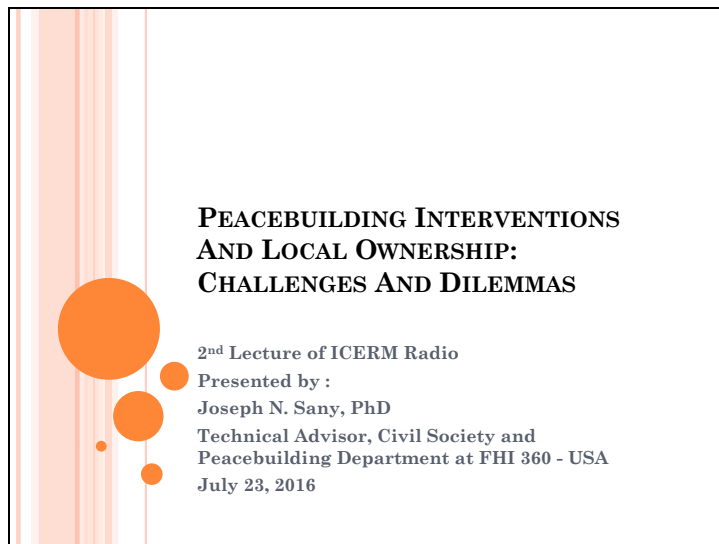


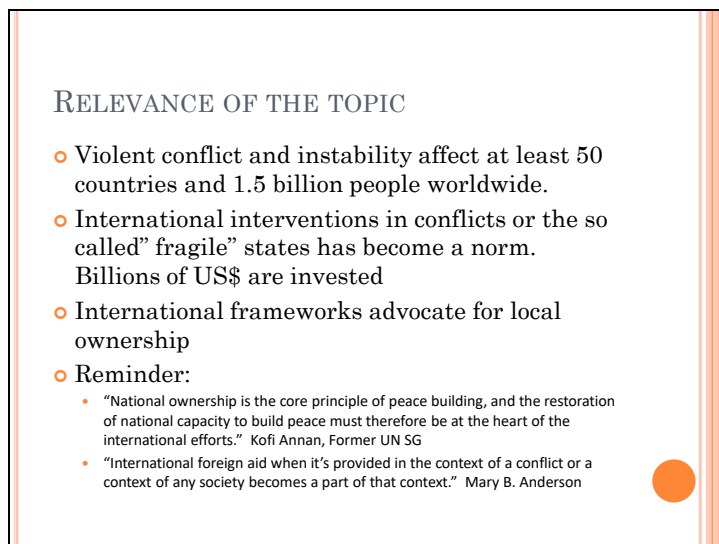
Slide 1



**PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTIONS
AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP:
CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS**

2nd Lecture of ICERM Radio
Presented by :
Joseph N. Sany, PhD
Technical Advisor, Civil Society and
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July 23, 2016

Slide 2



RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

- Violent conflict and instability affect at least 50 countries and 1.5 billion people worldwide.
- International interventions in conflicts or the so called” fragile” states has become a norm. Billions of US\$ are invested
- International frameworks advocate for local ownership
- Reminder:
 - “National ownership is the core principle of peace building, and the restoration of national capacity to build peace must therefore be at the heart of the international efforts.” Kofi Annan, Former UN SG
 - “International foreign aid when it’s provided in the context of a conflict or a context of any society becomes a part of that context.” Mary B. Anderson

Major development institutions such as the United Nations, Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC/OECD), World Bank, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) continually stress the importance of local ownership. As stated by Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, “national ownership is the core principle of peace building, and the restoration of national capacity to build peace must therefore be at the heart of the international efforts.” The international adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness Development by developed and developing countries alike, to effectively promote sustainable aid set the stage for Annan’s argument. Development actors often argue that they have prioritized local ownership at the center of their international assistance programs in fragile states, post-conflict and conflict-torn societies; however that remains to be seen.

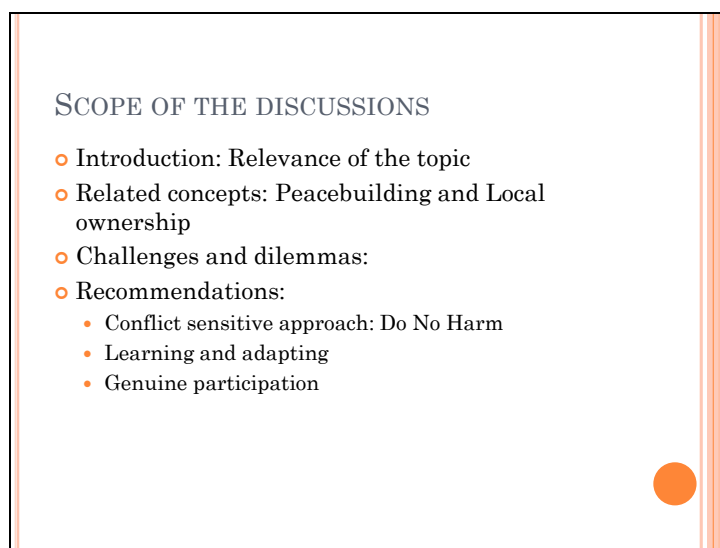
As I was preparing this lecture, two quotes summed up the issue: the first from Kofi Annan, the Former UN Secretary:...” and the second from a seasoned peacebuilder, Mary B. Anderson.....

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s remarks on the launch of the Peacebuilding Fund in New York, 11 October 2006. www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sgsm10677.doc.htm

More on Mary Anderson’s quote in *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace--Or War*. Lynne Rienner Publisher (1999).

In this book, Mary B. Anderson cites the experiences of many aid providers in war-torn societies to show that international assistance - even when it is effective in saving lives, alleviating suffering and furthering sustainable development - too often reinforces divisions among contending groups. But more importantly, she offers hopeful evidence of creative programs that point the way to new approaches to aid. Calling for a redesign of assistance programs so that they do not harm while doing their intended good, she argues further that many opportunities exist for aid workers to in fact support the processes by which societies disengage from war.

Slide 3

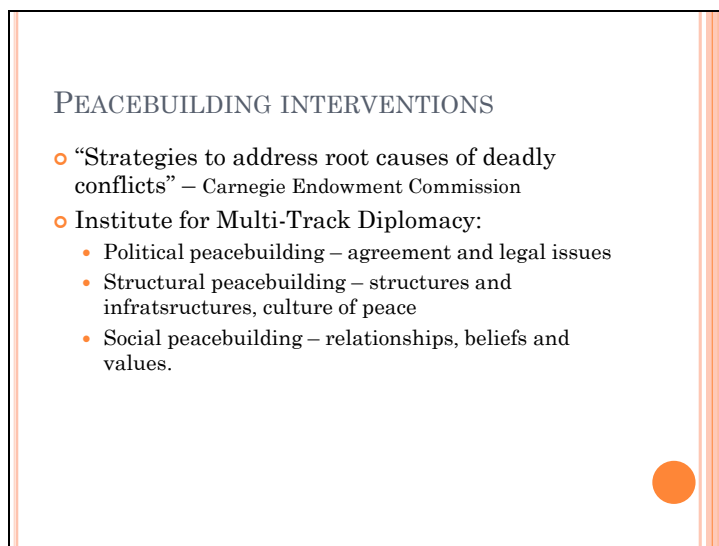


The present lecture will discuss the challenges to reconcile these two lessons; which boils down to the question of how to facilitate or leverage on local ownership of peacebuilding programs funded by “outsiders”. As we know peacebuilding interventions take place in a context of violence, mistrust and deep grievances. Therefore, it is relevant to know: who should own these interventions? What can be owned and hopefully sustained? How to avoid exacerbating the patterns of injustice or abuse, drivers of conflicts and instability? Can ownership help transform relationships and address root causes of conflict?

These are important questions, unfortunately, I don’t think we will have the time to cover them all today. In this presentation, we will start the conversation around some of them. In doing so, we

will briefly discuss the notion of peacebuilding and local ownership; then in the second part of the lecture, we look at the challenges /tensions related to local ownership both at conceptual and operational levels; then conclude with some recommendations.

Slide 4



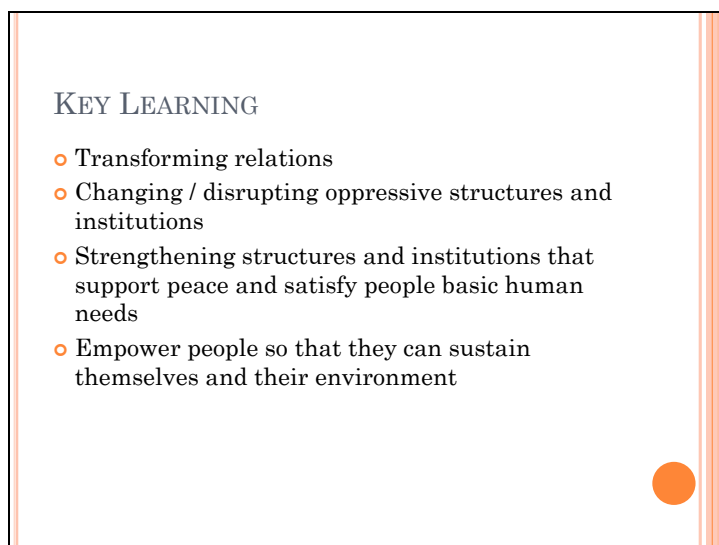
PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTIONS

- “Strategies to address root causes of deadly conflicts” – Carnegie Endowment Commission
- Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy:
 - Political peacebuilding – agreement and legal issues
 - Structural peacebuilding – structures and infrastuctures, culture of peace
 - Social peacebuilding – relationships, beliefs and values.

The slide features a title 'PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTIONS' in a serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list with one main bullet point and a sub-bulleted list. The main bullet point is '“Strategies to address root causes of deadly conflicts” – Carnegie Endowment Commission'. The sub-bulleted list is under the heading 'Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy:' and includes three items: 'Political peacebuilding – agreement and legal issues', 'Structural peacebuilding – structures and infrastuctures, culture of peace', and 'Social peacebuilding – relationships, beliefs and values.'. The slide has a decorative orange circle in the bottom right corner.

What do we mean by peacebuilding? I will mention a couple of quotes.

Slide 5

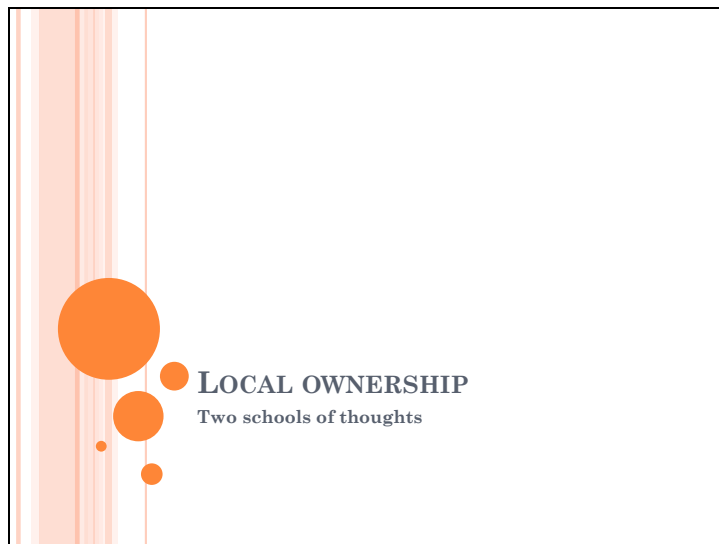


KEY LEARNING

- Transforming relations
- Changing / disrupting oppressive structures and institutions
- Strengthening structures and institutions that support peace and satisfy people basic human needs
- Empower people so that they can sustain themselves and their environment

The slide features a title 'KEY LEARNING' in a serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list with four main bullet points. The bullet points are: 'Transforming relations', 'Changing / disrupting oppressive structures and institutions', 'Strengthening structures and institutions that support peace and satisfy people basic human needs', and 'Empower people so that they can sustain themselves and their environment'. The slide has a decorative orange circle in the bottom right corner.

Slide 6



The notion of local ownership in the field of development is not new, but since the beginning of the 1990s, the idea remains at the forefront of development cooperation, but less so in the academic literature. In March 2, 2005, in Paris, heads of states, political figures, actors of multilateral and bilateral institutions demonstrated their resolve to more effective aid by signing the Paris Declaration, which stressed among other things, local ownership as a critical element of development aid. Prior to the Paris Declaration, the DAC/OECD, in its 1996 report “Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation,” advised that “sustainable development must be locally owned.” The advice has been adopted at least in policy documents by several development agencies and donor countries. However, the complexity of the notion and the debate it has ignited are fed on one hand by the ambiguity of the concept, and on the other by the fact there are several conflicting agendas and policy assumptions behind international interventions in situations of fragility and instability.

Helleiner, Gerry. 2000. *Towards Balance in Aid Relationship: External Conditionality, Local Ownership and Development*. Paper presented for Reality of Aid, International Advisory Committee meeting, San Jose, Costa Rica.

Lavergne, Réal. 2003. Local Ownership and Changing Relationships in Development Cooperation. Presented at CCIC/CIDA Dialogue "Local Ownership: Roles for Southern and Canadian Civil Society Organizations". March 20th, 2003. Canada.

Saxby, John. 2003. Local Ownership and Development Co-Operation - the Role of Northern Civil Society. An Issues paper Presented at CCIC/CIDA Dialogue "Local Ownership: Roles for Southern and Canadian Civil Society Organizations", March 20th, Canada. CCIC/CIDA.


There is a dearth in the literature on local ownership, particularly of international funded projects. Local ownership in the context of fragility and instability has been discussed through the lenses of security sector reforms; which is only one element of stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction. This dearth of literature can be explained by two main reasons: the cynicism that permeates among practitioners and some authors on ineffectiveness of all the speeches on local ownership; and the

fact that beyond policy recommendations, the operationalization of local ownership in measurable indicators has been a daunting task. This last issue is one of the key aims of this presentation. Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*. 13

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CROSSROADS: PATH ONE

- “Sustainable development... must be locally owned” (OECD/DAC 1996, p.13)
- Meaningful as long as it is not a goal to be achieved by foreign donors, but rather a means, an asset to build upon for the success of foreign interventions.
- Not a goal to be achieved by foreign donors, but a **means, an asset to build upon** (de Valk et al. 2004, Pouligny 2009, Reich 2006)



While the notion of local ownership has rallied development practitioners, there is no agreed-upon definition. There are two schools of thoughts on local ownership that offer a sharp contrast on what it means and implies. There are those who argue that the notion is meaningful as long as it is not a goal to be achieved by foreign donors, but rather a means, an asset to build upon for the success of foreign interventions. This implies that while the locus of ownership lies ultimately with the locals, foreign donors can facilitate, but not create it. For these authors, local ownership can be achieved but required that local stakeholders are involved in every aspects of the decision-making process and design and shared the desired outcomes.


De Valk, Apthorpe, and Guimaraes, *Local Ownership, Co-ownership and Capacity Building in Aid Projects: The Findings of a Comparative Study*; Pouligny, “Civil Society and Post-conflict Peacebuilding Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building ‘new Societies’”; Reich, “*Local Ownership*” in *Conflict Transformation Projects: Partnership, Participation or Patronage?*.

Brinkerhoff, “Where There’s Will, There’s a Way? Untangling Ownership and Politicalwill in Post-conflict Stability and Reconstruction Operations”; Killick, *Aid and the Political Economy of Policy Change*; Narten, “Dilemmas of Promoting ‘Local Ownership’: The Case of Postwar Kosovo.”

Slide 8

CROSSROADS: PATH TWO

- **A catch-all word** (Cornwall 2002, 2006, Chandoke 2003).
- **A practical euphemism** for donors exit strategies. (Vankovska 2006)
- A concept used to **legitimize and disguise** the **power asymmetry** (Crawford 2003, Stokke 1995).




The opposing schools of thoughts argue that local ownership has become a politically motivated, catch-all word rather than a genuine development concept that helps deliver what it promises; in other words, the rhetoric has surpassed any substance. Some authors in this school of thought see local ownership as a practical euphemism for exit strategies, as it provides foreign donors with the theoretical base for exiting. That argument is also shared by those who perceive local ownership as a concept used to legitimize and disguise the power asymmetry that is consubstantial to international assistance. In the same vein, other authors argue that, local ownership as a concept is very complex and cannot be observed, measured, thus making it elusive. But the multiple interpretations and lack of definitional clarity persist on the fact that local ownership is considered both as a principle and an outcome of international assistance for peace building.

Cornwall, “Historical Perspectives on Participation in Development”; Chandhoke, *The Conceits of Civil Society*; Scheye and Peake, “Unknotting Local Ownership.”
 Biljana, *Western Civil Society: Empowerment and Lessons Learned from the Balkans*; Crawford, “Partnership or Power? Deconstructing the ‘Partnership for Governancereform’ in Indonesia.”
 Mosely, Harrigan, and Toye, *Aid and Power: The World Bank and Policy-based Lending. Vol. I: Analysis and Policy Proposals*; Crawford, “Partnership or Power? Deconstructing the ‘Partnership for Governancereform’ in Indonesia”; Stokke, *Aid and Political Conditionality*.
 Boughton and Mourmonas, *Is Policy Ownership and Operational Concept?*

Slide 9

TAKE AWAY: WORKING DEFINITION

Local ownership is expressed when the **will** of local stakeholders is transformed into **support** for the project and sustain through the use of **existing and acquired capacities and resources**.




This definition implies a process and outcomes (local involvement and 3c)

Slide 10

TAKE AWAY : OPERATIONALIZING

An intimate link between processes and outcomes of local ownership.

- Process : Transformation of local will ->**Local involvement** -> Involvement of and interaction with and between local stakeholders
- Outcome: **Commitment, contribution** and improved **capacity**



- An attempt to operationalize local ownership.
- Facilitate commitment
- Secure the contribution
- Improve capacity:
- Managerial: planning, reporting, financial management, governance, fundraising, etc.
- Process oriented and advocacy: Participation, bottom-up and accountability mechanisms, adaptability and learning, innovation, etc

- Technical or project related. E.g.: youth livelihood, inclusive finance, value chain analysis.

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In my work, both research and practice looking at interventions in situations of fragility and reconstruction through the prism of local ownership, I see some challenges and risks, notably exclusion of masses, a reliance on elites with competing agenda, the difficulties to identify the local actors' motives and capacities, potential resentment, and conflicting priorities. These risks raise questions about the goals of these interventions as defined by donor countries and how they can be interpreted by local elites that may be implementing them or the majority of the local population that are expecting benefits.


In this section we will explore the various challenges and dilemmas posed when considering local ownership in international peacebuilding interventions. There are three main types of challenges:

- **Contextual**
- **Conceptual or Strategic**
- **Operational**

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CONTEXTUAL: LOCAL REALITIES IN COUNTRIES EMERGING FROM OR IN CONFLICT

- Capacity deficits (Government, civil society, business)
- Government lacks citizen trust and legitimacy
- Civil society forming or marred by tensions, coordination and alliance problems
- Violence: physical, structural, etc.
- International assistance runs the risk of antagonizing NGOs/CSOs and the government




Slide 13

CONCEPTUAL

Tensions between:

- The “West” -Western donors: “Liberal perspective” – Democracy – Market economy
- “The rest” - Orthodoxy “Conflict transformation” perspective



In his seminal work on local ownership, Dr. Timothy Donais captures and frames very well the conceptual challenges posed by local ownership in peacebuilding interventions. As argued by Donais, a discussion on local ownership of stabilization projects or those in situations of fragility cannot escape the tension between a) the liberal perspective of peace building and stabilization, which focuses on alleged international norms of democracy, individual rights and freedom, openness, political competition and free enterprise and b) the conflict resolution and transformation perspectives which focuses on local agency and bottom-up processes. A further expansion of Donais’s argument reveals several issues and risks related to local ownership of international interventions in situations of fragility and instability.

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DILEMMAS FROM THE WEST- LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

- **Goal:** Self-sustaining democracy – Rule of law- Market economy
- **Assumption:** 1) Liberal democracy, open economy and stabilization are mutually reinforcing 2) vacuum of authority, capacity and legitimacy which compel international to fill in.
- **Dilemmas/Risks:**
 1. **Democratization necessitates new changes to the political arrangements**, inviting different kinds of struggle by the elite that may resort to manipulation and in some cases intimidation or violence (e.g. South Sudan; Afghanistan, Somalia, etc.)
 2. **Trade-offs and tensions** between security, political and economic objectives. For example, in the short term, security priorities may actually undermine long term political objectives of democratic societies (war criminals rewarded with political positions)
 3. **Elite Capture** - a small group of elites capture the economic peace dividends without any incentives to create institutions and structures that will enable the majority to have access to these new opportunities
 4. “[T]he need for external intrusiveness vs. creating responsible self-government. Risk of alienating locals

The liberal perspective - The liberal tradition embraced by most Western donors views the ultimate goal of stabilization and related interventions as the achievement of a self-sustaining democratic country that respects the rule of law and ensures property rights, an open economy, and the security of its citizens. The United States for example views the attainment of this goal through progress in the following areas: security, governance and participation, humanitarian assistance and social-well-being, economic stabilization and infrastructure, as well as justice and reconciliation.

One key assumption drives this framework: 1) stabilization, liberal democracy and open markets reinforce each other.

The risks are:

The end states defined in this assumption, or at least the trade-offs they require, may not be appealing or relevant to local actors in the host country who will either truncate them during implementation or pursue them as long as the international community is paying, abandoning them as soon as the international community leaves, thus relapsing into instability.

Also, democratization necessitates new changes to the political arrangements, inviting different kinds of struggle by the elite that may resort to manipulation and in some cases intimidation. In addition to the potential destabilizing effects of democratization, there are existing trade-offs and tensions between security, political and economic objectives. For example, in the short term, security priorities may actually undermine long term political objectives of democratic societies.

In addition, the sudden infusion of resources and new opportunities without proper distribution mechanisms and processes, may reproduce the patterns of exclusion that are already driving the instability; these are situations whereby a small group of elites capture the economic peace dividends without any incentives to create institutions and structures that will enable the majority to have access to these new opportunities Mansfield and Snyder, “Incomplete Democratization and the Outbreak of Military Disputes.”

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RISKS FROM THE LOCALS PERSPECTIVE

- **Goal:** Facilitate an environment where local actors can build a peaceful, just and prosperous society
- **Assumptions:** a) People who have experienced the conflict are well placed to rebuild their society. b) locals know best what society they want for themselves, and are committed to see it through.
- **Dilemmas:**
 - They also imply some sort of consensus on what the locals want and envision for their society
 - How can we determine which locals reflect local interests?

The conflict resolution and transformation perspectives reject the premise of a universal set of norms to be imposed on a given society.

From these perspectives, peace building and reconstruction for that matter are bottom-up processes rooted in local norms, institutions and driven by locals themselves. In this case, the aim of reconstruction is “to nurture and create the political, economic and social space within which indigenous actors can identify, develop, and employ the resources necessary to build a peaceful, just and prosperous society.” Rather than locals adopting an externally imposed agenda, proponents of these perspectives view externals supporting a locally designed and driven reconstruction agenda. Two assumptions are at the core of these approaches to peace building.

Bush, “Beyond Bungee Cord Humanitarianism: Towards a Developmental Agenda for Peacebuilding.” 86

Laurie, *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform.*

These alternative perspectives put the locus of the initiative of the intervention and stabilization agenda in the hands of local stakeholders. They also imply some sort of consensus on what the locals want and envision for their society. That is, the citizenry is sufficiently organized into alliances or societal groups with discernible expectations in order to engage in a process of framing a shared vision and projects they can own. However, in a context marred by lack of trust, power asymmetry and exclusion as generally found in post-war situations, ensuring an inclusive and fair outcome of the consensus-building process is problematic.

Even if one concedes that, there is an emerging consensus on the agenda and that, locals have the initiative and control; it is still a reality that there is a lack of resources and capacity to implement such agenda. The question of whether locals have the capacity to implement a just, stable social order is still posed. Beyond this question, there is a more important one, which is: How can we determine which locals reflect local interests without the institutions to do so?

Donais, “Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-conflict Peacebuilding Processes.”

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In addition to these contextual and strategic challenges, researchers, practitioners and development agencies have been struggling with operational issues related to local ownership of international interventions. Issues related to relations between actors, the identification of local owners, analytical framework to assess and measure local ownership, and processes to facilitate its attainment.


In fact, local ownership implies a redefinition of relationships among stakeholders and the balance of power between international donors and recipients on one hand and civil society organizations, other organized groups (corporations, rebels, etc.) and the government on the other. However, the debate on local ownership of peacebuilding interventions in situation of fragility and instability brings important issues worth exploring: a) the notion of power difference (perceived or real) between local stakeholders and international implementers; b) the importance of local commitment; c) the issue of local capacity and; d) the question of local owners and the dynamics of power among them.

Moore et al., *Ownership in the Finnish Aid Programme*.

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POWER ASYMMETRY

- Power asymmetry that exists between donors and recipients stymies genuine partnership and effective participation of local stakeholders.
- As the result of that imbalance of power, local ownership amounts to locals accepting or “buying –in” the will of donors and their projects.

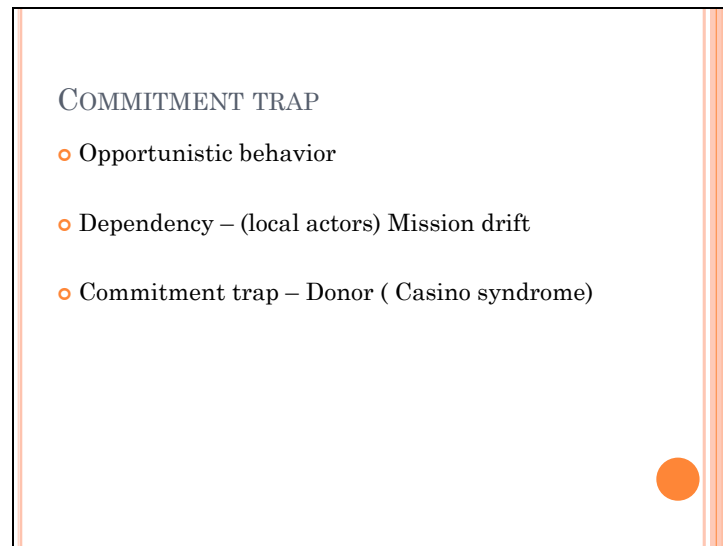


The concept of power asymmetry represents an important issue in the debate of local ownership in international funded projects in fragile states. The main critics of local ownership of international donors funded projects in general are based on the argument that the power asymmetry that exists between donors and recipients stymies genuine partnership and effective participation of local stakeholders. As the result of that imbalance of power, local ownership amounts to locals accepting or “buying –in”.

Rather than been considered from a fixed and presumably objective standpoint, the outcomes of the interactions result from the parties’ perception of their power, the power of others how they relate to each other and or the structure within which they operate. This understanding of power as a perceived notion and as a transformative capacity used by agents and structures to get compliance from others or shape their wants and desires, is the one adopted in this research. This understanding of power captures best the evolution and complexity that characterized the relationships among local stakeholders and between them and international actors. Ibid.

The will of donors and their projects. Crawford, “Partnership or Power? Deconstructing the ‘Partnership for Governancereform’ in Indonesia”; Fowler, “Partnerships in the New Policy Agenda for International Aid: Dead End or Light Ahead?”

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In the form of: **Opportunistic behavior – Dependency –**


Commitment is consubstantial to the visions, expectations and priorities of stakeholders. The notion of local ownership implies therefore that there is an alignment or compatibility in the vision and priorities of the reconstruction agenda or projects. However, as previously mentioned, at the heart of the question of local ownership and international assistance in general, there is inequality of resources and perceived asymmetrical power relations between international actors and local recipients. The inequality is further exacerbated in conflict situations, where there is a scarcity of resources pushing local stakeholders to seek for them. As a result, some local stakeholders adapt their priorities and mission to meet the requirements of the donors, without similar changes in their organizational structure and culture. In other words, they become opportunistic. It thus becomes difficult to separate local stakeholders who genuinely are willing to own the project from those whose sole purpose is to get hold of resources brought in by the project. This situation also poses the problem of designing incentive structure that will facilitate ownership by legitimate stakeholders, that is, those who share the vision and priorities of the donor-driven program and are willing to develop the capacity and muster resources for success.

Commitment trap for donors -(some people call the casino syndrome for donor) Staying with the hope that the next investment will yield the biggest payoff or “it will be stupid to leave now, while the end is insight.”

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THE CAPACITY CONUNDRUM: GLASS HALF
EMPTY OR HALF FULL

- Can they own all aspects of the projects (if relevant)?
- Leveraging local assets and resources
- Whose capacities are used or strengthened?
- Paternalism vs. Learning, co-creating


Capacity for ownership

In the United Nations terminology database, capacity building is defined as:

[a]process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organize their systems, resources and knowledge, all reflected in their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives.

There is the recognition of the importance of capacity and the necessity to develop it incrementally. Developing and strengthening the capacities of stakeholders both local and international is an important aspect for facilitating local ownership, as it helps locals contribute effectively to the success of the project and for international to learn from and improve. However, the notion of capacity building of locals feeds into the anthropomorphic. Unstable societies and those emerging from conflict are described in this case as ill and dysfunctional, therefore needing outside help. In practice, capacity building schemes designed on these assumptions may ignore the existence of local resources and knowledge, operating as if stabilization or reconstruction has to be implemented from scratch, thus running the risk of alienating locals <http://unterm.un.org/>, last accessed 11/20/ 2009.

Fukuda-Parr, Lopes, and Malik, *Capacity for Development*.


While necessary in some cases, the process of capacity development can be jeopardized if the “wrong” stakeholders are involved or the focus is more on formal stakeholders. In fact, there is always the issue of focusing on formal structures and institutions while excluding informal ones who may share the same goals and priorities as the donors, but lack the capacity and expertise to speak the language of the donors, e.g. English, result oriented, measurable goals, etc. There is equally the need to be cautious and constantly ask questions as to whether the process is exacerbating conflict or undermining legitimate structures and institutions.

Prendergast and Plumb, “Building Local Capacity: From Implementation to Peacebuilding.”

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ELITE CAPTURE

- Well connected, advantaged group misappropriate of resources.
- Externalities of imperative of local participation
- Imperative of demonstrating quick results
- Ignoring local power dynamics



Many donor agencies and international development organization have embraced the idea of local participation as a way to improve the effectiveness of aid. These development institutions view the top-down approach in decision making with local partners as risks that contribute to the misappropriation of project funds. This new shift of working directly with local actors to implement projects has also allowed the emergence of new frameworks such as Community Driven Development (CDD) adopted by the World Bank and UNDP, tools such Rapid and Participatory Rural Appraisal, and Community Youth –Mapping. All of these tools and frameworks aim at empowering project beneficiaries. The rationale behind this drive toward these bottom-up and community driven approaches is that the proximity to the issues provides project beneficiaries with relevant information, knowledge and an understanding that a remote actor would not have prior to the implementation of a project.

The intention is good, but there are risks:

- **Well connected, advantaged group misappropriate of resources.**
- **Imperative of demonstrating quick results**
- **Ignoring local power dynamics**

The “degree of impatience” created by the urge for quick results pushes the donors to skip a key element of participation which is the empowerment of the masses through information sharing and capacity building to hold leaders accountable.

Dutta, “Elite Capture: Concepts and Definitions: Bibliography with an Overview of the Suggested Literature”; Platteau and Gaspart, *Disciplining Local Leaders in Community-based Development*; Laffont and Tirole, “The Politics of Government Decision-making: A Theory of Regulatory Capture.”

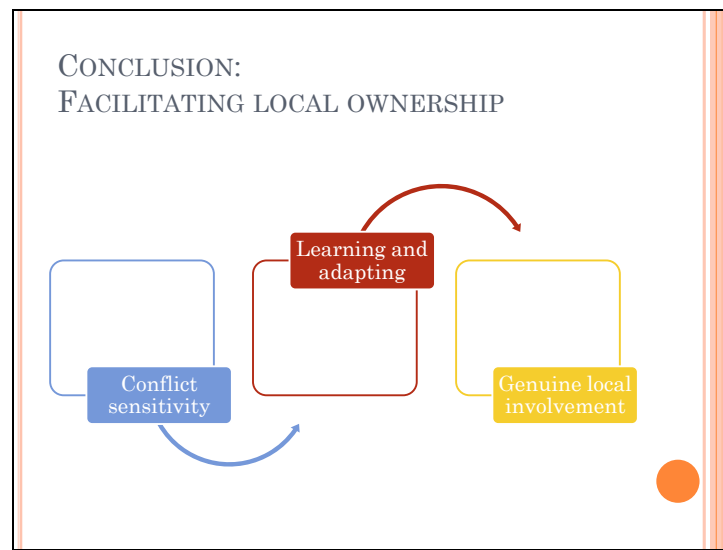
The policy discussion taken place at USAID around what is commonly called “USAID forward” illustrates this new shift.

Hoddinott et al., *Participation and Poverty Reduction: Issues, Theory, and New Evidence from South Africa*.

Transition to recommendations:

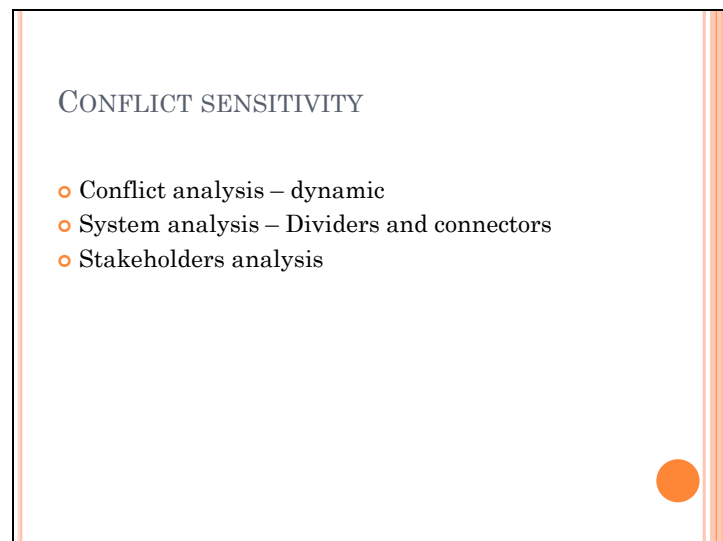
After exploring some of the challenges posed by local ownership of international peacebuilding interventions, I would like to turn our attention to what can be done to mitigate these challenges and risks. Obviously, there is no single magic activity or solutions. Instead, I will suggest some approaches and processes that have been used with relative success.

Slide 21



Local ownership, (that is the **will** of local stakeholders transformed into **support** for the project and sustained through the use of **existing and acquired capacities and resources**) can be facilitated. I suggest from my own experience working and researching on the topic, the following processes to consider:

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- A way of thinking about dividers and connectors is by using **SAVES**
- Do No Harm does not tell us specifically *what* to do in any situation - context still matters.
- What DNH does do is to guide us in how we think about our options.
- DNH helps us see more clearly what *not* to do and why one course of action is preferable to another
- DNH helps us identify why and where we have erred when we make a mistake
- Ideally, using DNH helps us see how to mitigate the mistake, reverse the mistake, or avoid the mistake in the first place

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LEARNING AND ADAPTING

- The importance of learning, however, goes beyond knowing what works well
- Learning is also a way to alter perceived power asymmetries between international interveners and local actors (Hannah Reich).
- Learning through monitoring and evaluation (Complexity-aware M&E)
- Learning appears to be a critical process that allows on one hand, adaptability and radical changes; and on the other hand, also transforms the nature of relationships among different stakeholders.



Unstable and conflict torn societies are complex and constantly changing which presents a challenge for projects. It is therefore critical for the project to be flexible and responsive to such a dynamic environment by integrating new learning and evolving contextual realities periodically during the implementation phase.

This criticism of the sector of development is also a clear recognition of the importance and necessity of learning in international development and particularly in interventions on complex context of instability and conflicts. The importance of learning, however, goes beyond knowing what works well. In her discussion of local ownership, Hannah Reich argues that learning is also a way to alter perceived power asymmetries between international interveners and local actors. She borrows the concept of “learning sites” from Norbert Ropers, which she refers to as:

... [T]he way in which different members of a peace constituency mutually learn from each other and ascertain their common ground. [...] The idea of learning sites can be seen as a first step towards establishing an equal partnership, in that it clarifies differences in attitudes, interests, values and even working styles between the different stakeholders.

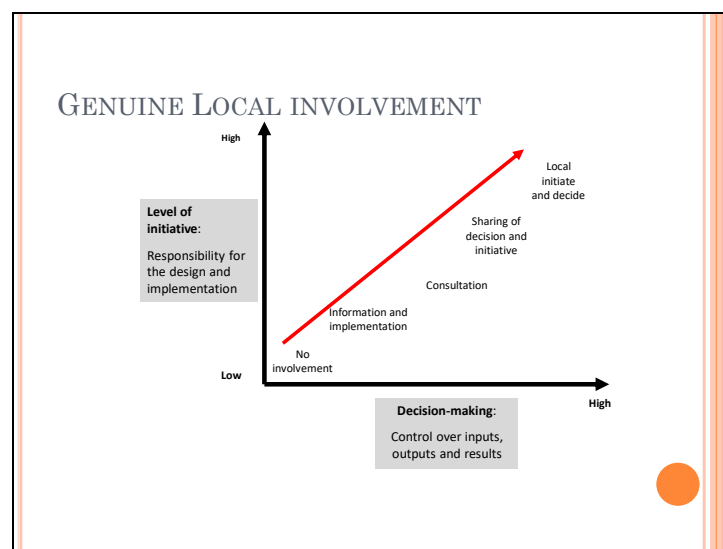
Ropers, “Ziviles Krisenmanagement: Handlungsebenen, Arbeitsfelder Und Zeitperspektiven,” 43. Cited by Reich, 2006.

Reich, “*Local Ownership*” in *Conflict Transformation Projects: Partnership, Participation or Patronage?*, 24–25.

This last point is relevant to the discussions of local ownership, given the nature of actors and the complexity of the context of fragility within which these actors interact.

More on the distinction between Organizational Learning and Institutional learning see: Van Brabant, Koenraad. 1997. Op. Cit.

Slide 24



Building on the work of Hart, Patenam and others in the development world:

The influence on the decision-making process, which translates into level of control and access to inputs, outputs and results; and

The level of initiative or responsibility local stakeholders have in the design and implementation of the project:

- No local involvement: The decision-making and the initiative and its implementation are the sole responsibility of outsiders (donors and/or international contractors)
- **Information and implementation:** Local stakeholders are informed about the initiative and assigned a specific role in the implementation
- **Consultation:** Local stakeholders are consulted and their advice influences the design of the project, but they have no direct influence over the decision-making
- **Locals share the initiative and decision-making:** Local stakeholders are involved in project design, execution, and funding
- **Local stakeholders initiate the project and control the project design, execution, funding, and expansion/continuation**

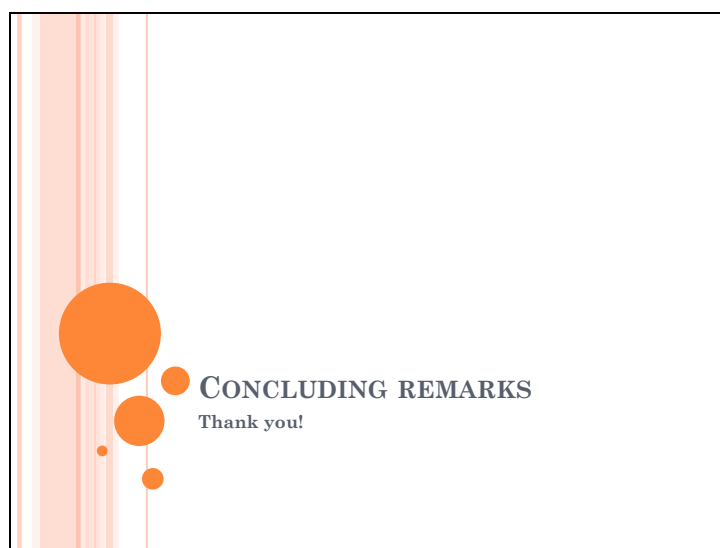
(Three C)

All these different interpretations of people's participation represent in fact different situations in which participants in a project or program find themselves. Depending on the power they possess (power in the form of resources, skills, capacities, and legitimacy), the objectives of the project, participants may be informants, passive beneficiaries, engaged stakeholders or partners at different phases of the project or program.

Because participation in its various forms can be liberating or disempowering, it is therefore not a neutral process. When it is genuine, it provides local stakeholders with more control and power to decide how to address their needs and expectations; when it is "instrumental," local stakeholders have to fit into the frameworks and structures decided by the donors. It appears that power relations are at the heart of the concept of participation. Participation is a dynamic process where power and control over resources which are the currency of the process shift in the course of a project or program; and consequently the nature of participation varies during the lifespan of that particular project or program.

See Sinwell 2008, Jenning 2000, Bohman 1996, and Freire 1972.
See Freidmann 1992.

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As previously discussed, peacebuilding interventions in unstable or situations of fragility imply by essence the introduction of new resources, new capacities, new ways of interacting and relating but more importantly they create new working relationships and rapport between local stakeholders and outsiders. These interventions may exacerbate existing tensions, power imbalances or create new ones among local stakeholders or between locals and outsiders.

Looking at the interactions between international donors, their contractors or implementing agents and local stakeholders, through the processes of **genuine local involvement or participation** and **learning** provides new insights and perspectives that help better understand the power dynamics at play during interventions in situations of fragility and instability. These processes are not new,

but identifying and implementing them with intent, may help facilitate local ownership in international peacebuilding interventions.

Thank you.

I look forward to your questions and comments.