examples of activities. Thereafter some specific approaches, relevant to peacebuilding, are described that are adopted by most organisations, notably working with local constituencies and combining income generating activities with training or awareness raising on peace. In the final part of the chapter several issues are discussed that pose challenges when talking about peacebuilding and change, notably the difficulty to attribute change, the choice of target groups, a changing context and its implications on risk management and the reorientation of programmes, and the specific role of network organisations.

Chapter five deals with result measurement of peace practices in eastern Congo. The first part is rather descriptive and presents some arguments as to why the creation of insight in the results of peace practices is deemed relevant by NGOs working in eastern Congo. Also, it lays out some general as well as more concrete examples that were given on what organisations themselves define as an achieved result or change in the context of eastern Congo. This is followed by an overview, and analysis, of some examples of initiatives that have been set up in the field of result measurement by the organisations approached in the research. The second part of chapter five looks into some issues that can be described as complicating or critical factors to result measurement in eastern Congo, such as the confusion that exists over concepts used in project management and the treatment of results, the use and development of indicators, and, finally, the means that should be involved.

Chapter six wraps up with the conclusions of the research and presents some recommendations with regards to forging the measurement of peace practices for Cordaid and its partners.

CHAPTER TWO

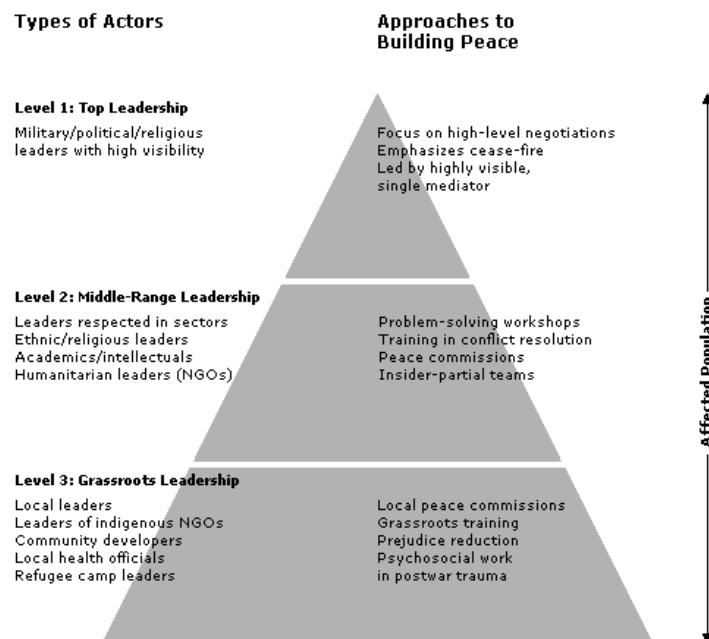
GENERAL THOUGHTS ON THE IMPACT OF PEACE PRACTICES

This chapter highlights some issues that are worth considering when thinking about measuring the results of peace practices. It briefly describes the relation between the multidimensional nature of peacebuilding and NGO approaches to peace. Thereafter attention is paid to some reasons, related to a preoccupation with project cycles, relationships of cause and effect and organisational positioning processes, are given as to why NGOs are increasingly focusing on the results of their interventions. This is followed by a reflection on why the attribution of success is difficult to establish for peace practices. Also, some monitoring and evaluation methods that step aside from relations of cause and effect are presented. The chapter finalises with a description of Cordaid's engagement in DR Congo.

2.1. NGO approaches to peace

Historically, most of the work of NGOs was very much input orientated. Also in conflict contexts, the mere fact of 'doing something', it was then thought, would always have some result. In the late 1990s, and also influenced by the increasing complexity and number of intrastate conflicts and their profound effects on ordinary citizens, NGOs began to develop ideas and practices around the interface of development, conflict and the wider implications of their interventions.⁴

As a result, a variety of theoretical and practical approaches to peace interventions have been developed over the years. Generally, it is understood that peacebuilding relates to different periods in (post)conflict societies and includes a multiplicity and combination of actors, strategies, target groups and activities. Peacebuilding is thus highly contextual and a cross-cutting concern that is mainstreamed in relief, development or capacity building.

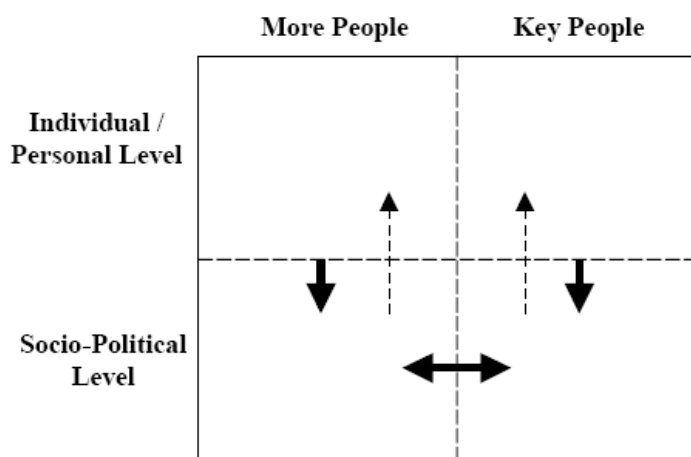


Source: Lederach (1997): Building Peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies.

⁴ For a more complete account on the history of NGOs and peacebuilding see Douma and Hilhorst (2004).

Peacebuilding, in its diverse forms, is no longer seen as an exclusive responsibility of political or military elites. Instead, it has become increasingly inclusive and involves a variety of actors. For example, Lederach argues that peacebuilding involves the elite and middle-range and grassroots actors. As the figure above shows, visualising these actors in the form of a pyramid shows the increase in number of people involved when moving from elite to grassroots.⁵ The elite-level in this respect largely, although not exclusively, focuses on political, economic and institutional peacebuilding through official and formal negotiations (track one). The middle-range and grassroots levels refer to social peacebuilding done by civil society actors (track two) that touch upon the structural level (root causes of conflict), the relational level (reconciliation) and the personal level (healing).

A slightly alternative view on relevant actors is presented by Anderson who distinguishes between “key people” (not necessarily the elite) and “more people”, and their relative spheres of influence on the individual and socio-political level. The arrows in the figure below reflect the importance of transferring impact among the boxes.⁶



Source: Anderson and Olson (2003): *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*.

Peacebuilding, as it takes place in (post)conflict settings, demands particular attention when it comes to the design and implementation of interventions. In addition to the impact conflict may have on NGO practices, NGOs themselves can also worsen a situation by what they do or do not do. In order to reduce harmful side-effects of aid and actively contribute to peace, as mentioned by Lange, civil society organisations are increasingly held responsible for an ability to provide a thorough conflict analysis, to understand and respond to the interaction between context and operation, to adapt intervention to local conditions and to adopt a proactive engagement in maximizing positive impacts of their intervention.⁷

2.2. Reflection on results

The growing reflection on the interaction between NGO interventions and peace, apart from the challenges presented by working in a conflict situation, also emerged from the development of an increasingly results-based approach among NGOs.

⁵ Lederach (1997, p.39).

⁶ Anderson and Olson (2003, p.56).

⁷ Lange (2004, p.11).

Attention for results and impacts has a strong link with the preoccupation of (international) NGOs with log frames. Such frameworks mean that the planning and implementation of projects should follow a rather fixed structure, or project cycle, using concepts like objectives, risks, results and indicators. Log frames aim at a precise description of anticipated results or expected changes in relation to planned activities. They are deemed useful to establish insight on cause and effect and help to exclude and anticipate to unwanted and unexpected events.

Result measurement is generally related to monitoring and evaluation, or M&E, practices. Although definitions on what M&E is are varied and abundant, it is based on gathering evidence that can help to respond to some basic questions. According to Sartorius and Carter, monitoring has as goal to answer the question “are we doing the program right?” and is an internal activity that takes place on a continual basis. Evaluation, as periodic assessment, aims at formulating a judgement on performance, relevance, efficiency and impact by asking the questions “are we doing the right program” and “how can we do (it) better”.⁸

However, to many local and international organisations, the language used in log frame approaches to result measurement is puzzling. What is the difference between output, outcome and impact? What exactly is an indicator and how to define indicators in relation to objectives and expected results? One of the critiques on the preoccupation with a logical relationship between cause and effect is that it provides little room for atypical approaches. Also, and especially among organisations working in developing contexts, a full comprehension of the various steps involved in developing a logical framework is absent.

Also, what can be described as a downside of the need to quantify and qualify the contribution of NGOs to peace is that it is difficult to hold specific actors accountable for the creation of peace. Also, the pursuit of success by establishing a relationship of cause and effect implies peace is an end goal. However, the contextual nature and diversity of peacebuilding practices make it difficult to define what the finality of failure or success is. This, argue Church and Rogers, relates in particular to the fact that conflict context change and occur quickly and often outpace the ability to learn from experience.⁹

Result measurement, next to a focus on output, has a strong link with organisational learning where newly acquired knowledge should, ideally, result in refining or reorienting a given approach, programme or project. In this respect, the effectiveness of peacebuilding projects depends a lot on the internal organizational culture and the commitment and motivation of people to engage in learning processes. An organization that deals flexibly with pilot projects combined with an open climate for discussing and learning from failures and success stories helps to improve successful implementation of projects for peace. However, as argued in the 2003 Beyond Conflict research report, the increased focus on output “has repercussions for the learning culture, which may bend more towards achieving results than towards creating space for reflection.”¹⁰

Also, result measurement is closely linked to positioning and organisational identity. Creating insight in results satisfies internal bureaucratic demands, legitimises interventions, proves their added value but also justifies the mere existence of the organisation, in particular in respect to other cooperating or competing actors.

Notably, learning processes and result measurement are not just about the identification of what worked well but also of what did not. As stated by Anderson, “Not to learn from experiences – to repeat the same mistakes- is counterproductive to effectiveness

⁸ Sartorius and Carver (2006, p.3).

⁹ Church and Rogers (2006, p.5).

¹⁰ Douma and Hilhorst (2003, p.27)

and wrong professionally”.¹¹ But even though ‘trial and error’ is an intrinsic aspect of peacebuilding, errors are generally little reflected in monitoring and evaluation practices.

In this respect, many organisations that work on peacebuilding issues leave the measurement of results out because they find it too difficult or argue that their efforts will only be achieved in the long run, that their contribution is difficult to isolate among the variety of actors in the field and that peace processes do not lend itself to project-orientated monitoring and evaluation practices.¹²

2.3. Some M&E methods

However, despite the difficulties in measuring peace impact, many studies have been undertaken on measuring the results of peace practices and several promising methods and tools have been developed. Although this paragraph does not aim at giving a complete overview or scientific critique on their values and disadvantages, some can be mentioned as they in particular link up with organisational learning and slightly step aside from rigid relations of cause and effect.

The first is the ‘most significant change’, or MSC, technique.¹³ It is a participatory monitoring technique that occurs throughout a project cycle and does not require a deep comprehension of theoretical concepts. It gathers stories from the most directly involved (beneficiaries, field staff) on what they see as relevant, or most significant, to change. Through the use of certain criteria, the stories are then analysed and selected by stakeholders on various hierarchical levels in a programme. After a period of time the most relevant stories, with the reasons of why they were selected, are documented and provide insight in the sort of outcome achieved and the possible need to readapt the programme or monitoring tool itself.

This method is build on the understanding that the stakeholders involved in peacebuilding know best what types of change are relevant to them, even though such change may not have a direct relationship with particular interventions. It also gives way to complementary and/or conflicting perceptions of change, which strokes with the variety of realities that exist in a (post)conflict context. A downside of this method is that it may risk isolating or highlighting certain feelings, opinions and events at the expense of others, especially when the overall or specific context in which the most significant change occurs is left out of the analysis.

Another approach is ‘outcome mapping’.¹⁴ As it merely focuses on behavioural change and looks at the broader context in which peace practitioners operate, it is useful for analysing peacebuilding practices. In line with the difficulties of claiming individual impact in programmes (cause and effect), the approach focuses on the contributions of a programme to a certain outcome while analysing the roles and achievements of other individuals, groups and organisations with whom the programme interacts (boundary partners). As the focus of the approach is on people, it helps to plan and assess the capacities they need to improve the well-being of their communities. The approach comprises three stages: (1) intentional design, which helps to plan the strategies a programme uses, (2) outcome and performance monitoring, which develops a framework for the ongoing monitoring of a programmes outcomes and (3) evaluation planning, which identifies evaluation priorities and sets up an evaluation plan.

¹¹ Anderson and Olson (2004, p.26).

¹² Church and Rogers (2006), Anderson and Olson (2004).

¹³ Davis and Dart (2005).

¹⁴ Earl, Carden and Smutylo (2001).

But whatever the M&E approach used, argues Elkins, in peace-precarious situations they have increased salience if they are (1) flexible and include quantitative and qualitative data, (2) do not only focus on end-of-project data collection, (3) focus on dialogue and feedback that allows ongoing adaptation of the approach, (4) give greater weight to “good enough” data instead of aiming for thoroughly tested hypothesis and, finally, (5) select indicators in a strategic way (narrow, redundant, triangulated and designed for cautious interpretation).¹⁵

2.4. Cordaid and peacebuilding in eastern Congo¹⁶

Cordaid’s history in DR Congo began in the 1980s with medical programmes of Memisa, one of the three organisations that merged into Cordaid in 1999. From the beginning of this century Congo became a ‘concentration country’ and Cordaid also began supporting organisations in the field of civic education/democratisation, emergency aid/reconstruction, peace education, trauma counselling/reconciliation and media. Cordaid adopted peacebuilding as mainstreamed theme for all of its programmes in the country. This is based on the perception that interventions in (post)conflict situations should encompass different parties (multi-actor) and take place in different sectors (multi-sectoral) simultaneously. It encompasses Cordaid’s three main intervention strategies, notably direct poverty alleviation (DAB), societal reconstruction (MO) and policy influencing (BB).

In this respect, Cordaid has in Congo and its neighbouring countries established a “programme that integrates emergency aid, the support to the return of refugees and internally displaced people, the reconstruction of the social infrastructure, peace initiatives and the development of sustainable and accessible healthcare.” Such a multi-sectoral approach, the plan states, “has the capacity to switch between emergency aid, reconstruction and development.”¹⁷

In addition to the possibility to switch between intervention types, emergency aid, reconstruction and development are also inter-linked in practice, which is the basis of the notion of linkage. Linkage could, however, also be more explicitly viewed as a two-way process whereby development actors and resources are allocated to enhance local capacities to respond to humanitarian crises.¹⁸ In eastern Congo linking relief to development aid is in particular relevant because of the presence of a Cordaid field office in Bukavu that is largely responsible for reconstruction programmes from a development perspective.

As Cordaid works through local partners, the main aim is to contribute to the strengthening of civil society organisations in order to stimulate the development and exchange of successful reconstruction and peacebuilding strategies. This is based on the understanding that conflict, insecurity, dysfunctional and corrupt administrative structures but also conflicting ethnic, political or religious interests on organisational level undermine the capacities of civil society organisations to respond effectively to the needs of the population.

An important aspect that influences Cordaid’s orientation in years to come is its recent reorganisation (January 2007). A regional approach has been replaced by a programmatic approach that encompasses ten programmes within four sectors, notably:

¹⁵ Elkins (2006).

¹⁶ For a general and more complete account of Cordaid’s approach to peacebuilding and crosscutting issues that play a role, see Douma and Hilhorst (2004, p.19-28).

¹⁷ Cordaid (2006, p.33).

¹⁸ See Douma and Hilhorst (2004, p.21).

- **Participation** focuses on the most vulnerable groups in society that struggle with discrimination or exclusion, and includes three programmes: Minorities, slum residents and (sexual) violence against women.
- **Emergency aid and reconstruction** focuses on the prevention of disasters, the enhancement of people's ability to recover and the promotion of peace and reconciliation. This sector is divided into two programmes: Disaster prevention and emergency aid, and reconciliation and reconstruction.
- **Health care and welfare** strives to make basic health care affordable and accessible to the poorest of the poor with a focus on local management. This is done through three programmes: Access to health care, care for vulnerable groups and HIV/aids.
- **Entrepreneurship**, through the programmes small-scale producers and micro funding, aims at improving the economic prospects and access to markets of poor people by fighting against imbalances in economic power through lobby, the development of sustainable production chains and micro funding.

As a result of the reorganisation, the Cordaid programmes in the east of Congo fall no longer under one team but are spread over the sectors health care and welfare and emergency aid and reconstruction, to which the partners covered in this research belong. A programmatic approach, it is hoped, will increase the possibility to exchange experiences and deepen thematic learning between different regions.

Terminology

- **Goal or general objective:** The broadest change in the conflict that the programme hopes to achieve or to which the programme hopes to contribute. It is derived from the conflict and/or the people in conflict and based on a conflict analysis.
- **Specific objectives:** Describe the types of changes that are prerequisites to achieving the goal or general objective. Specific objectives are attainable by the proposed activities and should have a link with the goal or general objective.
- **Output or immediate result:** The immediate deliverables or products from activities, which are often tangible or observable with respect to direct beneficiaries.
- **Outcome or effect:** Outcomes or effects are the changes in the well-being of the people, groups and organisations with whom a programme works. Outcomes can be logically linked to a programme's activities although they are not necessarily caused by them.
- **Impact:** Impact is the ultimate goal of any programme. It reflects significant and lasting changes in the well-being of larger community or society (indirect beneficiaries). Impact is usually not directly linked to a specific programme or activities but represents broad changes that are the result of actions of multiple actors.
- **Indicators:** An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative variable or measuring tool that reflects change in relation to an intervention. An indicator thus describes what to measure to determine whether the objectives are accomplished but does not explain why change occurs.
- **Monitoring:** An exercise to assess how programmes or projects are progressing with regards to planned objectives and activities. It should respond to the question "are we doing the programme right?"
- **Evaluation:** Can be conducted during a programme with a focus on improvement or after a programme has finished to judge its overall relevance, effectiveness, etc. Evaluation refers to broader management questions such as "are we doing the right programme" and "how can we do better?"

Sources: Church and Rogers (2006); Sartorius and Carver (2006); Anderson and Olson (2003) and Earl, Carden and Smutylo (2001).

CHAPTER THREE

THE DR CONGO CONFLICT

Slowly, the Democratic Republic of Congo emerges from a crisis that has over the last ten years cost the lives of up to four million people and forced many to leave their homes or even the country. The interdependent causes and consequences of Congo's vicious circle of underdevelopment and conflict are characterised by a complex mixture of power abuse, extreme poverty, the absence of a central state, corruption, traditional hostilities between different ethnic groups and the scandalous exploitation of the country's natural resources by a vast array of national and foreign interested parties.

For a better understanding of the context in which NGOs are dealing with result measurement of peace practices, this chapter presents an overview of Congo's history that, characterised by neglect and exploitation, has left its traces in present day society. Also, but without pretending to give a complete conflict analysis, an overview is given of the issues that shape the current socio-political, cultural and economic environment in eastern Congo.

A few topics are in particular highlighted as they correspond with some of the 'popular' intervention areas of NGOs active in the area, notably land conflicts, the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, sexual violence as human rights violation and the reintegration of returning refugees and internally displaced people. The east of Congo comprises the Ituri district in the Province Oriental, North and South Kivu and part of the Katanga province. In line with the research locations, the context description is limited to the Kivu provinces.

3.1. History in a nutshell

In the late 19th century, at the height of the 'scramble for Africa, the Belgian King Leopold II persuaded the West to accept his claim on the 'Congo Free State'. Although he never set foot in the colony himself, he introduced capitalist production systems, notably on the lucrative rubber plantations. The indigenous population was forced into slave labour and those who did not work hard enough got their hands hacked off or were simply killed. Between 1885 and 1908 Leopold's cruel reign left five to eight million people dead: half the country's population at that time. The historian Adam Hochschild calls it "the great forgetting".¹⁹

Following increasing criticism on the atrocities and the corrupt nature of Congo's state finances, Leopold was forced to 'sell' the Congo to the Belgian government in 1908. Although the atrocities gradually diminished, a firm alliance between the Belgian state, the Catholic Church and corporations engaged in the mining and export of diamonds, copper and uranium.²⁰

In 1960, following civil unrest in the Congo and a growing anti-colonial movement in Belgium, Congo was granted independence and Patrice Lumumba became the first democratically elected president. Lumumba was a distinctive pan-Africanist and argued that the country's wealth belonged to its population, which endangered foreign trade interests. Just 67 days after he was elected, Lumumba was sacked and placed under formal house arrest in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa). After an attempt to escape, he was hunted down by soldiers of the then army commander Joseph Désiré Mobutu. On 17 January 1961 he was executed by firing squads commanded by Belgians and his remains were burned and dissolved in acid.

¹⁹ Hochschild (1998, p.292).

²⁰ Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002, p.27).

Forty years later, in November 2001, Belgium admitted ‘moral responsibility’ following a parliamentary inquiry into Lumumba’s death.

In 1965, the pro-western Mobutu became the new president of Congo, which he renamed Zaire. He was supplied with billions of dollars of aid but used the fair share to build his personal fortune and invested little in the country. When by the end of the cold war African anti-communists were no longer of strategic importance, Mobutu fell out with the West and his power weakened. Mobutu’s incompetence to build a nation left a power vacuum that was filled in by a multitude of internal and foreign armed groups that all established their own ‘systems’ based on personal enrichment through the illegal trade in natural resources.

The 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda heightened insecurity, especially in the east of the country. During and immediately after the genocide, eastern Congo hosted over a million Rwandese refugees. Among them were an estimated 8,000 to 20,000 Hutu extremist (Interahamwe) that largely planned and executed the genocide, as well members of the former Hutu-dominated Rwandese national army, FAR. From within Congo these groups began to exercise a regime of systematic looting, abduction, hostage taking, rape and killing.

Accordingly, in August 1996, Rwandese, Burundese and Ugandan armed forces entered Congo, allegedly to put a halt to Interahamwe infiltrations. Also, they aimed at protecting the Banyamulenge (Congolese Tutsis) who were, they said, targeted on ethnic grounds by the Interahamwe. The same year, the neighbouring countries supported the creation of several anti-Mobutu rebel forces, such as the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo* (AFDL) headed by Laurent Désiré Kabila. His army advanced quickly to the capital Kinshasa and, after Mobutu fled the country in May 1997, Kabila pronounced himself president.

In 1998, the second war started when Kabila fell out with his former allies Rwanda and Uganda. With support from Rwanda, the *Rassemblement Congolaise pour la Démocratie* (RCD) was created and gained control over the east of the country. With the aim to overthrow the Kabila regime, fighting broke out between the RCD and government forces backed by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. In January 2001 Kabila was assassinated and his then 28 year old son Joseph became the new president.

Under international pressure Joseph Kabila agreed to take steps towards peace negotiations between the government, the oppositions, the various rebel groups and civil society organisations, resulting in the 2002 Sun City peace accords. The agreement foresaw a political transition period that build up to the first democratic elections since 46 years in July 2006. Given the size of the country and the lack of infrastructure, the organisation of the ballot posed enormous logistical challenges and the €400 million price tag was largely financed by the international community.

Joseph Kabila won with 58% of the votes after a second election round in October against 42% for his main opponent Jean Pierre Bemba, the leader of the ex-rebel force MLC (*Mouvement de Libération du Congo*) that was involved in the Ituri conflict. Although Bemba officially accepted his defeat, armed Bemba loyalists have since posed a security threat to the capital Kinshasa. A recent outbreak of heavy gun battles, late March 2007, between supporters of Bemba and Kabila’s presidential guards killed an estimated 600 people.

Although these tensions discredit the initial praise of the peaceful completion of the election process, people remain optimistic. General hopes are that in the post-election period promises made during campaigning will be effectuated. But given the great number of obstacles and challenges, change will not come overnight.

3.2. Context and challenges in eastern Congo

More than three quarters of the people in the Kivu provinces live off less than one dollar a day, well below the internationally accepted minimum. Although the area is rich in natural resources such as gold and coltan, ordinary people hardly benefit. Also the farming sector, despite the great agricultural potential in eastern Congo, is unable to cover the populations' basic subsistence needs. Poor harvests in recent years have also been caused by the plant disease 'mosaic' that attacks manioc, one of the major staple foods. As a result, many farmers are obliged to buy flour in commercial centres that is imported from India and Pakistan.

Another aspect weighing heavily on the creation of a healthy economy is the widespread presence of corruption, which forms part of the everyday practice of large (state)institutions such as the army, the police and immigration services. Such practices cause a severe lack of trust in institutions among the population.

Also institutions that are not necessarily linked to corruption, like schools, health clinics and hospitals, have to perform with inadequate human and financial resources. On top of that, the population does often not have the means to pay for such services. As a consequence, the majority of children are not educated and many people die from preventable and curable conditions such as malaria, malnutrition, tuberculosis, cholera or diarrhoea. Also, birth-related deaths, both in mothers and infants, are common. This is also related to the fertility rate of Congolese women – the highest in Africa – who get on average 6.7 children.²¹

Additionally, the quality of all sorts of infrastructure in the east is dreadful. For example, the roads in the region date from colonial times and have hardly been refurbished since. The exception, perhaps, are the reparations undertaken on the road from Bukavu to Kasongo (Maniema), which – remaining a dirt road – risks to degenerate quickly in the rainy climate. The work is carried out by poor Chinese migrant workers that earn a meagre salary of \$20 a month. Yet, an estimated 80% of the Congolese working population is unemployed.²²

Finally, another critical factor is the absence of trustworthy information. For example, the city of Bukavu with its 700,000 inhabitants²³ has no newspapers and lacks a reading culture, which is also influenced by the large number people that can not read or write. Although several radio stations broadcast, not all people can afford a radio and their geographical coverage is often limited. The consequence of the lack of information is that people rely on rumours, locally called '*radio troitoire*', which have in the past proved to be a breeding ground for conflict.

3.2.1. Land conflicts

In eastern Congo, many conflicts have a land-related component. Access to land can either be a direct trigger to violence and exclusion, but it is also an issue that is exploited and manipulated to safeguard socio-political agendas. The diversity of land conflicts makes them difficult to analyse and the following examples therefore merely serve to shed some light on their complexity.

In South Kivu, conflicts over land occur mainly in the mountainous territories of Walungu, Kabare, Mwenga and partially Kalehe, densely populated by the agriculturalist Bushi that farm in swamps and on mountain slopes. Intensive and prolonged exploitation of the latter has caused serious erosion and has made much of the land useless. Traditionally, but with the exception of large private plantations, all land in these areas belongs to the Mwami,

²¹ Source: UNICEF website, 2005 figure.

²² Fieldnotes.

²³ As there are no reliable statistics on demographic patterns in DR Congo the presented population figure must be interpreted as a rough estimate.

the traditional chef of a *collectivité* - an administrative entity but are managed by the *chef de groupement*, who lends parcels to its subordinates on a seasonal or long-term basis.²⁴

As most of these arrangements are orally made, they leave room for contradicting interpretations and form on many occasions a basis for conflict. Because of the circulation of weapons and the culture of violence that has taken root during the wars, conflicts over land increasingly tend to turn violent. Although community tribunals used to deal with tensions over land in a quite effective manner, the war-induced disintegration of social bonds has affected their position, legitimacy and power. Also, they have to 'compete' with official jurisprudence, which – although preferred by many people – is not necessarily more effective given the high incidence of corruption.

In the territories of Fizi and Uvira, communal conflicts manifest themselves as land-related but have no relation with land shortage. In fact, their underlying causes are of an ethno-cultural nature. The area is populated by various ethnic groups, such as the Babembe, Babuyo, Bafulero, and the Banyamulenge that have historical links with Tutsi communities in Rwanda and Burundi. Conflict, most notably between the Banyamulenge and Babembe and to a lesser extent between the Babembe and Babuyo, relate to issues of governance and leadership. Another disputed subject is the claim on Congolese citizenship by the Banyamulenge. It must be mentioned that the issues of nationality and ethnicity have become more pronounced because of their exploitation and manipulation by armed factions and political powers during the wars.

3.2.2. Demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants

Conflicts in Congo have implicated a multitude of armed groups: Congolese government forces, the RCD and MLC rebellions, the Mai-Mai²⁵ movement, Hema and Lendu militias in Ituri, foreign extremist Rwandese factions such as the Interahamwe, and other Rwandese, Ugandese and Burundese rebel factions and their respective national armies.

As part of the peace process, a large-scale demobilisation programme launched by the *Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion* (CONADER), helped by the UN peacekeeping force MONUC, had to reduce the extraordinary number of armed forces. With the exception of children, women, the handicapped and chronically or mentally sick, part of the armed forces are 'mixed' (*brassage*) into the national Congolese army (FARDC) and are trained on military conduct. However, the new army risks being divided as many FARDC soldiers are still loyal to their old rebel leaders. The ones that demobilise receive \$25 per month for a period of one year. So far, 14 of the 18 national brigades have completed his process and an estimated number of 150,000 ex-combatants are demobilised and returned largely to their respective villages.

The challenge then remains to reintegrate them socially, psychologically and professionally. Although many NGOs focus on their education or train them in setting up an income generating activity, for many the yield of looting as a rebel was without doubt more lucrative. It is therefore not uncommon that ex-combatants join armed gangs. Another point of concern is that the reintegration process is almost uniquely focussing on the ex-combatants, forgetting the community around them which may cause jealousy. Also, many ex-combatants

²⁴ The traditional administrative structure in DR Congo is based on a hierarchical structure.

²⁵ The Mai-Mai is a name used to describe a multitude of local defence forces composed of mainly young men. The word Mai-Mai means 'water water' and refers to the holy water they sprinkled on their bodies before combat. This water allegedly protected them from being killed by bullets. Originally set up to protect their respective communities, they increasingly became involved in practices such as rape, looting and inter-communal killings.

are not accepted by their communities because they looted, killed and raped among their own people. If such tensions are not dealt with in a professional manner, new conflicts may arise.

3.2.3. Human rights violations: Sexual violence

A particular shocking characteristic of the violence that ravaged in particular the east of the country is of a sexual nature. Most above mentioned rebel groups, but also the national army, have since 1996 systematically sexually molested many women, girls, young children and men. Although reliable statistics are nowhere to be found, UN agencies and organisations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International estimate that between 1996 and 2002, 40,000 to 60,000 people have been victim of sexual violence. Of course, this number is vastly outdated and only takes into consideration those who came forward as many victims keep their ordeal to themselves.

Apart from the humiliating act of being forced to have sexual intercourse, often with multiple men, the tactics used on victims include the mutilation of genitals by inserting sharp objects into the vagina or anus. Also, family members are forced to have sex with each other (incest) or with their cattle while neighbours and other family members are forced to watch, or even sing and dance around naked. The psychosocial trauma (shame, fear, humiliation) as well as the physical implications of such acts are horrific: unwanted pregnancies, contamination with HIV/aids, fistulas²⁶, incontinence, etc.

Although the incidence of such acts has somewhat waned, sexual violence has not been eradicated yet. However, a law on sexual violence that was adopted June 2006 could improve the trial of suspects and the protection of victims and witnesses; provided that the quality of the Congolese justice system betters in terms of independence, trustworthiness and the timely and correct conclusion of law suits.

3.2.4. Reintegration of returning refugees and internally displaced people

Another factor that has destabilised social relations in South Kivu is the massive displacement of people that took place. Because of the war and the presence of Interahamwe, numerous villages in have been abandoned (Walungu, Kaniola, Kalonge, Bunyakiri, Nindja, etc.). Many have sought protection in Bukavu, a city which grew from an estimated 600.000 inhabitants in 1996 to 1.2 million at the height of the war in 2002. OCHA estimates that some 1.1 million people are still internally displaced, of which 222.000 in South Kivu and 541.000 in North Kivu.²⁷ Additionally, some 408.000 Congolese are living in exile in neighbouring countries.

For the territories of Uvira and Fizi, many people have fled to neighbouring Tanzania, often up to ten years ago. In order to facilitate their return, in 2005 the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, began a resettlement programme that, for South Kivu, has since returned 24.500 refugees by a ferry named *Mwongozo*, meaning 'showing the way' in Kiswahili. In 2007, another 48,500 will be repatriated to South Kivu. In order to cover the costs, UNCHR recently pledged an additional \$47 million on top of its annual budget for the Congo resettlement programme.²⁸

²⁶ A fistula is the medical term used to describe the presence of an unnatural connexion between the vagina and the anus. This is caused by violent rape or the insertion of sharp objects in the vagina. As a result women suffering from this condition have become incontinent. Out of shame for smelling bad, many have withdrawn from public life.

²⁷ OCHA (2006, p.11).

²⁸ UNHCR (2007).

The resettlement process poses many obstacles. First, many prefer to stay in the central villages of Fizi and Baraka, which is causing overpopulation and competition over resources such as water. Also, people that do return to their villages will often find their houses destroyed and their land sold or unofficially claimed by others, which poses conflicts between the returnees and those who stayed behind.

CHAPTER FOUR

PEACE FOR A CHANGE

Peacebuilding can be looked at in different ways but in Congo it is, by NGOs, largely referred to as change: changing the behaviour of individuals, changing the functioning of institutions, changing the unequal distribution of wealth, and changing the marginalised conditions in which many people live.

This chapter looks at some issues that characterise and influence the contributions of Congolese NGOs to realising change. Although most NGOs have in practice adopted a mixture of activities and strategies, some distinct areas of orientation as well as some crosscutting approaches are described. Thereafter a paragraph on the conceptualisation of change looks at some aspects that interact with the possibilities to achieve change, notably the design of projects and the dilemmas involved in the attribution of results of peace practices, the choice of target groups, the ways in which NGOs deal with risks, and the specific function of network organisations.

4.1. Working for peace in eastern Congo: Organisational orientations

In eastern Congo, a multitude of civil society organisations touch upon a variety of conflict-related causes and consequences. Although definitions of what peacebuilding is vary in literature, in eastern Congo working for peace is by many organisations operationalised by the need to change the behaviour of and relationships between groups and/or individuals as negative behaviour is often the root cause of problems.²⁹ Such changes, it is argued, are needed within social, cultural, political and economic actors and relate to, amongst others, the reduction of inter-ethnic and land-related conflicts, the increase of non-violent conflict resolution, the establishment of a constitutional state, an effective reintegration of returning refugees, a change of mentality in favour of citizenship and democracy, the respect for human rights and human dignity, etc.

In this respect, most organisations have developed a mixture of orientations, strategies, and activities that ought to contribute to various sorts and levels of change they wish to see in society. On the one hand, this diversification is caused by the understanding that a narrow focus on one particular aspect of the context does not do justice to its complexity. On the other hand, diversification creates a broader base for organisational survival in response to different and often changing donor policies.

Despite the multi-dimensional nature of peace practices in eastern Congo, some specialisation can be observed and several broad organisational orientations are standing out. By ‘orientation’ is meant the general area in which an organisation operates. The choice not to call it theme, approach or strategy is deliberately made because organisations with a different orientation often use similar approaches or strategies and focus on the same themes. The analyses presented in the remainder of this report are, where possible, aligned with some predominant orientations adopted by the NGO’s covered in this research. Notably, as organisations often have more than one orientation, the categorisation presented below are not complete nor exclusive.

- Defence and promotion of human rights: In all respects, and reinforced by the war, human rights are little respected in Congo and many organisations aim at strengthening the

²⁹ Multiple interviews, January-March 2007.

juridical system as well as the support given to victims, with a specific focus on sexual violence.

- Juridical assistance to victims of human rights violations;
 - Monitoring of trials;
 - Denunciation of human rights violations through publications, etc.;
 - Dissemination of information on human rights, the Congolese constitution and particular laws (family code and law on sexual violence);
 - Training of juridical personnel (magistrates, lawyers, prosecutors) as well as national security forces (military and police);
 - National and international political lobby with regards to putting a halt to persisting impunity and stimulate law amendments in favour of a rights-based treatment of victims and perpetrators of human rights violations.
- Communication and information: In particular media organisations (most notably radio- and television stations) aim at the dissemination and promotion of complete, reliable, objective and impartial information as they feel its absence is hampering the peace process.
 - Production and dissemination of informative programmes that focus on news and current affairs;
 - Production of educational programmes that aim at influencing behavioural change on issues like sexual reproduction, agricultural practices, conflict resolution, respect for human rights, etc.;
 - Strengthening of journalistic practices by training of and exchange between journalists of various media channels;
 - Performing a watchdog function by holding political and military authorities accountable, in particular with regards to the post-election period;
 - Enhance media consumption and stimulate discussion and a critical reflection on community levels on topics relevant to the local context;
 - Production of visualised educational material in the form of posters on for example sexual violence or the election process.
 - Peace education: Formal and informal sessions on peace largely focus on changing negative and unwanted behaviour that has, under the influence of habit, ignorance or wrong examples, taken the upper hand in Congolese society.
 - Organisation of awareness raising and training sessions on peaceful cohabitation, human rights and democracy for a variety of target groups (administrators, military personnel, local communities, etc.);
 - The development and integration of peace modules in the formal Congolese schooling system;
 - Organisation of camps for youth in which they discuss on issues relevant to peace;
 - Training on responsible (local) leadership.
 - Local conflict resolution and reconciliation: A cause and consequence of conflict in eastern Congo is the localised escalation of conflicting interests over land, power and issues of nationality. In order to avoid that such conflicts become violent, many organisations aim at strengthening their resolution on the lowest levels.
 - Training of local leaders on ‘modern’ non-violent conflict resolution and mediation techniques;
 - Reevaluate traditional conflict resolution mechanisms by researching its strengths and weaknesses and its usefulness in a modernising society;

- Strengthening of useful aspects of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (*arbre à palabre*);
 - The creation of forums of exchange between groups of people that are in conflict, often around concrete (income generating) activities;
 - Local monitoring of tensions and conflicts between (groups) of people;
 - Dissemination of information on the formal regulations and laws on land ownership;
 - Negotiation of power sharing agreements of opposing (ethnic) groups that live in the same territory.
- Social reintegration: As the war in Congo has had serious repercussions on the strength of social bonds and left particular (groups of) people marginalised or excluded, many organisations focus on restoring trust and socio-economic human dignity.
 - Individual and community-based trauma counselling and reconciliation to counter stigmatisation, exclusion and humiliation;
 - Promotion of income generating activities (socio-professional reintegration) to restore personal confidence and the socioeconomic value of beneficiaries in their respective communities;
 - Physical resettlement and reintegration of some distinct target groups, namely ex-combatants and their dependants, returning refugees and internally displaced and victims of sexual violence;
 - Promotion and defence of women’s participation in (political) decision making processes.
 - Organisational capacity building: The history of Congo, characterised by violence and the neglect of institution building, has created a situation in which most organisations lack the capacity to function properly, which justifies the need to organisational strengthening. Even though this domain is predominantly occupied by international organisations, also local organisations seek to strengthen the (organisational) capacities of grassroots associations or other groups of beneficiaries.
 - Organisation of training sessions on project and organisational management;
 - Provide for thematic forums of exchange for partners or member organisations;
 - Solution-based assistance and exchange on the difficulties encountered in concrete projects;
 - Scientific and experience-based research on peace practices in eastern Congo.

4.2. Some distinctive approaches

Even though the orientations and even the type of activities of peace practitioners in eastern Congo differ, some distinct approaches or strategies can be identified that are seen as particularly useful to forge change.

Across the board, organisations work with some sort of local representation or constituencies that are called “*clubs de paix*”, “*noyaux de paix*”, “*club d’écoute*”, “*paillette de paix*”, “*chambre des regards*”, etc. Those structures are the ‘eyes and ears’ of an organisation as they provide information on the context and report on local conflicts or human rights violations. Also, they are often responsible for local conflict resolution or for the restitution of certain types of information among community members. Mostly, such structures are composed of notable, trusted and respected people such as teachers, chiefs and local administrators that have a positive influence in their communities.

Although some NGOs have sought to make use of already existing structures, most have been created. Because of the large number of such local constituencies it is unclear what the real incentives are for community members to participate and the possibility exists that some participate in multiple local structures supported by different organisations. This makes it difficult for an organisation to draw conclusions with regard to the impact they have on such community structures

Another significant approach to peacebuilding is the combination of income generating activities with sensitisation on topics like human rights, conflict resolution, mediation, peaceful cohabitation, etc. This is based on the idea that information is insufficiently internalised if it does not come with an economic incentive. As one organisation explains: “We have noticed that too much attention is given to training these days. It helps but when it is not combined with concrete activities the results remain marginal. For example, a group of ethnically mixed fishermen has been trained on the advantages of working together, but how can they do it if they do not have boats to fish together?”³⁰

As shows the above example, what makes the integration of economic activities sensible to peace is that they bring people or groups together that have a shared interests in the successful completion of the activities. In some cases, these groups are constituted of people with a similar background, for example victims of sexual violence, that find support among their companions. In other cases the focus lies on opposing ethnic groups. However, in that case it is important to identify the real problem that exists between such groups and the question needs to be asked if the activity proposed contributes to finding a solution. If this is not done properly the project will not achieve its objectives and, worse, may have a counterproductive effect.

An example that was given made reference to a project, “goats of peace”, that targeted the Banyamulenge and Babembe communities. “Thirty goats were given to one of the ethnic groups. The idea was that the other group would get the goats after they had given birth. But before it was time to rotate, the first group had gobbled up all the goats.”³¹ In this example the real problem between the two groups related to governance and the project reinforced it instead of solving it.

The rudiments of the above mentioned orientations of peace practices in eastern Congo have developed during open conflict where the quickly changing and alarming context caused civil society organisations to respond to every need that emerged. People started peace orientated activities because they felt they had to do something. On top of that, an organisational space for peacebuilding was created as a response to the availability of external funding.³² This twofold incentive to work on peace has resulted in a situation where many organisations, and in particular those that can be labelled opportunist, lack a degree of professionalism and largely function in a responsive manner. As one respondent mentioned, “the conflict did not allow us to take a step back and reflect on what we were doing, we just had to go, go, go”.³³

The Congo peace process, and most notably the democratic election process of 2006, has led to an improved security situation, which, it seems, reinforced the determination among civil society organisations to pull their weight in making changes last. With a government in place that has been chosen by the people the general feeling is that, finally, ‘time has come’ to attack structural problems and inequalities that have for many years created a breeding ground for animosity and violence. This has stimulated civil society organisations to take on a proactive role in reflecting on their practices and reinforces the need to professionalise, not

³⁰ Interview executive committee CCAP, 12-02-2007.

³¹ Interview independent consultant, 07-03-2007.

³² Interview president Bureau de la Societé Civile, 02-03-2007.

³³ Interview permanent secretary Groupe Jeremie, 01-03-2007.

just to have a more profound impact but also to set the example. Such introspection has also awakened the need to think about how implemented activities result in change.

In the following paragraph some aspects will be highlighted that relate to how the complex characteristics of conflict, interrelated with organisational planning processes, the choice of target groups, the ability to deal with risks and the functioning of network organisations impacts peace practices, the possibilities to achieve concrete changes and, in a later stadium, their measurement.

4.3. Conceptualising change

Peacebuilding, as the previous paragraph showed, is done by many organisations and encompasses various orientations, strategies and types of activities.

Before developing a peacebuilding programme or project, an organisation should have in mind what it wants to change. On a general level ‘envisioned’ changes relate to an organisations’ long-term vision and gives direction to what an organisation is doing and why it is doing so. On project-level changes are, ideally, more modestly formulated and translated into objectives that are (in part) realisable by the planned activities. In this respect, concrete changes are mostly described in relation to a specific target group, location and time period.

Ideally, the incentive and description of change should rest on a baseline study that creates insight in the situation at the beginning of the project or programme. The information gathered in a baseline also presents the foundation of result measurement in a later stadium. However, structured baseline studies that are organised around specific issues that have a link with planned activities are largely absent in the Congolese context. Instead, in identifying their approach, organisations largely rely on random exchanges with beneficiaries or their own interpretations of their needs.

What characterises social change, on a general but also project level, is that it is not necessarily achievable by one singular organisation but it is the result of many actors over a period of time. This means that it is virtually impossible to attribute change to one project, programme or organisation and that it is more useful to talk about an NGO’s contribution to a wider process of change; something that is acknowledged by civil society organisations in eastern Congo. However, what became clear from individual interviews but also the several working sessions is that many organisations have difficulties in making concrete who else and in what way they themselves are contributing to a wider process of change.

Of course, questioning organisations on what they see as their concrete contribution to change presumes an answer that takes into account ‘cause and effect’ and relates to the logical framework approach. And as argued earlier, many local organisations are not or hardly familiar with the concepts and ideas underpinning a logical framework as they develop interventions in response to a perceived need and not, in the first place, with the idea to create a specific effect.

Nevertheless, when not reflecting on a potential contribution to change increases the likelihood that actions occur in an isolated manner or that different organisations work with similar objectives, activities and target groups in the same geographical area. Also, as will be discussed in chapter five, it hampers organisations from developing and implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Besides these general observations on change, several issues that are linked with the possibility for NGOs to achieve peacebuilding-related change in the Congolese context stand out, notably their choice of beneficiaries, how they deal with risks and opportunities posed by a changing context and issue of peace networks. The remainder of this chapter describes and

analyses these three points against the background of accomplishing project-related or organisational goals.

4.3.1. Target groups

With regards to the wider changes to which civil society organisations in eastern Congo hope to contribute, the choice of beneficiaries as well as the location of intervention has a direct relation with the extent and type of change that can be achieved.

Many organisations in eastern Congo, it seems, recognise the need to identify and integrate those groups or individuals that can be labelled as peace-adversaries. In that respect, in particular those that intervene in the domain of peace education seem to have a preference to work with socio-political and military leaders, opinion leaders and leaders of groups based on, amongst others, tradition, sex, religion or ethnicity. According to several respondents such leaders have to be targeted because “have a vast influence on the local community”. With their position, they say, leaders can be “hypocrite spoilers” or “intoxicators” as well as “peacebuilders” when engaging their adherents.³⁴

Also, most organisations are in some way or another working with target groups that are described as vulnerable, such as victims of sexual violence, war-orphans, widows, etc. This relates to the fact that the needs within those groups are most obvious and that a focus on vulnerable groups strokes with donor priorities. But although the choice of vulnerable beneficiaries is justified by their socially marginalised position, vulnerable groups are not necessarily the ones that can have a large, or even modest, impact on peace processes. In fact, they are often the first in support of peace as they have been victimised by the absence of it.

Another point of attention is an organisation’s geographical orientation. As virtually all organisations in eastern Congo have their offices in the urban town centres, interventions are in some cases also limited to urban beneficiaries. Similarly, certain humanitarian hotspots, like Baraka south of Uvira, seem to attract disproportionate support of international as well as local organisations while more inland, and often more troubled, areas are deprived from any form of aid.

What can be argued in this respect is that the choice for certain target groups or locations of intervention need to be carefully made. In order to avoid ‘phantom projects’ that marginally contribute to change or are irrelevant with regards to the most poignant needs in society, these choices should be based on a trade-off between an organisation’s capacities and the potential to forge profound and lasting change.

4.3.2. Changing context: risk and reorientation

Another difficulty with achieving change is change itself. Organisations working on peace issues in post-conflict Congo are challenged by a quickly changing context that can offer new opportunities but also generates risks for the peace process at large or on programme level. As mentioned by a respondent: “It is not easy to specify which changes have been achieved because any type of change is contemporary, today it is something else than tomorrow.”³⁵

Risks posed by a changing context require from organisations to closely follow what is happening in society. Continuous efforts are therefore needed to monitor and evaluate if the ‘new’ context means that certain organisational strategies, programmes or projects are no longer relevant and to estimate if a review, adaptation or reorientation is needed: one of the principles of result measurement.

³⁴ Interview coordinator CDJP Uvira, 19-02-2007 and interview independent consultant, 07-03-2007.

³⁵ Interview social assistant CDJP Bukavu, 05-02-2007.

In Congo, in particular individuals or groups of people that display counterproductive behaviour pose risks, especially when those actors are military or political figures with considerable influence in society. “For example”, as mentioned by a respondent: “if you are working on diminishing the negative perception towards Rwandophones it only takes one controversial statement by Laurent Nkunda and your whole programme will be shaken up.”³⁶

Another organisation explained they dialogued with such potential spoilers on the moment the opportunity occurred. “Yesterday I was visiting the Masisi territory. Over 2,000 soldiers that are loyal to Laurent Nkunda are based in one of the villages where we are implementing a programme. I feared that Nkunda might not be receptive to our presence and that the large military presence would disturb our work. That is why, while being there, I decided to contact him in order to explain what we are doing. Although I was scared I was also happy that he accepted to meet.”³⁷

The research showed that most organisations in eastern Congo do reflect on similar context-related risks that could impede their work before formulating a project or programme. Also, they respond by adapting and concretising their conflict analysis during the implementation of a project. However, few organisation have developed a clear and predefined strategy on how to deal with context-related risks, for example by reorienting a programme or approach. This in spite of the fact that organisations do feel their donors give them the freedom to amend projects when necessary, as the questionnaire revealed. As a result, most NGOs respond in an incidental, immediate and ‘restorative’ manner when a risk manifests itself.

Working in a responsive rather than a thoroughly analysed preventive manner is strongly influenced by the fluid and quickly changing nature of conflict contexts, which makes it difficult to anticipate to potential risks. However, it could be useful to document NGO experiences of responding to risks. This may generate a knowledge base of how certain strategies are used in particular situations, it can reveal the logic of translating a changing context into a programme and it may inspire other actors facing similar risks.

4.3.3. Networks and change

The ways in which organisations conceptualise change in a (post)conflict context become even more complex in network organisations.

As mentioned before, change is the result of many actors over a period of time. In this respect, most organisations interviewed argued that the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of peace work as well as mutual learning is enhanced when bonds are established between actors that can reinforce each others work and act as partners. In other words, collaboration and the coordination of activities ought to result in a certain added value (the sum is larger than its parts) and reduces duplication, and thus overhead, of activities to a minimum.

In the Kivu provinces, this understanding has motivated the creation of several cooperative structures like networks, platforms or forums that are based on a communal interest. Some of these structures unite organisations with a specific orientation. For example, the *Reseau des Radios et Télévisions Communautaires à l’est du Congo*, RATECO, unites most community media outlets of South Kivu and the *Reseau des Associations des Droits de*

³⁶ Interview national director, Search for Common Ground, 05-02-2007. Laurent Nkunda is a dissident senior FARDC officer that has created its own rebel faction. In recent years his soldiers have destabilised large parts of Northern Kivu. Also, they have been involved in a violent take-over of the city of Bukavu in June 2004. Recent peace negotiations have granted him an official position in the Congolese army. However, Nkunda is by the international criminal tribunal wanted for war crimes.

³⁷ Interview coordinator Aide et Action pour la Paix, 12-03-2007.

l'Homme au Sud-Kivu, RADHOSKI, focuses on organisations working in the juridical and human rights sector.

Other networks are thematically structured and gather members from organisations with a different orientation. For example, the *Reseau Innovation Organisationelle of the Eglise du Christ au Congo*, RIO/ECC, has started an inter-organisational reflection process on the practice of peacebuilding, RPP, where its members exchange on issues like how to conduct a context analysis, the development of peace indicators, etc.

A particular case is the Uvira-based network organisation *Comité de Coordination des Actions pour la Paix*, CCAP, which associates various civil society organisations. In the composition of its members as well as the executive committee ethnic backgrounds are taken into account on a basis of equal representation (Banyamulenge, Babuyo, Babembe, etc.). Given the fact that ethnicity is conflict factor in the Uvira-Fizi region, the CCAP network aims at realising inter-ethnic solidarity among the various communities, belligerents, leaders and its member organisations. But given the fact that potential ethnic conflict factors run through the composition of (board)members, such a structure demands special management attention.

Apart from sharing a certain thematic interest, most networks – as was argued in Congo – also have a practical function, for example by serving as a protective shield. Because all members can present their case collectively, they have more bargaining power and face fewer risks as compared to working in isolation. CCAP gives an example: “In 2002 some employees of a CCAP member organisation were imprisoned by Mai Mai rebels. Immediately, as a network, we printed flyers demanding their liberation. We distributed over a thousand, the rebels understood the message and our members were freed.”³⁸

Panos also underlined the advantages of collaborating by making reference to a collective of journalists of several radios that produced communal programmes during the election process. “Because they shared information the programmes became more complete and credible. Also, the collective had a protective function because it proved to be much more difficult to attack a collective than individual journalists and, finally, the weaker members learned from the stronger ones.”³⁹

International donor organisations that engage with the Congolese peacebuilding sector are eager to collaborate with networks, thematic forums, umbrella organisations or particular types of synergies, mostly because they believe in the added value of collective and/or complementary action. However, donors should be aware of the risks of financing such structures as external funding tends to disturb the relationship with its members and can even undermine their *raison d'être*.

When such structures get financial support, “membership is motivated by the availability of funds instead of a genuine interest to work together.”⁴⁰ Also, most requirements of donors, with regards to the justification of funds or the submission of reports, are designed for project-oriented organisations. This creates a dilemma as networks, by means of definition and practice, do not fall in that category. But as alternative forms of funding policies such as process funding are still little developed, networks inevitably transform from coordinating structures into a ‘new’ implementing organisations. This jeopardises their position and role as they often absorb or replace tasks and responsibilities of their members.

Most of the above largely corresponds with theoretical notions on peace networks, notably that they create a comparative advantage and that they stimulate exchange and inter-organisational learning. However, in practice it is not always clear how networks operationalise their points of intersection and complementarity in Congo. It is therefore

³⁸ Interview executive committee CCAP, 12-02-2007.

³⁹ Interview provincial coordinator Panos, 22-01-2007.

⁴⁰ Interview advisors SNV Goma, 13-03-2007.

imperative to keep an eye on the practice of networks, as well as stumbling blocks and complicating factors with regards to network-related peace practices. The fact that networks combine various actors, and thus various views, potentially increases the possibility of disagreement on how to achieve change. Also, the possibility for members to learn from each other is not always guaranteed as cooperative structures are often led by dominant organisations or individuals. When not managed well this may create a disequilibrium that hampers the evolution and growth of smaller or less experienced members.

4.4. Concluding thoughts

This chapter paid attention to the interdependence of change and peace practices. Most organisations in Congo argued that working for peace means the necessity to put a halt to negative behaviour. This means that peacebuilding, on civil society level, becomes a highly social process in which certain attitudes, opinions, etc., of people need to be altered. To achieve this, NGOs have developed a range of organisational orientations such as human rights, communications and information, peace education, etc.

In Congo, some particular approaches can be identified, most notably the use of local peace clubs or constituencies that are responsible for the creation of a support base as well as providing the NGO with contextual information. Also, most organisations aim at combining small-scale economic projects with more soft approaches like training on human rights. Another particular aspect is the presence of peace networks. Although they in principle exist to coordinate the activities of their members, provide a base for exchange and learning and, by common action, have a protective function, it remains unclear what their specific comparative advantages are in relation to peace practices.

In that respect it is important to create more insight in their added value while avoiding to support networks in such a manner that they become (new) implementing organisations that replace tasks of their members. What stands out is that many organisations, both individual or networks, lack a professional approach as they have been either set up recently, can be labelled opportunist or have not been able to develop and professionalise during the war. Given the fact that numerous actors, whether experienced or not, are involved in peacebuilding, it is difficult to attribute change to a single actor. But what are the implications of these characteristics of Congolese peace practices on the possibilities to measure their results?

In order to achieve change, it was argued, it is important to set realistic objectives. Ideally, the motivation to start a specific project should be based on the needs of beneficiaries, which should be established by a baseline study that provides insight in what needs to be changed. Obviously, it is not easy to concretise behavioural change. Nevertheless, it is important to focus on a few specific aspects that can be influenced by a certain project or organisation. That also makes it a necessity to carefully select a target group as their relationship with having a positive impact on society differs (for example targeting belligerents may provoke a more sustainable change as violence reduces than targeting victims).

Additionally, risks presented by the context should be taken into consideration. Most commonly, such risks manifest themselves by powerful political or military figures that can, by one controversial statement, discredit a peace process wholly. Currently, most NGOs in Congo respond to such risks in a reactive manner. The quickly changing context, for good or worse, makes it difficult for them to anticipate to these changes. However, by documenting what steps were taken to solve a specific problem, what choices it involved and what the outcome was, valuable information can be gathered that can be put to use in future problem

salutations, whether it be in a reactive or preventive manner. Such documentation can start by building on valuable previous experiences. It is, to start with, arguably more useful and less time-consuming than trying to push NGOs to work out certain detailed scenarios' before a project starts. This, however, does not mean that NGOs should stop reflecting on what could potentially happen as being aware increases the likelihood to detect risks in an early stage.

As change is the result of multiple actors it is imperative to create insight in what others are doing, how actions can be complementary and how overlap or counter productivity can be avoided. This demands from NGOs to engage in open dialogue with other organisations, even if they could be labelled as competitors. Exchange between organisations with a similar orientation (for example media-related organisations, or human rights clubs) is useful when it comes to discussing the details of certain practices, evaluation methods, learning points, etc.

But also, exchange between organisations with a different orientation should be encouraged as it provides the possibility to, in a particular context, develop projects in such a way that they may work complementarily. Network organisations, in both these circumstances, can fulfil an important role in coordinating such exchange and processes of fine-tuning approaches. As the coordination of networks is not similar to traditional project-implementation, donor agencies should look in to how to shape and further flexible funding policies.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULT MEASUREMENT IN PEACE PRACTICE

This chapter looks into the experiences with result measurement, or monitoring and evaluation, of NGO peace practices in eastern Congo. It argues that there is a widespread understanding, often based on theoretical notions of monitoring and evaluation, of why result measurement is important. Also, as some examples will show, organisations have insight in what results have been achieved, either on a general or more concrete level.

Yet, when it comes to the practice of establishing a link between such results and the interventions of NGOs, experiences with monitoring and evaluation methods are sobering and largely focused on mechanisms of irregular feedback. As will be argued, this is caused by a widespread confusion of concepts that relate to project cycle management, which complicates the development of a sound monitoring and evaluation system. Also, the means to engage in result measurement prove to be insufficient.

5.1. Why should we?

The need to measure result forms part of the whole project chain and relates to upward, downward and internal learning processes as well as accountability.

Monitoring and evaluation takes place on different levels. In line with current characteristics of project management a distinction can be made between result measurement on the immediate level, which largely relates to the direct output of activities; the measurement of outcomes or effects, which are intermediate and more profound changes achieved on direct and indirect beneficiary level; and the measurement of impact, referring to long-term and sustainable changes in the wider society. Monitoring and evaluation can also be looked at as focussing on development results (changes observed in the groups, individuals and organisations with whom a programme works) or process results (focusing on internal organisational performance and effectiveness as well as the functioning of other stakeholders involved in process of change).⁴¹

For Cordaid, monitoring and evaluation takes predominantly place on output and outcome level, in which output largely refers to the extent to which the capacities of civil society organisations in the South are strengthened; both in number and quality. Outcome relates to the extent to which, in line with Cordaid's intervention strategies, poverty has been reduced, society is reconstructed and (international) policies have been influenced. Output, in this respect, is largely achieved by the interventions of its partner organisations on direct or indirect beneficiary level. Result measurement on output and outcome level relates to Cordaid's need to reports progress and results to its donors, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But also, it is strongly influenced by legitimisation processes vis-à-vis the own organisation and its partners.

In Congo, virtually all organisations contacted are increasingly aware of the need to monitor and evaluate what they are doing and have an elaborated understanding of why such exercises can be useful. The questionnaire revealed that organisations do not feel that the need to measure results is necessarily imposed by donors and it is neither seen as an exercise that comes at the end of a project or programme alone. Rather, NGOs predominantly explain monitoring and evaluation as being intrinsic to notions of internal learning in order to improve future programmes, projects and strategies, as well as organisational practices. As a

⁴¹ See for example Earl, Carden and Smutylo (2001, p. 64-66).

monitoring and evaluation expert observed: “The last couple of years NGOs increasingly recognise the necessity to engage in auto-evaluation in addition to evaluations conducted at the end of a project. They usually engage community members and beneficiaries in order to identify if they are still on the right track. They understand that peace processes are sensible and need to be closely followed.”⁴² Or as someone else mentioned: “When you don’t evaluate you don’t know what doesn’t happen but you also don’t know what does happen.”⁴³

As the responses below show, monitoring and evaluation can be related to various levels in which improvement is sought. What stands out is that most responses have a strong link to learning and reflection on a deep level. This understanding, it can be argued, reveals a strong theoretical knowledge on monitoring and evaluation which, as most organisations explained, is derived from participation in trainings and workshops on project planning.⁴⁴

- Activity level (performance and output)
 - Analyse if the planned activities are carried out and completed according to plan;
 - Analyse if the implemented activities have had the wanted immediate results.
- Effect and impact level (outcome)
 - Identify if different communities have been brought closer together;
 - Calculate the effectiveness of a project/programme (results versus investment);
 - Identify the achieved changes in/among beneficiaries (behaviour, action, relations).
- Strategic level
 - Decide on a possible improvement or reorientation of the project, programme, approach or strategy;
 - Improve the positioning and orientation within a certain domain;
 - Analyse what still needs to be done, with whom and by what means;
 - Identify mistakes in order to avoid them in the future;
 - Analyse if the completed activities stroke with the objectives and expectancies defined beforehand.
- Organisational level
 - Evaluate internal organisational practice, in terms of strengths and weaknesses, in order to reinforce capacities;
 - Identify the added-value of the organisation, which helps to create a sense of pride and auto-satisfaction;
 - Fulfil the internal obligation of specifying the future direction in relation to past experiences and present action.
- Contextual level
 - Identify contextual constraints and opportunities in relation to the programme (social, political, cultural, etc.);
 - Identify if a contribution can be made to what others are doing;
 - Develop a degree of cooperation with actors in other domains;
 - Identify if the ‘margins’ of the agreements made with donors are respected.

⁴² Interview independent consultant, 07-03-2007.

⁴³ Interview national director Search for Common Ground, 05-02-2007.

⁴⁴ Note that the organisations contacted did not give their responses in the categorical manner in which they are presented in this report.

Monitoring and evaluation forms part of organisational legitimisation processes. Ideally, it gives insight in the strengths *and* weaknesses of an organisation and its programmes. The ability to show ‘good’ results reinforces the position and trustworthiness of an organisation and organisations therefore have a direct interest in showing they are able to perform. Contrary, being open about more flawed or negative results, places an organisation in a vulnerable position as it opens doors for criticism . That is why result measurement often largely only focuses on the positive results; a characteristic that is often criticised.

Fears for being criticised have a strong link with the position of the NGO sector in eastern Congo. Over the years, and also against the background of a dysfunctional state apparatus and a generally weak economy, the NGO sector occupies a central position in the functioning of the local economy, in particular in terms of employment. Thus, to think that organisations are only motivated by ideals does not do justice to the reality as they are also strongly influenced by notions of organisational survival in competition with like-minded organisations.

The interrelation between result measurement and organisational legitimisation makes it a political exercise that can be subjective. Although organisational interests can never be completely ousted, acknowledging them will stimulate organisations to learn from experiences that may not be all bright. The following paragraph presents some (also predominantly positive) examples of results achieved by peace practices.

5.2. Reported results: some examples

Among the organisations interviewed and those approached with the questionnaire, descriptions of achieved results or changes observed were mixed in terms of scale and preciseness but several trends could be identified.

Some of the examples given were very common descriptions of generally easing tensions, such as for example the fact that the Banyamulenge community can once more circulate freely on the market, or that specific ethnic groups have started sharing meals or go to the same churches, or that fewer people take on weapons to arrange a conflict but increasingly seek a negotiated solution. What stands out is that these ‘achievements’ reflect generally observed behavioural changes in society. Although these ‘most significant changes’ are very valuable in terms of a proceeding peace process, they reveal little in terms of specific organisational contributions and are difficult to monitor or evaluate.

What is also noteworthy is that some ‘role model changes’ circulate that seem to serve as example for multiple organisations. Several organisations interviewed referred to a water-related problem that occurred in Baraka/Fizi some years ago when Banyamulenge militias had cut off the water supply serving Baraka. The shortage of clean water posed a serious threat to public health as it caused an outbreak of cholera. After mediation efforts by civil society organisations the obstruction was removed. Apparently, the conflict-related water-problem was deemed a priority. However, as compared to making profound and complex processes of change concrete, it could be argued that this example of change is rather comprehensive and confined in terms of cause versus effect and problem versus solution, and thus easy to digest.

Nevertheless, others examples were more concrete and have a more obvious link with the interventions of the organisations:

- Defence and promotion of human rights
 - “In August 2006 we launched an inquiry into the sexual exploitation of minors by FARDC soldiers and South African UN peacekeepers. Several testimonies were aired on the radio, which triggered MONUC to conduct its own investigation. After

- three months we saw that the incidents of sexual exploitation had diminished and parents of victims reported that their children went to school again.”⁴⁵
- “Our lobby activities, as well as those of our partners, had a profound impact on the adoption of the new law on sexual violence (June 2006). At first, there was not much support within the cabinet and the process became blocked. Luckily, the issue was brought in the media. The law passed in the final hours before the pre-election retreat of the cabinet, on a moment we did not think success was still possible.”⁴⁶
 - Communication and information
 - “With our mobile radio studio we launched some important peace-concepts such as ‘your neighbour is your brother’ and ‘by changing yourself you can change others’. We observed that people still refer to those one-liners.”⁴⁷
 - “During election time we distributed a poster with rules on how to behave as an observer. Through the radio we explained people where to find those posters. Many came to have a look at them which shows that our radio is listened to and trusted.”⁴⁸
 - “During the election period radio programmes paid a lot of attention to views of women who were interviewed by a specific cooperative structure of female journalists of various media. We have noticed that this sparked an understanding on household level that radio can be a tool for development for women.”⁴⁹
 - Peace education
 - “We have observed a change in behaviour of children that participated in our peace education programme on schools. With the Mutebusi insurrection [June 2004] the tendency in Bukavu was to retaliate by killing Banyamulenge. Some of the children we educated have hidden their ‘confreres’ in order to protect them.”⁵⁰
 - “We work with students because they have been manipulated a lot by politicians. Through workshops we showed them how manipulation forms an obstacle to peace. Currently, the students are better capable to resist to manipulative practices.”⁵¹
 - “During a discussion between local chiefs and police on the management of natural resources and their relation with conflict, it appeared that local chiefs were imposing taxes that were not recognised by official laws. Also, the police had no appropriate controlling system in this respect. After negotiations, the two groups adopted a more responsible behaviour.”⁵²
 - Local conflict resolution
 - “We organised a football tournament for Congolese and Rwandophones from the *haut plateau*.⁵³ We brought people together and asked them before and after about their perception of the other (through questionnaires). At first they thought it would

⁴⁵ Interview national director Search for Common Ground, 07-03-2007.

⁴⁶ Interview national director Global Rights, 09-02-2007.

⁴⁷ Interview coordinator and programme associate MIJAS, 17-02-2007.

⁴⁸ Interview, *ibid*.

⁴⁹ Interview provincial coordinator Radio Maendeleo, 22-01-2007.

⁵⁰ Interview secretary general Heritiers de la Justice, 01 March 2007.

⁵¹ Interview social assistant CDJP Bukavu, 05 February 2007. The Mutebusi insurrection refers to some days of heavy fighting in June 2004, when Mutebusi and Laurent Nkunda, two dissident FARDC militaries of Banyamulenge origin, captured the city of Bukavu. The reaction of the population was to take revenge on all Banyamulenge that were living in the city.

⁵² Working session RIO, 30-01-2007.

⁵³ The area south-east of Uvira.

not be safe to go to the ‘other side’, but they changed that idea after they played together.”⁵⁴

- “Because of our training on local conflict resolution the number of conflicts that are reported to tribunals is diminishing. The tribunals even start complaining that they are losing their clientele.”⁵⁵
- “In Kalehe exists a conflict between the Bantu and the Pygmies. The latter have been chased from their forests by the Interahamwe. As they do not know how to cultivate they began to steal from the farmlands of the Bantu, which created conflict. A group of women understood that, in fact, both the Bantu and the Pygmies suffered from insecurity threats posed by the Interahamwe. They contacted the Bantu chief, who gave a piece of land to the Pygmies. Accordingly, Bantu women learned them how to cultivate.”⁵⁶
- “We wanted to organise a meeting between the Banyamulenge and the Babembe so that they could talk about their problems. In the beginning they did not want to meet but they accepted to write letters to each other. After a certain time of writing letters they understood they were suffering from the same problems and accepted to meet on neutral territory. Now they have set up a communal farmland.”⁵⁷
- Social reintegration
 - “We organise listening sessions for ex-child soldiers. Many have nightmares and are afraid that ‘all the bad things will ever leave their mind’. After multiple sessions we see that their spirit calms and that their behaviour becomes more positive.”⁵⁸
 - “Awareness raising on problems between returning refugees and the local population has had as result that many more to lend a piece of land to the returnees until they find a piece for themselves. Also, some people have made their kitchen available as temporary housing facility.”⁵⁹
- Organisational capacity building
 - “After we launched our organisation ten years ago, many people did the same. We have accompanied many of them because they wanted to profit from our experience. Even though most have started working in different fields, together we created sustainable changes.”⁶⁰
 - “We have created ‘gardens of exchange’. This means that local organisations gather and discuss difficulties they experience in their projects. By supporting them in this way the indirect result is that they succeed in delivering quality work.”⁶¹

What this paragraph shows is that examples of change and results are abundant in the eastern Congolese context. However, general processes of change on society level are observed by many actors but may not have a direct link with targeted peace interventions. Accordingly, more specific changes that are (in)directly established by concrete actions level may prove immediate results, but still reveal little in terms of wider processes of change or impact.

⁵⁴ Interview national director Search for Common Ground, 05-02-2007.

⁵⁵ Interview permanent secretary and interim secretary general Groupe Jeremie, 01-03-2007

⁵⁶ Interview coordinator International Alert, 26-01-2007.

⁵⁷ Interview, *ibid*.

⁵⁸ Interview programme associate ADED, 19-02-2007.

⁵⁹ Interview president MIJAS, 17-02-2007.

⁶⁰ Interview peacebuilding coordinator ADEPAE, 07-03-2007.

⁶¹ Interview coordinator Pole Institute, 12-03-2007.

5.3. Result measurement in practice

What becomes clear from the previous paragraphs is that organisations have a good understanding on the advantages, functions and levels of result measurement. Also, they are quite capable of giving concrete examples of change. However, when it comes to the concretisation of how their actions contributed to such change and putting in practice their theoretical understanding of result measurement, organisations experience difficulties. As a result, in Congo, few organisations have developed structured approaches to result measurement.

Mostly, this is not necessarily caused by a lack of will but it is influenced by several complicating factors, such as the nature of peace practice. As already became clear from previous chapters, the fluid, heterogeneous and long-term nature of peace processes, interlinked with a rapidly changing context, make it difficult for organisations to measure their specific contribution to change. As mentioned by Search for Common Ground, “the problem with peace monitoring is that it deals with very complex changes in behavioural patterns that are influenced by minor changes in the context. It demands a high degree of flexible and that makes it difficult to develop hard-core measurement tools.”⁶² Also, a widespread confusion in the understanding of concepts inherent to project cycles and requirements introduced by donor organisations complicate result measurement, which will be discussed, alongside other critical factors, in the next paragraph.

Nevertheless, and even though several respondents admitted that they do not know where to start, many organisations have begun reflecting on result measurement and experiment with putting in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. However, given their relatively modest experiences in the field, it is difficult to speak about ‘best practices’. Besides, what works well in a specific project is highly dependent on the context, the orientation of the organisation and the characteristics of the project itself. When looking at how organisations monitor and evaluate results, some general as well as novel approaches to gathering information on progress and change stood out. Below, some examples will be linked to the organisation orientations that have been defined earlier.

- Defence and promotion of human rights
 - “After having organised debates among university students on human rights we have measured the number of students that integration human rights issues in their dissertations.”
 - “The number of dossiers treated by the tribunals has diminished. We know that because we analyse the registers that are kept by our local committees as well as the tribunals themselves (number of cases treated, solution).”⁶³
 - “We are working on the creation of a monitoring system with regards to our publications as we would like to know who reads them and how it is useful to them.”⁶⁴
- Communication and information
 - “In order to evaluate the programmes broadcasted by our radio we work with radio clubs. We analyse if people have been listening to our programmes, for example by asking them about their content and if they liked it or not. We also talk with

⁶² Interview independent consultant, 07-02-2007.

⁶³ Interview social assistant CDJP Bukavu, 05-02-2007.

⁶⁴ Working session ASPD, 12-03-2007.

- representatives, by means of focus groups, from the community at large to avoid biased responses. In that way we can improve the quality of our journalists.”⁶⁵
- “When we existed ten years we have, with the help of five students, developed a questionnaire that was distributed by our field representatives among the radio clubs, the people who listen to the radio and our partners. On the basis of the outcomes of the questionnaire we elaborated on a new participative strategy.”⁶⁶
 - “Reports written by our listening groups show that the programmes have an added value. Also, they reveal that listeners prepare themselves for our emissions.”⁶⁷
- Peace education
 - “When we visit the ‘peace clubs’ in the schools we ask them about what they have learned from our training sessions and how they have put to use the information. We specify our questions, which form part of questionnaires, according to the subjects that have been treated during a given period of time. Mostly, we prepare those visits at the beginning, during and after the school year.”⁶⁸
 - “We have completed a questionnaire with school children in order to create insight on the effects of peace education on their respective families. The questions were oriented to measuring impact and were developed with our partners.”⁶⁹
 - Local conflict resolution
 - “We work with 36 localities where we aim at installing a ‘paillote de paix’. Every three months we analyse how many are operational (in terms of percentage). We also have insight in how many meetings they organised and which subjects were tackled during those meetings.”⁷⁰
 - “All of our local commissions send us reports describing what activities have been initiated on a local level and which conflicts they managed to resolve.”⁷¹
 - Social reintegration
 - “With regards to socio-economic activities that have been set up, and are combined with training on peace, we try to gather information by making use of certain forms with questions. This is done by our local committees. The findings are used by our office to develop indicators.”⁷²
 - “With regards to the integration of refugees, we have organised an inter-communal workshop where we discussed on what the beneficiaries have learned and what remains to learn. We also ask from our local members to provide us with up to date context descriptions. By that means we can better monitor the project.”⁷³
 - Organisational capacity building
 - “We are in the process of designing a new programme and we want to integrate more extensively monitoring and evaluation in the budget. We realised that there are hardly means available for those vital aspects. We are also stimulating our partner

⁶⁵ Interview national director Search for Common Ground, 05-02-2007.

⁶⁶ Working session restitution, 28-03-2007.

⁶⁷ Interview evaluation associates Search for Common Ground, 06-02-2007.

⁶⁸ Interview executive secretary Heritiers de la Justice, 01-03-2007.

⁶⁹ Working sessions restitution, 28-03-2007.

⁷⁰ Interview executive committee GAIDN, 18-01-2007.

⁷¹ Interview coordinator CDJP Uvira, 19-02-2007.

⁷² Interview peacebuilding coordinator ADEPAE, 07-03-2007.

⁷³ Interview executive committee CCAP, 12-02-2007.

organisations to reflect on result measurement by reconsidering their logical frameworks”.⁷⁴

What stands out from the above, regardless of the organisational orientation, is that many organisations relate the success of their programme to feedback, as a monitoring method, they receive from beneficiaries in the field in the form of letters, telephone calls or oral testimonies. However, the question can be asked to what degree such feedback is representative for the results of certain programmes on a wider community level. Those people that do express their opinion through feedback have usually something to say that is positively or negatively biased. Also, most have an outgoing personality and the means to react. This potential subjectivity of information makes it therefore not representative for the whole target group and, although valuable, makes it difficult to use if for claims on impact or results on target group level.

Another type of feedback that is used a lot are reports written by or physical exchange with local constituencies. As mentioned in the previous chapter, almost all organisations contacted claim to work, in some way or another, with local representatives or organised groups of beneficiaries. A major task of such groups is to nourish the organisation with information from the grassroots that is used as reference materiel to evaluate results. “If there is a problem on the local level, our local constituencies include it in the reports they are sending us. We will try to react accordingly and appropriately.”⁷⁵ Positive feedback thus means the programme has a positive effect and visa-versa. Such reports raise similar concerns on objectivity and, in addition, they appear to be focused largely on a contextual description of important events that occurred in a community. Although information on the context can be put to use by the organisation, it does not necessarily say something about the achievements of its projects.

Nevertheless, organisations also actively approach their beneficiaries to establish insight in change. The most common methods used by organisations are questionnaires, interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions during field visits. Some have developed interview guidelines, or monitoring matrixes related to results on short, intermediate and long term, others approach such field visits in a more unstructured manner. However, the risk with the latter is that field visits, which are for some organisations rare because of budgetary constraints, become ‘all-in-one’ events where the implementation of activities is intermingled with their monitoring. Also, it was difficult to establish if clear criteria were developed on whom to involve in field-focused evaluative exercises. For those organisations that said they developed measurement tools, few were eager to share them.

Another monitoring strategy used by most organisations is that they organise internal meetings in order to discuss proceedings on a weekly, monthly or more random basis. Although such meetings often have a strong orientation towards discussing changes in the socio-political context, they also serve to fine-tune, improve or reorient an approach when organisations realise they can do better, such as for example the actions taken by several human rights organisations that adapted, and in many cases broadened, their orientation. The 2003 Beyond Conflict research report observed that human rights organisations in the Great Lakes region “aim to change unacceptable practices through denunciations of violence and by seeking the confrontation with authorities.”⁷⁶ Now, some years later, several human rights organisations recognised that a unique focus on ‘criticising’ military and political authorities hardly influenced their behaviour.⁷⁷ Although denunciations still form a core of the work,

⁷⁴ Interview programme associate Global Rights, 09-02-2007.

⁷⁵ Interview executive secretary RFDP, 06-02-2007.

⁷⁶ Douma and Hilhorst (2004, p.41).

⁷⁷ Interviews secretary general Heritiers de la Justice and permanent secretary Groupe Jeremie, 01-03-2007.

increasingly inclusive approaches are being developed, such as organising human rights trainings for political and military authorities, providing juridical assistance to victims of abuse, the monitoring of trials, and reinforcing the capacities of the population to defend their rights and to respect their civil obligations.⁷⁸

Also, inter-organisational meetings, often through networks, are held to reflect on peace practices, including the measurement of results. This is an excellent opportunity for organisations to exchange experiences and learn more about other opinions. However, in terms of continuity, the work would be facilitated if all participating organisations commit themselves by holding one person responsible for participating. What was by several respondents felt as in particular useful is when the participants of such meetings can focus on real project-related cases. By ‘hands-on’ debating on each one’s individual projects, in the form of a regular working class, concrete advice can be given by others. What should be avoided is that inter-organisational meetings rely too heavily on cyclical and often inconclusive discussions on the root causes of conflict as the differences in opinion between participants will never result in a all-agreed conflict analysis. Also, they should avoid a primary focus on the dissemination of theory as, to most people, theories are either confusion or stand too far way from what they are facing in their everyday practices.

5.4. Critical factors

With regards to the measurement of results in Congo, some additional factors are key to the practice of it. This paragraph takes a closer look at how a preoccupation with project cycles and approaches based on log frames hampers monitoring and evaluation because of widespread confusion on steps and concepts involved, whilst the use of indicators is separately highlighted. Also, the argument is made that current means available for result measurement fall short when wanting to structure, expand and deepen insight in immediate results, effects and impact.

5.4.1. Results and project cycles

An issue that has a profound effect on the fact that result measurement practices seem difficult to develop for organisations in eastern Congo is that planning processes at the start are muddled. As was already mentioned before, organisations are expected to follow certain guidelines in their project design, notably based upon logical frameworks, whereas they often lack a thorough understanding of the concepts used in such a design or have difficulties in making concepts concrete in their respective projects. As a result, when talking to organisations or reading their project proposals you sense that certain phases and concepts used in a project cycle are mixed up: ‘all the required information is there, but nothing is at its place’. It seems that they are working hard on getting in right but while being soaked up by a process of trying to meet the standards, too little attention is paid to critically reflect on why a certain project is developed in the first place.

Thus, in order to be able to show how certain actions contribute to the wanted change, it is important to take a step back and reflect on how the proposed activities touch upon a problem or situation, often context related, that can be influenced by the proposed activities. Herewith it is important to reflect beforehand on what ought to be achieved after an x-period of time, as well as on the indicators (quantitative and qualitative) that will determine if the achievement has been realised.

⁷⁸ Interview, *ibid.*

In this respect it is worth taking into consideration that more is not always better. Many organisations in Congo set their targets high by formulating very ambitious and rather broad objectives, such as for example “to contribute in a significant manner to the establishment of a rights-based Congolese state” or “to restore and strengthen social peace”. What is problematic with too general objectives is that result measurement becomes difficult as the relationship between the activities and the objectives remains imprecise.

Also specific objectives, according to the organisations that were contacted, prove to be difficult to formulate. In most cases, the specific objectives were also very general and had no link with the potential ‘reach’ of the organisations in terms of money, manpower and geographical access. Additionally, objectives are quite often formulated as activities by making use of verbs such as lobbying, training, distributing, etc., instead of describing a certain movement or change by making use of verbs that express such movement, for example: increase, restore, decrease, promote, strengthen, etc. As a result, when reporting results, organisations often limit themselves to the performance on activity level or refer to broad changes in society that are the result of multiple interventions that are not necessarily theirs.

But even if an organisation is capable of gathering information by monitoring and evaluating in a structured manner, that information needs to be treated. “Many organisations”, says a local consultant, “are incapable of reflecting on those findings.”⁷⁹ As a result, findings are not necessarily put to use in an organisation and its projects, either because it is too time consuming to do so, or the information, perhaps well-gathered, may prove irrelevant. In the latter case, the methods used to collect the information may have been ill-adapted to the project’s characteristics. Also, no organisation that was approached had set up a documentation system in which findings with regards to the progress of a given project could be filed. Without such a system it proves very difficult to retain overview, to learn from mistakes and opportunities and to share with others.

5.4.2. Indicators

Indicators occupy a central position in project management based on log frames. They are measurement tools that describe change or progress in relation to a projects objectives and the awaited results. They can be quantitative or qualitative by nature and can be specifically designed to measure the completion of planned activities (performance indicators), their immediate results (output indicators) of an activity as well as its more long-term effects (outcome indicators).

What was observed during the research is that organisations predominantly define quantitative performance indicators that have a direct link with the activity itself. Efforts on the effects and impact of activities are still only scratching the surface, as an organisation mentioned: “Until now we have only reflected on the immediate results and the effects, we still have to work towards impact.”⁸⁰ For example, an organisation that produced flyers in order to vulgarise the content of the law on sexual violence formulated indicators like “the number of flyers produced and distributed”. Similarly, indicators for activities like the organisation of meetings between community leaders were formulated in terms of the “number of sessions organised” or “number of participants”.

Although quantitative indicators provide insight into whether or not the planned activities were executed, it reveals little on what beneficiaries, in the above examples, have

⁷⁹ Interview independent consultant, 07-03-2007.

⁸⁰ Working session RIO, 30-01-2007.

done with either the flyers or the content discussed in the meetings (effect and impact level). Or in other words, indicators that reveal qualitative social change, on beneficiary level or in the broader society, are little developed. In those cases where qualitative indicators were developed (for example, the degree of acceptance in the community with regards to returning refugees), they were hardly underpinned by a tool or elaborated description providing insight in what constitutes 'acceptance'. This shows that the challenge remains to translate qualitative indicators into methods and approaches of actually measuring them.

Once more, the development of indicators also relates to the ways in which projects are conceived. Quite often, respondents were uncertain about how to formulate an indicator or how to distinguish between a quantitative and a qualitative indicator. If creative discussions on internal or external level or brainstorming sessions on indicators are not held from the onset, it is difficult to establish them once the project is ready for being evaluated.

As the nature of envisioned change in (post)conflict settings is highly qualitative, relates to inter-personal relations and mentality, and occurs over a long period of time, the development of indicators for peace processes is much more complex than it is for more traditional development projects in the agricultural or health sector. When taking the example of health projects, their indicators have most often been developed on the basis of extensive baseline studies, an aspect that is largely absent in peace projects. Also, health projects largely use global standards of what considered 'healthy' on which to base their indicators.

Peace processes, given their contextual nature, are however very difficult or even impossible to standardise. With regards to the debate if general indicators for peace processes could potentially be developed, most organisations argued that such an exercise will be futile as peace indicators depend directly on specific project objectives and the context and thus differ per organisation and location.⁸¹ Equally, it proves difficult to link the use of particular indicators to the different organisational orientations presented in this report, largely because most organisations had not (yet) developed a set of well-focused and workable indicators.

5.4.3. Means

Finally, one of the dilemmas of performing structured and frequent monitoring and evaluation exercises is that it demands time, people and money. And this is precisely what many organisations in eastern Congo, in particular the smaller ones, do not have. With regards to people, of all the organisations interviewed, only few had recently engaged personnel specifically responsible for result measurement. For example, one organisation has installed a monitoring and evaluation team of two people because "it was not clear what the impact was of our activities."⁸²

Also, when analysing project budgets, the only type of result measurement integrated is an external evaluation at the end of the project. This is in part caused by the fact that many donors are hesitant to reserve funds for activities that have no direct link with the beneficiaries, like monitoring and evaluation exercises. However, although it is important to keep an acceptable balance between the measurement of results and the implementation of concrete activities, the ways in which project budgets are now structured leave little room for a more extensive investment in result measurement.

⁸¹ Various interviews, January-March 2007.

⁸² Interview evaluation associates Search for Common Ground, 06-02-2007.

5.5. Concluding thoughts

Monitoring and evaluation, this chapter argued, is never neutral as it links up with political organisational legitimisation processes. Result measurement is generally used as a tool to prove you are doing things right as this generates support within local and donor communities. In this line of reasoning it is not surprising that insight in not-so-good results lags behind. However, negative experiences normally provide a richer base for learning and this aspect of result measurement should thus be stimulated.

The chapter has shown that Congolese NGOs understand perfectly well why monitoring and evaluation is useful, notably for reasons of internal learning, improving performance and strategies and analysing if projects proceed as planned. Equally, they refer to different levels of result measurement, such as the direct results (output), outcome and impact. When they are reporting results the examples are abundant. Yet, organisations base themselves on giving examples that are either very general and reveal little on their relationship with concrete projects, use similar exemplary results that are easy to understand in terms of cause-effect or give very concrete examples that are, on their turn, difficult to relate to wider changes in society.

Methods that are used, despite an organisations' orientation, are largely based on randomly gathered oral and written feedback. Only few organisations make use of structured questionnaires or other forms for gathering information. Also, organisations find it difficult to translate the information gathered through monitoring and evaluation exercises in concrete implications for their programmes. So far, and as also confirmed by all organisations interviewed, the practice of measuring results is thus little based on comprehensive and structured strategies of gathering, documenting, processing and sharing information.

This chapter has argued that this reality of result measurement is not caused by a lack of will but that the practice of result measurement is negatively influenced by the very nature of peace processes themselves, notably that processes of change in (post)conflict settings occur quickly and often outpace the ability to learn from them.

Also, project cycles based on log frames present a hurdle because most organisations struggle with making the concepts, which they often theoretically understand, concrete for their particular projects. Although it is futile to initiate philosophical debates on whether an approach based on log frames is most useful in peacebuilding projects, it is necessary to acknowledge their shortcomings. Such reflections opens the possibilities to invest in the development of slightly amended or additional thoughts, approaches and practices with regards to the design, implementation and monitoring of peace practices.

Yet another shortcoming is that most NGOs focus on quantitative indicators that predominantly describe the completion of activities. This provides little insight in changes on more intangible levels such as knowledge, perception, behaviour and relationships; which are arguably most significant when talking about measuring peace processes.

As most of the experiences with result measurement in Congo are thus informal and unstructured, it presents difficulties in creating insight in how things are exactly done, what types of approaches can be identified as 'best practices' and how the information gathered is informing organisational choices, thoughts and practices. However, it can be argued that such informal processes are valuable as they are based on inherent knowledge of the context and informed by instinct, gut-feeling and unspecified previous experiences. The value of these informal monitoring and evaluation methods can be enhanced by investing in their formalisation. This is not to say that NGOs in (post)conflict context should adopt rigid step-by-step approaches, but rather that they should be accompanied, stimulated and invited to critically reflect on what works for them.

On the side of implementing organisations this requires that they provide more detailed information on how they monitor and evaluate and what the outcomes are. This can be achieved by stepping up (in)formal oral and written exchange between colleagues as well as with donors, preferably throughout a project planning process, as well as the creation of local and international documentation systems of the particularities of specific outcomes. Of course, the challenges that NGOs face in measuring the results of their interventions on an immediate, intermediate and long-term basis are not exclusive to Congo alone. It is therefore also useful to stimulate inter-regional exchange of experiences.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Concluding remarks

This report has dealt with the practical experiences of local NGOs in eastern Congo with regards to the measurement of their results. Information on the subject was gathered during a three month fieldwork period in North and South Kivu (eastern Congo) where interviews, working sessions and a questionnaire were used to discuss with informants from Cordaid partner organisations, other peace-related NGOs and other relevant stakeholders in the field.

The objectives of the study were to (1) identify and analyse the experiences and best practices with regards to result measurement of peace practices; (2) to formulate and propose possibilities (instruments/pathways/scenarios) for furthering and improving result measurement of peace practices; and (3) to contribute to a capacity building process of the Cordaid partners with regards to result measurement of peace practices by stimulating reflection and mutual exchange.

The causes and consequences of the Congo conflict are complex and relate to a vicious circle of underdevelopment, poverty, corruption, hostilities between rivalling ethnic groups, the exploitation of natural resources, the absence of a central stated, etc. In eastern Congo some distinct issues that challenge the establishment of a sustainable peace have been taken on by local and international NGOs, notably the widespread problem of sexual violence, the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants and the reintegration of returning refugees and internally displaced people.

Cordaid's interventions in eastern Congo are largely based on a multi-sectoral and multi-actor approach. In this respect, peace is mainstreamed and attention is given to the linkage between relief and development aid as well as to building (organisational) capacities of local partners. The partners involved in this research are financed under the Emergency Aid and Reconstruction department.

Regardless of the type of problem, peacebuilding has in eastern Congo a lot to do with changing unwanted behaviour on individual, group or institutional level. In this respect, the local practices that have been developed around peace are divers and involve a variety of actors on different levels with different orientations, such as the defence and promotion of human rights, communication and information, peace education, local conflict resolution, social reintegration and organisational capacity building.

Some cross-cutting approaches in particular stood out, notably the focus on local clubs or constituencies and the mixture of income generating activities and peacebuilding training sessions. Also, the ability to achieve change is, amongst others, influenced by the choice of target groups and the ways in which NGOs are dealing with a changing context. Although it showed that Congolese NGOs aim at translating risks or opportunities posed by a changing context into their approaches, this is done in an incidental and unstructured manner.

A final aspect related to change is the creation of cooperative peacebuilding structures, such as networks, which stimulate exchange between and reinforce the work done by its members. Their advantages are locally defined as having a protective and learning function. However, the variety of interests often make networks difficult to coordinate and donors should be careful that their funding policies are not killing the initiative by introducing bureaucratic project-standards.

As peace is build over time, with different inputs and by different parties, the end result is never the achievement of one singular actor. It is therefore deemed necessary to focus on an actors' contributions to building various parts of peace by creating also insight in how the work of others is either reinforcing or impeding. In this respect, the attention for result measurement and reflections on output, outcome and the impact of peace practices are largely caused by shifting orientations of NGOs towards working styles based on output, learning and log frames. Also, result measurement is important for the organisational positioning, in particular with regards to colleagues and competitors.

Monitoring and evaluation activities can thus reaffirm if the chosen approach or the implementation of activities are still relevant and/or well-done. In fact, it is a technique to judge effectiveness, efficiency, importance and the strengths and weaknesses of concrete interventions, strategies and the organisation itself. The information gathered will ultimately be translated in lessons learned and improved performance. The research showed that most organisations in Congo recognise these assets of monitoring and evaluation practices and largely relate its value to learning processes that are largely motivated by wanting to improve existing practices. Also, they are generally capable to describe concrete changes that have been achieved in society but the link with their activities remained largely unclear.

However, thoughts and practices around monitoring and evaluation of peace-related activities largely remain theoretical as organisations experience difficulties in developing and implementing methods, tools and indicators in a systematic manner that can help creating insight in an NGO's specific contribution to a distinct process of change. It is therefore too early to speak about best practices. Also, it proves to be difficult to relate specific monitoring and evaluation practices, as well as the use of specific types of indicators, to organisations with a different orientation as the experiences of this research show that there is a lot of overlap and complementarity in the thinking and doing of monitoring and evaluation.

What stood out with regards to how NGOs in eastern Congo approach result measurement is that they largely relate the success of their programmes to (random) feedback from beneficiaries. Also, results and their indicators are mostly described on the activity level or with regards to direct beneficiaries, whilst there is little attention for results on outcome or impact level in the broader society.

One of the factors that influences this rather narrow approach to result measurement is the way in which projects are conceptualised. Although Congolese NGOs have adopted log frames for project design, they often experience difficulties in translating concepts into coherent proposals and the practice of interventions. In addition, in particular the smaller NGOs often lack a complete and thorough understanding of the concepts involved and reflect little on why they want to develop a certain programme. As a result, there is no clear vision on what needs to be achieved, which accordingly hampers result measurement. Also, most organisations lack the time and personal and financial means to engage in through result measurement practices.

The objectives of the research were largely met. Although the experiences of local organisations were thoroughly identified, discussed and analysed (first objective), the research did not manage to clearly identify best practices in the field of monitoring and evaluating peace processes in Congo. This was caused by the explorative nature of experiences and the general lack of consistently documented examples. With regards to the second objective, the study has identified several areas that need to be considered in further developing monitoring and evaluation practices of peace processes. These areas are deliberately not called a tool or instrument because that implies a certain degree of exclusivity that is impossible to achieve in a changing and divers context. The third objective, notably to contribute to capacity building, was met by organising several intra- and inter-organisational working sessions which had a

goal of stimulating reflection by asking questions, putting choices up for discussion and drawing on the exchange of experiences.

Although this study was focused on the experiences in the east of Congo and had a strong link with Cordaid, the issues raised are also of relevance to other regions, themes and organisations. It is therefore deemed important that the reflection on and learning of result measurement - in particular in (post)conflict settings - is ensured and continued on an as broad as possible basis.

6.2. Recommendations

As the observations and findings presented in this report raise questions on how to proceed with measuring the results of peace practices, including the further development of methods, tools and precise indicators, this paragraph presents some recommendations.⁸³ In order to strengthen and stimulate organisational learning on result measurement of peace practices and its integration in everyday practice, these recommendations should be seen as incentives to generate discussion and exchange rather than mandatory guidelines. Although some overlap exists, a distinction is made between recommendations in the field of peace practices as approach/orientation, project design, result measurement, capacity building, and cooperation and exchange. Where possible, the recommendations are singled out for Cordaid as well as for Congolese peace practitioners (including Cordaid's partners). Also general recommendations are included.

6.2.1. Peace practices

General

- The adoption of a multi-sectoral and multi-actor approach that mainstreams the attention for peace seems to be justified in the eastern Congolese context and can thus be retained;
- The combining of software and hardware (e.g. emergency and development activities, as well as for example training and economic activities) should be encouraged but their design should have a specific objective of stimulating peace-related results;
- Reflect on the development of innovative and edifying tactics, strategies and orientations. In this respect, the causes of conflict and their regional characteristics should be kept in mind and peace should not be looked at as an end goal;
- Peacebuilding strategies should ultimately increase the engagement, ownership and participation of its beneficiaries at grassroots level. It is herewith important to affirm that any type of support does not negatively affect or destroy local pacification and reconciliation processes;
- Strengthen the ways in which context-related risks and opportunities are translated into specific organisational approaches and projects. This demands flexibility, anticipation and clarification on why certain choices are made. In this respect the documentation of previously taken steps in risk-response may be useful for internal learning as well as inter-organisational exchange;
- Specific attention needs to be given to the functioning of peacebuilding networks by clarifying their strengths and comparative advantages in terms of coordinating, reflection and exchange. Herewith:

⁸³ The recommendations in this paragraph are in part formulated by Cordaid's partners during a reflection workshop that was held in Bukavu on March 28, 2007, at the end of the three month research period.

- Peace networks should ensure that they do not take over the implementing role of their members but specialise in the strategic coordination of its members, the compilation and distribution of results/experiences from and to members, etc.
- Donors should explore alternative forms of funding policies such as process funding in order to facilitate network functioning.
- Base the choice of target groups and locations of intervention on a realistic estimation on what can be changed with the means available. It is herewith important to find a balance in working with vulnerable groups of victims and peace-adversaries as well as urban and rural areas.

6.2.2. Design of projects

Peace projects, besides having to take into consideration the changing nature of the context, need to be designed in such a way that their results can be measured.

For peace practitioners

- Before developing a peacebuilding programme or project, an organisation should have in mind what type of change is needed;
- Make sure you understand the concepts involved in current project design frameworks. If not, ask for clarification or propose an alternative planning system.
- Ideally, the envisioned change should rest on a baseline study that creates insight in the situation at the beginning of the project or programme. The use of baseline studies before a project is implemented should be encouraged;
- Formulate modest targets and objectives that have a specific link with the activities proposed: in other words, the activities should be able to contribute to achieving the objectives;
- Integrate a clear, realistic and relevant monitoring and evaluation plan into project proposals (narrative as well as budgetary). Keep herewith an acceptable balance in terms of costs and manpower between the measurement of results and the implementation of concrete activities;

For Cordaid

- Extend the project planning process by creating space for the inclusion of baseline studies;
- If logic frameworks, despite their shortcomings, continue to form the basis of peace projects, make sure that partners have a thorough understanding of the concepts involved by providing them feedback on submitted proposals. Do not lose sight of alternative approaches to project management;
- Where possible, provide technical assistance to partners during the design phase of a project (thus before approval) while ensuring that the ownership of the process remains with the partners;
- Look into the creation of funding structures that allow the inclusion of more extensive result measurement practices.

6.2.3. Result measurement

Result measurement, next to a focus on output, has a strong link with organisational learning. Learning processes and result measurement are not just about the identification of what

worked well but also of what did not. More attention should be given to the not-so-good practices in order to integrate what has been learned in future projects.

For peace practitioners

- Clearly define the level of monitoring or evaluation: activity/immediate result, outcome or impact and develop indicators accordingly. Make sure that those indicators reflect the wanted change;
- Establish a database or filing system with relevant information on changes that occur in the context, the project(s) and the organisation. Also, document experiences with regards to monitoring and evaluation;
- Keep measurement tools simple and ensure that people that have to work with them understand them and have been involved in their development;
- In that respect, establish a clear, realistic and context-specific division of tasks and make someone explicitly responsible for the treatment of gathered information and the executing of its implications;
- Make sure that common-used and random ‘methods’, like using feedback from beneficiaries, are complemented by more structured and balanced information gathering systems.

For Cordaid

- Create a learning space for ‘trial and error’ of result measurement strategies, including the exploration of new types of instruments/tools, etc;
- Invest in ‘formalising’ the documentation of informal and unstructured experiences of partners with result measurement strategies, for example by facilitating the establishment of a result measurement database and the invitation of partners to contribute concrete experience;
- Reinforce individual or collective reflection (within Cordaid, between Cordaid and its partners and among partners) on what sort of result measurement strategies and tools do (not) work well in concrete peacebuilding projects;
- Reinforce Cordaid’s internal monitoring and evaluation systems with a focus on:
 - Peace as a processes by bundling results of individual projects
 - The results (outcome, impact) of capacity building trajectories

6.2.4. Capacity building

General

- Do not overly rely on the dissemination of theories but rather focus on how such theories can be put in practice around concrete projects (problem solving);
- Integrate the measurement of the results of interventions into the organisational culture;
- Ensure that reflections on results already begin with the planning of a project (including the development of indicators, measurement tools, methods, etc.).

For Cordaid

- Support individual and/or collective learning trajectories, while taking into consideration specific needs of partner organisations, that focus on the strengthening of capacities with regards to monitoring and evaluation practices (e.g. by technical assistance);
- Do herewith not adopt a rigid step-by-step approach, but rather focus on questioning partners on what works for them (why, how, with whom, etc). This stimulates reflection;
- Make capacity building an integrated part of support-structures;

- Explore if and how the Cordaid field offices in Congo can play a role in reinforcing capacities in the field of result measurement among its partners.

6.2.5. Cooperation and exchange

As change is the result of multiple actors it is imperative to create insight in what others are doing, how actions can be complementary and how overlap or counter productivity can be avoided.

For peace practitioners

- Stimulate exchange between organisations with a similar orientation (for example media-related organisations, or human rights clubs) as it is useful when it comes to discussing the details of certain practices, evaluation methods, learning points, etc.;
- Alternate this by creating exchange with organisation with a different orientation.
- Make sure that when small and less-experienced organisations meet with more experienced ones, that the former are not 'lost' in discussions;
- Focus inter-organisational meetings on real project-related cases. By 'hands-on' debating on each one's individual projects, in the form of a regular working class, concrete advice can be given by others;
- Invest in a more comprehensive coordination of actions implemented by organisations with a different orientation by paying attention to how they are complementary, mutually reinforcing and contributing to a specific aspect of change;
- Improve the presentation of reports by including narrative elements on results, impact and monitoring and evaluation practices.

For Cordaid

- Encourage the exchange between local organisations with a different orientation as it provides the possibility to, in a particular context, develop projects in such a way that they may work complementarily;
- Where possible, try to link up with already existing exchange-structures rather than creating new ones;
- Also look at integrating other local organisations that are not necessarily Cordaid partners in forms of exchange;
- Create 'one-to-one' exchange (partner-Cordaid, also on a distance) based on questioning rather than presenting organisations with fixed criteria of how they are expected to report results;
- Stimulate exchange on result measurement of peace practices with Dutch and international colleagues as well as between Cordaid and its donors.

ANNEXES

I: List of interviewed organisations

Bukavu

- Heritiers de la Justice
- Groupe Jeremie
- Reseau des Femmes pour les Droits et la Paix (RFDP)
- International Alert
- Global Rights
- Caritas Commission Justice et Paix (CDJP)
- Radio Maendeleo
- Panos Institute
- Search for Common Ground/Centre Lokole (SFCG)
- Centre de Gestion des Conflits (CEGEC)
- Reseau d'Innovation Organisationel/Eglise du Christ au Congo (RIO/ECC)
- Groupe d'Appui aux Initiatives de Développement de Ngweshe (GAIDN)
- Battiseurs de la Paix (BAP)
- Innovation et Formation pour le Développement et la Paix (IFDP)
- Action pour le Developpement et la Paix Endogene (ADEPAE)
- Bureau de la Societé Civile (BSC)

Goma

- ISDA
- Pole Institute
- Action Sociale pour la Paix et le Développement (ASPD)
- Synergy des Femmes Contre la Violence Sexuelle (SFVS)
- Aide et Action pour la Paix (AAP)
- Campagne pour la Paix
- Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV)

Uvira

- Commission Justice et Paix (CDJP)
- Comité de Coordination des Actions pour la Paix (CCAP)
- Action pour le Developpement et l'Encadrement de l'enfant en situation Difficile (ADED)
- Misson des Jacobins Sages (MIJAS)
- Groupe d'étude et d'actions pour le développement du Sud-Kivu (GEADES)

II: List of working sessions

Individual

- Action Sociale pour la Paix et le Développement (ASPD)
- Innovation et Formation pour le Développement et la Paix (IFDP)

Global Rights (with partners)

- Reseau des Associations des Droits de l'Homme au Sud-Kivu (RADHOSKI)
- Action Sociale pour la Paix et le Développement (ASPD)

- Initiative Congolaise pour la Justice et la Paix (ICJP)
- Centre Africain pour la Paix, la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (ACPD)

CCAP (with members)

- Groupe d'étude et d'actions pour le développement du Sud-Kivu (GEADES)
- Centre de Promotion Féminine (CEPROF)
- Société Cooperative de Développement de Fizi (SOCOODEFI)
- EMO-Barka/3eme eglise
- SOS-AJESS
- AFIB
- Femme qui en Soulève une Autre (FESA)
- Solidarité-Echanges pour le Développement Intégral (SEDI)
- Union des groupements des éleveurs et agriculteurs de Fizi-Itombe(UGEAFI)
- MINECO
- Halte Afrique
- Association des Femmes Chrétiennes (AFEC)
- Action pour le Développement et l'Encadrement de l'enfant en situation Difficile (ADED)

RATECO (avec organisations membres)

- Radio Télévision National Congolaise (RTNC)
- Radio Sauti ya Nkaahi Kasongo
- Radio Maria
- Radio Télé Udidon Grands-Lacs
- Radio Maendeleo
- Radio Apide de Kamituga
- Association des Femmes de Media (AFEM)
- Radio Rehema
- Réseau des Radios et Télévisions Communautaires à l'est du Congo (RATECO)
- Radio Neno la Uzima
- Radio Rehema
- Panos

RIO (avec organisations membres)

- Messagers pour l'Education et la Sensibilisation des Enfants à la Paix (MESEP)
- Conseiller pour la Paix et la Réconciliation (COPARE)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Search for Common Ground/Centre Lokole
- Peace Tree Network (PTN)
- Institute Vie et Paix (IVP)
- Action pour le Développement et la PAix Endogènes (ADEPAE)
- Ligue des Organisations des Femmes pour la Paix et le Développement (LIFOPAD)
- Groupe Jeremie
- Observatoire Gouvernance et Paix (OGP)

Organisations and initiatives covered by the enquete

- Héritiers de la Justice
- Groupe Jeremie
- Bureau de la Société Civile
- Action en Faveur des Enfants en Situation Difficile (AFESD)

- Village Cobaye (VICO)
- Barza Intercommunautaire du Sud Kivu
- Conseil pour la Paix et la Reconciliation (COPARE)
- Commission Nationale de Desarmement, Demobilisation et Reinsertion (CONADER)
- Laisser l’Afrique Vivre (LAV)
- Caucus des Femmes
- Action pour l’Education aux Droits (AED)
- Centre Olame
- Bureau Diocésain de Développement/Oevres Sociales (BDD)
- Reseau des Associations des Droits de l’Homme au Sud-Kivu (RADHOSKI)
- La Benevolencya

III: Questionnaire

Section I: Background information

1. Some basic information was gathered on the organisation (name, location, number of years experience, number of employees specified by sexe, geographic area of operation).
2. According to the strategy plan (if present) or else a concrete project: What are the specific objectives in relation to reconciliation/reconstruction/peacebuilding?
3. The respondents were asked to specify their beneficiaries according to five age groups (<5; 5-15; 15-25; 25-55; >55) and ‘specific’ target groups such as widows, female victims of sexual violence, women/girls dependant of military forces, farmers, fishermen, miners, police force, military forces, demobilised armed forces, journalists, (para)jurists/lawyers/judges, returning refugees, local chiefs, etc.
4. The **domain of intervention** was also specified (official diplomacy, informal conflict management, military measures, economic measures, social measures, good governance, communications/media, education, capacity building, socio-professional reintegration, research, lobby and other) as well as the **theme of intervention**: human rights, sexual violence, medical care, civil education, micro credits, peaceful cohabitation, peace education, rehabilitation of refugees/returnees, democratisation/electoral process, food security, exploitation of natural resources, denunciation of human rights violations, handicrafts, other.

Section II: Statements

1. The respondents were asked their opinion and the consultant marked their response on a scale of A (completely disagree) to G (completely agree). In the event of ‘no opinion’ X was marked.
 - I am convinced that my actions contribute to peace.
 - Organisations that are working on the same topic are my competitors.
 - A changing context/environment always results in an adaptation of a project under implementation.
 - In the context demands so, my donors give me the freedom to adapt the orientation of a project.
 - I have a thorough comprehension of the needs of the beneficiaries of my actions.
 - I know how my beneficiaries feel about the results of my actions on their lives.
 - I feel that evaluations is done to satisfy the donor.
 - Evaluations are mainly conducted at the end of a project.
 - I participate regularly in exchange sessions on monitoring and evaluation.

- I have access to information about monitoring and evaluation methods that I can use to study the results of my actions.
 - I feel that the objectives of my projects are too ambitious.
 - I know how to develop qualitative indicators that show the impact of my actions.
 - I have the capacity to measure the indicators I have specified in my projects.
 - When I measure the results of my actions I always refer to base-line data.
 - The development of a tool for the measurement the impact of peace actions is impossible.
 - The majority of workshops I have followed on peace issues were useless.
2. What is the most significant change established by your intervention(s)?
 3. Which evaluation methods do you know/have you heard of?
 4. Which evaluation methods do you use?
 5. How can you improve your monitoring and evaluation capacities?

Section III: Organisational understanding of concepts

1. According to your experiences in concrete project, how do you describe conflict?
2. Which specific characteristics of the type of conflict you just described do you want to change?
3. According to your experiences in concrete projects, how do you define peace?

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