Evaluating the Use of Communication for Development in Conflict Interventions
Measuring peace in participatory communication

Abstract

The application of Communication for Development (C4D) in conflict prevention, conflict reduction and post-conflict reconstruction interventions is a relatively new field. International organisations that have begun to adopt new communication & media designs in their peace work are progressively offering a credible baseline to engage in the assessment of this practice. In this paper, I offer a short compendium of the evaluation frameworks I have developed through my empirical research on the impact of Communication for Development in Peacebuilding; this is presented alongside a number of reflections and followed by concluding considerations on the state of the field.

1. Introduction

The application of Communication for Development (C4D) in conflict prevention, conflict reduction and post-conflict reconstruction interventions is a relatively new and unexplored field. International organisations that have begun to adopt new communication & media approaches in their peace work are progressively offering a convincing baseline to engage in the assessment of this practice. In this paper I offer a short compendium of the evaluation frameworks I have developed through my empirical research on the impact of Communication for Development in Peacebuilding; this is presented alongside a number of reflections and followed by concluding considerations on the state of the field.

Firstly, I will briefly discuss the current view of C4D in Peacebuilding evaluation practice, based in particular on the work of UNICEF, which is one of the international agencies that has incorporated C4D in its development programming. I will then review a Theory of Change (ToC) framework for C4D in Peacebuilding, which is useful in visualising how change can happen through the use of C4D for peacebuilding (Baú, 2015b). Thirdly, I will present a model that helps practitioners in both planning and assessing participatory media initiatives in post-conflict settings (Baú, 2015a). Lastly, I will bring attention to a frame of reference to be considered for C4D in Peacebuilding interventions targeting adolescents (Baú, forthcoming). In the end, reflections will be offered on the future of evaluation for C4D work in peacebuilding.

2. Contextualising C4D in Peacebuilding evaluation

C4D in Peacebuilding has been defined as

> "[…] a social process that fosters dialogue and meaningful conversations to reduce and prevent the risk of conflict or relapse into it. By using a range of participatory tools and methods, C4D in peacebuilding creates safe spaces for discussing both the causes and consequences of conflict, as well as 'normal and everyday life'. This process generates transformation at all levels by promoting listening, debating, building trust, learning to appreciate differences, sharing knowledge, developing skills […] and learning in order to lay the foundations of a sustainable and durable peace" (Spadacini, 2013:4).

This definition allows us to identify people's participation in creating a media output, working together towards a common product and engaging in a meaningful communication exchange as important components for building a peaceful co-existence between groups (Baú, forthcoming).

The evaluation of C4D in Peacebuilding interventions needs to be tailored to the approach, platforms, strategy and methods that are being utilised, as there is no one-size-fit-all style to be adopted. However, UNICEF (2017) puts forward a 'three-pronged approach to monitoring and evaluation' of C4D in Peacebuilding interventions, which is useful to consider. This approach focuses on:

(1) Outputs - This involves counting and documenting both the outputs of an intervention and their reach.

Alongside our peacebuilding objective, the agency suggests that the associated sub-objectives should consider the following: "(i) to deliver peacebuilding information in a specific conflict context, (ii) to facilitate access to peacebuilding services and resources, (iii) to aid other peacebuilding work by adding an effective communication element, (iv) to support peacebuilding advocacy, (v) and to amplify people's voices in peacebuilding" (UNICEF, 2017:n/a).

(2) Outcomes - After measuring reach, this involves identifying evidence of positive change among individuals, communities and institutions.

As identifying change in C4D in Peacebuilding interventions can be challenging, the agency suggests to (i) minimise the creation of new infrastructure and related training

by making use of existing data-gathering or reporting systems, (ii) document case studies effectively, (iii) consider the use of video with programme beneficiaries to analyse their personal transformation.

(3) Impact – This involves measuring long-term changes that may range from social cohesion to health, economy, and natural environment.

3. A Theory of Change for C4D in Peacebuilding

In an article on '*Communication for Development in Peacebuilding - Directions on research and evaluation for an emerging field*' (Baú, 2015b), I have developed a ToC table that offers important guidance both on the evaluation and on the planning of communication for development interventions in (post-)conflict settings, as shown in Table I. When evaluating a specific programme or project that is based on the application of C4D in Peacebuilding, this framework can also be used as a starting point to build a Theory of Change that is more tailored to the activities that are being implemented. The column identifying the communication for social change processes that arise from those activities usefully outlines what we can regard as the effects of the application of media and communication in conflict and post-conflict realities through a C4D approach (Baú, 2015b).

Theory of Change table
Overall aim: to apply Communication for Development designs to contribute to peace and create an enabling environment for sustainable development processes after a conflict.
Method: to set up and implement tailored communication and media programmes that contribute to the achievement of a sustainable peace in post-conflict settings.

Theory of change 1: **Individual change theory** Media and communication promote peace by affecting the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of a critical mass of people.	Description: **If** individuals are given the opportunity to share their experience through the media, and have a direct communication channel with different groups and decision-makers in the reconstruction process, **then** they will adopt a positive behaviour towards their social environment and discover their ability and motivation to be initiators of peace among their and other communities.	
	Personal	Communication for social change
Focus	Sense of worth; new self-perception as a survival rather than a victim; increased clarity.	Ability to have his/her own story heard within their social network; empowerment; knowledge development; informed communication replaces rumours.
Theories	A sense of engagement develops the willingness to actively take play an active role in the peacebuilding process.	Increased understanding of the effectiveness of communication to create change within communities as opposed to the use of violence; individuals' sense of powerlessness begins to transform.
Theory of change 2: **Healthy relationship and connections theory** The introduction or improvement of media sources and communication channels promote peace by providing an information conduit between dissenting groups, thus reducing prejudice and stereotypes between groups.	Description: **If** people are provided with media skills or are given access to a range of media sources and communication channels, **then** multiple voices will be heard, a dialogue between different groups will be established, and a shared understanding of the conflict will be enhanced.	

	Relational	Communication for social change
Focus	Acknowledgement of a shared grief; realisation of mutual interests; creation of new connections (also outside one's immediate network).	Establishment of a communication channel between victims and perpetrators; groups that are usually silenced gain a voice; ability to create and mobilise networks that support peace.
Theories	An increased commitment to work together towards the development of one united country strengthens the reconstruction process.	Patterns of revenge are replaced with patterns of dialogue; power dynamics between individuals and groups begin to transform, laying the basis for a more equal and peaceful interaction; ability to cooperatively solve problems.

Theory of change 3: **Public attitudes theory**	Description:
Prejudice, ignorance, and intolerance of difference encourage war and violence. The media can encourage peace by changing public attitudes and building greater tolerance in society.	**If** people are provided with access to media and tailored communication activities, **then** they can become aware of the events that led to and occurred during the conflict from a range of perspectives, including those of different ethnicities, religions, cultures and gender.

	Cultural	Communication for social change
Focus	Breaking down stereotypes; generating an understanding of groups' differences.	Accuracy of the stories and events shared; local communities' members are discovered to be sources of knowledge; individuals become informed citizens.
Theories	An increased understanding of different groups' views and historical perspectives enhances unity.	Interaction across the former conflict divide is re-initiated on the basis of common beliefs and clearer perceptions.

Theory of change 4: **Social change theory**	Description:
Violence and conflict disintegrate a society's structure and alienate its people. Access to media and communication platforms can help articulate and initiate the change needed to re-build the social fabric.	**If**, thanks to communication and media channels, people can gain an understanding of others' situation, of the conflict, and learn about the reconstruction process, **then** re-formed community relations will foster the establishment of an organised national structure that contributes to the creation of mechanisms leading to sustainable peace and development.

	Structural	Communication for social change
Focus	Promoting the creation of organised structures within communities, and of groups across the country that share similar experiences and needs.	Facilitated link between people and groups who might have otherwise not been in contact; positive collaboration; shift in the dynamics of oppressor and oppressed.
Theories	The formation of diverse groups organised by age, professional category, or with specific roles and interests, transforms one's idea of identity and re-frames power, while fostering peace and development.	Increased voice and organization of local communities; social change is brought about through a communication exchange between diverse groups and different cultures; different groups have their say in the reconstruction process.

Table I. Theory of Change table for Communication for Development in Peacebuilding (Baú, 2015:813-814).

A useful perspective to think about ToC in peacebuilding draws from Shapiro's theories of change to achieve social change in conflict transformation. These focus on:

- changing people's perspective on an issue, while developing empathy towards others and modifying negative behaviour. This is connected to *individual change*;

- creating meaningful and collaborative relationships between former enemy groups. This wants to address *relational change* (Shapiro, 2006:6).

Recognising processes and drivers that can also influence *social change* dynamics through the use of communication in post-conflict contexts is therefore a crucial starting point (Baú, 2015b).

4. Evaluating the use of participatory media in post-conflict settings

The concepts presented through the ToC in C4D in Peacebuilding framework take us to the idea of utilising participatory media to transform conflict between former enemy groups at the end of large-scale violence. When planning peacebuilding interventions, what goes often unrecognised is the direct role that different communication channels can play in transforming conflict and achieving social change. In the article '*Building Peace through Social Change Communication - Participatory video in conflict-affected communities*' (Baú, 2015a), I introduce a framework that highlights the potential of Communication for Social Change (CSC) in post-conflict settings through the use of participatory media. What I present shows how these types of media productions can contribute to re-establishing relationships and creating a shared understanding of the conflict, while building a vision of an interconnected future among opposing groups. It also brings to light the link between CSC and conflict transformation theory (Baú, 2015a).

Shapiro's work (2006) was again useful to build a framework of analysis that looked at the impact of participatory media productions in the light of the two dimensions of change that the author identifies in conflict interventions – the personal and relational ones – and of an additional resulting dimension that I have created, addressing social change. Figure 1 shows a visualisation of this framework:
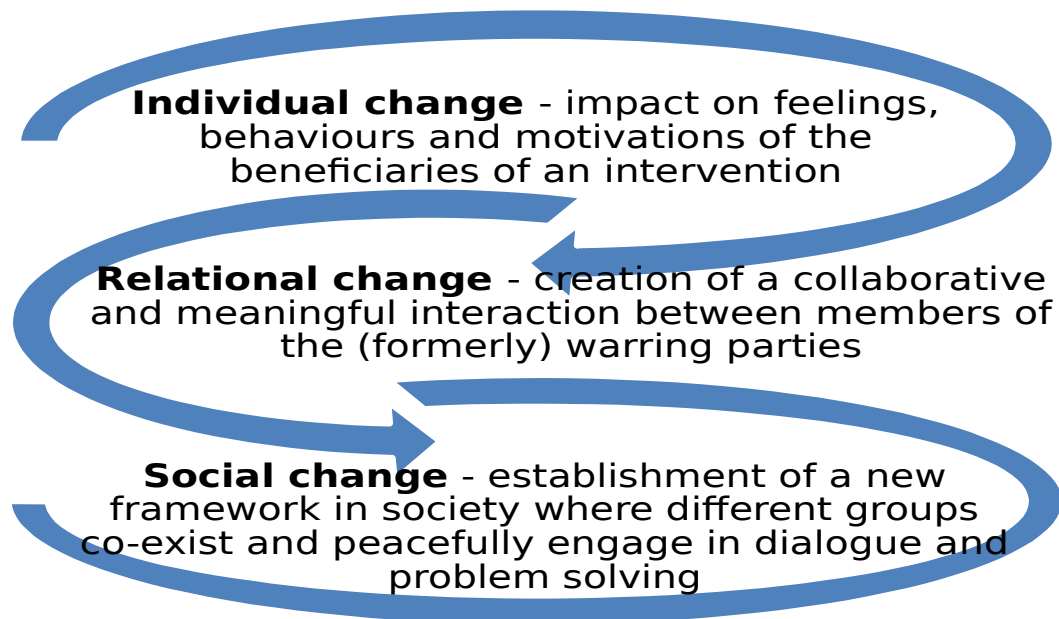
Figure 1. Analysing the impact of C4D in Peacebuilding interventions using participatory media for conflict transformation (Baú, 2015:8).

The answers I gathered from my interviews with people who took part in participatory media productions in the aftermath of 2007-2008 Kenya Post-Election Violence showed how both the process and its outputs had an effect on each dimension of change (Baú, 2015a):

- firstly, the participatory media activities strongly contributed in instating participants' confidence in re-establishing peace, in helping them identify themselves as agents of change, and also in guiding them in the discovery of new skills, therefore addressing individual change.

- secondly, the activities established harmony among those who had worked together in the mixed-tribe workshops. A constructive dialogue was initiated between the members of the different tribes, who took part in the media making, and among those who watched the final productions. An understanding was created of the situation of both victims and perpetrators and relationships that were broken began to heal, therefore contributing to relational change.

- thirdly, a sense of unity as citizens of one country, rather than members of different tribes, aroused from the answers. Thanks to this shift in power, people began to engage in new dialogue, laying the foundations that are needed to begin to initiate social change.

5. Assessing adolescents participation and contribution to peace in C4D interventions

In the article '*Art, Development and Peace - Working with adolescents living in internally displaced people's camps in Mindanao*' (Baú, forthcoming), I have developed a framework of analysis that can be used in the assessment of the C4D in Peacebuilding outcomes of peacebuilding programmes tailored to the adolescent group. The framework is built around the *strengths-based model* proposed by Cahill et al. (2010:28): this encompasses a spectrum of protective factors for adolescents that organisations should address in their programming efforts. The C4D in Peacebuilding outcomes have been articulated in relation to two key protective factors – 'social connection' and 'self-efficacy' - and related enhancement from Cahill et al.'s model (2010). Table II exemplifies this framework.

Key protective factors	Protective factors enhancement
Social connection. Feelings of belonging and acceptance from a social group, positive relationships with peers. *I am wanted and needed. I can contribute and be contributed to. I can listen and be heard.* [Cahill et al., 2010:28]	▪ Safe spaces available to young people ▪ Opportunities to participate [Cahill et al., 2010:28]
Self-efficacy. Feelings of control and agency and autonomy; capacity to learn, to manage and shape aspects of the environment; to manage the expression of emotions; to look after oneself. *I can do things to look after myself and others. I can learn. I can control the way I behave. I can influence my environment.* [Cahill et al., 2010:28]	▪ Vocational skills ▪ Opportunities to participate ▪ Contribution to care for the community [Cahill et al., 2010:28]
C4D in Peacebuilding-related programme outcomes	
Creativity & Participation. Participants' sense of gratification in engaging with the medium and the production process safely and creatively.	
Cooperation. Participants' sense of gratification from the small group work; ability to produce an output through a collaborative participatory process.	
Exchange. Possibility to express themselves, share experiences and learn about others.	

Table II. Assessment for C4D in Peacebuilding interventions with adolescents (adapted from Baú, forthcoming).

When applied to the analysis of UNICEF *Art for Development* programme implemented in an internally-displaced people's camp in the Philippines to reduce conflict between adolescents from different backgrounds, this framework helped to bring to light how the programme had been instrumental in achieving outcomes connected to C4D in Peacebuilding. The participatory approach employed to produce the programme's outputs reinforced the kids' engagement with and appreciation for the media and art forms as channels to express themselves, understand others, and share something personal. They also had the opportunity to recognise other participants' experiences of life in the camp and dreams for the future in relation to their own. Based on participants' impressions, this demonstrates the significance of **creativity & participation** and **exchange** outcomes (Baú, forthcoming). This can be linked back to the concept of individual change discussed in the previous work presented here.

The **Cooperation** outcome of C4D in Peacebuilding was evidenced in particular through the kids' happiness towards the opportunity that was given to them of working in a group, and towards the act of creating something together. Through the activities, the kids uncovered their ability to cooperate towards the production of a shared output; this cooperation superseded the barriers of their ethno-linguistic and religious backgrounds, which are typically used as dividing factors. Through the frame of reference employed we were able to conclude that the programme created a bond among participants and has led to new friendships; it has also strengthened the adolescents' sense of community of the camp (Baú, forthcoming). This is connected to the concept of relational change previously discussed.

6. Reflections on the field

Evaluating peacebuilding programmes is always challenging, as the results are hard to define. Moreover, the long-term effects of C4D appear to depend primarily on contextual and structural elements, whose overall inclusion when designing an intervention cannot always be met. Finally, outcomes are also influenced by the social, political, economic and cultural environments of an intervention. This leaves us with the acknowledgement that measuring the impact of C4D is a complex task that requires the application of different methods (Lennie & Tacchi 2013). In the context of peacebuilding, not only mixed methodologies but also diverse frameworks must be applied for evaluation; C4D in Peacebuilding cuts across a large number of disciplines that vary on the basis of the aim of the intervention and on those who are involved. Initiatives in this field can target distinctive demographics and address a

wide range of conflict-related issues: what keeps them under a common denominator is mainly the use of different media platforms and communication channels to achieve their objective.

Thanks to the latter assessment framework discussed here, for example, we were able to bring to light a number of positive C4D in Peacebuilding outcomes achieved by providing adolescents with the opportunity to participate in the production of art and media content (Baú, forthcoming). In addition to that, besides 'cooperation' and 'self-efficacy', the *strengths-based model* from Cahill et al. (2010:28) proposes 'self-worth' and 'sense of purpose' as further enhancement factors, with the idea of 'safety' placed at the centre. This opens up the opportunity to design, monitor and evaluate other interventions that can be connected to additional C4D in Peacebuilding outcomes within this area. This is particularly important as in situation of emergencies not enough attention is being paid to adolescents, who are not targeted as a specific group in the humanitarian response and are often regarded as powerless recipients of aid. Not recognising this particular youth segment as active responders is a missed opportunity for planning their participation in transforming community-based conflicts and facilitating development (Brathwaite et al., 2015).

This demonstrates how the evaluation of C4D in Peacebuilding can play a key role not only in understanding this practice but also in developing an effective design that encompasses the wide breadth of its scope.

7. Conclusions

This paper has provided a practical discussion on the evaluation of C4D in Peacebuilding interventions. The 'three-pronged approach to monitoring and evaluation' adopted by UNICEF has clarified the importance of outputs, outcomes and impacts when evaluating programmes in this field, while the Theory of Change table has taken these ideas further. The reflections offered at the end explain the challenges and context-related factors that need to be taken into account when engaging in this type of work.

At the same time, the article has presented two small-scale experiences of assessing C4D in Peacebuilding developed through my empirical work in this field (Baú, forthcoming, 2015a). The initiatives implemented on the ground, both in Kenya and in the Philippines, were evaluated through the application of specific frames of analysis to the data gathered from participants, which have been re-introduced here. These

frames have proved to be useful in determining some of the effects that the use of media & communication through a development lens can bring when working towards re-establishing peace.

On the whole, this article wants to be a contribution to the current debate on the evaluation of Communication for Development practice, with a specific focus on its use in the context of peacebuilding. The ideas and examples discussed here are offered to both practitioners and academic researchers in the aim of advancing critical thinking for a continuous effective development of this field.

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