

Introduction

Post conflict peace-building programmes around the world have faced insurmountable challenges. There are situations where successful post-conflict peace-building activities crumble within short periods, as state actors were not adequately prepared to take over responsibilities relating to the consolidation of durable peace. There are also cases where politically and economically stable states return to conflict once foreign aid is reduced and international experts leave (Filipov, 2006). International peace-building is often conducted in arenas already occupied by multiple actors, since peace-builders are rarely the only international presence in post-conflict contexts. Humanitarian aid workers are typically among the first responders in situations of displacement, but their interventions frequently overlap with those of development agencies, international organizations, and financial institutions. As Filipov (2006) notes, this overlap creates a complex operational environment where coordination becomes critical. Similarly, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC, 2016) emphasizes that without effective collaboration among actors, humanitarian responses risk becoming fragmented—addressing immediate survival needs while neglecting the structural foundations required for sustainable peace.

Hinds (2015) points out that a strong relationship exists between humanitarian aid and developmental aid, and there is need for in-depth analysis to understand such relationship. According to this study, humanitarian aid efforts run the danger of being ineffective and unsustainable in the absence of key engagement and improved alignment. Therefore, the need for a thorough analysis is both timely and urgent. Similarly, DuBois (2018) is of the opinion that humanitarian aid is part of development aid, provided during or after conflicts. He further stresses that humanitarian aid involves short-term programmes, methodologies and operational objectives to meet the urgent needs of people

in distress, but when such assistance occurs over a longer course of time to meet the same needs, it is translated to be post-conflict peace-building.

In contrast, scholars such as Jeans, Thomas & Castillo (2016) differ in their views on the relationship between humanitarian aid and development aid, claiming that these concepts are two separate entities. For Jeans, Thomas & Castillo (2016), humanitarian aid is an organized response in order to strengthen local systems to accountably provide essential social services and prepare for future crises. Development aid, on the other hand, concentrates on long-term approaches to deal with the root causes of poverty and vulnerability. This involves initiatives to change political, social and economic systems to improve communities' ability to adjust and withstand shock in response to long-term challenges. These can be achieved by the right mix of humanitarian, development, and peace approaches, critical in every society affected by conflict. Also, Kittaneh & Stolk (2018) align with this line of thought by advocating for the implementation of a 'mix approach, which blends the activities of humanitarian aid delivery and development programmes in conflict ridden zones. The authors believe that the mix could provide substantial opportunities for the enhancement of both immediate responses and longer-term outcomes.

Humanitarian aid and peacebuilding in conflict affected societies have opulent goals, yet there is still a persistent gap between their theoretical goals and actual results. While post-conflict peace building focuses on long-term structural change and reconstructing future societies, humanitarian aid is primarily intended to fulfil immediate needs and preserve human dignity during conflict. However, their successful integration is frequently hampered by differing mandates and techniques, ill-conceived plans and bad execution by various stakeholders.

Conceptual Clarification

Humanitarian Aid

According to Development Initiatives (2019), humanitarian aid refers to actions undertaken by organizations that are intended to alleviate extensive human suffering within the borders of a sovereign State. It can be defined as the assistance provided for the purposes of saving lives, alleviating suffering and upholding human dignity during and after crisis or natural disaster, as well as to equip the people withstand future occurrences (Ada & Abdullahi, 2021). Humanitarian aid is guided by four key principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence as affirmed by UN General Assembly resolution and enshrined in numerous humanitarian standards and guidelines (Development Initiatives, 2019).

According to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs {FDFA} (2011), the humanitarian principles can be conceived as follows:

- i. **Principle of Humanity:** This principle requires that the suffering of internally displaced persons be addressed in all its forms wherever found. While preventing or mitigating the impact of internal displacement, affected persons must be treated with dignity, and be seen as human beings—not just some vulnerable, hopeless victims of circumstances requiring assistance. (FDFA, 2011).
- ii. **Principle of Neutrality:** This policy requires that in the course of protecting and assisting internally displaced persons or providing services, humanitarian actors must maintain neutrality and not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, ethnic, religious or ideological nature (FDFA, 2011).
- iii. **Principle of Impartiality and Non-discrimination:** In implementing humanitarian action targeting internally displaced populations, it must be carried out based on need alone, giving priority

to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions based on ethnicity, indigene, gender, religious belief, social class or political persuasion (FDFA, 2011).

iv. Principle of Independence: Humanitarian agencies, whether local or international, are required by this policy to act independently and must never knowingly or through negligence allow themselves, or their employees, to be used to gather information of a politically, militarily or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian (FDFA, 2011).

Maurer (2019) gives an in-depth description of humanitarian aid with the postulation that humanitarian actors are not peace builders, but they are neutral, impartial, independent actors implementing humanitarian action which is distinct from political agendas.

Peace-building

Peace-building gained prominence by Boutros-Ghali - the then secretary general of the United Nations, in his 1992 “An Agenda for Peace” presentation. Boutros-Ghali (1992) states clearly that the peace-building processes include a wide range of activities carried out by Non-Governmental Organizations, international financial institutions and development agencies as well as local and national actors, covering a whole gamut of ventures to ensure prevention of war, or the healthy recovery of war devastated States.

According to the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies {KIIPS}, peace-building are activities done in society, which aim at resolving injustice in non-violent ways and to transform the cultural and structural conditions that generate deadly or destructive conflict. It revolves around developing constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. The process includes violence prevention; conflict management, resolution, or transformation; and post-conflict reconciliation or trauma healing before, during, and

after any given case of violence (KIIPS, 2018). As such, peace-building is a multi-disciplinary cross-sector technique or method that becomes strategic when it works over the long run and at all levels of society to establish and sustain relationships among people locally and globally and thus engenders sustainable peace. Peace-building activities therefore address the root or potential causes of violence, create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution, and stabilize society politically and socio-economically (Coning, 2013).

It is pertinent to note that the conceptualization of peace-building varies, with some definitions specifying what activities fall within the scope of peace-building or restricting peace-building to post-conflict interventions (Hazen, 2007). However, common to all definitions is the agreement that peace-building involves the improvement of human co-existence. In this sense, peace-building includes a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society at the community, national, and international levels to address the root causes of violence. While some scholars use the term to refer to only post-conflict or post-war contexts, others use the term more broadly to refer to any stage of conflict. In the same vein, Keating & Knight (2004) postulate that methods included in peace-building vary depending on the situation and the agent of peace-building. Successful peace-building activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace; reconcile opponents; prevent conflict from restarting; integrate civil society, create rule of law mechanisms; and address underlying structural and societal issues.

Furthermore, peace-building can be conceptualized into pre-conflict (Keating & Knight, 2004) and post-conflict peace-building (Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell, & Sitea, 2007), which is presented below:

i. Pre-conflict peace-building: Keating & Knight (2004) state that pre-conflict peace-building interventions aim to prevent the start of violent conflict. It includes efforts such as diplomatic, economic development, social, educational, health, legal and security sector reform programs, in

addressing potential sources of instability and violence. Keating & Knight (2004) note that this type of peace-building effort aims to manage, mitigate, resolve and transform central aspects of the conflict through official diplomacy; as well as through civil society peace processes and informal dialogue, negotiation, and mediation. Pre-conflict peace-building addresses economic, social and political root causes of violence and fosters reconciliation to prevent the return of structural and direct violence. Pre-conflict peace-building are efforts that aim to change beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to transform the short and long-term dynamics between individuals and groups toward a more stable, peaceful coexistence. Peace-building is an approach to an entire set of interrelated efforts that support peace (Keating & Knight, 2004).

ii. Post-conflict Peace-building: Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell, & Sitea (2007) divide post-conflict peace-building into three dimensions, that is, stabilizing the post-conflict zone, restoring State institutions, and dealing with social and economic issues. Activities within the first dimension reinforces State stability and discourage former combatants from returning to war (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, or DDR). The second-dimension activities build State capacity to provide basic public goods and increase state legitimacy. While programs in the third dimension are geared towards the ability of societies to manage conflicts peacefully and promote socio-economic development (Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell, & Sitea, 2007). The activities of post-conflict peace-building also include reconciling opponents; prevent conflict from restarting; integrate civil society; create rule of law mechanisms; and address underlying structural and societal issues. To accomplish these goals, peace-building must address functional structures, emotional conditions and social psychology, social stability, rule of law and ethics, and cultural sensitivities (Nitze, 2012).

Boutros-Ghali (1992) insists that post-conflict peace-building encompasses disarmament of combatants, procurement of political and economic concessions to stabilize the State, development of

infrastructure, and consolidation of the legal, financial, and political systems are just part of the focal points that undergo changes in the years immediately following the peace agreements. The main mission is to identify and support structures which will strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Branczik (2004) notes that the key part of peace accord in the aftermath of war is external development assistance to reconstruct a country's infrastructure, institution and economy. This requires reconstruction of properties and infrastructures, transition to normal security conditions, a functional judiciary to enforce the rule of law, governance and government services, democratization, economic development and local capacity building.

Theoretical Framework

Conflict Transformation Theory (CTT)

This study is rooted in the framework of Conflict Transformation Theory (CTT), which provides a thorough method for comprehending and resolving the underlying structures of ongoing conflict. Conflict transformation places more emphasis on long-term changes to the relationships, attitudes, and social structures that underlie conflict than conflict resolution, which prefers to concentrate on coming to an agreement or settlement (Lederach, 1995; 2003). According to one of the main proponents of this philosophy, John Paul Lederach, conflict can be viewed as an avenue for constructive change rather than just an issue to be solved. Lederach (1997) asserts that conflict transformation entails changing the very structures and processes that give rise to conflict in order to address its root causes. According to this perspective, peace-building is a continuous process that involves local capacity for change and transformation rather than a distinct stage that occurs after a conflict. Because it emphasizes local ownership, inclusive engagement, and the sustainability of peacekeeping actions, conflict transformation theory is especially pertinent to studies of humanitarian

aid and peace-building. According to the thesis, sustainable peace must arise from within impacted communities by active involvement; it cannot be imposed externally (Lederach, 1997).

Furthermore, Miall (2004) highlights conflict transformation's dual focus on process and structure, which aims to change both the current dynamics of conflict and the underlying factors that give rise to it. It is set apart from other peace-related concepts. This implies that, when it comes to humanitarian aid, interventions should be considerate of the dynamics of local conflicts focused on establishing long-term peace capacities rather than just easing immediate suffering. Similarly, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2011) asserts that various levels of society; top-level leadership, mid-level institutions, and grassroots actors must all be involved in conflict transformation, while dealing with intricate political and social realities.

While the discourse around peace-building has been greatly influenced by Conflict Transformation Theory, especially as it was developed by Lederach (1997), Miall (2004), and Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2011), several academics have provided critical insights into its underlying presuppositions. Chandler (2010) contends that when externally motivated actors assert that they are promoting local empowerment while enforcing liberal standards, conflict transformation and related normative approaches may unintentionally perpetuate neo-colonial power dynamics. Pugh (2005) criticizes the economics of peace-building in a similar way, cautioning that market-oriented initiatives and donor-driven goals can reinforce inequality rather than change it. International peace-builders' operational culture is questioned by Autesserre (2014), who points out that even when practitioners use participatory terminology, their approaches frequently stay technical and divorced from the lived reality of local communities. Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013) support a "hybrid peace" approach that is consistent with conflict transformation in that it criticizes models of peace that are imposed externally and promotes inclusive, context-sensitive tactics. This bolsters the idea that

humanitarian aid needs to be incorporated into more comprehensive, transformative peace-building frameworks. Finally, Newman (2009) warns that conflict transformation can be unduly idealistic and occasionally underestimate the significance of power imbalances, elite interests, and the political economy of post-conflict settings.

These criticisms highlight the need for more critical engagement with context, power, and practice in peace-building initiatives, without categorically rejecting the concepts of conflict transformation. Therefore, Conflict Transformation Theory offers a strong analytical framework for investigating the ways in which humanitarian aid can help cultures that are prone to conflict both immediately and over time. It urges a move away from technological, band-aid fixes and toward systemic and relational reforms that lay the groundwork for lasting peace.

By combining critical viewpoints on humanitarian aid in peace-building situations with conflict transformation theory, this study offers a theoretical contribution. The role of humanitarian aid in this transformative agenda is still poorly understood, despite the fact that existing literature places a strong emphasis on structural change and local ownership. This study reframes humanitarian aid as a potential catalyst for sustainable peace rather than just an emergency response by putting forth the idea of transformative humanitarianism. By critically evaluating the underlying presumptions of participatory aid models, it advances a paradigm that harmonizes humanitarian action with the more profound objectives of conflict transformation, further contributing to discussions on the "local turn."

Empirical Review

A critical analysis of the fragmented environment in which development, humanitarian aid, and peace-building programs function may be found in Korver's 2020 essay, "Peace-building at the Intersection with Development and Humanitarian Aid". According to Korver, these sectors frequently operate in silos because of different organizational cultures, financing sources, and

mandates, even when their goals and operational settings are similar. According to Korver (2020), development initiatives concentrate on long-term institutional and economic progress, peace-building seeks to lessen violence and promote reconciliation, while humanitarian aid usually attends to urgent needs such food, housing, and medical attention.

However, a lack of cooperation between these sectors may result in gaps in service delivery and redundant efforts. Funding systems, for example, frequently force organizations to choose between long-term development and emergency help, resulting in arbitrary boundaries that may not accurately represent the complicated realities on the ground. A change in organizational mindsets and funding models is necessary to support integrated strategies that address immediate needs while laying the foundation for long-term peace and development. The essay highlights the need for integrated approaches that combine the strengths of each sector. Korver advocates for partnerships that can lead to more sustainable peace and development outcomes, arguing that intersectional peace-building where humanitarian, development, and peace-building actors work collaboratively—can better serve communities in conflict zones. Korver concludes by advocating for a revised framework that cuts over conventional sectorial lines and supports an all-encompassing strategy for peace-building that makes use of the connections between development and humanitarian aid. This viewpoint emphasizes the significance of systemic integration in attaining sustainable peace, making it especially pertinent for academic conversations evaluating the relationship between humanitarian aid and peace-building.

In her insightful critique of the compartmentalized character of development, peace-building, and humanitarian relief, Korver (2020) argues for further integration through what she refers to as "intersectional peace-building." Despite the strength of her normative argument, there is a significant academic gap in the absence of operational frameworks showing how such integration can be accomplished in practice. Furthermore, the essay does not adequately address institutional dynamics

and power imbalances that could impede cooperation. By examining these gaps through a conflict transformation perspective, this study aims to expand on Korver's views and provide a more practical and grounded understanding between the relationship between humanitarian aid and peace-building.

Stoddard (2011), in a study titled 'Peace Terms: Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peace-building', discusses how humanitarian aid and peace-building have emerged as independent industries, while frequently overlapping in conflict-affected places. The study employs a descriptive, document-based methodology to show how peace-building concentrates on long-term initiatives to address the underlying causes of conflict and foster societal healing, whereas humanitarian aid largely addresses acute crises by delivering necessities like food, medical treatment, and shelter. According to Stoddard, both sectors frequently work in the same communities, but they have different goals and deadlines. She contends that because both disciplines run the danger of working against each other or duplicating efforts, this divergence has reduced the overall efficacy of interventions and led to gaps in service delivery. According to her, a lack of a cohesive approach may result in misunderstandings regarding the roles of various sectors, which would lessen their influence and the sustainability of the results.

Although this work makes a significant contribution to conceptual clarity, it mostly falls short of providing workable solutions for overcoming the operational gap between peace-building and humanitarian aid. The lack of integrative frameworks or context-specific models that could assist balance the long-term objectives of peace-building with the immediate need of relief represents a vacuum in the literature. Stoddard's research, in my opinion, offers a helpful starting point for comprehending how institutional boundaries can construct better coordinated reactions in conflict situations. Moving past definitional division and toward practical insights that can guide field cooperation is necessary, though.

In her paper, “Addressing the Gap between Relief and Development”, Ferris (2013) thoroughly reviews the literature on the distinction between development practice and humanitarian relief. The analysis finds a persistent operational divide between long-term peace-builders and short-term emergency actors. Despite the fact that many academic works make a distinction between these areas, Ferris points out that not much has been done to alter the realities that communities facing these disjointed initiatives must contend with. The study highlights the conundrum that frequently faces practitioners and donor organizations when they must decide between promoting developmental objectives and providing immediate and urgent relief. Ferris contends that this forced division leads to a gray area where one strategy finishes and the other starts, reducing influence and producing inefficiency. Although organizations make policy boundaries between development and humanitarian activities, impacted people and communities do not go through such seamless changes. They have changing, overlapping, and frequently long-term needs.

According to Ferris, these distinctions are institutional creations that are often maintained by rigid donor funding systems rather than being innate to the needs of communities. The outcome is what she refers to as a "muddled middle", where neither sustainable development initiatives nor emergency relief are completely prepared to address changing local situations. Ferris proposes flexible funding plans and increased emphasis on community-centered initiatives that can simultaneously address systemic and acute vulnerabilities to address this.

Ferris offers a coherent critique of the gap between practice and policy in the humanitarian-development relationship. Her research does not, however, offer specific operational frameworks or workable solutions. Building on Ferris findings, creating integrated operational frameworks that coordinate development and humanitarian activities is pertinent. This entails putting in place synchronized program deadlines, forming flexible financial pools that may adjust to shifting demands,

and forming cooperating planning committees between development and humanitarian organizations. By implementing these strategies, we may go beyond simply recognizing the issue and actively creating solutions that promote a smoother transition from alleviation to development.

Findings

The assessment reveals that humanitarian aid and peacebuilding are deeply interconnected yet remain insufficiently aligned in practice. A critical finding is that humanitarian intervention, though effective in alleviating immediate human suffering, often neglects the conflict dynamics that determine whether aid stabilizes or destabilizes fragile contexts. As Anderson (1999) argues in the Do No Harm framework, poorly designed relief can unintentionally fuel divisions, a reality still evident in contemporary crises. This underscores that humanitarian action, if not conflict-sensitive, risk limiting its contribution to sustainable peace.

Another key pattern emerging is that humanitarian and peacebuilding actors frequently operate in institutional silos, with overlapping mandates but weak coordination mechanisms. This fragmentation leads to duplication of efforts, competition for visibility, and diluted impact on both survival and stability outcomes (Barnett, 2011).

The analysis further demonstrates that donor-driven funding models—structured around short-term emergency cycles—undermine adaptability and discourage innovation. Aid projects are often forced to prioritize immediate outputs over systemic outcomes, thereby constraining their capacity to contribute to longer-term peace dividends (OECD, 2020).

In addition, the findings indicate that externally designed aid models, when imposed without sufficient engagement with local peace infrastructures, can marginalize indigenous mechanisms of reconciliation and conflict resolution. This not only weakens social cohesion but also erodes community ownership of peace processes (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013).

The study also finds that the absence of integrated monitoring and evaluation frameworks prevents a holistic assessment of both relief effectiveness and peace impacts. Humanitarian success is still largely measured in terms of delivery speed and volume, while peacebuilding impact remains under-assessed, leaving critical linkages invisible.

Ultimately, while cross-sector collaboration is increasingly recognized in policy discourse, it remains weakly institutionalized in practice. Partnerships between humanitarian, development, and

peacebuilding actors are ad hoc and personality-driven rather than systemic, limiting their sustainability (ICRC, 2016; Filipov, 2018).

Together, these findings reveal that humanitarian aid has significant latent potential to advance peacebuilding, but this potential remains underutilized due to structural, institutional, and conceptual gaps. Realizing this potential requires reimagining humanitarian practice as not only life-saving, but also peace-supportive.

Conclusion

This assessment highlights the relationship between humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. Saving lives, alleviating suffering, and protecting human dignity both during and after crises or natural disaster are the main goals of humanitarian aid, which also aims to increase resistance against such incidents in the future. Its operations are directed by the values of independence, impartiality, neutrality, and humanity.

Contrarily, peace-building refers to a wide range of initiatives carried out by national and local actors, international financial institutions, development agencies, and non-government organizations (NGOs) in order to deter violence or aid the reconstruction of states that have been impacted by war. Peace-building initiatives can be carried out either before or after a conflict breaks out (pre-conflict or post-conflict, respectively).

Despite working independently across global networks, these two professions are conceptually and methodologically comparable. While humanitarian aid concentrates on giving immediate relief by meeting basic necessities like food, housing, and medical treatment, peace-building seeks to promote economic stability and long-term prospects for communities. Through a critical evaluation of pertinent literature, the results of this work validate these differences and relationships.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made in this study, the following recommendations appears necessary:

- i. Create Conflict-Sensitive, Adaptive Aid Frameworks: Humanitarian efforts should incorporate conflict transformation principles from the inception, not just after a war or disaster. To make sure that interventions don't perpetuate local power disparities or systemic violence, aid actors must perform conflict and power analyses at every level of the program cycle. Simultaneously, this promotes harmony while addressing needs.
- ii. Establish Humanitarian–Peace-building Synergy Units (HPSUs) inside international organizations or consortiums, made up of experts, to jointly plan, carry out, and assess aid initiatives. This would provide a structural solution to the practice–policy divide, bridging the "operational framework" gap.
- iii. Fluid, Multiple-Mandate Sources of Funding: The current structure of aid is inflexible, with money divided between development and emergency relief. Introduce donor structures that allow for sequenced, tiered, and adaptive funding—allocations that vary as conflict dynamics alter. This makes it possible to respond and transform at the same time.
- iv. Humanitarian-peace stakeholders should incorporate Local Peace Infrastructures into aid Design, rather than using aid models that were created externally. Work with local peace actors (such as youth/women's organizations, mediators, and traditional leaders), and instead of displacing the subsisting peace capacities, aid should strengthen them. This promotes resilience and sustainability, both of which are critical to peace-building.
- v. Humanitarian-peace technical actors – including UN agencies, humanitarian-peace-building consortiums, academic institutions, MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) experts should collaborate to develop a toolkit that monitors both relief effectiveness and peace impact. This would

include local conflict sensitivity indicators, peace dividends tracking, and institutional learning protocols—bridging the research–implementation gap.

vi. Institutionalize cross-sector collaboration mechanisms: Humanitarian governance players, such as international NGOs, donor agencies, UN bodies and national governments, should take the initiative to formalize collaboration among humanitarian aid workers, development practitioners, and peace-builders. This can be achieved by developing collaborative planning platforms, integrated coordination bodies, and common monitoring frameworks. Such processes ensure that immediate relief operations are in line with long-term development and peace-building plans, resulting in more coherent and long-lasting results.