INTRODUCTION:

The concept of "Working with Conflict" has gained much interest and popularity in Afghanistan, especially in the last three years. Afghanistan, suffering from gigantic problems and adversities following the Russian invasion and the current civil war, is considered to be a country that can benefit from international peace efforts and expertise. The majority of Afghan people are in severe need of greater awareness to help them live a better and conflict-free life in future.

The role of NGOs and aid agencies in strengthening peace in Afghanistan as well as mobilizing people with developmental approaches is significant. Aid, if used properly, can efficiently serve in support to peace. The efforts made so far by aid agencies, though little, have been very encouraging and valuable. The Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) has been the pioneer in this. Since 1993, NCA has been significantly involved in launching programs for peace; and ACBAR, for its part, has had much interest in this relatively new initiative. ACBAR has conducted several meetings/workshops. For example, the 1995 Conflict Resolution Workshop.

Very recently, NCA, in its continuous support to peace and development, undertook another step. NCA organized a resident workshop on Working with Conflict in Swat, NWFP 14-31 October 1996. The workshop was facilitated by Simon Fisher and Steve Williams from "Responding to Conflict (RTC)", Birmingham, UK. The workshop was participated by 20 staff members of 11 agencies.

Following the completion of NCA's "Working With Conflict" Training Course in Swat, ACBAR, intending to enhance the importance of conflict management skills to enable aid agencies to effectively address the conflict affecting their activities, organized a one-day workshop for a number of NGOs and UN agencies. Some 25 people from 13 agencies participated in the workshop. Simon Fisher and Steve Williams, from RTC, were invited to facilitate the workshop.

AIM:
The aim of the workshop was to provide the participants with a view of the role aid agencies can play while working in a conflict situation; as well as identifying and enhancing the importance of skills to analyze and work with conflict.
THE SESSION:
The session started on 8:30 am. The participants were first briefed on different aspects of conflict; and four small groups formed and time allocated for discussion.

After the coffee break, the groups reported back on their discussions to the whole group. Analytical discussions, both in plenary and small groups, continued up to lunch. After lunch, more detailed analyses were made about conflict, the conflict affected population, and the spectrum of strategic options, etc.

The workshop adjourned at 3:00 pm.

DISCUSSIONS:
The following three topics were raised:

. Why should donors and aid agencies take conflict seriously?
. What are the options for policy and programming?
. Developing a peace-building dimension.

Why should donors and aid agencies take conflict seriously?

What is conflict? Conflict is sharing different goals within a time and location in a society. The differences do not necessarily have to be dealt with in violent ways. In societies like Afghanistan, encouraging dialogue and understanding is a vital need.

Aid, either directly or indirectly, has a significant impact on conflict in Afghanistan. Ideally, aid means relieving poverty and empowering development, which is a concept very close to peace. Nevertheless, this could only be in the context of the proper use of aid. Improper use of aid may result in the opposite and have negative effects on conflict.

Impacts of aid on conflict were discussed in the session. The groups were assigned to discuss the following two questions:

1. Does aid have any negative effects on the conflict in Afghanistan?
2. Can you see ways that aid could have a positive effect on conflict in Afghanistan?

The group discussions are summarized as below:

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF AID ON CONFLICT
If aid is used improperly:
- aid could be stolen by factions;
- aid could be taxed by factions;
- aid would be a substitute for local resources, and would enable local resources to be used for conflict purposes;
- channeling aid through commanders would affirm their legitimacy and would increase their power;
- free distribution of aid would increase people’s dependency, leading to lack of community mobilization;
- improper delivery of educational aid may teach violent messages to students;
- unfair distribution of aid would increase animosity between communities;
- aid can satisfy the vested interests of donors;
- un-balanced provision of incentives (salary, etc) would cause jealousy and resentment among staff of Government, UN agencies and NGOs.

**POSITIVE EFFECTS OF AID ON CONFLICT**

If aid is used properly:

- Aid would help mobilize the community;
- through channeling aid, people from different sides of conflict could be provided with safe space, safe voice and incentives to act in non-war ways;
- aid would advocate human rights;
- aid would build local capacities for peace, particularly, through provision of training opportunities;
- aid would reduce poverty, and would reduce crime rate;
- aid would address emergencies, and would avoid human disasters that could lead to conflict as well;
- aid would bridge relationships between communities;
- aid would disarm young fighters by providing employment opportunities;
- education aid would spread messages of peace and trust.

**ii. What are the options for policy and programming?**

There is an end to every war. Even if it goes for hundred years, there will be finally a conclusion. Every conflict begins with a Pre-conflict stage and ends with a Post-conflict situation. It goes through certain stages with different capacities for enabling peace actions. (See diagram below)

The pre-conflict period, as well as post conflict stages, there are good opportunities for aid agencies to build peace and trust and help avoid further conflict. The Pre-conflict stage is the time for building trust and lightening tensions, while the post-conflict stage needs much greater efforts to build up relationships and trust. Only a small amount of tension and an improper approach is needed to turn a post-conflict stage back to the pre-conflict stage.

Little can be done during the Confrontation stage. This leads to Crisis which is the climax of conflict, whereby conflict starts inclining towards an Outcome. An Outcome could be a one sided triumph, an agreement, etc. After Outcome, conflict starts cooling down, and the Post-conflict stage begins.

A conflict could straight-forwardly go through these stages, or it may make regressions backwards at any of the stages.
STRATEGIC OPTIONS
A handout detailing the spectrum of strategic options in the stages of confrontation or crisis was circulated. Participants were asked to identify the position of their respective agencies according to the five categories in the spectrum. (The handout is attached as Annex A.)

Participants, in their groups, discussed the policy options of their organizations, focusing on the following two questions:

- Where on the spectrum are your agencies now?
- Where would you like to be? What would that mean in practical terms? Policy?

Developing a peace-building dimension

Annexes B, C and D are attached to provide some conflict analysis.

The "Triangle" (developed by Chris Mitchell) is a very effective tool to analyze different aspects of conflict. By understanding these aspects, agencies as well as individuals can identify the potential points in a conflict situation. As Context, Behavior and Attitude are very much inter-linked, any change in any of them could affect the whole conflict.

To develop a peace-building dimension, aid agencies would need to include peace strategy in their policies, strategies and plans. Field staff of agencies should be able to mediate in any conflict situation.

TRAINING NETWORK (WORKING WITH CONFLICT)

Mohammad Ehsan, Programme Manager - NCA, and a resource person of the network, briefed the participants on the Network, its objectives and its structure. The formation of the Training Network was the outcome of the Swat Training Workshop.

The trainees at the course, who were committed to transfer the acquired skills to other aid workers, especially those in close contact with the community, proposed the formation of a Network to the meeting of the Directors of their agencies, in the ACBAR office on 3 November. The Network was approved. The Network has eight resource persons and one coordinator. (A diagram of the Network structure is attached as Annex E.)

CONCLUSION

Taking account of the influence aid agencies maintain in the communities and the role they can play to deal with conflict, the aid agencies should be committed to consider peace and avoid activities that lead to or strengthen conflict.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- The concept of DO NO HARM! should be promulgated throughout the aid community. Development oriented approaches should be implemented to minimize any negative aspects of aid.

- Conflict management skills are necessary, especially for field staff of aid agencies. Such skills could be provided through the Training Network concept.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ACBAR would like to express its thanks to Norwegian Church Aid for their continued support in introducing such initiatives; to Simon Fisher and Steve Williams, who kindly accepted the invitation to facilitate the workshop; and finally to all the participants for their contribution to the successful outcome.

The participants:
- Suleman
- Prof. Elham
- Javaid
- Mohammad Ehsan
- M A Asiel
- Chin Chin
- Munawar Mohmand
- Donna Copewell
- Peter Cook
- Peter Coleridge
- Sadaqat Roghani
- Arne Strand
- Farida
- M Aman Joya
- A Raziq
- Karina Schmidt
- Charles A MacFadden
- Shafiq Ahmad
- Liz Spencer
- Ahmad Jawed Ludin

and some others not listed.

1 DO NO HARM! Supporting Local Capacities for Peace through Aid; by Mary B Anderson. This book suggests the best approaches for delivery of aid with the least negative impacts.
## SPECTRUM OF STRATEGIC OPTIONS

**IN STAGES OF CONFRONTATION OR CRISIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WITHDRAW</th>
<th>REACT</th>
<th>ADAPT</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>INTERVENE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organisation decides to withdraw all or part of its operation, in the awareness that staying or withdrawing makes a statement and has consequences.</td>
<td>The programme continues with the same objectives, with changes necessary for it to continue, such as negotiating travel permission with armed groups as well as government officials.</td>
<td>The programme is consciously re-assessed for balance and differential impact, and adapted to ensure equity and participation of polarised groups.</td>
<td>Local initiatives are sought and supported which actively address the conflict, particularly in preventing escalation or improving communication and relationships between groupings.</td>
<td>The organisation actively intervenes in the conflict, offering for example links to international mediation, training or resources to &quot;level the playing field&quot; or other such options.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

@ Responding to Conflict, 1995.
In any given conflict situation, different parties have different experiences and different perceptions. For these reasons, they are likely to attribute the conflict to different causes. One side may say, for example, that the root problem is injustice, while another side says it is insecurity. Each group is focused on the issues that concern it most, and particularly the areas where it is suffering most. All of these causes and issues are real and important, and all will have to be addressed before the conflict can be resolved and the situation improved. Meanwhile, a great deal of energy may go into attacking those who see different causes or concentrate on different issues. One challenge is to try to help everyone involved to see that all the different issues are part of the problem, though certainly some will be more urgent or more important than others.
A possible working definition of conflict is: *a relationship between two or more parties who have, or who think they have, incompatible goals.*

In order to understand more deeply what conflict is, it can help to focus on two elements in this definition: behaviour (which is basic to any relationship) and goals (what you can to achieve). The model below identifies different kinds of conflict according to these two elements. The word "compatible" means "in harmony with"; the word "incompatible" means "clashing", or "in opposition to".

### Compatibility of Goals and Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compatible Goals</th>
<th>Incompatible Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compatible Behaviour</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPATIBLE GOALS</td>
<td>INCOMPATIBLE GOALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPATIBLE BEHAVIOUR</td>
<td>?? ?? How would we describe the combination of compatible goals and compatible behaviour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOMPATIBLE BEHAVIOUR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURFACE CONFLICT</td>
<td>OPEN CONFLICT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

@ RTC 1996

ANNEX C
TYPES OF ACTORS

Level 1: Top Leadership
- Military/political/religious/other
  leaders with high visibility

Level 2: Middle Range Leaders
- Leaders respected in sectors
- Ethnic/religious leaders
- Academics/intellectuals
- Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)

Level 3: Grassroots Leaders
- Local leaders
- Leaders of indigenous NGOs
- Community developers
- Local health officials
- Refugee camp leaders

APPROACHES TO CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

- Focus on high-level negotiations
- Emphasis on ceasefire

- Problem solving workshops
- Training in conflict resolution
- Peace commissions
- Insider-partial teams

- Local peace commissions
- Grassroots training
- Prejudice reduction
- Psycho/social work in post-war trauma

Figure 3: Actors and Peacebuilding Foci Across the Affected Population

© John Paul Lederach 1994
SUGGESTION FOR NEXT STEP AFTER COMPLETION OF WORKING WITH CONFLICT TRAINING WORKSHOP

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

ACBAR
ADA
CDAP
CoAR
FAO
NCA
NPO/RRAA
SCF
UNDP
UNOPS
UNCHS

TRAINING WORKSHOP
WORKING WITH CONFLICT
15-31 OCT. 1996, SWAT

POOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE

TRAINING NETWORK

RESOURCE PERSONS

COORDINATING AGENCY

TRAINING ORGANIZER

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

TRAINING
INFORMATION
EXPERTISES

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES IN THE NETWORK

ADA ACBAR CoAR NCA NPO/RRAA UNCHS CDAP

AMOZGAR
EHSAN
FAHIM
FAROOQ
KHIAL
NAFISA
RAZIQ
SULEMAN