

## **How to support peaceful, inclusive change: Research and evidence programme**

Conciliation Resources, International Alert and Saferworld are working together on a three-year programme, funded by DFID's Global Security Rapid Analysis (GSRA) programme, to provide evidence-informed policy and programming lessons and recommendations to DFID, the UK Government and other peace, security and development actors. The programme started on 1 May 2017 and will run till March 2020.

### **Themes and link to DFID and UK Government priorities**

Conciliation Resources' work will inform and help shape the implementation of DFID's Building Stability Framework by examining how conflict resolution mechanisms and processes, including peace processes (Building block 3) can support progress across the four building blocks of the framework, in particular in building fairer power structures (Building block 1) and more effective and legitimate formal and informal institutions (Building block 4) in transitions from war to peace. It will ask what kinds of external support and engagement can help the shift from short-term power-sharing to longer-term political inclusion. It will help DFID to think and act beyond the state, to sub-national and cross-border initiatives, and how best to partner with civil society. Our work will look at:

- **how to support peace and transition processes to deliver inclusive outcomes:** negotiating trade-offs between inclusion and stability; relationships between sub-state and national political settlement processes
- **how to support armed actors' transition out of violence:** push and pull factors for combatants; pathways to peace talks in ongoing conflict
- **how to support gender-sensitive conflict analysis and programming in practice:** implementing gender-sensitive peacebuilding; practical guidance for gender-sensitive conflict analysis

**Theme:** *Pathways out of violence for armed groups*

**Sub-theme:** *Comparative learning – Afghanistan*

### **Objective**

To have identified entry points to facilitate progress towards dialogue between the National Unity Government (NUG) and the Taliban; develop 'inward' comparative learning to inform efforts to support progress on the respective entry points (Afghanistan); develop 'outward' comparative learning on how to provide practical support for engaging armed groups in peace talks more broadly (global).

### **Provisional research questions**

- What are the potential entry points to facilitate progress towards dialogue between the Taliban and the NUG?<sup>1</sup>
- What can experiences from previous peace talks in Afghanistan and globally tell us about options for progress in Afghanistan?
- What external factors encourage or discourage progress towards talks – for example sanctions on the Taliban?
- How might the nature and shape of talks in Afghanistan affect their outcome, in terms of the content of the peace deal and prospects for implementation?
- How can peace talks between the Taliban and the NUG balance priorities of ending violence and advancing an inclusive political settlement?

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<sup>1</sup> Lines of inquiry will be developed consultatively as part of the project methodology, but initial suggestions include models for supporting: intra-Taliban dialogue; intra-civil society dialogue; intra-NUG dialogue; developing an agenda for talks; modalities for talks (e.g. principle or position bargaining) and for support architecture; exploring sequencing options (e.g. regarding ceasefire); mediation and mediation support options; options to develop principles for talks.

- What do efforts towards peace talks in Afghanistan tell us about other contexts?

## **Main activities and outputs**

### **Year 1**

- **Consultative research** to assess previous efforts to support dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghanistan Government, the current diplomatic landscape, UK Government priorities for dialogue, and potential models for progress towards talks
- **Field visit** to Afghanistan to investigate key in-country perspectives on entry-points and barriers to progress on dialogue (to be confirmed pending risk assessment)
- **Scoping paper** identifying three potential entry points for progress on dialogue, and exploring how comparative and expert learning could help inform pathways for progress on each, including options for external support

### **Year 2**

- **Expert workshops (x3)** to interrogate pathways for progress on respective entry points for dialogue in Afghanistan, bringing together designated and relevant expertise (policy and practice) from Afghanistan, from other contexts and from UK Government. Location and participants to be confirmed, depending on entry points for dialogue identified and risk analysis
- **Analysis and learning** on entry points for dialogue, drawing on workshop discussions
- **Production of learning materials** on options for progress and for practical support
- **Sharing learning** among targeted audiences, including HMG through print and digital dissemination and uptake activities, in-country and globally

## **Timeline**

### **Year 1 – 2017-18**

- September – October: Recruit specialist consultant and advisory team
- November: Consultative research
- December: Field visit
- January – February: Scoping Paper – writing
- March: Scoping Paper – publication and dissemination/sharing with HMG and others

### **Year 2 – 2018-19**

- April – May: Expert workshops X 3: consultative design
- June – August: Expert workshops X 3: convening
- September – November: Analysis and learning
- December: Production of learning materials
- January – February: Sharing learning among targeted audiences

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