

PARTNERING FOR PEACE: PRACTITIONER STORIES OF GLOBAL NORTH-SOUTH PEACEBUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

by

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Partnerships

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DEDICATION

This manuscript is for all those who dedicate their lives to transforming settings of violence and unrest by working together with others who often have different ways of working, seeing, and being in this world but share a common goal of helping to create more peaceful places to live.

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ABSTRACT

PARTNERING FOR PEACE: PRACTITIONER STORIES OF GLOBAL NORTH-SOUTH PEACEBUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

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Peacebuilding and conflict resolution interventions often require partnerships between local experts who are from those conflict settings and skilled professionals who are “outsiders.” Efforts to resolve or transform protracted social conflicts must be carefully planned and implemented in any conflict setting, but such interventions arguably require extra sensitivity and awareness when outsider-Northerners partner with insider-locals in the global South. This study investigates how these North-South partnerships develop and unfold through an in-depth process of narrative research that profiles the lived experiences of both Northern and Southern based “peacebuilding” practitioners. Their stories teach us about instructive cases of partnership that unfold in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (East Timor), Colombia, Argentina, Zanzibar, Kenya, Nigeria, and Israel/Palestine. The practitioners’ narratives are presented through an interpretive morphological analysis of North-South partnerships. The morphology

of partnerships reveals the shape and stages of these partnership cases and examines critical moments and turning points that unfold in the course of partnership. The contributions of this study include new insights about the beginning, middle, and end stages of partnership while also detailing how seasoned practitioners make sense of their goals, actions, and interactions with their partners as they address “critical moments” that arise from various dynamics of identity, culture, and power that shape conflict intervention and peacebuilding work. Their stories reveal that strong interpersonal relationships built on trust and reciprocity provide the basis for solid partnerships. Yet despite many success stories, the pervasive asymmetry in power and funding resources between Northern and Southern partners creates dependency and numerous other challenges. The study concludes with a discussion of several considerations for how practitioners and organizations might improve partnership practices, including ways they might decolonize peacebuilding efforts and balance asymmetries in funding by shifting more control to local partners.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Many people say that interventions fail because the partnerships fail. Many institutions do not know how to work together. Therefore, it's a dilemma as to how do we ask the people questions that are so difficult because they are in conflict, when we as partners working for peace are not capable of mediating our own problems? This is something that I put in all of my assessments that I have done for peace processes. I've seen that the difficulty lies in the organizations and institutions where there is not a commitment with "el campo de trabajo" (the field). – Practitioner from the Global South

There is no simple or fixed path to transform communities plagued by violent conflict, or nations torn by war, into places where non-violent choices take precedence over violence and where different identity groups manage to peacefully co-exist. As a result of this complicated challenge, efforts to resolve protracted social conflicts or prevent future violence often require partnerships between local experts who are from those conflict settings and skilled professionals who are “outsiders.” Insiders might need outside resource support for their local interventions. Outsiders also initiate programs in foreign conflict zones, but can they operate successfully in those regions without local assistance and guidance? Learning how those involved in peacebuilding activities partner with others, and what they do together, therefore matters greatly for understanding what works and what is problematic about insider-outsider joint collaborations.

Conflict interventions between outsiders and insiders should be carefully planned and implemented in any conflict setting, but they arguably require extra

sensitivity and awareness when outsider-Northerners (from North America & Western Europe) work with insider-locals in the global South (nations in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, for example). Well-conceived conflict interventions can contribute to “positive peace” by transforming relationships, addressing injustice, and improving socioeconomic structures within society (Galtung 1969). Yet a lack of proper skills or poor planning by conflict practitioners could lead to ill-conceived “peacebuilding” partnerships -- and their accompanying interventions -- that do not build peace but instead contribute to increased violence and greater marginalization of some groups by others.

These North-South “outsider-insider” collaborations motivated the present inquiry into what occurs in these partnerships. What do these outsider and insider practitioners do, and are they successful, in their partnership efforts? For instance, do outsider practitioners conceptualize, analyze, and carry out interventions in ways that acknowledge and address different ways of knowing rather than privileging a Euro-centric or Western-Northern values framework? What role do the Southern partners play in the design and implementation of interventions when Northern based peacebuilders partner with locals in the global South? The inherent dynamics of funding, power, and culture in North-South collaborations are central concerns in this research. Finally, what can the overall dynamic(s) of these relationships teach us about conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts?

Some conflict resolution scholar-practitioners promote a cosmopolitan approach to “conflict resolution” interventions, promoting contemporary

“prescriptive” practices rooted in Western methodologies while also attempting to elicit indigenous strategies and empower locals (Ramsbotham 2005; Curle 1995; Lederach 1995; Francis 2002). John Paul Lederach’s (1995) influential “elicitive” framework teaches that “insider partials” are critical to building trust in the presence of outsiders who may claim a more neutral or impartial role in peacemaking activities, for example. Therefore, one way outside “experts” seek success is by planning to work closely with insider “experts” who understand the local context. Still, very few North-South collaborations, other than at the highest political levels, might involve direct mediation of conflicts by outsiders. Instead, outside practitioners partner with locals in a multitude of diverse ways to address volatile communities in nations struggling with internal conflicts or in those “post-conflict nations” that are recovering from the lasting, often unresolved, consequences of war.

Whether or not North-South collaborative interventions in conflict settings are perceived to be “successful,” and what that success looks like, is part of what this study seeks to uncover. But to really understand the relationship dynamics, challenges, and durability of North-South partnerships one must learn how Northern and Southern partners make sense of their goals, actions, and interactions with others. As a result, the research presented in this study focuses on eliciting and analyzing stories of partnership from highly experienced practitioners who work as outsiders and insiders in a variety of conflict settings.

In conflict resolution and peacebuilding one is typically considered an outsider if they are from anywhere other than the locale where the work is being done to prevent, manage, or resolve conflict. There are thus varying degrees of “outsiders” and “insiders” within a given country or region. Outsiders in this research refers primarily to peacebuilding practitioners who live in the global North, while to be an insider implies the practitioner is from the host country in the global South, but not necessarily from the specific community where some projects might be done. In this study, the term “peacebuilding practitioner” refers to those who practice different forms of conflict resolution or conflict transformation activities in countries that are troubled with internal conflicts or those that are recovering from internal conflicts or civil war (post-conflict nations).¹

An analysis of the stories of outsider “Northern-based” practitioners who are engaged in the development and front-line work of North-South collaborations can inform theories and practices that motivate and potentially guide partnerships. Yet perhaps what is of greater importance is for the disciplines of conflict resolution/transformation, and the broader field of peacebuilding, to gain some understanding of how “Insider-Southern” partners experience these partnerships, which are often conceived and funded by their Northern partners. Ultimately, such findings might enable practitioners, and the organizations they represent, to

¹ The terms peacebuilding, conflict resolution/transformation, and what I mean by “practitioner,” are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2: Contextual Framework.

improve their methods of intervention and develop better partnerships in complex cultural settings where the consequences of protracted conflict are severe.

A narrative research approach of gathering stories that brings forth the lived-experiences of practitioners in North-South collaborations opens an important line of inquiry into conflict resolution and peacebuilding practices that can plumb deeper than many standard evaluations of projects like surveys or focus group discussions. Furthermore, a narrative approach specific to partnerships benefits from a deeper narrative perspective that gives greater attention to meaning making. The narrative perspective argues that conflict is the production of different stories and resolution lies in the altering of those stories (Cobb 2006; Nelson 2001). The ethics of practice thus rests in recognizing, acknowledging and providing opportunities for marginalized people and their perspectives to give voice to their experiences.

“Peacebuilders” who practice conflict resolution/transformation have their own narratives about their practices, including how they partner with others.² Ethical practitioners should seek to avoid marginalizing their partners’ power or cultural frameworks; yet we do not know enough about how, or if, this is taking place as people partner in settings of protracted social conflict. Although there are important frameworks for conflict-sensitive development and international aid, like Anderson’s (1999) “Do No Harm,” there is no single ethical model, or model in

² These choices may reflect the storylines (Hajer, 1995) that practitioners have about their work, about the places where they work, and about their role as peacemakers or peacebuilders, for example. The meaning practitioners give to these categories thus impacts their decisions.

general, that practitioners follow in their conflict resolution/transformation fieldwork. Those who claim to be “helping” or “empowering” others therefore should engage in reflective practice to assess what, and how, they are helping. Those of us who are scholar-practitioners need to seek the perspectives of these “peacebuilders” about their partnership cases, especially “Southerners” who have less opportunity to voice their experiences to those in the North where many conflict intervention initiatives are directed and funded. In the research presented in the following chapters, this gap of knowledge has meant providing a space for local-insider partners to speak and share their stories.

Emphasizing the importance of reflective practice in this study has also meant questioning the ways “practitioners” engage others -- what they do -- in what are often intercultural and asymmetrical partnership interventions.³ Philosopher James Dewey’s reflections on pragmatism offer a broader purpose for this exploration of reflective praxis. Dewey presents a practical foundation for scholar-practitioners who believe in the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice and who feel reflective practice is key to building good theory. Omerad, in his research on pragmatism, states, “Dewey defined inquiry as the transformation of a puzzling indeterminate situation into one that is sufficiently unified to warrant assertion or coherent action. What is required is the application of intelligent

³ I say intercultural because although there are many cross-cultural dynamics among the parties in conflict areas, and North-South partnerships are almost always intercultural to some degree.

inquiry, the self-correcting method of experimentally testing hypothesis created and refined from our previous experience (Ormerod 2006, 901).

This type of self-correcting practice is evident in the literature on the evolution of conflict resolution methods like interactive problem-solving workshops (Mitchell and Banks 1988; Fisher 1997a), but the larger, diverse field of peacebuilding, which often involves a variety of conflict resolution and conflict transformation related approaches, is short on the pragmatic insights practitioners have as they reflect on specific cases of their work -- a void this study begins to fill.⁴ Peter Coleman (2011), in his work on finding solutions to the seemingly unsolvable “Five percent” of intractable conflicts, emphasizes the need for more insight from those on the front-line of conflict resolution practice. Coleman says standard approaches to social science research are more than often “based on a set of assumptions about science, intervention, and change that limits their applicability for addressing the unique, long-lasting challenges of the 5 percent” (Coleman 2011, 19).

One of the ten issues Coleman critiques about standard research approaches is that “They feed the research-practice gap ”(p. 23). A major challenge for conflict resolution is that practitioners are often disconnected from the existing research

⁴ Peacebuilding is a widely used term that often means different things to those who employ the term. In this study, the focus is on peacebuilding efforts by practitioners who are considered to be conflict resolution and conflict transformation specialists, but who are also seen as “peacebuilders” since their efforts aim to build more peaceful communities and/or nations – but not necessarily in the sense of “state building.” I discuss the field of peacebuilding, and the differences between conflict resolution and conflict transformation in some more detail in Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework.

and theory that is 'removed from practice realities and constraints' and challenges their own opinions and experience in the field. Similarly, researchers "often fail to utilize the expertise of highly skilled practitioners in their development of theory . . . "(Coleman 2011, 24).

John Forester's (2006) pragmatic approach of learning from city planners and dispute resolution professionals gets at the heart of what practitioners do on the front lines of practice and is the foundation for the methodological approach I take to learn from "conflict resolution" and "peacebuilding" practitioners as they partner across cultures and nations. Forester produces narrative profiles that bridge the practice-theory gap by doing narrative research (eliciting stories from practitioners) and investigating what he calls "instructive-cases" of practice (Forester 2006; Forester 2007; Forester 2009). His method of working interpretively through narrative analysis of practitioner stories, he explains, tell us in the practitioners' own words less about *what* they have actually done than *how* they imagine and corroborate element of their own practice (Forester, 2009, 10)." By utilizing Forester's narrative research techniques to understand peacebuilding partnerships (see details on this approach in the Methodology chapter) this study offers an innovative alternative to institutional case studies or structured surveys in order to uncover and illuminate some of the insights and nuances of successful and problematic practices in North-South conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

In summary, this research is about instructive cases of partnerships that illuminate the reflections of Northern and Southern "peacebuilders" on their

theories and praxis in the field as they partner with others. How these practitioners make sense of their partnering experiences is critical to our overall understanding of what is taking place in the larger context of international peace and development work. The analysis of their stories presents a morphology of how partnerships unfold and also offers other practitioners and organizations who intervene in conflict settings a set of insights and skills for navigating the critical moments that arise around such pertinent issues as culture, identity, and the dynamics of power. Conflict resolution interventions and larger peacebuilding efforts stand to benefit by learning from the voices of both “Northerners” and “Southerners” who experience the outsider-insider dynamics that complicate their partnerships and influence their thinking and actions.

Looking Ahead – Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 (Conceptual Framework) provides the theoretical and practical context for this study of North-South partnerships. It explains the terminology used throughout this study and paints a picture of what is meant by “peacebuilding partnership” and “peacebuilding practitioner” in the chapters that follow. It also reviews some of the relevant literature on conflict resolution, issues of power, culture, and difference. Lastly, it examines some of the critiques of peacebuilding. In Chapter 3 (Methodology) the details of data analysis, data collection, and the participants are explained. Specifically, the chapter details John Forester’s approach

of narrative research to elicit Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) practitioner stories that I adapt for use with peacebuilders and explains my interpretive “morphology” analysis of the partnership stories. Chapter 4 (The Context for Engaging Together) introduces each of the partnership cases and provides insights into the context and reasons that brought these Northern and Southern based practitioners into partnership with others. Chapter 5 (Trust in the Early Stages of Partnership) focuses primarily on the importance of overcoming distrust and creating “trust” in partnership. Chapter 6 (Ways of Engaging) shares practitioner actions and methods in what we might call the middle stages of partnership. As practitioners partner and work together they often experience critical moments that disrupt the flow of partnership and act as turning points in their relationships or in the way they approach their work going forward. These (critical moments and turning points) are presented in Chapter 7 where peacebuilders reveal the myriad challenges that occur in North-South dynamics and how it impacts them. Chapter 8 (End stages) explores how these practitioners view the end, or continuation, of these partnerships. Chapter 9 (What Matters Most) concludes the Findings Chapters with practitioner reflections about what stands out for them as critically important in their partnership cases and in partnering generally. Chapter 10 (Discussion – A Deeper Look at the Morphology of Partnerships) ends with additional thoughts and critical considerations on peacebuilding partnerships in each stage of partnership. In particular it questions how/whether these peacebuilders are contributing to what Victoria Fontan calls “decolonizing peace”

(Fontan 2012). Lastly, in Chapter 11, I provide Concluding Remarks, Limitations to this study, and Suggestion for Future Research.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

Prior to exploring the narrative accounts of Northern and Southern practitioners about their peacebuilding partnerships some explanation is needed about conflict resolution and conflict transformation. How are they connected and how do they relate to this study's primary focus on North-South partnerships?

A focus on North-South "partnerships" also requires a review of some of the existing literature on partnerships and a clearer definition of the parameters of partnership in this research. The term "peacebuilding practitioner" is also confusing and demands some attention here. All of these concepts comprise part of the conceptual framework for the exploration of the practitioner stories of partnership that follow.

Furthermore, this chapter explores some of the theories and disciplines of practice that inform the field of conflict analysis and resolution, while also presenting several authors who critique the current state of conflict resolution and peacebuilding and offer new ways to conceptualize these fields of practice. They ask us to consider such dynamics of dominance, power, and cultural difference, which are all relevant to the study of partnerships and the specific actions of the partners.

Conflict Resolution/Conflict Transformation, and Peacebuilding

The intent of this section is to provide some working definitions and explanations for terms and their relation to one another that appear throughout this study. In this research, I often refer to conflict resolution and conflict transformation together, as in “peacebuilding practitioners do conflict resolution/transformation activities.” Conflict resolution is the more commonly accepted, familiar term, but one that is often misunderstood or used to imply different processes and outcomes. Conflict transformation takes a broader perspective that is not entirely evident by its name, which is also taken less seriously by some traditionalist who prefer conflict “resolution” or conflict “management.” A brief explanation of these terms follows and then a more detailed discussion of peacebuilding, and “peace,” that help to explain how all of these terms are connected in conflict intervention practices.

Conflict Resolution

Chris Mitchell, one of the preeminent scholar-practitioners in the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution describes the road towards the potential “resolution of any protracted and intractable conflict” as a long and detailed process with many actors and many stages along the journey (Mitchell and Banks 1988, 34). Mitchell envisions "conflict resolution" in the following way:

A process having number of distinguishable components or "sub-processes" rather than as an end state to be achieved... All of these efforts, approaches or models try, to some degree, to suggest appropriate principles or strategies to be applied at different points in the "life cycle" of an intractable conflict, or at different developmental "stages" of such a conflict (ibid, 34).

Importantly, he adds,

The whole point about conflict resolution, whether regarded as an end condition or as a process, is that it assumes that the conflict "resolvers" - whoever they are - have to deal with a problem that has already gone through at least one escalatory cycle to a point or plateau of sustained mutual coercion and violence.

Conflict resolution as such -- in the world of global conflicts -- is no simple end-state or easy process. Conflict resolution is indeed a sophisticated step beyond "conflict management," which refers to various efforts to limit, mitigate, and contain a particular conflict" (Reychler and Paffenholz 2000, 15). Conflict resolution includes a plethora of approaches from problem-solving workshops and other forms of interactive conflict resolution, to non-Western approaches, and new innovative narrative methods (Mitchell, Chris 1993; Fisher 1997a; Abu-Nimer 1998; Ramsbotham 2005; Cobb 2003; Cobb 2013). These are not covered here, but are mentioned to highlight the diversity of methods that might be utilized in various conflict intervention/peacebuilding efforts.

Conflict Transformation

John Paul Lederach is considered to be the founder of the transformation perspective, or at least the scholar-practitioner who made it an understandable and

widely used approach by those who work with difficult and often protracted social conflicts worldwide. He explores the concept and its practical applications thoroughly in his published work (John Paul Lederach 1995; John Paul Lederach 1997; John Paul Lederach 2003). The intent here is to provide a brief understanding of it here so as to better understand its relationship to peacebuilding and those peacebuilding practitioners in this study who are also sometimes referred to as practitioners of conflict resolution or transformation.

Lederach says, “The transformation approach understands social conflict as evolving from, and producing changes in, the personal, relational, structural and cultural dimensions of human experience. It seeks to promote constructive processes within each of these dimensions.” He then explains, “The transformation metaphor provides an expanded view of time, situates issues and crises within a framework of relationships and social context, and creates a lens to look at both solutions and ongoing changes (John Paul Lederach, Burgess, and Burgess 2003).” Lederach’s table (Table 1: below) helps clarify the differences he sees between the resolution and transformation approaches to conflict intervention.

In his later writings, Lederach argues that conflict resolution and conflict transformation should not be separate endeavors with conflicting objectives. Instead, he says practices like interactive conflict resolution (e.g. Problem-Solving Workshops), discussed in more detail later, involve a process and skill-set within a wider “conflict transformation” approach that asks questions in what he calls a “both/and framework.” The practitioner must ask, “How do we both find creative

responses to the presenting problem, and, at the same time, find strategies and approaches to address the deeper context” (J.P. Lederach, Neufeldt, and Culbertson 2007, 18)? Lederach and others who are committed to conflict transformation emphasize that practitioners must know their values and know their theories of change when they engage in any conflict intervention or, more generally, sustainable peacebuilding.

Table1: Resolution and Transformation: A Brief Comparison of Perspective (John Paul Lederach, Burgess, and Burgess 2003)

	Conflict Resolution Perspective	Conflict Transformation Perspective
The key question	How do we end something not desired?	How to end something destructive and build something desired?
The focus	It is content-centered.	It is relationship-centered.
The purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the presenting problem creating the crisis.	To promote constructive change processes, inclusive of -- but not limited to -- immediate solutions.
The development of the process	It is embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the presenting problems appear.	It is concerned with responding to symptoms and engaging the systems within which relationships are embedded.
Time frame	The horizon is short-term.	The horizon is mid- to long-range.
View of conflict	It envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes.	It envisions conflict as a dynamic of ebb (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change).

Peacebuilding

The discipline of peacebuilding might be said to suffer from a crisis of identity and terminology. People sometimes use the concepts of conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding interchangeably, but they do not always

mean the same thing or refer to the same set of activities as has been noted above. Conflict resolution and conflict transformation do not equal peacebuilding, as there are many other things that must occur for any society to achieve a peaceful and just place to live.

Peacebuilding is generally considered to be a vast set of activities by different actors from international and local organizations focused on development, humanitarian relief/aid, and conflict resolution related activities. These activities are more than often not coordinated in a systematic way, however, and they may view their goals and methods very differently. Some in the human rights and relief fields struggle with the objectives of “peace” held by many conflict resolution/transformation specialists, for example, if resolving conflicts or achieving peace comes at the expense of not addressing systemic poverty and hunger. These are incredibly valid concerns and have led some scholar-practitioners to think about peacebuilding strategically and systemically in ways that can address conflict systems holistically. Strategic or systemic conflict intervention and peacebuilding approaches recognizes that resources, actors, and approaches should be coordinated and collaborative to achieve multiple goals and sustainability (Ricigliano 2012; Schirch 2004; Nan 2003).

Ricigliano states that all the various peacebuilding actors need to be able to see their work as contributing to a “supraordinate goal” in order to overcome their differences for an effective collaboration that can best serve the communities they are seeking to assist. He argues that “peace,” if properly re-defined, can be a

supraordinate goal that diverse practitioners from different disciplines can embrace. It must be a redefinition that avoids “utopian critiques or a trade-off between peace and justice”(Ricigliano 2012, 15). He asks us to consider the following definition: “Peace is a state of human existence characterized by sustainable levels of human development and healthy processes of societal change” (ibid).

Ricigliano comprehensively lays out the logical components of this definition, but what is most important for the present study’s embrace of the definition is that it “recognizes that peace is fundamentally about how people work together (a process measure) to meet the basic needs of a population and how well they are meeting those needs (a substantive measure) (ibid, 16). Furthermore, he says,

Peace is not just a snapshot in time. It is about substantive indicators of human development measured at any one moment (e.g., a snapshot of good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights, security, economic vitality, social capital, etc.), and peace is also about how the society deals with problems or issues on an ongoing basis (ibid).

Northern and Southern practitioners featured in this research would likely embrace such a definition of peace and its relation to the conflict intervention and capacity building work they do. Many practitioners who work to manage, resolve and transform conflict settings use the term peacebuilding to demonstrate how their work contributes to a larger effort to strengthen societies so they can live in peace and with justice. Schirch (2004) utilizes the term “strategic peacebuilding” to present a framework for a sustainable approach to building peace in divided communities. Rooted in principles of conflict transformation, “strategic

peacebuilding” views conflict as a nested system, seeking change within the personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions of the conflict. Also central to the sustainable/strategic philosophy is the need to work towards a just peace and address the large problems of structural violence in a society(Schirch 2004; Ricigliano 2012; Galtung 1969).

Thania Paffenholz’s book, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, provides a useful overview of “the field” of Peacebuilding and some deep critique relevant to the present study (Paffenholz 2010). She says the term “peacebuilding” was first used by Johan Galtung in his 1975 discussion of “Positive Peace” to describe one of three approaches to peace: peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. The term peacebuilding evolved over the past decades into two primary camps: liberal peacebuilding and sustainable peacebuilding. Liberal peacebuilding largely emerged from the United Nations 1992 *Agenda for Peace* report and focused on the democratic rebuilding of states. Liberal peacebuilding is rooted in Kant’s notions of a democratic/liberal peace and is generally equated with statebuilding, development, and good governance. Sustainable peacebuilding, in contrast, can be attributed to John Paul Lederach, whose framework for peace centers on creating sustainable reconciliation within divided societies over a “generation-long” time frame” (Lederach 1997). Paffenholz emphasizes that although “the time frames are different, and the explicit goal of liberal peacebuilding is the establishment of liberal peace, sustainable peacebuilding approaches also

reflect many elements of the 'good society,' based on the work of Kant (Paffenholz 2010, 54)."

Paffenholz makes an important distinction between International Relations theories of liberal peacebuilding, which are often not explicit about their agendas for state building for example, and what she refers to as the middle-level peacebuilding theories of conflict management, conflict resolution (John Burton school), the complementary school between management and resolution, and conflict transformation. She outlines how Lederach's "middle-out approach" to connect individuals and groups from different socio-economic and political levels of society has become the leading school utilized by scholar-practitioners and international non-government organizations (NGOs).

The largest contribution of the conflict transformation paradigm in peacebuilding is its deliberative focus on local actors, putting more emphasis on local peoples and civil society than the conflict "resolution" school of thought, which has tended to focus more on elites (Track I leaders) and those that scholar-practitioners refer to as Track II "influentials" who might have greater influence with decision-makers at the Track I political levels (L. Diamond and McDonald 1996). Paffenholz says that in the transformation school local actors are at the center of many peacebuilding efforts, whereas in the resolution school these actors have often been "subject to outside interventions." The difference between the two camps, she says, has become marginal with second-generation conflict resolution approaches starting in the 1990's and evolving over the past 20 years.

Peacebuilding Partnerships

“Partnership” is one of the core values of strategic peacebuilding, according to Schirch (2004). She states, “The value of partnership is an alternative to domination. It encourages people to use *power with* others to satisfy mutual needs and rights. When relationships are egalitarian and based on values of partnership rather than domination, people cooperate with and empower each other to meet their needs and rights” (Schirch 2004, 16). Schirch’s definition certainly places a high benchmark for what might be needed to make North-South partnership succeed. Whether skilled and reputable practitioners actually practice such ideals, or claim to in their narratives, is revealed in the findings chapters ahead.

Partnerships between peacebuilding practitioners, as conceptualized in this research, refers to some type of formal working agreement between people and organizations who focus primarily on conflict resolution/transformation processes, which might include such diverse activities as capacity building training in natural resource disputes, problem-solving workshops between identity groups, conflict prevention through the use of different media, or dialogue processes for the various stakeholders in a conflict. These are not short-term collaborations of a few weeks or months. Rather, they are long-term collaborative endeavors between outsiders and insiders that last several years at a minimum and typically aim to foster sustainable peace and prevent further violence.

The topic of “partnerships” is not well covered in the academic field of conflict analysis/resolution, or in peacebuilding literature. Direct references to partnership are mostly limited to a discussion of the need to partner with insiders as outsider practitioners work in foreign conflict settings. Some of these discussions by prominent scholar-practitioners are explored below in the section – The Peacebuilding Practitioner. One area that has given attention to forms of partnering or collaborating for peace is literature on coordination. Susan Allen Nan has written extensively about the need for greater coordination in conflict intervention efforts. As mentioned above, Ricigliano talks about systemic coordination of peacebuilders. Lederach promotes connecting leaders and grassroots through mid-level influential actors. He also challenges people to see and develop the connections between them in the larger web of relationships that exist within a community/society (Nan 2008; John Paul Lederach 2005; Nan 2003; John Paul Lederach 1997; Ricigliano 2012).

Nan ‘s particular focus on “intervention coordination” is useful for considering this study’s focus on investigating deliberate partnerships. Intervention coordination includes a plethora of ways people and organizations might work together that range from simply informing one another of their activities to closer forms of cooperation or collaboration. Although Nan does not discuss the term “partnership” directly, she suggests that when coordination between groups is voluntary they often “come together to share information, share resources, jointly

analyze progress, strategize next steps, and even develop and implement joint programs together” (Nan 2003, 1).

Nan calls one of the closer forms of intervention coordination “Working in collaboration,” which might come the closest to the ideal of “partnership” between individual practitioners and also between organizations (ibid, 3). Her own intervention work with other practitioners and locals on the Abkhaz-Georgian-peacebuilding process describes a close form of collaboration that shares characteristics of North-South partnerships described by the Northern and Southern practitioners profiled in this study (Nan 2003; Nan and Garb 2009). Nan and Garb describe the level of collaboration in the Abkhaz-Georgian initiative:

After these three international NGOs had met they responded together to the call of local peacebuilders who had encouraged the attempt to coordinate. Between 1999 and 2005, local and international representatives built a coordination network built on cooperative working relationships between themselves, their organizations, their citizen peacebuilding initiatives, and the official actors in the Abkhaz-Georgina peace process(Nan and Garb 2009, 273).

This study of partnership does not look specifically at coordination or how various partnerships might coordinate with one another, although some practitioners do describe various levels of partnership within a larger effort they support. Nonetheless, practitioner reflections on peacebuilding partnerships might help inform the broader coordination literature about specific dynamics between outsiders and insiders, Northerners and Southerners, and help inform what works and what fails as people and organizations purposefully collaborate.

Although there has not been a specific focus on North-South partnership in conflict analysis/resolution studies, the field of international development has looked more closely at relief/aid and development partnerships between Northern and Southern based organizations. Some of the literature provides valuable insights into the contextual challenges that might unfold in North-South conflict resolution/transformation peacebuilding partnerships. In the article: *Trust, accountability and face-to-face interaction in North-South NGO relations*, Mawdsley et. al (2005) state that formal development discourses and institutions tend to be “anxious, silent, or even hostile” on the subject of the importance of personal relationships between partners. The tendency of NGOs is to be guided by donor demands for greater transparency, auditing and evaluation techniques often lead to forms of micro-management that can lead to heavy paperwork, unbalanced efforts and low morale among workers. These authors argue that “greater personal interaction between Northern and Southern NGOs” is needed “as a formal mechanism of partnership. (Mawdsley, Townsend, and Porter 2005, 77).” Essentially, they advocate for more face-to face visits and open dialogue between partners in order to improve the effectiveness of both Southern and Northern NGOs. These critical issues are relevant to the present study for at least two reasons. First, a focus on practitioner perspectives ensures that the informants are those who are working and talking directly with people who represent their organizational partners. Second, a narrative research approach can bring forth details that help explain the weight of “relationship” in N-S partnerships.

In *The Development Gift: the Problem of Reciprocity in the NGO World*, Stirrat and Henkel (1997) offer additional relevant lessons for Northern “peacebuilders” who partner with locals in the global South. The authors examine the problematic chain of events that can unfold in relationships between Western based development NGOs and their Southern counterparts. They argue that what seemingly starts out as a free gift is eventually transformed into “a heavily conditional gift when it reaches the ultimate recipient.” Stirrat and Henkel raise many valuable points that show that while partnerships between Northern and Southern NGOs are not impossible, they are problematic in ways that are not always apparent on the surface. They explain the “dilution of the pre gift” that links giver and receiver in different ways. Although a gift might start with obligation-free giving from well-intentioned northerners to northern based international development NGOs, “the act of receiving is hedged with conditionality at best, while at worst the gift may become a form of patronage and a means of control (Stirrat and Henkel 1997, 72). In this study, it was therefore important to pay attention to the dynamics of funding (giving and receiving). Are Northern practitioners aware of such control, or do Southern practitioners feel constrained by it, at the micro-level of practice?

The above articles demonstrate some of the challenges for North-South partnerships within the development paradigm and highlight the possible constraints on strategic peacebuilding partnerships at interpersonal and organizational level when practitioners are affiliated with an NGO or other

institution. But these authors do not discuss particular challenges related to peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and the development literature on partnerships that was found reflects an absence of in-depth practitioner stories of experience. Some exploration of practitioner experiences in partnership exists in the “gray literature” of peacebuilding NGOs that have published about their approach to partnering.⁵ *CDA Collaborative Learning Projects’ Reflection on Peace Program (RPP)* has done some extensive research on Insider-Outsider organizational partnerships, yet their findings seem more focused on the expansive field of “liberal peacebuilding” that is much broader than conflict resolution and encompasses humanitarian/aid and development efforts in states living through war or re-building from it. These include people working for international NGOs that might be building schools, supporting agricultural development, or establishing food security, for example (Anderson and Olson 2003). In contrast, this study focuses on established practitioners who consider their work activities, and sometimes their organizations’ missions, to be a form of conflict resolution/transformation that contributes to sustainable peacebuilding. Still, the results of RPP’s research is generally presented as recommended guidelines for individuals and institutions and is a very useful set of criteria to compare with what practitioners in this study describe as vital to their work and partnerships.

⁵ Although there is substantial gray literature from NGOs on their peacebuilding work, especially in the area of evaluations, such work does not offer the more elaborate detail of personal experience that qualitative interviews with practitioners will provide.

The Peacebuilding Practitioner

Countless individuals who work in conflict zones and post-conflict settings might be viewed as “peacebuilders” if we consider both the “liberal” and “sustainable” notions of peacebuilding. This would include a variety of actors doing humanitarian/relief/aid and development work that might be directly or indirectly contributing to building peace in a given area – of course their actions, if poorly conceived, could also be knowingly or unknowingly contributing to the causes or escalation of conflict. Research for this study, however, has limited its focus to actors who in some way consider one of their identities to be a peacebuilder, peacemaker, or conflict resolution/transformation practitioner rather than aid or development worker per se. How a practitioner defines him or herself, of course, varies across cultures and from one setting to the next. What is important here is that their practice – and their partnership work – focuses on some form of conflict prevention or resolution that they would consider to be part of a larger conflict transformation/peacebuilding effort.

The term practitioner is also central to this research because it emphasizes that these peacebuilders practice a particular, but varied skill set, whether or not they refer to themselves as “practitioners” or “experts” in their craft. Northern practitioners who participate in this research might be best categorized as “strategic” peacebuilders who focus primarily on transforming relationships,

problem-solving, and building the capacity of others to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. Strategic peacebuilders also recognize the interdependent nature of peacebuilding with those actors who focus on development and humanitarian assistance. They tend to recognize they are outsiders who need local partners to be effective in their work. Many of the Northern practitioners will likely be influenced in some way by Lederach's sustainable framework and his prescriptive/elicitive approach. His books have become some of the foundational guides for Northern NGOs and government supported agencies, like the United States Institute for Peace.

Into the Eye of the Storm: A Handbook of International Peacebuilding, is particularly relevant to an investigation of practitioner experiences in North-South partnerships precisely because it aims to serve as a guide for Northern based practitioners (Lederach and Jenner 2002). The authors focus on such critical issues as assessing how and whether to intervene, ethics and funding, navigating the geography of protracted conflict (including advice on cultural and religious challenges) and, importantly, they also provide advice from some non-Western practitioners.

"Partnership" is not addressed as an independent topic by these authors, yet some do highlight the importance of partnering with locals while others relay principles that seem extremely pertinent to any consideration of partnering across cultures and hemispheres. Sue K. Williams offers suggestions about assessing "who is calling" to ask for assistance, emphasizing that peacebuilders should carefully consider the people -- and their networks -- before accepting an invitation to work

together (Williams 2002). The same principle would seem to hold true for those interested in developing longer-term partnerships.

Williams says that peacebuilding is by nature collaborative, which indicates that the different parties need to work together. She outlines an assessment approach for deciding whether to work together on a given project that could apply to the concept of more sustainable partnering. "Partner" is mentioned in her framework, but in the context that you may be working with a familiar NGO partner (and their partners) on a particular intervention or consultation. It is less clear how these collaborations or "partnerships" unfold within the conflicts that they are trying to resolve.

Susan Collin Marks (2002), of the NGO Search for Common Ground, also offers a checklist for deciding whether to work with someone or some organization. Her valuable insights highlight the importance of recognizing the long-term commitment one is making to peacebuilding when they say yes to a project versus the likely futility of "parachuting" in to help for a short stint in an unfamiliar setting. Mark's checklist implicitly indicates a need to partner, but does not explore what that means. How organizations like *Search for Common Ground* partner -- and how the involved practitioners understand these relationships -- can illuminate the success and sustainability of their interventions.

Louise Diamond (2002), in her chapter, "*Who else is working there?*" demonstrates why local knowledge and commitment matter in any form of partnership. The outside practitioner can be a catalyst for change, or an inspiration

for action, yet she emphasizes that her suitcase goes both ways. She states, “I can come into the system, but I will invariably leave it. Knowing this, I am seeking those who are central to the change process, to see and support what they are doing to make a difference (J. P. Diamond 2002, 35).”

In asking the critical question, “*Where do I fit in?*,” Lederach (2002) asks practitioners to consider his pyramid analysis of identifying high-level, mid-level, and grassroots actors in a conflict setting. His suggestion to focus on overall change processes as opposed to independent peacebuilding “activities” seems particularly relevant to the development of North-South partnerships. Lederach says you should first ask yourself if someone from within the local conflict system could just as easily meet the needs of what you propose, or have been asked to do. You should not displace a local resource just because you have the skills or financing to get involved. If you do remain involved, Lederach suggests doing “everything you can do to empower people from the setting to take primary roles and responsibilities in support of long-term change in their own homeland” (Lederach 2002, 45). He emphasizes locals’ involvement over one’s own role so as not to co-opt a process that will need local support to survive.

The concept of empowerment warrants more discussion later and signals an important goal and claim to look for as practitioners reflect on their partnership cases. In Lederach’s writings the use of the language of “empowerment” does not appear to assume the problematic notion that an outsider can “give power” to locals. In asking us to consider our “value-added” to a conflict setting Lederach does not

discuss the nature of partnerships. The following analysis of how “outsider” partners perceive their work in partnerships thus contributes insights into this notion of value-added and the overall ethics of peacebuilding work.

Larissa Fast’s (2002) chapter, *“Is it Safe?”* raises some critical concerns for the study of North-South partnerships. Presenting lessons from the development/aid field, she presents a security framework for peacebuilders to consider. Although many aid workers may be less familiar with the paradoxes and challenges of neutrality and impartiality than the trained mediator type, her caution of building a broad base of support versus being perceived as an advocate for one side would be critical to any partnership endeavor (L. Fast 2002). If outsiders closely align themselves with an insider partner who is too close to one of the warring parties, for example, then it could pose real trouble for their future work as third parties. Chris Mitchell, an influential conflict resolution scholar and practitioner has made similar arguments for third-parties considering their role in any intervention (Mitchell and Banks 1988). Partners may not be neutral however, depending on whom they partner with and the nature of their objectives. If practitioners are empowering some groups but not others, for example, as in training some people to confront others non-violently as a form of conflict resolution, then the inevitable consequences of impartiality and a loss of trust by those other groups might be worth it to them.

Practitioners Janice Moomaw Jenner and Dekha Ibrahim Abdi aim to get at the safety question raised by Fast from a peacebuilding practitioner standpoint, one

that is based on their own experience of partnering (Jenner and Abdi 2002). Essentially, they suggest following the lead of local actors. One can be a catalyst to bring out the voices of local “peacebuilders,” as Louise Diamond also noted, but suggest that outsiders really need to listen to insider perspectives and work within local frameworks. In-depth stories of North-South partnerships can help expose the degree of listening and adherence to local frameworks that are or are not taking place.

Peacebuilding: A Field Guide is another influential book utilized by scholar-practitioners and assigned to students in the Conflict Analysis and Resolution academic discipline (Reychler and Paffenholz 2000). Despite its comprehensive coverage of the many facets of “sustainable peacebuilding,” there is no reference to partnering or partnership in the table of contents or index. Undoubtedly, references to working with local partners are made by the contributors, but any analysis of what it means to partner, or how to partner, is absent.

Anderson’s (1999) *Do No Harm* framework for conflict sensitive development work clearly addresses the importance of good partnering practices (Anderson 1999). Although aimed at teaching ethical conflict-sensitive development practices to those doing peacebuilding/development work, her more recent work with Olson for the *Reflecting on Peace Practice*, delves more specifically into insider-outsider partnerships, offering some criteria that is useful in assessing what practitioners say they do in their reflections (Anderson and Olson 2003).

Surprisingly, these guide books touch very little, if at all, on some of the dynamics of “power” in peacebuilding; something this study tries to address. Anderson and Olson’s (2003) research does begin to get at the larger problem of asymmetry in outsider-insider partnerships. Asymmetry typically arises because “outsiders” often control funding, program design, and project evaluations. They explain how “insiders” also wield a type of power by acting as gatekeepers who control local knowledge and may influence who the outsiders meet and partner with in their work. By allowing practitioners to describe specific cases of partnerships this study goes beyond focus group discussions and adds thick narratives from in-depth interviews on issues like funding and power asymmetry, as well as the dynamics of culture and identity that inevitably create “differences” that result in challenges for those working in conflict zones.

One thing that remains unclear in these guides for outsider peacebuilders working with locals is what is meant by the term “local peacebuilder”?” The Northern practitioners in these guide books have years of training, education, and experience and would likely hesitate to call themselves “peacebuilders” without such extensive lived-experiences on the ground in conflict zones. Those they refer to as the local partners on the ground may not have any formal conflict resolution training but are simply dedicated to working for peace or the cessation of violence. Although others may have received practical and academic training in the West/North they still carry their unique worldviews and local identities with them.

When these different worlds of practitioners converge we must ask if those varying experiences and worldviews truly complement one another or lead to a power/knowledge imbalance that distorts the indigenous efforts that some Northerners declare as critical to success. Regardless of whether or not Southern practitioners have a formal Western education, the cultural/context differences between the global North and South will almost certainly be evident in the ways those practitioners engage one another. Differences between partners might be more apparent in how they interact with the local people who we might call the beneficiaries, or recipients of their collaborative interventions. The critical nature of acknowledging *difference* in Conflict Analysis and Resolution practice, reviewed below, would seemingly be extremely pertinent to partnership efforts.

Addressing “Difference,” Marginalization and Power in Conflict Resolution

In *The New Politics of Conflict Resolution*, Brigg (2008) begins to address what scholar-practitioners can do to address the marginalization and exclusion of people from non-dominant cultural groups who have different ways of knowing and being in the world. Brigg characterizes “difference” as critical to the politics of engagement in the field of conflict resolution. He explains how peoples’ claims about difference stimulate and often ignite conflicts and he centers his study on culture as “the most salient manifestation of difference,” choosing not to focus on other critical manifestations of difference like gender and religion.

Practitioners of conflict analysis and resolution are challenged to recognize and address differences that manifest in contemporary conflicts because of the field's largely Western-based values and analytical problem-solving framework. Scholar-practitioner Morgan Brigg claims, "Enthusiasm for conflict resolutions practical possibilities unwittingly re-inscribes dominant ways of thinking about community, order, and politics, and that this disavows and governs difference" (Brigg 2008, 2). As a result, he says the fundamental challenge to our field is that "conflict resolution cannot credibly address pressing conflicts across difference if it denies some of the key differences to which it aims to respond" (ibid, 3).

Western conflict resolution continues to evolve from what Brigg calls the "hopeful modernist." He credits Avruch and Black (1993) with giving culture a central place in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, making it a primary concern for scholars like Ramsbotham and colleagues who state that "culture" is the decisive challenge for the "universalizers" in the field (Ramsbotham 2005; Avruch and Black 1993). "Cosmopolitanists," like Ramsbotham, suggest enriching both Western and non-Western conflict resolution through their mutual encounter. The problem with this cosmopolitanism assumption, according to Brigg, is that it indicates CAR should be an international/universal enterprise. Cosmopolitanism and CAR privilege Euro-Western ways of being because they are grounded in largely Western Social Science roots (Brigg, 2008; p. 10-11).

The challenge for "third parties," and invariably those "Northern" practitioners partnering in the global South, is to critically consider how their

methodologies and practices incorporate the different views and experiences of local partners. If not, Brigg tells us that these practitioners risk missing key issues for all the local stakeholders because these processes exclude different ways of knowing and being. Cultural difference, for example, becomes challenging to see and engage because people have varied versions of truth or reality shaped and reinforced by their respective worldviews and which may blind them to seeing “difference” in other peoples’ ways of being/knowing.

Brigg explains that what distinguishes conflict resolution from the ways other social science disciplines address culture in conflict is its ability to respond to difference and relate to the human beings involved. He tells us this through the story of Benvenisti -- a participant in an interethnic conflict workshop -- who questioned the facilitator’s knowledge and understanding of the people in the room. What seems to be key for Brigg is not that culture is fundamentally the problem, but instead that we respond and relate to its various manifestations in the participants (or partners) with whom we engage. He offers an interesting insight on one of CAR’s fundamental challenges, which is the problem of not recognizing the multiple individual traits of cultural difference within what often gets labeled as a particular “cultural” or “identity” group. Brigg (2008) notes:

As individually expressed ‘cultures’ and multiple interactions and cross-fertilizations proliferate, knowing culture by asking the question ‘what is culture?’ becomes more difficult. Asking *what* must progressively limit its claims until, pursued to its logical conclusions, it arrives at the individual subject. Here it cannot serve its social science task of aggregation nor adequately know individual humans because asking “*what are you?*” does not adequately respond to human difference. Knowing culture is trending –

against traditional social science impulses—toward knowing *someone* in the sense sought by Benvenisti in objection to the workshop organizer (Brigg 2008, 28)

His inquiry raises the question as to whether Northern and Southern partners know one another's cultural milieu and how it affects their thoughts and actions? Brigg also states, however, that "Culture is a fundamentally important phenomenon but not one that should suggest boundaries between people. This stance becomes clearer in light of Avruch's teachings that culture is rarely the root cause of a conflict but instead creates the lenses through which deeper identity issues and other real or perceived differences get refracted (Avruch 1998).

Ultimately, Brigg aims to build off the foundational work of Avruch and Black in CAR and extend the culture question by pushing scholar-practitioners to examine how we have come to know and order human difference in the processes we use. Brigg critiques Avruch's (2006) distinction of scientific and political uses of culture by challenging his charge that culture's value as a social science term is threatened by political actors' "strategic use" of culture within such contexts as the human rights debate. He believes this stance prioritizes an academic perspective while masking the "colonial residues" of Western ways of "knowing human difference," which in essence leads to delegitimizing the arguments and 'culture' of the political players while prioritizing the frameworks and practices embedded within CAR (Avruch 2006; Brigg 2008, 39–40).

Brigg also addresses Avruch's Type I and II errors and his distinction of experience-near (e/n) and experience-distant (e/d) conceptions of culture, a

distinction that can help scholar-practitioners avoid under- or overvaluing cultural difference in conflict dynamics. He worries that analyzing cultural issues within an e/n and e/d framework reifies the social scientist way of understanding the world at the risk of missing other ways of knowing that might be critical to conflict resolution. Brigg asserts the usefulness of being aware of Type I and II errors, while asking: How can we both value culture and manage the reification and overvaluation of culture *without* invoking historically and culturally specific underpinnings of Western social science (Avruch 2003; Brigg 2008)? In his own practice, Brigg begins to address these cultural dilemmas by using both himself, and his conflict work between Australian aboriginals and those who emigrated from Europe, as sources of analysis.

Now, let us turn to some reflections in the literature of other scholar-practitioners who begin to address some of the issues of difference, culture, and power that Avruch and Brigg have raised, and which helps to inform critical issues considered in the stories of peacebuilding partnerships that follow. Understanding how these issues have been central to mediator-facilitators of intercultural disputes shows why these dynamics warranted consideration in the analysis of intercultural North-South collaborations.

Forester (2009) addresses many of the challenges raised by Brigg in his book *Dealing with Differences: Dramas of Mediating Public Disputes*. He provides rich anecdotal experiences from his own work and that of select practitioners who have

found ways to navigate the complex challenges of identity, culture and power.⁶ Forester rightly acknowledges that practitioner awareness of power, value differences, and the political possibilities of the people they work with, means going beyond the limitations of such terms like win-win, compromise, and collaboration. Much like the scholar-practitioner's potential error of overvaluing or undervaluing culture, he warns that those who intervene must not ignore the latent or explicit power differences between parties, while also being careful not to assume "differences to be irreconcilable or non-negotiable"(Forester 2009, 16; Avruch 2003). The importance of "power" for these mediators reinforced the research agenda of this study to pay careful attention to differences in power and culture as Northern practitioners described their partnerships with people in the global South.

While paying attention to marginalization is critical, Forester says practitioners must also be wary of too easily buying into a marginalized or "noble savage" perspective when working with indigenous parties who might be making claims around environmental injustices. This point raises an interesting ethical question for practitioners who Forester interviewed, like Shirley Solomon and Wallace Warfield, who carefully assessed their roles as they diligently worked to help give voice to marginalized parties in a conflict. Forester's focus is on these "advocate mediators" who do not hide behind a veil of what Warfield called the

⁶ Forester's method for researching the experience of practitioners is the model for the present study, as noted in the introduction and detailed in the Methodology section.

“strict neutrality which tries artificially to build parity between groups where there is none” (Forester 2009, p. 61).

These practitioners, and others reviewed below, aim to create interventions that expose the different values and worldviews of the identity groups to one another. Although marginalized groups likely come into a mediation process with a greater understanding of the dominant group’s worldview than the dominant group has of them, many conflict resolution approaches may not create the space for different worldviews, nor potentially divergent values, to be engaged and examined by the parties or practitioners involved.

The practitioner must also be mindful that calling an intervention process “participatory” or “collaborative” in itself does not make it so, and highlights a challenge for intercultural conflict resolution where differences might play out along different identities like ethnicity or gender. Indeed, the way an intervention is constructed risks marginalizing or excluding the voices of weaker (non-dominant) parties or the local partners for that matter. Consequently, how/if practitioners discuss issues of participation and collaboration in their partnerships is also relevant and is revealed in the narratives ahead.

Mary Adams Trujillo (2008) addresses some of the challenges of addressing different “ways of knowing,” which Brigg poses for scholar practitioners in his critique of Western social science, yet she also makes a strong argument for the value of the scholarship that can inform conflict resolution, such as critical ethnography. Trujillo warns that academics privilege some ways of understanding

what constitutes knowledge and truth and often exercise their privilege to be apolitical, without acknowledging that 'legitimacy of knowledge is politically determined, socially constructed, and culturally informed(Trujillo 2008)." Still, she makes a solid case for disciplines like critical anthropology/ethnography that seek to uncover the dynamics of power asymmetry and cultural dynamics, as Avruch has done in the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (Avruch 1998).

Trujillo notes that conflict resolution practitioners work to find out what they need to know to bring about change while also questioning which knowledge claims are legitimate. Academia, she says, provides the tools, resources, and information that help practitioners convert their experiences into social change. Finally, Trujillo argues that ethnographically oriented studies are especially useful in making evident the political and social realities of marginalized groups. Brigg (2008) might challenge Trujillo's view by asking whether the way we make those experiences evident adequately reflect the ways of knowing that group, or does the group get further marginalized by having the Western anthropologist's analysis give voice for them?⁷

Practitioner Roberto Chene (2008) brings critical attention to issues of dominance and power in the discussion of difference and intercultural conflicts. His lessons about white dominant American culture could be applicable to many global

⁷ The same question might be asked of this study's thick description/ethnographic narrative approach of giving voice to Southern practitioners. My interview method is covered in Chapter 3: Methodology.

contexts where indigenous groups are marginalized to the dominant culture's institutionalized systems. He says:

The point I want to make here is that according to our differences we are already institutionalized into conflicted, unhealthy, and ultimately unimprovable (within the dominance paradigm) human relationships. The conflicts between us are already set in the dysfunctional paradigm that we have constructed for relating to one another... We need to think about the role of conflict resolution in addressing the chronic undercurrent of conflict that is always present even when it is not overt. We need to learn how to address a situation that most people think of as normal(Chene 2008, 34).

Chene, like Avruch and Brigg, argues against a common assumption that conflicts are often rooted in cultural differences. For Chene, "dominance, not difference is at the root of cross-cultural conflict." As a rule, he says, "it the dominant side that wants to believe it is always about the differences." Chene further problematizes conflict resolution and ADR with his view that mediation typically functions on the dominant side of intercultural conflicts and is one more institution that is "relatively low on the spectrum of cultural competence and inclusion." He says very few mediators address inherent power dynamics in intercultural disputes and that many people of color participate "at the cost of keeping parts of themselves invisible" (Chene 2008, p. 34). Conley and O'Barr make a similar argument when exploring how women are marginalized by divorce mediation's tendency to take advantage of women's ways of being by pushing for collaboration and compromise when they really ought to be fighting for more rights and power (Conley and O'Barr 1998).

“Power,” which Foucault has linked to knowledge in some contexts, manifests itself in various ways that warrant deeper attention in the study of conflict resolution practice and peacebuilding practice (Foucault 2003). In particular, a greater understanding of the manifestations of power in peacebuilding interventions and in the partnerships between Northern based outsiders and local partners might help explain the critique that conflict resolution initiatives often fail to adequately consider the structural dynamics of conflict that influence events before, during and after any intervention (Galtung 1969; Bendaña 2003; L. A. Fast 2002).

The critical need for scholars and practitioners to question the relationship between culture, power and conflict is also assessed by scholar-practitioner Beth Roy. Roy (2008) highlights Juliana Birkhoff’s doctoral research as illuminating prevailing mediation conceptions of power as “a thing,” something people “have”, and power as “a negotiating position.” Roy, however, argues that power is something “we do” and is the means by which people either accomplish or are denied well-being. Taking an apparent Foucauldian position, she says that power “is enacted in transactions between and among people, embodied in cultural practices, and played out in organization roles” (Roy 2008).

Roy, like other practitioners mentioned here, notes that power dynamics show up problematically in conflict resolution around notions of neutrality in mediation or claims of balancing power asymmetry in a problem-solving workshop. When structural or institutional processes work to silence some voices then

practitioners must assert their power to shape the conversation in ways that encourage openness, and this may require the practitioner to employ tactics that teach those “who have lived lifetimes in the culture of supremacy” how to share power because they are not able to see how to do it by themselves (Roy 2008, p. 189).

The above discussions on culture and difference indicate that some U.S. based practitioners are very conscientious of power in their work, which counters some of the critiques leveled by critics like Brigg. Still, there seems to be less known about the challenges of addressing power and cultural difference from the perspective of conflict resolution practitioners working with diverse groups in non-Western countries. Could this be true for North-South partnerships too? Cultural difference and power asymmetry should be a concern for all practitioners and I have given attention to it where it has emerged in the narratives of the peacebuilders who share their stories in the following chapters. Prior to delving into the analysis of how such dynamics unfold in North-South partnerships, it is worth examining how identity, culture and power are addressed in some of the dominant forms of conflict resolution interventions used by Northern based “peacebuilders.” One way to explore the challenges conflict resolution/transformation practitioners confront is to look at the predominant practice of mediation, problem solving workshops, and training that fall under the larger umbrella of what Ron Fisher termed Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR), since many of the practitioners who undertake ICR consider their efforts part of

“strategic peacebuilding” in places with protracted social conflicts, like Cyprus, Sudan, the Caucasus, and Israel/Palestine. Many collaborative N/S peacebuilding efforts utilize aspects of interactive conflict resolution, either through capacity building training or workshops with opposing parties.

Interactive Conflict Resolution as a Starting point – Addressing Culture and Power in Practice?

The Alliance for Peacebuilding, a Washington based network for peacebuilding practitioners and organizations, shows the link between ICR and peacebuilding by quoting scholar-practitioner Ronald Fisher on their webpage:

"Peacebuilding uses communication, negotiation and mediation instead of belligerence and violence to resolve conflicts." Fisher defines peacebuilding as, "developmental and interactive activities, often facilitated by a third party, which are directed toward meeting the basic needs, de-escalating the hostility, and improving the relationship of parties engaged in protracted social conflict."⁸

Problem-Solving Workshops, and other forms of Interactive Conflict Resolution, have been some of the major forums used by seasoned practitioners to resolve protracted social conflicts. One of the core reasons for promoting interactive conflict resolution is based on the theory that interaction between key parties in a conflict is paramount to de-escalation of the conflict and “seeks to encourage system-level changes through changes in influential individuals(d’ Estree 1998).” As the practice of Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR) developed and

⁸ See *Alliance for Peacebuilding's* website: <http://afpb.site-ym.com/>

evolved in its use by scholar-practitioners as well as by non-government third parties and retired government diplomats, Fischer developed a broader definition of ICR. He describes ICR as “Facilitated face-to-face activities in communication, training, education, or consultation that promote collaborative conflict analysis and problem-solving among parties engaged in protracted conflict in a manner that addresses basic human needs and promotes the building of peace, justice, and equality” (Fisher 2006).

Mitchell and Banks (1988) explain that it is relatively difficult to distinguish between track II initiatives that are intended mainly to provide reassurance -- like Jay Rothman’s ARIA framework or Harold Saunder’s Sustained Dialogue processes -- and Problem-Solving Workshops that focus on analysis and the search for solutions. The key difference, he says, is that these “reassurance” processes focus primarily on relationship building. In Mitchell’s chapter, *The Conduct of a Workshop*, he shows that relationship building is perhaps a byproduct, but not a focus of the Burtonian analytical problem-solving workshop (PSW), which Avruch (1998), Fetherstone (2000), and others have critiqued for its reliance on a universalist approach to addressing the basic human needs of the parties (Mitchell and Banks 1988; Rothman 1997; Saunders 1999). Unlike the traditional conflict resolution school of analytical problem solving, a focus on “relationships” is central to the conflict transformation school of thought and might be central to partnerships rooted in conflict transformation theories.

Power in Interactive Conflict Resolution

Third-parties who facilitate problem solving workshops tend to center their discussions of power on how to create symmetry in a workshop between opposing parties that have different degrees of power outside the workshop. Burton's model seeks to focus on equalizing power during the problem-solving workshop process but avoids tackling real power imbalances between the parties, regardless of the power asymmetry and structural violence that may persist afterwards. The idea seems to be that in order to get anywhere in the facilitated negotiations, and make progress with solutions, these issues/interests cannot be fully explored or solved in a PSW (Burton 1990). Kelman says:

“Asymmetries in power...must be taken into account in the workshops discussions. But the two parties are equal in the workshop setting in the sense that each side has the same right to serious considerations of its needs, fears, and concerns” (Kelman and Cohen 1976).

Some argue, like Israeli scholar Ifat Maoz, that equalizing power in the workshop benefits the weaker party by creating a more equal platform for dialogue than exists outside the space created by the panelists (Maoz 2000).

Rouhana (2004), however, begins to help us understand how marginalization can occur in interactive conflict resolution processes, demonstrating that third-parties have to go further than just convening a “neutral” space with equal air time for grievances and problem solving. He states:

Denial of the other's legitimacy or negative images of the enemy other, can take different forms in asymmetric conflicts. Needs for recognition, security, and identity have different meanings for parties who have unequal power, because they emanate from drastically

different collective experiences and from a relationship to the other group that differs in its nature and essence(Rouhana 2004).”

Absent from the above literature on ICR is how dominant discourses can also lead to exclusion and marginalization of who gets to participate, as well as what transpires inside the conflict resolution processes. Sara Cobb challenges the predominant social psychology and social identity approaches to problem-solving workshops by emphasizing the need for “critical” narrative analyses in conflict dynamics and narrative mediation skills in conflict resolution workshops. Attention to narrative in context, she says, enables attention to the struggle over meaning and the processes by which some discourses become dominant and others become marginalized. Marginalization, in this context, “is the consequence of delegitimization in narrative” (Cobb 2003; Cobb 2006).

Finally, in considering the dynamics of power outside of the immediate interactive conflict resolution intervention, it is important to note that “Structural Violence,” which can perpetuate asymmetrical power relationships, seems relatively absent from the problem-solving literature. Addressing structural violence, or at least acknowledging that it must be addressed somewhere, is critical to achieve what Galtung calls a state of “positive peace” (Galtung 1969; Galtung 1990). Some problem-solving practitioners, like D’Estree, have stated that structure will have an effect on power asymmetry dynamics after workshops and therefore should be addressed (d’ Estree 1998, 187). She emphasizes:

“If you go into an intervention and haven't thought through the larger theory of change and you expect individual level change to link up with local and

system change then you're only going to get individual change. You're not going to get change at the next levels except by accident.”⁹

Fetherstone (2000) and Bendaña (2003) argue (below) that conflict resolution and peacebuilding interventions in the global South are problematic because many Northerners tend to focus more on altering relationships, or addressing local issues, without attention to the larger political and economic structures that may ultimately determine whether any sustainable change occurs.

Culture in Interactive Conflict Resolution

A study of North-South peacebuilding partnerships requires a deeper look at the role culture might play in specific conflict resolution interventions and in the overall relationships between the partners. A brief examination of culture in ICR is thus a starting point to thinking about how Northern practitioners might address the challenges of ethnic or cultural differences in their non-Western interventions.

As noted earlier, problem-solving workshops are generally analytical and task-oriented and adjusting the approach to accommodate variations in cultural differences seems to be often overlooked in favor of focusing on the universal needs the parties might share (Burton 1990). In response to critiques of the marginalization of culture, and the absence of cultural analysis in controlled communication processes, Burton stressed the universal ability of reason and

⁹ d’Estree continues, “An important thing for interveners to think through on the front end is actually structuring the intervention consciously so that attention is being given and time is being given to not only having experiences that change individuals’ attitudes and give them new skills, but also allow them to think about how this will translate into the next level of change (Beyond Intractability interview - d’Estree)”

analysis that transcends cultural groups and can be drawn upon in the Western framework of the problem-solving workshop. He also suggested that interactive conflict resolution approaches might have more in common with indigenous, non-western approaches than the pre-dominant judicial approaches practiced in the United States. Abu-Nimer and others demonstrate that such a generalization seems unproven and the question remains as to how applicable this type of interactive conflict resolution is in non-Western cultures and how compatible it is with the different cultures in which it has been implemented (Abu-Nimer 1998).

In his review of conflict resolution training workshops that incorporate problem-solving methods, Fisher states that none of the interventions he examined began with what Avruch and Black (1993) describe as an anthropological analysis of the manner in which conflict is conceptualized and approached in the host countries (Fisher 1997).¹⁰ Whether cultural frames of analysis should be incorporated into a problem solving workshop or training will depend on the make-up of the party's identities and cultural backgrounds as well as the time allowed for such exploration. In interethnic or intercultural conflicts an analysis of how each group conceptualizes and addresses conflict would ideally occur prior to any formal intervention (Avruch and Black, 1993; Fisher, 1997). Such cultural insights can help outside practitioners to recognize relevant cultural knowledge or behaviors that surface in the intervention process and, most importantly for this research, in their partnerships,

¹⁰ These observations are more than a decade past now and a fuller investigation is needed as to how more recent interventions have incorporated such analyses and intercultural sensitivities.

which could prove beneficial if addressed or harmful if left alone.

In considering all these facets of culture in conflict work, it is imperative to address some issues of intercultural communication. There is much written on the role of intercultural communication that can help practitioners who navigate the complexities of cross-cultural interventions and partnerships, but culture is far more complex than just the verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors, often manifesting in the symbols, rituals, and narratives of the parties (Hall 1959; R. Cohen 1997; S. B. Cohen 2002). Avruch warns of the dangers of not attending to “language and meaning” if one only sees culture as the nationality or ethnicity of a group and the supposedly shared traditions or norms of behavior of its members (Avruch 2003). When one side is more rooted in the analytical cultural framework of a problem-solving workshop, for example, (i.e. Israel) and the other is not (Arab Palestinian) there might be an unfair advantage of understanding the meanings and relevance of western analytical skills, which creates another level of power asymmetry between the parties.

Peacebuilders who attend to language and meaning can help equalize the playing field in an intervention and could also create greater symmetry in their partnerships with local actors (Abu-Nimer 1996; Cobb 2006). Yet all practitioners bring their own cultures and language/meaning, which will also alter the overall dynamic of a partnership or intervention. Missing from the above literature on interactive conflict resolution is how the above issues of power, marginalization, and attending to cultural differences are understood by the practitioners in the

context of specific interventions and cases when they partner with local peacemakers.

One of the limits of conflict analysis, and assessing conflict resolution approaches, is that in-depth narratives of experience seem to be given little attention as a way to learn what is taking place and perhaps even measure success. This might be because the field already struggles with evaluating the success of seemingly concrete exercises like workshops. Despite the challenge of evaluating subjective narratives of experience, the interviews that follow demonstrate the rich value that narratives field experience have for teaching others who might follow similar paths to prevent, manage, or transform conflict settings.

In particular, Southern-insider practitioner stories about their work provide insights into collaborative partnerships and whether they are as empowering, culturally sensitive, and symmetric as Northern practitioners might claim about their work. Southern voices provide the critically needed alternative view on North-South partnerships and how such dynamics as identity, culture, and power are unfolding. But prior to a discussion of this study's research methodology, however, some practical and theoretical concerns about the larger framework of conflict resolution and strategic peacebuilding should be explored. These concerns raise critical issues that the experienced peacebuilders in this study illuminate in their stories of practice.

Challenges to the Northern “Peacebuilding” Agenda

Having based this research on this conceptual framework of conflict resolution/transformation and strategic peacebuilding -- and practitioners rooted in those traditions -- it is important to assess where it is challenged theoretically. Critical to thinking about how peacebuilding addresses cultural differences, marginalization, and power in conflict intervention, Paffenholz (2010) argues that the conflict “transformation” approach to sustainable peacebuilding has not been subjected to any rigorous critique. She outlines what she and others see as weaknesses and deficiencies, including her belief that although Lederach’s approach emphasizes understanding traditional values and local voices, “it needs to be analyzed, for these structures are often transformed by modern developments” (Paffenholz 2010). Drawing on the work of *The Life and Peace Institute* in Somalia, she also argues that the middle-out approach may not work, or be appropriate, in all societies and that a bottom-up, grassroots approach should be better conceptualized. Heathershaw (2008) adds to the debate by highlighting the New Testament-Christian religious understanding of peace in Lederach’s framework, arguing that the approach has brought the “religious fringes into the secular mainstream” (Heathershaw 2008, 608).

Paffenholz also describes the more recent alternative discourse school that utilizes the teachings of Foucault to deconstruct the liberal agenda of conflict resolution/peacebuilding schools, and argues that in some cases the field is “part of

an apparatus of power which attempts to discipline and normalize” (Fetherston 2000; Paffenholz 2010). Featherstone’s (2000) *Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: A Reconsideration of Theoretical Frameworks* raises critical questions about the discursive practices in these fields, thus raising valuable questions for any exploration of partnerships that involve practitioners rooted in these frameworks. He explains that a discourse “makes real,” and legitimizes, “that which it prescribes as meaningful.” His point is that scholar-practitioners must critically reflect on the discourse within which theories of “conflict resolution and peacebuilding are formed and reformed” (Fetherston 2000, 191).

These critiques helped influence my choice to utilize a narrative research methodology. The approach of gathering practitioner stories, explained in Chapter 3, contributes to uncovering some of the prevalent discourses circulating amongst Northern and Southerners who are partnering to resolve conflicts and/or transform violent societies into more peaceful ones.

Some of Fetherstone’s assertions are particularly relevant for my interest in practitioners who work with complex identity issues in North-South partnerships. He begins his critique of the conflict resolution field by discussing Burton’s theoretical framework of “Provention” and his theory of “Basic Human Needs,” explaining that Burton produced what essentially “amounts to a two-part model of peacebuilding” (Fetherston 2000, 201). Conflict resolution, for Burton, offers short-term methodologies primarily in the form of facilitated problem-solving workshops (discussed earlier) that have been “conceptually developed”, tested and improved

over time. Provention, in contrast, “provides a long-term, societal focus, dealing with issues of the common good, political interests and ideologies” (ibid, 201). What is critical for Fetherstone here is that it is through provention, which he says lacks developed theories and methodologies, and not through conflict resolution, that “Burton seeks the transformation of discourses, social institutions, and structures (ibid, 203).” He credits Burton’s work as pioneering and valuable for the conflict resolution field, but critiques it for being disconnected from the “social spaces” inhabited by those in conflict zones and says the discursive foundations of basic human needs theory and provention must be examined and problematized. Interestingly, discussions of basic-human needs and problem-solving workshops as a method for addressing them were essentially absent in the North-South practitioner narratives other than being mentioned separately by two Northern practitioners.

Fetherstone also takes issue with the lack of power analysis in Lederach’s elicitive framework with its greater emphasis on reconciliation and the transformation of relationships, claiming it’s a largely “unproblematized set of theories and practices” (206). He is not claiming the model is “useless” but that the discursive issues of the model in a given intervention, or in “the broader global context of actions,” merit critical reflection. Drawing on the work of Foucault and Habermas, Fetherstone suggests a more emancipatory, transformative and counter-hegemonic approach to peacebuilding. He acknowledges some parallels between Lederach’s model and Habermas’s theory of communicative action and seems to

ultimately ask that at a minimum a more critical, self-reflexive discursive space be opened in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Fetherstone's critiques and suggestions, whether or not one agrees with him, are useful for considering the partnering experiences of Southerners with those Northern practitioners influenced by Lederach's work and/or the foundational conflict resolution theories of Burton and Azar (Azar and Farae 1981; Burton 1990).

Turning more specifically to the importance of Southern voices in peacebuilding is Bendaña (2003), who argues in his discussion paper, *What Kind of Peace is Being Built: Critical Assessments from the South*, that liberal peacebuilding becomes "an inherently conservative undertaking, which seeks managerial solutions to fundamental conflicts over resources and power" (Bendaña 2003; Paffenholz 2010). Ten years after the declaration of the UN Agenda for Peace, Bendaña asks us to critically examine any assessment of the effectiveness of the peacebuilding project. He raises questions not only about the UN notions of peacebuilding, but particularly about Northern Agendas and donors that are heavily invested in the final outcome and "so demanding of 'reconciliation (p.3)."

Bendaña begins his argument with the notion that there are two primary peacebuilding concepts, yet many understandings of what peace and the peacebuilding enterprise mean? The first concept is: "short term involvement of the international community, centralism and political measures primarily undertaken by an external agent, even though attention is paid to the content of the indigenous players." The second concept involves "long-term efforts by mainly indigenous

actors to promote political and economic development, and a sustainable solution to the root causes of the conflict” (Bendaña 2003, 4). This distinction is a useful comparison for one of the motivating goals of the present study - to understand what makes for effective, and sustainable, North-South partnerships from the perspective of both outsider and insider peacebuilders?

Bendaña says, "If peacebuilding is to survive as a field of inquiry but also positive engagement, then it has to shed its stability, short term, market oriented, toolbox facet (p. 6)." He argues that a Southern perspective on peacebuilding would require any intervention effort to address structural violence because there is no peace without socioeconomic justice. He makes a key claim when he states that peacebuilding is interpreted in the North as a specialized field and that most of the discussion about what peacebuilding is and what it is supposed to accomplish takes place from "the vantage point of the North." This is not so with the term "peace," he says, and that one of his goals is to show that the "field" and the "North" need to listen and incorporate Southern perspectives (a goal of the following interviews) to keep peacebuilding from circumscribing itself to the worlds of policy and academics (p. 8).

Bendaña’s (2003) critical perspective raises questions for the nature of peacebuilding partnerships at the NGO and consultant-practitioner levels. He states:

“For all the talk of ‘partnership,’ there seems to be little room for the discussion of the broader issues of globalization and impoverishment that are at the heart of South concerns. Or are we more worried about being understood by the donors and policy-makers than by the victims and rights-holders? Can we have it both ways” (Bendaña 2003, 27)?

So what do those practitioners on the front-lines of partnerships value, as outsiders and insiders? Bendana's questions provide a challenge to look closely at North-South partnerships and relationship dynamics, and thus support my motivation to better understand how North/South partnerships are conceived and how they "play out" as projects and programs unfold in practice.

In summary, the overall goal of the alternative discourse critique, according to Paffenholz, is transformation of people and structures into "posthegemonic" society, which she says seems to resemble Habermas's (1984) notion of a society free of hegemony, Foucault's (1991) notion of governmentality, and a Marxist reading of international relations (Paffenholz 2010, 56; Habermas 1984; Foucault 1991). Although the emerging alternative discourse approach contributes greatly to the field by bringing attention to power structures, marginalized voices, and "ordinary" peoples, the greatest weakness of these critics is that they do not actually analyze the voices of these marginalized actors, which appears to be an inherent contradiction to the discourse they advocate (Paffenholz 2010). Thus any balanced examination of North-South peacebuilding partnerships must give voice to practitioners from both sides.

Limitations to the Review of Literature

There are numerous works on “peacebuilding” that are not reviewed here and there is other literature out there on a variety of other types of organizational North-South partnerships in the fields of development, and medicine, for example. In this conceptual framework, however, I have attempted to be comprehensive in reviewing literature that links together the foundational elements of the narratives that follow: conflict resolution/transformation, peacebuilding, and partnerships. The above body of work therefore provides a context for considering how many scholar-practitioners theorize and approach their work, some ways they address the dynamics of culture, power and marginalization, and why this is important to consider in the exploration and analysis of North-South peacebuilding partnerships.

Literature on hybridity in peacebuilding and development, for example, is a new area of scholarship and seems particularly relevant for understanding the nature of partnerships in intercultural contexts. Hybridity is the coming together of top-down and bottom-up (as well as indigenous and exogenous) forces and deliberative approaches. This literature might begin to explain how the interactions between the presumably global norms/ends of practitioners and local meanings/practices work out on the ground in North-South partnerships (Mac Ginty and Sanghera 2012; Richmond 2011; Richmond 2010).

What is missing from the literature reviewed to date is an examination of practitioners’ narratives, a form of “reflective practice,” on the dynamics of

partnership, including how practitioners in the context of their joint interventions understand issues of power, marginalization, and cultural difference. As touched on earlier, more has been written about organizational partnerships between large humanitarian/aid development organizations, some directly involved in peacebuilding with “partners” from the global South. Less seems to be known about how partnerships are understood and carried out from the individuals engaging in intercultural partnerships on the front lines.

In conclusion, the above conceptual framework and review of literature point the way as we dive deep into the lived-experiences of peacebuilders and unearth their instructive examples of partnering to address challenging conflicts in nations around the world.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study provides an in-depth look into North-South/outsider-insider partnerships in conflict resolution and peacebuilding by eliciting instructive stories of partnering from experienced practitioners. In conflict resolution/transformation one is typically considered an outsider if they are from anywhere other than the locale where the conflict intervention/peacebuilding work is being done. There are thus varying degrees of “outsiders” and insiders within a given country or region. Outsiders in this research refers primarily to practitioners who live in the global North, while to be an insider implies the practitioner is from the host country in the global South, but not necessarily from a specific community where projects might occur.

The partnership cases narrated by practitioners are examined individually and together in order to understand the dynamics and progression of partnerships. What shape do partnerships take? What do the early, middle, and late stages of partnership look like? To address these questions, the practitioner narratives are presented in an exploratory way to see if there is a recognizable “morphology” of

North-South strategic peacebuilding partnership, which can help to better understand and practice partnering (Propp 1968).

One way to connect practitioner actions with what unfolds in partnerships is to ask practitioners about some of the challenges, “wrinkles” they experienced, in their partnerships and how they handled such challenges. Their reflections have been interpreted in the findings as critical moments and turning points for the practitioners and their partnerships. Stories of practitioners from both the North and the South also show how the dynamics of identity, culture, and power unfold in North-South collaborations. Such findings arguably help to expose both successful actions and problems that might inform better practice and theory in the discipline of conflict resolution and help answer questions from critics of any peacebuilding agenda.

Research Questions

The primary research questions that inform this study are:

(1) How are outsider and insider practitioners who are involved in North-South peacebuilding partnerships experiencing these partnerships?

(2) What are they actually doing “in the actions” of this partnering with the other in conflict resolution/peacebuilding interventions?

(3) What can we learn about the form and trajectory of North-South peacebuilding partnerships generally?

Background questions that motivate my primary questions, and that inform my interest in discussing partnership discussions with interviewees include:

(a) How do Northern practitioners conceptualize their interventions and understand their engagement in their partnerships with non-Western others?

(b) What can we learn from local-insider partners from the global South who are often marginalized in the dominant peacebuilding literature produced by the North?

(c) What do practitioners say about the dynamics of culture and power asymmetry in these partnership initiatives, and do such dynamics lead to critical moments and turning points for the partners?

(d) How do practitioners navigate these dynamic challenges and what does it say about conflict resolution/peacebuilding interventions and the peacebuilding endeavor as a whole?

Data Analysis

Practitioner interviews are analyzed utilizing an interpretive framework of narrative research to discover practitioners' insights about their actions as they partner and the characteristics of their North-South partnerships, both of which can help inform better conflict resolution and peacebuilding work. Data consisted of verbatim transcripts of semi-structured interviews with 16 practitioners and their stories about the 13 partnership cases listed below (see Table I below). Each interview focused primarily on what they deemed an instructive case of North-

South partnership in a conflict or post-conflict setting as described in the following section on the Data Collection method. Interviewees also elaborated on some of their other cases of outsider-insider partnerships and on peacebuilding partnerships generally. All of the cases were read and analyzed for their unique qualities while the researcher also sought to discover what these partnership cases had in common with one another. Thus in addition to learning about the nuances of practice (practitioner actions in partnership), the intent is to see what can be learned about the stages or form of partnerships. My assumption was that most partnerships have a beginning, middle, and end, but they may not develop and unfold in such a straightforward manner.

The Morphology of Partnerships

Each story of partnership recounted by these practitioners reflects different stages of coming together, carrying out projects, and then coming to a conclusion or developing into some type of ongoing partnership or relationship. One of the objectives of this research is to examine the diversity across the way these partnerships occur, but likewise hope to identify some characteristics or patterns that exist across cases. As a result, the analysis can be said to be an exploration of the patterns that emerge rather than an exploration for preconceived notions of patterns.

Presenting these narratives of instructive cases independently, with their various stages of development, would not provide a useful way to see nor discuss the rich comparisons and unique differences across partnerships. Almost everything practitioners spoke about is relevant to the present investigation of partnership, but presenting each case in its entirety would only result in the reader having to sift through 13 distinct cases and then try and understand how they all relate. The researcher would be challenged to present an analysis that would connect the cases in this way.

Presenting partnerships through a framework of “morphology” offers a way to understand and organize the wealth of narrative data provided by practitioners and provides a way to explore the various stages and dimensions of these North-South collaborations. The term Morphology originates from the Greek language and means the “study of shape” and has been applied to various fields of study, including biology, mathematics, linguistics, and folklore (“Morphology (folkloristics)” 2013). The use of morphology in the field of folkloristics is most relevant to the present study as it has to do with analyzing the structure of narratives in folk tales, particularly the seminal work of Vladimir Propp in 1928 and studies inspired by it that presented alternative conceptions, namely Levi-Strauss in 1960 (Jacobs 1971).

The morphology of narratives, as Propp first presented it, is a form of structural analysis that presents stories as a linear sequence of events or stages in an event as presented by the informant, therefore “ if a tale consists of elements A to Z, the structure of the tale is delineated in terms of this same sequence” (Jacobs

1971, 897). Levi-Strauss later termed this sequential ordering of events as “syntagmatic” structural analysis in comparison to his own preferred “paradigmatic” analysis for the study of folklore in which the elements are taken out of a given order and are re-organized in some form of analytic schema (ibid).

The narratives of partnerships are obviously not fictionalized folktales but the lived experiences of practitioners recounting stories of partnerships. Since I am interested in understanding how partnerships begin, develop, and ultimately unfold over-time, a sequential analysis seemed most relevant, but my analysis led to some restructuring of the events out of chronological order. Furthermore, the paradigmatic approach is concerned with context and not just the structure of the narrative, which fits with this study’s concern for the context of each conflict location as well as the overall context of North and South or outsider/insider that informs the viewpoints of practitioners.

After an initial reading of the narratives, each case of interview transcript was read through a second time to determine the stages/progression of events that unfolded in each story. As presented in the Findings chapters to follow, partnership stages are often tied to practitioner actions. Some of these actions clearly fit with preconceived notions of what occurs in the beginning, middle, or end of a collaboration/partnership. The decision “to create a partner,” for instance, is clearly an initial stage. But the stage of “building trust,” for example, can be an initial stage but also something that occurs over time and needs to be maintained.

Furthermore, certain challenges or “critical moments” that arise throughout partnerships may occur in different stages and can cause partnerships to shift directions. As a result of these unique characteristics of North-South collaborations, the linear presentation of the morphology of partnerships narratives might be challenged. In other words, the morphology lays a framework for understanding the stages of these partnerships, but there are clearly things that happen (critical moments and turning points), which can account for a non-linear progression of relationships and tasks. The importance of analyzing critical moments and turning points follows.

Critical Moments and Turning Points

Critical moments and turning points in North-South collaborations are events or discursive exchanges that result in a shift or disruption in the way partners relate to one another and potentially the way partnerships unfold. Researchers and scholar-practitioners who study the field of negotiation have looked extensively at the notion of “critical moments” and turning points that arise in the discursive practices of negotiators and in the overall negotiations themselves (Leary 2004a; Druckman 2004; McNamee 2004; Forester 2004; Druckman 2001; Putnam 2004; Stuart 2004; Donohue 2004; Cobb 2006). These studies conclude that the idea of a critical moment could be useful to a variety of practice disciplines. With this in mind, I sought to analyze the challenges or “wrinkles” that partners

experienced in partnerships as potential critical moments and turning points in the relationships between partners and in the morphology (stages) of the partnerships themselves.

Leary (2004) notes that critical events and exchanges are distinguished from more usual ways of working in that they carry urgency and are associated with a subjective sense that ordinary controls or rules no longer seem to be in play” (Leary 2004a, 143). Although “peacebuilding” partnerships are less time constrained or rule-bound than negotiations, and are a different animal altogether, they share some common characteristics with negotiations, including interpersonal dynamics and potential expectations around agreements or ways of engaging between participants.

These scholar-practitioners of critical moments in negotiation arrived at a number of interesting points in their studies of critical moments in negotiation that should be kept in mind for the analysis of these partnership narratives. Linda Putnam (2004) says critical moments can be discontinuous and transformative events, with the trajectory that includes interpersonal relationships, social processes, and institution (Putnam 2004). These moments can enlarge or complicate existing conflicts. Critical moments, according to Stuart (2004) might induce uncertainty in the participants “causing them to question not only what is going on but their understanding of the game they are ‘really’ playing (Stuart 2004; Leary 2004a, 144). Such self-questioning or questioning of one’s partners could lead to a turning point in the relationships or the larger collaboration/partnership.

This could lead to partners questioning their own legitimacy, or the legitimacy of others (Cobb 2006), as effective partners or effective peace practitioners.

Another pertinent issue raised in the study of critical moments by Druckman and others is whether or not these turning points can be recognized as they happen in the course of a negotiation or, in our case, in the development of a partnership? In other words, "it is hard to escape the conclusion that the designation of any event as a turning point is best approached as a matter of retrospective interpretation. Its significance is often best assessed by considering its consequences (Druckman 2004; Leary 2004a). Leary states,

The significance of certain moments in negotiation, as in life generally, sometimes can only be recognized in hindsight. And even in retrospect, tracing how one moment was ultimately linked to the next, can we unequivocally say which were more critical than others? Small things unnoticed can have large consequences, as Franklin (1758, 1983) and others have noted: "For want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe, the horse was lost and for want of a horse, the rider was lost." If the chain of causality is too tangled, it sometimes seems impossible to link specific events to particular outcomes (Leary 2004b, 311).

As the above example states, it is important to examine even the little things that might make or break a partnership between outsiders and insiders. Although these scholar-practitioners are often talking about negotiators reflecting on their actions retrospectively during a negotiation session, the importance of reflecting on critical moments is critical to conflict resolution/peacebuilding partnerships since practitioners who are engaged in these collaborations can make changes in their partnerships going forward or in future partnerships. The importance of challenges

or wrinkles that might have led to critical moments is vital to the present studies deliberate attempt to give both Northern and Southern based practitioners the opportunity to engage in reflective practice that might alter their assumptions or theories about partnering and help improve practice generally.

Finally, Donohue (2004) reminds us that turning points are a “shift in the story, but we must know the whole story to understand it (Donohue 2004)” Thus, it is important to understand the critical moments and turning points presented in Chapter 7 as part of the larger stories of partnership that contain them. These moments were interpretively identified and analyzed within each case study, but then placed together and compared so they can be understood as an inevitable part of the morphology of these partnerships.

Methodological Concerns -Doing Justice to Practitioner Narratives

Finally, there are some important challenges that face anyone wishing to study practice, whether it is the practice of “doing” partnership in general or within a specific conflict resolution/peacebuilding intervention. Addressing some of these challenges helps to justify the present approach to gathering stories. One of the challenges, “The problem of the practical – recognizing situated stories as revelatory,” gets at the validity question some scholars might raise about a narrative research approach. Forester (2006) says, “If we learn to think about ‘knowledge’ as merely ‘scientific,’ we might well be right, but not right enough.” The point of

considering peacebuilding “practice” and “partnerships” would be that if we only think about knowledge in terms of building or “engineering structures,” than we might ignore the kind of knowledge along the lines of “knowing how to listen (to plan with affected people to reconstruct the future)” (p. 573). For Forester, this challenge of the practical “goes beyond not confusing generalized, testable propositions with embodied practical judgments.” Instead, we need to recognize that we can learn more from the details of real work and practical-contextual judgment than from general models, recipes, or rules people might talk about using in various contexts” (Forester, 2006, 573).

The second major challenge is the challenge of “moral resonance-doing narrative justice in the ways we write” so as to remove “the blinkers and emotional tone deafness of much of conventional social science” (Forester 2006, 572–3). Its a process that he says Hannah Arendt refers to as writing and analyzing language in ways that match the moral quality of peoples’ real lives and experience. The main idea for Forester, in brief, is to take practitioner stories “far more seriously, more critically and less literally than we have, not simply and dismissively as subjective or worse, as navel-gazing, but as disclosing nuanced claims and offers, acts and strategies – as deeply illuminating, even revelatory . . .” (Forester 2006, 573). This seems particularly pertinent to those I interview from the global South whose ways of “being” and “knowing” may be very different from those of us in the North asking the questions. But it also supports the value of gathering the stories of

influential “peacebuilders” from the North who, with the right questions, will go beyond the “navel-gazing” some critics might fear.

One of the ways I attempt to do these partnership narratives justice is by making the practitioners’ voices - their stories - central in the Findings chapters. Rather than over analyzing or rewriting what they say, their wisdom and knowledge is privileged in the writing by including as many of their own narratives as possible throughout the following chapters. In many regards, practitioners were the co-researchers of this study. They reflected on and shared their vast experiences in partnerships and in the fields of conflict resolution/conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Because this dissertation is also an engagement in “reflective practice” the expectation is that they and others will learn from these stories. As a result, I often use the third-person voice of we and us, as in “She tells us,” or “we learn from.” For confidentiality purposes, as noted in detail below, I do not use practitioner names but I do often use “she” or “he,” which I did in part to reflect the balance of gender in the study. I have also emphasized some of the key points in their stories in *italics*. At times I use my own voice in the first person to signify my participation in this conversation with practitioners, particularly in the summary/remarks I make at the end of each chapter and in the final Discussion chapter.

Data Collection: A Narrative Approach

Interviews are conducted using a narrative approach to elicit practitioner stories of their experiences in forming and implementing North-South partnerships. A narrative process is particularly useful for reflective practice. Well-designed questions can help people to critically reflect on their work and to explore the puzzles they have on these issues. Forester (2006) models the importance of an interpretive “narrative analysis” focus of “practitioner profiles” rather than concentrating on textual analysis of academic literature or project evaluations developed by organizations. Forester’s approach to narrative research is distinct from *research on narratives*, because it is about the method of asking questions to elicit stories from practitioners and not the deconstruction of those narratives as would occur in a structural narrative analysis, for example. According to Cobb, Forester does not “do operation on the stories” that emerge. Narratives can be presented essentially as reflections on the rich lived-experiences they illuminate.¹¹

Forester’s (2006) “grounded method” for understanding how planners, administrators, and mediators engage in public service and dispute resolution provides an ideal approach for eliciting the stories of practitioners who practice in the fields of conflict resolution/transformation and peacebuilding. In line with Dewey’s pragmatic framework for generating theory from practice, Forester calls his approach a sort of ‘critical phenomenology’ or better yet a ‘critical pragmatism.’

¹¹ Sara Cobb, class lecture; Course 695: *Narrative Approaches to Conflict Analysis*, S-CAR, GMU; Fall 2011.

'Critical,' he says, because of his concerns with different manifestations of power and resistance and 'pragmatism' because of trying to learn from the friction of real practice in various fields. In an article discussing lessons for South Africa he says, "studying practice in the face of complex relations of power, political loyalties, ethnic, religious and territorial identities (and more) must reach far beyond taking anyone's intentions at face value: it must reach the micro-political details of planning practices (Forester 2006; Forester 2009). This critical-pragmatic approach is thus a vital methodological framework for uncovering what practitioners do in peacebuilding North-South partnerships, especially as they face challenges and critical moments in their partnerships that might arise from the inherent asymmetry in power that exists between the North and the South.

Forester proposes some guidelines that serve as a practical strategy for collecting and analyzing partnership stories from practitioners and I have added their relevance to this study in parentheses.

Forester (2006) states:

- "Choose actors, not spectators." (This means choosing experienced, reflective practitioners who are engaged in settings of interest and who are not too far removed from their partnerships).
- "Ask those actors to tell the stories of instructive cases revealing both challenges and opportunities. (By asking for 'instructive stories' one is thus subtly asking for accounts that peacebuilding practitioners judge to have value for others. Specific open-ended questions need to be asked that will get

at what practitioners think is valuable for North-South partnering and some of the issues that arise from the dynamics of identity, culture and power in the partnership work).

- “Do not ask the actors, ‘What did you think about X?’ Ask, ‘How did you handle X?’” (What is critical here is that by asking what people think about partnership might result in their views of the political or funding challenges for example, but it will not result in their specific actions. Asking what someone has done to build a partnership in the face of cultural differences, or political obstacles, will result in a story about what they did or tried to do to overcome such challenges).
- “Get the actor’s story with a trajectory. The intent is to get at a story with a beginning, middle and end and one that has enough complex material for analysis.” In looking at partnerships, it is useful to approach this in a two-fold manner. Some partnerships may be ongoing without a clear end, an evolving story, and so it is important to ask about a specific case of working together as well as learning about the overall partnership/relationship.
- “Help the actors help us: ask for relevant details, not good intentions; ask for examples, not abstractions. These practice stories are guided conversations; they are not one-way monologues where the interviewer just passively listens.” Forester says, “As analysts of practice, our job is to help practitioners tell richly revealing, politically complex, socially nuanced stories of their practical work.... This means the interviewees not only co-construct the interview

conversations, but the interviewers must bring analytically informed questions to explore” (Forester 2006, 579). (Specific questions for peacebuilders are listed below).

- “Ask for practical implications.” The idea here is to get at the meaning people ascribe to words like ‘power’ or ‘respect.’” Forester notes that we need to invite practitioners to teach us what they really mean. The idea is not to lead the interviewee to any pre-planned point that we hope to make, but get to their practical insights and deeper knowledge about what is taking place. (For this research on N-S partnerships that means not necessarily raising the issue of power, but asking for specifics in meaning if the concept is raised).
- “Allow time for reflections and ‘lessons learned.’” This might be a secondary goal, but asking for their lessons learned is one way to probe for “their sense of significance and value – of warnings or opportunities or less obvious ideas that really deserve attention,” for others that try to do that kind of conflict resolution/peacebuilding work. (For this study, I chose to ask practitioners “what matters most to them about their partnership cases as a way to get at some of the lessons learned).
- “Give ‘reflection’ content by mining the riches of surprise.” Asking practitioners about their experiences of surprise or discovery can get at practitioners previous working theories, or espoused theories, their frameworks of expectations or ways of understanding that may have led them to believe one thing only to find that their actions in practice led to something entirely different. At its essence, exploring these moments of surprise can allow the researcher to give

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authentic meaning to being a reflective, or fully deliberative,
practitioner

phone when a solid Internet signal was not available for them. Each of the recorded interviews lasted approximately 1-3 hrs.

Participant Selection

Purposeful, snowball sampling was utilized to select interviewees by focusing on the established networks of handful of highly experienced Northern practitioners who are well known for their work through their publications, organizations and/or body of work in the field. A similar number of less-known practitioners with similar years of experience and strong reputations were selected from various nations in the global South. Northern practitioners referred some of these Southern peacebuilders to me. Others were known of by me, the primary researcher, and contacted directly. The fact that these Southern peacebuilders are less well known has less to do with their relative experience than it does with the general asymmetry between North and South in the disciplines of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.¹²

My approach of working through the loose networks of peacebuilders is intended to highlight varied practitioner experiences from some of those who have shaped the field of conflict resolution and conflict transformation in the North, as

¹² Although the Southern practitioners in this study may be less recognized than some of the “stars” of our field in the North, so to speak, they are often well-known and respected in their respective networks and in their own nations. One can certainly do very important work and fly under the radar by choice, as with Sp5 for example, proving that being known is not always a prerequisite for success. My pre-requisite for this study, however, was to choose practitioners with vast, yet sometimes very different, experience.

well as influential practitioners in the global South who are willing to engage in reflective practice on their partnerships with Northern individuals and organizations. Most of the selected “peacebuilders” are affiliated with some type of organization/institution in their partnership work. Some Northerners are formally attached to International non-government organizations (INGOs), while most Southern practitioners have their own local non-government organizations (LNGOs) in the conflict area where they work. A few other practitioners work or consult for international organizations, including foundations and institutions affiliated with the United States government.

This non-random approach is intended to provide diverse lessons of peacebuilding partnerships in different national and intercultural contexts rather than to compare and generalize across a small sub-set of similar or like-minded practitioners. In the end, the interviews resulted in 13 distinct cases of partnership. Nine Northern and six Southern practitioners participated in an in-depth interview session, in which they narrated their stories of partnership. Two Northern practitioners felt strongly that I interview their Southern partners, which resulted in two cases that provide crucial perspectives and insights from both sides. I deliberately did not ask to interview both partners in a case in order to allow people to speak candidly about their partnerships, and to protect relationships, as noted below. Lastly, two of the Northern based practitioners consider themselves part of the global South in that their identities and family ties connect them

intimately to the South as well as to the North. These cases provide rich information about identity and the complex layers of any North/South distinction.

Disclaimer and Note on Confidentiality

This study did not originally attempt to interview matched sets of North-South partnerships for a number of reasons. First, uncovering perspectives on problematic aspects of the partnership might put those relationships in jeopardy, which could be particularly problematic for Southerners who criticize their Northern counterparts but are dependent on funding from them. I was also concerned that partners would speak cautiously and withhold real challenges if they knew I was going to interview their partners. Additionally, it is not my intent to verify Northerners' claims directly, by talking to their Southern partners, as that might set-up a study that is more about proving or disproving how Northerners describe their practice and their partnerships. Instead, the intent is to capture the varied dynamics of peacebuilding collaborations and the diverse experiences of Northerners and Southerners when they partner.

Nonetheless, a few of the Northern practitioners I spoke with recommended I speak with their Southern partners about their experiences in partnership with them or about collaborations these insider-practitioners have with other Northern based partners. I contacted these Southern practitioners and when they agreed to an interview I asked them which case they wanted to discuss, as each had a variety of experiences, and both suggested the case with the Northern practitioner who had

referred them. They also view those cases as successful and instructive for others. Interviewing both sides of these partnerships thus offered the opportunity for a more complete picture of a few of the partnership cases.

Despite the incredibly insightful reflections that practitioners offer within this study, and their generally positive framing of their partners, there are a number of critical issues raised that warrant confidentiality for all of the involved practitioners. A primary concern is that Southern practitioners who are dependent on the funding of Northern partners and donors might be impacted negatively by their frankness and transparency about the dynamics or relationships in their partnerships. Despite my desire to credit all of these skilled practitioners for their excellent work, the dynamic challenges of partnership require confidentiality for the relationships presented here, especially as they relate to protecting present or future relationships with international organizations and donors that support them.

Given these inherent power dynamics between the Global North and the Global South, all practitioners are referred to as Np1 (Northern Partner 1) or Sp2 (Southern Partner 2) and so forth in order to protect these relationships and their work in future partnerships. Supporting international and local organizations are also kept confidential in order to protect their reputations and relationships. I often use pronouns (he/she) or (the INGO, etc) where identifying names have been omitted from the practitioners' narratives.

Although some Northern practitioners and their organizations might like to be recognized for their contributions in this study, it would be unfair to other practitioners who prefer their anonymity. Furthermore, naming Northern practitioners and not Southerners could be interpreted as only accentuating the inherent North/South power differences that tend to marginalize Southern voices. For example, some of the Northern practitioners are widely known in the North and are extensively published. Many Southerners are not, but that does not make their fieldwork or contributions to peace any less valuable.

Findings Overview

The following chapters provide a detailed look at cases of partnership between Northern and Southern “peacebuilders” who are some of the most seasoned practitioners of conflict resolution and conflict transformation working together to construct more peaceful communities in countries plagued by internal conflicts or those recovering from the lasting fractures of war. What all of these practitioners have in common is that they are working in some capacity to prevent, resolve, and build the capacity of others to transform conflict settings in nations that comprise part of what is collectively known as the Global South.¹³ Their reflections

¹³ The North-South divide is broadly considered a socio-economic and political divide. The North consists of North America, Western Europe, and Japan. The South is made up of Africa, Central/South America and Asia... "The North" mostly covers the West and the First World, along with much of the Second World.

on what they deem to be instructive cases of partnership provide us with rich narratives of how partnerships form and unfold in the field of work – what I call a “morphology” of partnerships (described in Methodology above) – and also expose many of the critical moments and problematic challenges that occur. While the chapters that follow break down, analyze, and present these stories into stages of partnership, they also explore the nuances of the practitioners’ actions and reflections that make these partnerships “instructive cases” (Forester 2009). In many cases, these peacebuilders also reflect beyond any one case to their overall experiences and feelings about partnering in peacebuilding.

Partnerships vary greatly from long-term endeavors that are primarily rooted in the relationship between two or more individuals, to those that are initiated by individuals but created and supported at an institutional level, to partnerships where international practitioner-consultants for an INGO, for example, work closely with locals whom they consider to be their “partners.”¹⁴ Nevertheless, the narratives that follow do indeed reveal a related set of practices that occur across these peacebuilding partnerships as the practitioners and their organizations form relationships, implement interventions, and confront the particular challenges

While the North may be defined as the richer, more developed region... many more factors differentiate between the two global areas. 95% of the North has enough food and shelter. [1]... In more economic terms, the North—with one quarter of the world population—controls four fifths of the world income. 90% of the manufacturing industries are owned by and located in the North. [3] Inversely, the South—with three quarters of the world populations—has access to one fifth of the world income. It serves as a source for raw material, for the North, “eager to acquire their own independent resource bases...subjected large portions of the global South to direct colonial rule” between 1850 and 1914. [4] (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North-South_divide)

¹⁴ Although some cases may seem primarily about the practitioners it is important to acknowledge that every practitioner has an institutional relationship that supports him or her, whether it be a large or small INGO, foundation, or for profit firm in the North or a local NGO in the global South.

created by North-South and intercultural dynamics. Prevalent issues in the morphology of North-South partnerships include: overcoming distrust and building sound relationships, differences in access to resources and powerful decision-makers, the introduction of new ideas and methods by outsiders, and the importance of local context/culture and local methods.

In conclusion, this study of practitioners' "reflective" narratives on their experiences partnering in North-South peacebuilding collaborations is the first of its kind. While I do discover patterns of practitioner interactions and philosophical approaches across the cases, this initial effort also highlights the particular attributes of the featured partnership cases. So while I have organized my analysis into a set of organic stages, within these I am working to capture the details and highlight the particularities.

Looking Ahead

Chapter 4 introduces each of these instructive cases through the voices of "peacebuilders," providing insights into the context of conflict and motivations that brought Northern and Southern based practitioners and organizations into partnership. Chapter 5 focuses primarily on the importance of trusting one's partner(s), which practitioners deem as critical in the early stages of partnership. These peacebuilders narrate the reasons people working for peace and development in the global South often distrust outsider-Northerners, but they also

speak of the actions they take to build trusting relationships. Chapter 6 details what practitioners “do” in peacebuilding partnerships in what we might call the middle stages of partnership. Their stories tell us about their methods and actions as they collaborate to transform violent settings into cooperative, tolerant, and hopefully more peaceful places. Their actions and approaches to both partnership -- and the conflict resolution/transformation work they implement -- speak volumes about what is important to Southern and Northern peacebuilders. As these practitioners partner and work together they often experience critical moments that disrupt the flow of partnership and act as turning points in their relationships or in the way they approach their work going forward. These critical moments are presented in Chapter 7 where peacebuilders reveal the myriad challenges that occur in North-South collaborations and how they managed or resolved these impasses. In chapter 8, practitioners discuss how they exit or continue these partnerships and reflect on what they believe indicates whether their collaborations were successful. Lastly, Chapter 9 concludes the Findings Chapters with practitioner reflections on What Matters Most to them in their partnership cases and in partnering generally.

As noted earlier, a few of the Northern Practitioners suggested I converse with their Southern partners about their experiences as practitioners and get their perspective on the partnerships. As a result, the various elements of two cases – the partnerships in East Timor and Sri Lanka – will be presented through the narratives of both sets of partners. Although these practitioners view these partnerships as instructive, largely for the positive aspects of the collaboration, they remain

anonymous for consistency of not recognizing people in the study and because they speak candidly about the challenges and dilemmas of other partnerships as well as honestly reflecting on their own actions “in the doing” of partnership work in the field. One case on Land Use Conflict in Iguazú, Argentina, is particularly unique in that it reflects a South-South Partnership that was only loosely, yet still importantly, connected to an international non-government organization. The case also highlights critical moments that are more specific to the actual intervention with the community, than to the partnership itself, and the unique lessons that holds for practitioners. It is thus presented by itself as a partnership case (Appendix A) to reflect its uniqueness and to show the various stages and challenges of a partnership in succession.

In the following chapters, the perspectives and experiences of Northern practitioners are sometimes shared first, followed by the stories of Southern peacebuilders who at times offer similar insights into critical issues but sometimes present a very different narrative, or counter narrative, to their Northern based counterparts. The intent is not to privilege the North first, but rather to provide a context in which to ground, and perhaps contrast, the reflections of the Southern based practitioners that follow. Other times it is useful to hear from Southern voices first, providing a different context in which to absorb the stories from the Northern “outsiders” that follow. In some cases Northern and Southern partners seem in alignment with one another due to the nature of who they are or because they share a similar working methodology, yet they inevitably carry with them different

cultural and ethnic identities and come to these partnerships from very different places, geographically and sometimes philosophically.

Table 1: Instructive Partnership Cases

Northern Partners	Partnership Cases	Some Critical Moments and Turning Points
NP1	Natural Resource Conflict Transformation in Nepal	Accountability/Transparency, Politics, and Identity
NP2	Conflict resolution Capacity building for local trainers in Afghanistan	Insider/outsider relationships; Staff turnover; the limits of friendship
NP3	Training Peacebuilding facilitators in Mindanao, Philippines	Leaving behind a sustainable project and programs
NP4	Creating a collaborative for peace in Sudan	Funding, Accountability/Transparency
NP5	Incubating a new partner in Colombia	Power and Access; Confronting Donors
NP6	Conflict prevention programs in Zanzibar, Tanzania	Working with political leaders; Identity
NP7	Creating North-South-South partnerships between Palestine-Israel-Jordan	Power asymmetry in relationships; Identity
Southern Partners	Partnership Case	Some Critical Issues and Turning Points
SP1	Working with Child Soldiers in Colombia	Local Control; Recognition; Funding; Failure to listen
Sp2	Developing a Peace Education Curriculum in Kenya	Implementation; Acknowledging roles; Bureaucracy
Sp3	Building Peace through sports clubs for youth in Nigeria	Asymmetry and Funding; Poor Communication
Sp4 & Np8	Natural Resource and Land Conflict in East Timor	Cultural dynamics and Language; Saving face
Sp5 & Np9	Inter-religious peacebuilding in Sri Lanka	Funding and Foreign Politics; Corruption
Sp6	Land Use Conflict in Argentina	Power, Politics, and Violence

The Morphology of North-South Peacebuilding Partnership

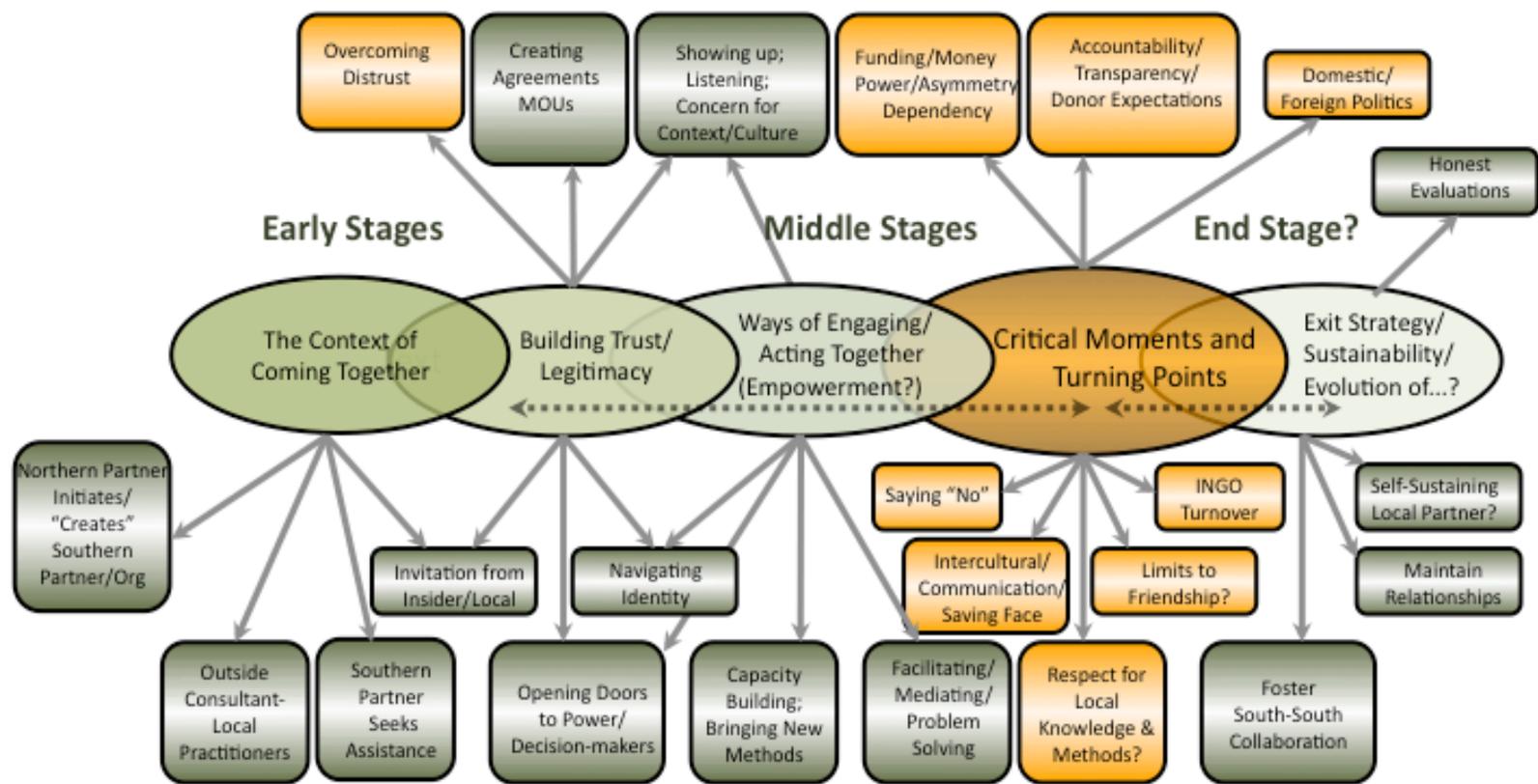


Figure 1: The Morphology of Partnership

CHAPTER FOUR: NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS -- THE CONTEXT FOR ENGAGING TOGETHER

In this first chapter, the diverse group of Northern (outsider) and Southern (insider) practitioners describe the context of each conflict area and some of the foundational reasons for North-South collaboration in their particular cases. The stories of these deeply engaged peacebuilders begin to reveal that “peacebuilding” related partnerships often have rich layers of complexity and vary widely in scope. What might first appear to be “one” partnership between a Northern based practitioner or international organization and their “local” partner in the global South may have smaller partnerships that develop or are created within the larger North-South partnership. First, we hear stories of Northern partners finding or “creating” their Southern partners in The Sudan, Colombia, Zanzibar, and Israel/Palestine. Then we learn about partnerships between Northern practitioner-consultants for INGOs or Foundations, who partner with locals in capacity building activities, in the cases of Nepal, Afghanistan, and Mindanao. Lastly, we hear from Southern practitioners about how their partnerships in East Timor, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Colombia, and Nigeria began.

We learn that partnerships begin for a variety of reasons, largely dependent on the types of individuals and organizations involved. This is only the beginning of

these partnership narratives. How these partnerships continue to develop and unfold is revealed in the chapters that follow.

Northern” INGO Creates “Southern” Partner

Several of the practitioners’ cases profiled in this study demonstrate that peacebuilding related partnerships are often conceived and initiated by International organizations (primarily INGOs) and their Northern based practitioners. The following case summaries begin to present how practitioners describe -- and make sense of -- their outside-driven interventions/collaborations in different conflict settings throughout the global South.

Collaborating for Peace in Sudan

Northern Partner 4 (NP4) is founder and director of a growing U.K. based International NGO that typically partners with established local peacebuilders -- and their small organizations -- that the INGO identifies as exceptional individuals making an impact in their home countries. In the majority of cases she says:

Our partners are existing organizations... we raise money for them, help them meet other like-minded people, and promote what they’re doing... Typically we start working with organizations when they’re quite small. They’ve done something, and we know something about the quality of their work, but they may be just be hiring their first one or two people and we are providing the funding for them to get going with an operating staff. We want to know what they want to do and sometimes we’ll say, ‘We can’t really do that’ or ‘That may be great, but I can’t explain it to anyone who might want to fund it because it’s much too vague.’ *So we will never tell people to do*

*something, but we might say that what they want to do is fine but we don't think we can raise money for it.*¹⁵

But in reflecting on her own direct involvement in North-South partnerships, NP4 focuses on an instructive case that she describes as atypical of the way most of their partnerships begin. In this case, her INGO was not aware of an obvious partner prior to their initial exploration of how they might contribute to peace in the region. She describes the initial engagement with the collaborative in 2006, the year after the peace agreement between The Sudanese Government in North Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) that set the context for a referendum on the South's independence from the North:

We actually brought together peace building organizations from the North and from the South of Sudan and we did that because we went on a trip to Khartoum and we met people there and then met people in Nairobi and realized that they were actually saying similar things but they had never met each other. Now suddenly they were going to be part of one country again.

NP4 commissioned someone to go and talk to these Northern and Southern Sudanese peacemakers before the initial meeting occurred in order to see what their interests were. She had some of her own ideas about what they might be interested in a year after the war ended, but she found that they were all interested in essentially the same thing, "which was to disseminate the compacts of the peace agreement that had been signed the year before.... Because the people actually had some idea of the rights it gave them."

¹⁵ Throughout the Findings chapters I often italicized what I interpret as key points by the practitioners. Key points often highlight a main idea or feeling, or they were expressed emphatically in the interview.

As we will see in the chapters that follow, the “Collaborative for Peace in Sudan” and other work by Np4 and her U.K. based INGO explores some of the steps and critical issues that arise when a Northern based INGO forges a new project and partnership in the global South. She is not alone in such endeavors as we see in the stories that follow, but each practitioner and organization brings their own methods and philosophy to creating a Southern Partner.

Incubating a New Partner Organization in Colombia

Central to the very mission of the INGO that practitioner Np5 directs out of Washington, DC is building and sustaining partnerships globally with locally driven civil society organizations. The INGO and its practitioners then work to incubate the new partners until they are largely self-sustaining. NP5 states that her INGO focuses on conflict resolution capacity building as the key mission of the organization, but that in a broader sense it is about “Conflict and change management and really thinking about that as kind of the software of democracy. Our goal is not just conflict resolution. Our goal is Democratic systems and practices that allow for inclusive decision-making and peaceful, political debate and decision-making.” NP5 describes the central strategy for accomplishing that mission as an investment in local institutions that she considers to be their local partners. The partnership model, she says, “is really about incubating a local organization.” NP5 shares her work of incubating a partner in Colombia as an instructive case for us to ponder.

We decided we want to incubate a new organization in Colombia and *the reason we decided to form a new organization is that we were so focused on creating a neutral platform - an organization that will really have the legitimacy to convene different stakeholders from different sides and be multi-partisan.* What we have found is that we can't find existing organizations in countries where we worked that don't either have an advocacy background or are issue specific and are known for that issue specificity - child's rights, etc. *So we really feel like we have done our best work when we create our partners, but then we do create them to become sustainable organizations.* They are not field offices and they have their own funding streams eventually, their own Board of Directors, and no ex-pats in their organization.

Np5 emphasizes that the most successful way to create such a partner - one that shares the philosophical approach of the Northern based partner - is to identify the right social entrepreneur, the right individual, to build an organization within a country wrestling with conflict or post-conflict peacebuilding. So how do you choose the right partner - one that has credibility for this kind of endeavor and can perhaps provide that "neutral" platform to engage in conflict resolution related activities? Np5 elaborates for us,

Well, you know that's really the nugget (chuckle) a successful investment in local capacity. You have to find the right person.... We've been lucky and we have been really unlucky. How we found this particular person was, to be honest with you, kind of a personal relationship. We've done it a couple of different ways in the countries where we have worked. We've had a completely open call for applications stating that we have some funding to create a new organization, asking who's interested in applying? We have not had success in that, at all.

She continues,

We've had the most success when people that we know and trust, who know our mission, say to us, "Oh my God, there's this fantastic woman from Kenya and she wants to start her own organization and I've told her about (the INGO) and you guys have got to get together. She would be the right person to invest in." And that happened to us in

Yemen, where there was this Yemeni woman who did a fellowship program directors, a year-long conflict resolution masters program, but she was just fabulous. And Yemen was not on our list as far as a country where we worked but we could not let her leave our office without having an agreement.

But Np5 demonstrates that there are also instances of picking a country first and then looking for the right partner,

We really wanted a center in Colombia - going through our own networks to hand pick someone that we think would be appropriate, and in that we've been successful in some cases, and not so successful in others. That did work in Columbia with someone that I just happen to know. It was a personal relationship based on a lot of trust.

The Colombia case illuminates why INGOs might engage in other countries in the first place, or at least why that engagement focuses on a particular set of objectives. In the beginning a practitioner or institution from the North hopes to somehow be of service to the people in that conflicted local, but may not have a clear path to partnership. They do not know exactly what is needed and finding a local partner can resolve that uncertainty. In the case of Np5, she tells us that she and her newly formed partner did a thorough country assessment before settling on their specific objectives. They talked to “everyone and their mother about who's doing work in this place, what kind of conflict resolution and capacity building already exists, and where would be the local partner’s niche area. *We talked to a whole bunch of donors about what’s on their priority list.*”

Here the role of donors becomes apparent in the shaping of a peacebuilding intervention and the nature of the partnership itself. Np5 emphasizes the critical

role of corporate partnerships as they build and support new partners in the global South. Without corporate partners she believes sustainability is unlikely. In Colombia they work closely with GE (General Electric). She explains, “GE's local staff helped us conceive where would an organization like (ours) focus . . . what kind of work would (they) be doing?” But it was the role of the U.S. government that had the largest influence in where this partnership ultimately put its energy – a role that creates both positive opportunities and challenges as the partnership unfolds.

The U.S. government had been convening what they called a high-level series of dialogues for 12 years with top government decision-makers and thought leaders. The series, which was first hosted in the United States, began as a large-scope discussion on “the conflict in Colombia.” Np5 says,

It was really about bringing together left, right military, human rights groups, people at the very senior level for an off the record 3 day discussion and the fact that the US ambassador convened it made it possible for everyone to attend. Houston series over the years became the place. It was the place to go. It became very well known and each year they determined a different topic. It went from conflict with the big C to a whole bunch of other issues.

As Np5’s instructive case of partnership unfolds throughout the next chapters we see many elements of partnership in the larger context of Northern engagement in non-Western/global South conflict settings. She gives us a few factors to consider as she explains why she chose to reflect on this case. From her perspective, *“It is an example of what a successful partnership looks like when the international partner steps aside at the right moment and that's really hard to do because there is money at stake and this is very high level.”*

The case shows how a peacebuilding activity that is conceived and funded by the U.S. government can eventually be adopted by an international organization and its local partner, with eventual ownership belonging to the local organization, but perhaps without full autonomy in the decision-making as the donors expect some influence. Np5 relays,

When we talked about creating partners (in) Columbia, the US Embassy said we've been doing this Houston series for 12 years and it's something that we would really like to "Colombianize." We think this is a really needed space, this three-day event to bring different thought leaders together, in every factionalized and still very conflicted environment, but we don't want to fund it ad nauseam when we think that Colombians, if they value it, should be able to do it on their own. So perhaps partners Columbia could be a kind of facilitator for this process and be a technical Secretariat.

Supporting National Unity in Zanzibar

Northern Practitioner 6 (NP6) is Vice President for a large international non-government organization with headquarters in both the United States and Europe. She has a long career as a peacemaker and at times she is still an active practitioner who characterizes herself as sometimes hands-on but more often supervising, managing, and supporting the people on the ground who make up the organization's country teams. In describing her organizations approach to partnership, she calls the INGO "a different beast," and says:

It's a different structure from the way many organizations operate because of the country programs, which are very autonomous and there's a relationship that's in constant movement between the two. At a retreat some years ago *I really decided that we were both local organizations with an international*

center and we are an international organization with local chapters. We're both.

She continues,

At the last count we had over 2500 partnerships going on in the organization, and many of them are long-standing. Bear in mind that we are not a consultancy. *We are an international organization not an American organization. The point is that it's not as if we are sitting in Washington and partnering with people.* We do have some of those, but their meta-partnerships. They are acted out at the regional and local levels and many of the partnerships have nothing to do with (the INGO headquarters in the U.S. or Europe) at all. In fact most of them don't.

As Np6 reflects on the notion of North-South partnerships that the organization has built through 50 offices in 30 countries, she raises a critical reminder of the potentially misleading dichotomy of North-South: *"They may be in the North or in the South but they're all essentially South in the real sense of it. Even though they may be in the northern hemisphere they are "South."* This serves as a reminder that the terminology of North-South itself is limiting, although perhaps useful in distinguishing developed nations of North America and Europe from less developed or under-developed nations, regardless of which side of the equator they fall on.

I asked Np6 to narrow her vast experience over the past 30 or so years to an instructive case of partnership where she was a critical actor. As it turns out, over the past few years she has played the central role in establishing new partnerships in Zanzibar, Tanzania, which has now evolved into a new country program for the INGO with offices in both Dar-es-Salaam and Zanzibar. She relays how it began:

I wanted to get involved in this tiny little place (Zanzibar) because what I reckoned was the government of national unity that was created out of so much marveling conflict, and that was so thoughtfully created, so thoughtfully. The decision to appoint a bipartisan commission to see through the referendum, holding the referendum, getting the “yes”, changing the Constitution. Actually, now the only way they can change from a government of national unity is by referendum that allows the Constitutional change. And then dissolving parliament and having good elections that were free and fair and people for the first time were dancing in the streets during the election instead of killing each other, and then forming the government within a week. And they did it so well I believe it's a model. And that's why I decided to stay with it. *I really wanted to do this because that's my vision for the world - governments of national unity.*

Np6's reflections as a practitioner working for an INGO shows us that it may be difficult for peacebuilders to separate their individual goals and values from the organizations they represent. The institutional values they bring with them influence how and why many personal and organizational partnerships form, and yet, as we will explore later, perhaps it is the mostly about the people who establish the relationships that determine whether partnerships bloom or fade away.

Forging Partnerships for Health and Security in the Middle East

Some partnerships are conceived in the North, funded by international NGOS or other donors, but the key partners and the work they do together exemplifies more of a South - South collaboration. This case has both the North-South dynamics of the United States and Middle East and the primary relationships on the ground that are primarily South-South.

As a practitioner, Np7 is for all practical purposes both a Northerner and a Southerner. She explains, “Technically I am an American, because I am only holding a U.S. citizenship, but I am 100% full blooded Palestinian in the sense that my parents are both Palestinian, born and raised here” (in Palestine where Np7 is now living). She is now an American ex-pat working for an INGO in Jerusalem. For the purpose of understanding her role in the dynamics of partnerships she explains that she is technically a staffer for an INGO that is working in the field. Her work provides insights into the development of a partnership by local staff and also provides insight into how partnerships initiated or funded by Northern based INGOs might often contain, or have elements of, South-South partnerships within them.

As an instructive case of partnership initiated by a field office of a Northern based INGO, Np7 describes her organizations’ work, and their joint roles, in a partnership with the Ministries of Health of Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.

We’ve been working with that initiative and have a specific project with those ministries for the past ten years and it really is a partnership, because they are in control of their own project, but we would administer it, so *it’s an actual equal partnership. It has several layers to it*, so it is not so straightforward and easy. You are dealing with 3 countries - Israel, Palestine, and Jordan, and how it began was the nuclear threat initiative, and the U.S. decided that they wanted to look at this region for a possible biochemical threat.

The Nuclear Threat Initiative in the United States approached her INGO with the overarching theme but then the INGO came up with the idea of how to build a partnership. She says the idea was, “Let’s develop the three countries on an equal basis medically, with the labs, so that if there were ever to be a biological threat in

the region, that all three countries can respond at the same time.” That was the initial idea and then the nuclear threat initiative funded the development of the project, particularly on the Palestinian and Jordanian sides as they lacked the necessary laboratories to collect the data or research in the field.

Np7 helps us to understand more about the mission of the INGO that employs her, and that Np6 helps to manage (see Zanzibar case), by offering a perspective from the country office in Jerusalem. She makes it clear that the INGO “Selectively picks who we’re going after to work with.” They tend to be local leaders or “influential” people – those who can participate in what conflict resolution practitioners call the type of Track II diplomacy than can impact the highest levels of government. She elaborates,

Our office rarely works with grassroots. I mean we’re more in the area that we honestly believe the only way to achieve any change is through the leaders, whether its religious leaders, political leaders, or social entrepreneurs. It’s the next tier, maybe not this generation or the leaders that we have now, but in the next five years. So the leaders that come are the ones that are going to make the peace. So we really head hunt those people who we think will have impact in the region and we work with those people, we don’t just kind of work with the masses at the grassroots. We don’t think that is where the change is going to come from.... We really do make sure that we’re influencing important people that will have direct impact on the region, or at least we hope we are.

With regard to the Minister of Health Partnership, her INGO made it clear that it wanted to work with the ministries, but she emphasizes that her organization didn’t have a choice in the matter of whom they got to work with from each country’s Ministry. The ministries identified the people that she says, “were able, or unofficially able, to work in the name of the government.” In some respects it is a

different case from how the INGO sometimes chooses to work with certain key individuals first since it did not pick those three deputies.

The partnership eventually morphed into a new consortium of professionals, led by the higher collaboration between the Ministers of Health for each representative government. Np7 explains,

As a few years went by, they decided that biosecurity and biosafety is really not practical in the sense that is probably not where we wanted to go. They decided that they wanted to do more health-related issues so there are two layers to this. One, they are actually on the ground working on products for infectious diseases in the region, which knows no boundaries to any virus, for example, the bird flu. If that spread, what does it mean for the region or any other virus to come out, because it affects Israel, it affects Palestine, it affects Jordan quite rapidly. At the same time, the system put into place and developed between two countries is the exact system and that would be used if there were ever a bioterrorist threat.

The dynamics of the partnership roles are complicated. The project, she explains, “is intended to be ours, although technically we’re just holding it, because it’s not an NGO, it’s kind of a body of people and the executive committee of that are the three countries. There is a ministry deputy from Jordan, Israel, and Palestine on this board among the donors. We’re on the board, and so is the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and a couple of other people.”

Np7’s story of the partnership seems to imply that although there is an overarching partnership between the Ministers of Health and the INGO country office in Jerusalem, the core of the partnership involves the relationships between the three deputy ministers that represent Palestine, Israel, and Jordan. “Those three people rotate as chairmanship of the board and they are the people that we do a lot

of work with. They are pretty much our partners. The initiative among those three particular people, who have invested the past six or seven years into this, is what makes or breaks the project.”

What makes this case particularly interesting, she emphasizes, is “They’ve been able to sustain their relationships as deputy ministers and sustain all of the work they continue to do, even through all of the wars, even during the two Gaza wars and the Lebanon War they’ve been able to continue.” Still, she acknowledges that in addition the roles she and her co-director play in sustaining the work they have one staffer, a Palestinian who manages the project for the INGO and in her opinion serves as “the actual glue for the three countries.” In essence, it’s a team effort and there appears to be a high level of interdependence on one another to make all the elements of the partnership work.

A very unique and insightful part of Np7’s work as a Palestinian-American practitioner in the Middle East, which plays out in this and other projects, is her daily relationship with the Israeli co-director at their Jerusalem office, another layer of intercultural partnership within an INGO’s country office. Np7 beautifully expresses how this inter-personal and inter-identity relationship plays out in their work as she discusses her actions and reflections in the chapters that follow.

Practitioner- Consultant Narratives of North-South Partnerships

The following three instructive cases reveal first-hand experiences in North-South partnering from the standpoint of Northern based practitioners in the role of consultants to an INGO or foundation that has committed to long-term work in a conflict setting. Although each case varies, these practitioners play instrumental roles in the formation of partnerships whether that is on an individual or group level, or for the institution that has employed their conflict transformation/peacebuilding services.

Partnering for Natural Resource Conflict Transformation in Nepal

Northern Partner 1 (NP1) shares a rich and insightful case of his long-term engagement with the people of Nepal. He has in his own words, “been fortunate” to be involved in a decade long peacebuilding initiative initiated and funded by a U.S. based Foundation. NP1 says there are a lot of facets to partnership, and in thinking about the bigger picture of his work in Nepal, he states that one of his partnerships was “to accompany” the foundation in their initial 10 year investment in the people of Nepal who were being adversely impacted by the rise of insurgency and conflict that really intensified in 2003. He shares, “In that partnership I have the role as an advisor, as well as a conceptualizer and shaper of the initiatives that they were looking into supporting financially with their foundation.”

When the foundation first started its work in NP1 helped to form a Nepali advisory group, or what they sometimes called the “reference group,” composed of about seven key individuals. They were from different ethnic and caste groups, representing “different walks of life across Nepal.” He would meet with them every time he worked in Nepal, but the advisory group also helped advise him and the program officer on the bigger decisions faced by the foundation as they started to develop the programs. In about the third or fourth year of working together with the advisory reference group they focused in on three strategic areas where the foundation would put in a longer-term investment. At that point a proposal emerged for a focus on natural resources conflict transformation (NRTC) work at the community level.

As a way to focus his vast experiences in Nepal, and the potentially many instructive examples each has, I asked NP1 to reflect on these natural resource partnerships and an interpersonal working partnership he built with a Nepali co-facilitator who was a member of the Nepali advisory group. He was a former student of NP1 in the United States and now also a friend and colleague. He brought both his knowledge and lived experience in Nepal and his educational training in peacebuilding to the partnership. He had previously completed an MA in conflict transformation through a Fulbright scholarship and was now working as a columnist and editor for some of the national English newspapers in Nepal. NP1 explains:

He was a person that I had proposed to be a part of this advisory group because it seemed to me that he not only had background in the areas of peacebuilding, but as a journalist he was in touch with so many different aspects of what was happening in Nepal's landscapes. And when we started this NRCT (Natural Resource Conflict Transformation) process, after some consultation and decision-making, we agreed that (he) would work with me as a co-facilitator for the whole the process. *Co-facilitator meant that while I would often be responsible for helping to shape some of the direction of the agenda and some of the inputs, (he) would function as a translator and a contributor.*

The motivation for the NRTC focus was rooted in the fact that natural resources, especially the use of forest and water in contested land issues was an immediate part of Nepal's landscape of social conflict and division and would be a source of conflict for years to come. "Our feeling was that if we engaged with people from the local communities to approach and address those areas of conflict more constructively it would be a significant contribution to the work they were helping to promote in Nepal."

The local partners chosen for the NRTC focus roughly consist of four groups with whom NP1 and the foundation had built some relationships with over the initial years of engagement in Nepal. One of those groups – a federation of forest user groups - was chosen to hold and manage the funding for the Foundation. The second group is a federation of water user groups across Nepal. A third component of the partnership involves community mediators who are now part of an effort to expand some of the mediation skills -- from earlier work implemented by Np1 and others -- into facilitating larger social conflicts in Nepal. The fourth layer of partnership in the Natural Resource Conflict Transformation partnership developed

out of a desire to engage the participation of the Mukta Kamaya - the former bonded laborers in Nepal, which is essentially a form of slavery that is no longer permitted under constitutional laws in Nepal.

Np1 explains that although the practice still exists illegally in several areas of Nepal, many Mukta Kamaya have been released and when they leave their situations of bonded laboring - a context they have been in for generations in some instances - they move as groups that have no real place to settle for work or to establish a home. This movement leads to a significant amount of land conflicts that are about people who are seeking to survive in their migrant, mobile state:

A lot of them move towards places where they can survive, near the edge of the forest where they have access to water and wood for cooking. And that is viewed by other people were from those areas, either from forest, or water groups, or others, as forms of encroachment and then that becomes conflict between the communities that are watching and seeing these people arrive.... And sometimes those conflicts fester for a long period of time and can usually turn violent.

In discussing the Natural Resource Conflict Transformation collaboration with forest user groups, water user groups, the Mukta Kamaya bonded laborers, and the participation of community mediators, Np1 teaches us why many peacebuilding partnerships are “multifaceted” and some of the challenges they face in the chapters that follow.

Conflict Resolution Capacity Building in Afghanistan

What does conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Afghanistan look like? What do outsiders or insiders do there? Northern Practitioner 2 (Np2) offers us a window into the dynamics and challenges of building the conflict resolution capacity of both an international NGO and the Afghan locals who would continue the daily grind of building peace in a divided country. When Np2 got involved the INGO had been in Afghanistan for 22 years in the South – Kandahar and Helmand. They were there before the Taliban and through the Taliban years and they had built deep relationships and very strong networks with the Afghans. Most of their 300 plus staff are Afghan, he says. The INGO's country director, an ex-patriot, believed the ability to manage conflict was critical and felt the programs on the ground, throughout all the villages Afghanistan, needed to be able to work with conflicts in those communities because there was always conflict running through them at some level. Np2 reflects,

It could've been villagers and armed groups or conflict within villages. If you're running a rural livelihood development program than you're giving productive resources to members of the community, chickens or seed or whatever, and if you can't give those resources to everybody then how do you decide what families to give those resources to? What is the fall out that causes in the communities? Who gets what benefits? And then it goes to traditional governing structures, conflict management structures. So Nigel wanted to not just have people trained in conflict resolution, but for Afghan trainers to be trained and within Mercy Corps they would then go train most of the staff and do this on an ongoing basis, and eventually be able to provide other supports, like assistance with mediations or intervening in conflicts if needed.

The large international relief and development organization had recently acquired a smaller conflict management organization run by some renowned experts in the conflict resolution field. NP2 was instrumental in putting together a strategic alliance between the two organizations and their respective ways of thinking. At the time he says, "It was still fairly novel to be bringing together relief and development and conflict work, so this was riding head-on into that." NP2 gives the INGO credit for not approaching the new conflict resolution program in a command-and-control fashion with those working in the field, as if to say, "Headquarters says you have to do this. It was more like give us a chance to sell our wares to your country directors and if anybody picks up on it we'll see what happens."

This is an interesting and instructive case of what NP2 refers to as "kind of a hybrid" partnership, in part because it involves an institutional partnership between the INGO and the conflict management firm, an all encompassing relationship between the INGO and Afghanistan, and the role of ex-pat staff and Afghan staff partnering together to build a sustainable program to manage or resolve conflicts. NP3 says the INGO's "ethos as an organization is about local empowerment and local capacity", in this case working with Afghans and that they had a lot of legitimacy with the Afghans because they had been there through the really hard years and were not viewed "as some international predator who had come in and was there for the aid dollars and would leave as soon as things got bad."

The Afghanistan project ended up being a case in point of the merger between people rooted in international human rights, relief/aid, and development and those grounded in the slightly different goals of conflict resolution (Avruch, 2006; Babbit & Lutz, 2009). The INGO's Afghanistan office was one of the first country teams to say, "We want to build our internal capacity to make conflict resolution skills a core competency of all of our staff." They wanted an internal group of trainers because with over 300 and some staff, and the inevitable turnover, they would be training constantly. The goal was to develop a really good general set of curriculum, with techniques and cases, and contextualize it with local trainers and knowledge of the local context.

Building Local Capacity for Peacebuilding in Mindanao

Northern partner Np3 is a Palestinian who began his life's work in his homeland and is now a respected scholar-practitioner, consultant, and director of a peacebuilding organization in the United States. He provides us with insights for understanding North-South Partnerships through his ability to identify with, and embody, perspectives from the global South while working within the frameworks and paradigms of donors and international organizations based in the North. Np3 states, "Working in partnership from the north/west towards the south is something that I have kind of two levels of experience with...in the late 80's I would partner with people from here (the United States)." But for roughly the last 20 years

he has initiated many of his working relationships from the United States. In the following sections and chapters we learn about North-South peacebuilding partnerships through his reflections on his consultant work in Mindanao, Philippines, and other partnering initiatives in Africa with his U.S. based peacebuilding institute.¹⁶

The Mindanao peacebuilding partnering work lasted from 1999 until 2006 and was between initiated between Catholic Relief Services (CRS), The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in the city of Davao, and NP2 as a primary consultant who spent time working on the ground in Mindanao a few times each year. He was not alone in implementing the work, yet played a central role on many levels, offering us a unique look from the perspective of a consultant to a large multi-year INGO investment in conflict transformation. Like the other practitioners who describe one of their professional roles as being as being short or long-term consultants to an international organization or foundation, NP3 notes that there are several dimensions to the Mindanao partnership:

¹⁶ **Mindanao** (pron.: /m *inda'-daɪəw*) is the second largest and easternmost island in the [Philippines](#). It is also the name of one of the three island groups in the country (the other two being [Luzon](#) and the [Visayas](#)), which consists of the island of Mindanao and smaller surrounding islands. [Davao City](#) is the largest city in Mindanao.

Mindanao is the only area of the Philippines with a significant [Muslim](#) presence. Due to widespread poverty and religious differences, the island has been the site of a separatist movement by the [Moro Islamic Liberation Front](#) (MILF). Fighting between MILF and Philippine forces has displaced more than 100,000 people. (The **City of Davao** ([Cebuano](#): *Dakbayan sa Dabaw*, [Tagalog](#): *Lungsod ng Dabaw*) is a city in [Mindanao, Philippines](#). It is a part of [Metro Davao](#), the third most populous metropolitan area in the country. The city serves as the regional center for the [Davao Region](#). Davao is also the largest city in the Philippines in terms of land area. It has an estimated population of 1,530,365 as of 2011.) Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindanao>

One is the planting of the seeds for launching a local and regional – regional means a South Asia Institute to train people... Who is going to do the training? Are you going to go to the international consultants? That is the first dimension. The second dimension is not only to rely on the international consultants, but also to have co-facilitators who eventually become the primary, lead trainers. Third, is the design of the curriculum - coaching and mentoring on how you design peacebuilding training – how to identify the major needs and then how you do evaluation.

In the chapters that follow NP3 focuses on his co-teaching with the local trainers and much of the mentoring that occurred over the years. Together they engaged in the concepts, in program design, and strategically planning the outreach to wider audiences. As someone who plays various roles in different partnerships, Np3 tells us about partnering in Mindanao and the roles of a consultant who often just comes into the conflict setting for a period of weeks at a time to train and build specific relationships, yet is challenged by the larger logistical or financial role played by the INGO, or other institutional partner, that is supporting the overall intervention effort. He shares:

For me and others who came from outside, for two and three weeks at a time, the challenge was with the logistics of the place. How much capacity did we get? How much (choice in the) selection of the participants did we have - carefully or not carefully? How much follow-up did we have after we finished? How did we act on the evaluation? Were there areas to be improved and did that take place or not? But again that was not my scope of work because I was not the institutional partner with them. This is the type of thing that I think (the INGO) would need to take care of with them in that context.

Later, we learn more from Np3 about the temporary nature of Northern practitioners in the South and the obstacles that presents for sustainable programs and partnerships. Now, let us turn to the voices of peacebuilders in the global South.

Southern Practitioner Narratives on Partnerships

Preventing Violence with Former Child Soldiers in Colombia

Southern Practitioner 1 (Sp1), and her Colombian NGO, dedicate their time and energy to supporting indigenous women impacted by violence, marginalized Afro-Colombian youth, and working with young people have been recruited as child-soldiers in Colombia's decades-long war. In thinking about partnership with Northern practitioners and organizations she recounts diverse partnerships with organizations in Germany, Holland, and in the United States. She says her Bogota based NGO has in cooperation and relationships with others in some shape of form for 20 years.

As an instructive case of partnership, Sp1 tells us about her partnership over roughly the past 7 years with a large INGO -- with headquarters in both Europe and North America -- that focuses primarily on helping child soldiers and other youth impacted by violent conflict throughout the global South. She describes how the partnership was initiated, "In 2005 they came to Colombia to present and invited organizations to get to know them and their projects, and to potentially initiate a relationship. We went and told them about (us), how we work, and this led to us proposing a project at the end of 2005." She explains that as they began to correspond they discovered that they "*were very similar on the level of methodology.*"

She adds, “They have a methodology that is based in the expression of art, which is very valuable to them (the youth). And we have a similar approach.”

As a result of this realization Sp1 and the INGO decided to partner on a small project on the theme of prevention - to prevent boys and girls from getting pulled into the armed conflict in Colombia. She notes, “One of the areas that we focus on is inclusion. Let's just say that in some projects we work on prevention and in others we work with children who are already part of the armed conflict. So we worked with them (the INGO) to define the project and reach agreement about how it would be carried out.”

While describing how the INGO works in Colombia, the nature of their working relationship together, and whether it had an exclusive partnership with her organization, she says,

It's almost always a foreigner directing the program and the professionals that they direct are Colombian. So the leader is a foreigner and the team that follows her direction is Colombian. In the case of (this INGO) they have more or less a dozen associations/partnerships in Colombia. We are only one of these organizations.

Sp1's insights into her organization's collaboration with the Northern-based INGO, and some of the critical moments that define the partnership, show us more about how North-South partnerships grow and evolve, as well as the critical challenges they face, in the proceeding sections of this study.

Building a Peace Education Curriculum in Kenya

This instructive case of partnering for peace education curriculum in Kenya is unique in this study in that it is a case where the Southern partner initiated the Partnership with the outside institution. Southern Partner 2 (Sp2) is an established peacebuilder in Kenya having worked extensively in the areas of trauma healing, violence prevention, and peace education. In addition to her early hands on experience in Kenya in the 1990's, she received an MA in Conflict Transformation at a University in the United States around 2005. Since that time she has been actively working to build peace in the aftermath of the violent tribal and ethnic conflict tied to Kenya's contested political landscape. Sp2 has been engaged in several partnerships as a practitioner – “either in consultancy, or research, or in other areas.” Over the years she has worked with foreign government aid and development agencies that support projects in Kenya and consulted for a number of U.S. based organization or what she calls “North-based donors.”

After the politically motivated violence following the 2007 Kenyan Elections, Sp2 co-founded a local non-government organization dedicated to peace and development with a mission to empower Kenyans to be able to be able to react and respond to the challenges of social change in their communities. She describes it best,

The organization basically works within the compact of Kenya, mainly the North Rift, Northern Rift Valley. The initiative wishes to empower communities so that they are informed about what their social rights are, to be able to participate in decision making as a way of preventing

them from getting involved in violence, because they lack ways of expressing themselves.... We use information sharing and things like Action Research... going into communities with approaches to empower communities so that they can be able to kind of express themselves and at the same time be able to empower themselves to deal with their issues in ways that do not necessarily lead to violence.

Over the past few years she has been intimately involved in a peace education partnership with a branch of the UN and a Ministry of the Kenyan government. She tells us how her organization initiated the partnership.

We presented them the idea. They did not put out a request for proposal... Because usually with a solicited proposal, it is very tedious, they are very time consuming. There's a lot of paperwork. But this with UNICEF was unsolicited. So we just approached them and told them, this is the concept we have, and this is what we feel we can work on with you. And they said, okay. It looks like something we can also use to raise funds and work on it.... So that's how it worked out.

These types of locally driven international partnerships that are not solicited by outside donors seems fairly rare, as he words indicate. "It was unsolicited, which was something that I think we are very proud of."

Here she describes the reason behind the partnership work with the UN and the Kenyan government that followed.

The main design of the program was to go to schools because schools were the most affected. Schools were burned down. Schools that belonged to two different communities were razed to the floor. Books were stolen and vandalize. In Kenya we use the schools as a polling center for voting, so what happens is when voters go to the schools to vote, and maybe during the process of counting or during the skirmishes that are when the election happened, the violence is usually at the schools. And when children come back, they find that the schools are in bad shape. So that is what informed the concept... We are not just targeting the schools. We are targeting communities to say, "When you go to schools to vote, the schools are supposed to kept as zones of safety, so that they are kept intact and not vandalized

or destroyed, so that the children can learn that schools are places where they can feel safe.”

While describing the current context in Kenya, leading up to the general election of 2013 – and the first big national political event since 2007 - she emphasizes, “It’s not good, nothing – not much improvement, really. It looks like we just transferred the violence to other areas. So where the violence was last time, we did a lot of work there. It was much calmer. But it looks like the violence has gone to areas that were neglected –so we have to do some firefighting.” Sp2 says it’s not just the same tribal groups fighting as in 2007, “but it’s an identity conflict, definitely, between minorities.” She clarifies,

People all feel that they are marginalized and think like that... It looks like in every region there’s a minority group that feels like they are marginalized, and these tensions keep coming up. It’s partly wanting recognition and representation, because right now the constitution has kind of evolved to the county level rather than what was previously so. In an event, those small geographical regions, they thought they would be devolving power, but even within those small regions there are still identify conflicts where people from the same tribe now are competing over clans, over power. So it’s devolved the conflicts into smaller identities. The tensions are always there, but the elections are just an excuse.

At the heart of Sp2’s peace education work in partnership with the UN, and funded in part by the Kenyan government, is their effort to implement a national peace education program. The goal is to teach about “cultures of peace right from the time the children are young, so that they grow up knowing how to resolve conflict and negotiate, and do mediation rather than use violence.”

In the upcoming chapters on the dynamics of how partnerships unfold (including the critical moments or turning points), and the deeper challenges of these relationships, Sp2 teaches us that the complications of international partnerships are not just about North – South dynamics, but power dynamics between government and non-government/civil society that might occur in any nation regardless of their geographic locale and might be more pronounced in places like Kenya or other parts of the global South. Another question Sp2's partnership raises is: Does a ministry of the UN with its international HQ and way of doing business seated in New York, but with country based offices and staff, constitute a "Northern Partner" or a "Southern partner?" Sp2 chose this as an instructive case of Northern partnership, so perhaps those are the dynamics that most resemble it, especially as she compares it later on to one of her locale-local "Southern" Kenyan partnerships.

Peacebuilding through Dialogue, Education, and Sports in Nigeria

The peacebuilding efforts of Southern Partner 3 (Sp3) demonstrate not only some of the benefits and challenges of international collaborations, and cross-cultural partnerships, but some specific differences in North-South and South-South partnerships that may or may not be context specific. As a practitioner, Sp3 has played a central role in developing and maintaining peace clubs throughout Nigeria that bring people together from various backgrounds, whether it be "North-South,

Christian-Muslim, and all the ethnic groups we have in the country.” The goal is, he shares, “To see how we can move forward with the country's conflicts. And we do that by way of peace education and civic education with the communities and within the schools.”

Sp3 explains that the club project started with about 15 members and has grown to over 4000 members in various states and has done very well primarily due to a close partnership and financial support from the British government. He works with them regularly and they provide the funding and the space for his work with Nigerian youth. He says that at the present moment, DFID, the United Kingdom's version of USAID, “is trying to communicate and see how they can assist us to do more of what we did before.”

Southern Partner 3 tells us that early in his endeavor to build peace clubs for youth in Nigeria the British Council provided him with leadership training, including the opportunity of a learning exchange in Ireland where he met with the director of a renowned organization that has worked with children caught in the path of violence in Northern Ireland. He says these learning experiences, provided by the British, “have made him the tolerant, peace-facilitator that he is today.”

Sp3 is also engaged in a South-South partnership that developed out of his partnership with the British. As his work unfolded, Sp3 was introduced by his British partners to a large peacebuilding INGO based in the Middle East. His relationship with them has developed into another layer of the partnership with its

own set of dynamics and challenges that Sp3 reflects on in the morphology of partnerships that follows.

The following two cases present both the Southern and Northern partner's reflections on their joint collaborations. My original intent was to not intentionally seek matched pairs in North-South collaborations to allow practitioners to feel safer about speaking candidly about their collaborations. When some partners recommended the perspective of their partners, however, it offered a wonderful opportunity to examine a case of partnership from both sides (North and South/outside-insider).

Partnering for Natural Resource Conflict Transformation in East Timor (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste)

The context for the conflict intervention and peacebuilding partnership explored here is rooted in the plethora of land-disputes that manifested shortly after the popular consultation on independence in East Timor. The practitioners involved give us a sense of the tension that existed throughout the new country explaining that during the militia perpetuated violence the building that held all of the land and property records for East Timor was burned to the ground:

Seventy percent of all property titles were either damaged or destroyed in the whole country.... A huge number of people who were displaced and living in each other's property. In rural areas it's complicated as there are large number of different language groups. It's like Papua New Guinea and each valley has this other language, many of which are unintelligible to people of the next valley. And because they use slash and burn agriculture, they moved around, so there are all these competing claims over land. The Indonesians

had to use strategic hamlets so they concentrated people in areas and moved them all. So the question was how do you deal with all these land conflicts?

To begin to tackle this problem a partnership was formed between a U.S. based practitioner and his organization, Np8 hereafter, and two Indonesian lawyer/conflict resolution practitioners committed to human rights, conflict transformation and social change in Indonesia and East Timor. One of the practitioners, Sp4, also narrates her take on the partnership. First, Np8 shares some of the reasons the overarching partnership was initiated,

The partnership came into being because of building longstanding relations with the two people who are from the Indonesian Center for Conflict Transformation and I probably had known at least one of them for, I don't know, maybe five or six years before. I had met him, he's a lawyer, and I had met him at a conference in Sri Lanka, which was a conference... and I did a sort of a brief training program on dispute resolutions and he said, "Wow, this is really fascinating. It really would work in Indonesia. And I think we ought to pursue whether we can do something."

He recounts how the two went on to do some trainings together and during that time she met another young Indonesian lawyer primarily focused on Human Rights and who "was joined at the hip" with the other new colleague (Southern Partner 4) on a variety of legal cases and projects. "She is just a stellar person, and when he stepped down she became the Director." As Np8 got to know these Indonesian practitioners quite well he thought, "*Well I'll form a partnership with this group* and I figured it would be fine with the East Timorese because although they were Indonesians they had been fighting against Suharto" for progressive social change in Indonesia.

Np8 chose to discuss this as an instructive case because *“It is probably one of the best north/south examples”* that he has been involved with as a central actor. Before diving into the nuances of the partnership work, he says, “It was a very interesting collaboration. I mean, it has a lot of fascinating ins and outs, both between the Indonesians and us, or me, and then also the government of East Timor.”

Sp4, who is based in Jakarta, speaks about the partnership with Np8 and his organization, as well as other partnership experiences, from her standpoint in Indonesia. Most of her work with Np8 has been “in the area of capacity building connected to peace building and conflict resolution activities.” Her story confirms that she and Np8 met in a training workshop through her Indonesian colleague and that he suggested the partnership. She says, “(He) felt we could work together further. Before meeting (him) I had worked some with (a professor in the U.S.). So mediation and conflict resolution was not a new thing for me.”

Reflecting back, Sp4 notes how interesting, and seemingly refreshing, the experience was for her:

I have never seen a person like (Np8), I don't know if it's about him or it's typical of the Western approach, that doesn't want to jump in to answer the question. He always allows for the perspective of the people who brought the question to emerge first. This was very interesting for me because it shows two things. One is that the person who brought the question tried to dig further into their knowledge of how to settle that, and the second is that (he) also had a chance to understand more about the situation before he responded to it.

Her surprise as to her partner's patience and sensitivity towards the local perspective is a strong indicator of the importance of taking such an elicitive, non-dominant approach in intercultural communication between outsiders and insiders.

Despite the praise that emerges in his partner's version of their collaborations, Np8 reflections on how his relationship with Sp1 began show that he had to overcome some fears that his Southern partner had about an imbalance of power and control in North-South collaborations. Perhaps at a deeper level it appears to reflect a general fear of a neocolonial agenda of the developed world saving the underdeveloped peoples. He explains,

I remember having a dinner with (her) and her husband and their daughter. We're talking about why collaborate... and all that, and she says, "You know, if we work together, *I really have to make sure that it's a real equal relationship. And that it's not you...wanting to work with little brown people.*" I said, "You know, if, that's not my intent." And they said, "And we're not accusing you of doing that. But we just need to make sure. It's really important that we do that."

This was not the first time NP8 had experienced such fears by local partners, "I've had this conversation twice. Once in Sri Lanka and they almost use the same words in how they refer to themselves and that kind of dynamic." It is critical that Western-Northern outsiders be aware of this fear by insider-locals as they begin a new partnership.

Inter-Religious Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka

The partnership between American practitioner Np9 and Sp5, a Sri Lankan, is a remarkable story of the intricate nature and balance of the professional and the personal in peacebuilding partnerships. The narratives of the two women reveal much about the importance, and power, of the individuals in making partnerships work, regardless of the organizations to which they might be attached. It also shows how the formation of a partnership between parties -- and eventually collaborating on work together -- rarely follows a direct path.

Sp5 could have reflected deeply on a number of partnerships that she has been deeply engaged in, but chose her work with Np9, and the U.S institute where Np9 works, as an instructive case. She tells us a bit about why,

(It) is a success story of a partnership, of sharing with each other, merging the different disciplines together, instincts, strategic thinking all these kind of different things where we collaborated and built a good relationship to do good work. And in the USAID case we couldn't do that because of a lot of dynamics in different bureaucratic agendas and personality issues.

Np9 provides some background on how the relationship first began and then eventually settled into a formal institutional relationship between her institute and Sp5's grassroots peacebuilding organization:

I was as a graduate student at Fletcher, I was doing my thesis there on the role of religious peace building or the role of the religious sector, with respect to the peace process in Sri Lanka and making recommendations about how to mitigate the negative influence of the Buddhist monastic community on their opposition to the peace processes there. As I was doing that work I was invited to do a consultant piece with the Academy for Educational Development... and they had a number of ongoing projects that

were supporting local peace building efforts.... I'm out there and I'm meeting with all of these different organizations.

Np9 also explains the challenges of trying to connect with peacebuilders at the grassroots, or who may be working outside of the system where all the international aid money flows. The "money attention" primarily flows to what she calls, "The big, visible, loud peacebuilding organizations in Colombo." She elaborates,

They get a lot of money from USAID, DFID, and the international development players and peace players who strive to have this big visible role and spend a lot of time talking about their programs and sort of emphasizing that this is a successive program and so on. And so I reached out to a lot of those organizations that were doing peace work, religious peace work, but I was also trying to get to know some of the smaller, more local initiatives that were happening that were being conducted by smaller organization that were based outside of Colombo, to the extent that it was possible.

In Np9s quest to connect with more local initiatives she was given Sp5's name from a fellow Fletcher student who had worked in Sri Lanka and was aware of the Sri Lankan organization's commitment to inter-religious peace building. She recalls that she hadn't heard of Sp5 yet because "you didn't hear much about (them), they were really under the radar," with their work in the field. But she asked her friend to send an email and connecting her with Sp5 and the two ended up exchanging a few long emails about their interests and experiences in peacebuilding, and their desire to meet and talk further.

Still, there are many obstacles to coordination when lives are absorbed by conflict and war and both women explain that it sometimes takes perseverance and

the right situation to bring two peacebuilders with a similar mission together. Np9 says,

Unfortunately our paths did not cross, because (Sp5) spends a lot of time outside of Colombo in the field. Most of my time was in Colombo and the times that I was out in the field, so we're in different places, so we ended up not really being able to meet, so I didn't get to know much about her organization during that time.

Sp5 similarly recalls that they "tried their level best" to connect during Np9's initial visits to Sri Lanka, and then relays how things picked up again,

After (Np9) left the country, doing this research, she joined (the U.S institution). She had a very 'special care' for Sri Lanka because she did research in Sri Lanka and all that kind of thing. So when she returned to figure out how she could work in Sri Lanka she checked with one of the organizations, (an NGO) center for peacebuilding in USA. That organization did a T.O.T (train the trainers) program in Sri Lanka in 2005. I was the coordinator of the program as well as one of the participants who trained through that program. (Np9) contacted the center to see if they recommended any person with whom they worked for a (new) program on religious peacebuilding - to meet and explore possibilities to develop a partnership. So (the NGO) introduced me to (Np9) again and said, "maybe you can talk to (Sp5). She is working with religious clergy." So again we crossed our lives.

When they finally did meet it was in an altogether different context. Np9 was no longer a student or a consultant just hoping to share ideas, she was working for the U.S. based institute and now coming with potential funding for the right local partners. Np9 offers an enlightening perspective on how the work in her new position began. (The institute) had not been doing much in Sri Lanka previously other than looking at it "as sort of a case study in our books." But, "A board member, right before they hired me said we should be doing something in Sri Lanka." She recounts,

When I came in, my boss actually interestingly at my interview said ‘Do you think that we should be doing religious peace building work in Sri Lanka?’ And I said ‘You know I think it’s really tricky, because we’re an American organization and there is a lot of sensitivities in Sri Lanka to Western organizations and American organizations supporting religious peacebuilding work and working with the Tsonga, because *they see this as sort of forms of neocolonialism and neo-imperialism and that there is a Christianized agenda* to it.’

In fact, she told her new boss that even the monks who get involved with peacebuilding efforts led by the Western community are often delegitimized in the eyes of others and are “accused of being anti-Buddhist or becoming Christian Buddhist Monks.” So her overarching message to her employer was, “I’m not sure that we’re the right organization to be supporting religious peace building efforts for that reason.” But after all that, she says they found a way to engage. “And then they hired me and in the first week my boss said let’s go do something in Sri Lanka, so it’s like ‘all right.’”

Perhaps things worked out because as Sp5 claims, “She (Np9) came to Sri Lanka again as a project officer and she came having done this research, with a very good understanding of the organizations and individuals involved in religious projects on the ground.” The reflections of both women on how the partnership unfolded, how it was challenged, and how it ultimately endures is presented in the following chapters as we explore the building of trust and other stages in the morphology of these partnerships.

Summary

In considering the “morphology” of partnerships, the above narratives on collaborative North-South conflict transformation/peacebuilding efforts reflect a diversity of contexts and dynamic factors and yet in a generic sense they share similar plotlines and casts of characters.¹⁷ For example, in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and in South/Southeast Asia there are cases where Northern practitioners initiate the idea of partnership with an existing person and their organization and other cases where Northern based practitioners affiliated with INGOs create new partner-organizations who are insider-locals to the conflict or post-conflict region. Many of the Northern practitioners here lead INGO’s while their Southern counterparts lead local non-government organizations that have formed in response to the conflicts in their home nations. Other northern practitioners may work with INGOs but characterize themselves primarily as independent practitioner-consultants who are working/partnering with INGOs and Northern based foundations as well as with the local individuals and groups they are working with in the target areas.

Northern practitioners who lead INGOs tell us that supporting the right individuals -- who are committed to conflict resolution/transformation and, perhaps more importantly, are “entrepreneurial” enough to sustain the business of an organization -- seem to be the most critical factors in choosing a partner, regardless

¹⁷ Although this is not a structural narrative analysis, it is useful to think about common patterns and characteristics as we come to understand some of the apparent stages that manifest in these partnerships.

of where the conflict or country is located. A strong relationship with a Southern partner might eventually lead to a North-South collaboration between them, but in other cases the INGO has a goal for intervening in a particular place and then has to do the groundwork for finding the right organizations or partner(s) to implement the work.

In other words, sometimes “the right organizations” just do not exist in the places where Northern peacebuilders want to work, at least not one that has an agenda or mission that matches or agrees enough with the Northern partner who brings ideas and financial resources, and so they create something new. Northern partner 4 (Np4), for example, demonstrates a case where an INGO based in the North takes the initiative to create an organizational partner in Sudan where none existed previously. Like Np5 in Colombia, or Np6 in Zanzibar, partnership may start with an idea, a desire to contribute to peace, dignity, human rights, or even democratic systems.

Southern practitioners of peace and conflict work share many of the same goals but appear to be dependent on Northern partners to carry out their own agendas. It would seem that Southern partners are typically a key to success in any North-South collaboration because they know the context, the cultures, and dynamic factors of identity and politics that occur on the ground. So although they might be dependent on Northerners for resources are not Northerners also dependent on their Southern partners for the implementation of any sustainable conflict intervention?

The above first look at practitioner narratives on the dynamics of the conflict settings, the parties involved, and their reflections on the reasons for working together, begins to raise some questions as I consider the stages of partnership and the critical moments that arise in the following chapters. To start, I question the potential pitfalls, or benefits, of Northern initiated partnerships in the global South. Are these partnerships consciously or unconsciously part of a larger Western/Northern peace agenda or are they perhaps more appropriately about what is desired and needed locally by their Southern partners and the communities they seek to help? The enmeshment of the North in the development of the South might be inevitable, but the way outsiders engage their Southern partners mean the difference between neocolonialism and a more organic and “indigenous” future for people recovering from violence and war. Political elites in the West may be afraid of such organic possibilities, but peacebuilders care more about non-violence rather than the means to achieve it.

Furthermore, I also wonder in some of these cases whether or not the roles corporations or governments play in shaping and funding partnerships between individuals and non-government organizations is productive or harmful to Northern and Southern partners’ peacebuilding endeavors? Or is it a little of both? In some of these cases the original ideas for outsiders engaging seems to originate, or at least be influenced substantially, by corporations or governments that have surely their own agendas for peace and development. What complicating factors might arise, financially or politically, when these institutions or governments are partners, or

funders, in North-South peacebuilding ventures? In the Sri Lanka case we can begin to perceive some of the tensions practitioners might face when they work for a larger INGOs, or institutions that are supported and influenced in varying degrees by the United States or British governments, for example, and the uncertainty of whether their work in that context will “Do no harm” (Anderson 1999).

In the telling of their stories of instructive partnership cases, the Southern practitioners profiled in this research seem to start off with quite positive perspectives of the collaborations with their Northern partners and the work they have done together. There is an initial appreciation in the stories above for those Northern practitioners who share a similar methodology or approach to working in the field, as well as a commitment to letting the local partner take the lead, or at least have a role in decision making. But as we seek to listen to the voices of Southern and Northern practitioners, and see if there is a morphology to these partnerships, we might imagine that their stories of partnership, not unlike folkloric fairytales, often reflect the ideal in the early stages while later stages reveal the hard realities of North-South/outsider-insider relationships.

CHAPTER FIVE: TRUST IN THE EARLY STAGES OF PARTNERSHIP

The above introductions to the partnership cases give us a sense of the diverse ways in which peacebuilding practitioners from the North and South come together to collaborate. How partnerships develop and unfold after they form seems to depend on the individuals involved, their methodologies, and the constructs of the organizations or agencies that support their work. Reflecting on a number of his partnerships, Np3 says, “I think one way of looking at partnership is how you establish it as an entry and then how do you manage it during the project. Then I think the third component is your exit strategy as you can’t be in that partnership forever. The challenges are different in each phase.”

Other practitioners show how some partnerships transcend any one project and continue on due to a special relationship or because the approach of their INGO is to have no exit strategy per se. Such admirable approaches to partnerships, whether long or short-term in nature, might ultimately be challenged however by the unforeseen funding or institutional dynamics discussed in Chapter 6. For any partnership to have a fighting chance, however, it seems the parties involved must have a foundation built on trust and free of suspicion.

Overcoming Distrust of U.S./Western Influence

Although some of the partnerships documented in this dissertation are born out of a pre-existing friendship or history of working together, Np3 explains why distrust of foreigners is a critical challenge that outsider practitioners face as consultants, or as part of an organization involved in a new partnership. The feeling might be, “Are you a CIA agent? Are you government voice? Do you have a hidden agenda? Why are you here?” In his own case of partnering on civic education initiatives in Chad, it took his team a long time to establish trust at both the individual and institution levels. He says he and the members of his peacebuilding institute overcome that mistrust easier than the average outsider because they have the language skills, the religious background, and sufficient knowledge of the local context to allow their new partners to feel comfortable with them. Importantly, Np3 says they also have a methodology of “Being respectful and working from within,” but despite that, he states, “We still face an obstacle in the suspicion of ‘Why are we doing this?’”

Distrust of the outsider might be particularly evident in peacebuilding work that is sponsored or funded in some way by the United States government, and perhaps other governments. Recalling her work in Sri Lanka, Northern Partner 9 provides insights into the dynamics of distrust that exist for many people throughout the “developing” world/global South. Suspicion towards Western

organizations and forms of neocolonialism are still quite prevalent in places like Sri Lanka where new ideas by outsiders may be interpreted as a disregard for their own values and belief systems and local ways of doing things.

Np9 says some governments are doing it in very subtle ways by working through development agencies like USAID big development organizations/INGO's that come in and work with civil society and local governments. She says they often have these seemingly collaborative relationships, but have larger agendas that may be unspoken to their local partners. She reflects,

They're supporting things that are reflective of their own values in democracy and these are new forms of colonialism. There are new forms of cultural influence as well, not just government influence, development influence.... These kinds of attitudes are everywhere. I see that in Iraq. I see that in African contexts. I see that in Latin America."

Np9 remembers, "I think, likely, my boss heard me say that about Sri Lanka and thought that is no different than these places and thought we are able to support some good initiatives despite that." It is her recognition and acknowledgement of this reality that helps her to be transparent in her own goals and motivations with her partners while seeing the bigger picture of her work in an institution that is viewed as non-partisan by many but cannot escape its affiliation with, or influence from the U.S. Government. She elaborates on her awareness of the distrust many locals have of outside influence by certain government agencies and the INGOs they fund for peace and development related projects in Sri Lanka:

I understand what their argument is, because these are forms of trying to influence government systems, centrally to the social attitudes and behaviors, in particular ends, and it might be that I'm

completely inline with those kinds of ends if they are about religious pluralism, religious coexistence, religious rights for gay people, if they're about whatever it is, human rights and democratic systems that allow for self-representation for people who are about establishing a rule of law, so that even marginalized poor people can have their rights protected and when lands are taken from, these sorts of things.

Np9 continues,

These are value systems that we have and we're supporting these kinds of initiatives in places and are not against those ends, but I see their argument that they're making - that we with our vast resources and funds we are coming into these places and we are sending these funds into projects... that result in things that we've determined are morally superior or the best kinds of government systems. It is a form of neocolonialism. I get that.

In the early phases of her partnerships, like the one with Southern Practitioner 5 (Sp5) in Sri Lanka, she must overcome or verify these perceptions by being open and honest about her mission, and that of her agency, in supporting local partner's work.

Distrust and Suspicion: Collaborating with the U.S. Government

In Kenya, Southern partner 2 tells a powerful story of why the issue contracting with USAID before she started her own peacebuilding and development organization

When I think back about my experience now when I was working with (the US agency)... They make it very obvious to you. They'll tell you, 'We are here because we want to implement the American,' you know, 'interest,' (She laughs). For most people is a put-off, but sometimes they'll just look away because they want the money.

We begin to see here the omnipresent dynamic of money that sometimes brings local partners into less than ideal asymmetrical relationships with their outside partners. She explains that the local implementer/practitioner's interests are often discarded for the larger agenda of the agency, which leaves the local people with little power in the outcome and rightfully fosters an atmosphere of suspicion.

You find it is like a really kind of a bullying thing. And that was the experience when I was working for USAID.... When they come with the money, and they say, we are here, and take this money or not, whether you take it or not, we are here to pursue our own interests. And usually sometimes there's a lot of resistance to that.

Kenyans find it particularly problematic when any political program is attached to the intervention. Sp2 exclaims,

People are like, so what interest does the U.S. have here? Are they here to destabilize? So it causes a lot of suspicion when U.S.A. says they are here to support their interests. People become suspicious, like, are they here to topple the government? Are they here to make the youth rebellious? So people are very suspicious of such programs that are funded with governments that say, 'we are pursuing our interests.' So such partnerships can naturally create problems for many local organizations.

She gives us a specific story of the post 2007 election violence, and the harm that may come when practitioners attach their efforts that have hidden agendas or unintended consequences that are beyond your control as the local partner:

What stands out is initially since we had just come from a period of election violence a lot of people were eager to find ways in communities for facilitation, to dialogue, and they did a good job. They provided the funding to bring communities together and all that. *But eventually what seemed to have been an unintended impact was*

that they were collecting evidence for the ICC to prosecute suspects of ICC. This was confidential information. But I think it was later on used to indict the suspects.

One can imagine how this would impact peoples' trust in future violence prevention or peace building programs. Sp2 reflects. "You can imagine your being taken as witness or your information being given as evidence that's used to indict a member of your community, so the rest of your community is very hostile towards you. So the reconciliation doesn't happen." She then shares an example from a recent trip in the field that highlights some of the perceptions people have of these programs:

I was just going back home and I met one politician who said, 'Are you still working for USAID?' And I said, 'No, I left.' Then he says, 'USAID are not good people. They have very funny motives. They wanted to pin me down and to ban me from seeking an election post because I'm too old.'

She clarifies why this is problematic for local peacebuilders.

They think we are part of that process as well to prevent people from – or to collect evidence, or to prevent people from contesting from political positions, because the U.S. doesn't want a candidate. And you know when Hillary came here there were some candidates banned from contesting, so you know such things make it very difficult for peace workers to say, this is what we want.

Why then, besides the money, would many local organizations or individual practitioners who are committed to conflict transformation and peacebuilding enter into partnerships connected to outside governments? Sp2 helps to expose the dilemma that is surely felt throughout the developing world:

The interesting thing is the way the U.S. comes in – it can be very subtle. It can be very subtle; you would not know what they want.

And after they have gone you're like, oh, okay, so that's what they are looking for. *But some people go through these partnerships without knowing what they're going into.* And other people go in just to get money to pay their salaries and to keep their project funding moving.

She continues,

There are other U.S.A. projects that are wonderful, projects to do with healthcare, malaria... everything. They are good because you can see the impact actually changes and affects lives. But when it comes to democracy/governance, these fluid things like peacebuilding and politics - is where people, you know, get very suspicious. You wonder what interests are they pursuing?

Sp2 is therefore careful to acknowledge that there are many U.S. programs that invest in programs with tangible benefits that Kenyans experience and value, but her words also indicate that when the United States makes its political preferences evident when it supports 'peacebuilding' efforts, then it will be difficult to convince local people that its in their best interests.

Foundations for Building Trust

Northern and Southern practitioners repeatedly talk about the importance of building partnerships based on trust or wanting to trust and be trusted by the other. Their reflections on their practices and actions collaborating with others provide a sense of what they really mean when they talk about the need for trust, something that might seem obvious in any relationship yet means different things to different people and can vary for across the North-South divide.

Sp5's words are insightful for Southern peacebuilders that might be looking to build new partnerships with northern organizations, which typically provide the majority, if not all, funding for the projects. Her reflections show how the receiving partner in a financial partnership can act to build a more holistic working relationship with the outside partner. In a story about the challenges a small organization faces when reporting how the funds they spend on programs match up with the amounts they originally budgeted in their proposal, she emphasizes why openness and honesty by the receiving partner are so vital to long-term success.

It's about integrity and it's about the whole value of transparency and accountability, which we are promoting.... If I treat them as my friend, and if I treat them as partners, they also have a right to really know what's going on in the field. It is sharing the reality of the field. They are also going to be inspired to then listen to stories that are happening here, not just through reports.

Northern based INGOs and the practitioners that lead them do indeed discuss the critical roles that transparency and accountability play for funding organizations, as is evident in a later section of this study specific to funding challenges. Yet in discussing the early stages of building partnerships these Northern peacebuilders talk more about what they perceive or know to be true about the good character and reputation of the locally based partners, traits that appear to be the foundation for having a solid partnership based on accountability and transparency. NP8 repeatedly mentions, for example, the outstanding credibility of his Indonesian partners in the local environmental and within the

human rights communities and the great fortune he has of working with people who have “squeaky clean” reputations.

In Colombia, Np5’s reflections show that INGOs seeking to build long-term partnerships, or even a sustainable peacebuilding organization, around key individuals need to trust that these people have the personality and skills to help build it. In Chapter 4, she told us how her desire to create a new organization in the conflict plagued nation of Colombia started with the idea to engage there by building a local partner organization that could implement the work on the ground. It then required finding the right individual to build it around. Her reflections tell us a little more about what “trust,” in this sense, looks like.

To be honest with you, *one of the strongest indicators of success for us (in creating partnerships) is finding someone who is going to be able to build a business, who is entrepreneurial, who can sell the field as opposed to just do the work.* That has been a big success factor of the people that we work with because in the end they are kind creating a business for themselves, right? I mean they’re mission oriented, but you have to raise the money. Because we don't give any money to Columbia anymore... and we do that with 18 centers around the world now. We network and there's still marketing to be done and we will put people and organizations that we meet in touch with him in Colombia.

What Np5 seems to be suggesting is that there is both a personal and impersonal side to trusting one’s partner when supporting new “partnership ventures.” One must trust the individual as a person, his or her character, but also trust that they can keep the founding partner’s investment growing and sustainable. Many outsiders start without a previous strong relationship in the conflict area and

instead need an invitation or introduction by those who do have the established ties to the right local agents of change.

Are You Invited and By Who?

Outsiders will make slow headway engaging locals and establishing partnerships in a foreign setting without an invitation from a well connected, or respected, local insider. With the right invitation, however, outsider practitioners can find that initial acceptance and start immediately on the building of “trusting relationships” that practitioners emphasize as critical to success. This is not only true in North-South collaborations, but in South-South partnerships, or any urban-rural collaboration such as the Iguazú, Argentina land-use conflict in which Southern Partner 6 (Sp6) was invited from the capital, Buenos Aires, to create a problem-solving dialogue process in the more rural province of Misiones.¹⁸

Sometimes those invitations come from respected individuals in a community, a reputable organization, or government actors that are well connected. Outsider may not know all the ramifications of being connected to the source of their invitation and so they will need to be skillful and self-aware enough to stand on their own actions and reputation after they get their feet on the ground. The partnership work to support national unity in Zanzibar offers several insights into the importance of “establishing an entry” and the complexities that might be involved when you are coming in as an outsider. In this case, the initial idea to invite

¹⁸ Read the full story of this Argentine partnership in Appendix A

Northern based practitioner 6 (Np6) and her organization to work in the politically divided region came from members of the U.S. Embassy, who are outsiders and yet also partially insiders to what is going on politically.

Np6's narrative offers many interesting on many levels since she and the headquarters of her international NGO are based in the North (United States), but she herself is a white South African who brings a lot of prior life and work experience as a Southern based practitioner in South Africa during the transition from apartheid to democratic majority rule. Many years later she comes to work in the politically divided Zanzibar, Tanzania as both an American professional and a South African, and it seems that her ability to shift identities plays a vital role in the way she has been able to connect with different parties. She says, "I had many passports and citizenships and I could be an American there, or anything, it didn't really matter because they all know I'm South African."

Still, despite her strong reputation as a practitioner in Africa she cannot, in her own words, "just show up" in a place like Zanzibar, or any other foreign conflict setting, and assume there will be an accepted role for her. Her identity does factor in, she explains, but not immediately with those who do not know her. Experienced "outsider" practitioners engaging in conflict related interventions or capacity building know they will not get very far without some form of invitation to be there in the first place. If they don't have an initial relationship with the local population they aim to serve than it is critical they know people who can make those introductions and begin to bridge any divide.

She explains the initial role of U.S. State Department staff in Tanzania,

This was facilitated by the American Embassy. They have a diplomat for Zanzibar on the ground living in Stone Town and then they had this guy who is based in Dar-es-Salaam but spends a lot of time there - a very senior diplomat. Those two had been working there quite a while by the time they called us in and he had recognized the need for something - and he knew he couldn't do it. I said one of the conditions for us coming in would be that you have to introduce us to everybody. We cannot just arrive. So the two of them took us around and we met cabinet ministers. It was before the election, so we were still with the old regime. We met everybody, we met the president, met the chief of the opposition, and all level of people.

NP6 explains that this important principle of first having an invitation is about

“finding a way to be accepted” by the locals you aim to partner with in your work.

About her interactions in Zanzibar she says, “At the end of that assessment, that first trip there, people said, "Please, please come and do this work!"

The initial round of introductions by these two men at the U.S. Embassy led to NP6 building her own relationships with her the principal local contacts with whom she would later partner with on dialogue and media projects. Those initial relationships then led to deeper forms of collaboration and networking in which other local invitations to work on timely issues might arise. She recalls, “At a certain point I wanted to start to work with the women members of Parliament because I had talked with the most senior woman in the government. She and I became very close and she said we really need to do this, so I set out to do it at her request.”

NP6's reflection on how the partnership with the members of parliament began does bring to light the ambiguous nature of how the seeds of collaboration

are launched and fertilized between outsiders and insiders. Although she set out to do it the Zanzibari parliamentarian's request, it was NP6 that approached that exposed her to the program possibilities. What is important here as a first step is that there was an invitation and willingness from local government leaders to begin the work. The involvement of local government raises the possibilities of affecting more systematic change on an island where most of the violence appears politically motivated even as other identity differences are at play in the way violence often manifests.

The Transitive Relationship in Afghanistan

Np2's work also illustrates the importance of how outsiders are invited into work with locals who may be distrustful of new arrivals. His story of partnerships in Afghanistan shows how peacebuilding consultants can build genuine relationships with strangers, to whom one is an "outsider," by having "insider" knowledge of, and connections to, the international organization sponsoring the long-term intervention. He shares,

I came in is kind of an insider – outsider. I'm really an outsider to (the INGO) but I'm not really an outsider to (it). But I'm certainly an outsider to (the INGO) in Afghanistan.... It goes back to the relationship question. There is an organizational relationship here that we stepped into through (the INGO), so we were starting way ahead because of that very good long relationship (the INGO) has there. It meant a lot to have (this organization) vouch for me as I stood in front of the room. So when I was introduced as an old friend of (the organization) that's a good thing. But then, and this is

something I've seen over and over and learned over and over, *there's this transitive property relationship.*

He continues,

If you have a good relationship with your initial contact but that contact also has a good relationship with the people you will be working with, then you can pretty much do *the transitive thing which is A and B have a good relationship and B and C have a good relationship, then A and C can at least start with a good relationship.* So people will give you the benefit of the doubt for a while, *but then it's all about how you conduct yourself.*

There appear to be several layers of trust and relationship the practitioner must consider before entering uncharted waters of intervention or capacity building in a foreign context. Perhaps key to his statement is the claim that the INGO has a great reputation with the people in “x” country, or even more specifically, in “x” state, department, or province. In other words, it might not matter how wonderful a person you are if you attach yourself to an organization or government that has done more harm than good. It is critical that the local population respects the INGO.

If the organization is well respected then the transitive relationship works. “The trusted third-party will give you the space to work out, feel out, a personal relationship with the people that you wouldn't have if you are a stranger.” Then after they open the door for you as an outsider you better have the skills and cultural sensitivity to not blow the benefit of the doubt your new acquaintances gave you. “If you're an idiot and your offensive, off putting,” shares Np2, “then it doesn't matter that you were introduced through a trusted third party.”

In this story, we begin to see some of the actions practitioners take to build trust-based relationships. For Np2, conducting the training was critical, “but it was also how you (as the outsider) hang out with people and how you conduct yourself in front of the room.” He says one needs to acknowledge what may seem obvious, such as, “I’m from a different culture, I’m not of you,” but then also connect with them as people. Perhaps it is experiencing the everyday things that human beings do together. Np2 says it is the sitting down with people at lunch breaks or walking around during the exercises and connecting with them, but it is also “everything about how you coach people or give instructions.” He shares his own actions and beliefs,

If someone is missing a piece of paper and you run to get it, being of service to them. And you communicate that to them in lots of ways, verbal and nonverbal. You pay a lot of attention to how am I being and how am I connecting with them as a group and as individuals.... So maybe we are doing a prisoner's dilemma thing, a communication piece, or a perceptions exercise – that's what were doing – but the most important thing that I am doing, at least for me, is building relationships with the group and with individuals in the room.

Np2’s work helps to give meaning to the value outsiders place on developing relationships, being in relationship, with insider-locals, whether they are one’s formal or informal partners. As we further explore how N-S partnerships form and unfold in the sections that follow, it is useful to consider the importance of “relationship” in these practitioners’ narratives.

Relationship Building Takes Time

Np7 reminds us that strong partnerships are not built overnight. Maintaining good communication during an ongoing conflict may be more challenging than a pre or post-conflict setting, as she alludes to in her reflections on partnering with the Ministers of Health from Jordan, Israel and Palestine:

Relationships are built through years of negotiation, communication, and being there for all sides of the partnership. That is the one thing that I would say for anybody that is doing this kind of work... *you can't expect to walk in the door and develop partnerships right off the bat. It takes several years, at least, and months in some cases, to develop this kind of bond and trust to where you're working in a conflict area that you can still talk to the other side even though there is a war going on....* It takes years of building up the trust and communication and the bonds that we have.

She gives us a sense of how they work through difficult issues in an example where one of the government ministry partners was having some difficulties with accounting that was affecting the overall relationship. "It takes a lot of work to resolve accounting issues with government ministries." When these types of challenges arise she works closely with the Palestinian project manager from her INGO, but also with her Israeli co-director, to negotiate and talk with the partners about how to reach a resolution. The long investment of the relationships has developed into a certain bond of trust between the Palestinians and Israelis where they can typically work things out within the partnership, but sometimes it requires her intervention skills as an insider-outsider to the partnership, and the tactful use of her identity, to help bridge differences. She will strategically work with the

Palestinians ministries, for example, while her co-worker might negotiate with the ministries on the Israeli side.

Consistency in “Showing Up”

Good relationships typically do take time and perseverance and one way to do that is to consistently be there for your partner. For Np6 the establishment of any partnership “is an organic process” that develops through consistently “showing up” as a practitioner and as an organization. She calls it the “Woody Allen Principle” from his movie Annie Hall.

She recalls in Zanzibar,

I would go there for a month and live there and go often to see people. I was on my own. Sometimes the media guy would come along, but he was doing something completely separate. As a matter of building relationships... *one of the things about building trust is that you do what you say you will do and you keep showing up.* You offer support on a consistent basis – consistency is very important.

The Northern partner showing up consistently does seem like something “Southern partners” would care deeply about. But perhaps what is most prevalent in Southerners’ stories about building trust is that outsiders respect them, respect local ways of doing things, including their own working methodologies.

Knowledge and Concern for Local Culture/Context

Southern practitioners highlight the strength of partnerships where the outsiders have respect and working knowledge for local ways of being and knowing. Although many seasoned practitioners based in the global North will reference the importance of being culturally sensitive and respecting local methods, the reality of such actions is more easily measured in the narratives of the locally based peacebuilders. Some of the southern practitioners I spoke with go beyond the importance of outsiders being sensitive to culture and context to the need for local peacebuilders to have greater control over their work in North-South collaborations.

Reflecting on her work with the European based INGO and their work with youth impacted by the war in Colombia, Sp1 says her organization chooses to work with others and/or receive funding from outside organizations “when they respect our methodology,” a methodology that fits with the local context. In other cases, like the partnership work in East Timor, the Southern Partner is willing to accept much of the methodology and leadership of the Northern partner as long as there is care to make it culturally relevant to the local context. Sp4’s appreciation for her partner’s approach and personality is evident. “I know that (he) is very modest because he has a lot of experience in this, but *he allowed the Indonesians to take lead roles* and he supported them in the process because he believes that the local cultural part is the most important thing to convey.” Sp4’s words convey how much

it means to an insider partner to have guidance from outsiders yet still maintain a sense of leadership and local power in the manner work is executed in the field. More about how these inter-cultural partnerships unfold, and what is important about the dynamics of culture and language, is revealed in Chapter 6 (Working Together) and Chapter 7 (Critical Moments and Turning Points).

In addition to the skills needed to build trust, many practitioners reflect an awareness of their own identity and the impact it may have on local partners in the early stages of creating a trusting partnership. Their stories reflect the variety of ways identity impacts the forming of working relationships in zones of conflict.

Identities of the “Outsider” Practitioner as a Factor in Building Trust

The identities of practitioners, chosen or not, may often be a critical moment of crossing the bridge from distrust to trust in the formation of partnerships between Northerners and Southerners or in any outsider-insider collaboration. Interestingly, many Northern based practitioners who have “lived experience” in the global South are acutely aware of their own identity and see a direct correlation between their nationality, ethnicity, or even their skin color, and creating an atmosphere that puts those they work with in the South at ease, laying the foundation for building trust. Others describe the role of religious identity in partnership, the impact of being an elder peacemaker, and the challenges one must overcome as a “white” American. In this section, they describe how they understand

the roles of their identity, or at least parts of their identity, in the overall dynamic of their partnership cases.

Ethnic and National Identity as a Factor

In reflecting on his work in Chad and Mindanao, Np3 describes the advantage his ethnic identity and appearance brings him in his peacebuilding work throughout the global South,

If it takes you three days it may take me one day to break in the conversation and establish a connection. It has played an important role in terms of being accepted and not judged immediately by the local participants. It makes a big difference with many people. I don't do anything. The door is open before I say anything, and then when I say something that they like -- and they feel more comfortable -- the doors open a little bit more. The doors open that much more as a Palestinian, as a Muslim, as someone who works for (a peacebuilding institute).

Np2 shows us that practitioners can strategically use their identity to build trust. He says his identity has been a critical factor the work he has been doing for the past 27 years. He discusses a partnership he developed in Niger as an example,

We had a training for Koranic schools and the Koranic schools were Madrassa – very closed. They don't accept many people from outside. And their system is very particular. A white Anglo Saxon person will come there and work, but they will not really work from within. So I composed a team with myself, a Moroccan, and an Egyptian. The Egyptian had experience with the Islamic institution that they respect and we knew that through this entry he could connect to them. We all spoke Arabic. We can all recite verses from the Koran. I've done work with similar groups.

He tells us how it played out,

So we arrive there in a very remote area outside of the capital in Niger and they look at us and check us out and we check them out and then

you know gradually may realize that you are not only professors, but as development people they understand that we are committed to the cause of improving Islamic education and they don't see this as a threat. *We tell them we are not here to persuade you not to teach Islam. On the contrary we want you to teach it, but let's talk about how you teach it...* And we shared food. And we spoke about people we knew in the Muslim world they discovered that we knew some of the same people that they appreciated.

Skin Color and Perceived Common Identities

Np2's identity, or at least his physical appearance as a person of color, has also helped him in interesting ways to connect with people in the field.

What's interesting for me, and this will kind of go to that is that I have a skin color that is actually much more prevalent around the world than being white or being very dark but it's a real asset in kind of situations. Kabul is a place where you will see a pretty diverse group of people who are Afghan, both diverse looking and how they dress – the dress and traditional garb and a dress in Western garb – that if I put on a pair of jeans and a decent shirt and walked around the streets of Kabul people would think I was Afghan.

Chuckling, he continues,

So there is that advantage, even if it is that kind of superficial connection were people say, "oh you look like you're from here." But even when I'm in a group in the Middle East my tell story of the first time I was in Egypt a cabdriver from the airport would not believe that I was not Egyptian and we eventually agreed that I was half Egyptian. And I tell people that my family is from southern Italy, so I am basically Mediterranean and that's a big swath of the world. But it's really interesting because most people have those things and there's some kind of touch point that you can connect on.

Perhaps what we can learn from this is that initial perceptions are indeed often about looks, which means the majority of Northern practitioners from North America and Western Europe who have white skin color will have to do more to

overcome the distrust that built up over centuries of colonial and neocolonial interference in the South. Np2 may not have a recognized identity of ethnic or political persecution, like a Palestinian, but just being a non-white can enable trust.

Some practitioners have a variety of identities they can employ in different circumstances, which can be particularly effective for “white” toned peacemakers who need to overcome the mistrust that might arouse in unknown others in places like sub-Saharan Africa.

Managing Multiple Identities

One’s nationality or shared identity, like that of an African, can also be the type of “touch point” that Np2 describes above. For white South Africans, Americans, or someone who carries both identities, it will take a conscious effort to be with people in a way that transcends any preconceptions they have about you.

Np6 gives us a sense of how she navigates her identity in a place like Zanzibar:

You know people always have perceptions and my own sense is that when you meet them it's who you are that that comes through has and we have to be tremendously conscious of those things. So as a white South African, with the heritage of South Africa, as an American with the heritage of America, I know that it is incredibly important for me to be hugely respectful. I mean, I am anyway, and to be conscious and considerate, and not taking over things, and at the same time being able to step into leadership when I'm asked to. It's a mix of things, but *I do think it's incumbent upon us to be conscious of who we are.*

Depending on her audience, Np6’s identity as an American and white South African could be a double-edged sword. It may be her identity as a peacemaker that

ultimately transcends other identities and allows her Southern partners to trust her help and support.

Other outsiders, white or non-white, may instead connect with their partners and the local community through a spiritual/religious identity that they bring to bear in their interactions and which can transcend color or ethnic differences between them.

Religious Identity as a Connector

Northern Practitioner 3 (Np3) shows us in the example above how his understanding of Islam and his identity as a Muslim connects him to people throughout the Muslim world, and that identity plus the advantages of outward ethnic identity appearance help him to break the initial barriers that often come with being a practitioner that works for a United States government agency, a U.S. based University, or even an INGO. Similarly, Northern practitioner 9 is able to connect with partners and the beneficiaries of their project through her knowledge and practice of Buddhism. She has the added challenge of being a “white” Anglo-American, and the sometimes advantageous or disadvantageous female identity. Whereas Np3 said he might not have to say anything to break initial barriers, she likely has to demonstrate her knowledge. She states,

I think the fact that I have studied Buddhism and know Buddhism and totally love Buddhism also helps when I meet with Buddhist monks there. They know that I’m affiliated with the project and so on. *I can demonstrate to them that I have respect for Buddhism and I understand*

some of their concerns about how Christian supremacy groups, historically and contemporarily, in Sri Lanka have had a very submissive, derogatory attitude towards Buddhism.

Her religious/spiritual identity is therefore not just about building trust with the Buddhist community, but overcoming the distrust/fear that she and her organization might have a Western-Christian agenda. Her principal peacebuilding partner in Sri Lanka (Sp5) brings up the same important attributes of Np9's identity in a separate interview conversation about the early stages of their partnership. Speaking about her organization's desire to build their inter-religious work beyond the select religious clergy they were already working with, Sp5 recalls,

I needed somebody who I can trust and I realized that (NP9) is very religious, spiritual. I am someone who is thinking about religion in a different way (than Np9), but I have a lot of experience in the field. So I started this conversation with her to get support about how to design the process really, more than looking for funding.

The identities of the two women, and how they interacted with one another to create trust, was paramount and needed to precede the financial details of any long-term collaboration. Funding, and all its complexities are indeed addressed by both these practitioners, and others, in the following chapters.

Elder Identity

Age and the respect for elders that is prevalent in many countries, but seems particularly evident in non-Western societies, is another identity that comes to fore for some outside practitioners in partnerships. Both Np6 and Np8 reflect how their

partners looked up to them in part because of the assumed wisdom they brought as practitioners that had many more years than their younger insider partners. Np6 describes the overall benefit of her age without highlighting how it plays out in practice, although other stories highlight the general respect and appreciation that comes with recognized knowledge and experience.

At my age, of course it is a very good thing in this (work), being an elder is wonderful! It does not mean you can't do this work if you're younger. I was doing this in South Africa when I was 20 years younger! But there are so many good things about getting older. I have to tell you, you have lots to look forward to. It carries so much that is really wonderful with it.

Despite the advantages of age, it would be useful to remember that “outsider” elders might have to work that much harder to elicit the local perspectives and wisdom of their younger partners who might be reluctant to freely speak their mind in the presence of their more “senior” external partners. Thus there is the double barrier of locals relying too much on the outside “expertise” of Northern partners that Np1 and Np8 speak about in their narratives, and the additional factor of local partners being potentially submissive to those who are their elders.

While all the above dynamics of trust discussed above are critical to the overall partnerships, and certainly play a big role in the interpersonal relationships of the involved parties, many peacebuilders also emphasize the need for some type of written partnership agreement to clarify the nature of the working relationship. Practitioners often referred to the importance of such agreements in the early stages of partnership.

Memorandums of Understanding

Partnership agreements have different implications for Northern and Southern partners. For those practitioners and organizations/agencies based in the North it may serve as a way to ensure business is conducted efficiently, to keep track of the management, finances, and evaluation of projects. For Southern partners it may be a way to ensure that they have equal or adequate power in decision-making and design of programs.

Sp1 discusses the relationship with their supporting INGO partner,

To begin, there was a letter of understanding and the letter of agreement about how we were going to manage the funds, how we are going to present reports, how are we going to verify that what we are agreeing to is realized? We made an agreement where we established how we were going to receive the funds. In the case with (this INGO), we receive the funds every trimester.”

The MOU appears to focus more on funding, transparency, accountability, and reporting within the framework of what the funding Northern partner expects. It does not mention the particularities of how they will work together, i.e. make decisions, in the field, which might lead to complications at a later point. Thinking about it, she shares an underlying concern for local control in defining and implementing programs.

What does it mean to carry out a project together? To work together on a project means we receive some resources, we “arm” our teams and we apply our methodology. This is something (our NGO) does with any partnering organization. *It's important that we define our teams, define how we will work, and we always receive resources when they respect our methodology.*

As we explore Sp1's instructive case more in the next chapter we can see that while funding arrangements might be more straightforward, agreements or expectations of how partners will work together in the field may not always work out so well, especially with such challenges as staff turnover that may occur in a large INGO. An MOU might thus signify an official relationship, but it might also represent a form of control by one partner over the other. As a result, some Southern partners feel it is best to proceed without a formal agreement of how the partnership will operate and instead first see how the various parties work together prior to any formal MOU or agreement. In telling her story, Sp4 returns to what I am calling "a narrative of trust" and has several insights as she reflects on why it would be common practice for her to define the nature of the partnership upfront in local collaborations but not in North-South partnerships.

I'll put it this way, if the local organizations come to us we will emphasize to them at the beginning, "This is the kind of partnership... I don't want to be the person who has more knowledge than you." I put those kinds of preconditions. But with foreigners, especially when we don't know the original culture that they have, sometimes I'm a little hesitant to talk like that because I don't know their cultural habits, how they interact with others, I'm hesitant to put it in front of the cooperation because it can also show that I don't trust them. *With north-south cooperation, trust building will come during the process rather than from the beginning.*

She elaborates,

In the Indonesian contexts it's not so common to put this kind of precondition in front. I'm just reflecting myself (now) on some of the work I'm doing with friends and we are usually hesitant to put any kind of precondition at the beginning. We are expecting to educate each other during the process about what is the meaning of

partnership, but again it depends on the other side, the other partner, and whether they understand or are quite sensitive. It's hard but I think that is a part of our culture.

Critical to this research focus on North-South is her distinction between North-South, which she refers to as partnerships with foreigners and South-South partnerships that still have outsider-insider dynamics, reminding us that in peacebuilding related collaborations between citizens of the same nation there is likely to be a necessity to recognize differences in identity, culture, and power between the outsider practitioners and those from the “target” or “recipient” community.

In Kenya, Sp2's story proves that an MOU might be the necessary official documentation to get things started and to define partner roles, but it is how the relationships “play out” in fieldwork that really determines how the key parties relate and whether or not there is a true sense of equality in the partnership.

After the UN agency decided to support their proposal they had to go through a partnership agreement, says Sp2, “But that is just the formal paperwork that makes us say, ‘We will do it A, B, C, D and commit ourselves to do what we’ve done.’”

Considering the agreement and the partnership dynamics, she explains,

For me, it went beyond the funding partnership, because how we are involved is that all of us are involved on equal level or equal ranking. It's not like one person is above the other... the partnership has worked out in the sense that all the three of us are considered equal partners. So every time we have meetings to decide on the next project, we meet - all of us - and all of us are to give input. And all of us have to contribute. And then we share out roles. So there is a role the government needs to play, there's a role that UN needs to play, the role we need to play. We share out the roles again, and then kind of

just work together. All the three of us have been working together. No program has been implemented without the other partner.

Although the relationship may seem ideal at first, Sp2's further reflections on the partnership, which we explore in Chapter 6 (Working Together), reveal the challenging factors when two partners in an agreement must also work with a funder or national government agency that is a critical part to implementation of the project – in this case, implementing a peace education curriculum for an entire country.

Northern-based practitioners affiliated with international non-government organizations (INGOs) also emphasize the importance of formal Memorandums of Understanding. Np6 explains the usefulness of an agreement when partners disagree. She says, "I believe it's very important to have a memorandum of understanding, some sort of letter of agreement, which you then put away into a drawer and you can bring out in a case of conflict. *It's one of the best conflict resolution mechanisms because we all forget or something happens and we change our minds, but there it is.*"

There have been MOUs that have been broken by the local partner and not gone so well in her experience, but she highlights the work in Zanzibar as a case of "doing it well." We can see why MOUs might be essential when there are multiple partnerships within an overall program and keeping track of all the roles and responsibilities seems essential to a successful program. In Zanzibar, she states:

In fact we have two or more of them as we are doing that with every organization we are working within Zanzibar. We are working with

eight radio stations and we have MOUs with most of them. We've got a partnership with a women's organization and we're doing leadership training for women members of the House and that's an MOU. We have a partnership with the Ministry of Good Governance & Public Service and that is an MOU that's being formulated. They asked us for it and we are putting it down in writing. These are all very simple, there's nothing complicated. It's just really, 'we agreed to do this in partnership and these are your roles and responsibilities, these are our roles and responsibilities. This is the money allocation, this is the time that it's all going to be delivered in, and were going to talk about anything that comes up that is a problem.' I do believe in doing things at this level. *You need them for other things, but just having that clarifies things because you can never underestimate the ability of human beings to misunderstand each other.*

One of the many lessons offered here is that partnerships are often multi-dimensional and each unique part might need its own clarifying agreement, or MOU, about roles and responsibilities. Other peacebuilders, like Np1 in Nepal, talk about the multi-dimensional nature of many partnerships, especially those working for country level change. Lack of clarity about roles and responsibility more often than not will lead to a break down in the partnership, or at least lead to poorly executed programs.

Summary

In some cases of North-South collaboration the connection to influential government actors proves useful for establishing trust and building relationships – like in Zanzibar where government ministers had a working relationship with the U.S. Embassy/State Department officials who invited Np6 to explore programming for the Islands. For consultants, the reputation of the Northern based

“international” organization that employs them is also crucial to how practitioners initiate and build partnerships in the field, as is the case in Afghanistan where locals trusted the established INGO. We can also see that the process of an outsider creating a partnership with local practitioners, or even local political leaders, does not just happen overnight.

In most cases, the practitioners here seem to emphasize the personal attributes of their partners as being the greatest factor in creating a successful partnership-relationship for both Southern and Northern partners. This finding might suggest that there is not much to be done except be an honest and genuine person/partner. According to scholar-practitioner Sara Cobb, perhaps this is the most important factor, or perhaps it is just the way that people “describe” what they see to be the case as they reflect on their partnerships. It might first appear that such a focus on personal attributes means practitioners are less attentive to other relational, cultural, or power dynamics (Cobb 2010).

If practitioners are aware of these dynamics then perhaps they feel they can be overcome, at least in some way, by the strength of their interpersonal skills? Yet the overall success of North-South collaborations are more complicated than that given the imbalances of power, dependency, and cultural differences that emerge as their stories of partnership unfold. But the strength of interpersonal relationships between North-South partners alone will not change the ultimate continuation of dependency and resulting asymmetry. Just being a good person will likely not be enough.

Np3 emphasizes that outsiders need to be mindful of asymmetric power relations when establishing trusting relationships in the early stages of partnership.

He states,

You have to be careful about establishing a genuine relationship with the group... You have to be very respectful and honor that relationship. To do that *you have to work from within and to work from within you have to know a little bit of the codes, and the language, and the meaning of the relationship*. All these are one package of elements that makes the entry possible and I think that's the topic this conversation. In my view, it's how do you devise a safe, trustworthy entry as an outsider in forming a relationship.

The above narratives also hint at the power that Northern partners have, especially those that lead international non-government organizations, when it comes to choosing to local partnerships, and often times setting up a country or field office to maintain those partnerships. In Chapter 4, we learned that some practitioners who run international organizations look for the right organizations to partner with and if they cannot find one then they try to create programs and partnership around particular individuals who have the right skills, which preferably include an entrepreneurial spirit. That scenario gives Northerners significant power in influencing the structure of the peacebuilding and conflict transformation that they hope will grow out of that intervention. Np6 shares her experience in Zanzibar, "I asked around and I met one organization and I was not impressed and then I asked somebody who I trusted who introduced me to this particular organization and they seemed like the right one." She explains that she

also had a lot of time to get to know the Zanzibari politician who she was interested in working with while she was fundraising to establish the programs.

So we used the time and we got to know each other. We would sit and have coffee together. I met her colleagues and we used that time to build relationships and to be concretely putting in place the pieces so that finally when we got the funds I was able to bring my colleague in and get them together, where they could form a relationship and build an MOU. It was all already in place. So it's a building process.

Her words thus give voice to her philosophy that one should not invest time and money into a partnership unless it has a clear purpose and concrete goals.

Whether or not the philosophies and methodologies of North-South partners mesh, a trusting relationship may be the greatest factor in determining whether their short-term conflict resolution or long-term transformation/peacebuilding initiatives are, ultimately, successful. But establishing trust is only an initial step. And although building a trusting relationship may appear to be a crucial stand-alone “early stage” in the morphology of partnerships it is likely something that must continue to be built, and not broken, as partnerships manifest into specific programs and projects. Once that initial entry is gained and enough trust is established then partners must act and work together to design and implement their methods of conflict prevention/resolution and their tools for building peace. How do they do that?

These practitioner reflections have helped us begin to understand what establishing trust, or overcoming distrust, means to them in the initial phases of forming partnerships. In the “morphology” of partnerships trust is clearly a

necessary ingredient in their overall development and partners must make a conscious effort to consider the perspectives and needs of their partners early on in the process. Taken together, the Northern practitioner discourse on “trust” communicates that solid relationships are the key to good partnerships and they are built through perseverance and consistency in one’s actions. That might mean navigating the challenges of one’s personal identity, but more likely means paying attention to what your partners need and giving voice to their methodologies and ways of knowing. Partnership agreements help to clarify misunderstandings and disagreements that arise and might be more effective if they address the particularities of how partners will work together in the field. Although, some practitioner reflections that emerge later, on the need for flexibility in donor demands, for example, hint that too many formalities and restrictions in Agreements/MOUs initiated by outside partners might be experienced as a form of control by those on the inside who do the majority of fieldwork.

In conclusion, we must recognize that trusting the people and organizations that one partners with is a critical first step, but we should also ask how these relationships play out as they implement their joint initiatives? What are the actions and thought processes of these peacebuilders as they work together in conflict settings? Without the direct observation of practitioners working together with their partners we cannot see how their actions unfold in the field. Instead, we now turn to how Northern and Southern peacebuilders make sense of the methods, skills, and decisions they make in the field with their partners. The reflections of

these skilled practitioners can teach us much about what many peacebuilders actually do and also provide us a window into the state of the larger peacebuilding enterprise from the standpoint of those who address conflicts for a living.

CHAPTER SIX: WAYS OF ENGAGING: PRACTITIONER ACTIONS AND METHODS

In the morphology of peacebuilding partnerships, what happens after the initial idea of partnership takes root and practitioners and their organizations have created agreements and work to build trust between them? The methods or actions that unfold, what we might call the “doing” of practitioners who are engaged in the work of North-South collaborations, is certainly difficult to know unless you can directly observe it or you are in fact one of those practitioners. Still, any one observation or first hand experience offers a limited picture of what occurs in the diverse “field” of work that unfolds in conflict settings worldwide. We can come to understand partnerships better, however, by listening to how Northern and Southern peacebuilders make sense of their roles, their methodologies, and their everyday actions. This chapter reveals what peacebuilders do throughout their partnerships, but perhaps most notably in what we might call the middle stages of partnerships when programs and projects are implemented.

A central objective of this study is to give Northern and Southern practitioners the opportunity to reflect on their partnership work in ways that might provide lessons about how they work, and how others might endeavor to work, in the field with local partners. These practitioner narratives provide valuable

insights into both their methods of intervention/engagement with their partners and the nuances of their actions as they work together as outsiders and insiders in places impacted by direct and structural violence (Galtung 1969;1990).

What Types of Work Do Partners Do Together and How Do They Describe Their actions?

In this chapter, Northern practitioners describe their work as collaborative actions that bring in new ideas, open access to powerful decision-makers, and create spaces for dialogue and problem solving. Southern narratives also highlight the value of outsider contributions in their partnership experiences, at times emphasizing the importance of a shared methodology and the need to utilize local knowledge and approaches. Practitioners narratives also give meaning to how different conflict intervention methodological approaches are utilized in conflict transformation and peacebuilding partnerships, such as the more commonly discussed train-the trainer model or a perhaps less known action-reflection form of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Lastly, a number of pertinent issues related to culture and language emerge that warrant exploration. In particular, those Northern and Southern peacebuilders who reflect on the same case of partnership, as in the cases of East Timor and Sri Lanka, narrate their actions in a way that reflects awareness of culture and language dynamics that must be worked out in practice in order for intercultural North-South partnerships to succeed.

Opening Doors to Power

Northern-based practitioners, particularly those attached to INGOs, claim they often have greater access to the higher levels of political or corporate power within a country than their local partners. They bring their reputations as experts or as representatives of reputable international organizations, which opens doors of influence that many locals simply cannot open on their own. Despite the opening of doors that INGOs might provide for their Southern partners, locals may still struggle for recognition and influence with powerful, high level donors or decision-makers and thus need additional support from their international partners to gain the access and influence they need.

In Np5's experience, the most useful partnerships are when the international partner has different access than the locals, especially when local partners are working for change "in a factionalized country where just being a part of an NGO or civil society organization has a stigma to it." She elaborates:

I think that in the partnerships we've had with the affiliate centers throughout the years, we've opened a lot doors for relationships with the local private sector that were hard for them to open because someone from the civil society that worked in conflict resolution or peacebuilding skills wouldn't naturally have access to that world. And we as an organization believe it's really important. But that is a key difference about (our INGO) I would say. We really push them (our partners) to have access to all different sectors.

Thinking about her work of "incubating" a new partner organization in Colombia, Np5 describes what she calls "the sustainability and the value added" of having an international partner. "When you have an international NGO that is kind

of branded as credible, meaning that the brand is known, then that opens doors to that other organization for potential funding and access to other stakeholders to play a convening role locally that wouldn't happen if we weren't by their side." This includes corporate partners, like GE, who were able to convene a breakfast with the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce and create an opportunity for the local partners to present the dialogue series to the Chamber of Commerce and say to them, 'Here is why this dialogue process is so important.'"

In Colombia, much of Np5's work involved connecting her partner with corporate partners because she believes the sustainability of their efforts requires support from the influential private sector. She emphasizes that the corporate relationships/partnerships she encourages are not just from the "philanthropy perspective of who should help fund the dialogue," it's also about including their influence in the dialogue series and asking them, "By the way who should be at the table to help address this issue because you're a voice that needs to be a part of this discussion?"

The international partner also can play a vital role in dealing with funders or government agencies, which might be one in the same. Many issues come up for local partners around dealing with funders and sponsors. Np5 tells us, "A lot of minutia things" that may necessitate what she calls "relational support, moral support." It is helpful for the local partner to be able to pick up the phone or email, for example, and have the international partner -- with their different experience and influence -- to help them work through a problem in which they were not

finding the answers they needed on their own. At one point during the Colombia dialogue series Np5 called the U.S. Embassy (the funder of the dialogue) and asked, "*What is the holdup with the last payment?*" -- a payment that was needed for the local partner to implement the series. For Np5, "It's absolutely access that an international NGO has and we put it to good use (chuckle) on behalf of our partners."

Speaking about her partnership in Sri Lanka, Np9 tells how access and connectivity are important to organizations that are working in relative isolation from other peacebuilding initiatives. She realized her partnering organization (Sp5) already had a solid curriculum in place that provided conflict analysis and conflict transformation skills but that as it got deeper into inter-religious peacebuilding work it would need access to others. She recounts,

I got them in touch with other religious organizations in Sri Lanka. I was concerned that there is often some conflicts in civil society, and so much turf battling, and such a fragmentation of civil society that *I encouraged them* as much as possible to reach out to other organizations, to other religious institutions, and to develop from the beginning a collaborative approach to it. *I connected them* with other organizations that were doing interreligious work as well, so it wasn't just reinventing the wheel or creating another competition.

In the case of Zanzibar, Np6 provides another story of how the outsider role seems paramount in the access to power during the early stages of building new partnerships. In telling how for her relationship unfolded with the director of their programs in Zanzibar, she recounts:

The interesting thing is that *I had the access at the higher levels* but she didn't have that, so I was taking her to meet people and then stepping

back.... That was my intention to hand it all over. *I had the access because of the way I had come in, I had come in at an ambassador level, and I was considered ambassador level.... I had the access because of my experience and everybody knew my experience.* They loved the fact that I had written a book and everybody wanted copies. I shipped out so many boxes of books and would just give them to people. It became a calling card. I doubt that many read it, but they liked that.

In addition to what Np6 views as her personal influence in establishing access to decision-makers, she also emphasizes the importance, and perhaps luck, of timing when to come in as an outsider with something to offer. She recalls, "Timing is critical and I came in at exactly the right time when this was all happening, the change (in the political/national environment). I think even three months later I wouldn't have had the access."

Np4's narrative of her work in Sudan is also a story of influence and access despite the different words she chooses to describe her actions in the early stages of collaboration with local actors from throughout the Sudan. NP4's says her initial lead role in building the new partner was "*like being a midwife helping the baby get born.*" She describes the birth of the collaboration in Sudan as "really quite a complex thing" of getting people from the North, the South and the Nuba Mountains together to decide how they wanted to work together and where they wanted to focus their energy.

She considers one of her roles as an outside partner to be a sort of guide who helps define the parameters of what is feasible to accomplish. "Inevitably they wanted to do far more than we were able to resource them to do, but that was okay because what they did was very worthwhile." In the first few years she worked

closely with the steering committee, describing herself as a sort of honorary member for a time until they became more autonomous. Like many outside partners, her actions reflect, above all else, the ability to connect local partners with those that have influence and by doing so create a new space for new relationships and work to emerge. Prior to the breakup of Sudan it could be difficult and dangerous to bring people together and find a safe place to do inside the country.

What I did is *I prepared the ground*. I had invited some people and organized people from the South to invite other people from the South. I organized logistics and got the venue. And when the British Council offered to have them stay for dinner in his lovely garden, I sort of felt like okay have done everything that I can do. I will not have to do anything else now because now it's up to them. I provided them with the best facilitators and the best host and a good set of participants. Now I just have to sit back and see what happens. And that was quite a relief really because I'd never done anything like this before.

This was new and different for Np4 because her INGO typically starts working with people or small organizations when they've already done something and they know something about the quality of their work, whereas here she seems to feel a greater degree of risk or at least uncertainty as the funding partner. Yet there is also evidence of a certain letting go of control and acceptance of the unknown after the initial coordination takes place.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible to separate out the conversation of access and power from that of funding. Np6 states, "*You can't do the work without the funding.*" At some point money always seems to play a role in partnerships as we have already seen in some cases, a critical issue that is explored by these

practitioners in greater detail in the following chapter. For now, it is important to acknowledge -- as the dialogue case in Colombia demonstrates -- that North-South peacebuilding collaborations, whether prevention, management, or the more elusive transformation of people and places, need money to get started and to be sustained. Several outside partners in fact mentioned the correlation between consistency in funding and gaining the trust of inside partners in the course of describing the financial challenges of peacebuilding.

Np6 tells us why the outside partner's influence might play the critical role of ensuring local financial support to peace programs. Here she details her own process.

I think the story of Zanzibar was building partnerships with the funders on the one hand, that was on the mainland, that's very important. That was continuous. Every time I went I would go to Dar for a few days and meet with everybody and talk to them, brief them, and ask them until the funding those come in. And then building the relationships -- the more important work -- both are important because you can't do the work without the funding. People began to use me as a source because I was spending so much time there and I knew a lot of what was going on. And then building the relationships with the political actors, which is where I was working. Then bringing in resources and concrete program -- the reason for the partnership was concrete program. I met this woman with her NGO but we didn't do anything for many months... We talked and we went through the whole idea of what we wanted to do but it took time to raise the funds.

Northern Partners not only open doors and bring access to power; they also bring new conflict resolution ideas and peacebuilding methods. First hand accounts of what and how these ideas and methods are introduced in the global South are

critical for understanding how partnerships, and ultimately peacebuilding interventions, work out in practice.

Outsiders Bring in New Ideas and New Methods

Outsiders, whether they are skilled practitioners who work independently, or for INGOs or Foundations, inevitably influence their local Southern Partners with their ideas, teaching, training, or new technology. The contributions of Northern partners may sometimes be problematic, as these practitioners explore later, but first let us begin to understand the perceived benefits of Northern engagement in the global South as described by these highly experienced Southern and Northern peacebuilding practitioners.

Southern partners voice appreciation for outside partners who offer new ways of viewing the context of conflict or the approaches/methodologies being utilized to address conflicts. Underlying this appreciation is a narrative of local control - when they are ultimately left with the ability to reject or act on those outsider recommendations. Sp5 says her approach to working with conflict is generally idealistic and “dreamy.” She explains that her original goal to bring all sides of the Sri Lankan conflict together at the start was lofty and unrealistic. While co-designing her program for religious clergy it was her partner’s insights (Np9) that led to a real breakthrough in the way she viewed her own peacebuilding objectives. Reflecting on her partner from the U.S., she recalls:

She asked the smartest questions. I may not advising us or telling us what to do, but she asked me... "How long has this polarization been happening?" And suddenly I realized, my God it's not 30 some years, it's 100 - 150 years this polarization is there. So in this polarized society that we are living and how can we bring them all together at once? Instead she suggested working with them (the conflicting parties) separately in preparing the ground and then brings them together when they are ready. So that is how the idea came to work with separate groups for the first 11/2 to 2 years to prepare them to work together.

The partnership was thus key to preventing her local team "from jumping into the nest" too soon. Critical here is Sp5's inference that peacebuilders coming from the North, or anywhere outside the locale of engagement, can be truly effective if they have the right skills and first-hand knowledge of the conflict environment. "She is an outsider and she has a very good understanding of the Sri Lankan context and what is happening, so she asked the right questions at the right time. That is a real good experience with an outside person."

In fact, Sp5 says she shares the details of her vision and work with all her close international friends/partners because she knows "they will ask the right questions... because they can see." She explains, "They're not saying... 'You are not looking at this, but they are asking the questions.' This is really changing the whole dynamic about the way we're thinking."

Southern partners want their ideas and practice to be considered and they need partners who will listen, observe and reflect before asking questions that can promote new thinking and ideas. They may be lucky enough to have such outside partners, but they might also have to be more assertive in expressing their vision

and needs as an organization and as practitioners. Critical to Sp5's reflections here is that she connects the possibility of these productive exchanges to the aforementioned widespread value of building a trusting relationship between partners. She emphasizes, "To go through that process in the personal relationship is really, really important. Because peacebuilding means relationship, right? But a genuine relationship and you just can't start a genuine relationship. It's a process. And how you're building that genuine relationship is most important."

Southern Partner 1 (Sp1) also narrates a transformative moment that transpires in the early years of partnership between her Colombian grassroots NGO and the large INGO from Europe as they work together on the re-integration of child soldiers.

There is something that I remember that was very interesting. We were thinking how do we promote human rights with these child soldiers? And we were discussing, observing, and this woman from (the INGO) told me something that was for me very significant. She told me, "Don't think about how to educate them on human rights concepts. Why don't we think hard about the skills you already teach (in your organization) – how to get along, how to share, etc. *When you get together with them what can you demonstrate that will help them understand human rights? This was very interesting because this is what we already do.* She said, 'I know this is part of your methodology.'

Sp1 describes the actions and reflections that occur as she works with these children of the Colombian war:

When the youth are asking about the significance of what they are doing, and about (our organization), we always refer them to good practices and processes that allow them to experience emotional tranquility. *But how interesting it was to have this conversation together (with this woman) because this is what we already did with the youth – we constructed meaning together.* In one incident, for example,

we created a group circle, a ritual of the Sierra, and we spoke about co-responsibility. When we are in a process of social inclusion we are teaching human rights like participation and inclusion...

From her story we learn how an outsider-partner, in this case a skilled practitioner within an INGO, can create a turning point in the partnership by helping the insider-local partners see their work with new eyes, or understand it in a different framework, while also affirming the work they are already doing. In this case Sp1 clearly realizes she was on the right track of teaching the youth to embody human rights in their actions rather than talking about human rights in an abstract way.

In the stories above, Southerner practitioners relay that their “Northern” partners respect what already exists, and that they value the local knowledge or skills before imposing or suggesting new ways to do things. It is difficult to know how often this type of positive collaboration really occurs in the field by the average practitioner or the multitude of international organizations working in the global South, but these reflective Southern practitioners certainly encourage Northerners to practice an inquisitive and curious model of interaction.

The voices of Northern practitioners offer additional insights on the benefits and challenges of bringing in new ideas and technology to their local partners. A northern partner, especially a large INGO with an established mission, most likely enters into a new partnership or conflict zone with some preconceived ideas and strategies for what might work, whether or not they share them upfront seems to depend more on the philosophy of the organization or individual practitioner. Np6’s

story of building partnerships in Zanzibar reflects some of the challenges faced by outsiders when they are starting a new endeavor.

Many of the partners in Np6's INGO are radio and television stations in conflict zones and these partnerships involve negotiating the content of the violence prevention or peacebuilding related programming. Finding media partners that share the INGO's vision is critical for Np6. "We want to do 'common ground' programming. So we need to find partners who are interested in, in fact committed to, getting behind what is often a new idea." Finding local media partners that shares a common vision or who are willing to embrace their vision can be a laborious process of dialogue and trial and error that unfolds during the joint production of radio or television shows.

Np6 says the launching of media partnerships and other violence prevention programs in Zanzibar was a "collaborative process" of dialogue between NP6, Zanzibari politicians, and her INGO's new locally based director in Zanzibar, a Burundian woman who brought with her a lot of experience from other African conflict zones. Np6 says that hiring a local person to lead a new program is often problematic for a place still in the midst of conflict, especially in such a tiny and politically charged space as Zanzibar. Instead, Np6 feels it might work better to have someone who brings the perceived "impartiality" of an outsider to initiate the country program.

Apart from the media programming, one of the main efforts in Zanzibar was developing a conflict transformation skills training that had emerged from Np6's

conversations with women members of parliament, particularly one female leader of the House of Representatives. Np6 explains how she (and her INGO) worked with the new Burundian director to develop a program centered on the goal of national unity:

When we began to talk we asked her (the Burundian), so what kind of people do you think would be good? And she would say something like well there's some good people on the mainland? We said, don't you think this should be Zanzibari?" We talked that through and then we agreed that they should be Zanzibari. Then we talked about gender and she asked what about having men and women? *We said yeah, we think there should always be men and women. Although this is a woman's program we don't want to make further divisions.* We discussed how to do that, and then we discussed whether they could have government affiliation or not? What would this look like? And we decided they couldn't because we would be working in the House (parliament) and they might know people from government, the ministries and so on, and it would be too much of a conflict. Then, we discussed if they should have a background in training? Well yes and no. If they do, that would be wonderful, but there are so few people that have it. *We didn't want to limit bright young people who have a lot of energy.*

The above dynamic is particularly interesting because it shows the types of decisions a reflective practitioner might consider when planning an intervention. Although it is unclear how much outsiders drove this process, or how much the Zanzibari partners were involved in the details, Np6's narrative reflects an interactive decision-making process based on their educated judgments of experience. Sometimes outsider-partners bring welcomed new ideas, as we see below, while in other cases (see Chapter 7) the outsider approaches may be less than ideal to the insiders at the host site.

Unlike some Northern partners who might be looking to simply support or accompany a local peacebuilder or organization in what they are already doing, it may be more challenging to shape, influence, or even incubate a new organization that you view as a semi-autonomous or autonomous partner but you also see them as part of your larger mission. A big part of Np5's work in Colombia involves bringing new ideas to the local partner organization she helped to create. She explains how part of her work as a practitioner -- and part of her international organization's mission -- is to support the work of their Colombian partner organization by providing them with information from their headquarters in Washington, D.C. and connecting them with their other partner centers in the global South, such as in Peru and Argentina where the "partners" are working on "extractive industry conflicts with communities and local governments." The Northern based INGO Headquarters "partner" thus serves as a network, acting as "a hub of information sharing." Np5 elaborates, "We want to build a bridge, and often it's very direct, where we say, "Hey Columbia, there's this interesting anticorruption program that the affiliate center in Romania is working on that would be really useful for Columbia."

In telling the story of Colombia, NP5 reflects:

There's a little bit of just mutual self interest in our partnerships and I don't think there's anything wrong that. So, for example, if there is a call for proposals or if we happen to have an opportunity with let's say the IFC, or a consultant in a country where we don't have an affiliate and we have a business opportunity, and we want to work with Partners Columbia. We come back together as kind of co-equals to say

you know it's in both of our self-interests to work on this opportunity. Would you like to work on this with us?

Over the life of the partnership such collaborations involve negotiating about funding and who will do what percentage of the work, etc. Again, she reminds us that it as a relationship of “mutual self-interest,” and says, “It’s a grown-up relationship.” Whether or not they jointly develop the specifics of their working methodology together is a little less clear.

In this Colombian case, however, where the partners were organizing a high-level, Track I-II dialogue series, Np5 shows why local and international partners often need one another. Not only can an internationally recognized and well connected INGO open doors and create access to those with power and influence, but its staff can bring a different set of lenses with which to view the issues and perhaps offer the coaching they feel the local partner needs to succeed. In Colombia, the new local partner was in the midst of convening, facilitating, and handling the logistics and Np5 and her Northern based colleagues came in and took a much bigger view of the process at the first dialogue series in 2009, “It was kind of an evaluation of that moment and (we) really talked to all the participants.”

Np5 and her team conducted many interviews to discover what people thought was useful, how things could be improved, and how the dialogue might be expanded into a multiday event. In telling us about these early stages of partnership, Np5 alludes to the experience an international partner can bring to a local partner who might be focused more on the minutia of implementing an event

or program than the larger peacebuilding objective. “To a certain extent part of that moment of partnership was around kind of the analytical value added by taking a big view.”

She explains the significance of her own role and how the interactions with the local partner changes to a more autonomous relationship over time:

This was a big deal dialogue and so I think coaching them and giving them the right resources to bring different high-level political types together because they hadn't worked at that level. We then attended the (dialogue) series the next year as an attendee and at that point it really just becomes kind of coaching. *We are a resource to them if and when they would like support or have questions.*

Holding a Space for Change

Not only do outside partners bring ideas and technology to a conflict setting, or to their local partners, sometimes they also bring an ability to create a new space amidst the seemingly impenetrable spaces already filled with the chaos of war and everyday tensions. In other words, Northern practitioners and their organizations impact conflict settings just by being there, sometimes in more noticeable ways than others. They may create spaces for events, training, or dialogue and problem solving workshops that bring people together and by doing so they become the convener. If done well, the outsider can be a catalyst for change, but done poorly outsiders can do more harm than good to their partners and the people they hope to serve. Northern partner 7 (Np7), a Palestinian-American living in the occupied territory of Ramallah, and working in Jerusalem, confirms this risk, “I think what a lot of time happens -- and I know one example was when my niece went to a talk

with Israelis and Palestinians -- the people holding the space were not good at diffusing these issues. In fact, the way that they handled it instigated more conflict.”

In contrast, one of the skills she feels the INGO she works for brings to its partnerships is the ability “to know how to hold a space correctly and make sure it’s not just holding the space.” Anybody could hold the space, she says, but its about “holding in the sense that it keeps everybody feeling protected, balanced, equal, and you know, to me, to honestly move forward.” She says they do this by “allowing for both sides to feel acknowledged, respected, understood and listened too without having to hold positions.” Unfortunately, Sp7 did not get to explain to me how exactly they accomplish those particular skills in those contested spaces.

Her story does showcase important partnership work that is not in the spotlight for those who might be critical to any peace or conflict intervention activity. As other practitioners have noted, an organization must be well recognized and respected to bring adversaries together in a shared inter-group space, whether it is a public or more secretive gathering. In other cases it might be safer for practitioners to connect with people only at the individual, interpersonal level and not publicize any outside-international presence or potentially problematic funding sources to potentially skeptical onlookers. Np7 tells us, for example, that the INGO country office she co-directs in Jerusalem is not really well known in the Israel/Palestine region, by either side, and that is deliberate. Thinking about the partnership work with the Ministers of Health and others she reflects on their

approach and provides a sense of how they create the safe space she referenced earlier.

You know we don't, per se, have the need to promote our work in any sense and the fact that the participants, people that we work with, know that we hold our work more important than promoting ourselves, I think draws them in more. I think the fact that they know that most of our work is "under the radar." You know, we don't publish those names. We don't publish our pictures. It's one thing we require of all our donors when we are reporting. You know the donor has to accept – even the US government. They have this rule and regulation that they have USAID labeled somewhere and we make sure that that is not necessary in our meetings and so the people feel, "okay, I'm safe." They feel that they won't be labeled or listed on the Israeli side. We're also not going in as a peace organization...We're by no means seen as a peace organization, so that also helps us. It has become a dirty word for some reason.

Her caution of being seen as a "peace" organization points to something many outside practitioners and INGOs might not recognize until they really come to know a place. "Peace" or "conflict resolution" could be dirty words for different reasons. In the Middle East it might just be because people are reluctant to keep speaking about something that never seems to come. But there or elsewhere groups that work for peace are often perceived as threatening to those who want the status quo.

In the above stories, practitioners have hinted at methods they use – dialogue, media, and workshops – but they have not delved as deeply into particular guiding methodologies or overarching approaches for their partnerships. The following narratives focus in on some particular methods used to build the capacity

of locals for conflict transformation and peacebuilding in their communities and nations.

Empowerment

In these narratives partners begin to talk about the notion of empowerment as they refer to coaching, mentoring, and creating access for their local partners. So what does coaching and mentoring involve and what does it mean? It certainly seems to mean consistently showing up, as Np6 conveyed as a critical component of her partnerships in Zanzibar and elsewhere. Northern Partner 5 states, “I went to Columbia eight times the first year. So that is a lot of face-to-face interaction.” But more illuminating than the number of visits is how Np5 makes sense of her interactions of coaching and mentoring during those many visits. “It’s a little bit of empowering the local partners to feel that they can come to say what needs to be said” when there are power imbalances between them and some of the more powerful stakeholders in the dialogue, or whatever the intervention might be. Maybe they want to say to the embassy or the vice president's office something about how the dialogue should unfold but worry about how that will impact their future relationships.

As an example of what empowerment looks like in practice, she says a local partner might be conflicted between those moments where they must meet their contract deliverables with the donor/sponsor and the potentially divergent moments of doing “what's most necessary for the process and the country.” Such

choices can be extremely challenging to learn how to confront as a local practitioner, she explains, “when you're a little subcontractor to this big contractor to this big huge donor.” Reflecting on her part in “empowering” the Colombian partner to address this dilemma, she explains:

Empowerment looks like talking with them about how they are designing a project -- saying yes you have contract deliverables but a year from now all these people who are managing the contract for these are going to be gone and you will still be here and you know that you can't just do these three meetings and have a report and then all the sudden present at the Congress. That's not going to work. So how can you comply with the letter of the law of this contract and do something that's a little bit more meaningful. I think having that conversation with them is empowering.

What Np5 is doing with her partner here seems to be a way of reframing the situation to reveal choices or new possibilities. She adds,

That was a key moment of me saying you're not just implementing a contract right now, your conducting a process for the good of your country and even when you don't have the money and you and these particular players won't be there anymore – I do think that was a moment of empowering them to think bigger than just the big bad donor and what the donor wants and sees as necessary... the deliverables in the contract.

Np5’s story begins to touch on what she refers to as the huge “power imbalances between donors and local implementers,” but it also highlights a trend of asymmetry between Northern and Southern partners in their access to different types of power. A certain amount of coaching and prompting might be necessary to help the local partner to not be, or feel, dwarfed by the sometimes poorly conceived demands of funders. Yet in doing this she recognizes that she holds a certain

amount of power as an outsider that her local counterparts would not risk exercising. She states,

We can say, 'That's totally stupid what they're telling you to do and that doesn't make sense.' And I think a local implementer would never in a million years say that or feel that they can say that. So sometimes what I say is, '*Tell them what they want to hear but do what you know needs to be done.*' Work around it a little bit and I think that's been a key moment of this dialogue process. The donor had these really dumb deliverables because you know they check a box and they really don't know even the substance of what they're talking about in the dialogue.

Her example describes the position of influence an outside expert might have and begins to get at why local partners might prefer to save face rather than confront the consequences of challenging funders or powerful decision-makers. Both outsiders and insiders may have to defy donor expectations and reframe their actions for funders in order to do what they know is best for productive dialogue and conflict resolution to occur.

In the case of Sri Lanka, Np9 speaks directly to both the issues of access and empowerment with her local partner (Sp5) who has confirmed elsewhere how her outside partner (Np9) successfully contributes to her organizations work. Speaking of her agency's work with Sp5 and others, Np9 says:

It's a kind of an *empowerment model*. We have a little bit of an idea of what we think might be useful in that setting based on some of our experiences with religious peace building other places. They have much better sense of what the details of that are, what the real needs are about who to work with, how to navigate the religious tensions.

She explains what that looks like in practice,

We're giving them resources and support... financial, but also training resources, even things like films that they can use in their workshops

or curriculum material and hooking them up with other religious peace builders. *But we are sort of taking a back seat and taking a lot of cues from them in terms of how – what the projects should look like in their details and how they should unfold and what they think the direction they should go in.*

For Np9, empowerment is “not trying to come in and say that this is the solution and this is how you do it.” All too often, she explains, international organizations develop a proposal that tells the local partner, “You’re going to do this, this, and this and we’ll give you the funds for it... and then you know they continue to drop in twice a year.” In true partnership one cannot “parachute in, parachute out.” Instead, its about taking your time and trusting that “they know what is the best way to navigate the local situation with what the local situation calls for and so it’s letting them be in the driver’s seat.”

Reflecting on how her U.S. institution engages with the challenges of religious factors in conflict, and how she contributes knowledge from her diverse experiences to compliment her partners’ more context specific wisdom, she states:

We recognize that all conflict situations are very vulnerable, sensitive, dynamic situations and that as an outsider of this (local) organization, we’re not going to understand all of the dynamics, especially the things that are under the radar, but that is even more so the case when it’s religious dynamics and sensitivities. Who within the religious sector do you engage with? What issues are red lines or potential landmines? So we are particularly careful about working through local actors and trusting local actors to understand and navigate the religious tensions much more than we can.

Practitioner Methodologies for Building Local Capacity

Practitioners based in the global North not only bring access, and a myriad of new ideas and ways of seeing things, they often bring a whole new methodology to their partners as they help people resolve environmental disputes, transform communities in conflict, or contribute to a national culture of peace. Although some outside organizations and practitioners focus on the use of media to reach the general public, or hold Track II dialogues where they supply the third party facilitators, the peacebuilders interviewed in this study focus predominantly on various forms of capacity building, including training their partners and co-training local people with their partners in conflict resolution/transformation skills. Their narratives provide a window into the nuances of how these methods work, and their active roles in making them work “in partnership.”

Asking practitioners what they do in the field with their partners as they engage in the myriad activities of peacebuilding leads them to reflect on their actions and beliefs and gives meaning to the methodologies they use. The goal of such questions is to get beyond a practitioner’s “good intentions,” or what they think about their case, to the practical implications of how they handled ‘X, Y, or Z, for example (Forester 2007; 2009). Most Northern based practitioners, and some of the Southern peacebuilders, describe what they do with their partners as some form of building the capacity of locals to address the conflict and violence that surrounds them. Mostly it involves training aimed at equipping people with the skills to

become facilitators, mediators, or trainers who can multiply the number of locals with the tools to address conflicts.

These Northern practitioners do emphasize the collaborative design of their train the trainer (TOT) approaches with their principal team of Southern partners, but several, as In Afghanistan below, also describe the initial trainee “beneficiaries” as “partners” who provide critical input into the development of the trainings offered. Such relationships between outside trainers and the recipients of their training may be a different degree of collaboration than that between organizations or individuals who sign a formal MOU. Still, it constitutes a dynamic participatory relationship that these practitioners describe as a form of partnership even if it is not formally defined that way. The following stories illuminate how peacebuilders use a variety of capacity building methodologies in very different conflict and post-conflict settings and also help us to understand what makes these approaches work in partnership with others.

How Can We Best Serve You?

In the Mindanao peacebuilding initiative, Northern Partner 3 (Np3) discusses how a partnership based primarily on training and capacity building might evolve in a way that best works for the local partners. He asks them a simple question really, but one that likely does not often get asked by outsiders coming in to provide training. He shares,

After we did the training and mentoring we asked how can we have the best use of our presence here as the international consultant? And they said we want you to go work with our partners in the field. So they arranged for me to go to the field for a week at a time to meet with local civil society groups and give lectures and trainings, and sometimes do strategic planning with them. One time I traveled to (an outer island), which seemed at the end of the world at that time because not many people reach there. And I had to lecture for about 300 people on the island because not many people come to that place so they wanted to make it big to reach out for the Mindanao Peace Building Institute.

This little story teaches us that outsiders must not only ask what their local partners need. They also must remember that there are multiple levels to any partnership and that those we partner with often have their own local partners whom they hope to transfer newly acquired knowledge and skills to. The story also reveals what Np3 has realized elsewhere, that what Northern outsiders consider to be “the field,” i.e. the country location in which they work, might be quite different than the more removed, often quite rural, notion of “the field” held by their local counterparts. Working in Mindanao is working in the field for Np3, for example, but the more local notion of what it means to engage people in the field would indicate the need to be discuss different interpretations and expectations about who and what is involved in collaborative fieldwork. In this sense, practitioners must realize that partnerships are not just about two individuals, or two organizations, but between two different networks that need to work together.

Training an INGO's Afghan Staff in Conflict Resolution

Np2's consultancy with a large INGO in Afghanistan is ultimately about training and building the capacity of local Afghans to have the conflict resolution related skill set to effectively manage and run the INGO's local programs. His narrative about his work reveals that these local-insiders are his partners in the development and implementation of the curriculum even though many become staff of the INGO's local programs. He focuses in on the methodology he used with the local team, those who would become the trainers who will implement the conflict resolution programs throughout the region.

We would say to them, 'Look, here are the materials that we have found that have been effective in various forms in different parts of the world...We often use a module on communication, understanding perceptions, and using good inquiry. That's just kind of the general rubric and here are some ways to do that. What do you think fits?'

He continues,

Or we would do a series of pilots where the group can help assess where that would fit or not fit with the Afghan context. What might be useful and needed and what wouldn't be? *So the most important thing is you do a training, but then you sit down with the group after and discuss what they would keep and what they would change.* It's like a focus group really.

Then we sit down and really start to modify the materials and then do a second pilot with real participants.... Once we settled on the set of curriculum per se, we would give them guidance and then based on what they did they would suggest what we should change, which we added to the teaching notes. It's all very iterative.... They work with us on the second draft in the teaching notes. They then do it again and revise it in light of their experience.

It's part of the collaborative process and it's about relationship too. If what we were trying to do is say, "Hey we have this collaborative, mutual relationship," but then you say, "Here are the teaching notes. Trust us, just do this." Then they are going to get the message that this is not really a collaborative relationship.

Thus, there is a foundational conflict resolution curriculum brought from outside the conflict zone, and its likely novel to the majority of the local population, yet there is a willingness by the INGO and its consultants to adapt it to the local context and culture through a layered process of interaction. Np2's larger realization about the methodology of his training and the general process of "North – South" partnerships shows an awareness of the necessary equality, or at least collaborative relationship, an outsider must strive for to avoid the all too likely asymmetrical relationship of dependency that occurs between international organizations/funders and local recipients in the global South. He questions the North-South dynamic:

Are you coming in from the North as the supplier of resources, whether it's funds, curriculum, or skills? What's the sort of model? Is your pitcher full and their pitcher empty and you're just going to pour some of your water into their pitcher? Or is it kind of a collaborative relationship?

In Kenya, Sp2 offers more insights into train-the-trainer methods of capacity building in partnerships. She tells us that partners must collaborate regularly and be able to rely on one another to successfully implement a large program, such as training Kenyans in a countrywide peace education curriculum. As the locally based implementing organization, Sp2 says they realized their target group of Kenyan

school children was very large and that the partners would need to bring their various resources and ideas to develop an appropriate curriculum and training structure. Her story shows that the level of planning for training educators to train students at the country level cannot be done in isolation, and that her local NGO would need support and expertise from her formal partner in the UN and from the Kenyan government ministry that was integral to the projects implementation. She explains,

The initial curriculum we had actually begun with writing manuals. A lot of preparation went into research to find out how and what other countries are doing, whether it is countries in Africa that have implemented the peace education. Then we looked at their manuals and their curriculum. Then we used the Ministry of Education's curriculum developers to draft a teacher's version... So it took a lot of preparation stages before it finally went into books, activity books, and teacher training manuals that are now being implemented in schools around Kenya.

Implementing a national program of that scope is far more complicated than it might appear to the average outsider. Sp2 clarifies that the program is at a national level, coming out of Nairobi, but says each district has its own government structure and way of working. As a local expert you might have the knowledge and vision of what is needed, but implementing it requires collaboration with your funders and larger organizational partners who have the technical resources to support you. She tells us,

So we had to go through the districts, build the capacity, or kind of do some training for the districts, the Ministry of Education officials, and now build the capacity of the teachers so that the teachers can reach the students. (The Peace Education Curriculum) had to be carried out in various stages in order to reach it to the students, because we did

not have the capacity ourselves to go directly to the children and teach them the curriculum.

As we might imagine, Southern practitioners often have grand visions, and wise insights, for systemically addressing conflicts, but they need the financial and technical support from international partners, or local governments, to carry these ideas to fruition. Again, the reverse may be true for other peacebuilding initiatives. Northern practitioners may offer new ideas or systems of conflict resolution/transformation and they cannot make anything happen without the investment, commitment, or insights of their local counterparts. In the following instructive cases, Northern practitioners reflect two comprehensive, yet very different, approaches to capacity building in conflict zones facing incredible land and natural resources challenges. These peacebuilders help us understand the actions of partnering as they describe the models they use and the work they do.

Building Capacity through Dispute Resolution Design Shops in East Timor

Np8 says the U.S. based for-profit firm, of which he is a founding partner, defines itself as “A stake holder engagement, collaborative problem solving and dispute resolving organization.” Primarily they consult on strategy design, formal training, designing dispute resolution systems, and serving as intermediaries when appropriate. Describing his partnership work overseas in conflict zones he reflects on the ripple effect of designing a new system that is built on strong local practitioners. “One of the things that we’ve found is the dispute system design is if you’re looking at impact it may be the greatest impact because you multiply yourself by however many people are in the system. If you design a system that has people and good ways of educating people about what’s available . . . you have good intermediaries, and all that, I mean, they can make a big difference.”

The overall process of these partners collaborating on the design shop workshops occurred over a period of about 8 months. Np8 and his Indonesian partners would travel to East Timor and go out and work together for about two weeks and then be away for a month and a half before coming back to work again. He clarifies that their role as outsiders was assisting with the design and capacity building through training rather than any type of direct mediation of conflicts, which he infers would be both inappropriate and likely unacceptable to locals when he says, "We're never going to be working in East Timor as mediators."

One of Np8's principal Indonesian partners, Sp4, also emphasizes why her organization focuses primarily on capacity building and support for people in the areas of conflict transformation and peacebuilding both in Indonesia and in East Timor. Discussing her organization's collaborative approach with Np8's Colorado based firm, she states:

We are building the capacity of the people who are going to work in those areas (of natural resource conflict). The reason I am not, or my organization is not, doing the conflict resolution intervention itself is because we believe that if we don't have sufficient time or resources to deal with the conflict directly it will make the conflict worse rather than really helping.

She then reflects on her partner's approach, showing us how he has directly impacted her organization's outlook and methods.

I believe from the perspective of (Np8) - when thinking about our work together in East Timor - that he just wanted to give them the knowledge and then expected them to use that knowledge on their own, adjusting it for their own local context, and then continue to work. *That approach encouraged us to do the same thing.* Both of us

understood that if we cannot dedicate our effort totally to the conflict, then don't even try to get close to it.

Dealing with the conflict “directly,” as she notes, implies an ability to be fully engaged on the ground in the communities, and be an accepted intermediary, as Np8 alluded to in his narrative of the appropriate role for outsiders. Sp4 again hints at a shared paradigm with her Northern partner regarding intervention. She tells us,

My personal opinion is that we, and maybe also our partner (Np8's organization), don't want to go in too deep into this kind of intervention. We understand the limitations of resources and availability. Because when working with conflict, even if you have a partner in a specific location, I don't think it can be settled in just one week, or one month. It's an ongoing or continuous process.

Np8's own story of how this partnership work with Sp4 points to the fluid boundaries of partnership. The peacebuilding projects that partners embark on are often not fixed in scope and may change or require additional partners as they develop. Np8 explains how the primary partnership with his Southern Indonesian partners evolved into a relationship with an East Timorese man and some of the challenges they all faced:

I would say the partnership expanded so that it had the three sides, because it then turned into (a partnership with) the Land and Property Directorate staff they (Sp4's organization) were working with. The Land and Property Director is the East Timorese entity under the Ministry of Justice. And, there was an outstanding director of the Directorate and he and many of his colleagues had been trained in Indonesia in land administration. He also was generally very well respected in East Timorese society and politics, although he had difficulties with the Minister of Justice, who did not like collaborative dispute resolution. She (the Justice) wanted everything to go through the courts, even though they had no courthouses. There were practically no lawyers, and one judge for the country. I think it (her

resistance) was because it was a combination of both control and I think that they didn't trust customary justice...

Although they had an advocate for alternative dispute resolution in the Director there was no guarantee a new system introduced by an outsider would take root due to the resistance in the existing justice system. Systemic change is difficult without altering such structures. Np8 talks about some of the unknowns when introducing a new model -- the Design Shop approach -- in East Timor and the criticality of having a local champion in the Land and Property Director.

The idea came principally from me, but it would never have worked if he wouldn't have been willing to do it. We called them design shops, which is essentially a collaborative design of a dispute resolution system and we'd recently done one with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Canada... and I thought, you know, this will really work, but it depends on how hierarchical Pedro is. He (Pedro) said, "This sounds like a great idea." So he brought all of his staff. He sat there and participated pretty much as an equal throughout the whole thing.

Luckily, Pedro was the type of individual who was collaborative and open about the process, perhaps emphasizing that the success of any outside intervention ultimately rests in the nature of those who lead it.

So now that the newly evolved three-sided partnership established that the partners could work together, and agree on the methodology, what did they actually do as the Design Shops unfolded in East Timor? Np8 tells us,

The first part was doing the situation assessment. Then we did another session where we actually did the design of their dispute resolution system and then we identified what were the particular skills the people would need to be able to do it? We did a five-day program on mediation and then a program on arbitration, even though we were never able to get approval through the Ministry of

Justice to do so. We wanted to set up either a land tribunal or a land arbitration system if (people) couldn't get voluntary settlements.

He adds,

We also then trained the East Timorese Land and Property Director staff in negotiation because if the government was a party then they had to negotiate on behalf of the government. If it was (a dispute) between private citizens, or between a private company and one of the community groups, or between community groups, then they could serve as mediators.

Those seem to be the foundational courses for building the system, yet Np8, Sp4, and the other partners, also trained local promoters, people "who could go out to communities to educate people about the choices that they had." The idea was to make the population aware of their options for land dispute resolution. To reach a decision on their dispute, "They could either go to traditional authorities...the equivalent of a District Officer, called the Chefe de Suku, or they could go to the Land and Property Directorate." The Land and Property Directorate, now trained in the new system, also offered citizens an appeal process if they were dissatisfied with any arbitrated decision whereby they could select mediation by an individual or a panel.

In summary, these narrative gems by Np8 and Sp4 give us a sense of the depth of their capacity building initiatives and why it could not happen without the right partners. Not only is there a commitment and vision, but there is also a sense of interdependency that likely occurs when outside partners are conscious about creating something sustainable with local partners.

Building the Capacity of the Nepali People through a Participatory Action Research Model

Np1's partnership in Nepal depicts a unique system for building local capacity that incorporates elements of a train-the-trainer methodology but over a longer time span and in a way where those being trained perhaps have a more deliberate role in influencing the conflict management/transformation system they create. Np1's narrative reveals how outsider interventions into a conflict may involve multiple partners and how new dimensions of partnership can evolve out of an initial partnership.

His reflections on partnering begin to reveal a methodology of training and interaction with local groups that aim to strengthen their abilities to become agents of change in their own communities. He describes those local groups who receive the initial capacity building and then carry it forward as his partners.

Our partnerships were with these land and water organizations, but more specifically with the small teams that were identified across the country who came for the early development phase of this and who subsequently developed into a subset of people who began to have a real passion for doing this (natural resource conflict management) and who would carry it to the next level of doing more capacity building using the *action-reflection model* of the seven modular training.

Np1 and his co-workers started with a diverse group of about 25 people who would participate over a period of about 24 months for the first development of the NRCT initiative with water and forest user groups. They call this capacity building initiative *The Seven Modular Training*, a model whereby small teams and groups come together seven times for 5 to 7 days at a time in a type of interactive workshop

format. Here he tells us a little about how the initial group came together and the action-reflection work began to unfold:

We asked (the Nepali resource group) to identify people who would come in teams from a very specific location, so they came from a common geography a local area or village. They came from different parts of the country, the mountainous areas, the planes, the mid-hill areas, they came from the East and West, and the teams were usually about three in number. The reason we use the team approach was that *each team would go back to their particular location and would take some of what we were working on and apply it into their location and then bring back to the next workshop what they either discovered, researched, or attempted to develop in reference to a conflict in their area -- and the difficulties that they were facing -- and that would form a part of the next modular training. In an iterative form we would add more layers of approach and capacity as we went along.*

Early on, Np1 and his local partners covered issues like understanding the dynamics of conflict in local communities and members of the group researched the types of natural resource conflicts that had emerged in their communities over the past few years. In subsequent workshops, he says, “We took account of the kinds of conflicts that they had and the social dynamics they described about what was going on. We'd introduce some ideas about conflict mapping in a simplified way, but mapping mostly meant that they tried to identify the sets of people that were involved in the conflict and to identify their views or perceptions.”

Np1 says he did not initiate the work with a preconceived model of mediation or facilitation for these forest and water group representatives, but instead he sought “to do it in collaboration with this set of people over the course of those 24 months.” Together they would discover “what they were finding that worked and didn't work.” The model then evolved over time as all the parties

worked together. It eventually progressed towards identifying a small set of people from each of the main groups in conflict who would “circulate around all the groups in conflict,” and inquire not only about their viewpoints but also elicit proposals for what might be done. In essence, the methodology was a form of community facilitation but with local insiders facilitating the dialogues. He explains,

It emerged with the model of people who were from the community. They did an assessment, developed a process proposal, got an agreement for everybody to participate, and then they facilitated the dialogue that would emerge around those issues. *It's an unusual kind of hybrid* in which the people involved in it participated directly in helping to develop that approach and it's still in evolution. There is nothing perfect about it. We are still learning and it's now in about its third or fourth year.

Np1's narrative thus reveals how a long-term approach to capacity building can evolve in partnership through by applying this participatory action-reflection approach to peacebuilding. Those 20-25 people who first participated in the “seven modular training” developed into what Np1 and the foundation that supports him now refer to as the “national resource persons.” These “resources persons” are now conducting a the second seven modular training in both the East and West of Nepal with roughly 50 trained facilitators emerging from that work; The original members are thus now “accompanying people” throughout Nepal “as they develop and learn more about the process, while simultaneously refining their ability to do it.” They thus learn by acting and reflecting on their interventions and training as insiders to the conflicts while receiving overall support and insights from the outside partner team led by Np1.

Summarizing the methodology, Np1 gives us a fuller picture of what he did as a practitioner, and what they did together, to act and reflect as they put the conflict transformation modular training to work:

It was people from their own community who knew there was a conflict and who together began to ask and inquire about it, identify who is involved, and then formed what we called a spider group, using the web analogy.... The image of a spider is of a small animal that moves around a space and actually touches each space that is strategic for that conflict, so to say. And in this case the spider was not an individual person, it was a spider group that was made up of 1 to 2 people from each of the main stakeholders in the conflict.

The spider-web approach requires *“a phase of some development where those people had to be carefully chosen.”* They initially received some support to develop their own capacity, says Np1, but then they would travel together to visit each of the conflict areas to get the perspective of the people in conflict and also figure out how to develop and propose processes that people in the communities could accept. He clarifies, *“This is essentially based on dialogue about where will we meet, who will we meet, how will we facilitate it? There was a whole process of also developing the way to handle larger group meetings that were mostly outdoors in fields, and under trees.”*

Np1’s narrative ultimately supports the notion, as other practitioners have mentioned, that outsiders often help locals see their work in new ways. In this case, however, participants came into the process narrowly focused on dilemmas in their own communities or groups and did not yet view themselves as resources in their communities, much less for the country as a whole. Np1 tells us that his role *“was a combination of helping them to understand, one, the overall need that we felt was*

there and to identify with them how they viewed the needs in reference to conflicts that were happening around natural resource issues in their areas.” Aspects of Participatory Action Research then became a way to develop a methodology that permitted them to develop new understanding about conflict and how to respond to it while also coming to see themselves as resources for the communities in conflict.

He describes the methodology:

We didn't actually sit down and train them in PAR, but we used assignments so that they were constantly participant-observers in the things they were doing. They were trying to do mapping, or trying to do a first set of interviews with people and gather their perspectives, with a return to develop a facilitation approach or process design. And *while they were doing that they were also observers of their own community* and what was happening, what worked, what didn't work, and we would shift and try and answer some of those dilemmas as we went along.

He continues,

It was the first time for almost all of them that they participated in a capacity building kind of workshop with a were just being given, 'Here's our program, here's what you're going to learn, here's the material and were going to do a three-day input on gender conflict,' or whatever the topic happened to be. So it took a while for them to get a handle on this methodology. It was really new to them to a large degree.

Np1's reflections suggest that the outsider should only lead to a degree and then must step back and be more like a guide, a watchful eye, that accompanies them on their journey and is also willing to be led along the way. He says, "My role was to constantly be watching for, and overlooking, what I was seeing and what I could propose that might respond to the needs that they were meeting or having difficulty with, how to shift or adjust what we were doing that would be more

responsive to those needs. So you draw on everything you have as a person who works in this field to be helpful in that direction.”

If capacity building relationships between trainer and learners can be viewed as partnerships, as many Northern practitioners claim, then this approach might get the closest to an equality of give and take since the learner really seems in control of the learning process after the initial stage and then brings the other partner along on their journey of conflict transformation. Culture is ever present along this journey, and the unknown path that other practitioners follow. Let us now turn to stories of how culture manifests in the “doing” of partnerships.

Cultural Dynamics in Practitioner Actions of North-South Partnerships

All of the instructive cases of partnership explored in this research embody some level of intercultural dynamics, generally played out in conflict or post-conflict settings between Northern/Western outsiders and non-Western insiders to a conflict zone. For many reflective practitioners, issues of culture and language naturally emerge as they describe what they do and how they work with their partners. In the earliest stages of partnership, many reflected on their identities and the impact their identity can have on building relationships. Now, as they get into their reflections on their actions in partnership, these Northern and Southern practitioners reveal that partnerships seem to work best when identity, language, and culture are consciously considered because these dynamic factors can be quite

challenging and even problematic in any North-South engagement, as we see evidence of in the next chapter, when they are not addressed well by one or more of the parties.

Western Collaboration in the Global South?

Outsiders based in the global North often have a foundation of collaboration skills, and know what it means to be collaborative. Southern practitioners educated in Western academies of peacebuilding or conflict resolution might also approach their work with similar frameworks. Nevertheless, as Np2 explains, outsiders cannot assume their collaborative approaches will be culturally relevant to their non-Western local partners. He emphasizes, “You want to get to a relationship where you can be collaborative in a way that will work. Being collaborative is a loaded term in a way. Is it American-style to be collaborative and say, “Hey Joe let's get around the table and collaborate.” Instead, one might be working “in a more stratified, status conscious culture” and the only way to get through that is to first build strong working relationships where people grow to trust each other. Collaboration might have more to do with how one relates rather what they accomplish. Np2 states, “When I'm talking about doing the collaborative curriculum development the more important part is the relationship aspect.”

A key to Np2's success in Southern Afghanistan was the long-standing reputation of the INGO, in which he says some of the same ex-pats have been working with communities upwards of 10-15 years. As noted in his earlier

discussion on the power of the transitive relationship, he claims that if the INGO had not had that enduring relationship over the past 20 years he and his partners would not have been able to collaborate in the manner of gathering local Afghans in a room around the table and saying, "Tell us what you think" in order to have the program best fit local needs.

The goal is to have them answer honestly and be 'bought in' because when we say 'Tell us what you think,' ultimately what's going to be happening is (we're) communicating to them that 'You're going to be teaching this, so you need to make this fit you, and if it doesn't make sense or you cannot imagine that you would ever get up in front of a room of Afghans and say this, then its not going to work...

NP2's work in Afghanistan was not just about training Afghans to implement the conflict management training, it was about developing the material collaboratively in a way that would capture their stories so they could write up their unique conflict scenarios and develop teaching notes together. As an example, he tells us how cultural/religious factors can be utilized in partnership and how outsiders might learn from insiders how to interact in ways that have a positive impact on the outcome of the project:

We had one trainer who for each model in the training had verses from the Koran you could use at the beginning. Maybe you wouldn't use that with every group, but in the South it was important to sort of start with prayer. He would start with prayer anyway, that was normal in meetings, but by picking these verses from the Koran that spoke to negotiation, spoke to understanding the mind of others, doing it with them out of respect... That was even better.

Acknowledge and Utilize the Local Cultural Context

Whether in Colombia, Kenya, East Timor, or Sri Lanka, Southern partners emphasize the importance of outsiders being attuned to the local culture and context, and speak fondly of those partners who actively take measures to adjust their work appropriately. In Indonesia, Southern Partner 4 realizes in “reflecting on how we designed the training itself,” that her Northern partner has an acute awareness of operating as an outsider within the local context. “He has “a lot of concern about how to bring out the Indonesian perspective and culture on the issues and matters at hand. He designed a program that highlighted the Indonesian perspective and also how the Western countries and cultures are dealing with conflicts.” He also utilized Sp4 as his guide and interpreter. Sp4 said Np8 would often defer to her local knowledge and in many informal settings would have her explain cultural and social issues. They would then co-train together so she could bring her skills and wisdom into the programs.

Northern Partners also speak often about the importance of having a local partner who can translate for the outsider. Its not just translating words but the far more complex context that a non-local cannot understand. In Nepal, much like in East Timor, there would be layers of complexity to the environmental resource conflicts that were difficult for outside partners to speak about in their capacity building efforts. Np1 says his Nepali co-facilitator might translate for 5-10 minutes when he has only spoken for 1 minute. The outsider may have expertise about the

context and even the dynamics of the conflicts at hand, but it he needs the partnership to make it relevant and also inviting, or acceptable, for many locals being exposed to the new information.

In Sri Lanka, for example, Np9 emphasizes that although she has knowledge of the process and intricacies of inter-religious peacebuilding that her local partner (Sp5) did not have when they were starting out, she could not make her training relevant or even welcoming without her partner. Np9 says of their working relationship,

She was able to make it all contextually relevant, so I might present on some of these issues but I think it's rather offensive, actually when an international trainer comes in -- and especially if I'm talking about religious bias or something and I try to point to bias that Buddhist Monks in Sri Lankan history have shown towards the religious minorities there -- like can you imagine how the Buddhist Monks in that room would respond to it? I can talk about the religious biases in Nigeria where I work or in Iraq where I work and I can say I don't know if that's applicable here, but in Nigeria what you see is blah, blah and it might be something that I know is kind of relevant to Sri Lanka. But she (Sp5) has been able to come in and sort of bring it all into the Sri Lanka situation. She has the trust of them. She is local. She is herself Sinhalese Buddhist. So she can say things that may be critical to Sinhalese Buddhists and so on, and I can't.

Another way outsiders can adjust to a local context is to fit in with the rhythms of the place and the schedules of the people living there. Perhaps one of the greatest cross-cultural lessons for an outsider practitioner trying to get project accomplished, while also building positive relationships, might be the need to balance efficiency with the necessary constraints of the local context. All too often, Northerners/Westerners forget that people in other cultures may place different

values on how they spend their time and what they prioritize in terms of work, family, and lifestyle.

Northern Partner 6, for example, recounts how she worked with the constraints on peoples lives in a politically charged, conflict riddled, and hot tropical African island. She describes the development of her work with the Minister of Public Service and Good Governance in Zanzibar, a new ministry created specifically to implement the government of national unity. She went to meet with the Minister, someone she describes as having “a lot of cachet,” and he told her, “I want you to do two things. I want you to train our senior staff and the second thing is I want you to do communications with the people so they understand what's going on.” She said they did both and then describes the flexible approach she employed as the work developed.

Something I've learned to do and that they are now doing is to fit in with people's lives and meeting people where they are. If I said, 'I want to do a 3 day workshop with your senior staff,' that is a, very difficult thing for them to do. So what I do, and I do this in a lot of places, is I do morning workshops, 9 to 12 with a break. Just short workshops once a month is what we do with them because it fits in with their day. They are all there anyway it just becomes a part of the day. Essentially what we do is we go in for the long-term. We are culturally attuned because of our people on the ground. We stay there. They are small things but to me this is the “stuff” of it. It's knowing these things and doing it in a way that fits the local rhythm. Zanzibar is very slow as you know and so you work with that rhythm. It's too hot not to be (going slow) anyway.

Summary

If the initial stages of partnership involve establishing a purpose and agreement for partnership, and the trust building that must accompany that, then the ways they carry out programs and projects together -- the doing that takes place as partners implement programs and build capacity -- might be best described as the middle stages in the morphology of partnerships. In the above stories we see that the success of outsider ideas and overall models of engagement like TOT and PAR seems largely dependent on the skills and demeanor of the lead practitioner -- how well s/he works with the local population and adjusts to the norms of behavior there. Sp5's words reveal that although the substance of what outsiders bring in information and access is critical, it's how they do it that matters. It's not a matter of "outsider" partners telling the local partners what they think is the right method or the best intervention, but rather a process of inquiry that helps the insiders critically reflect on what they are doing so they can see things anew and then make up their own mind about how to act.

Practitioners' framing of collaboratively designed train-the-trainer models and participatory capacity building with local groups as form of partnership raises some questions about the nature of partnership in those relationships, as compared to more formal partnership arrangements with written MOUs. Is there symmetry, for instance, in the relationships and does symmetry really matter in terms of the end goals of each of these so-called partners? Most of the capacity building cases

described by Northern-based practitioners lead to an effort to provide training for their Southern partners, and perhaps other local community members, yet outsiders are guided through the complex cultural and political milieu of conflicts zones by their local hosts. Although it might first appear that INGOs and outside experts are generally the party adding valued resources to these collaborations, both sides are far more interdependent on one another. If the Southern partners are not “empowered,” or given the space to contribute their own ideas to these methods of conflict intervention, then true partnership does not exist and the dynamics of partnership might be better characterized as a hierarchical, neo-colonial arrangement.

Perhaps Np1’s action-reflection version of PAR perhaps gets closest to a give and take model of partnership in capacity building. This raises a question about the relationship between capacity building and empowerment. If there is such a thing as outsiders empowering insiders, the PAR model does seem to reflect the ideal of an outsider introducing a set of ideas and way of thinking that gives new power to insiders on their own terms. Np1’s approach of not having a preconceived model for the ways his Nepali partners would develop the mediation and facilitation techniques, for example, emphasizes the characteristics of a participatory partnership.

Some practitioners claim there is not much difference between mentoring, coaching, and capacity building. They are instead just different descriptions of the ways they work with others, which might be best described as various forms of

empowerment. A teacher-student relationship may exist as far as the process and new concepts go, but the students are the experts when it comes to understanding the local cultural context and the intricacies of communication, as well as how local structures operate, like the indigenous Nepali natural resource user groups. Finally, empowerment emerges in practitioner narratives as a process of outsiders asking the right questions or restating things that allow insiders to speak and think about their work in new ways. Sp1's experience of suddenly seeing her work through a human rights lens, or Sp5's experience of viewing the Sri Lankan conflict over a longer time-frame, gets at the notion of empowerment as a discursive practice between partners.

Something else to question is the responsibility outsiders have when they decide to engage Southern partners or communities that may indeed embrace the help but did not consider it before it was introduced to them from the external practitioners or INGO. If outsiders are the brainchild of new models of conflict resolution, for example, but local partners willingly participate and take it forward then how much responsibility do the Northern partners bear if things fail or people get hurt in the interventions their newly formed Southern partners engage in? Is that just the risk people take when they try to transform violent people and places?

The partnerships explored here come across as inter-dependent model partnerships in many regards, especially as we have seen in the way they act together, but how equal is that interdependency when the outside partner typically brings the resources and can leave at anytime or perhaps find another partner if

things don't work out? In this regard, North-South partnerships seem to be odd interdependent relationships because international partners probably could not engage effectively in foreign settings without local partners. Yet outsiders usually have more choices, the power to choose when it comes to which local partners they want to work with in any given setting. Local actors have fewer choices and are typically dependent on the funding of outsiders to accomplish their larger objectives and thus they are vying with other local organizations to find international donors and partners. Furthermore, the objectives they strive to implement may have been introduced by the outside organization/donor.

While the above reflections share the many positive actions and approaches practitioners take to make partnerships work they also begin to touch on factors like culture, language, politics, power, and money that complicate partnerships overtime. In brief, partners bring different cultural backgrounds and languages to their collaborations that alter the dynamics in important ways. The main partners might all speak English, for example, but those they serve at the grassroots level may not. Northern partners who are culturally sensitive, and even those who have experience in the locale, will still not fully understand the nuances of the socio-cultural and political context, or the various identity groups that reside there, without assistance from locals. Perhaps of greatest concern is how the flow of money, and the power that accompanies that, creates asymmetry between Northern and Southern partners. The following chapter goes much deeper into the actions

and methods partners do together by emphasizing critical moments and turning points that arise from these complicating factors.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CRITICAL MOMENTS AND TURNING POINTS IN NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

Given the opportunity to reflect, peacebuilding practitioners from both the North and South recognize a variety of similar factors that surface as their partnerships with one another progress and unfold. They describe some core obstacles in these outsider-insider partnerships and then often provide us specific instances of how these challenges arose, sometimes got resolved, and sometimes served as a turning point in the relationship or in how one party approached their practice or the partnership. This chapter presents these events as “critical moments” in the morphology of partnerships. Leary (2004, p. 143) states, “Events and exchanges that are ‘critical’ are distinguished from more usual ways of working in that they carry urgency and are associated with a subjective sense that ordinary controls or rules no longer seem to be in play.” Although many practitioners have looked at critical moments in negotiation it has currency in all practice disciplines (Druckman 2001; Leary 2004a; Forester 2004; Cobb 2006).

Many critical moments unfold in the course of partnership. Some moments are the result of unforeseen and unexpected dynamics that occur as partners act, while the roots of other challenges might be present before partners start working together in the field. They are critical because they present disruptions for one or

more of the practitioners, or for the overall flow of partnership, and can signal a turning point in the relationship or collaboration. Critical moments show us that although the morphology of partnerships might have recognizable stages (building trust and signing agreements, etc.) there are non-linear “turning points” throughout the course of North-south collaborations that might signal a new direction or a change of attitudes. Cultural, social, and political factors present interesting dilemmas as outsiders and insiders work together. Intercultural dynamics in the interpersonal relationships of partners are present throughout these instructive cases but are given more attention as important factors - critical moments - by some of the peacebuilders.

Dilemmas around money are so prevalent in the discourse that the topic warrants its own section below to explore critical moments that transpire as a result of funding dynamics. Unequal power between Northern and Southern Partners runs through many of these narratives on difficult issues and the critical moments that accompany them. In summary, the critical moments and turning points described below manifest in different ways, sometimes in interpersonal moments between practitioners and in other cases they unfold in larger group or context moments. How do these challenging moments impact not only the partnerships and the overall work they are trying to accomplish, but also the individual partners? Lastly, do these critical moments/disruptions get resolved and how? The following sections demonstrate different types of critical issues in the morphology of partnership and how, or if, resolution was attempted or needed.

Interpersonal and Intercultural Disruptions in the Flow of Partnership

Let us turn to specific stories of critical moments, what we might call disruptions in the flow of partnership, and try to understand their impact on these practitioners and their North-South peacebuilding collaborations.

Confronting Unrealistic Donor Expectations

Reflecting on what she thinks empowerment looks like in practice, Np5 tells a story that weaves together cultural, language and power dynamics that can unfold between a local partner and an influential donor. She shows how the international partner can also serve as cultural broker -- typically a role of the local partner -- by acting as an intermediary between the local partner and the Northern donor or other foreign partners.

The woman who worked in the US Embassy's public affairs office at the time they were organizing the very first Columbia dialogue series was just a piece of work. I mean she was like a screamer; someone who would just fly off the handle and scream at you and her Spanish wasn't very good... So there was a lot of running interference with her, where I could talk her off the ledge a little bit. So she would unload on me, saying things like, 'Why didn't they give me this thing on time?! I was supposed to get the participant list and I don't have it yet....'

She goes on,

Sometimes there were actual language problems (between the donor and the local partner), like 'I thought he said this and I misunderstood because we were having the conversation in Spanish.' *There were*

translation issues, but then there was cultural translation, like (the Colombian partner) saying, 'Oh yeah, it's coming to you.' But there is the American culture that says, 'If I said I needed it today at 4 o'clock, I meant I needed it today at 4 o'clock! Because I got a boss that responds directly to the ambassador!' But when (our partner) says, 'I'll get it to you today at 4 o'clock,' he probably means by this Friday.

Sometimes the Northern partner has to mentor the local partner about these intercultural differences and how to deal with expectations from those that control the purse strings. Np5 describes how she resolves this critical moment that could have led to a breakdown in the overall relationship between the partners and the embassy.

It was a little bit of me coaching (our partner) that when she the U.S. Embassy staff) says 4 o'clock, she means 4 o'clock. And that was a one-on-one coaching resulting from them complaining to me and her complaining to me and me translating to both of them kind of what was going on or supporting them to say, "Hey listen you can't be futzing around with her, you've got to step up and deliver when you said you're going to deliver or just say, 'I can't get it to you now.'" Because you know Colombians are really nice and will really never say to your face something you don't want to hear.

This last point really drives home one of the cultural divides that might surface between Northern partners/donors and their local partners in the global South – the individualistic task oriented nature of many from the West and the more collectivistic cultures that tend to value the preservation of relationships and personal reputations (saving face) over being direct and to the point about what they want or need to accomplish (Hall 1959; Hall 1989; Ting-toomey and Kurogi 1998; Stella Ting-Toomey 2001). Of course such differences exist on a continuum, varying greatly among individuals in any culture, but they are also often accurate

enough in many cases that both sides in North-South peacebuilding collaborations should be prepared for such challenges.

Testing the Limits of Friendship in Partnership

Sometimes interpersonal and intercultural dynamics lead to difficult moments that present challenges not only for the individuals involved but also for the larger organizational partnership or the conflict resolution/peacebuilding effort in general. In the case of Afghanistan Np2 recounts the challenges of befriending those you work with in a cultural setting where the lines between a professional and personal relationship might be blurred.

There was a guy who was in the initial group of trainers, in the Afghan group, who was a great guy. He was very appreciative of being involved in this and very committed. *I really believe he was committed personally to what we were trying to do for Afghanistan and how we were trying to do it, and yet he wasn't a good trainer.* He got into the process fairly far until it kind of came to the point where it had gone through a couple iterations of pilots, trying things out and being in front of groups, and it just didn't work.... There were people on the INGO side who were also disappointed in him.

He continues,

The training team had to make a collective decision and say, "Sorry but we are going to bring in some different trainers and you're not going to continue on as a formal kind of trainer in the program. You're not going to be one of the Afghan staff who ends up taking this forward." For Np2 it was particularly challenging and was a turning point in their relationship and in the way he thought about both his engagement as an insider to the INGO and as an outsider to the local population. "It was a really tough conversation. It was one of those where it's going to be difficult no matter what. In any culture and any relationship he was going to be disappointed."

Np2 then reflects on the core problem in that critical moment of the relationship. "If I had a put my finger on it I would characterize it as, 'But I thought we were friends.'" He then elaborates on the dynamic and gives us a sense of how friendship might become problematic in a train-the-trainer relationship or any formal partnership.

He and I were pretty close... like big hugs all the time and we had some great conversations! I guess what I would've done differently is sometimes I think you get caught up in the good feelings part and not giving the feedback as strongly as I probably should have given it in the context of that relationship. Because I probably was doing the, 'Oh were friends, I don't want to upset him too much or I don't want to take the risk of upsetting him.' And so I regretted that. Along the way you kind of get caught up in that, 'Wow everything is great!' There are parts of this friendship that are deeper than parts of friendships with people that I've known for a lot longer in other contexts.... You get to that acceptance point where you get into this kind of friendship point where you don't want to jeopardize that all. You sort of rest on your laurels.

We can see how such a turning point might arise in any partnership if one does not anticipate how to address the personal side of the relationship when there is a hitch in the working side of the collaboration. And as Np2 emphasizes, it would have been a difficult conversation in any context. But Northern practitioners also need to be mindful of cultural and power dynamics that they bring with them as outsiders when they collaborate with Southern partners or engage any local peoples in their interventions. He explains why navigating relationships might have been particularly challenging in the Afghan context:

You have a certain kind of relationship that was more important than whatever work it is that you were doing. There are different attitudes

across cultures around “there is work and there's personal.” In some places those are separate and in some places it's difficult to separate them. In this relationship I would say we did separate them and ultimately errors appeared where I felt bad, he felt bad. But there were folks at (the INGO) who thought it's about time we get rid of this guy.

The relationship was ultimately saved, at least from the perspective of Np2, which provides some resolution to the critical moment where the relationship was altered. He shares, “But even afterwards I would say we were able to reconnect, so the friendship that was there before wasn't an illusion. It was stressed by this a bit. It built-up expectations, it built up his expectations to a point that they shouldn't have been, in all fairness.” For Np2, the ultimate resolve might come in that it altered how he engaged with local partners going forward. Such turning points can therefore occur at both the personal and professional levels of partnership. You have to be aware of that and act. He tells us, “You can set a tone to the wishful thinking of, ‘Well the other stuff will work out . . . versus being more willing to really push the relationship, or push the interaction maybe further earlier.”

Ultimately, this story of Afghanistan is instructive because it highlights an asymmetry that is often present in North-South collaborations; where one party might have more power in the decision making and in the course the relationship takes as it progresses. Friendship is not just challenged by cultural difference but by unequal power. Friendships might develop naturally, but in the end Northern partners, or outsiders generally, may be a source of knowledge or financial resources for their locally based partners.

Finding Local Advisors to Navigate the Political Landscape

Those who work for social and political change will inevitably face resistance and obstacles along the path of their work. There will always be those who resist a redistribution of power in any place as politically and ethnically divided as Zanzibar, Tanzania. The peacebuilder has to be prepared to step into difficult moments where s/he might say the wrong things to the wrong people or simply may be misinterpreted. Np6, in her experience trying to establish partnerships and implement programs for her INGO, tells us why, for her, it is important to not take things personally when navigating the complexity of local politics in a conflicted society. In the following story, she conveys a critical moment where things did not go as planned in her efforts to build a new program with members of Zanzibar's House of Parliament.

Some of the cabinet members had come across a paper written by a very senior South African politician who had been a part of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy and so they asked me if I knew him - *he happens to be a great good friend of mine* - and they said, 'We would really like him to come meet with the cabinet.' So I went ahead and contacted him and then I went to the Minister of State responsible for government (in Zanzibar) and said, 'Your colleagues have asked for this and he's willing to come and I've been able to find some dates. What do you think?' And I couldn't get a reply from him.

How often are practitioners faced with the challenge of whether to proceed or not when certain decision-makers fail to respond or simply choose not to communicate within your timeframe? It is often a critical moment in an intervention or in the process of building a program because expectations from the

involved parties are high and you, as the convener or third party, have played a central role in creating those expectations. Insider partners often know how to handle such disruptions better than their outsider Northern counterparts simply because they are more familiar with the sociopolitical or cultural context at that moment in time. In Zanzibar, Np6 did not know exactly how to handle the lack of response from the Minister whose approval was needed. So she did what a reflective practitioner ought to do, she did not rely only on her own judgment but asked advice from locals she could trust.

I got some elders... two very senior people, very highly trusted, very involved, and they became my advisors on everything in Zanzibar. That's an important piece. I was always going back to these advisors to say, 'What do you think I should do because I can't get a reply from him? I went to his office...?' And they said just move it ahead, move it ahead, and so I moved ahead and I told the people I was in contact with, and a week before - I hadn't paid the deposit for the hotel that I found, a resort just north of Stone Town - this minister finally calls me and says, 'I don't think this is the right time.' And essentially what he was saying is we don't want outsiders (the South African politician) coming to do this yet.

The impact of such setbacks can be devastating if you are not prepared for them because your reputation might be stake. The seasoned practitioner is steady in such critical junctures and will seemingly go with the flow and trust that things will work out despite the uncertainty of what lies ahead. Np6 explains,

The moment that he said to me, 'We don't want to do this now,' I had the first reaction of 'gasp' (all the air going out of her!). You know what's going to happen and then taking it personally. *But I'm experienced enough to move through that very quickly and to be able to come out of that.* You know I'm human. So really training ourselves is such an important piece of this.

She adds,

We have to have tremendous consciousness and be disciplined inside ourselves, to remember these things, to remember it's not personal, to remember that people are doing what they need to do in terms of their bigger picture, to remember that things work out in different ways, and it's for the best, even if it takes you in another way... These stumbling blocks come all the time.

This critical moment in the early development of partnership with members of Parliament could have been a real setback, a negative turning point, if she did not handle it sensitively. She had to cancel everything she had put in motion and she did not want the decision to be too divisive politically, since the Minister who said “no” was from the ruling party and most of those who vocally supported the visit from the South African belonged to the political opposition! Np6 explanation of how she handled this gets into some of the nuances of capacity building and building trust with local partners that have been central to discourse of the practitioners in this research.

He was from the ruling party, because it's a government of national unity. But one won and one lost, and the way they have done it is that the winning one is the boss. It's not quite what I would think of as a government of national unity. There was a delicate situation where I didn't want to, in any way, add to or create conflict between them. I had to handle it with the other cabinet members, from the other party, very, very carefully and make sure that everybody knew that it was fine. We had become close, all of us, because you know when you're coaching people, when you spending time together, *they never knew it was 'coaching them.'* But I spent a lot of time with them, listening to them, asking questions and providing feedback, and building up trust.

Np6's reflection tells us that keeping it simple and using few words might be the safest route for addressing such a delicate situation and hopefully resolving the potential disruption to the project and partnership.

I had to find a way to thread the needle without in any way being blaming or divisive -- telling the other cabinet members who were so keen to have him there because they really liked his work and what he'd done -- and so I did it in 2 line emails to everybody. I just said, and I had to tread a very fine line, 'I had a good talk with Mohammed (the Minister) and he doesn't think this is the right time. So we're going to postpone this and will do it when the time is right.' I needed not to say, 'Look, your minister has put the kibosh on this,' because that would be divisive. But if I just said, 'Oh, the South African can't come,' I would be covering up and they would all know.

There might be multiple pieces to resolve in any "critical moment" that arises between outsiders and insiders partnering in capacity building or other conflict interventions. In this case of cancelling or postponing an event we learn there is a balancing act between maintaining trust and confidence with our local partners and, on the other hand, not burning bridges with those outsiders who were previously invited to participate and who we now have to disinvite. Open communication is not only about clearing things up. It is about learning new things that we may not have considered. Practitioners thus need to have enough contextual knowledge and local assistance to fill in the information gaps that are not provided, as Np6's narrative describes,

I went back to the South African - he was a very senior cabinet minister first in the apartheid government and then under Mandela. He asked me good questions, political questions, which taught me. He said, 'So was he (the Zanzibari Minister) delivering a message?' And I said, 'Yes, he told me that it wasn't him speaking.' The minister said a couple of times to me, 'Look I'm delivering a message.' He had to be

very careful. And I knew exactly where the message was coming from because at that stage there were people who were in the government (of National Unity) but against it - people who didn't want this - and I knew the conduits. You know when you're in a place and your working at this level. You know.

The conclusion of her story signals a message that perseverance and trust in one's overall objective can lead to a positive outcome when faced with critical moments, but we likely need local partners/advisors to see our way through it.

So I went to my advisors and I asked what to do and they said just keep on with your work, don't worry about it. What it did, it worked out well the end, it released some funds – it was quite a big chunk of money to pay for it – because it had to be very top class for the cabinet members. Releasing funds gave me an extra mission and that gave me the time to raise more funds and keep the missions going, and then keep going back. So things work out in mysterious ways.... Now he (the Minister) actually wants to do it. I got a message in February that he now thinks it's the right time.

The above stories reflect a wide skill set and certain awareness as outsider practitioners navigate these challenges in a way that preserves their relationships with local partners. In other partnerships, INGOs and outsiders might act in ways that are quite problematic for their Southern partners, putting strain on the partnership and potentially causing harm in the conflict setting. In the following sections, Southern practitioners shed light on core issues that lead to such critical moments.

Respecting Local Knowledge and Methods

Southern partner 1's partnership work with ex-child soldiers in Colombia is insightful on many levels perhaps most for the potentially harmful impact it reveals Northern Partners can have on Southern partners and those they serve, even if their overall joint collaboration does more good than harm. Her instructive story also shows that partners might experience challenging issues like decision-making around methodology and program control in very different ways. That is, it may impact one-side far more than the other and thus be a turning point for that individual but not their partner(s). Before narrating the nuanced lessons of a particularly critical moment in her work with the European based INGO, Sp1 first speaks generally about the vital need for partners to listen to one another and for outsiders to respect what is already in place. She states,

What we have to work to do is get our partner to listen more. They have to accept that we have produced knowledge that is adjusted to our local context, our political history, or social processes! Because many times organizations arrive with the magic solution to the problems that we have.

These problems are compounded by the impermanent nature of Northern Partners and their staff.

I think these challenges and discussions take place whenever there is a change in personnel (with the partnering organization). If there is a new director (for the *INGO*), we have to have this discussion again. If it's a very administrative person then they don't really understand these discussions (of methodology). But every time a new person (ex-pat) arrives we always have to return to clarifying these things.

First, Sp1 reminds us that it was actually a shared vision around the methodologies for engaging youth that led to partnership between her grassroots non-government organization and the international NGO. She explains,

One of the most interesting things was comparing our methodologies. We have a methodology that incorporates the *elements* of art – theater, video, photography etc. - and we are very proud of what we have developed. And we began to share our methodology with our partner, let's say we recognized that were getting results from the children reading, telling stories, and what the children were saying.

Things became problematic, she recalls, in certain moments “when our partner was sharing workshops with us they wanted to intervene and give us recommendations, such as telling us, ‘Why don’t you do it this way or work that way?’ And this was not easy.”

Such advice seems problematic when unsolicited, even though positive learning may come from it. Her narrative conveys the need for outside partners to respect insiders’ knowledge of local context and ways of working despite the control that the funding partner might feel or perceive.

We already had a lot of confidence in what we do. We have a lot of familiarity with our methodology and it appeared to us to be a little bit of an interruption in our work. *It's like when others give you their opinion and you have not asked for it....* Because we felt that *in some form they consider themselves to have a superior knowledge* of how to do things because they worked in so many countries. This bothered us some. Because we had done this work with the knowledge of Columbia, we had studied in it, and had a lot of success with it.... They were providing us with funds and something that we always clarify with our partners is that we receive the funds but we hope that they will recognize our methodology.

It appears that a common appreciation for overall methodology allowed the two organizations to resolve most impasses and continue to collaborate, even now, but it has meant Sp1 and her organization making some difficult choices, including a willingness to carry on after a particularly disruptive event. She reflects, "I think what allowed us to really resolve our differences is that we realize that they had respect for our approach and we had elements of the project that they liked." Her story suggests that both sides of the partnership had to realize the give and take nature of their interdependent relationship, an awareness that might only come with a strong and reflective practitioner like Sp1. She explains how she held her ground in the beginning when the Northern partner was suggesting how the program should be implemented.

We listened to them and they told us their experience and we shared ours. And afterwards we thanked them but told them that this project was ours. We initiated the project and when they arrived we already had formulated how we wanted to do it, how we wanted it to function, because we had experience with prevention. We had already begun to teach the contents and processes that we are going to use in the project.

At the heart of this issue of local control for Sp1 is the fact she and her organization will remain doing the work even after their outsider INGO leaves. She explains,

The organizations that don't have the money at the end of the process, that receive the funds, have to continue on. An organization like us that receives funds also needs to say, 'I want to have a discussion. We have our proposal. I want to listen to yours but I also want you to listen to ours.' I think it had an impact in these terms. Local organizations need the capacity to discuss, to argue, and in our case, for example, to write and present our own solutions.

This story of an outside organization failing to listen to its implementing local organization, and its practitioners, shows how not listening has larger consequences. It can lead to jeopardizing young lives. Despite their mutual respect for methodology and having worked out their differences on overall implementation of programs in the beginning, Sp1 tells us why she still felt unheard and the consequences that had on her organization and the youth she was supporting in her work. Her detailed and rich story is best told in her own words:

I remember an experience with (the INGO). We (Sp1's organization) had been working on a process that we coordinated with a group of youth for two years. We have been working with them on psychosocial development and also on their life goals. They had organized an armed night watch group for the conflict (prevention). It was a network of youth to monitor the conflict.

It occurred to our (INGO partner) to select three or four of the youth to lead the network. These four youth were those that talk the most, converse and speak out in public. This decision in particular bothered me a lot. It bothered me how they chose them without a discussion with the larger group, without agreement from the group, without using a process, when inside the youth group they were ready to organize their network.

But (the INGO) chose these four as leaders to travel the world, to get to know famous personalities like other youth who had lived in conflicts and written books about it in the United States or Holland. I thought it was a bad idea for children who were not ready for this and to promote this as if it was something that the youth wanted or desired.

I told them (our partner) that I was not in agreement with this approach. I think it should be process in which we plant the idea in the group, where they share their experiences and the group has time to transition to the point of choosing its representatives. I planted this idea with the youth and with (our partnering organization) but they

didn't listen to me. They didn't listen to me at all and they decided to continue with the four youths they chose.

I wanted a process that lasted at least six months where the youth learned how to work together, what is a network, and at the end of the process they would decide who's going to represent them and for how long. They needed at least a year for this whole process. (The INGO gave a time frame for funding of 3 months).

They (the INGO) came to visit with a very particular interest and they guaranteed these youth that they were going to travel the world, get to know others, and many other things. I told them again, 'I'm not in agreement with this process because it should be a process. To construct an organization, construct a network, should involve dialogue. It's a collective and they should decide who will represent them.' They invited an ex-child soldier from Sierra Leone who had written a book and was living in New York. He came and the four Colombian youth shared experiences with him with the idea that they were going to start a network and work together on this and all of that.

But these kids didn't have any experience and had just begun the process with us.... The youth themselves didn't feel it should be this way. It's as if you chose representatives for the United Nations but nobody in Colombia was involved in that decision! They chose these four youth to be the heroes, and have a huge responsibility, when they were not ready for that.

She continues,

These youth were in this position for about a year and the (INGO) was giving them resources, sending them on trips, giving them opportunities for exchange, and at the end of the year they realized that the group/network of youth was not continuing. It was a question of not having respect for the other youth, let's say. And then they (the INGO) suspended everything, and took everything back. This was very painful for those youth because they said, 'We didn't ask for anything. They invited us to accept this and so why have they taken it away?'

This also affected us (our organization). We had to tell them. 'Yes but we never named you all to be chosen. You shouldn't have accepted because it should have been a process that you all chose.' It was a very powerful and difficult experience that ended up affecting more or less

a group of about 120 youth. And especially these four youth who had to return to being normal kids without any of these things that were promised to them. And they came back to us asking for help. I did tell them, 'Look, we tried to talk to you about this at the beginning but you didn't listen to me.'

Sp1 explains how although such critical moments in North-South collaborations might eventually have some positive outcome, they can also create very damaging consequences. The outside's organizational partner may not even become fully aware of these consequences, or change its behavior, if the Southern partner chooses not to confront the INGO's failure to listen in order to maintain the greater good of the overall partnership. She explains why addressing problems might be hard and connects this critical moment of not acknowledging local context to the problem of size, turnover, and change that occurs within Northern partner organizations.

In the end it opened up a space for dialogue with the youth, but not with the financing organization because *the two people that organized the whole process resigned and left and new people arrived that didn't know or understand anything about that* (process). The new people really didn't know the story, like it never happened.

She explains why such a transition might occur,

It's almost always a foreigner directing the program and the professionals that they direct are Colombian. So the leader is a foreigner and the team that follows her direction is Colombian. In the case of (this INGO) they have more or less a dozen associations/partnerships in Columbia. We are only one of these organizations.

Such disruptions really impact small community based organizations that remain with the tasks and relationships on the ground. After it was all over, she

claims, "We maintained a relationship with the youth that had been involved...with some. But many became distant and did other things. They were left very hurt by it all."

Saving Face in East Timor

Unlike the case above described by Sp1, Np8's partnership with practitioners in Indonesia and East Timor is characterized by his Southern partner (Sp4) as an exemplary case of respect for local knowledge and practices in partnership. Yet even for the seasoned and culturally sensitive outside-practitioner, it is not uncommon to face obstacles and uncertainty. Np8 tells us here about a critical moment that arose with one of his principal Indonesian partners and how his other partner, Sp4, helped resolve the disruption in their work together.

I really wanted (him) to come and do one of the programs. He's an internationally recognized human rights lawyer, he really fought against Suharto, and he has taken really interesting and tough cases. H has great credibility. I kept writing to (him) and I could never get a response back... I was being pushed by the East Timorese to schedule times to come and I couldn't get an answer. Finally, I was so frustrated, I wrote a letter to (him) and I sent it to (Sp4) and I said, "I'm going to send this letter to (him) but I need to have you look at it first and to tell me what to do!?" I wrote it and it came back right away. 'Do not send this letter to (him)... if you do, you will damage your relations for life...' Because I was very blunt -- you know, being a blunt American -- and Indonesians, who are sort of like Japanese, are very, very indirect. Sometimes they'll go, 'Oh, it will be difficult,' which means, 'Don't even think about this! It will be impossible.'

Np8's decision to consult the partner who he was in regular contact with, and who was the non-responsive partner's colleague, was thus instrumental to preserving the relationship and the partnership. Np8 shares how Sp4 helped,

She said, 'Let me talk to (him)_and see what I can figure out why he's just not being responsive, because that's not like him.' The next day we talked on the telephone, and she said, 'I found out why (he) has not been responsive. There are two things. One is he's a little bit afraid for his safety because he does not know how people will respond to an Indonesian.'

The second thing Sp4 relayed to Np8 in that important call was that the other Indonesian partner wasn't sure how the East Timorese would respond to an Indonesian because of the number of people that had been killed during the Indonesian occupation. So, Np8's other partner (Sp4's local colleague) was very sensitive to the way he might be received. Np8 says he did not recognize this dilemma in part because Sp4 had recently been working in the same East Timor locale and her unresponsive colleague "was not a person who would normally be afraid." Np8 then pondered the difference of working in East Timor versus Indonesia where this partner had been taking great risks as a human rights lawyer. "I guess maybe risking your life in Indonesia, where you may have strings that you can pull to get out because of connections, was different than going someplace where you didn't have that."

The story also shows how the line between what can be attributed to culture and individual personality can also be challenging to decipher. Np8 says of his partner,

He's also extremely modest. He told (Sp4), 'I'm just not sure whether I can really contribute anything.' So (Sp4) called me back and I talked with her, and I said, "Well, for one thing I think you've been there and I, we've, really checked it out. I think the safety and security is not really an issue. I know he may be worried but I don't think it is, and so you need to talk with him about that. Second of all, we need to acknowledge that there probably are East Timorese who will hate Indonesians, but as you know in the group that we're working with that's not the case.' And then she said. 'How about, the issue of what he has to contribute? I said, 'You know, I think he has a lot to contribute and I'm really willing to work with him and sit down and talk about, you know, what he wants to present, what he thinks is most relevant. We can talk about the context there, and you know he can decide really what they want, or what he wants to present.' "

Np8 explains that he really pushed for his participation because he felt that it would be really important for the East Timorese participants "To meet someone of his intellect, and stature, and what he can provide." Np8's experience also told him it would be important for the East Timorese to meet another Indonesian "who actually was involved in the same struggle they were in for Democratic control." He eventually did indeed decide to participate, but what is most fascinating about the resolution of this critical moment, is how Np8 really came to understand the cultural cues to resolving such impasses as the lack of communication he was experiencing with this partner and the key role Sp4 played as an intermediary.

Emphasizing the nature of problem solving in Indonesia, Np8 describes a conflict resolution process he later witnessed while working with one of his partners on Indonesian processes for intermediaries.

Whenever it's tense, Indonesians work things out informally or quietly, and then something will happen. I was in Indonesia one time, we were in a meeting, and we watched and things looked like they had been intense, but everything worked out. And I said, 'So what's

happening?’ He said, ‘What they’re doing is they’re doing a role-play and the role play is they had issues, they talked about it, worked it all out informally, and then said what they were going to say during the meeting. Then they all get in the meeting and they all say what they’re supposed to say, and that’s what they do.’

He continues, making the connection to the critical moment he had with his partners,

Well, they were working it out; the role-play was just everyone following the script of what they’d already worked out informally through this subtle diplomacy, which is how they work. I thought of course, why didn’t I think about this? I mean, that’s why I essentially sent the letter to (Sp4), but she said, ‘Don’t show the letter. Let me just talk with him about the issue.’ So she did and he ended up coming. *It was a really good lesson about how not to be so direct. Be willing to check it out with someone from that culture, be willing to use an intermediary, even when we weren’t technically having a dispute. We just weren’t able to communicate well and he probably couldn’t have directly articulated some of his concerns to me without being embarrassed, so it allowed for face saving.*

This instructive case of resolving a critical impasse speaks to the value of having a strong, strategic relationship with insiders who can help provide advice and bridge any potential cultural or contextual misunderstanding between partners, like the advisors that Np6 sought out in Zanzibar. Reflecting on it, Np8 says, “It’s another example of an intermediary as someone who is not totally neutral, or impartial, because (Sp4) is a colleague and (he) is her mentor.” He concludes, “We have, you know, this great collegial relationship, so she has a dog in the fight in that she’s interested in preserving the relationship and being able to do good social change work.” Perhaps having several partners, or at least advisors, is a critically

important piece so when there is a disruption in the flow of partnership the outsider has someone to guide him or her through the impasse.

The Many Faces of Power Asymmetry

Critical moments in partnership are often sparked by the inevitable tensions that arise real or perceived differences in power. Power manifests in different ways of course and it is useful here to listen to some overarching practitioner reflections on the relationships between power, money, and local control before presenting some of the specific case examples below of how they manifest into critical moments and turning points in partnership.

Np3, a “Northern based” practitioner from Palestine who brings both the global North and South perspectives to his work, says the North-South partnerships he has been involved with are all challenged by asymmetric power relations “where people in the global South are dependent on you in various ways.” From his experience, he reflects on some of the critical factors that lead to dependency on the Northerner-outsider, particularly in the area of resources. He says, “One of them is the technical capacity that you bring.” He explains that the level of people that he typically work with “are weak in the sense.... that they do not have much, if any, exposure to literature, to programs, or experience in design.” Instead, reminds us

that its “the one who comes from the North that usually has the ‘so called
“expertise.””¹⁹

Np3 reminds us that despite the relationship of dependency, Southern partners have their own forms of power and knowledge. “I think the local partner has the local expertise, knowledge of the culture knowledge of the context, and also knowledge of the needs. And also the capacity to deliver.” He continues,

One way to look at it is both sides in the partnership have different bases of power. You come with the money and the expertise and the local partner has the local expertise. There is a dependence on you in administering the funds, in making the books accountable. These are serious issues. Many times we have issues with how qualified is the local organization in handling bookkeeping to receive funding? There is a level of asymmetric power because of the funds.

These are wise observations that any outside partner might do well to acknowledge before they engage in the global South. Many of the factors Np3 describes unfold in the Northern practitioner narratives of instructive cases described below.

Southern Practitioner 1 offers another view on asymmetric power and how it impacts partnerships.

If you (as the international partner/donor) give up a little bit of your power then you can work a little bit more equal with the other. What I'm telling you is that these organizations, in some form or another, have power, and they work with local organizations like us that are not so powerful and this can present difficulties. *They may give you resources but you have to accept many things.* I'm talking about many

¹⁹ We should carefully consider the issue of outsiders coming into foreign conflict settings as “Experts,” even if the local recipients might respect that title. In my experience, it is critical to acknowledge the expertise of locals, even if at times they are more likely to show up to work with an outside “expert” over someone from their own community.

international agencies that I know, with whom we've worked, in general.

Sp1 continues,

In general all of these entities have a certain amount of power and this power in a certain sense is revealed when you talk with them and you construct an agreement. It's a little bit about, "how will I have control over the project/over the local partner? What will I do so they will tell me the results? What can I do so they will comply with the numbers, with our requirements?" I'm talking in terms of overall control and this is related to the theme of power.

Now let us turn to some specific critical moments and turning points that stem in part from imbalances in power between partners. First, we turn to a story of working with asymmetry in what might best be characterized as a "North-South-South" partnership in the Middle East.

Identity, Asymmetry, and the Challenges of Accountability in a North-South-South Partnership

A disruption in the work between Np7's INGO and that of the three ministers from Jordan, Israel, and Palestine reminds us that partnerships are often complex, multi-layered collaborations that may include additional individuals and parts working in the "field" who are attached to the primary parties, but whose actions, or lack thereof, impact the overall dynamic of the peacebuilding endeavor. In many ways this story blurs the lines of North-South partnership or at least reveals the layered complexity of such distinctions when a Palestinian-American/insider-outsider works for an INGO inside a region where her primary identity group is a

party in the partnership her organization is supporting and thus also a primary party in the larger regional conflict that motivates the partnering work.

Np7 describes a critical moment in the partnership where she and her co-workers had to confront one of the Jordanians, who are “a sort of sub-partner” in the field on the Jordanian side. He was not doing the work that needed to be completed for the program supported by the three Ministries to move forward. Although it might first appear like a simple solution where the Jordanian Minister could have just dealt with the disruption the sub-partner was causing, such critical moments in partnership are never easy to resolve when politics, identity and power asymmetry are at play.

We sat in a meeting, hours and hours there, with the three ministries and there was discussion as to who should approach this Jordanian partner - and the Jordanian deputy ministry was there ... There was kind of a debate amongst the Palestinians, Jordanians and Israelis that since the Chairman of the Board right now is an Israeli, he should go ahead and make direct contact with the partner and just resolve it and tell them that A, B and C has to be done; otherwise it's not going to be effective. The Palestinians didn't want to interfere because the Chairman was in charge, even though they were technically partners. The Jordanian didn't want to say anything because it was his side that was not doing the job they were supposed to do.

She continues,

So I had to kind of mediate that because it was clear that the Israeli should not be the one that should be the one going to the Jordanians, even though he is the Chair of the committee. I had to work through that and explain to the Israeli, 'While even though you are the Chair, I don't think it should be, 'Hey, I'm the Chair and checking in on you. Why aren't you doing your job effectively?'

Np7 explains,

I think it's going to be taken as, 'The Israeli is the one telling us what to do.' At the end of the day, they took my advice and we put it on the Jordanian to go talk to his partner and if that would not get done, then we (the INGO) would intervene directly... So in the end that is what happened. The Palestinian and the Israeli from our office suddenly had to go to Jordan and make it clear that 'If things don't operate well we have to drop you as a (sub) partner.'

The case suggests that the outside partner has to be able to see the bigger picture and be able to suggest a strategy or take action if the immediate partners are unable to do so. The moment seems to demand balancing the dynamics of identity, power, and politics in the Middle East in order to prevent a rupture in the partnership with the INGO or in the relationship between the three Ministers. It signals a turning point in the way the partners see one another and their communication with each other. Probing a little deeper into the story we can see the complexity of the moment in Np7's reflections,

I think that there is a positive and negative here. The plus is that three Ministries of Health were so close to each other as ministers, that they really didn't have – you know, they weren't willing or able, because they're such good friends. I mean they usually speak their mind and speak what they want and what they need, and in this particular case I think that they were so close to the issue that they really couldn't kind of step out of their friendship of how close they are and say that this (openness) wouldn't necessarily resonate with the other partners. So they're close relationship kind of blinded them to the fact that the rest of the world and the rest of the partnership does not operate this way.

Np7 gives us a sense of her actions as both an individual practitioner and as a staff member for the INGO.

One, I had to work with the actual deputy ministers to bring up the sensitivity of the fact that even though you three are quite confident and comfortable with each other, the other partners are not as comfortable with each other and so for an Israeli to go and talk to

Jordanians in the field would be unacceptable and my role was to flush it out and they all had to agree. Then, on another level, (the INGO) had to intervene and go and actually do the work and do the reprimanding -- if you want to put it that way -- to resolve the issue, because they weren't able to do it on their own as Jordanians.

Identity looms large navigating this critical moment of the partnership. Her identity as a Palestinian-American, and that of her British-Israeli co-director, which allows them both to both operate as insider-outsiders, features prominently in their ability to help the partnership move past the impasse.

I would say that the identity factor probably plays the most effective and is the red flag, you might say, as to why I need to step in... Being one step outside of that circle and being also a Palestinian helped me say, 'Hold on, we're missing a small nuance here that the Israeli telling the Jordanian what to do might not be the most appropriate way to take this forward.' So it's me being a step outside of the relationship that directs the dynamics, and then definitely being a Palestinian and knowing the sensitivity of an Israeli telling an Arab what to do...

Important to our understanding of this multi-level collaboration, she explains her co-director's role and the kind of partnership they model within the INGO's country office.

Ultimately an Israeli was also involved in settling the issue - what we try to do always at (The INGO) is not -- whenever it is possible -- not to stick to the typical, to say, 'Okay, let the Palestinian director go or the Palestinian project manager go to Jordan. You know, I mean that is not the point of common ground. I mean, we want all nationalities to mingle. So if it is at all a situation where the Israeli can go with the Palestinian... We try to make sure that both sides are there, because that's how we represent the office.... You know we actually want to walk the walk. We want to make sure that we're representing and that we're doing and acting upon what we would expect others to do. That's why, in the end, (the Israeli co-director) and the Palestinian representative was the best team to go and bring it up with the Jordanians.

Np7 and her practitioner colleagues often find themselves working to balance power in other ways between the ministries and other collaborations between the regions polarized identity groups. Northern based practitioners, and those embedded in international organizations, have emphasized why asymmetrical power, often most profoundly felt in funding and access to resources, is one of the greatest challenges to establishing a successful partnership. Partnerships are further complicated when the majority of work that practitioners implement in the field involves asymmetrical relationships between the parties. Northern Partner 7 explains how she and other practitioners in her INGO work in Israel/Palestine to address imbalances in power and knowledge that exist in their partnerships.

Unequal access to knowledge/power can present critical moments and turning points if not managed as Np7 describes about her practice with the Ministries of Health from Jordan, Israel and Palestine.

The asymmetry that exists between Israelis and Palestinians in that (work) is always very evident and very clear In general, the majority of Israelis have a better educational system. They're advanced in the work field more. They've had more exposure, more experience. Even though you bring, for example, the two Ministries of Health, they're really not equal in the sense of experience or qualifications. The Minister of Health of the Palestinians hasn't done what the Minister of Israel has done as a career, as a person in his field. So you have that imbalance already and then you have the psychological imbalance always for the Palestinians - the Israeli is the occupier.

This seems no small dilemma when, as the outside international convener/partner, you are trying to create an equal playing field in an asymmetrical partnership. We might make the case that any collaboration between Israelis and

Palestinians resembles a North-South relationship in terms of pure access to power and resources. Perhaps reflecting from her own position as an insider-outsider, she describes how this imbalance manifests.

So there is always this dynamic of being the lesser of the two when you're in a room of Israelis and Palestinians, even as high up as ministries. You'll have the Chairman there, the Israeli, the Palestinian and the Jordanian there and you could easily pick – if you've been around long enough, you could easily pick up on the fact that *the Israeli seems to always be a little bit more confident and the Palestinian seems to always be more...not submissive, but more apt to not speak his mind* and prefer to speak his mind directly to the Israeli later, as opposed to in public.

She says,

You deal with a little bit of that psychological dynamic in all projects bringing the Israelis and the Palestinians together. In some cases, it will reverse itself in the sense that you'll have Israelis that are sick and tired of hearing about being occupiers....

The North-South dynamic within the ministry partnership is evident here, even if they are aiming to treat one another as equals. Many Israelis who have engaged in dialogue processes with Palestinians will resist participation, she says, because their feeling is, "We're sick and tired of being labeled the occupiers all the time and so we don't want to deal with the Palestinian side... They always want to claim that they're the victim."

This apparent dueling victim narrative appears to manifest itself in most of the work Np7 does that brings the two sides together, regardless of the real power differences that exist between them. It may not be evident among the Ministers of Health who are working in partnership, but it could be there in a latent form or play out in the fieldwork that they oversee. So how do Np7 and the INGO address these

challenges? They often convene different types of problem-solving workshop forums as a way to level the playing field, build trust, and foster shared learning.

Np7 says diffusing such tension is probably one of the best attributes of her INGO, as well as being co-directors with her Israeli and the benefits that brings, but bringing the different sides together is not an easy task given the risks for participants, especially with the anti-normalizing campaign she described in which “Palestinians are not supposed to meet with the Israelis and if they meet together they’ll be blacklisted.”

People have faith in us – one because we’re an International NGO, but also because (she) as an Israeli and I, as a Palestinian, have been living here. We understand the conflict and the dynamics of the sensitivities, so they’re more willing to cooperate with us. I think we’re the only NGO right now - international NGO - that is very successful, quite frankly speaking, at dealing with cross-border issues and it’s mainly *because we know how to diffuse*. We know what’s going to come up and we know the issues have to come up. We hold a space for that to happen and then we help them work through the feelings.... Once the Israelis and Palestinians get what they need off of their chest with the posturing, then we’re able to help them move through the different phases of this. That’s how it will work.

Her story reminds us of the risky nature of the work these peacebuilders do, especially the possible dangers that face those who participate in these interventions when others in their communities resist change.

Identity, Transparency and Dependency in Nepal

A plethora of critical moments can arise throughout any North-South partnership, especially a long-term peacebuilding effort like Nepal, where Np1 has

been engaging for close to a decade. A critical moment for the outsider might come in the form of facing the challenge of helping your local partners be less dependent on outside solutions and to see themselves as owning solutions to local problems. Some critical moments might be far more complex than any one practitioner can address, such as the larger sociopolitical space, but nonetheless it impacts the partnership and can lead to turning points in the way the relationships and work unfold.

Np1's reflections reveal a number of turning points in the lives of partners and in the dynamic of the partnership itself. One major turning point in a partnership might be when one of the parties realizes he has changed as a result of the work or the training provided by the outside partner as we see below in the case of the Mukta Kamaya, bonded laborer.

"Who am I?"

One seminal turning point in Np1's partnership work reveals itself in the transformation of one of his local partners. Capacity building, what some might term empowerment, often leads to altered ways of seeing oneself, a struggle with one's identity in different contexts, and the challenges that presents to others in one's community who have not been exposed to a new way of thinking or acting in the world. Exposure to new practices, where people go from just being a part to conflicts to being a resource for change – as in mediating or facilitating community conflicts – can complicate an individual's identity. Np1 says the critical moment

with the Kamaya is “the kind of dilemma we got when people came back from the field.” His dilemma was “I am from one group, and now I am working with this other group, so now when I go out there ‘who am I?’ Am I supposed to be pushing for the agenda my primary group of bonded laborers? Or if I have to facilitate, does that mean I don't have any opinions?”

The idea of being an insider-outsider facilitator, wearing two hats so to speak, was completely new and likely quite complicated among the political realities of forest, water, and bonded laborer groups vying for land and natural resources. Np1 and his other partners thus had to be prepared to help those they trained work through such dilemmas. From this example we can come to understand the important role outside partners might play in coaching and mentoring locals who go through a transformation, so that such a critical moments can be a productive, rather than destructive, turning points for the Mukta Kamaya and thus for the web of relationships in the Nepali partnership.

There were other related turning points for Np1 that had to do with the overall cultural milieu and the ways insiders perceived the role of outsiders.

Expecting Solutions from Outside

When outside experts come to work in foreign settings there may often be an expectation by the locals that these outsiders not only bring resources, they bring answers, and they bring solutions to problems that have not been resolved locally. Why else would they be there? Well, Np1's story teaches a model of engagement

that leads people to find their own answers and yet it is a process that likely takes time to incubate in a conflict habituated setting. Np1 explains how the resource team he helped train through PAR ran into challenges while implementing the conflict analysis and community mediation techniques:

With the *local groups expecting solutions* that again was the kind of thing that happened after people went back to their local communities and started this process. They said, 'As soon as we go to people to talk about the conflict the immediate thing they want is what is the solution going to be? And we haven't even done the mapping yet.' The expectation in Nepal is that if somebody comes and says 'I'm interested in your situation,' then their immediate responses is, "Good, bring us a solution." (Chuckles).

If we reflect on the collaborative nature of this North-South peacebuilding intervention we can see how such a moment might be seen as a critical turning point for the various parties involved. First, the resource team was under "a lot of pressure" because "they had to convince people of a different approach," rather than just expecting solutions from outside. It had to be an approach that would deliver a solution. Second, this dynamic puts stress on the primary partnership with the Northern based foundation and Np1 because it disrupts the speed of accomplishing what we might presume to be their larger goal of the Nepali resource team carrying on the work in a self-sustainable matter. Np1 tells us it was a challenge over the years that remained a complicating factor in the partnership.

Until we worked through a whole process a time or two. The local communities never fully understood what was happening until the end when they discovered that they were participants in helping to shape the solution rather than waiting for this person or team to come with the solution for them, which is the model that there much more

used to - you got a problem then you go find somebody bigger and better to answer for you.

So with perseverance, and the right model of engagement with local partners, the resolution of such critical challenges as “dependence on outsiders” can be surmounted and lead to a potentially monumental turning point in the relationships partners have with one another as they work for non-violent solutions to complex natural resource conflicts.

The Problem(s) with Money in Partnership

Money is of course a powerful medium that has been known to create stress and potential problems for any type of business relationship. In North-South peacebuilding partnerships, money typically enters the relationship in the form of funding from the outside partner to the local-insider partner and thus creates or adds to an asymmetrical and often dependent relationship dynamic between donors and recipients who are often wed in some form of partnership. The narratives of Southern and Northern practitioners reveal that peacebuilders are deeply affected by these dynamics in their work. They speak generally about the dilemmas of money in their partnerships and often present stories of critical moments that give us a sense of how funding dynamics arise, disrupt partnerships, and sometimes get resolved.

Funding dynamics for Northern and Southern partners are quite different, yet intimately interconnected. While Northerner partners worry about accountability, transparency, and potential dependency in their Southern partners, the Southern partners fear too much power and control by outside partners and also worry that the need for local people to survive may misguide their initial peacebuilding/development objectives. Sp5, referring to numerous local organizations in Sri Lanka, says many people get trapped in the cycle of chasing the funding opportunities regardless of whether it fits their mission accordingly. She reflects,

I think that is one of the mistakes we are doing here... Honesty and being genuine in organizations is somehow missing because of the competition for the funds. Every time that a funder is coming all the key staff is totally behaving differently. I think it's not healthy for anybody. When people are coming with funding from outside, (local) people are pretending, and they (funders) can sense it. It's so confusing for me because I know that funders know that, but then I feel like this is like a game, you know? Everybody playing their bit to survive.

She then relates it to her own observations with Np9 who would eventually become her partner through Np9's North American based peacebuilding institution:

Most of the organizations were more open and transparent with her (Northern Partner 9) when she was coming first as a student, right... because she was a researcher, not much taken seriously, and she very was free to go to the field and meet people and participate in activities and all. But when she is coming as a funder, the situation is very different. Luckily she had a very good understanding of Sri Lanka and organizations when she came as a funder.

In Nigeria, Sp3 sums up the problematic relationship between power, funding, and dependency in a way that supports Sp5's claim that both Northern and Southern partners play their part in sustaining an imperfect cycle.

When talking about partnerships between North and South, or between the United States and Africa, it is a one-sided partnership because you find the North is giving all the resources to the South.... That is why those who bring money control the project. At times we don't like the approach but because they give the money *we have to dance to their tune*. We have our input, but the larger input comes from the donors.

A general problem of peacebuilding and development projects in Africa, he emphasizes, "Is the logistics and the travel take almost 40% of the funding. Traveling from the UK or from America takes a lot of money (that might otherwise go to projects). He suggests that although it is not always the case, outsiders need to be mindful that "A lot of so-called ex-pats from the UK, people with expertise in peace building want to bring more funding to engage their own citizens...and I think that's one of the challenges that we have." He describes his own partnership with the British government positively, but says it is a dependent relationship of "one way funding, because we don't bring anything to the table financially. We only contribute in-kind, not in cash. That is through administering the effort."

Np3, in discussing his work in Africa, the Middle East and in Mindanao, also connects the challenges of asymmetrical relationships to funding and the varying time frames that outsiders commit to their local partners. Outsider time commitments vary greatly, as we can see by the ongoing relationships many of these reflective practitioners have with Southern partners, but they will always be limited

in scope compared to those partners who live daily in or near the conflict locale.

Here he reflects on the moment when the main international NGO that he was working with as a contractor in Mindanao reduced its funds and began to pull out:

Of course it was challenging. I say (the intervention) was successful because we trained the staff, but then the sustainability issue required continued funding. As a result, when (the INGO) either did not find donors like USAID or another entity to give the money they found this as the rationale to say, 'Look we spent years, 6-7 years, in the same project and they should be on their feet now to do their own work.' Which I think is a good argument, but one needs to build towards that. I see that as a good partnership where an organization is willing to commit 5 to 6 years of core funding to staffing in a north-south relationship. I think that's crucial.

Np5's experience in Colombia demonstrates the challenges International NGOs have in extracting themselves from the cycles of funding dependency they may create, even when there is an explicit goal that the local partners will become self-sustainable. There is reluctance by the outside partner to detach from the donors because of the benefits it brings to them. She recalls the initial funding relationship with her INGO partnership in Colombia.

When we talked about creating partners Columbia, the US Embassy said, 'We've been doing this (dialogue) series for 12 years and it's something that we would really like to Colombianize. We think this is a really needed space, this three-day event to bring different thought leaders together, in a very factionalized and still very conflicted environment, but we don't want to fund it ad nauseam when we think that Colombians, if they value it, should be able to do it on their own. So perhaps (the new Colombian partner organization) could be a kind of facilitator for this process and a technical secretariat.' So how this worked was they funded us. We got a grant in the US and (our) partner in Columbia was the sub grantee.

This type of funding relationship is “*the crux of power dynamics*” in partnerships, she says. Her example of the donor/grantee/sub-grantee relationship sheds some light on the nature of dependency and how Northern partners might perpetuate it if they connect their own survival, or perhaps their reputation or “relevance,” to the project and the funds it provides.

That's probably the main issue in my experience, how funding is really divided and at what point you in the United States give up your funding from the international groups so it goes directly to the local organization/partner. *That's very challenging, I think, for international peacebuilding or conflict resolution organizations because you want the model of being able to have your relevancy.* So a lot of times you hold onto the relationship with the funder very tightly. In this case partners Columbia had existed for a year and what we did is we helped run around the country building support for Colombian organizations, private companies and foundations, to support the Houston series.

Politics, Transparency, and Financial Accountability in Nepal

Np1's statement, “Much is hidden from the eyes of the foreigner,” reveals the complexity of factors like local politics and social norms that can impact peacebuilding efforts but might be largely beyond the control of the individual practitioner/consultant whose main focus is on training and building strong relationships. The following story reminds us of the multi-dimensional layers of some partnerships, when there are both outside donors (foundations, INGOs, governments, etc.) and individual practitioners or small organizations that are also partnering with the local partners. Here he provides the context for the challenges with partners from the local resource management groups in Nepal:

I think in terms of partnerships, the hardest dilemma that we faced was one that has a lot of nuances. The federation of forest user groups is a membership-based organization. It's made up of local community groups and they are very large. They have grown fast and they have maybe 7 or 8 million members overall, a lot of community user groups, and they have kind of a modality by which they should rise in leadership. But over the years of course there is a lot of (political) power to being at the center of that movement. So the elections get rather hotly contested and this of course came in the post-war period and (The forest user group), like all organizations in Nepal, is not based in one particular party. The political parties contest those spaces so members are from different political parties and that can create difficulties in the organizational structure.

He continues,

Basically in Nepal every kind of space that is significant is contested politically on a partisan basis. Political parties are sort of in the life of everything and when the political parties are in very competitive party politics it has an impact immediately on much of what you do in this kind of initiative... Those are very subtly underneath the surface. It's also about which political party has greater capacity, so it creates a lot of complications.

Np1 explains the relationships between the political landscape and issues with financial accountability for their partner -- the natural resource group that was holding the sponsoring foundation's funds for the conflict transformation initiatives in rural Nepal.

So my biggest dilemmas that emerged over the years was while (the forest user group) was conceptualized to hold this space, it tended to want to dominate that space and the (its) central committee wanted to use some of the funds for other purposes and some of the audits. So there were all these questions of how do you interface between an international INGO, or foundation... and the partner that is receiving the funds, and have due process and transparency?

These dynamics are extremely complicated during, and just after, elections. Np1's narrative describes just how invested an outsider can be in the fate of his partnerships, but some things will be outside of his control.

A good colleague of ours was actually just elected to be the first chairwoman of (the forest user group organization), and we are very proud of it, but the internal divisions within the organization have gotten pretty significant and *they did not have adequate modalities for accounting and transparency*. That part of the partnership has struggled for a number of years, so while NRCT (Natural Resource Conflict Transformation) was growing from the ground up in its efforts, it was running into issues of how it can continue if there weren't the necessary accountability and transparency issues that had to be sorted out. That actually slowed down our process for a period of time.

These types of issues might result in a series of critical moments that impact the dynamics between partners and eventually lead to a more significant turning point in the partnership. Resolution might therefore be an ongoing process. But again what might make Np1's case unusual is the long-term investment and commitment to work through such challenges, whereas many North-South collaborations might terminate after 2-3 years due to funding regardless of their progress or stage of development. Np1 contemplates how the challenges of politics and funding might be resolved and his own role in it.

It's a problem on the one hand of growth - that NRCT is growing. Sometimes when you grow you have growing pains, but it's also the problem that the culture of organizational development and organizational behavior in Nepal doesn't always match what is needed in the kinds of normal accounting and transparency procedures that INGOs and foundations require. That was an area that corresponded more to (the Foundation and its program officer). It wasn't my direct responsibility, but it really had a complicating effect on the pace of what we were doing because things got held up at

different points. My work was not to represent (the Foundation) in those areas. My work was to accompany the development of the initiatives on peacebuilding, the actual program development.

He elaborates,

But for program development work you need the right procedures in place for (the foundation) to continue to provide the funding. And that's what became complicated.... Right now were in the 10th year during the course of this year I think there will be some decision about whether NRCT will go more independent and work in conjunction with all the major federations and other groups but not be hosted by one of them.

This instructive case teaches us that “critical moments” around accountability and transparency may often be rooted in the larger socio-cultural and political environment, rather than in any deliberate actions by the partners, and therefore require a lot of strategy to mitigate because they may not be completely resolvable.

Acting as a Financial Bridge in Sudan

Np4's work in Sudan also puts a spotlight on the challenges of accountability and transparency in the global South, and perhaps on the chaos of any conflict zone, and what actions an INGO might take to support their local partners. Speaking about a critical moment with the collaboration in Sudan she relays,

We discovered that *their accounts are a bit of a mess* really so we are kind of organizing someone to go and do an audit and give them some more financial support. And secondly, we're kind of acting as a bridge between them and the funder because the funder is quite demanding, I mean I don't think unreasonably demanding but they want various things in the way the evaluations are delivered. So my Head of Africa Programs spends a lot of time saying to (our Sudanese partners), 'Why didn't you go to that meeting?' Or, 'When are you going to be able to do this?' Or arrange things when it will be possible for people to (actually) come? *I think without ourselves as that bridge, as*

wonderful as their work is on the ground, they wouldn't be able to maintain these relationships with funders.

A key difference in her INGO's approach from many others, she reminds us, is that they really give their local partners "the space to do what they want to do." Np4 thus aims to work with funders who will support their goals rather than telling them what, when, and how to do things, although they certainly provide guidance about what they think will work or what might not be attractive to donors. Describing some of the peacebuilders that her INGO has chosen to partner with, she states,

They've had funding from UNDP and others, and that's not been without value, but when they want someone to fund them to do what they want to do they find it very difficult. So we work really hard to try and find a funder that wants to fund that.

The crux of the matter, she explains, is if you do not have a flexible funder, or someone helping you communicate your needs to funders, it can be easy to take on the larger grants that may steer your goals, objectives and overall mission in a completely different direction. She reflects, "It's sort of terribly easy to say, 'Well I've got to feed myself so I will do this project with UNDP, UNICEF or UNEFM even though we don't think it's really going to work...' because that's the only game in town.

Np4 says their role with partners has also changed overtime because whereas they used to manage and distribute all the funding from donors, they now mostly facilitate the Southern partners direct relationship with a donor that supports the local partner's goals. Her belief is that most donors are not interested in shaping the objectives or direction of the local peacebuilding initiative.

I think most foundations don't have the arrogance of government donors. They accept that they don't know what the program needs or what are the core needs. They might like funding A rather than B, but I don't think I can remember a funder saying, 'Don't you think it would be useful if your partner did XYZ.' This is just not really the sort of conversation you have with a funder. I had been speaking to a foundation about a project with the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) and they said, 'Well our board is interested in these aspects of the project but they're not interested in those aspects of the project. Maybe you could get our associate foundation to fund those aspects?'

She explains that they are not saying that its not a worthwhile project or group.

Instead, they are saying, "We just sort of decided that what we are interested in is protection of victims and moving into the Central African Republic..."

In spite of these positive relationships with donors, local partners may find the accountability requirements of the donors to be extremely challenging and so they still need assistance from their INGO partners to navigate the funding issues.

She emphasizes,

They find it very hard to do. The forms are very complicated and you have log-frames and stuff and you have to write exactly the right thing in exactly the right box and nobody ever comes to see you to see if you're any good. Our experience is that one of our partners has sort of cracked it and they raised quite a lot of their funding without us. But most of our partners struggle to get direct funding from donors, but they want to resist just being a deliverer of UN projects because that's not what they're in it for.

Regardless of who the local Southern partners work with it seems there will be some critical moments around funding – it might be the amount of money, different goals for how the money should be spent, or a general lack of funds to do everything that both partners might hope to accomplish. Reflecting honestly on these dilemmas, Np4 tells us how Northern partners who are in it for the long term

may have to be creative, and that might involve making sacrifices for their Southern counterparts.

I think our partners and we would both say that the weak point in our way of working is the lack of consistency of funding. *The funding comes sometimes in fits and starts and that's really difficult for them.* And I completely understand that. On the other hand, we sort of commit to support them until for some reason or another the partnership comes to its natural end. Lots of people have a three year project and then when the three three-year funding ends, that's the end. That way you get consistent funding for three years but when the funding ends (that's it). In our way you have to be willing to improvise. Sometimes our partners don't pay themselves salary while they are working with us to raise more money. I wish they were able to raise more money themselves, and one of the things I would think we will focus on in the next peace exchange is how the organizations can raise income from their own communities because it's not good to be so dependent on us.

Indeed, the overall dependency on outside partners, perpetuated by so many of the inequities between global North and South, presents so many challenges for well-intentioned peacebuilders who want to create a relationship of equality with their partners.

Insecurity of Funding and INGO Turnover

Many of these Northern and Southern based practitioners have alluded to the hard reality that outsiders come and go. They are impermanent or temporary in the conflict setting and perhaps in the partnership too. It might be a positive goal and outcome that Northern outsiders are eventually absent from nations in the global

South, but their departure may come at inopportune times or result in relationship dynamics that are unfavorable to local partners.

In the case of Afghanistan, Np2 tells us how temporary consultants and changing staff can also complicate funding. He says,

This is where me being an outsider (to the INGO) comes into play, we finished up and we had a great team of trainers, they had their own curriculum, they were doing their own trainings and at this point I had sort of step out, but I was working with a full-time person (who was part of the INGO conflict management team) who did follow-ups that the maintenance kind of stuff. But then the (INGO's) country director leaves and *you do run into the changing organizational context stuff*, which I think you might run into a lot when you have more of the arms-length outsider-insider.

Np2 describes the branch of the INGO in Afghanistan as sort of an insider-outsider, but one that cannot avoid the insecurity of funding challenges. "They were an international organization but one that was for all intensive purposes an Afghan organization in terms of how they ran day-to-day... but it still existed in the context of a bigger organization.... So personnel changed and funding streams changed." He acknowledged that the country director and the INGO had a good accounting system and that programs like the Rural Livelihood Improvement Program had dedicated funding programs so that grants could continue when people left. But Np2's work as a consultant and the conflict management team had a less secure operation time frame. He says, "My time, the conflict resolution time, was being billed to five different grants! And basically what it says is that that there is not one

dedicated funding stream for this work. They were carving out funds from a bunch of different grants to pay for this general capacity building.”

The story reflects the insecurity or instability of funding and highlights the impermanence of Northern practitioners, something that is present in many, if not all, collaborative North-South conflict intervention and peacebuilding endeavors. Reflecting on why these factors were disruptive in Afghanistan, Np2 states,

It kind of goes to the insecurity of the funding streams. Even though they were thinking of this work as core competency across their program areas, there wasn't a core funding stream that was dedicated just to this work. And so even though the cost is defrayed for (the INGO), and they have an internal service provider that makes it cheaper, you still have to move money around. The internal conflict people are pretty much overhead more or less. So there was a disruption both in the leadership, the country director, and in the funding stream.

Again, he highlights how the INGO he worked with is deeply invested in the country, not just with resources but also with relationships and local staff, and is therefore viewed more as an “insider-outsider” than a true outsider. Funding problems are most likely, he believes, when “it's more of an arm's-length relationship.” When grants run out then programs might just die out for the arms-length partner. “So you're doing all this local capacity building, sort of local empowerment, and so how does it continue if the external source of funding stops? I mean that's a challenge for everybody.”

When Funding is Tied to Politics and Foreign Policy

Peacebuilding efforts can be sidelined, and partnerships disrupted, when funding streams are tied to U.S. foreign policy or simply to the value governments place on the value of peace and conflict resolution related endeavors. Because Np9's close partnership with Sp5 was wed to the U.S. institution where Np9 works, her ability to carry out the work rested largely on the resources the institutions programs provide. Here she narrates a deeply critical moment in the Sri Lankan inter-religious peacebuilding work Sp5 was carrying out with her support. It happened to occur while she was on a leave of absence, making the situation all the more challenging for her as an invested practitioner.

Every year (our institution) defines what its priority conflicts, first tier, second tier conflicts and what they're going to be. We obviously are a very small organization at the end of the day; we can only work in so many places. We have the option of trying to work in a lot of places and only having minimal impact or focusing our work in several different countries and trying to have more of an impact in those places. The way that we decide our priority conflicts is based on what Congress is interested in because we have to go back every year for funding and we want to be seen as helpful to Congress. So what is in the U.S. Security interest - What Congress is interested in and where we think we have some resources or knowledge that could be helpful to the conflict situation there. Those are the two primary ones. And Sri Lanka had been on the list, primarily for the latter, not because it was of that much strategic importance to Congress. But at the period I was on leave was when (the organization) faced its budget crisis.

Np9 says this was when the Tea Party Movement came into power in Congress and there were many questions about stewardship in Washington D.C, which prompted many to question the funding that was being provided for the

peace related work of her institution. The issue of what is important to Congress became much more primary to her organization because of the funding dilemma and it ended up just having to cut its work in several places where it had been engaging on the ground, including in Sri Lanka and Nepal, because “those were just not places Congress pays as much attention to.” She was taken by surprise by the changes. “When I came back from my leave I discovered that the Religion Program would no longer be able to give direct financial resources to Sri Lanka. And I became very concerned about this project being able to continue.”

Her experience shows that funding decisions outside of the control of the committed practitioner can be very stressful, as practitioners in partnership not only have to worry about potentially unfinished business, but also the strain on the relationships that have developed in the course of working together. Speaking of the disruption and its impact, she states:

Yeah, it sucked. It was my baby and it was something that was showing a lot of success and impact. I felt personally dedicated to (Sp5) and the team and I felt like we were sort of leaving them high in the dry in the midst of all of this and Sri Lanka is not of strategic importance to Congress. And that was a time of height and anxiety for (the organization) and you know there was no way.

When relationships hold partnerships together

Fortunately for both Np9 and Sp5, the partnership transcended that critical disruption and they were able to explore a variety of solutions to keep the vital fieldwork alive. Most amazing about the story is that the local partner, Sp5, footed the bill to keep Np9 involved until a better solution was found. Np9 tells us,

Actually, they (Sp5's organization) were in the midst of doing some evaluation work, and actually, because Sri Lanka was no longer a priority conflict, (our institution) wouldn't even pay for my travel to go out there and meet with them and I mean talk about an abrupt ending of a relationship! So (Sp5's local NGO) paid for me to go out there out of their project funds -- to participate in this monitoring and evaluation.

She says the Sri Lankan NGO was committed to a very participatory evaluation of their projects and they wanted both the participants and their funders to be involved. Luckily for Np9 her boss supported her decision to go -- even though they could not fund her time there -- as long as she was able to complete her other projects. Sp5's effort to keep her U.S. based partner involved paid off because she understood the funding dilemma and that the decision was really out of her Northern partner's control. Np9 tell us how the work was able to continue,

I went over there for that and then while I was there I met the U.S. Embassy and checked to see if there was other potential donors to support their work and sort of talked about their work to other potential funding sources. But then we (the institution) also had the Grants Program and so while there are priority conflicts, there is also the annual grants competition that anybody from anywhere can apply to. So I encouraged them to submit an application to the grants program, in addition to a number of grant funders in D.C. I connected them with the folks at NED and with the organizations that they could send those proposals to get continued funding for this project, and we also talked about how great the project was, and about how great they are as an organization, and how impactful the work was, and how responsible they are in terms of reporting and so on. They ended up submitting the application to the grants program here and it got funded. So now that project is continuing under the grants program.

In the end, their partnership story reveals the commitment some practitioners have to their relationship and their shared mission to transcend the critical funding moments that threaten to derail all that has been started.

When Southern Partners Say No

Southern Partner 1 tells us,

In some cases you have to say, 'No we can't work with you,' because they want you to do this, that, and other things, like X amount of workshops, and we have to say no we don't accept this type of contract. "This is not our proposal, it's your proposal." We do an initial evaluation take into account the methodology that we have defined of how we are going to conduct the process.

Peacebuilders who are largely dependent on outside funding to accomplish not only their objectives and goals, but perhaps their dreams and desires, are faced with an incredible challenge when offered funding from donors and potential partners that have differing goals. The central issue here, perhaps what I would call the "Narrative of the implementer" is the need for more local control in the details of practice (methods) and the timeline of implementation of peace and development programs.

Earlier we heard how locals from Nigeria to Sri Lanka get trapped in a survival mentality, perpetuating cycles of dependency, while Northerners may also stay in projects to support their incomes or organization's reputation. The predominant trend is for Northern and Southern practitioners in the peacebuilding and development field to take on whatever comes their way in order to sustain themselves, perhaps with hope that those projects will do some good. It is a very challenging dilemma for Southern partners, as Sp1 explains, "INGO partners raise funds for themselves and then look to associate with organizations like us to carry

out projects with people in the field. This puts us in a difficult space because we're almost like intermediaries who execute the funding of these projects for them, but do not have decision-making control.”

But some reflective practitioners do say no to what is offered to them because they believe so strongly in their own methods and more importantly they want to maintain their integrity and some control over what they do. The following narratives provide insights into the discourse of “saying no” and what that means for these reflective practitioners. In some cases, like for Sp5 in Sri Lanka, or Sp4 in Indonesia, these decisions seem to signify a turning point, not only for them but for their outside Northern partners, or prospective partners who value such commitment to principle.

Turning Down a Big Grant in Sri Lanka

Sometimes principle triumphs over money. In the following narrative by Sri Lankan peacebuilder Sp5, she reveals why many “Southern” based practitioners and their organizations might prefer to maintain their autonomy and their mission despite the temptation of a large source of funding. She also reminds us how much relationships matter. Sp5 states,

I'm a person who is not trusting the system. I'm not much trusting organizations, but I trust people who are working there. So I'm trying my level best to develop a human relationship with the person who I am working with, but in some places people can change due to the organizational situation, the bureaucracy and all the things that the system brings to the scenario. In some organizations, like USAID, the

system is so strong that they can do nothing. They are just helpless so then you have to have guts as local partners just to say no, right?

Thinking about this challenge, she recounts a critical moment in the midst of her ongoing work with Np9 and other existing partnerships. Her grassroots NGO was awarded a very large fund from USAID after applying to its Reconciliation grant program with another U.S. based peacebuilding NGO as the primary partner. She explains what happened:

It was a big fund; I don't even remember the numbers. We presented the proposal to USAID Washington to get their reconciliation grant... and we won that, but they came up with many ideas, which we didn't want to accommodate. One of the main things is we had to collaborate with the Sri Lankan government, and government offices - all these things that were not in the original proposal.

Problems thus arise when the donor directs, or changes, peacebuilding efforts to support its own agenda or interests at the expense of the local partner's vision. She continues:

Washington DC wrote a totally different proposal, but Sri Lankan (office) changed everything because they want to have a good diplomatic relationship with the Sri Lankan government. They really wanted to make the government happy, which we don't want to do. So then we very clearly said, "No, we don't want this fund."

Saying "No" to such a grant baffled both the donor and her fellow peacebuilding organizations in Sri Lanka. It also presented challenges for her U.S. based NGO partner who was really counting on the partnership with Sp5 to implement its planned programs in Sri Lanka. Sp5 describes the reaction from the funding officer at USAID in Washington:

The lady told me, 'You know this is the very first time -- and I'm working in many countries -- an organization like yours said no to this kind of fund.' I said, 'Yes of course because we know when to say yes and when to say no.' And then (our U.S. partner) was in a very helpless situation because they were really hopeful about this fund. So what we did is talk to another local organization in Sri Lanka and we introduced them... and we handed over the whole fund to this other local organization because they were okay with those conditions. They were also really surprised when we talked to them about giving them the fund. Before they said yes, they were saying, 'We really want to study the papers.' They thought there was some trick and that was why we were planning to give them this big fund (laughs). They can't believe that we are saying 'no' to this big fund! We just told them simply we don't want it.

Sp5 then returns to the idea that good partnerships are based on trusting relationships with key individuals. Her words suggest that a determined local partner can often shape a partnership with outsiders in a way that supports the insider's goals, but only if outsiders are willing to listen and adjust to local methods and objectives – as others have mentioned. It seems that this large grant opportunity did not present the necessary relationship criteria for a successful partnership mainly due to the power asymmetry that would have unfolded with USAID.

One thing I realized is that even though I negotiated and I changed the clauses of the grant, *I didn't have time to change the mindset of the officers who were dealing with us* because they think that we are very low and they are very high and they think that we have to listen to everything that they are saying.

This type of asymmetrical scenario is insightful for the way money is handled and highlights Sp5's own strong principles about how peacebuilding funds should or should not be spent. She explains,

As an example, as soon as they (the other LNGO) got the fund and they had organized a planning meeting with their staff outside Colombo, they are sending me a text saying, 'We are at (X) Grand resort from this day to this day to plan your project with our staff and we invite you and another of your colleagues to participate in this at (X) Grand Lodge.'

She exclaims,

I was like, 'What is this?! You're planning our project without discussing it with us? And then you're asking me to come with another colleague?' As a policy, we never spend that kind of money for planning! For planning we have big offices and we can do planning at our offices. Why should we go to the most expensive hotel just to spend five days to plan? We need five days to plan with separate disciplines, not just with staff. Planning with staff whether it's 5, 10, or 15 days we can do at our office.

Sp5 says those are the main principles her grassroots organization is practicing. Her story clearly reveals the waste that likely occurs in many planning efforts, before the fieldwork of conflict resolution even begins, and how it takes a strong and principled practitioner to resist that kind of extravagant, wasteful initiative.

Resolution of this critical moment thus went beyond just saying "No," it meant confronting those that she felt were misguided and taking a stance for what she believes in. She explains how she confronted them in writing.

I wrote it as it is and told them, 'I am not happy with the way you are inviting us. And it's not only me. If you're having 15 members on your team to plan our project and we have another 15 members here, and I have another 45 core team leaders in the field who are the participants in this project! So if you allow me to bring all these people then maybe I can consider. Otherwise I am not.' I think that they were really shocked. They thought, 'Okay we have this luxury resort five days and she is going to jump into her vehicle and come join...'

One more important dimension of this problematic and critical moment in Sp5's recent peacebuilding work gets at some of the mishandling of funds that can occur when funds do not go directly to the local partner who is implementing the intervention in the field. In many places, in the global South or elsewhere, corruption is rampant and it might be outside the control of the initiating agency team. Foreign government development agencies often use contracting agencies that serve as a sort of peacebuilding and development middlemen and they hold funds for many implementing organizations, like Sp5's grassroots efforts. Sp5 tells us about the challenges that often unfold within Sri Lanka,

It's so dirty politics there. The grant was for two years and was awarded at the end of 2009. According to the plan, in April 2010 they were to start the project, but until the end of 2010 (the local contracting office) played with this fund. In the beginning of 2011 they started this conversation with us. According to (the agency) in Washington, the grant had to release to (the U.S. based peacebuilding NGO) who would be handing over the whole project money to us and then both of us would be managing the project money and project activities. But what (the US agency) has done is they have chosen their agent... and they handed over that fund to them and then they will be managing the fund on behalf of (the U.S. peacebuilding NGO) and us!

All the while, Sp5 exclaims, this middle-man agency is "maintaining one of the most expensive areas for their office and using expensive vehicles and many staff members and all those kind of things. They are the people who are then asking (the implementing partner) to trim the project to nine months and it's a 24 month project, right?"

Resolution to such a critical juncture in a practitioner's career might come in the form of teaching others how to do the same.

Most of my friends who are in the field are really in a crisis with funds these days and they're asking me, since we have said no to grants, 'How are you doing it without much funding?' And my answer is we never work for funds, we never develop relationships with people for funds. We do what we do openly and communicate honestly and then those people are ready to work with us. I strongly believe that if tomorrow all those funds stopped, we would not be stopping our work. But the level would be different and we wouldn't be able to work as fast. If we don't have any funds then we have to go slow.

She then concludes this instructive story with a nod to the incredible partnership she has with Np9. She says, If (she) had been there, in this (middleman contracting organization), she would have been having a very healthy discussion with us, very respectful, and very ethical, to find a win-win solution to do it even within nine months." In fact, Sp5's decision to say "no" was not only a turning point for her, but also for Np9 and others with whom she had existing smaller scale partnerships than the one she turned down. She tells us, "She (Np9) was so happy to know that we said no to this, that we have taken that stand, as well as all of our other funders.... I treat them as my friends, as (our organization's) friends. It's such a beautiful relationship."

Struggling for Control in Kenya

Local non-government organizations (LNGOs) that implement programs funded by outside partners face unique challenges, as we saw with Sp1 above.

Kenyan Sp2's work of building a national peace education curriculum with her UN

partner and a ministry of the Kenyan government reflects an ideal partnership in many ways. There is constant collaboration between the three organizations and the 3 “partners” always travel to the field together. Yet something was amiss given the way the partnership agreements were structured. Sp2 explains,

The interesting thing is the UN is in partnership with the (Kenyan) Ministry... They have to implement all their programs through the Ministry of Education. That’s the partnership that the government came up with... And then what happens is the UN has partnerships that say if they bring on another partner, that partner will be regarded as a UN partner. So we were brought on as a (UN) partner. And we signed our partnership with the UN. Then the UN signed a partnership with the Ministry... So our organization has no (formal) partnership with the Ministry. And I think that’s where the dynamics come in. We (communicate) with (the UN representative) most of the time.

Not being in an official partnership with a bureaucratic national agency may have more pros than cons, but the structure of the relationships nonetheless produces some critical moments for the partnership that Sp2 still struggles with in the work. She tells us,

We’ve had to overcome a little power issue, power struggle, especially from government, where government wants to control. We are using government structures. We have to go through their bureaucracy, which has really slowed down our programs and pace of implementation. And a lot of times also *we’ve had to kind of work at their pace.*

You know, *governments usually are ready when they’re ready.* So you cannot push them to say this is getting late or you have to do it on time or – *it can be very problematic coming from a civil society background, where you have the timeframes and the limited project implementation period.* The government doesn’t seem to be in a hurry. *And yet we cannot go ahead without them.* So there’s that back and forth, back and forth.

Sp2 conveys that there have also been instances where the government ministry people have wanted to take the lead on work that was started by the local organization. Purposefully or not, they want to be the face of the project and not allow the local implementing peacebuilders “to come out...on an equal basis.” She laments that their attitude is “like they’re doing us a favor sometimes. That’s how it feels like.”

At the core of Sp2’s frustration seems to be a lack of respect and acknowledgment for the hard work that local peacebuilding implementers do. She returns to the idea that the more powerful partners should really be there to make access easier for the implementing partner, but that is not always what happens when bigger partners and donors assert their leadership:

So they have to be reminded all the time that, oh, yeah, there’s another organization you need to acknowledge. You need to do that. And so it’s kind of not done deliberately, but sometimes it’s either that the government is so used to working on its own that they’re just aware of themselves to the extent that they tend to forget that the other partners exist... It’s not deliberate.... The idea is to guide, but also to just kind of be our – I don’t know what you say – but kind of just open doors for us to get in. And sometimes they’ll say like, ‘Oh, okay, we are already here and we can do it,’ and then *they forget that these are the partners they’re supposed to be opening the door for, so they took over....* I mean we are the ones getting the feeling that the Ministry... kind of would say, ‘we can do without you, you know.’

This dynamic with the government has been a turning point for Sp2 in terms of how she approaches the partnership. Her narrative also shows that turning points may only happen for one party and the only resolution to critical junctures might be the satisfaction of trying. Luckily for Sp2 there has been enough dialogue between

her, the UN, and the ministry allowing a space for her to confront them with her frustration. Luckily she does have an advocate in her UN partner who also feels the government agency is too slow and bureaucratic as the three work together to make implementation possible. Contrarily, the government tends to feel that the UN is “too pushy.” She herself has directly discussed this with the Kenyan government:

It has gone up, and we’ve talked about the partnership issues to say that they need for them to *acknowledge and recognize all the partners that are involved*. But sometimes, given that the Ministry is very large, and we deal with so many people there sometimes, every partner - not every partner, every officer from the Ministry - comes in with their own perceptions and attitudes as well. But we’ve mentioned it. We have mentioned it to them.

We see here again that turnover and change in large organizations or agencies -- Northern or Southern based -- is a major concern for the local practitioners and small organizations who must persevere in their likely non-glorified roles working for peace.

Sp2’s words also indicate that although the Ministry is a partner of sorts, she cannot view all the “changing officers” as “partners” with the same regard she has for her more consistent partner from the UN. Yet she clearly prefers the relative autonomy she has by only having a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN agency and not being tied to a formal agreement with government. She explains,

If there was a formal partnership, they would kind of want to take control over us. I think that’s the reason why I preferred not to be in partnership with them, because partnership is more of giving up the control to them and allowing them also to access your funds and office books and things like that, to know how you spend your money. So the partnership gives them an upper hand, but if you did an agreement, you’d give them an upper hand over you, because they are

government. And that means that you become more a subject to them.

South - South Communication Problems

In Nigeria, Southern Partner 3 tells us about a South-South partnership that developed out of his initial North-South collaboration with the British government. The British Council in Lagos introduced The Nigerian Peace Club Project to a Jordanian Peacebuilding INGO that has a focus on sports-based initiatives. As a result, the Jordanians have been in partnership with Sp3 for the past 4 years, mostly providing technical and financial support. "With respect to the Jordanians, we are still in partnership, only that the condition of the partnership is very, very low... the communication is not swift."

Sometimes as practitioners tell their stories, reflecting on their work, insights happen about their practice or in this case their partnerships. Sp3 says his partnership with the Jordanian INGO is incredibly challenging due to the lack of communication from his larger Southern partner. It is difficult for him to continue his current work with peace clubs when he does not receive the guidance he needs from the outside funding partner. He exclaims,

Communication is very, very poor. A case in point is email - it will take maybe a month for them to respond to you! It might take like two months for them to respond where they may not respond at all. Everyone has an iPhone or iPad...they have the connectivity, but they just can choose not to talk to you. We design programs together but the communication is very poor. It's very frustrating because you don't know whether the program will continue or not. They'll talk to you when they want to talk to you, not when you want to talk to

them...then they ignore us. *You know in partnership communication is very, very essential.* Sometimes they don't send the funds because we haven't communicated. Then there is a crisis maybe a bomb drops or something happens in Nigeria and they say, 'oh, let's do something again!'

In that moment of narrating his experience partnering, he has an insight that his partner communicates when there is a crisis that they can respond to, but is hard to reach when Sp3 needs ongoing support for the daily work of prevention and peacebuilding. He ponders, (laughing), "That is what I am thinking. I'm just realizing that now!" In his experience, "What most partners are after is just numbers. "Okay we are working in 44 countries, we have reached so many people in X countries." What is critical, he says, is that "peacebuilding or intervention goes beyond numbers. It's the impact, or the effect on the local community of the projects that matters and not statistics."

Resolving these critical moments, when they involve confronting the more powerful (financing) partner's whole way of engaging, can be very taxing for the small local partner and may not result in significant, if any, changes. The only resolution might be for local partners to know they confronted their partners to express their concerns or grievances, another unidirectional turning point in the relationship. Sp3 tells us that outsiders might be so preoccupied with the business administration of all their projects that they fail to recognize how busy their local partners dealing with all the intricacies of conflict resolution and capacity building on the ground. He tells us,

We did a training program in Kano for three days in December, sponsored by the Jordanians. I confronted them, and told them that's not how we work. They responded that 'We are so busy.' 'But I am also busy,' he told them. 'I've got other things to do besides your program.'" *It should not be a master-servant relationship*" he exclaims.

The master-servant/dependency dynamic that Sp3 worries about is of course related in part to funding and the need for local control of resources that so many Southern practitioners have voiced in their instructive cases of partnership. He states,

Regarding funds, I want to believe that most of us in Africa should not just be seen as beggars, just scrounging for funds. We can do a lot for ourselves. We have potential, if not for our leaders – because they are so selfish and self-centered. We should not be seen as beggars, we are not. What we are doing is for our own good. It's for communities; it's for peace; it's for development. After all, who caused the crisis in our country? We caused our crisis so we should know how to resolve our crisis.

More independent South-South partnerships within Nigeria and West Africa, where partners can implement projects without outside funding, is still a dream he hopes will be realized. "I think we're getting closer to that. We have to look inward and see how we can help ourselves," he says.

At its core, Sp3's story suggests that many larger Northern based partners have a tendency to lose sight of the purpose of what locals need.

It seems that is what is happening because they also have donors and they want to report to their donors that they have reached 44 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, stating, 'We've worked with thousands of children, 6000 youth in Nigeria.' But what are you doing? What are the impacts of the program?

Implementing what the donor partner wants, instead of what local peacebuilders like himself see as more useful, has been a turning point in the way he hopes to partner for peacebuilding and development going forward.

I tell you, I think the whole approach of workshops, in Africa, is not working. Organizing workshops, conferences, are not working here because people just come for conferences and workshops and no effect. *I am talking about conflict resolution workshops*, etc. Forget it, because a hungry man is an angry man. It's not enough to say, "Don't fight". "Okay, but I'm hungry!"

For Sp3, peacebuilding in Nigeria will require giving the youth skills beyond how to resolve conflict. He explains,

I think we need more useful local empowerment, where the locals are empowered so they can learn to fend for themselves and for their families rather than workshops and all the seminars. People come to seminars and take the food and refreshments and just go on -- that's all. We need vocational trainings for the young people, to have something to do. Vocational trainings like computer knowledge, mechanics, electricians - practical knowledge.

He continues,

There is a need for us to infuse practical knowledge into what we are doing. Give them something they can fall back on to bring food to the table for their families. Because what is happening in our country is the young people have no work, no food, and no skills to fend for themselves. But if we can go beyond mediation, conflict resolution and all these trainings and introduce vocational skills it will go a very long way. They need communication skills but they also need these other skills.... If we are partners, then the North has a role to play - maybe in terms of knowledge and technology.

Np3's concerns about the types of programs that many North-South collaborations focus on gets at the heart of what many critics of peacebuilding and

conflict resolution worry about – the ability of short-term projects to make changes that will alter structural violence.

Summary

The stories of Northern and Southern practitioners illuminate a variety of challenges that might disrupt their collaborative efforts in conflict settings. These are critical moments that can disrupt the general flow of “peacebuilding” partnerships and will likely be turning points in the relationships of the affected parties, even if a change in perspective or ways of engaging is only experienced by one side. Returning to the idea of North-South partnerships as a morphology (a series of stages that unfold) then we might ask where all of the above narratives of practice fit in? We can begin to see that although partnerships may have beginnings, middles, and ends, the way they unfold is not so linear. Partnerships fluctuate and change as they move through those three major stages over time. Skilled practitioners can help all the layers of partnerships unfold more smoothly by being aware, mindful, and skillful in handling these critical junctures -- with complex dynamics of identity, culture, and power -- that often manifest in unforeseen ways and must be addressed in the interpersonal and organizational relationships between partners.

Cultural challenges abound for the outsider. As Np6 has told us about her work in Zanzibar, and Np8 in Sri Lanka, outsiders need to have close relationships

with insider-advisors, perhaps what we might call “lifelines,” to help them talk through critical moments that can turn a good collaborative effort on its head. Despite the many intercultural challenges that manifest in these stories, Northern based practitioners rarely bring up culture as a critical challenge for them. It would be useful to know if they ever consider doing more of what Avruch (1998) calls in-depth cultural analysis with their partners, or with other advisors, before engaging in partnerships.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking discourse that runs through these partnerships is the unequal power between Northern and Southern partners and the dependent relationships it so often perpetuates. The general flow of money from North to South is undeniable and although the funding from Northern donors often benefits Southern partners tremendously by allowing them to implement projects -- and sometimes sustains their very livelihoods -- this reliance on outside funding can also lead local organizations to go astray from their intended mission and serve the interest of outsiders, interests which they may or not share for their communities or nation.

A Southern practitioner discourse that signals a desire for less outsider-power and greater local control was prevalent in many of these stories of critical moments. Although Southern practitioners seem to relish the support of good Northern partners, as Sp4 and Sp5 have described in their partnerships, practitioners like Sp1 and Sp3 have voiced the need for greater access to local funding sources, which could give them greater autonomy and decision-making in

their conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Sp1 sums up the dilemma for local initiatives when she states,

I believe that at some point in time one has to exist and work. We are accepting projects in which we don't have a lot of control. But at the same time we are trying to, for our part, negotiate with our partners about funding decisions, but we are also now looking for our own funds to manage. We are in between the two because we need to exist. For me, a huge challenge for organizations like ours is how to manage and control our own funds, our own financial resources. If we are not able to eventually work like this then we will remain dependent. In this moment we are trying to see how we can raise our own funds.

This need for greater control, and perhaps greater acknowledgment for their contributions -- as expressed by Sp1 in Colombia, Sp2 in Kenya, and Sp3 in Nigeria -- is part of what I am calling "the narrative of the implementer."

Lastly, one of the most revealing aspects of having these practitioners reflect on disruptions in their work and partnerships, and how they resolved it, if at all, is when we see a turning point occur for them professionally or personally. Sometimes insights arise in the telling of these critical moments, as we saw with Sp3 in Nigeria, leading him to view his partnership in a new way. It's a testament to the power of reflective practice and its potential ability to improve peacebuilders' work and perhaps their partnerships.

CHAPTER EIGHT: END STAGES - DO OUTSIDERS EXIT OR STAY ENGAGED?

In this chapter, practitioners share their observations and first hand experiences about the “end” stages of these partnership cases and help us to better understand the overall morphology of North-South collaborations.

Although partnerships vary tremendously in scope and some may continue indefinitely, they do share a number of common characteristics as they morph from their initial beginnings into the challenging work of implementing projects and finally to some form of closure to the particular programs they are doing together. Some Northern practitioners state that there should be an exit strategy for outside organizations that partner with local organizations in conflict regions. Np3 and others believe that outsiders cannot stay in these partnerships forever and they must consider how they will eventually disengage.

But a formal end to partnering may not be the goal for some organizations or individuals. Some of these partnerships have not yet completed the work they set out to do, other partnerships continue on with no end in sight, and some partners have formally finished their projects together but their relationships have stayed in tact in such a way as to keep the windows of possibility open for future collaboration. At an organizational level, outside INGOs and their consultants might

foster dependency by staying too long or, conversely, by not staying involved long enough with the necessary technical or financial support to sustain the programs they help to create.

In Np6's case, as with other practitioners profiled below, we see that the initial few years of partnership may only be the beginning of their collaboration if partners create what is actually needed in the communities and programs take root with the right people in a sustainable manner. While some practitioners, like Np3 in Mindanao and Np1 in Nepal talk about how essential it is for "outside" partners to have a well developed exit strategy, other Northern based practitioners in this study did not talk about the idea of exiting the partnership, at least not completely. As practitioners, they will of course not physically remain there for the long-haul, but some envision their institutional partnerships and interpersonal communications as part of their indefinite support to the local organizations they have "created." This is true even when they seek autonomy and financial independence for the local partner, such as Np5's collaboration in Colombia.

Np5 describes how the partnership with the local Colombian NGO progressed and their ongoing commitment.

We wrote a report for the U.S. Embassy; making recommendations for how to 'Colombianize' the process... The quality of that report, in my opinion, engendered a lot of credibility with that donor so that the next year we recommended to the US government that they give the grant directly to (the local NGO in) Columbia. They had existed now for two years and they had demonstrated that they were up to the task of convening this dialogue program 'and, oh by the way, they can raise money. They will raise half the money this year,' which they did. ... We don't have an exit strategy actually. We are kind of in bed with

our affiliates, they share a logo with us, but we do work ourselves out of a job (laughter).

On the other hand, Np3 says the temporary nature of most outsiders creates challenges for successful partnership. He says the challenges of developing a sound exit strategy for outsiders engaged in capacity building include: not enough time, not leaving enough reserves behind, and general attrition of local participants. For example, "You might start training and building the capacity of 15-20 people and end up with 2-3 in the end and it's too late by the time you discover that you've left only a few people behind." Looking back at his recent partnering work in North Africa, Np3 highlights the challenges outside practitioners face in leaving both a sustainable relationship and product/outcome for their local partners.

In that relationship you are temporary because you know and they know that after three years that the project will be cut by the outsider. And indeed that is exactly what happened... In three years there is very, very little you can do because it's only 3 to 4 visits. You don't always have the capacity to stay with them on the ground to coach, mentor, and hand holding type of capacity building.

In essence, he states:

You are really relying as a partner from outside on very little capacity to sustain (the conflict intervention work that you have started). I'm referring to the issue of once you gain an entry how do you ensure when you exit that you have left something behind with your partner? And that's an issue. It's about the ongoing relationship, the quality of that relationship, the mechanisms that you leave behind for them, and also the quality of the product.

As North-South collaborations run their course the product may be complete "but the mechanism to carry it is not there." His metaphor of leaving behind a

broken airplane is a powerful reminder that outsider conflict resolution/transformation “experts” must question their objectives and abilities before engaging in partnerships.

You leave behind the airplane to fly, for example, but you don't leave behind the fuel, the technique to fix it if it's down, or the pilot to fly it - and never design for where they want to go. I think in many of these cases, these north-south partnerships, you end up with maybe a airplane, maybe fuel for three months and one pilot sometimes gets a call and can't fly or they don't have a strip to fly on.

In other words, Northern partners may not stay long enough or invest enough to lay a solid foundation for the locals who remain with the daily challenges of their fractured communities. Np3 describes this “as a classic problem of development,” which we can correlate to many North-South peacebuilding efforts in under-developed regions. Sustainable programs and durable relationships are difficult to achieve in partnerships given the general asymmetry in financial resources and differing access to knowledge/power between the dominant nations of the North and the rest of the global South. This is true regardless of whether North-South collaborations last a months or years.

So how might outsiders know that what they have left behind is indeed useful? Are the relationships partners form of less, greater, or equal importance to practitioners than the products they implement? Obviously all partners hope programs and relationships will remain sustainable when the Northern partners exit or become less involved and the following narrative clips reveal some of the

indicators of success for practitioners as their partnerships progress into the latter stages of development or termination in the fluid morphology of their partnerships.

Indicators of Success

Aim for Financially Self-Sufficient Partners

Now that Northern Partner 1 (Np1) is in the last year of a planned 10-year investment in Nepal by the supporting foundation, all the partners must operate with a sense of looming transition to decreased outsider support and less direct involvement by their trainer, “guru,” and friend from the United States. Although he might continue to work regularly in Nepal for the next few years he hopes he will be needed less as things progress. Reaching self-sufficiency in the local programs is a constant focus and concern for the partners. He explains,

It's something we grapple with together. The 10-year horizon is the end of 2013, but I probably will continue to do of this accompaniment for a few years, partly because (the foundation's program officer) who has been there throughout this process has just now retired. This next visit in early March will be her last and a new person is coming on. So I will likely stay on for at least a few years. I don't know if it will be as intensive, but we are certainly talking about transition and next steps. We've had a very clear understanding from the very beginning that the purpose was to provide a platform that would be owned and carried forward by the Nepalis and hopefully in ways that would be sustainable and independent of the originating funding.

Np1 shows that in a long-term collaboration/partnership there are many factors to consider when thinking about what you are going to leave behind when

you are less engaged or no longer involved at all. In the partnership with the NRTC resource group they have gotten to a place in which they are conducting the second round of the seven modular training that Np1 and his co-facilitation team introduced. This has been highly successful, as they have doubled the original effort in terms of breadth of local participants trained. Still, there are unknowns as to how the overall leadership and direction of the NRTC will proceed.

I think the biggest looming issue is what organizational form this will take and I don't know the answer to that yet. The second is that this will then form a group of somewhere in the range of about 50 - 70 people would be prepared to work fairly significantly in this area across Nepal. So we really started to look at the questions of what is it they will need and how it might be structured and where longer-term funding might come from.

Much of the uncertainty lies in the political reality of the nation, he says.

Politically, Nepal is in a place where they should now have a constitution in place but it's not yet come forward. They are still coming through the aftermath of the Civil War and there are a lot of contested issues.

A stable political environment at the local level can lead to a sound structure for these conflict transformation initiatives to survive and flourish. Np1 explains how this could unfold with the NRTC in Nepal:

At some point, quite possibly this year, there will be not only a national election – that's almost 100% certain – but there's a good chance for the first time in many, many years there will be local elections. And that would help to reconstitute some of the local bodies, the local development committees, the civil governance committees -- and those groups in principle support raising local budgets through forms of participation from the national government and local taxation, etc.

He continues,

Some of what they would do is to likely work in partnership with these kinds of organizations that provide services, especially around the conflict areas that they've always struggled with in terms of local governance. So one can imagine that there would be, over the next years, the potential for some streams of income coming from partnerships that would happen with local governing bodies. It's true for both the community mediation work and for the NRCT. So we are definitely looking at that.

Champions of Change

Similar to the shorter term initiatives described by Np2 in Afghanistan and Np3 in Mindanao, Np1 story helps us further understand why leaving a trained local team in place, one that can implement the work a way that best suits the local context/culture, is one of the reflective outsider-practitioner's highest objectives.

Reflecting on the way forward, he shares his plans for leaving a sustainable outcome for those he worked with and an infrastructure for peace for the whole of Nepal. He tells us,

What I've been working on the last couple of years is to really work closely with a key set of people that I think are very likely to provide leadership to this. The term I've been using is they become 'change champions' and they are championing a certain focus on the kind of change that were trying to work on. But they're really trying to understand and have deep ownership in what methodologies would be a part of that. For example, a deep commitment to improving the capacity of local communities to dialogue on contentious issues or the ability to have people develop and facilitate processes whereby what has often turned into very polarized and violent conflict could be handled differently....

Overall, Np1's narrative shows that a goal of outsider partnerships, even if a decade plus in the making, should be to create a local infrastructure for peace that is no longer dependent on foreign assistance. In Nepal, he says,

It's a set of people who can continue to provide leadership to this and who are going to be there and embedded in the situation.

That in the long-term means, in essence, if I am successful that I can hopefully work myself out of a job and that this moves over to people that really begin to carry it forward in their own capacity, decisions, and direction. I've helped to nurture some of that but it doesn't depend on me anymore. So that's a process that has to be done very intentionally and it's already started over the last couple of years.

As to whether the partnership really comes to an end he imagines his forms of accompaniment and support will be ongoing but to a lesser degree.

I can well imagine that even 5-6 years from now somebody will write me and I will write back because you know they'll have questions or they'll need some type of advice on something. But I do think there will be much less focused on the intensive presence of me being... It will no longer need that. That's the nature of that process.

Strive for Local Control of the Curriculum

The partnerships described by Np2 in Afghanistan and Np3 in Mindanao are similar in that those who they view as the local partners are in large part people they trained, mentored, and coached to become the staff of country based offices that are directly connected to international peacebuilding/development organizations. Their partnerships roles began as practitioner-consultants who provided training to local staff and community beneficiaries– and then often evolved from there into specific relationships that involve the dynamics of friendship and

ongoing consultation. Their roles as practitioners who consult for large Northern based INGO partners, yet also work closely on the ground with the local partners, allows them to see the strengths and pitfalls of North-South partnership from a unique perspective. They are not permanent employees of the Northern INGO partner, which allows them to step back and take a wider view of the dynamic between all the parties.

Something they and many other practitioners from both the North and South stress as vital to success is leaving the locals with the ability to implement the skills and procedures they have given them or developed together.

What was crucial was that beyond the 3rd year the major decisions of core curriculum were made by the local staff who were trained to continue to work there. And the other point that is important is that the project did not stay in the capital, the main city, but it reached out to the rural areas to the community, its sort of more in the field. Although it's funny because we in Washington call Davao 'the field' and Davao themselves call the rural area the field, so we are really three layers removed from the so-called field. And this is the type of partnership work where you are able to have some kind of relationship where you are working with not only the government, not only the capital, and expanding beyond these areas.

Find Local Leaders that Support Your Work

Outsiders benefit when their local partners are happy with the products they bring or the programs they create together. Both insiders and outsiders benefit when local political leaders who have the authority to give peacebuilding interventions broad appeal amongst opposing groups embrace those programs.

Np6 shares why the initial phase of the partnerships in Zanzibar concluded on a positive note for continued engagement:

When I did finally leave in February of this year, because I had also established a program for the whole of Tanzania, with an office in Dar es Salaam, one of the very senior ministers from the conservative side, which is less likely to say these kind of things wrote to me, and he said, 'You've done something really wonderful here. So many people came here and they didn't stay. You came and you've done it and you felt right from the start. Thank you for everything that you've done.'

She said that feedback was particularly important in the early stages of partnership "When we didn't know what we were doing." She remembers, "I was very pleased that he could see (our INGO) in that way because that's how we want to be seen, and that comes from really building organically, consistency, trust, relationships, and delivering. These things need to go together. I told him we had established an office and he just said I'm so pleased."

Seek Honest Evaluation and Know Your Blind Spots

Throughout these chapters practitioners have emphasized the importance of trust in partnerships. Solid relationships between partners is key to the type of honest communication that will let Northerners know if there work in the global South is indeed effective. Np2 tells us that often the most insightful feedback about training and collaborating with others comes in informal moments together like hanging out over lunch or taking a walk together. Some of the bigger indicators might be measured in the evaluation feedback they provide to the INGO, but he says

there is also “the micro-feedback” where you ask your local partners their impressions over tea. His story shows that the self-aware practitioner recognizes the asymmetry that might be there as well as the simple fact of cultural differences that exist in North-South engagements. He states:

You're constantly monitoring these issues; at least I am, because however you want to define the divide, you know there is some kind of divide. I'm not talking about whether it's a good divide or bad divide, or whose fault it is, but there is always a divide and you know you have blind spots and you know you have sort of mental models that exist because of the divide and they may not be conscious.

Importantly, Np2 tells us that outsiders have to know they have such blind spots and that they are going to make mistakes and therefore must be prepared to make the best of that reality:

You have to be consciously reflective about what you're doing and always be open to the fact that you may have stepped in it, even though it was the farthest thing from what you intended. It may not be conscious, but you know your going to step in it and you're sort of mortified by it, but you have to be open to it all the time.

Maintain Relationships When Funding Stops

The story of partnership in Sri Lanka, between Np9 and Sp5, demonstrates how powerful it is to for peacebuilders to connect at a relational level, building a bond of trust that can transcend major financial disruptions and other critical moments. Np9's narrative reveals that even strong friendships are indeed challenged by the dynamics of dependency in partnership and that without a funding dynamic between them balance is restored to the interpersonal relationship

that began before an institutional partnership was created. Her awareness of her own position in an asymmetrical relationship is evident when she considers Sp5's feeling about their partnership work. "I think she has felt pretty positive about it... but again, I'm a funder." She then explains how the burden of losing funding can also have positive results in the best of cases.

I'm still in partnership with them and I'm going to see her (Sp5) next month, in October, so I'm still connecting with her. I'm going to be bringing peace builders to Sri Lanka early next year, but she is no longer funded by my program. So the funding partnership has ended, but not the relationship... I will say that part of me is kind of relieved that the religion program is no longer funding (her organization) because now I feel like there is much more of an equitable standing between (Sp5) and me.

The sustainability of their relationship is telling given the tremendous turning point the partnership took when Np9's institution dropped its priority funding for nations that were of lower priority to the U.S. government, effectively ending the direct support it had been providing Sp5 from since 2008. As is relayed in Np9's story of this critical moment (Chapter 7), these practitioners are both committed to inter-religious peacebuilding in Sri Lanka regardless of the lapse in funding. When the funding stopped, Sp5 paid Np9's airfare to participate in an evaluation of how their work could be improved and Np9 then sought other sources of revenue for the local NGO, something that may not have transpired without the trust between them.

So I went out there. Actually, they were in the midst of doing some evaluation work, and actually, because Sri Lanka was no longer a priority conflict, (my institution) wouldn't even pay for my travel to go out there and meet with them -- and I mean talk about an abrupt

ending of a relationship! So they (Sp5) paid for me to go out there out of their project funds to participate in this monitoring and evaluation! They wanted both the participants to do a lot of it and they want funders to be involved in the evaluation.

Not only was Sp5's local organization extremely committed to full participation of all stakeholders in their evaluations, they were clearly committed to transparency with their donors and to keeping the doors open for continued collaboration. Luckily, Np9's institution was supportive of her keeping the relationship strong and the partnership intact informally, despite the fact they were no longer funding it. Surprisingly, she says, "My boss supported it. I mean he sort of thought as long as you're getting your other responsibilities done, you can go and do this. I mean it wasn't like I had to take leave from (my job) in order to do it." She then explains how her strong interpersonal partnership with Sp5 helped keep financial opportunities open for her Southern partner:

I went over there for that (the evaluation) and then while I was there I went over there and met the U.S. Embassy there and checked to see if there was other potential donors to support their work and sort of talked about their work to other potential funding. But then we had the program and so while there are priority conflicts, there is also the annual grants competition that anybody from anywhere can apply to. So I encouraged them to submit an application to (the) grants program, in addition to a number of grant funders in D.C. I connected them with the folks at NED and with organizations they could send proposals to get continued funding for this project.

As she did this networking on behalf of Sp5, Np9 says, "We also talked about how great the project was and how great they are as an organization – how impactful the work was and how responsible they are in terms of reporting and so on."

They ended up submitting the application to the grants program here and it got funded. So now that project is continuing under the grants program... Institutionally, according to our rules, I have to keep some distance with them. I can't be involved in really close consultations about how they're designing and developing and implementing this stage of the project as (the institution) is funding, but I can still be in some consultation with them. So we're still in contact and when (Sp5) is up in New York in October, I'll go and see her and learn more about the project. I stay in touch with them about current events and Sri Lanka and I'll see things on the news about the Monks saying or doing this or that.

Np9's story shows the commitment some Northern partners feel to their Southern partners even if they are no longer directly involved and are not paid to spend time working on issues they both support. She still provides Sp5's organization with information and the two brainstorm new ways to work together. One way Np9 does that is by keeping her friends in Sri Lanka in mind as she works on religious peacebuilding initiatives in Burma and elsewhere. She explains that some of the dynamics between Burma and Sri Lanka are very similar in terms of "the breakdown of the religious groups and the identities... the relationship with the Tsonga." Thinking about what is next for her partnership with Sp5, she concludes, "I've been in touch with them about bringing a group of Burmese peacebuilders there to see the project in the field and talk to participants and learn a little bit about it."

The collaboration between Np8 and Sp4 in East Timor and Indonesia provides one more example of how partnerships endure after a program is completed. Sp4 discusses the benefits of an ongoing relationship. Many years after their joint interventions they correspond and keep possibilities open.

Cooperation with us and (Np8's firm) is now mostly by email or Skype, where we discuss and talk. We maintain our communication -- personal and as friends rather than more professional -- because there are no emerging issues right now. For example, (Np9) sometimes refers people to communicate with me...

Those referrals might lead to new opportunities where the fruit of their earlier collaborative work designing a land-dispute resolution system pays off.

Three years ago there was an organization in Bangkok that also wanted to develop this capacity building training program. This organization engaged him (Np9) to join them at that time... and (he) referred them to me. After that they hired me to be one of their trainers.

Ongoing cooperation and communication between Northern and Southern practitioners likely becomes more limited as partnerships end or morph into informal forms of collaboration, as Np1 predicts will happen with his partners in Nepal, but some form of ongoing information sharing and encouragement can prove to be highly supportive for Southern practitioners who may feel isolated in their work and who might also lack access to other resources and opportunities.

Share Power/Control

These Southern based peacebuilders offer vital insights for Northerners to consider as partnerships end or evolve into something new forms of collaboration. In Colombia, for example, Sp1 's partnership with the (European based INGO) endures after completing some initial programs with child soldiers, including the

disagreement/critical moment she had with her outside partner about promoting four youth leaders at the expense of the local decision-making process (see Chapter 7). There have been enough other positive interactions and benefits that have transpired, however, to keep their joint collaborations moving forward. Still, she describes the present relationship as being more institutional and administrative than the initial interpersonal relationships she had at the start of the partnership:

We presented together a proposal for resources from the European Union and in this endeavor we had a lot of interaction because we went as partners. Their role in those projects is very administrative. We have a lot of contact with them, so much, but in administrative things - not to discuss how we do things (methodology).

Although the funding and administrative support allows Sp1's organization to implement the projects it seems the critical moments described earlier -- of feeling unheard and ignored when it comes to local knowledge and input about how the INGO should engage the youth -- have left some lasting doubts about the partnership. She explains,

I feel, putting my self in their shoes, that they view us as having certain experience, that we already have certain knowledge, but in some form they look upon us with some lack of confidence. Without the confidence to say that yes we have the capacity to do the work; with some lack of confidence that the organization is capable of managing the resources. From the point of view of their shoes they implement a lot of control, many controlling facets so that our organization responds to the level of logic that they have proposed. This really complicates the relationship because someone has to supervise the resources, someone who regularly supervises what you do. I feel that they put so many controls and it's not necessary for you to talk with one another. Is this resentment, and if so, do you want to say something about it?

One can sense some resentment, or at least disappointment, in Sp1's voice as she considers the dynamics of interaction with this international partner. Her reflection again demonstrates why strong interpersonal relationships are critical for working through problems and challenging issues together throughout the course of partnership. Yet interpersonal dynamics cannot be removed from organizational communication when one of the partners works for an INGO that might be making the decisions about the level of face-to-face and on the ground interaction that is needed with local partners. It seems that talking to your partners becomes less useful when one side of a partnership controls how certain things will transpire and there is no formal agreement/MOU about how to negotiate the way they will work together.

In Kenya, Sp2 feels like her partnership work to prepare for the 2013 elections has been productive and realizes a few things that might help her as she collaborates with the UN and the Kenyan government going forward. Although it is a partnership that she has been in for the past few years it has a long way to go, as its projected end date is 2013.

Actually, most of what we did, our objectives, have been achieved... We feel like we are halfway through the project implementation, and half of our objectives have been achieved.... In terms of (impact) we can't gauge that impact right away, but in terms of outcomes and results, we feel that so far we are having a good impact. But our main gauge would be: 'How will the schools fair after the general election?' That would be our determining factor to say whether the work that we did actually helped the students and the communities to be able to cultivate cultures of peace.

Thinking about where the partnership goes from here brings Sp2 back to some of the shortcomings of the 3-way partnership and how her local NGO needs to adjust. Looking back at some of the partnership interactions, she says one thing that maybe she and her organization have not done so well is assert their need for more control and independence in the work. But, she says,

On the other hand, I tell myself maybe it's just as well that we didn't throw our muscle around, so that we just make sure that our objectives are being achieved. We don't have to keep pumping our chest to say "Here I am," yeah, yeah, take recognition of me!"

Her realizations that she could have been more assertive stem from the critical moments with the government where she felt unacknowledged for her contributions. Although she is not certain whether a more passive or assertive relationship would be beneficial going forward, it's a turning point in how she will seek to work with the ministry going forward and how she will initiate other partnerships in the future.

In retrospect, I think that maybe there should have been a way in which we discussed modes of operations before we went into the partnership. Like a working agreement... We needed to lay down our own – what do you call it -- modes of engagement – MOUs. To say that we would work with you if you do it (x, y, z). We would need to have our own agreement when we're going into partnership with other organizations.

It is a realization that it is vital for local partners to take a more active role in shaping the agreement with their larger partners, whether international or domestic. In this case, the UN agency presented Sp2 with the partnership model

agreement. She recalls, "I signed the dotted line, yes. *But very rarely do we also take part in creating (the agreement).*"

Summary

"Peacebuilding" partnerships between outsiders based in the global North and insider-locals in the South do not always end, but their joint involvement in specific collaborations does inevitably terminate or transform into something else. The morphology of specific peacebuilding partnerships between INGOs and local institutions in conflict settings may follow a more predictable shape of beginning, middle and end stages, but if we consider peacebuilding partnerships from the standpoint of practitioners then the morphology of partnership seems more fluid with ongoing support and sharing of ideas often continuing between partners/practitioners even after outsiders have exited from their direct engagement in the host country.

As they consider whether their partnerships are ending or continuing, the language of local control over resources and projects is prevalent in the discourse of both Northern and Southern partners, yet they emphasize this from their unique standpoints as outsiders and insiders. Economic self-sufficiency for the local partner might be a goal for these Northern practitioners whereas for insider-locals it might be a hope of what will, or should, come at the end of a North-South collaboration. The above stories tell us that many Northern partners aim to have

local partners who can successfully manage their projects and be the necessary agents of change for peace and nonviolence. Southern practitioners may hold such values too, but in these stories they more often emphasize their need for greater participation in decision-making as partnerships progress. Progress may mean co-creating future MOUs or restructuring existing working agreements. The question remains as to whether their outside partners, who often bring the money, will be open to such changes.

Finally, after asking these peacebuilders to consider the end or next stages of their partnerships I asked them to consider “What matters most” to them about their partnership cases and about partnerships generally. Reflecting on how their cases have concluded or “morphed” overtime, and what stands out as instructive for others, provides us with more valuable insights for those who seek to improve their current institutional or interpersonal partnerships and for other practitioners who will engage in future N-S conflict resolution/transformation initiatives. Although their concluding thoughts on what matters most warrant their own chapter (below), much of what they value and prioritize has already emerged above in their reflections on the beginning, middle, and end/current stages of their partnership cases.

CHAPTER NINE: WHAT MATTERS MOST – LESSONS ACCUMULATED

The detailed practitioner stories that unfold in each stage of the morphology of partnerships presented above expose a variety of the philosophical underpinnings that ground their practice and inform how they would like to collaborate and partner with others. In this chapter these “peacebuilders” speak specifically about what matters most to them in their North-South cases, and partnerships in general. In some of their reflective moments they imagine, and describe, how their Southern or Northern based partners might view their partnership.

When these peacebuilders talk about what matters most in their partnerships there are a number of qualities that are strikingly similar yet also have their own unique characteristics of interaction. The importance of reciprocity and mutuality in partnerships is central to the talk of Northern and Southern peacebuilders as they reflect on what they care about when partnering with others. Reciprocal partnerships mean a balance of control/power, which although may not be possible in terms of financial resources can be accomplished by greater decision-making and leadership by the Southern-insider partners. Balancing power may come from local partners asserting their will but can be more easily facilitated by

conscious outsiders from the West/North who ensure they do not dominate all aspects of their collaborative engagements in foreign settings.

The following sections provide a window into what these seasoned peacebuilders value as vital actions and important pitfalls to avoid in their own partnering. While some ground their reflections in the specific cases featured throughout this study, others describe perhaps the ideal features of a partnership they strive for but have not yet fully experienced. Taken together they provide some guideposts for others who engage in complex intercultural, North-South collaborations. Figure 2 (below) diagrams these principal values of partnership.

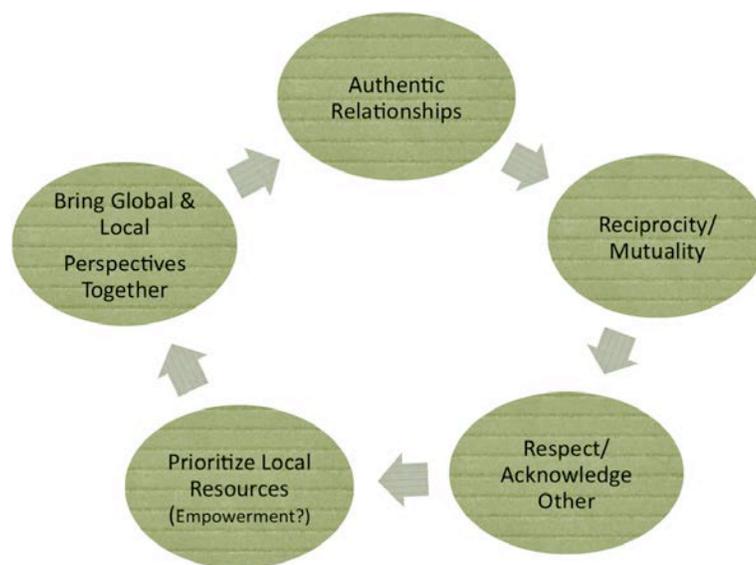


Figure 2: What Matters Most

Authentic Relationships

There is a powerful discourse that relationships matter throughout these instructive stories. For some of these seasoned practitioners the nature of the relationship with their partners is perhaps what matters most of all. The ideal of strong “relationships” should not be misconstrued as a simple notion of healthy interpersonal dynamics between “good” people. But in some cases we can indeed learn from these narratives that well intentioned, skilled individuals are perhaps the critical factor that makes all the other complicated dynamics work out in these asymmetrical, intercultural North-South collaborations.

Np1 describes some “guiding principles” for a strong partnership as he works with others in Nepal and elsewhere.

One is that it has a very strong relationship focus. That relationship focus is about constructing new spaces and teams of people who are mixed from their backgrounds so that you are not narrowing too much to one slice a very complex reality. *Relationship means that you are committed to the authenticity of relationships.* So it's not bound by a project timeframe it's bound more by the parameters of who we are together and what we are trying to work on. And we of course have the great luxury that (the foundation) brought into the vision that this needed to be a more expansive timeframe rather than a shorter timeframe. So it permitted a lot in terms of its expansion and breadth...

He continues,

I think that there is obviously a whole area where *I've worked as much as I can to mitigate against the asymmetrical forms of relationship* where there are experts and peons, so to say, and that takes a lot of different forms. The kind of shape that it took with proposing to do a

model of co-facilitation with (my Nepali colleague and student) is one example. *The bigger picture is how do we do this in ways that don't create inappropriate dependencies?* We want to work to bring out the imagination of the people that we work/partner with and work hard to not create a structure that creates too much dependency on one person.

His narrative helps us to understand what a focus on authentic relationships means in practice. Being authentic is more than just being true to oneself, authenticity seems to be about being true to the ideals of good North-South/Outsider-Insider partnerships. A solid relationship focus means an awareness of the dynamics of dependency and a willingness to give more power, recognition and control to those people/partners that might initially look to you for the answers and resources.

Reciprocity/Mutuality

Good partnerships demand that the giving and receiving is not unidirectional. If Northerners typically provide money, technology and other resources then Southern partners must be able to share their local knowledge and skills and ideally take a lead in project implementation. Meaningful partnerships require both sides to try and understand their partners' world -- the context of the South or the North where many of the conflict resolution and development ideas and methodologies are born.

As practitioners discuss their cases, we see how reciprocity is connected to what some call "mutual relationships," but reciprocity also applies to addressing

asymmetry in N/S relationships. Sp5 sheds light on how she views herself and how she approaches her work with outsiders in Sri Lanka.

For me being a peace practitioner means someone who can empathize with each and every partner and the person whom you are involved with. I'm trying my level best to most of the time understand your part of the world where many of these ideas and concepts are coming from, as well as our part of the world, a different context, and how we can initiate a collaborative partnership that is more respectful and cooperative.

She continues,

*I strongly believe that the problem of the world is that somehow even though we are the same, the diversities are beautiful, but *somehow there is no proper way to make us understand and to develop our skills in how to accommodate differences* - to achieve something that is beautiful and productive. I think that is part of the problem when it comes to this two - end partnership.*

Her thoughtful words about different ways of seeing and being in the world, and the challenge of overcoming “difference” serve as a reminder that this is a much needed skill in conflict resolution. But it is not just necessary for resolving differences between adversaries. Mutuality/Reciprocity in partnership means recognizing and acknowledging one another’s differences and respecting the difference that arises within your collaborations.

Similarly, Np3 explains how there are at least two different levels of expertise in North-South partnerships and why outsiders who provide resources must be careful to emphasize what the receiving partner has to give. He says,

*I bring my own knowledge of civic education but I go to somebody and Chad and they have their own knowledge and expertise of civic education in Chad. *So there should be an equal respect for a mutual relationship.* However, because the money comes from me – (The*

Northern partner) – many times it is perceived that I have a little bit more influence in the process and I think in many ways that's an obstacle and a problematic in the relationship unless you *manage in a way that is culturally sensitive*.

Sp4 explains that her collaborations with Np8 in Indonesia and East Timor worked because “a mutual-interest partnership” existed where they really learned a lot from each other and were able to share knowledge. She laments how some “partners” are just doing the project activities together, but not stretching themselves. Instead, “ It's about trusting each other, mutual benefit, playing with the same approach, and those kind of things.”

Np2, speaking about his role as insider-outsider with a large INGO in Afghanistan -- and who saw himself in partnership with the Afghans he was training in conflict resolution -- describes some of the critical relational qualities that the Southern practitioners have also expressed in their narratives. Reflecting on his partnership efforts, he says,

There is a lot of this work which is not about the details...I think a lot of it is about sort of the spiritual side, the human side of having that experience of working with someone from a different world with a different set of experiences and having it sort of be a really positive experience for them and for me too - *a mutually positive experience and that's not in a manual anywhere*.

He continues to tell us some of the interpersonal ways of being that cannot be taught in manuals, but likely must be inherent in the “peacebuilder” or learned overtime in the trenches of the tough collaboration that violence prevention and conflict transformation work require.

I think if we're really being honest *it's a whole lot about being present, being human, connecting, walking with them as they're walking a really difficult journey. They know and I know that I am not going to walk with them on the most difficult parts.* I think that is really important. It doesn't show up in your annual report. It's not one of those to do's in a line item you have to deliver on a grant proposal, which are talking about successful collaborations or partnerships and I think that's a big part of it. It's like in physics to particles come together and both are forever changed afterwards.

When reflecting on her INGO's partnership with the Ministers of Health, and her role as a practitioner, Np7 says *"it's by far the relationships" that matter most to the partnership,*" and her example shows that the importance of relationships extends beyond the implementing or initiating partner to the myriad layers North-South and South-South relationships that might exist in any complex intervention that involves multiple cultural and identity groups. She explains:

I mean the most important aspect for me personally and for (our INGO) is the fact that the ministries as people -- not as our partnering organizations, identities, or flags, but the people themselves -- continue to be friends, to talk to each other, even through the worst of times.... I mean if they were never to buy new equipment or improve the labs or, you know, find a way to, you know, contain an infectious disease, which obviously would be great and we would love that, it'd be a huge health success for the region, but I think that to have an Israeli, a Palestinian, and a Jordanian who are always are willing to talk to each other regardless of what's happening...I mean it's one thing to be social entrepreneurs, or an NGO, or peace movements talking (working together) -- the civil society side is one thing -- but to be politicians and to be in their ministries and to continue to talk to each other, that's a huge success for me.

Thinking about her work in Sri Lanka, Np9 says she feels very positive about the overall partnership between herself (including the role her peacebuilding institution plays), and Sp5's Sri Lankan NGO. Friendship is at its core. She explains,

I feel like I learned a lot from them. I feel that we were helpful to them. I think that our collaborative relationship has played a role in why this project has been successful. *I think that the thing that is most meaningful to me about our relationship is just the personal trust that we have between us, and the personal relationship... I care about them. We're friends now forever, I hope...* I would never go to Sri Lanka and not see them and I would probably stay at their house. I know them personally now and *we have a mutual love and respect for each other.* We actually sign our emails 'love' now, and I don't do that with many of my partners (laughs).

As she reflects a bit more on their present friendship -- what might be construed as the "less professional side" of their partnership -- she realizes this reciprocity and mutual concern has been there all along. "That was there before we (the U.S. institution) were even funding, I mean when I was still funding the project.. It's just that overtime we've become both colleagues and friends."

She also realizes it might be rare and that such close relationships might present problems in some partnerships, as we learned from the critical moment Np2 experienced with one of his Afghan trainees (Chapter 7). She reflects,

I can imagine that there might be opportunities when the closeness and the friendship would create difficulties if the project was proceeding in a destructive way when it would be difficult to send challenging messages to the local partners that were your friends; Because you wouldn't want to hurt their feelings.

Let us now consider reciprocity from another angle. Northern practitioners who are originally from the South -- like Np3, Np6, and Np7 -- have experiences of what its like to be in the role of the local peacebuilder with outside partners. Np6 earlier experiences working on the transition from apartheid to democratic rule taught her some of the more important things outsiders need to bear in mind as

they partner. “Being on the receiving end has served me so well in my work in the world because I know what it feels like to have people come in from outside.” She explains how challenging that is.

People come in and they take your time, your knowledge, and your energy and give you nothing in return... It was always a dance because you clearly wanted to brief people, support people, if there was something they could do, but often it felt as though they were coming to take not to in any way give. And then there were a few who did come in to give. There were some remarkable people who came in. We need to be very aware of coming into partnership where there is reciprocity, so not just coming into take, and on the other hand were not coming in just to take over.

Outside organizations thus have to be conscious of what they are offering and the nature of the partnership they might be proposing.

The Southern practitioners profiled here now offer us more direct insight into what matters to them in their partnerships.

Kenyan peacebuilder Sp2 tells us,

I think what matters most about partnership should be respect - respect and acknowledgement of what each partner is bringing on the table. It's not about competition. It's about collaboration. It's not about outshining the other partner; it's about bringing all our efforts together, because we all need each other. But that's very rare in partnerships. I think it's more of an ideal because it depends, again, on who is providing money and who's providing what, you know...

From her insights we can conclude that respect is one of the absolute ingredients for a healthy partnership. Some reciprocity and mutual benefit might be feasible for both partners simply by constructing a fair and balanced MOU or formal agreement, but how can such a partnership last or flourish without respectful engagement or acknowledgment of what the local partners bring to the

intervention? In her case, the government's failure to acknowledge her NGOs vital role as a designer and implementer of the peace education curriculum created stress between the partners. Similarly, a lack of respect for Sp1's ideas about how to best engage former child soldiers led to critical problems that adversely impacted not only the partnership but those youth they are trying to help!

Although reciprocity/mutuality are ideals voiced by conscious practitioners, Sp2's experiences show that funding partners will have to recognize the strengths that each side brings and money cannot be the strongest factor in the relationship between partners. "In Africa," she says,

I think what I've realized is that because of the dependency culture, the partnerships, especially from the Western countries, they tend to be more dominant in the whole thing than the local partners. It's like if I'm bringing in the money and have a bigger say rather than acknowledging that if I'm bringing in the money, and you're bringing in your skills or you're bringing in your structures, we need to be at an equal partnership. So it looks like the money always takes the upper hand over resources, like human resources and time and structures.

She continues to explain why it shouldn't be that unbalanced,

Because if a donor hands us money, it means that there's something they are interested in doing and means that you are doing – both of you have an objective you want to achieve, so it's a 50/50 thing. It's a win-win kind of situation. But in most cases it looks like if you're not giving money, then it means you're insignificant, which should not be the case, I think. Because you might not be giving money, but you are providing your time, which maybe the other partner doesn't have. You are providing your technical skills or your knowledge of the local situation, which the other partner doesn't have. And in most cases, the social or the assets the other partner is bringing are not seen in terms of monetary value.

Sp2's insights are particularly insightful reminders that the mere fact that an outside organization gives local partners resources means the donor/outside organization recognized that the recipient organization has something to offer, most likely something the outsider needs or wants, even if its only recognition, feeling relevant, or perhaps just feeling good that they are either helping to prevent further violence in a current conflict or contributing to peace/development in a post-conflict nation. They are thus interdependent and the heavier resourced outside partner would do well to acknowledge that as much as possible.

Relationships and The Triangle of Satisfaction

For Np8, it was his partnership work in East Timor and Indonesia that made him realize how much the success of North-South collaborations/partnerships is dependent upon the quality of the relationships. "This partnership made me realize how much it can be based upon personal relationships and friendships." After they had worked together awhile he realized his Indonesian partners felt closer with him, and thus more open, than with some of the other people they had worked with from abroad. Np8 is confident his partners felt quite good about the partnerships and notes that they like the opportunity to work with an international partner. "We worked well as a team," he says, a reference to the joint decision-making that occurred.

Lastly, Np8 summarized the central importance of relationships in his East Timorese partnership by connecting it to the vital nature of the content he and his partners are teaching and the process they are utilizing. One of the things that Np8 and his organization use in their training materials is the triangle of satisfaction, which has become well known in the Western mediation tradition as a model for focusing on process, relationship, and substance/content. He feels it's a relevant way to diagram the success of his partnerships too. He tells us how it works in the field.

I think there's sort of three different pieces to it, and one was I think that we did the project and *we have both preserved and built even more powerful relationships* with each other, both personal and professional. *Procedurally, I think the process that we used was in many ways pretty innovative* because it was using this design shop and bringing people from all parts of the organization to design a system and approach that I think actually worked. *And substantively they have been doing this and are resolving disputes and basically it still exists so it's been something that has been sustainable over time.* So substantively I think that they've been able to resolve a number of disputes. I think that to me those were the real values of it.

Np8 emphasizes that "there was a lot of sustainability in that project," but he also acknowledges that sometimes conflict practitioners cannot accomplish all they hope for when their ideas are not completely accepted by the local political institutions. Partners thus may be able to train people and lay the foundation for change, and even accomplish significant progress, but there are often structural challenges that may take longer to change, if they ever do. He explains:

I think the weaknesses of it was we were not able to help them, the East Timorese, build the relationship that they may have needed in order to get full support through the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry

of Justice I think was fine as long as they were mediating. They didn't want to have a tribunal. And I think you need a backup system when people can't agree. And part of it was just the whole situation. I mean, to get new laws, to get new policies past and all that, it was just gridlock and so I think that that was tough.

Prioritizing Local People and Resources

In their own unique voices and stories Northern and Southern practitioners show that many of the issues that matter most are related to the role of the insider partners and the local beneficiaries who insiders and outsiders have come together to assist with ideas, skills and/or other resources. Some speak the language of empowerment and emphasize the value of blending the global and the local, while others focus more specifically on the value of local control and locally driven projects.

Nigerian Sp3 returns to his master-servant analogy and his thoughts reflect a desire for reciprocity in terms of more local power/control. He worries about how the asymmetrical nature of North-South funding can foster attitudes of dependency from both sides of a partnership.

Partnerships should not be a master-servant relationship. Regarding funds, I want to believe that most of us in Africa should not just be seen as beggars, just scrounging for funds. We can do a lot for ourselves; we have potential. If not our leaders – because they are so selfish and self-centered – We should not be seen as beggars; we are not. What we're doing is for our own good. It's for communities; it's for peace; it's for development. After all, who caused the crisis in our country? We caused our crisis so we should know how to resolve our crisis.

His story of partnership with the Jordanian INGO shows progress away from purely Western linkages, but it's still an asymmetrical relationship in terms of funding and major decisions coming from outside. Sp3 says he has not yet seen much evidence of local locally driven South-South peace and conflict related partnerships within Nigeria or even regionally within Africa. He feels that they are getting closer to that and that people need to figure out how to best utilize their internal resources, he says. *"We have to look inward and see how we can help ourselves. We look at what's going on in Mali, West Africa with the Nigerian troops there to repel the rebels – the Islamists."* His sentiment is that the same cooperation that is provided for "peacekeeping" must be attached to peacebuilding and development efforts.

Bringing Global and Local Perspectives Together

Several Northern peacebuilders highlighted the value of bringing global and local perspectives together as one of the most essential things about partnerships. By doing so they believe they can have a greater impact on the people and communities affected by conflict and war. Providing a Northern perspective specific to the North-South dynamic, Np5 says outsiders provide an external perspective that can help "people who are living and breathing a conflict" in their own country to see something they cannot see with their own eyes because their proximity to it, or perhaps unknown biases, blind them in one way or another.

Np8's reflections on his work demonstrate that outsider peacebuilders must be aware of why they are bringing new ideas in and how does it compliment or add to local methods or practices.

The question that we all, that I always struggle with, is '*Are we augmenting what currently exists?*' In other words, you're trying to enhance it by bringing in dispute resolution knowledge from around the world, *so how do you integrate knowledge from afar with knowledge from here?*

Who takes the lead in North-South collaborations will vary depending on the goals and approach. Northern outsiders may initiate the partnership but look for their local partners to take the lead in implementing the intervention programs, as Np4 seeks in Sudan. But in other cases, where outside consultants need to play a bigger role in teaching a new system, they may have to work harder to bring out what already exist in their partners local context and skill set so as to not dominate or overpower it.

In thinking about bringing together the global and the local, experienced peacebuilders realize this cannot just be a North-South dynamic. Some practitioners indicate that more needs to be done to promote regional and local collaborations that are independent of Northern donors/partners. The role of the Northern partner might thus be to facilitate the networking and partnering of Southern practitioners/organizations that share similar objectives. Coordination of various Northern and Southern actors in conflict resolution/peace work is something that has been desperately needed in many conflict zones, but many NGOs continue to work in isolation or compete with one another for funds rather than find ways to

pool their resources. International NGOs and practitioners can facilitate new regional or local partnerships when they coordinate and bring Southern partners together (Nan 2003; Nan and Garb 2009; Ricigliano 2012).

Np5 gives an example of this in her work with Colombia and others. *“I am a big proponent though of the South – South as opposed to the North – South relationships. We have convened a lot of West Africa or Latin American dialogue around extractive industries and what the Argentines have to say to the Senegalese is way more helpful than what you/we whatever say to the Senegalese.”*

Concluding his thoughts about partnership in Nepal, Np1 sums up the critical role Northerners might play as catalysts for new collaborations and why peacebuilding partnerships rarely just involve two parties. He states,

I do think there's something powerful about the local with the global. I think that is a good partnership. More and more we are looking at regional partnerships. How do we bring about more coherence in Latin America, or a group of democracy advocates in the Middle East, and what kind of convenience could you be from the Unites States for those partnerships and what would the role be where we are not central anymore, where we are not the spoke? But we are part of the convening process that becomes much more decentralized within regions.

In his reflections on this multi-faceted approach he shows that North-South partnerships are hard to define, or draw boundaries around. *“There is not a core thing that is partnership,”* he determines. *“We have to talk about partnership as plural – embedded sets of relationships.”* Partnership, he surmises, is probably quite like the nested paradigm model that has become a useful way to understand the

complex, but interconnected nature of conflict (Dugan 1996; John Paul Lederach 1997).

Empowerment for Local Partners and Beneficiaries

One of the most important aspects of partnership for several Northern based practitioners is the idea that their collaborations with local people and communities in the South has led to these locals having more “power” in their lives or perhaps at least the perception that they do because they are enabled with new tools and ideas to accomplish their objectives – objectives that they may have only come to see through the interaction/collaboration process with outsiders. Np2 reflects on what matters most about his partnership work in Afghanistan:

I think... the growth of these Afghan trainers, whether they stay with (the INGO) or not. That's not the key to why it's significant but *I think the folks that we worked with really felt empowered*. I hate this word but they felt “*self-actualized*,” if you will. This is where they wanted to go. This is what they really believe their country needs; that their fellow country Afghans need.... And they feel really more empowered to do that, whether it was just that they have the so-called legitimacy of working with somebody from the outside who had credentials from a place like Harvard or wherever. This could be really self-deceptive and/or self-congratulatory. *I want to believe that it's not so much the magic of the tools that we gave them or ability to help develop people's trainers. I think it's part of just the personal relationship - it was the connection that was made.*

Empowerment can mean providing new ideas and skills that enable people to address their respective conflict issues, yet perhaps just giving people financial resources to do things as they already best see fit is also empowering. Nevertheless, while discussing her INGO's new partnership in Sudan, Np4 warns of the delicate

balancing act that is needed when “empowerment” is linked to financial support. “*I think the most important thing this first of all that we are led by our partners and secondly that are funding doesn't destroy exactly the qualities that made them effective in the first place.*” She explains,

The way that that can happen is if money causes the leaders of organizations to do things for your benefit and not for the good of their community. This is incredibly challenging because it basically kind of means that you have to walk a fine line between giving them enough income stability that they stay with the organization and don't feel like they have to take another job in order to feed their family, but at the same time not funding them to the point where they are in a sort of different socioeconomic orbit from the people that they are working with. This makes me feel that although the way we work is definitely the right way, it's very niche and I'm not sure that it's capable of being applied on a much bigger scale.

For Np4, her observation that this may not be a widespread practice in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding is “a conundrum that we need to think about.”

More Local Control/Power

Although Sp1 does not speak directly to “empowerment” in her stories of Colombia she does speak directly to the need for more local power and control over their resources and methodologies in the field. One gets the sense that the idea of empowerment, “dar poder” --to give power” in Spanish, can be achieved by the more dominant international organizations paying more attention to local wisdom and thus facilitating greater decision-making to the local organizations and practitioners. Thinking about what matters most in her partnerships, Sp1 returns to the critical need for outside partners to listen to their local partners. Its not just

about the outside organizational partner listening to the local partner -- at an organizational level -- but also listening to the beneficiaries of their joint programs, like the Colombian youth in this case. The problem, she reminds us, was that the INGO did not involve the youth in the decision making process of deciding who would represent the youth internationally. As many Southerners have emphasized, outside partners need to pay attention to how things are done in the local context and if they cannot directly ask the beneficiaries how they do things then they need to rely on what the inside partner knows. For Sp1, it is critical "To listen to the group, *respect* the idea of the group, and *respect* what the group decides." She explains the greater problem of outside power and control and why rebalancing that initial asymmetrical relationship is so important:

If you, as the international partner, *give up a little bit of your power* you can work towards a little more equality with the other. I'm not only talking about (our partner), I'm talking about many international agencies that I know, with whom we've worked, in general. In general all of these entities have a certain amount power in this power in a certain sense is revealed when you talk with them and you construct an agreement.

For most international partners, she says, "It's a little bit about, 'How will I have control over the project/over the local partner? What will I do so they will tell me the results? What can I do so they will comply with the numbers, with our requirements?' I'm talking in terms of overall control and this is related to the theme of power." Still, despite these challenges to a fulfilling partnership, Sp1 highlights the value of partnership with internationals – something noted by others below. Of her partners in Colombia, she states:

One thing that I always remember is that they permit us to carry out our work. There are difficulties and challenges, but really they need to let us implement our work and we cannot fail to remember this. Second, is that partnerships allow us to learn from other experiences. Third, there needs to be an experience of interchange of dialogue that allows you to recognize each other, to see one another, and how you are seeing your ways of working. This is very interesting.

Know the Local Context

One of the best way outsiders can pay more attention to what locals need, and how programs might be more successful, is to spend time up front learning about the context and the nuances of culture and identity that inform some aspects of why conflicts escalate and how they might be managed or even resolved. Some conflict analysts advocate a lengthier process of cultural analysis (see Avruch 1998) but most outside agencies do not give culture and identity dynamics adequate attention prior to engagement or entering into formal partnerships. Np6 emphasizes how important this is in complex political environments like Zanzibar. “We need to be sitting with people and finding out what it is they want and what they need rather than working just with what we want and need. What I am saying to you, and we had the luxury of doing this.” Her point is that while some practitioners are conscious of the need for this work upfront, they lack the time and resources to do so.

Np8 says of his U.S. based firm, “We always try to the greatest extent possible to do it, but you just don’t always either have the time and for the most part most clients that I work with won’t pay for that.” He says that one of the problems

created by not spending time upfront learning from partners is that the local-insiders come to expect more from outside partners, which seems to indicate that taking the time to do a cultural analysis is a way to prevent asymmetrical relationships. His experience in Southeast Asia and elsewhere is that many local partners “operate on much more of an expert paradigm that you know it, just come in and do it for them.” He adds, “Sometimes they don’t have the capacity or they don’t have the framework” to get started.” But importantly he tells us that you can get to what matters to people by asking them about their lives, “especially if you ask people to tell you stories. Their stories will tell you how.”

Np8 and other peacebuilders talked about the vital need for outsiders to have a local translator and one mentioned it on her consideration of what is critical to North-South partnerships. A translator is someone who cannot just translate words, but also the culture/context and bridge the gap between Northern practitioners and the local people involved in partnership programs. Sp4 states:

It is a must to have a translator because of the language barrier, not just language but cultural, during the process. Whether it's statements from Chris, or other partners, we take this statement and add contextual information to it. Of course we have to ask permission first, but (Np8) was very happy when we proposed the idea of translating his statement first but making it longer to add the local context and make them really understand it.

Shared Vision and Purpose

One final piece that these experienced peacebuilders have learned is that people and organizations that enter into a partnership agreement must have a clear

purpose for doing so and that is typically rooted in some degree of a shared vision about the people and place they are serving. Np6, who continues to nurture her collaborations in Zanzibar, clarifies:

I don't think partnerships ever work if you make them for the sake of having a partnership. *There has to be a purpose* and that may sound like a very simplistic thing to say, but it's really important because people often go into to partnerships because they like somebody or they think they ought to because they're doing similar kinds of things. But there needs to be a real purpose.

Simply doing the same type of work is not enough of a foundation. The shared vision and purpose grows out of continued dialogue and the necessary building of trust that can foster a clear reason to enter into an informal agreement or formal MOU to collaborate. In Zanzibar, Np6 spent lots of time in conversation with the women members of parliament before the idea to formally partner emerged.

The building of communication and connection with other organizations, whether they are the local organization or other international organizations is all a good thing to be doing so that when the moment comes that there is something appropriate to do together you have relationships in place and know each other. Because in the end, trust is the core of any partnerships.

Np6's return to the notion of trust building that has been voiced so many ways by all these practitioners emphasizes that just finding an organization or person with a shared purpose may not be enough. It will take sustained and open communication to create a solid enough foundation for a partnership that can handle all the complexities needed to help prevent violence and mend a divided society. But it seems that people and organizations that start with a shared

vision/purpose can also more easily build trust. Speaking about the vital nature of a shared vision in Zanzibar, Np6, states, “If we meet a radio station that says all we are going to do is attack the government then it's not going to be a good partner for us because that's not what (our INGO) does.”

Everything Np6 says makes sense, yet it does reflect the notion that the local partners vision must fit with the INGO's overall vision and objectives. How much influence then do local partners have in shaping the vision and purpose of the programs going forward? What she has said elsewhere is that she (or other outsiders) cannot do the real work “on the ground” or “in the field” as we outsiders like to say, but that it must be those who have a more intimate understanding of the local context. This would imply, as so many have, that “implementing” partners need to understand the cultural nuances and dynamics of identity and local politics.

Summary

The above stories by practitioners reflect an awareness and concern for preserving strong relationships above all else as collaborations reach the final stages, which ultimately may be predominantly dependent on the individual personalities of the practitioners. Yet obviously a sustainable, positive partnership is also dependent on the institutions that support them. Northerners care tremendously about the successful outcomes to their interventions and leaving sustainable products and partners behind. Southern partners might care most about

increased local control and whether the power/knowledge asymmetry between them is balanced or reduced through mutual participation that maximizes what each party can offer to their collaborative efforts.

Of particular interest is that the Northern practitioners in this study tend to view their partnerships as a success and they imagine that their Southern counterparts also regard the collaboration with them positively. When asked how their partners likely viewed the partnership, practitioners shifted between descriptions of how their partners might have viewed the programs to how partners might perceive them as people and professional practitioners.

Several of them suggested I interview their Southern partners, as in the cases with Sp4 and Sp5. Np1, for example, reveals the respect locals may have for outside experts, perhaps even more so for those they consider to be their elders, as Np6 and Np8 have chronicled earlier when discussing the impact of the “elder” identity in their experiences with Indonesian and Zanzibari partners. Here Np1 shares the value of teacher-student relationships that transcend age differences and are prevalent in many Buddhist and Hindu communities.

They see me as “the Great Guru” (laughs). That's what they always call me, but in many regards they are their own gurus. You know, obviously early and throughout as a teacher, guru would mean teacher primarily, as an expert in the area of conflict. There's always kind of an awe for people in local communities towards those that come from outside with some level of expertise. I think over time a lot of it developed in the direction of really more a form of accompaniment with them in the development of this rather

than somebody who is just a content expert. I think primarily it was teacher...²⁰

Being an outside expert can be a tremendous value to insider-partners but it also requires humility and a willingness to acknowledge the expertise in others.

As we consider how the collaborations between partners end, even as their relationships might endure, it is imperative that outsiders consider their temporary status in conflict/post-conflict settings. The temporary nature of most North-South collaborations is certainly an obstacle to leaving sustainable products and relationships in place. It is a real dilemma for the reflective practitioner and should be something every Northern partner reflects on prior to any engagement in a foreign country.

The length of time outsiders can commit to impacts the success of the North-South collaboration, with longer timeframes often ensuring greater results. But what matters most is the quality of the product and relationships created during the partnership with local partners and for both sides to be mindful that joint initiatives and funding do not continue past a point where local partners would benefit more from being self-sufficient. Np3 also tells us that practitioners need to recognize that in some cases you may build beautiful programs and have strong products in place, but war and its rippling impacts may be beyond your control and undo all your hard work. Describing his work in Sri Lanka in 2006-2007, for example, he laments:

²⁰ Np1 offered to give me the contacts of his Nepali partners to follow-up on their perspective on this, but I have not done so. If I need to add in some more Southern partner interviews to the dissertation this would be a good place to start. Of course I would then have one more matched pairing of partners interviewed, which I was originally not going to do.

We left something very nice, very beautiful. People forums. Then the government troops come in, declare war, and destroy everything.... It is out of your control, but what's in your control is preparing the people that you work with together for something like this to happen. And that's rarely done because it's very hard for people to imagine beyond their day-to-day existence - that there is going to be a bomb or war or something that you can prepare them to have a backup plan for.

Practitioners and NGOs stand a better chance of maintaining partnerships and ways to re-engage in the face of such chaos if they have built strong relationships that can withstand the destruction of their work by governments or other forces that are not in alignment with the non-violent peacebuilding agenda. His observation does raise a concern for conflict resolution and peacebuilding as a whole, however, about our ability as practitioners to alter larger government systems that often perpetuate direct and structural violence. Perhaps planting the seeds for potential change/transformation is enough.

A shortcoming of these practitioner reflections on "What Matters Most" is that they offer little about how to manage crisis or handle the dynamics of complex interactions between the partners as partnerships end or change, although such skills and philosophical approaches can be distilled from practitioners narratives on dealing with *critical moments and turning points* in Chapter 7. What emerged here, as noted above, is more about the structure of the interpersonal and organizational relationships that hold partnerships together.

In the end, there seems to be wide-agreement among these reflective practitioners that sustainable peacebuilding means the programs and projects they

introduce must eventually be led by locals and their indigenous organizations, or at least by a locally staffed office where outsiders have varying levels of influence. Ultimately, those who live there are the only ones who can ultimately transform their countries but they often benefit from the support and encouragement of international partners, especially those who consciously work for mutually beneficial relationships. Such north-partnerships have to work from the beginning through the end stages to counter the inherent asymmetry that comes with North-South collaborations and find ways to reduce or eliminate financial dependency, even if that means Northern INGOs or other partners have to let go of their own attachment to remaining relevant in a conflict setting that is not their own.

CHAPTER TEN:
DISCUSSION – A DEEPER LOOK INTO THE MORPHOLOGY OF
NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

This dissertation has endeavored to create new insights and understandings about the nature of strategic conflict interventions in the global South, specifically working to illuminate the nature of North-South peacebuilding partnerships. In this chapter I review the core findings of the previous chapters in the context of the “morphology of partnerships” while raising new critical questions about partnership and peacebuilding and discussing some of the implications for practice. A goal of this dissertation, after all, is to learn and share how to improve praxis in the fields of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Those who form partnerships and work together on the front lines of conflict can best describe how partnerships develop and unfold, and whether they ultimately come to an end. The peacebuilding practitioners I spoke with each shared what they believed to be an instructive case of partnering. Examined together, their narratives tell us what is both unique and what is similar across practitioners and partnerships. These diverse instructive cases of partnership reveal a number of characteristics that I have attempted to present as various stages in a “morphology” of North-South partnerships – a way to understand some of the

expected steps and unexpected disruptions that unfold during the course of these joint peacebuilding initiatives.

As we have heard from the data, people and organizations that come from North America and Western Europe to engage in the practices of conflict resolution/transformation and peacebuilding in nations of the global South cannot successfully intervene without the support of insider-locals. Although some locally based peacemakers certainly operate independently of any external cooperation or support, the majority of practitioners and peacebuilding organizations in the South rely on various types of international support due to the general asymmetry in resources that exists between the North and South. Countless peacebuilding related partnerships have therefore formed out of their independent and mutual needs.

Stage 1 - The Context for Engaging

There must be a clear purpose for all parties to enter into partnership in the first place. In the morphology of partnership, therefore, the first stage is the context/reason for engaging together. In many of the cases described in Chapter 4, partnerships arose when a northern-based international nongovernment organization “creates” a partner in the South. Sometimes these “Northern” generated partnerships start with a relationship with a particular local practitioner and other times it just begins with an idea or desire by the Northern practitioner, or organization, to engage in that conflict locale. In other cases, some form of

collaboration may already be in place between two organizations, but a further level of partnership is described between outside practitioners who come in as consultants to a large INGO or foundation and the local beneficiaries who come to be their partners in the field. These consultant-practitioners often view those they train as their “partners” and involve them as such in some level of planning and decision-making.

Southern practitioner narratives provide different windows into partnerships. They often see themselves as the implementing local partner that is integral to outside partners accomplishing their objectives. Sometimes the ideas and methods for conflict intervention and peacebuilding originate with the Southern practitioners and they seek partnerships with external practitioners and institutions that can support their goals.

The reality that many partnerships are initiated by Northerners, and sometimes involve the “creation” of a new organization based in the Southern conflict locale, should raise some questions about the larger “peace” or “liberal peacebuilding” agenda, which has received increased attention following the United Nations’ 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*. The fact that several practitioners in my research describe how their Northern based international organizations often identify or create southern partners might suggest a “savior” mentality by those outsiders, as in the notion by Np5 that her INGO’s conflict resolutions endeavors might be understood as evangelical in nature. Critical theorists concerned with Northern-driven peacebuilding efforts seem to worry most about outsiders who

engage in peace and conflict work with a larger aim of transforming the institutions and governments of nations into “democratic” systems that mirror the developed nations of the North and align with their Western agendas (see Heathershaw 2008, for example). Some of these theorists and practitioners point to the general need to give greater voice, control, and general autonomy to marginalized actors from the South as a way to combat or counteract this apparent liberal agenda (Richmond 2010; Bendaña 2003).

Victoria C. Fontan’s book *Decolonizing Peace* specifically looks at what is wrong with the neocolonial agenda and how peacebuilding might be improved (Fontan 2012). Although many of the practitioners in the present study might be best described as conflict transformation experts or strategic peacebuilders committed to nonviolent solutions for peace and development, it is worth examining how they contribute, or might contribute, to this decolonizing of the peace project that Fontan describes. When we think about the notion that there must be a purpose for partnership, in this context of decolonization, practitioners ought to consider Lederach’s (2002) statement that, “You should not displace a local resource just because you have the skills or financing to get involved. He implores those that do find a reason to engage in conflict settings to do everything they can “to empower people from the setting to take primary roles and responsibilities...” as they will be the instruments of change over the long-term.

Many of the practitioners in this study spoke of the need to put locals first, but also believe in the value of outside ideas and methods. Northern peacebuilding

organizations, and many of the practitioners who run them or consult for them, do have missions that support peacebuilding and democratic systems through non-violent means. If a Northern partner's vision is broad enough then they are bound to find Southerners who need an outside partner and whose goals and vision fit within their larger mission.

Those Northern partners who place high value on entrepreneurial skills when finding a Southern partner obviously care about sustaining the programs or organization they create. Such efforts are in a sense about strengthening civil society in the nations where they engage; but it is the degree of local leadership that will seemingly determine how organic and insider-driven those initiatives are. Local leadership in partnerships cannot be accomplished solely by entrepreneurial local peacebuilders/practitioners but require that outsider partners help to open a discursive space and provide the resources for that to occur.

Studies like a *Time to Listen* and *Confronting War* capture this critical need through the voices of Southern recipients of humanitarian relief/development and peacebuilding assistance (Anderson, Brown, and Jean 2012; Anderson and Olson 2003). So how much do Northern based INGOs and independent practitioners let their work -- towards what seems like positive change in violent societies -- be driven by locals who seek to transform their own communities and nations? Are partnerships that are initiated in the North better if they are led or at least co-created by their Southern, local partners?

Many Southern practitioners would have started their own interventions, and even perhaps initiated their own partnerships, if they had the resources to do so. Since they often lack such resources, is there a problem if an outside individual or organization identifies those local peacebuilders and decides to support them, perhaps even choosing partners with an organizational or philosophical structure that somehow resembles their own? That one of the Northern partners in this study says, "We have done our best work when we create our partners" suggest a need for some control, or influence, that would surely be harder to achieve if they partnered with an existing, independent civil society organization.

Very few Northern peacebuilders, NP4's organization comes to mind, might be willing to support local peacebuilders and their respective organizations with little or no influence in the leadership and direction of programs. In most cases, her organization connects with local peacebuilders who already have local organizations and projects, or at least innovative ideas, yet they do not have the resources to accomplish their objectives. Still, the partnership case in Sudan -- where they identified and recruited Sudanese peacemakers and then convened them at the British Embassy in Khartoum -- should lead us to question if such an approach is problematic for those locals, given the history of the British in the Sudan? In some cases foreign governance may just have to play a convening role, as there is no safe substitute. Perhaps the support of the British is worth any risk it might bring to those peacemakers and what really matters is that it was their choice to participate or not.

Beyond the case of Sudan, we should question if/how Northerners are potentially denigrating local leaders by relying on external government agencies from the West. Certain foreign governance might help level the playing field in a divided society, but at what expense to creating local solutions or indigenous led infrastructures for peace (Suurmond and Sharma 2012; Lederach 2012). Ideally Northerners could create greater symmetry and decolonize the process by using local leaders or a local institution to convene meetings if the safety of the participants was no less an issue than the risk that comes from their participation with the British consulate, for example.

From the data we can also see that at times there is ambiguity in where the seed for some partnerships originates. It may just depend on how it is framed by the Northern or Southern practitioners involved. For example, one Northern practitioner said she started the collaboration at the request of her local contact/future partner, but her being there in dialogue, sharing her expertise and experience with this local politician, is what opened the door for that invitation. Furthermore, in the case of Zanzibar with Np6, and Colombia with Np5, to name just a few, there was an invitation, and influence, by the local U.S Embassy that facilitated the Northern partner's initial involvement. In the end, when considering the need to decolonize our conflict resolution/peacebuilding efforts, where the seed began probably only matters if the partnership develops without much local influence/control.

Moving beyond the critical questioning above, there are also likely many positive outcomes when Northern practitioners have a hand in creating a Southern partnering organization. These Southern partners may become affiliated organizations to the INGO, as in the case of Np5 in Columbia, or even part of the INGO in the form of a semi-autonomous country office as described by Np6 in Zanzibar and Np7 in Israel/Palestine. The INGO leaders in his research certainly describe their country offices as very autonomous, led by locals or those who might be seen as insider – outsiders from the region and/or share a common identity with those they serve in their work. A benefit from these new partnerships that Northerners have helped to create is that once these Southern organizations are created they are often connected to a network of similar organizations based in the South. They are thus able to form South-South partnerships that they would not have had the resources to implement had they been left to work for peace in relative isolation. The financial resources they receive, which ideally only makes them dependent on outside support initially, can also give them the resources and time needed to build local to local partnerships that they likely would not have been able to sustain prior to external support. Still, we cannot be certain from the data of these practitioners that this is the norm for peacebuilding and development in conflict and post-conflict nations. Some research shows, for example, that locally based NGOs that are created and funded by the West are in fact quite disconnected from the local populations they are meant to serve (Aksartova 2009).

Many of the partnerships described above do complicate the notion of pure North – South partnerships. Many North – South partnerships develop into a variety of local collaborations within them. The Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian Ministries of Health partnership, narrated for us by Np7, is one interesting example of a North-South-South partnership. Although the initial idea for partnership came from the international NGO, and the members are accountable to them in various regards, the partnership and relationships of the different identity groups involved has taken on a life of its own. Sp6’s case of partnership in Argentina between an outsider from Buenos Aires and an insider from Iguazú (read Appendix A) is only loosely affiliated with an umbrella organization based in the United States that had little influence, and no decision-making in the intervention she and her partner carried out. From these example and others we must recognize that the lines of Global North - Global South partnerships are blurry and not as definitive as they may seem at times in this analysis.

Many of the partnerships featured in the chapters above are by no means permanent partnerships in the sense that new organizations have been created to continue on indefinitely in collaboration with their co-founding Northern organizations. Different partnerships involve agreements between outside INGO's, foundations, or government entities that may provide some direction, but mostly provide financial support for the Southern practitioners/organizations that implement the conflict intervention programs on the ground. Southern partners, like Sp1 in Colombia, Sp2 in Kenya, and Sp3 in Nigeria have spoken to both the

benefits and pitfalls of these collaborations, which I explore in more detail later but can be quickly summarized here as a desire to balance power in a way that leads to more local control. This must be done by creating greater symmetry in decision-making and in funding sources that lead to less dependency.

As we consider why and how partners come together, it's useful to recognize that most of the North-South collaborations featured above involve capacity building of the Southern partners and local community members by the outside Northern practitioners/partners, at least initially. In other words, outside experts often play a vital role in training local peacemakers/practitioners to sustain the facilitation, mediation and conflict resolution related training after they leave. Some would ask what is wrong with that, especially if it is an investment in local capacity? Perhaps the crucial question here is: To what degree are these capacity building initiatives designed and shaped by locals to fit the norms of their culture and sociopolitical environment?

Utilizing local peacebuilders also teaches Northerners new ways of seeing and thinking about conflict and its resolution. The learning/capacity building between practitioners can be bi-directional, as in my own experiences co-training with local experts in Uganda. Such bi-directional learning is surely often the case in North-South partnerships and should be given greater visibility. When Northern driven efforts of capacity building efforts are in some shape or form directed or co-created by insider-local experts, and outsiders are learning indigenous approaches

from insiders, then Northern practitioners might be said to be contributing to the decolonization of peacebuilding.

Practitioners like Np1 in Nepal, Np2 in Afghanistan, and Np3 in Mindanao work hard in their varying styles to have their capacity building efforts shaped by local methods and ways of knowing. Even if they are introducing Western approaches, or what is often referred to as “contemporary” conflict resolution techniques, they are also eliciting local skills and traditions and assume that what they leave behind will be transformed into whatever is most appropriate for the local context. It is good to know that concerns by conflict theorists like Brigg and Avruch are being addressed in practice by some of these Northern peacebuilders. These practices are critical, especially given the fact that some of the Southern practitioners in the study indicate that they often feel their ideas and ways of knowing go unheard or get ignored by some of their outside partners.

As we consider the decolonization of conflict resolution and peace building it is important to recognize that some of the Southern practitioners in this study, and likely many others who run peacebuilding organizations in the South are “Northern” educated and trained. Perhaps they have degrees in conflict transformation or conflict resolution from universities in the United States or the UK. This educational background surely allows for common principles and understanding when it comes to partnering with Northerners and carrying out the challenging work of conflict analysis and intervention strategies for the conflict settings where they will work together. In many cases it allows Southern practitioners to implement

“contemporary” approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding without the support of any so-called external “experts.”²¹

We might ask: “What is problematic about Southern practitioners being educated or trained in the North, if anything?” Do more organic ways of peacemaking or indigenous conflict resolution approaches get ignored due to the types of partnerships that are formed in North-South collaborations? Most likely they do, although some scholar-practitioners I have spoken with who are from Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, critique outsiders who idealizes indigenous practices since these practices often fail to make headway beyond smaller local disputes or they reinforce practices that have not prevented local violence. Still, most partners recognize the need to incorporate respected traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution and involve those locals who can enrich their interventions accordingly. North-south partnerships may therefore be best understood as cosmopolitan efforts.

Some practitioners in this study referred to the importance of partners being able to speak “the same language of peace,” but voiced that speaking the same language might be less about the terminology of mediation or academic concepts of conflict resolution. Instead, as Sp5 has indicated in Sri Lanka, Np7 in Israel/Palestine, and Sp6 in her work in Argentina (Appendix A), “Speaking the same language” is more about the ability to really listen and find common ground

²¹ Contemporary conflict resolution often refers to current practices in the West, but many of these techniques have their roots in indigenous practices from non-Western societies (see Ramsbotham 2005).

and shared meaning in your efforts to intervene. Perhaps “partnership” between Northerners and Southerners who “speak the same language” of peacebuilding and democratic principles of dialogue is exactly what is needed to recognize and combat the neocolonial powers that dominate much of the global South.

But we must be careful that our discourse about what peace and peacebuilding mean, for example, is not limited by ignoring different ways of being, thinking, and speaking about these concepts. The danger here is that focusing on sameness and common ground reflects the dominant discourse and concepts of the West/North and obscures critical differences that might be important to resolution of critical moments in partnership, for example (Foucault 1984; Brigg 2008; Forester 2009). In my discussion with Sp5 in Sri Lanka she told me that we connect as peacebuilders by “being who we are.” A better partnership is therefore not just about understanding one another conceptually but seeing and listening to each other as people committed to peacebuilding/peacemaking and allowing divergent ideas and methods to rise to the surface. For that to happen, outside partners/donors have to help open discursive spaces for their local, sometimes marginalized, partners. I consider this more in the morphology section on Ways of Engaging (below).

Finally, as we consider the context for North-South collaboration and the ideas of decolonizing peacebuilding it's important to think about those who Northerners describe as their ideal partners and target populations. Several of the conflict resolution professionals who are attached to INGOs describe the focus of

their partnerships as targeting Track I leaders or Track II “influentials” – those who have the mobility and influence to sway the leadership of a government or opposition group. Such a focus helps counter the critique by some that internationals involved in conflict resolution and peace building tend to focus on grass-roots victims of conflict and thus failed to address structural violence.

If peace building and development projects are indeed neocolonial and leave both the powerful and structures of violence in place then those who are committed to building a culture of peace, or at least less violent societies, may experience/feel failure. Practitioners in this study have shown, however, that a focus on community level leaders has also gone a long way in transforming broken societies to address complex conflicts like the natural resource conflicts described by Np1 and Np8, for example. Np1’s efforts with indigenous peoples in Nepal have built a structure for addressed conflict at community levels throughout the country, addressing political and socioeconomic structures in the process. Np8’s work with Sp4 in East Timor also worked to systemically change the way disputes are handled locally by engaging judicially systems that can affect a more just system nationally. These types of partnerships that address both grassroots and leadership, and are sure to utilize those in the middle levels of society that can serve as a bridge between leaders and the base, might stand the greatest chance of creating a sustainable infrastructure for altering structural violence.

Stage II - Building Trust

In the morphology of partnerships presented above, practitioner narratives reveal that trust is a critical ingredient that must be established early on in the relational actions of practitioners and in the way they create and structure partnership agreements or memorandums of understanding that determine the nature of their partnership and perhaps the structure of how they will work together. Although creating “trust” is described as a critical early stage to partnerships, “trust” is also an omniscient factor in the success or failure of North-South collaborations. Lewicki et al. (1998; 2006) describes a number of psychological approaches to trust development that helps us to better understand the role of trust and distrust in partnerships.

Trust is defined as “confident positive expectations regarding another’s conduct, whereas distrust is “confident negative expectations regarding another’s conduct” (Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies 1998, 439; Lewicki, Tomlinson, and Gillespie 2006, 1002). Applicable to what emerged in the narrative data for this study is the complex relationship between trust and distrust. Most relationships involve some combination of trust and distrust along a continuum from low to high trust and low to high distrust. More appropriately, Lewicki et al. (2006; 1004) suggest that in relationships the answer to whether people trust or distrust one another (their partners, for example), is not always a simple yes or no, but “to do what?” Several of their findings are relevant to the lessons of trust that emerged from these

experienced practitioners as they reflected on the development of their partnerships.

Not all relationships begin with low levels of trust, yet low trust and varying levels of distrust do often exist at the start of relationships where there is a lack of information about the other and uncertainty about how the other(s) are “likely to behave in future interdependent situations entailing risk.” Northern practitioners in particular have to be acutely aware of their mission and agendas and how their Southern partners perceive them. Even in the best of cases -- with extremely skilled and culturally sensitive practitioners -- outsiders based in the United States and many parts of Europe carry colonial baggage. This colonial burden even affects those Northern/Westerners whose identities reflect an ethnicity or birth nationality that many in the global South can relate to when they first meet.

Np3's partnering work in North Africa highlights this trust dilemma in partnerships. Despite his primary Palestinian identity he had to overcome tremendous distrust towards the U.S. from his Islamic partners. His example that he had to tell them, “We're not telling you not to teach Islam, but how to teach it...” implies that the local partners needed to know that their Northern based partners were not pushing a non-Islamic agenda. Nonetheless, suggesting how they should teach Islam does imply that his outsider team felt there was a better way than the more radicalized forms of Islamic teachings that were being taught. In reflecting on this, we must be careful here not to assume that Np3's outsider-team was pushing a Northern or neocolonial agenda. He and his team are, in fact, themselves Muslim

and perhaps view their agenda more as a nonviolent Islamic agenda, an agenda of peace, rather than a Northern agenda.

Let us explore a little more the relationship between identity and trust in how Northern based outsider practitioners are perceived by insider locals. Non-white identities might indeed help bridge the gap of distrust that Southerners have towards outsiders as many of the northern practitioners profiled here have reflected on in their stories. Yet the majority of northern practitioners from North America and Western Europe do carry the white identity with them. In discussing his partnerships in Indonesia, Northern Practitioner 8 and I spoke about the challenges that come with being an Anglo-American working in the global South. His reflections resonate with my own practice experiences, and Np6's earlier comments on being a White American/South African, all of which demonstrate that we have a lot of work to do to overcome U.S. Stereotypes and realities that are inevitably ascribed to us by those who do not yet know us as individuals. Awareness of that takes a conscious effort about knowing ourselves. It also means not taking some things personally, but being prepared to define your identity as something different than what others might perceive. For example, in my experience in Zanzibar in the years following 9/11, were likely quite similar to Np6's partnership stories, which meant overcoming a general mistrust by Islamic leaders towards any "American" supported initiative. This was true even though a Muslim woman activist invite me to be involved. Defining myself as an independent educator, who has the ability to consider all viewpoints, and involve all parties, was therefore critical to removing

deep layers of mistrust that result from American foreign policy decisions not connected to my small-scale efforts.

It's incumbent upon northern practitioners to demystify the "white savior" or "great guru" perception that might permeate the people that we touch in some fashion – even if we humbly see ourselves as just accompanying them on their journey. The above narratives reveal that practitioners from outside are often valued for their expertise by locals over their fellow countrymen who may have different but equally valuable information. Despite the distrust that might exist for some foreigners there paradoxically seems to be more trust towards outsiders than insiders in some areas, like educational and technical knowledge, which may give outsiders greater legitimacy in the eyes of locals than they deserve as partnerships begin. As a result, there may be a tendency for the local partners to over rely on the abilities and information shared by their Northern partners.

Np1 and Np8 have spoken about their awareness of this preferential nod towards outside expertise in their partnership cases and how they work to make their collaborative relationships more symmetrical. It is clearly good to address the issue of expertise by acknowledging the expertise of the local partners and local beneficiaries in one's projects. For those who carry the inescapable "white identity" it is also critical to be aware of the power and context that identity might bring to the trust/distrust dynamic between partners. In other words, it would be foolish to assume that you are the exception to the rule (of distrust) just because you are not

the stereotyped White American, for example, or even because you are sensitive to the dynamics of culture and power in the community that has let you in.

Sp4 spoke directly to the issue of overcoming distrust in Indonesia when she said she wanted to make sure that NP8 wasn't just coming to help "little brown people." She and other Southern practitioners like Sp1 and Sp3 want to know that their own methodologies and local ways of knowing/doing are going to be valued in a partnership despite their desire for the knowledge and skills their partners have to offer them. Even if local Southern partners come to know their outside partners as being extremely sensitive to local ideas and practice -- as reflected by many Southerners in this study -- other locals in that setting may see the Northern outsiders as something else and assume they have a neocolonial agenda. Northerners thus have to first work to be trusted by their Southern partners so that these insider partners will help them to overcome the obstacle of distrust from the "beneficiaries" of their joint projects.

In conclusion, Lewicki et al. link the development of trust to stages of relationship development. In the morphology of partnerships presented above, relationships and trust are interwoven in the narratives of practitioners and one can see that trust and distrust increase or decrease overtime based on the actions of the partners as partnership develop and unfold.

Stage III - Ways of Engaging (the Doing of Partnership)

When I asked practitioners what they did in their partnerships I was trying to get at their actions, or at least how they understand and make sense of what they do, in their partnering work "in the field." Partners do act together from the beginning, in the initial stages of partnership, as they work to build trust and gain an entrée. But what they do in the field, the methods they use in conflict related interventions and peace building activities, emerge most clearly in what we might call the middle stage of partnership.

In Chapter 6, the detailed stories of Northern and Southern practitioners revealed that outsider/external partners often open access to power/resources and they also bring a variety of new ideas and methods to their internal partners. Sometimes the presence of outsiders can facilitate change or they might deliberately "hold a new space" for change to occur. Still, they are often introducing new methods of dialogue or problem solving within those spaces. These peacebuilders describe much of what they do as forms of "capacity building." A common model that unfolds in partnerships, albeit in different ways, is the notion of train the trainer (TOT) - training local mediators or facilitators to implement strategies like violence prevention or natural resource dispute resolution throughout their communities or nation.

The techniques of the practitioners profiled in this study vary widely from more structured, shorter-term programs in which the outside partner might come

for weeks at a time over several years, to more organic Participatory Action Research approaches where outside support might last a decade plus. Yet the narratives of each of the Northern practitioners in the previous chapters describe a high level of local participation and influence in their capacity building initiatives. Although their different approaches may be seen along a continuum -- in terms of how much they are contributing to decolonizing conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts -- the capacity building approaches described by many practitioners (as in Afghanistan, Mindanao, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and East Timor) all reflect an effort to put the ideas and contributions of their local partners at the heart of what they do.²²

Southern practitioners in this study often speak of their role as the implementers and those most familiar with the challenging issues of language and culture that are part of the local context. They play a vital role in serving as cultural and linguistic translators for their Northern-outsider partners. We should by no means assume, however, that these seemingly ideal aspects of partnerships are the norm. Some Southern practitioners spoke often of the need for their partners to listen more to insiders and pay greater attention to local needs and context.

Here I want to briefly consider the work of Chris Argyris and Donald Schon who explain why the theories of practice that practitioners espouse to use are not

²² Although this may be impossible to measure in some cases, the few cases that feature the stories of both the Northern and Southern partner do reflect agreement on the level of local involvement or “empowerment” (see more on this below).

always what emerge in action – their theories in use. Reflective peacebuilding demands that peacebuilders assess themselves and their partners to determine if their espoused theories of collaborative practice – joint decision-making with local partners, for example – is what occurs. Or do Outsider/Northern partners tend to fall back to tendencies of defensiveness and persuasion when things do not go as planned with partners. This seems an especially challenging dilemma when cultural differences and financial/resource asymmetry are at play.

Reflecting on practice in any discipline requires an honest assessment of both the good and the bad, or perhaps what works and what could be improved. In revisiting the above practitioner reflections on their ways of engaging in partnering there is a tendency for both Northern and Southern peacebuilders to cast their actions in a positive manner. They often refer to the notion of empowering others throughout their discourse, for example, a prominent and heavily loaded concept in conflict resolution/transformation and peacebuilding that I discuss in more detail below.

Perhaps it is human nature to rate ourselves, our doings in the world, favorably. This tendency to reflect on what worked well likely stems in part from my asking these practitioners to select "instructive" cases that they and others might learn from (Forester 2007). Some clearly did choose instructive cases with the challenges of North/South dynamics in mind. In most cases, however, I had to probe for challenges, what I referred to as "wrinkles" in the partnership, in order to get at

the critical moments and turning points brought on by the complexity of factors like culture, identity, and power asymmetry.

In considering Argyris and Schon's suggestion that practitioners make a road map for practice, I think it is still unclear how much peacebuilding practitioners tend to think about the middle or end stages of a partnership before they find themselves already deeply engaged. How much do they anticipate these later stages on their own or with their partners and plan for possible critical moments around the dynamics of money, power, or culture? In some cases partners might benefit from co-creating a road map that can help them navigate and anticipate the stages of their partnership, but it should demand flexibility for the unknown twists and turns that might accompany the relationships and overall partnership.

Empowerment

Empowerment enters prominently in the discourse of many of the Northern practitioners, and some of the Southern practitioners, in their descriptions of what they do in their peace building partnership activities. As noted earlier, some might wonder what is wrong with the notion of empowerment, especially in the way that Paulo Freire, a Brazilian from the global South, explains it. Freire coined the term "conscientization" as "the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action." He says, "We all acquire social myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon

uncovering real problems and actual needs” (Freire 2013; Freire 2000).” Taken in this sense, empowerment cannot be given but is co-created through action and reflection together, as Np1 describes about his partnering work in Nepal.

Cobb (1993) who has written about empowerment and mediation, might suggest that peacebuilding practitioners cannot “give power” to others but can instead facilitate a discursive space for empowerment to occur. In this sense, empowerment is more about the outsider opening a collaborative space for dialogue or discussion with their southern partners in which local knowledge/power are able to emerge. A greater focus and awareness of opening discursive/communicative spaces that lead to the empowerment of Southern partners seems like a critical first step (Habermas 1984; Foucault 2003). A second step is partners jointly opening up such spaces for the marginalized actors in the conflicts areas they are working in. These spaces, if well facilitated, or mediated, can help to legitimize marginalized narratives that are at the core of much conflict and might also be at the heart of many misunderstandings within partnerships (Cobb 2003; Cobb 2006).

Although these practitioners did not talk about opening discursive spaces per se, some Southerners and Northerners described that dynamic being present in some of their dealings with one another. Outsiders might share new information or ask the right questions, as Sp5 said about her partner Np9’s line of inquiry regarding how long the different identity groups had been in conflict in Sri Lanka. Sp1 also reflected on how a woman from her partnering INGO Sp1’s pedagogical approach in

a way that allowed her to see that she was already on the right track with teaching human rights to youth.

But there are also potential hazards that might arise in trying to "empower" your partners. One way this might manifest in practice is chronicled in the "critical moment" narrative of Np5 in Colombia. Outside partners might be able to challenge authority of a foreign donor in a way that locals are unable to do so, but they must be careful not to jeopardize their partner's legitimacy by putting their partners in a precarious relationship with those donors or other powerful decision-makers that local partners rely on.

A good example from the above practitioner narratives is when I asked Np5 about her willingness to "empower" her local partner to challenge the U.S. Embassy staff when it's the local organization and its staff that have to stay and work daily in Colombia with the Embassy people. In contrast, Np5 does not live in Colombia and is able to return home to Washington - even though her INGO does not have an exit strategy in terms of their long-term partnership. She explains, "That is absolutely true, so there are definitely things that I can say that they don't say and that role, with regards to our ongoing partnerships, we play all the time." From this example we might learn that although outside partners may feel they can empower insider locals to speak their mind and challenge authority in certain circumstances, such as with a misguided donor, outsider-partners still remain with a certain power over insider-partners in that their distance and separation, as well as their international

reputation, allows them to say things in the discursive space that locals would dare not say for fear of reprisals.

Lastly, it is useful to consider how capacity building, an integral part of what many of these practitioners do in partnership, is related to empowerment. Np1's capacity building approaches, using the action –reflection method in Nepal, might be more empowering than many of the other approaches described above simply because he describes it as an organic process with no preconceived model of the mediation/facilitation system that would eventually emerge from the local teams. His work is about developing “agents of change” and although the model may indicate the empowerment of locals, he does not use that terminology directly in his narrative and there is no indication that Np1 has all the answers as an outside “expert.” Instead he sees himself as an overall facilitator, “accompanying them” on “their” journey to transform their communities.

We might conclude from these above examples of “empowerment” that good partnering in conflict interventions and peacebuilding related activities becomes less about the details of coordination and collaboration and more about how it is done discursively, such as talking with local practitioners about ways of working that might diverge from one's own espoused theories of conflict resolution practice. This is more than just the ways partners relate to one another verbally and non-verbally; it has to do with what is said and how they act; it is how partners legitimize themselves for their partners and what they do to legitimize their partners. This may at first require emphasizing different identities, consciously or

unconsciously, such as Np6 with her South African/American/Elder identities or Np7 with her outsider/insider, Palestinian-American identities. Some scholars, particularly in the field of Sociology, talk about how people emphasize different “badges of legitimacy,” in their work, which also seems applicable to these partnerships (Clark 2012; Benjamin 2013). But after that initial doorway to acceptance is open, as Np2 mentioned in Afghanistan, then it is all about how you present yourself in interaction. Respect goes beyond being polite to an acknowledgement to the other’s ways of being and the larger cultural context.

Stage IV - Critical Moments and Turning Points in Partnerships

As I said earlier in the discussion on morphology, we might view partnerships as having a particular form, unfolding or developing along certain stages, as a way to understand some of the common experiences these practitioners faced and that others might benefit from in their work. Still, some of the categories I have created from the narratives suggest that the stages of partnership are non-linear and that any morphology of a partnership, unlike the term’s use in the analysis of linguistics or folklore, has many unpredictable elements to it that unfold in its various stages. The various dynamics of asymmetry that exist between the global North and South, as well as the unique individuals that come together, dictate that partnerships will not follow a predictable form or clear sequence of events beyond the generic stages of beginning, middle, and end. Critical moments that

arise as people and organizations collaborate are especially relevant for practice because they might signal a need for new techniques or methodologies, a necessary return to re-establishing trust, or an overall change of direction in the partnership, such as bringing on additional partners at the local level.

McNamee and Leary's treatment of critical moments in negotiation as "relational moments" and "transformations" is particularly useful to this discussion of critical moments in partnerships. Let us consider partnerships as a form of negotiation for comparisons sake. They suggest the interdependent nature of negotiators and the necessity "to remain open to the ways in which 'the other' collaborates in the construction of our own identities and abilities (McNamee 2004, 269). Leary tells us that the "relation" is not a component of the negotiation but the essence of the process, an idea that seem particularly pertinent to conflict resolution/peacebuilding partnerships (Leary 2004b).

The stories above reflect that a number of critical moments arose in these partnerships, and although some might be anticipated -- like asymmetry in financial resources -- how they actually play out in practice can only be dealt with in the moment they arise. These moments are often disruptions and inevitably unfold "relationally" between those involved. North-south partnerships are indeed messy, as Np5 explains when discussing the sensitivities of negotiating the details of how partners will work together. To pretend partnerships are not messy would only reinforce the general asymmetry between North/South and certainly would not be a step in the direction of decolonizing the peacebuilding agenda. Paying attention to

cultural differences that might play in the relationships between partners is an obvious first step, but paying attention to asymmetry in resources and differences in power/knowledge is harder to do and will bring inevitable challenges to any partnership.

McNamee teaches that when we shift our attention from persuasion and argument in conflict resolution and negotiation “to the ways in which the meaning that emerges in negotiation is constructed relationally, we shift our central question as well. We move from ‘who has the truth?’ or from ‘who is right,’ to ‘how do we go on together?’” I would argue that this is the ideal stance for practitioners to approach the variety of critical moments that arise in the morphology of partnerships. More important is McNamee’s point that what is integral to this shift in stance is the difference between an emphasis on making incommensurate belief systems commensurate (i.e. Consensus models) and an emphasis on bridging incommensurate belief systems (McNamee 2004, 270).”

Relevant to addressing critical moments, or any stage of partnership, is this latter point of “bridging” which focus on the ways partners can coordinate a multiplicity of viewpoints on any given issue or conflict. This goes beyond the limiting approach of searching for sameness, or common ground between partners, and gives attention to difference. She says it is the process of coordinating our differences, not erasing them, that “going on together” becomes possible. This might be the best practitioners can do at the interpersonal level to help balance some of

organizational or structural challenges in North/South collaborations that are beyond their immediate control in that moment of relating to one another.

Stage V- The End or Continuation of Partnerships and the Continuing Challenges of Resources and Sustainability

How partners address and prepare for the temporary nature of all outsiders is perhaps the greatest challenge to North-South partnerships. In the end, locals living with their conflicts have to remain and do the hard daily work of building peace, while outsiders come and go and most likely phase-out altogether. The sustainability of these collaborations ultimately would seem to rest in the skills and commitment of the Southern partners if they have the resources to keep projects going.

With the impermanence of outside partners comes the impermanence of funding. Some, like Sp5 in Sri Lanka, have just enough resources and the necessary ambition to do the work with or without funding from Northern outsiders, but their progress would be hampered and their impact less. If they are to break free of dependency on Northern funding then they will have to get creative in their networking and generate local or regional interest for supporting their efforts. This is extremely challenging in unstable nations if we consider that most Northern-based INGO's also struggle to maintain their own funding sources. Many partners in the South may also be reluctant to let go or break free of their partnerships with outsiders because they value more than just the money provided -- they see a real

benefit to the access they provide to others in the international community as well as the information/knowledge outside experts can share, especially in the way of similar conflict scenarios from other countries.

Addressing asymmetries in funding and paving the way for local partners and projects to remain sustainable is one of the most critical factors in partnership and vital to “decolonizing” peacebuilding efforts. Many Southern partners feel they have to “dance to the tune” of their funders (who are often their partners) during the course of partnership. In Nigeria, for example, Sp3 suggests the dilemma of dependency this creates in Africa where the fear of losing funding trumps marching to your own beat. He and others, like Sp1 in Colombia, express a narrative of control over the implementing partner and feel a little trapped in their ability to act and sometimes implement what they believe is the best method of action to help their target groups and communities. Southern practitioners sometimes do negotiate for greater control, or just say “no” to donors or projects where they feel the requirements are unreasonable or that their vision or autonomy will be squashed, as Sp5 powerfully relayed in her story of turning down a large grant in Sri Lanka.

Northern practitioners/partners may also be trapped by funding dynamics and the fact that as consultants, or recipients of grants, they are also accountable to donors and their specific demands. That this insight emerged in the narrative of one of the Southern partners makes it more interesting, precisely because we see how the constraints on outsiders impacts the local-insider partner. In our conversation,

Sp4 reflected:

I don't know whether you bring the perspective of the donors into this type of North – South cooperation because sometimes I also have a feeling that the partners from the North have difficulties adjusting with the local context in each situation because there is no flexibility on funding. Sometimes relationships cannot be as smooth as the one with (Np8) was, if the donors do not trust us (partners) 100%, and support us in the way that we believe we are going to conduct the program.

Another critical issue is that international non-government organizations and perhaps even government institutions may be reluctant to stop funding their partners because they want/need to remain significant in the conflict setting and in the larger “field” of peace and development in which they operate. This is extremely challenging even for an organization like Np5’s that creates partnering organizations that they hope will become completely autonomous – despite maintaining some type of shared vision and name with the main INGO in Washington. As she reflected on a critical moment of talking her partner through a disagreement with the U.S Embassy who was funding the effort, she recalled the difficulty of having given up that funding relationship with the donor because it is those types of relationships that often keep international conflict resolution organizations “relevant.” Even so, practitioners like her and Np1 -- whose peacebuilding consultancy work in Nepal is supported by a U.S. based foundation -- are ultimately trying to work themselves out of a job and leave self-sustaining local partners. It just often takes longer than expected, if it ever happens, for local partners to break free of financial dependency on Northern donors.

One of the more commonly unspoken fears of Northern practitioners who seek greater autonomy for their local partners is a concern for their partners' abilities to be accountable and transparent with their finances and organizational management. This concern prevents them from disengaging early or on the time frame they might have hoped for because, perhaps ironically, they want to help prepare their partners to be self-reliant. Unfortunately when there is not a conscious attempt to help locals become self-reliant before outsiders disengage then Northerners are only perpetuating asymmetric funding relationships and dependency. The ideal goal of sustainability in North-South partnerships seems to be mostly about leaving sustainable projects and partners when outsiders exit. Fortunately, the Northern practitioners interviewed here seem to be consciously working to address that problem in their work.

Now that we have revisited the morphology of partnerships and discussed some of the critical issues that practitioner narratives illuminated I want to turn to what other peace and development experts have said about outsider-insider partnerships between the global North and South and compare them to what matters most for practitioners in this study.

Are Northern/Outsider Practitioners Doing What They Are Supposed To?

The present study is perhaps the first of its kind to look at such North-South partnerships in great detail through the reflective stories/narratives of

experienced conflict resolution and peacebuilding practitioners. These outsider and insider practitioners have been engaged in both their design and implementation of partnership projects. Asking whether these Northern-based outsiders are partnering in the best and most ethical manner possible is one way of giving differential responsibility Northern partners given the inherent asymmetry that exists in resources/power between the global North and South. Whether or not practitioners are working/acting in the most appropriate ways is surely very context specific.

It is therefore useful to compare what these conflict resolution/transformation practitioners say they are doing in the above instructive cases -- that is how they make sense of their work in the context of partnering -- to some of the criteria or guidelines that others committed to good partnerships are providing to Northern organizations as guidance. Doing this has three purposes. Firstly, to see if what these practitioners say they are doing fits the criteria of many INGOs and foundations that have engaged in supporting peace in the global South. Secondly, this discussion can begin to show us if the apparent ideal partnership practices, as stated in this organizational literature, seems to be part and parcel to the practice of Northern partners (as expressed by their narratives), and, critically, if these principles are experienced by the Southern partners. After all, the reflective practitioners in this study have given us a rare window into the detailed nature of partnerships and conflict transformation/peace building work in a variety of contexts. Thirdly, it will be interesting to consider the notion of decolonizing peace

in light of these guidelines and the practices that matter most to the practitioners in this study.

Although less has been written about partnership in the academic fields of conflict resolution and peacebuilding than has in academic development circles, some INGOs and other nongovernment institutions have written about what they think makes for good outsider-insider peacebuilding/development partnerships as well as what to be concerned about in terms of North-South cooperation.²³ Some of this “gray literature” was developed from extensive interviews with people from both the North and the South. The insights of Southerners have been particularly emphasized in the criteria that INGOs suggest for those engaging in peacebuilding activities.

First, let us consider the extensive research by Anderson and Olson (2003) in their report *Confronting War*, a report that is part of the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project of the organization The Collaborative for Development Action. Their research has been quoted extensively by organizations like Interpeace, an international peacebuilding organization and strategic partner of the United Nations. Anderson and Olson offer some criteria (principles) to follow from their research that they say is surprisingly often violated, albeit unintentionally, in outsider-insider partnerships. In comparing their criteria to the narratives of the experienced peacebuilders in this study it is important to consider that much of

²³ As noted earlier, studies on coordination and strategic peacebuilding do discuss the vital role of partnership between outsiders and insiders, but not exhaustively from a practitioner standpoint as this study attempts to do (see work by Susan Allen Nan and Lisa Schirch, for example).

Anderson and Olson's focus is at the institutional partner level, while my focus is at the practitioner-level. Although some of the practitioners are tied to INGOs and clearly spoke with their organization's mission in mind, others spoke independently of any institutional mission.

The suggested principles from *Confronting War* are detailed in the footnote below but can be summarized as follows: 1) Mutual recognition and mutual consultation, (2) Clearly defined roles and vision, (3) Share criteria to evaluate and improve, (4) Recognize and validate differences, (5) Insiders should drive the needs of the partnership, and (6) Build sustainability for when outsiders exit.²⁴

In comparison, the practitioners in the present study emphasize some similar principles of the most important aspects of their partnerships (see Chapter 9: What Matters Most?). These include: 1) Shared Vision and Purpose, 2) Prioritize local people and resources (3) Know the local context and have a translator, (4) Work for

²⁴ 1. At the core of good partnerships is recognition that each partner's knowledge and credibility are important to the effort and that each party's reputation will be hurt by failure. Thus, the relationship should be horizontal and based on mutual consultation; neither party should be seen as simply a service provider, financial underwriter, or subcontractor to do a job. Both parties should have equal influence on decisions. There should be joint processes for setting strategies, defining goals, and evaluating results. 2. The agencies' roles should not only be clearly and explicitly defined; they should also be re-negotiated and re-assessed frequently. Often peace partners assume that a common vision and values will be the glue of their relationship and they rely only on verbal, open-ended agreements to this effect. 3. Partners should take time to identify shared criteria by which to evaluate and improve their relationship. 4. Partners should take the time to understand and define where their missions diverge. That is, they should explicitly recognize that they have differences as well as a common vision, and they should clarify and acknowledge these as valid. 5. Even in a horizontal relationship, the initiative and definition of needs must come from insiders. 6. Together insiders and outsiders build a sustainability strategy for when outsider funding and programming is phased out.

more local control/power, (5) Find the value of bringing global and local perspectives together, (6) Work for authentic relationships, (7) Emphasize Reciprocity/Mutuality.

The narratives of the Southern peacebuilding practitioners profiled throughout these chapters, particularly as they discuss the critical moments in their partnerships and what matters most to them about partnerships in general, demonstrate that although they have experienced many benefits of collaborating with outsiders from the North there is still great room for improvement. Sp1's case of not feeling heard when collaborating with her external partner in support of ex-Child soldiers is a powerful example of non-financial asymmetry in practice. It comes down to a lack of symmetrical decision-making and an absence of joint planning that is suggested above in *Confronting War* and by some of the Northern practitioners that shared their stories here. Sp1's experience, and Sp2's in Kenya, raises concerns about unsolicited advice by the external partner and apparent lack of confidence in local implementing partners.

Sp3 experienced a similar lack of confidence from one of his partners in Nigeria and suggested that although an outsider partner's intentions may be good, lack of communication and failing to check in regularly with the local partner creates tremendous stress on how and if the Southern practitioner should proceed with his or her conflict intervention/peacebuilding activities. In fact, all of the Southern practitioners interviewed for this research spoke about such problems with external partners at some point in their careers. Again, in these cases, it is

about the external organization paying attention to the narrative of the implementing partner. Still, most of the Southern peacebuilders whom I interviewed chose to go into depth about cases where their Northern partners have mostly acted in ways that recognize and involve them.

In summary, the highly experienced Northern practitioners who shared their stories with us throughout the chapters above describe their work -- what they do -- in ways that show they are meeting if not exceeding the principles and guidelines suggested by studies like *Confronting War* and *Time to Listen*. They have especially done well with criteria number one (above) in that they emphasize recognition of what their local partner brings and they highlight the need to work towards reciprocity and mutually benefitting relationships in their partnerships. With this in mind, Np5's claim that partnerships are often formed and maintained by projects out of mutual self-interest warrants some reflection. Is the idea of mutual self-interest, for example, just a way for a Northern/International organization to justify their continued involvement in a conflict of the developing world, or is it an honest assessment on her part that nothing the North does in the global South is purely gratuitous, as is described in the article *The Development Gift: The Problem of Reciprocity in the NGO World* (Stirrat and Henkel 1997)?

The Northern practitioners I interviewed did seem to fall short --or perhaps, more accurately, sell themselves short in their reflections -- on some of the above recommended principles, such as strategically (re) negotiating their missions with partners or discussing upfront how their missions diverge with their local partners'

objectives/goals so they can co-create a shared plan of action that benefits all. Few of the narratives above describe the constant negotiation that might be required to balance power as capacity building or conflict interventions are implemented. One particular quote by Np5 does stand out:

I think true partnership is messy, that's how I experience it, really messy because if you really are in a nonhierarchical relationship with a local partner and they are to field office, and you can't tell them what to do, then you are constantly negotiating things, which is absolutely appropriate. It is appropriate. There are issues around kind of boundary leadership. Where does my role begin than yours end?

But this shortcoming of other examples in the data may have been more a fault of my own for not asking practitioners the best questions, or not probing enough into a particular storyline they were highlighting. In partnerships born at a primarily institutional level it may be hard to tell where the fault lies when outside partners do not engage in ways that lead to locals feeling empowered or do not choose methods that help to “decolonize” practice. An INGO might have very sound guidelines and training for partnering, yet the particular individuals that implement or manage the work in the field failed to act appropriately. In contrast, many organizations may not be doing enough to prepare their staff to carry out ethical partnerships that seek to balance power in various facets of their joint collaborations.

Many of the Northern practitioners also narrated principles not listed in the guidelines provided by *Confronting War*; although similar ideas might be appear in other organizational literature. These principles include making sure you have local

advisors who can assist you with the complicated political context, or a type of cultural broker you can rely on to translate more than just the difficulties of linguistics but also the nuances of culture that will apply to things like negotiation, mediation, and dialogue. This may or may not be a main partner, but could be when transparent and trusting relationships have been built, like with Sp4 and Np8 or Sp5 and Np9. These practitioners also teach us through their stories that having a close local ally, who is not your partner, or having more than one strong relationship within a partnership, is useful when there is a misunderstanding between the principal partners. For example, verifying your decisions with one partner about how to avoid an apparent cultural gaffe with another, as in the case of Np8 with his Indonesian colleagues, can help avoid permanently damaging the relationship for both sides and save face for the insider local.

Lastly, one of the most burdensome problems in partnerships is the demand many international organizations place on local implementing partners in the way of paperwork, specifically financial reporting and evaluations. Local peacebuilders and their respective local NGOs have an average of five outside partners and/or donors to whom they have to report (Anderson and Olson 2003). To the extent that international organizations and outsider practitioners can coordinate their efforts and lessen their requirements for Southern partners to oblige the institutional demands of the North, the further they will be going along the road of decolonizing their praxis! Again as Sp5, Sp4, and Sp1 have described in their practice, many of their peers take on Northern financed peacebuilding and development projects as a

matter of personal or organizational survival and are thus forced to implement and report as their donor partners require. Few are able to say no to funders when donor requirements do not fit their own goals/objectives, although the reflective Southern practitioners in this study demonstrate that the desire to maintain their integrity by saying “no” to outside partners is perhaps becoming more common in the fields of peacebuilding and development.

In terms of outsider perspectives on paperwork, the Northern practitioners in this study did not talk much about reports nor mention log frames, for instance, other than Sp4 highlighting that they are a significant burden for local partners. Is regular reporting necessary? If the reputation of the INGO or donor rests on their implementing partners functioning in a uniform and consistent way across their numerous partnerships, then maybe yes. If they care more about being led by their local partners then maybe not. Flexibility might be the ultimate key to a lasting partnership.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUDING REMARKS, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH

The practitioner narratives within this study teach us that peacebuilding partnerships between people and organizations from the global North and the global South require recognizing the interdependence between outsiders and insiders to conflict settings (see Figure 2 below). Whether or not Northern outsiders should be involved in promoting peace and development in the global South is a critically good question to consider that is examined some in the Discussion chapter above, but a thorough examination of that question is ultimately beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, this research acknowledges that North-South partnerships do exist, will continue to occur, and can be improved.

What matters most, therefore, is how this interdependence manifests in conflict and post-conflict/development settings. Northern based practitioners and their organizations have a lot to offer local partners in terms of financial resources and new ideas, but locals living in the global South bring the vital knowledge of what really matters in those settings and the appropriate ways to operate so that they are not disempowered by their outside partners. Partnerships will in fact benefit from practitioners who recognize that knowledge and power are inseparable components that permeate the many layers of partnership and must be recognized and

acknowledged by partners as they manifest in the contributions of both insiders and outsiders.

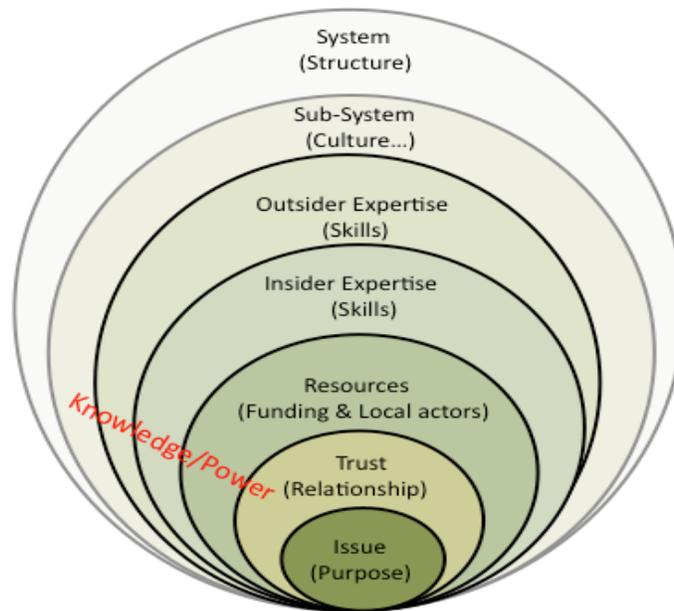


Figure 3: Nested Model of Partnerships
(Adapted from Nested Conflict Models by Dugan, M. and Lederach, J.P)

Each partnership case described in this study is so unique in its particular set of individual and institutional relationships, and timeframes, that it makes any one definition of “partnership” problematic. Still, in these practitioner narratives we can see a clear pattern of necessary steps and relational dynamics within the dynamics of culture, power asymmetry, funding challenges, and (inter) dependency. Learning what transpires for these highly experienced practitioners from all corners of the world, and in very diverse types of collaborations, teaches us about these different

stages of partnership and what to do or not do under similar circumstances. This study also illuminates the often non-linear nature of partnerships.

These insightful practitioner narratives of partnership cases also reveal that critical moments and turning points arise in the beginning, middle, and later stages of partnership, disrupting what might be the expected course of the partnership. Peacebuilders' descriptions of their practice show us that critical moments often serve as turning points in the partnership and for the individuals involved. The critical moments discussed in Chapter 7 point to the criticality of reflective practice in the various fields of conflict resolution and peace work. Some practitioners already practice this, but this research might help inspire such behavior in others. Practitioners must reflect critically on their own practices and partnerships if they are to achieve greater symmetry and cultural sensitivity in North-South, outsider-insider collaborations. Although the morphology presented within this study is not intended to be a roadmap for all partnerships, it may offer valuable lessons for partners and encourage them to develop their own roadmaps for partnering in conflict intervention/peacebuilding.

Importantly, this research has opened an additional space for Southern practitioners to reflect on North-South collaborations and can be seen as a vital piece for improving praxis as well as decolonizing “the field.”²⁵ Providing a space for insider-locals or “Southerners” to give voice to their practice and experience in

²⁵ We must remember that “the field” is another problematic concept in the terminology of northern practitioners as MP3 demonstrated in his example of how locals in Mindanao see the field as much more specific to a given local context whereas Northerners might see the field as anything out there beyond their home base.

partnerships can help improve the way North-South collaborations occur, even if it is a Northerner like me who asks the questions and interpretively organizes the data. Granted, it may be better to have local peacemakers from the global South write their own experiences of partnerships, as has likely been done in some circles of development work, but collecting their narratives is a starting point and perhaps demands less of their time than expecting them to disengage from their demanding work to write about it. In this study, asking Southerners to reflect on challenges with their Northern counterparts or outside donors -- the critical moments that disrupted their flow of work or changed the way they saw their partners -- could have been potentially problematic for them. Confidentiality was therefore needed precisely because full transparency of the messy aspects of partnership is likely more harmful to Southern practitioners given the asymmetry in resources and resulting dependency that exists in most cases.

This study has also shown the centrality of “relationship” in partnership. Although these reflective practitioners describe many problematic moments with partners in general, the instructive cases they chose to narrate tend to focus on solid partnerships that worked mainly because of the individuals involved. Yet the organizational philosophies and approaches that support those individual practitioners also play a critical role, as was the case with Sp1 in Colombia. In that case, the international organization’s mission aligned with the local NGO’s methodology of utilizing the arts for peacebuilding and, therefore, allowed the partnership to have a solid foundation. It was the close collaboration with the

INGO's skilled country representative that helped create an understanding of the two organizations' shared philosophies. Later in the partnership work, however, other representatives of the INGO failed to listen to Sp1's contextually relevant local approaches for dialogue with ex-child soldiers. This breakdown led to a turning point in how Sp1 viewed the partnership. The failure to listen to the local implementing partner happened at the interpersonal level, but cannot necessarily be separated from the outside organization's approach to collaboration since the local partner repeatedly warned the INGO about its approach.

Sri Lankan peacebuilder Sp5 also emphasized the central importance of relationships in her partnerships. But she has also told us her belief, based on her experiences in Sri Lanka, that some institutional systems, particularly those attached to government, might be too strong for even the best-intentioned individuals within them to alter the dynamics of partnership to be more symmetrical. That is to say, as we have noted elsewhere, good individuals and partners are still constrained by different forms of asymmetry that must be addressed and the constraints of these asymmetrical "collaborations" may lead Southern practitioners to say "No" to some "partnership" proposals by financially powerful outsiders who fail to adequately consider not only the local partner's objectives and goals, but their locally appropriate ways of being and doing peace work.

Shifting Control

“Empowerment” of locals is the goal for many skilled practitioners and organizations who come from outside to work in foreign conflict settings. But too much control over resources, timing, and decision-making by outsiders can result in local peacebuilders feeling they have little power over the process and outcome of their work. “Insider” local partners often have their own methodologies - practices that should not be replaced, but instead promoted or incorporated appropriately into the systems introduced from the North/West.

There is asymmetric responsibility for ensuring effective and sustainable outcomes since funding for conflict resolution and peacebuilding typically flows from North to South. Practitioners are key actors in this process and it is important for peacebuilders to reflect on how they understand their work in complex partnership interventions where identities, culture, and power asymmetry are at play. The reflections of these global “Northerners” and “Southerners” can therefore help shape the future work of “peacebuilding” related organizations and agencies at the international and local level and, perhaps, contribute new knowledge to inform theoretical research on conflict intervention and peacebuilding work. But simply reflecting is of course not enough.

Many of the practitioners interviewed here are closely aligned with either international non-governmental organizations based in the North or with local NGOs or civil society organizations in the South and therefore have differing

experiences with donors, whether they are Western governments, foundations, or philanthropic individuals. Practitioners are often connected to INGOs that are the grantees of funding from large donors like USAID, the United Kingdom's DFID, or Canadian CIDA. They then channel the money to the sub-grantee partner on the ground that implements most of the work. This creates a real power dynamic in the relationships of all parties, as Np5 stated about her INGO's partnership work on high-level dialogue in Colombia.

Southern partners need to prove they are accountable and transparent in their work for this to occur. As some of the Southern peacebuilders have noted here, this happens by regularly telling funders what they are doing in the field and by having strong principles that transcend the temptation to alter their budgets just to meet unreasonable donor demands or to increase their own overhead before they have proven they need such funds. The Southern practitioners featured here seem to feel the payoff of maintaining their integrity by confronting unreasonable donors or turning down grants that force them to work contrary to their mission and goals is worth the possible consequences. Some Northerners and Southerners may see that as risking their economic survival or relevance in their country's conflict setting. But "Saying No" in these situations might strengthen their relationships with existing partners who will be willing to support them more. Accountability, transparency, and integrity build trust.

I see some major problems, however, if we maintain that the only way inside-partners can build trust and gain more control from their outside-partners/donors

is by proving they are accountable, transparent, and integral. This scenario shows that the power imbalance is further skewed towards the outside resource-rich partner with Southern-local partners having to prove themselves on a variety of fronts. Local partners' ability to say "no" does indeed give them some power, but often leaves them having to scramble for survival and re-enter the game of competition for new resources. Northern-outside partners therefore have to do their part to tip the scale of asymmetry towards their partners by giving them more control or convincing donors to loosen their grip on how things unfold in the field. In other words, outside peacebuilding partners may not always have direct control over financial resources – as they may be the controlling grantee from other donors who may have their own agendas. But they may need to help shift more control to their local partners or be willing to give up their intermediary role of management and thereby create greater symmetry in North-South collaborations (See Figure 3 below).

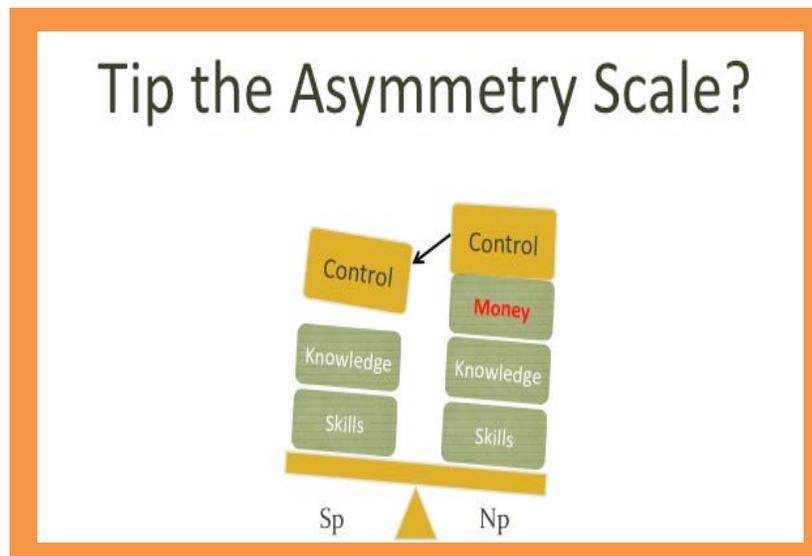


Figure 4: Asymmetry Scale - Balancing Power

First, Northern INGO partners, funders, and experienced outside practitioners must help local partners understand how they can more easily meet the demands placed on them by their outside partners and funders. Second, they need to examine -- preferably with their partners -- whether those demands are unreasonable and play their part in helping to ease the burden on local peacebuilders who are juggling multiple partner/donor relationships to carry out their important peace-building work. True empowerment might be best described by those who control the purse strings opening up a discursive space for reflection on funding and control with the receiving partner in a way that results in those Southern locals having more say in how projects and partnerships develop.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

I am aware of some limitations and advantages to this narrative approach to the present research. One tradeoff is how interviews do and do not provide access to what actually happens during practice on the ground. Focusing on practitioner stories about partnerships and their practice will not allow one to “see” or actually experience how they engage with others, such as participant observation (of practitioners) might yield. But having an outside observer watch the dynamics of a partnership is also problematic since the observer’s presence would likely alter the relationship dynamic and potentially be damaging to the intervention work they are doing. It might be easier to penetrate an organization involved in partnership and work with practitioners to get an inside view, but there would be ethical human subject review concerns if one was working with and researching people in the field.

Critics of the narrative research approach might question this initial investigation of experienced Northern and Southern based practitioners when an ultimate concern of this research is the impact of peacebuilding practice and partnerships on the communities they target in non-Western/Northern settings like Sub-Saharan Africa. I argue that our discipline needs to reflect on its practice and theories of partnership to check our assumptions about how North-South collaborations are working out. A narrative approach is not a complete way to do that but it offers a way for partners to think about their work in a deeper and more complex way than academic surveys or INGO project evaluations might. Speaking

with affected communities on the ground about their experience of partnership interventions is indeed critical, yet a significant piece of the puzzle for effective peace and development work will be missing if we first do not understand the theoretical conflict resolution frameworks being employed by the Northern and Southern practitioners who lead those efforts.

This research represents an exploratory in-depth study of a diverse group of practitioners from the North and South, yet there are some clear limitations to my selection of participants for understanding peacebuilding partnerships. First, those from the North tend to be very experienced and well-known practitioners (in conflict resolution/peacebuilding circles). Although they can provide vast knowledge and insights into partnership they might accentuate the positive of their work and actions over mistakes in their practice, or “wrinkles” in their partnerships, as compared to less senior practitioners engaged in partnerships in the field. It is likely that the confidentiality of all practitioners, however, allowed them to reflect more candidly and critically about their work. Nevertheless, the future research approaches I suggest below would also benefit from talking to some less senior peacebuilders who are also engaged in the front lines of conflict resolution/peacebuilding partnerships.

My participant sample also had a few less Southern based practitioners than Northerners. At first I considered only interviewing Northerners as way to look at narratives within the side of conflict resolution and peacebuilding that initiates and funds much of the work “out there” in the global South. I then decided that a

balanced view, if not larger view, was needed from the South but felt like I really needed to be there talking to folks. That is why I thought of a regional focus on North-South partnerships in Eastern Africa/Great Lakes region. Funding and time constraints and the discovery of Forester's conversational interview techniques convinced me I could talk to Southern practitioners via Skype or cell phone and allow me to have the diverse pool of peacebuilders who ultimately participated. Still, it was challenging to sufficiently connect with Southern practitioners. Some of the interviews took many attempts to set up and several resulted in dropped calls/web meetings. Some Southerners were also quite constrained with time in their lives to participate via Internet, resulting in fewer total interviews with peacebuilders from the South than I originally anticipated. Such challenges of time and resources for these Southern peacebuilders could be viewed as another layer of asymmetry between the global North and South.

Lastly, in terms of methodology, there are some potential issues with the exploratory "morphology" analysis and organization of challenges, or "wrinkles" in partnership as critical moments and turning points. Although I reflect in great detail on what these narratives tell us, I also essentially present them as they are with the lessons they reveal in their raw form. Some might ask what I am missing by not further analyzing the structure and content of their narratives. Perhaps a more systemic form of narrative analysis of the practitioners' language might result in some telling information about the dominant discourses and ideologies that shape and direct partnerships and conflict resolution/peacebuilding work generally. My

own concerns with identity, difference, and power, and whether or not we should be engaged at all as outsiders, forces me to ask if a critical theoretical approach would have been appropriate? I ultimately decided in the value of sharing practitioners' stories as they are, however, preserving their voices and insights without dissecting them. John Forester's narrative research approach is intended to do just that – “mine the richness” in practitioners' stories that can teach us about their actions and thinking - rather than critically analyzing their discourse or the structure of their narratives (Forester 2006; Forester 2007; Forester 2009). But perhaps such critical analysis is an alternative avenue for future research.

Finally, one of the limitations of this study's detailed focus on partnerships at the level of practitioners is that although it gets at the heart of how many partnerships are conceived and implemented in “the field” of practice, it misses an appropriate examination of the broader system that informs and contains those partnerships, mainly the role and impact of donors. As noted in the discussion chapter above, the actions of donors and the international organizations that often manage the funds often leads local peacebuilders and their organizations to be dependent on outsiders for financial resources as well as control over those resources to make peacebuilding decisions. Funding and programmatic decisions are often made in Western-Northern locations that are far removed from where the difficult work of peace is unfolding in the global South. Further research on North-South peacebuilding partnerships would therefore benefit by bringing donors into the conversation. Returning for a moment to a voice from the South, Sp4 reminds us

that donor decisions impact and control the work of both outsider and insider practitioners and she asks me to consider their role. She says,

I don't know whether you bring the perspective of the donors into this type of North – South cooperation because sometimes I also have a feeling that the partners from the North have difficulties adjusting with the local context in situation because there is no flexibility on funding. Sometimes relationships cannot be as smooth as the one with (Np8) was, if the donors do not trust us 100%, and support us in the way that we believe we are going to conduct this program.

In his book *Making Peace Last*, Robert Ricigliano frames the donor – implementer challenge in a way that raises questions for me about how doors might conceptualize partnerships and the decisions they make when working with partners. Ricigliano states,

Peacebuilders who have a predominately macro-level perspective, like donors, face a different planning challenge than those with a predominately micro-level perspective, such as implementing agencies. Donors need a macro-level, systemic view of a social system that helps them operate a series of micro-level programs, which, in turn, contribute to macro-level, sustainable improvement in a society's level of peace. This is a macro-micro-macro planning challenge (macro-level perspective, micro-level operations, and macro-level goals).

The statement might be more of a hope than a reality and also contains some interesting language about control, i.e., programs they “operate,” that demonstrate the need for talking to donors.

Research by Kanyako (2010; 2011) on donor relationships with civil society organizations in Sierra Leone also shows some of the problematic North-South donor dynamics that could be investigated through narrative research. Regarding this study's concern with dependency and transferring more control to local

partners his country research shows that peacebuilding related organizations face greater regulations from funders. He states,

Local civil society groups engaged in contentious ('hot-button') issues face far more scrutiny and constraints to their work than groups in non-contentious issues Local CSOs engaged in 'hot button' political and advocacy issues involving human rights, anti corruption, and democratic reforms, face far more scrutiny from the authorities and constraints to their work than their peers working on less contentious issues (Kanyako 2010, 1).

He also notes that donors may act in ways that make sustainability challenging, if not impossible.

Donors need to ensure that winding down support for CSO's after a conflict does not force them out of existence; rather winding down should be done slowly enough that CSO's have time to diversify their income and become institutionalized through memberships or activities that allow them to become self-sustaining (Kanyako 2010, 1).

In later research he expands on the temporary nature of outside support and the impact that might have on the survival of peacebuilding initiatives that at least begin in some form of partnership. He says,

Donors' largesse to the indigenous entities in the nongovernmental sector was short-lived, as donors curtailed their support as soon as the most critical phase of the peace process had concluded. The donor cutback threatened the existence and viability of nongovernmental civic groups in all sectors....(Kanyako 2011, 2)

From a narrative research perspective engaging donors in future research will mean in-depth interview-conversations with key individuals who are linked to specific international partnerships with local organizations and practitioners in the global South. In rare cases, funders might have a more involved role in the conflict

intervention fieldwork. In this study's case of the Natural Resource Conflict Transformation partnership in Nepal, for example, Np1 worked very closely with a project leader from the funding foundation in the United States. The foundation's project leader who was concerned with financial and programming decisions accompanied Np1 on most of his work trips to Nepal and they consulted one another throughout the process. Although it may be an atypical case of close involvement by a donor over almost a decade, her insights would be extremely valuable to a fuller understanding of the many layers of partnership that potentially influence any particular North-South "peacebuilding" collaboration. In most cases donors might spend little to no time in the conflict zone with the local peacebuilders who intervene or build the capacity of others to transform violent communities. Talking to these donor representatives about how they understand their role in the multi-faceted system of partnership is an important next step in conflict resolution/transformation partnership research (Figure 2: Interdependent Nested Model).

Although this study is primarily concerned with longer-term partnerships, future research on partnerships could benefit the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR) by exploring cases of problem solving workshops and other forms of "interactive conflict resolution" where Western/Northern based practitioners partnered with insiders from the South at various time over a period of years. Burton originally advised against using insider-partials in Problem Solving Workshops, whereas Lederach has tended to advocate the use of insider-partials in

his mediation work. More traditional problem solving style workshops have now evolved to sometimes use key insiders as advisors or unofficial members of the facilitation team, but we do not know how both sides of these “partnerships” view their joint interventions (Mitchell 2010; Fisher 2005)? What are the implications of such collaborative efforts and what can they teach others in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding? Nan and Garb’s work of working with local peacebuilders in Georgia and South Ossetia comes to mind as an example of a longer term interactive conflict resolution collaboration/coordination effort that might be fertile ground to ask practitioners to reflect on their efforts from a partnership perspective.

Initially, I had intended to focus in more on a particular region and explore the particularities of the various layers of North/South/South partnerships. Although I had some contacts in Uganda and Kenya to facilitate such an investigation, it ended up being beyond the scope of my final decision to interview a broad spectrum of practitioners engaged primarily in North-South partnerships. An in-depth regional approach to studying partnerships would be valuable to the study of conflict resolution/transformation theory and praxis. In Indonesia, Southern Practitioner Sp4 told me that many of the problems that happen with Northern outside partners also happen within Asia at organizational and individual levels. Her point, suggests that this morphological analysis and consideration of critical moments for in North-South collaborations could be expanded to examine various

outsider-insider partnership dynamics (North-South/South-South) within Asia or different regions internationally.

In addition to not taking a deeper look regionally, in places like the African Great Lakes or the Horn of Africa, this study was not able to address many hot spots in the Middle East, including many of the nations that struggled through the “Arab Spring.” It would be interesting not only to consider North-South conflict resolution efforts in that region, Yemen, Iraq, and Egypt come to mind, but also global “South-South” partnerships between practitioners and organizations within that region. A focus on such partnerships might result in different core attributes of successful partnership as well as unique collaborative approaches to conflict resolution/transformation work. Still, the “stages” of partnership presented in this study, and the many lessons that accompany them, are developed by such a diverse group of international practitioners that it is likely to have valuable attributes for outsider-insider partnerships in any locale.

Most importantly, additional research by Northern/Western based scholars on, or, better yet, “with” Southern practitioners about their regional or local to local ways of partnering/collaborating/coordinating might help to “decolonize” peacebuilding related endeavors internationally by bringing local actors and marginalized voices to the fore. Such research might hopefully influence practice and policy at the international (U.N.) levels to address many of the neocolonial concerns that extend beyond the control of practitioners of conflict resolution/transformation who are aware of such problems but choose to remain

engaged with the hopes that their collaborative efforts can do some good for the people they work with and our complicated world.

APPENDIX A:
CASE STUDY OF A NORTH-SOUTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIP
ON LAND USE CONFLICT IN IGUAZU, ARGENTINA

Sp6, an established practitioner now working primarily with the United Nations, talks about a rich case of a South-South partnership some years back when she was running an Argentine non-government organization dedicated to conflict resolution and related civil society issues. The organization had been born out of a partnership an INGO in the United States and was still affiliated with its Northern based founding organization despite working quite autonomously in the South American region.²⁶ The partnership case she reflects on here involves a collaboration between her Buenos Aires based NGO, which operates at a countrywide level, and a locally based organization in rural Argentina.

The Iguazú case is featured here as a case study, and not in the proceeding chapters, for a variety of unique reasons in comparison to the North cases profiled above. First, the primary partnership here reflects a South-South relationship within Argentina yet there is still some affiliation and involvement with a Northern based INGO. The “outsider” INGO has little connection to the collaboration beyond securing funding for the collaboration. Second, the case demonstrates that many

²⁶ Interestingly, the initial partnering INGO is same organization that Np5 now directs. Np5 chose to speak about her organizations work in Colombia where she was intimately involved, but she and others had recommended I speak with Sp6 as a practitioner who could offer some strong insights on partnership.

South-South have outsider-insider dynamics practitioners must be mindful of when they partner. The nationally focused Argentine NGO is an “outsider” to the community and region and thus needed an insider-local partner to better engage the specific people and context in. This is a reminder that there are different degrees of insiders and outsiders. “A common mistake is for foreign agencies to think of all nationals of a country experiencing conflict as insiders, without understanding their particular relationship to the conflict (Anderson and Olson 2003).” Just as a third-party mediator from New York City would be perceived as an outsider in California, locals anywhere will often distrust those who they perceive as not knowing their cultural setting or the context of their conflicts.

This case of partnership is also different in that the narrative focuses on a critical moment with the community in an intervention that the partners are doing together rather than a critical moment between them as outsider-insider partners. The obstacles they face are more of a disruption to their overall purpose and not to their relationship as partners. Although, if partners cannot work together to handle such dynamics of power, politics, and identity then their partnerships will be compromised. Finally, the story shows that building trust between outsiders and insiders is also about creating trust for the larger population they are there to serve in their work as peacemakers.

The Context for Engaging

Partners usually come together for a specific reason, hopefully guided by a complimentary vision, and lastly because they each have something to offer one another that help them achieve their mutual goals. Sp6 describes the issues that brought her national NGO and local association of mediators together:

In Argentina there was a concrete conflict because of a landless people occupying very strategic lands around Iguazú Falls, a very famous attraction in Argentina and Brazil, and they became very violent and the mayor didn't know what to do. They requested help and we, (the country NGO), partnered with a local NGO in the province of Misiones.... It (the partnership) started with very good relations with some of my colleagues in the country. In Misiones, specifically, I have a very good colleague who is also leading a mediation NGO. I had been training her team during a couple of years on public conflicts.

Sp6's organization was very interested in the natural resource and related land conflicts that were arising along the borders of the country. Partnering seems to have given both organizations greater legitimacy and influence, although the outside organization's reputation was almost compromised by its ties to the INGO in Washington. Together they were able to jointly build a strategy in order to grab the attention of local policymakers, institutions, and NGOs so they could build awareness of "the kind of work that could be possible through dialogue and mediation." When Sp6 initially received a grant from WWF to hold a workshop she collaborated with the local mediation organization and they jointly invited who they both considered to be the key stakeholders, "People who are part of the private and

social sectors and also the national government, which was the national park agency that has a local presence there.”

Sp6 explains what happened next,

We had it in a nice hotel and the people came. It was a four-day training on how we deal with public, social-environmental conflicts. We offered case examples and then they chose a case to work with and of course they chose the case that was a huge conflict going on in Iguazú. We were doing some role-plays in the workshop and when we finished this the people from the workshop requested that we be the facilitators, or mediators, of our conflicts.

She then shows how the particular collaboration for this intervention was cemented and why it made sense to have both partners involved:

I said okay the local NGO is the natural organization that is already in town and would be perfect for this. But also having someone more from outside to build the team of people who are on the ground and close to the conflict, but are perceived not so impartial because they are so close to the conflict. I think that was the richness of partnering between the local NGO and ourselves. We were coming from the capital, Buenos Aires.

In the land-use conflict of Iguazú, the two women worked quite well together -- one representing the “local” NGO and the other the NGO from the capital city -- yet they faced incredible challenges in the project they initiated. As her story unfolds we learn why their partnership worked and the decisions and actions Sp6 made in the critical moments.

Critical Moment one - Overcoming distrust and building trust

Being formally connected an international NGO based in the United States has its benefits and its downsides. Sp6 says that a partner with the INGO they were also part of larger international network of partners. In Iguazú this was “actually very problematic,” she states, because local stakeholder realized that as part of an international organization they had some outside funding from a foundation to do this process, even though the INGO partner in Washington was not involved in the design or implementation of the project in Argentina. She explains the INGO’s mission:

(They) have this way of working in which they help you build a very local NGO. They give you some support during the first couple of years and then you have to go on your own. They played a role in helping us get (foundation) money a couple of years before.... They helped us make a proposal for the funding. But in this process they were not playing any role and actually it was better in terms of identity. In those places you don't need someone who is coming from the States and who doesn't speak the language. It was very sensitive.

People were somewhat distrustful of outsiders, even from Buenos Aires, and being tied to international funds complicated things further. So partnering with a respected local practitioner from the Misiones district was critical. Typical of any natural resource public engagement process, however, was the fact there were some people who did not want an open process with mediators in the first place. What was unique to Iguazú was the particular, and complicated, challenge the practitioners faced from a local political strongman. She recounts the story:

Some of the landless people actually didn't want us to be intervening because they didn't want huge participation. There was a lot of mistrust, but there was also a local leader who was not interested in transparency. He was using the people in order to negotiate his political career. He did not want the process we were proposing so he started to blame us in the media, stating that we were coming from the U.S and that we were interested in the land and blah blah blah. So it was difficult to build confidence in the process for all the leaders who we needed to convene. It was really very, very interesting. How Sp6 handled it shows the importance of Southern outsiders and insiders

working together to overcome a difficult disruption in the flow of their work. They needed one another to build a strong process and confidence in the majority of the people. She tell us how they began to overcome the distrust:

The first thing we did was a very thoughtful strategy with the media, the local media. And this was in part because they are working jointly with *Asociación Misiones de Mediación*. They knew the local journalist, so we first made a meeting with the journalists to explain the process to them with a very transparent perspective of why we were working there, who was paying for our fees, how were we working as an NGO with our different funding sources, like Hewlett foundation, and the other grants we had for doing this process. We were explaining how the money was coming to pay for our time and how we made an agreement with the government and also with a church (to convene), because we were designing the process and how to select the best conveners.

She continues,

We designed the convener of the process. We put together three conveners – the local government which is the formal institution that has to deal with the concrete solution to the situation, the church to ensure the participation of the landless people, and the legislative counsel/the local parliament. So we have all the political spectrum there. It was a commitment of the whole town of Iguazú to really bring a solution to this situation.

Sp6 said processes like this often require an accepted non-governmental convener because there is not enough trust in the local government. They brought

the church in because the landless people were much closer to the religious leaders than to the government and would be more likely to participate. We explain this to the media so that we could have the local radio stations and the TV discuss the process as a piece of news and we were very transparent with this. We had to be very careful in terms of articulating confidentiality and transparency for these kinds of processes because you're dealing with public interest – there is a need to be transparent but also have some forms of confidentiality with the people... This is one of the most challenging things, she emphasizes, and requires a collaborative effort. She states:

We put this team together of young people who were working with me and we put them to visit the landless people to start building confidence with them. We spent a lot of time preparing the people for the process. We understood that the conditions for dialogue were not there and we had to work a lot and building conditions for the process.

Sp6's young team leaders were working together with one young person from the locally based mediation organization and they were traveling together to Iguazú several times per month over three months been and spending about a week for each trip visiting and convening the people. She and her main partner/practitioner were also busy on the ground building confidence in the process together. She states, *"The most important thing for me is how do we build confidence in the people."* Moreover, she states:

We explained to the local government that these people (various groups living on the land) needed to be strengthened (coached) before a formal dialogue takes place - before the formal meetings take place, because they were not prepared to talk in a constructive way.

They did not have enough confidence. My colleague (the local partner) has a very good reputation there and so the government was trusting her a lot. We were the two people, the only ones, having meetings with the government - at the local level and at the state level, what we call the provincial level, which were politically opposed to the local ones who were suited to deal with all these politicians and rules of the game. It was very difficult. We had to pick a very key people from the government at the state level, which was the Ministry of land. She was a very good lady.

Part of the challenge that insiders and outside practitioners have to address is how to engage all the different identity/interest groups. She explains how the partners had to choose people on their team that could connect with the respective stakeholders:

We were trying to put the right people to talk with the different groups. The people talking with the landless people were different from those talking with the government. We put two young guys to work with the landless people in order to build a lot of confidence with them and they're perceived more as grassroots people. (My main partner) was more perceived as a person with high connections to the track one, let's say, people from the government. The indigenous communities were involved, but they were not part of the problem because they have already got the titles to their lands. So we did not have the indigenous peoples perspective, which would have been a huge topic. It's a huge topic in this region (of Latin America), but this case it was not an issue.

It took a lot of collaborating and the skills and connections she and her local partner provided to bring all the stakeholders together. She describes some of the main participants in the dialogue:

There were many of them. They were different commissions from the different neighbors the rural and the urban landless people who were making claims for their land, there were environmental NGOs, grassroots NGOs, and the local government was represented not only by the mayor but by the land director. The key person was a land director. Then we had two officials from the provincial government.

We also had two persons from the tourist chamber, which is very powerful in Misiones. The other main party was the national party because the problem of these 2000 hectares that work occupied is that they are on the border of the Iguazú National Park, so this was very risky in terms of biodiversity.

Critical Moment Two - Facing Critical Challenges Together

Once they laid all the groundwork and invited the participants, Sp6 and her partner organization were able to start the hard work of community dialogues to address the land conflicts and seek solutions. She tells us,

The first dialogue process we decided we were going to meet in a rural school. In the previous phase 1 we selected the participants, we were doing role-plays and putting them in the roles of the mayor and having them imagine how this process will run. So they were very well-prepared and we suggested that in order to build confidence with their constituents that during the formal dialogue they come not only with their selected representatives but also bring two or three others to be observers of the process. We put this stage, the first real dialogue, in a rural school so people could really arrive to the place without difficulty.

Peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives are often aided and hampered by the presence of media. Sp6 shows that this cases was no exception:

We were having to deal with the media, that they won't be present except only in the opening and we would give a press release when we finished. Work with the media was really hard (because of how public conflicts can get derailed by the media), so the strategy with the media was key.

The role of media became increasingly important, and beneficial, however when the partners faced a critical moment that threatened to derail the whole intervention.

Political-power dynamics tied to the control of land-resources was the biggest challenge to the joint intervention in Iguazú. The biggest challenge they faced together was dealing with a local saboteur to the process. She reflects on the course of events and turning points it presented for the people and the process:

Local politics and power was huge and we had a very difficult time because, as I was mentioning, the leader of the most radical group was very violent. It was a former military (army man) in his interest was axing not in the people but in the land. And he was expecting to build the power of having all these people occupying this land, which is very, very attractive for tourist development, and then negotiate directly with the mayor - because he wants to run for mayor also. We had a very tough time when he realized but the process would bring transparency to everything. He was lying to the people. He was collecting money from the people, promising that he will bring titles for them and that he had already got some rights on this land, and this is not true.

She explains,

In part of the rules of the game, we were having transparency and we were bringing experts to the process in order to bring axis information for the people. It was amazing for these people to start understanding with maps and information what was this land about, what were their rights, what could happen to this place in terms of biodiversity and risks? This is a very interesting process in this way. But this was not for fulfilling the interests of the guy.

As things became violent, the partners' skills as conflict practitioners were really tested. Sp6 relays the escalation that occurred:

So he started threatening the new leaders that were arising from this process and I remember at the end of one of the meetings one of these leaders came to me and said, "We are at risk. This guy is going to kill us!" And I said, "no, don't tell me that. This is a public process and this could not be possible. I mean you are now empowered with this information and you can go talk to this institution." We're trying to

help them to organize themselves in terms of legal structures in all these things.

Fascinating here is her realization that outsiders really need to take local insights seriously. She states:

But actually, they were right. This local strongman who was trying to sabotage the process) sent somebody to shoot him. He was seriously hurt, I don't know how many weeks in the hospital? And then, there was a revenge. Somebody came from another province - this is this is the story, one of the narratives, and I'm not sure if this is true, but we were told that - two cousins came and took revenge and actually shot this leader, who we called the bad leader because he was tricking the people. So he was killed in the middle of the dialogue. He was killed after we are ready got like 2-3 agreements. We passed the agreements through the local Congress and some people were given their titles. So he had become crazy with the process. He was losing power!

Resolution

Many outsiders might run from a process like this after such a series of events, but Sp6 believes the right thing to do was to work with local partners, and all the stakeholders who cared, to move forward non-violently. She explains the path they took:

It was very difficult. We tried to bring some space to reflect on this. There were people that had supported him and this was a very tough situation, but on the other side, when he was killed it was amazing how the political map changed and the provincial government got an agreement with the local Mayor, which is something that we were pressing from the very beginning. This was in some way good for the process because people can go ahead by themselves. But in the moment he was killed this was very, very tough.

She explains that most people did not want to leave the process and that this guy had become less involved in the dialogue before the shootings occurred.

This guy was not coming to the last meetings because he was rejecting the dialogue. After the meeting she would go to the media and blame's and when the process saying that we were not trustful and of course than the media was coming to me and my statements were always the same ones, saying, "I understand that these are very new processes and people don't trust them. We need time. "And of course he didn't want to come but he was always invited, and his people are invited." But his people didn't come anymore, and we continued with the other sectors.

What they did then was create a space in the process for reflecting on violence and how it impacted the community and what to do if it came again. She explains how the role of gender and the church became important in creating some resolution to this tragedy.

We asked a very key person there, she was a nun and she was very connected with the women - was very difficult to bring the women's at the table. We were two women leading this team and we're expecting more women at the table, but this is not possible among the landless people. So in the situation came up, we asked the nun who was very, very active to bring a space into the church to pray for him about what happened. And then we tried to move forward.

Concluding the Dialogue

Like many North-South outsider-insider partnerships, this essentially South-South Argentine collaboration was challenged by funding and the resulting constraints on implementing agreements. Nonetheless, the process was hugely successful in establishing agreements and beginning the process of implementation of what community members had agreed upon during the facilitated dialogues. Sp6 reflects:

We actually had to finish our intervention by the end of the year and have more funds but we tried to continue supporting (the local partner in Misiones). Of course the implementation of the agreements is always more challenging than the reaching of the agreements. Implementation of agreements, when you have public policies, means they had to think in the long-term and you have to name the people at the table who will be in charge of the implementation of the agreements. By that time we already had these people, but then a couple of years later when new elections let the new people in politics they change something and they didn't commit to the whole agreement. So not all agreements were implemented.

She continues,

We reached several agreements. The more sophisticated agreements were having to do with how to deal with the more sensitive environmental land in which the government and the national park after work together this started good but then in a couple of years with the change in political parties it became very difficult to continue the same environmental policies. But in the first agreement they were bringing protection for some of this land, provincial parks with special status that could not be occupied, and requires special treatment in terms of biodiversity. This was very good.

In the first agreement there was also an effort to take care of people's titles to the land. There was a census to figure out who are the people occupying the land. So there was defining criteria as to who will really have their title and guarantee that the title will be given to the people who were really in the need of the land, but not the ones who are making deals and already had other lands or property and they were just occupying this land because it was a good "deal". There were maybe the people related with this leader I was talking about. This is a very sensitive part of the process, identifying who was who. People were very, very happy with the process.

The End or Continuation of Collaboration?

As noted above, the hard work of partners and the possibility for sustainable programs and products is almost always inevitably constrained by limited financial resources. Sp6 tell us how it affected her and the partner in Misiones.

It was 2 to 3 years later that we got some request from the government and helping them to do urban planning in a participatory way and try to use these methodologies. Unfortunately, we didn't have the money and they didn't have enough money for us because of travel. But the Asociación (local NGO) was given some help, so that was good because we felt like we strengthened the local organization. Local stakeholders developed more confidence in the local mediation organization too.

She explains,

We didn't have enough money and we were only making like two or three trips that were funded by the local government to try and go and work with the people in the implementation. It was very frustrating. But then without money it was very difficult and I think this is always the case. *First, because money is one of the things that builds confidence in the process.*

She explains how partners have to turn to local funders for sustainability and to create support from the community, but it is not always enough. She states:

We were to bring some money from the church and from the government together so as not to be perceived as the government mediators. We got some money from them in order to do some follow-up, but it was not enough because of course some of the agreements were very ambitious in terms of future public policies on this land. So new elected officials in the local institutions and also in the national party institutions were not having the ownership of the agreement. So a lot of work would be needed with these new public stakeholders in order to continue with implementation.

This particular collaboration between Sp6 and her partner in Misiones eventually stopped due to the various constraints described above, but their relationship and partnership continues. Sp6 tell us:

We left them alone in some way. We were helping from Buenos Aires, but it was too much for them also because they were also not having funds. The local organizations forming in this country have a lot of difficulty to get international funds. They are mainly volunteers, so for them it was great that we could pay for them during that intervention. I think it was very good in terms of developing prestige for them. They were requested many times to go and facilitate different meetings. They were requested to mediate some cases afterwards. The problem was always that they didn't have enough money. But I think in some ways they were strengthened by the process. We continue with the partnership in other situations. We actually continue working with (her) a lot. (Later) I started strengthening a network of practitioners in the region, I suggested (she) be included in this regional network of community practice and learning. So it was very rich in many senses.

In the end, Sp6 explains why she thought this particular partnership was so successful at handling all the challenges and complexities of this joint collaboration. She states,

*It worked pretty well because we were friends and this is not always the case when you partner with people that you don't know. It's very different. When you are partnering with different formal institutions like the UN it's very different, but (at this level) it was the perfect partnership. Two of us were doing all the meetings together. We had a lot of trust from our young colleagues that were working for us. They were very excited to learn, as it was the first huge process for them. As friends and colleagues we were mobilizing our team and also could give the stakeholders the perspective that *we were bringing the best of being local and the best of being outsiders*. She knew the people and is very well known. And we share the same framework on the field. We speak the same language, so when we're together with the team defining the problem in a way that could be constructive for holding the first meeting, we were enjoying our work together. It was a wonderful experience.*

Having the person with very good credentials in the field, in the place you're working with, that already knew the people - that knew who was working with whom, who are the networks, who are the risks? It's key. *It is something that I couldn't have done by myself because I'm from outside.* So that was extraordinary. And for her, of course having someone with an international network to give support, prestige, helped her not be just like, "Well I'm a mediator here in the town and I could help..." It was like, "no, we have international professionals here and we have an international network." That was the asset for her.

We get a sense of what matters most to Sp6 as she reflects on the overall partnership.

Looking at what happened after this with my work, and in different partnerships with different institutions, I think this was one of my richest experiences in *partnering* because it was a true partnership. We were having the same perspective, we both advantages that we brought to one another. It was a necessary association. *I believe these types of processes cannot happen without associations, without partners.* They are very complicated processes that require constructing a lot of trust and the trust will never be built by just one organization or one person -- apart from the fact that they require resources and funding.

I realized that these partnerships were absolutely key to have a successful process. *Many people say that interventions fail because the partnerships fail.* Many institutions do not know how to work together. Therefore, it's a dilemma as to *how do we ask the people questions that are so difficult because they are in conflict, when we as partners working for peace are not capable of mediating our own problems.* This is something that I put in all of my assessments that I have done for peace processes. I've seen that the difficulty lies in the organizations and institutions where *there is not a commitment with "el campo de trabajo" (the field).*

I believe *the process of choosing a partner is key.* One has to think about the level of the process. Who is needed that I don't have? What organization do I need for this process/intervention that I cannot do individually as *an organization?* And also who are the people that I need? In the end it's a question of people.

Building on early statement that her partnership in Misiones worked well because they “spoke the same language,” she concludes with this thought:

We had the same theoretical approach because sometimes you don't always work with people with the same theoretical perspective, academic background, or similar practice. But this is something common between us and it was very important.

Her concluding statement might remind us that although paying attention to “difference” in the ways our partners think, act, and practice is critical, partnerships might flow more easily when its easy to relate and communicate a similar vision. A question might be: Do other ways of intervening or building capacity get lost marginalized by too quickly focusing on sameness? Either way, it is nice to see that they found a way to help the community they aimed to serve.

APPENDIX B: A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON PARTNERSHIP

I have always envisioned my own small NGO, Intercultural Peacebuilders (ICPB) as a network of partnerships and yet I believe I have to first make strong partnerships on an interpersonal level. I have begun to do that with a few special individuals across the globe, including fellow S-CAR PhD student Ashad Sentongo who I worked with in Uganda in 2005 -- years before we had any idea we would both end up at George Mason University. As Ashad and I now conceptualize programs in Uganda I wonder what else we can do to make his work on the ground in Uganda more successful.

Sometimes you will have a common vision and feel deeply inspired together, but at other times your different life experiences, worldviews, and cultural habits will force you to see things differently. This becomes challenging when your partner has a different approach and it forces you to examine your certainty about your own plan of action. In reflecting on my growing partnership with Ashad, I have already been tested by some variations in our vision of how to proceed. What began as a joint vision for an essentially Track II workshop for one troubled region of Uganda has morphed into a plan for a most of the tribal and cultural kingdoms and representatives of the government. Although I was initially more comfortable in supporting a Track II process that involves middle level leaders connected to the

grassroots and the top (i.e., Lederach) Ashad has convinced me that the focus should be more at the top first and, importantly, he believes he has the connections to make it happen. Where we disagree some, perhaps, is on the approach to set it all in motion and my involvement, or lack thereof, in the process. The challenge now, due to the need to engage the government, is Politics, and getting people to come talk about a problem that transcends all the political opposition in the country.

Originally, I planned to accompany Ashad in meeting with leaders this past summer to explain the initiative, elicit their ideas for a more indigenous dialogue process, and get their commitment to participate in a first workshop session. Due in part to budget constraints I am not going and Ashad will attempt to do this on his own. I was concerned with what might get overlooked by him working alone, and the pressures from his own tribal and political affiliations. Ultimately, I just had to trust that he knows best as the local Ugandan with deep knowledge of appropriate communication and customs. We do agree that my being there could have two possible impacts: (1) It could negatively influence the meetings with tribal and political leaders by giving them the false impression that this is an American initiative with a neocolonial agenda or simply that it is an outside intervention. In reality it's an indigenously conceived idea with some outside guidance, (2) My presence could have positive impact in generating interest and commitment, as well as serving as another voice for questioning and envisioning the local input for the process. Unfortunately, the ultimate factor in not implementing this important work to date is the lack of funding.

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BIOGRAPHY

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