



rtc
responding to conflict

**Strengthening Policy and Practice; Meeting the challenges of working in
complex environments Course**

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Summary Report



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Abbreviations

ACROSS:	Association of Christian Resource Organization Serving Sudan
CAFOD:	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
COPA:	Coalition for Peace in Africa
COU:	Church of Uganda
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
NGOs:	Non Governmental Organizations
OCVP:	Observatory of Conflict & Violence Prevention
PSJC:	Peace and Social Justice Commission
RECODA:	Research, Community & Organizational Development Associates
RTC:	Responding to Conflict
UNMIL:	United Nations Mission in Liberia

1.1. Background information about Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA)

Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA) is an African network of peace builders whose key purpose is to promote peace, justice, human rights and development through capacity building, advocacy, research and documentation. As a network, COPA facilitates linking and sharing between practitioners and stakeholders to ensure the building of sustainable peace in Africa.

COPA's Core Goals

- Capacity building for peace building practitioners
- Lobbying and advocacy for peace related policies
- Research on conflict issues in Africa as well as documentation and dissemination of information
- Formation and participation in strategic partnerships with other peace building organizations at the global, continental, regional and national level

Core Activities

I. Capacity Building: COPA's capacity building program aims to strengthen CSOs in Africa to increase their sustainability and effectiveness, enhance their ability to provide services, create collaborations to more effectively serve their target communities, and improve knowledge of public policy and advocacy. This includes;

- Tailor made Trainings for organizations
- Building Capacities for Peace Practitioners training

- Gendering Human Security, Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation courses
- Training of Trainers, Trauma healing and reconciliation
- Women in peace leadership and empowerment

II .Research

Informative and regular publication on case studies and success stories;

III. Lobbying and advocacy for peace related issues.

For more information on COPA's work, visit www.copaffrica.org

1.2. Background information about Responding to Conflict (RTC)

Responding to Conflict is a non-governmental organization that works to transform conflict and build peace. RTC believes local people are best placed to find their own ways of dealing with conflict.

Since 1991 when RTC Begun, it has:

- Established itself as a leader in the field of conflict transformation
- Trained practitioners from more than 70 countries including those from some of the world's most violent conflicts
- Provided specialist advice and consultancy services to the governments of the UK, Australia, Japan, United Nations Development Programme and leading international NGO's and charities such as Oxfam GB, Christian Aid, AGEH, Care International, CAFOD, the American Friends Service Committee and variety of Redcross national societies
- Designed and managed long-term programmes in the Middle East, the Balkans, East Africa and South East Asia. Currently RTC in partnership with others is facilitating programmes in Nepal and providing long-term support to programmes and projects in Kenya and the Middle East
- Published the handbook 'Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action': Which has been acknowledged as a key resource for practitioners, trainers and academics throughout the world and has been translated into 8 languages.

For more information on RTC, kindly visit www.respond.org

About the Strengthening Policy and Practice; Meeting the challenges of working in complex environments Course

This course was designed to draw on the experience and practice of practitioners in Africa in influencing internal policies and programmatic approaches. It aimed at providing a platform to draw from best practices, lessons learnt and to examine the interface between policy and practice for more effective approaches in peacebuilding, development and post-conflict reconstruction. It identified how organizations can strive to balance their organizational mandate with the demands of working in complex and rapidly changing political emergencies.

Course objectives

1. Deepen participants understanding of peacebuilding from a conflict transformation perspective as it applies to their work
2. Provide a platform for participants to apply appropriate conflict analysis to their own organizational situations
3. Explore the relationship between organizational policy and practice in situations of instability, conflict or violence
4. Examine issues relating to aid and conflict in order to develop conflict sensitive policies for organizations
5. Consider the key policy and practice issues relating to the prevention of violent conflict and of peacebuilding
6. Strengthen participant's competencies to contribute proactively to the development of appropriate policies and best practices in their organizations/institutions for working in environments affected by conflict or violence

The Course Content

- Developing a common understanding of conflict and violence
- Introduction to conflict analysis
- Application and learning from Conflict analysis
- The interface between Aid and Conflict
- Focus on roles and relationships at different levels and the implications for policy and practice and the strategic options for organisations
- Organisational assessment
- Impact assessment

Session 1: Setting the scene

- a. *Getting a common understanding of key concepts (conflict and violence)*
- b. *Exploring the 2 world views in conflict transformation (Pacification & Peacebuilding)*

Session one focussed on understanding the key concepts of conflict, violence and the various perspectives applied by different worldviews in conflict transformation. It was clear that many participants view of conflict and violence was shaped by what they see in their contexts. Many felt that there are direct linkages between conflict, violence, abuse of human rights and underdevelopment. Conflicts could be latent, surface or open and knowing the specific stage that applies to a particular context/community ensures intervention is specific. The need for early warning interventions was emphasised since in many instances, conflicts do not happen overnight.

Many participants equated violence with observable harmful behaviour often informed by people's attitudes and contexts. Sometimes, violence can also be invisible, hidden beneath a people's systems and structures. For transformative change to occur, an organization working on violence must have policies that target attitudes, behaviours and the context within which the violence takes place.

People working in conflict transformation apply different world views which were described as either pacification or peacebuilding. Both the pacification and the peacebuilding worldviews have different stages and employ different strategies to achieve their goals. Understanding the worldview we employ in our organizations and the stages we operate in is instrumental in informing the policy direction our organizations should take in order to have impact.

Organizations that focus on peacebuilding as their worldview see the inter-dependence between people in terms of maintaining security and interdependence between issues and systems. Those applying this worldview do projects that target the general wellbeing of all appreciating that people have needs that need to be met. Its interventions are multi-sectoral and use the bottom up approach with the belief that real transformation can only be generated by the people in the particular context. This group views conflict as necessary for change and calls for the fair distribution of opportunities. It views the planet as a home where focus should be on building just relationships aimed at eliminating structural violence, creating system thinking and empowering cultures to creatively deal with conflicts.

The Pacification model is famous with establishments such as governments. Their approach of security matters is that of competition (it is either us or them, eat or be eaten). Its focus is on the wellbeing of one group at the expense of others. It believes in exacting power over others and in the use of coercion as a form of conflict resolution. Projects use the top bottom approach and solutions are derived from the top.

Reflections for this session were that the peacebuilding approach if used is likely to result to long term solutions that are community owned and more sustainable while the pacification worldview is more likely to result in further antagonism. Peacebuilding should be a continuous process applied at all levels of society and that before deciding on

the worldview to adopt, there is need to think of the strategies we need to use. Strategies should be informed by the context and not vice versa. For meaningful change, organizations should create linkages between the strategies and the actors applied in each of the two worldviews.

Session 2: Understanding conflict analysis

- a. *Introduction to a variety of tools of conflict analysis*
- b. *Analyzing and understanding various conflict situations*
- c. *Exploring analysis as an intervention*

Session 2 focussed on having a deeper understanding of what conflict analysis is, why it is done, when it should be done, the various tools that can be used and their applicability in real contexts. It also involved exploring key learning's derived from the application of the tools in question.

Participants were introduced into Conflict Mapping, Stages of Conflict and the ABC Triangle. For each of the tool, a real time conflict was analysed and lessons on practice and policy drawn. Real time conflicts analyzed included 1) South Sudan- A conflict in the Wau County between the national government, the Fritit & Dinka communities and the county government over the relocation of the County headquarters and subsequent change of name, 2) Uganda- A conflict in the Church of Uganda between the Provincial office, parishioners in the Karamoja Diocese and a development partner over leadership and representation in the church 3) Somaliland- a land conflict involving a mining investor, the national government and the local communities over land ownership and usage. These conflicts were analysed using the Mapping tool, the Stages and the ABC triangle.

One key thing about conflict analysis is that it helps organizations to make informed interventions. This means conflict analysis should come before interventions. The results of the analysis should inform the strategies organizations use and these should further be informed by the policies in place. Since conflicts are not static, conflict analysis ought to be an ongoing process and should make use of a variety of tools to be comprehensive. Some tools may only reveal root causes, others only the actors and relations between them, others may capture the story line given by the different actors in the conflict while yet others may only show the effects.

For instance the mapping tool is used to identify actors in a conflict and to define the relationships and power plays. The ABC triangle when used helps to understand the factors relating to behaviour, attitude and context and how they all influence each other. The stages help to understand the stages in which the conflict is in and the likely future scenarios.

Some key learning's for policy drawn from the tools included the fragile nature of conflicts, indicators on early warning, power plays, relationships and linkages for intervention. Others included pointing out who can influence/transform, the drivers of the conflict, the stakeholders to engage with, the real needs and fears that drive the

actors and provide opportunity for conflict transformation and the contextual perception of why actors do what they do. Further, some of the tools especially the ABC helps organizations to think outside the box and to ensure there is no exclusion when carrying out intervention.

One key reflection on the session was the awareness that conflict analysis requires patience and involvement of different stakeholders. Unfortunately, many organizations fail in their interventions either because they rush through the process, they engage with the wrong stakeholders or they do not do any analysis at all. In terms of policies, the tools can help organizations to determine when to intervene, who to engage with and the strategies to use.

Session 3: Options for organizations working in conflicts

a. To explore the range of options for organizations working in conflict contexts

b. Conflict sensitivity

Resource materials for the session:

- Working with conflict book page 125,*
- Contemporary Conflict Transformation by Miall Botom & Woodhouse*
- www.conflictsensitivity.org*

This session involved analysing case studies of real situations that face organizations working in conflict contexts and the challenges they face in light of rapidly changing environments versus organizational policies and practices that may not adequately respond to the situations. Some of the policy issues that such organizations face were identified as mandate versus the changing context, delegation of power between organizational offices operating at different levels (head office, regional, national), capacities to address emerging needs (skills, finances), coordination of activities, clarity of roles at different levels, participation of all actors and stakeholders etc.

In this session, participants were introduced to the PIN Triangle, a useful tool for use in a context where an organization is trying to understand the needs, interests and positions of warring parties so as to get a common ground from where negotiations/dialogue can start.

Organizations working in conflict contexts are faced with different options often dictated by organizational policies. They are those who work around conflict, those who work in conflict and those who work on conflict. However, the approach an organization decides to take has an effect in its conflict sensitivity approach. For instance, leaving a conflict context when there is violence could send the message that some lives are more valuable. Likewise using armed escorts could end up legitimizing the use of weapons in the context while working with certain groups while leaving out others could further reinforce animosity between groups.

Organizations that work around conflict normally leave a context upon the outbreak of violence/crisis stage and relocate to safer/more stable areas. Those who work in conflict

adjust their operations/programmes to fit in the conflict area e.g. by beefing up security of staff or changing working hours. Those who work on conflict adjust their programmes to proactively engage with the conflict situation e.g. organize dialogue, mediation, provide funds to hold meetings etc.

Before 2000, conflict sensitivity was referred to as the 'Do No Harm Approach'. This refers to the organizational ability to have a sound understanding of the context they are operating in. The intervention must always correspond with the context. To be conflict sensitive means that organizations must analyse the impact their interventions will have on the context both positive and negative and aim at reducing negative impact and maximize on positive impact.

Session 4: Organizational capacities

- a. *To assess organizational capacity*
- b. *Operationalizing good practice*

Assessing of organizational capacity was an individual session involving reflecting through one's organization to determine its level of:

- conflict analysis
- Positioning in a conflict context (around conflict, in conflict, or on conflict)
- Political implications of interventions
- The extent of balanced representation of all stakeholders
- Shared understanding of the intervention approach by everyone in the organization, the target community and all stakeholders
- A clear Vision, Mission, Operational Policies and Procedures, Management style and delegation of authority
- Human resources capacity
- Sense of ownership of work being done and level of acknowledgement of work well done
- Funding policies
- Consistency of interventions to organizational policies, vision and mission
- Needs assessment of beneficiary groups
- The extent to which monitoring and evaluation is done
- Sustainability of organizational programmes
- Level of advocacy work and how it relates to other activities of the organization
- The applicability of equitable partnerships with other stakeholders.

Through the exercise, participants were able to identify areas that their organizations are doing well, areas that need improvement and areas that show inconsistency and areas that need real time interventions to be in line with the aspirations of the organizations.

In order to maximize on the impact of interventions, organizations need to operationalize their good practices. The force field analysis tool that is normally used in conflict analysis can powerfully help organizations when planning an action or strategy, to clarify the forces that might support or hinder what they intend to do. Further it could help them

identify those forces which either support or hinder their desired change (or a plan of action).

Participants used the force field analysis to analyse the driving and hindering forces in the real life conflicts that had been identified during the conflict analysis sessions. The purpose was to help them identify the positive forces so that their organizations could reinforce them and also find ways to work around the hindering forces.

Session 5: Impact assessment

a. *Assessing impact of activities*

b. *Preparing to return*

*Resources for the session were drawn from 'Reflecting Peace Practice';
www.cdainc.com/rpp*

This session was aimed at enabling participants get a better understanding of impact assessment of peacebuilding initiatives. Impact assessment is done at the programme level and at the writ level. Some of the criteria applied to determine impact of peacebuilding projects include the ability of the initiative to contribute to stopping of key conflict drivers, the ability of the initiative to motivate communities to start using non violent means of conflict resolution, the initiatives leads communities to develop their own initiatives or to be more proactive in dealing with their conflicts, it leads to the reform of systems and structures for instance governance, constitutions, development of peace policies, and ability to heighten people's resilience in dealing with provocative situations.

Further, the session provided participants with a platform to think through the five days they had been in the training, assess the knowledge and skills they had gained and determine their next course of action in actualizing the knowledge. Many shared their desire to involve their organizations in conducting organizational capacities and re-looking through their policies to determine to what extent they reflect their practice and vice versa.

Appendix 1: Evaluation and consolidated participants comments

1. What is your most important learning from this week?

- Understanding the concept of conflict transformation and conflict sensitivity
- How actions can influence (+/-) on the conflict even if we're not working on peace building
- That practice and policy are inter-linked and that policy should be flexible to allow changes in practice so as to responding to the ever changing context effectively
- The three conflict analysis tools, provided me an insight on how I can best influence policy and intervention that is I realize that hindering or drawing forces can be built upon to become critical and effective strategic options to a seemingly precarious conflicts

2. What will you do differently as a result of this training?

- I am going to do the exercise of organization assessment with the staff also we will look at our strategy
- I will incorporate conflict sensitivity into our proposed organizational capacity assessment
- Ensure that I do a deep analysis with the communities to ensure what we do with each community does not trigger conflict with the next.
- I have a clear understanding of who and how policies in the organization are made. I will now lobby our governance structures to formulate policies that are more responsive to the context we are operating in
- I will employ more of the field force analysis tool to my work, so as to advocate for more strategic intervention towards youth empowerment, this will require me documenting more writing more than I have been doing

3. To what extent were your objectives met

- Am so impressed by the facilitation process and the organization
- I certainly appreciate how you organized the training. It was in-depth and helpful.
- I would just suggest you to add a trip to the historical and important places so that the training makes very good sense.
- The workshop is well organized the issues are met our concern. The methods are very easy to make us to understand quickly.
- It is good if this training try to design a course on how to be context –specific for designing policy and practice.
- I now have a clear understanding of conflict transformation, the challenges of policy formulation in a complex environment and would still need support in translating this to a concrete program
- There could have been more time to discuss in depth about sensitive/complex environments that threat destruction of initiatives and more suffering for the people e.g. for us in the church the sexuality standoff with donors

4. Please comment on the structure of the training and the methods used.

- The participatory methodology was very good, it allowed for practical engagement and learning from each other

- The structure was very interesting. Not use of PowerPoint is still update I realize. Not only update but efficient
- The methodology was very reflective for me and will have a deeper impact on me. I also learned some new processes of facilitating trainings
- Training done very simply, relaxed but attaining objectives-just wondered why we did not explore technology of how social media can be a driven hindrance because many people are into it nowadays-It is an environment we are working in! Complex if you want add
- The learning tools are so appropriate in that training, the training was very participatory, allowing all participants to capture and internalize the concepts through brainstorming, documentation, presentations .It is the first training I have attended without any PowerPoint and thick manuals yet, I can articulate almost all concepts for each day.
- The structure was good because every day I could build on what I had learned on the previous day.

Appendix 2: List of Participants & Facilitators

Name	Organization
1.Martha Ndogoto	Coalition for Peace in Africa
2.Josephine Ng'an'ga	Quality Control Manager(RECODA)
3.Julie Kiwanuka	United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)
4.Amos Magezi	Provincial Secretary COU
5.Abdirahman Hassan Nur	Observatory of Conflict &Violence Prevention
6.Nancy Hinga	ACROSS
7.Micheline Sikuli B.	P.P.S.S.P/R.D of Congo
8.Natalina Andrea	Justice &Peace
9.Jessica Nalwoga Bayuma	Church of Uganda
10.Bizuneh Assefa	House of Federation Ethiopia
11.Mohyeldeen Eltohami Tahya	Sudan Peace &Development
12.Joan McGregor	RTC
13.Jimmy Okumu	Concordis International