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CONTRIBUTING TO PEACE CONSOLIDATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan

Needs Assessment Country Report

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Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan Needs Assessment Country Report

May 2014

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Executive Summary

Peace consolidation needs to be understood from the perspective of positive peace creation, in which, based on the absence of direct violence, equitable and integrated outputs and outcomes are developed in the spheres of economy, social services, politics, justice, human relations, and constructive conflict resolution. Essentially, successful peace consolidation may be achieved only through the interrelated cycle of peacebuilding/ peacemaking/ peacekeeping, sustainable development, and nationally owned capacities.

The present Needs Assessment Country Report (NARC) is the output of a 4-months, joint Afghan-Romanian-Canadian research process implemented within the framework of the research and capacity building project "Achieving the MDGs through Peacebuilding: Capacity building in transition to democracy, community based-dialogue and peacekeeping operations for international, national and local actors in Afghanistan", aiming at highlighting and analyzing peace consolidation related capacity building gaps, challenges, achievement, lessons learned and "best-fit" solutions for Afghanistan on the eve of the 2014 transition process and the 2015 MDG mark.

Key needs identified:

- There is a series of historical and contextual factors that directly affect and are affected by inadequate/ missing capacities for peace consolidation and sustainable development. In the case of Afghanistan, the most stringent ones are related to the general state-building project, the military security situation, the socio-economic and cultural realities, and the available resources.
- The customization of capacity building programmes to the particularities of the Afghan culture and context is quite low, with 50% of the respondents considering that this processes if lagging behind, or having not awareness of such endeavours.
- Among the thematical capacity needs identified along the research process the most mentioned are: peacebuilding and development, gender and peacebuilding, conflict transformation, strategic planning and thinking, community dialogue processes, human right, mediation, youth and peacebuilding, and prevention of electoral and political violence.
- Local and national ownership of the capacities serving peace consolidation and sustainable development is relatively low in Afghanistan, being generated, but also leading to a high dependency rate on foreign capacities and support.
- The cumulative impact of capacity building programmes is quite low, denoting a siloed work practice among the international, national and local actors, with joint cooperation being enabled mostly by matching political agendas.
- Capacity building programmes are developed and implemented mostly through a supply- and donor-driven approach, with little integration of previous lessons learned and local capacities.

Key capacity building strengths:

- The assessment has highlighted a series of principles that can enable sustainable change in Afghanistan's capacities and capacity building programmes for peace consolidation and sustainable development, among which: "unity of vision and plan"[1] of capacity building strategies, assessment based programming, country-led processes, dialogic approach to all capacity building engagements, inclusiveness of processes towards all stakeholders, systemic view, trust, plurality, and participatory/ bottom-up approaches.
- There is a relatively high awareness among actors implementing mandates of peace consolidation and sustainable development of the systemic interconnectedness between the different thematic areas that can directly, structurally and culturally support capacities and capacity building efforts.
- Enhancing the effectiveness of existing capacities and capacity building programmes benefit from a range of cooperation mechanisms, among which the most mentioned are: experience sharing workshops,

[1] Academic Perspective, *Afghanistan: Lessons Learned from State-Building*, http://en.akademikperspektif.com/2014/03/11/afghanistan-lessons-learned-state-building/, accessed on 05.04.2014.

working groups, informal meetings, joint projects, formal platforms, conferences and UN country team joint work.

- Existing capacities and capacity building, establishment and implementation strategies prove to have a comprehensive change generation vision, planning impact for short, medium and long term. This opens the possibility to utilize synergies between efforts for more sustainable results.
- There is a general understanding among peace consolidation and sustainable development actors, that the majority of the programmes planned and implemented have at least a partial alignment with national peace consolidation and sustainable development objectives in general and the Afghan National Development Strategy in particular.
- Peace consolidation efforts build not only on modern capacities but also on traditional Afghan mechanisms, among which: jirgas, shuras, local elders and mullahs that have the legitimacy and acceptance of their own constituency to transmit peace related messages, and can act as entry points for further peace consolidation and sustainable development efforts.

Based on the findings of the assessment process, the last chapter of the report presents a series of recommendations aimed at responding to identified needs, diminishing the negative effects of challenges, and enhancing the change generation capacity of strengths. The recommendations address the following areas: strategy development, vision setting, context assessment, cumulative impact creation, cooperation for programme development and implementation on various level, utilization of traditional mechanisms, strengthening capacities, trust building, institutional memory and knowledge management, programme customization to local particularities, language sensitivity, and content of peace consolidation capacity building programmes.

1.
Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan: An Introduction

"Violence and fragility have become the largest obstacles to the MDGs. The narrow approach of MDGs is problematic given the broadening of the concept of development that has occurred. The narrow focus also ignores the interrelations among aspects such as security, justice and development."

(Source: UNPBSO, *UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Peace and security thematic think peace*, UNPBSO, New York, May 2012, p. 3, http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/14_peace_and_security_20July.pdf, accessed on 18.02.2014.)

Jalalabad and Beyond – A Historical Perspective from Kabul
(Source: kabulwazir.files.wordpress.com)

Defining and contributing to the process of peace consolidation in the 2014's Afghanistan proves to be a challenging undertaking, due to the narrow connotation such a concept has received in the light of the impending security transition: that of general peace-making.[2] Basing strategy and action on the principles of systemic engagement, multi-stakeholder approach, national ownership and legitimacy, cumulative impact creation and evidence-based / demand-driven engagement aids in expanding and creating an integrated understanding of the concept itself, towards constructive and sustainable results.

As such, peace consolidation needs to be understood from the perspective of positive peace creation, in which, based on the absence of direct violence, equitable and integrated outputs and outcomes are developed in the spheres of economy, social services, politics, justice, human relations, and constructive conflict resolution. Essentially, successful peace consolidation may be achieved only through the interrelated cycle of peacebuilding/ peacemaking/ peacekeeping, sustainable development, and nationally owned capacities, as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1 - Cycle of Peace Consolidation

1.1. Creating the link and exploring connectivity

Protracted violence claims lives, displaces people, destroys various forms of infrastructure, and creates a climate which hinders the achievement of the basics of human security. Even with the cessation of violence, the insecure environment of a violence torn context continues to bear effects: instable and delegitimized state institutions[3] fail to deliver basic and inclusive services to the population; available budgetary resources are diverted towards the prevention of relapse into war[4]; the socio-economic gap of inequalities continues to widen; the justice and overall state system is crippled by corruption; the level of health care and access to education crumbles, creating the weakening of the labour market[5], workforce and possibility of production; the political and legal instability, coupled with negative growth rate and heightened investment risk fails to grow business confidence; violence

[2] Observation made by UNDP Afghanistan staff of Afghan nationality.
[3] Afghanistan Ministry of Finance, *Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, Kabul, p. 56, http://www.af.undp.org/content/dam/afghanistan/docs/mdg/MDG-2010-Report-Final.pdf, accessed on 26.02.2014.
[4] Afghanistan Ministry of Finance, *Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, Kabul, p. 56, http://www.af.undp.org/content/dam/afghanistan/docs/mdg/MDG-2010-Report-Final.pdf, accessed on 26.02.2014.
[5] Richard Hogg, Claudia Nassif, Camilo Gomez Osorio, William Byrd, Andrew Beath, *Afghanistan in Transition: Looking beyond 2014*, World Bank, Washington DC, 2013, p. 8.

against minority and marginalized groups grow; and the environmental degradation accentuates. The cumulation of such structural constraints then further enhances tension, crisis and violence.

The interconnectedness of these elements and the importance to understand and build upon them has been highlighted by several international and national organisations mandated with engagements on war-torn and conflict affected areas. The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda clearly highlights that shortfall in any of these areas will create a negative impact on the others[6], while the World Bank's 2001 World Development Report states: "A key lesson of successful violence prevention and recovery is that security, justice, and economic stresses are linked: approaches that try to solve them through military-only, justice-only, or development-only solutions will falter."[7] The interconnectedness is further endorsed by the UN General Assembly, which states in its resolution A/RES/60/1: "We recognize that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing."[8]

The peace consolidation cycle of Figure 1 builds on this interconnectedness and mutually reinforcing nature of violent manifestations, causes of violence and effects of violence, looking to build integrated strategies that would dismantle the negative relationships on the one hand, and strengthen and promote constructive opportunities on the other.

The transformative process, depicted by the right-side loop of the cycle is facilitated by a mix of elements pertaining to the fields of peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping, their combination and employment level being defined by the position of the context on the conflict life-line. Due to their ability to address structural and cultural contradictions, transform colliding attitudes, and contain violent conflict behaviours, the three measures can reduce the conflict risks and enhance political, economic, social, security and relational development opportunities. In return, if development gains a wider understanding than that of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including "justice, human rights, horizontal inequalities, jobs, inclusive politics"[9], the impact of development strategies and action would be the reduced risk of conflict and violence, through lower level of structural and cultural root causes and conflict enablers, and efficient, locally and nationally owned conflict handling mechanisms.

In order to enable good strategy and programme development on either side of the peace consolidation loop, there is the need of strong state, institution and society capacities to implement needs assessments, planning, strategizing and programming processes, while making sure that the content of all actions and policies are custom designed to local and national needs. When talking about capacities, one needs to take into account the three interrelated elements linked to it: competencies, capabilities and overall capacity. Distinction needs to be made between these three elements, as follows:

Figure 2 - Peace Consolidation Capacities
(Adapted after: Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen, *Systemic Peacebuilding Toolkit*, PATRIR, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, http://patrir.ro/en/about-ipdtc)

[6] UNPBSO, *UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Peace and security thematic think peace*, UNPBSO, New York, May 2012, p. 7, http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/14_peace_and_security_20July.pdf, accessed on 18.02.2014.
[7] World Bank, *World Development Report 2011. Conflict Security and Development,* World Bank, Washington DC, 2011, p. 28, http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/world-development-report-education-2011-en.pdf, accessed on 02.03.2014.
[8] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/1 from 2005, *2005 World Summit Outcome*, New York, 2005, paragraph 9, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/A-RES-60-1-E.pdf, accessed 23.02.2014.
[9] UNPBSO, *UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Peace and security thematic think peace*, UNPBSO, New York, May 2012, p. 4, http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/14_peace_and_security_20July.pdf, accessed on 18.02.2014.

"competencies, which are individual attributes; capabilities, which are collective ones; and capacity, as the combination of the two that enables an organisation to create value."[10] The three together foster a wide spectrum of international and traditional skills, tools, methods, knowledge and values related to peacebuilding, peacemaking, peacekeeping and the overall field of development, put in the service of institution building, systemic engagement strategies and solutions.

1.2. Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan: the Project and the Needs Assessment Country Report

The present Needs Assessment Country Report (NARC) is the output of a 4-months, joint Afghan-Romanian-Canadian research process implemented within the framework of the research and capacity building project "*Achieving the MDGs through Peacebuilding: Capacity building in transition to democracy, community based-dialogue and peacekeeping operations for international, national and local actors in Afghanistan*"[11]. The project had been built around the principle objectives of mapping, evaluating and strengthening mandated local/ national state, civil society, and international actors' peace consolidation expertise and capacity in Afghanistan, to support the creation of a conducive context for the achievement of sustainable development, and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The target group of the project includes key government / state actors, policy and decision makers dealing with development and peace consolidation in Afghanistan; key civil society / non-state actors dealing with development, governance, and peacemaking/peace consolidation in Afghanistan; staff of UN agencies and peacekeeping missions and UN Country Teams in Afghanistan (UNAMA, UNDP Afghanistan).

As part of this effort, the NARC represents the collection of findings and recommendations distilled from the above mentioned assessment process, highlighting and analyzing peace consolidation related capacity building gaps, challenges, achievement, lessons learned and "best-fit"[12] solutions for Afghanistan on the eve of the 2014 transition process and the 2015 MDG mark. The NARC seeks to generate evidence-based policy recommendations for the quality enhancement of the above mentioned capacity building processes and content in order to:

- Enhance Afghan ownership over peacebuilding and peacemaking capacities required by a peaceful transition process;
- Highlight the link between the need for nationally and locally owned peacebuilding and peacemaking capacities, and the successful engagement with MDG targets;
- Boost national, local and community based capacities to achieve MDG targets in the post-2014 transition period through the use of peacebuilding/ peacemaking skills and knowledge;
- Offer a central role to traditional/ indigenous peacebuilding/ peacemaking practices in overall capacity building processes in Afghanistan;
- Strengthen the role of the Afghan civil society in the provision of such capacity building programmes for national and local actors.

The methodological steps incurred by the assessment and report development process are:

- Identifying of key informants of the interview/ survey process through i) online actor mapping, and ii) informal discussions and information gathering from local networks of the Afghan research team, so to ensure the wide representativity of the results.
- Desk review process including the identification and analysis of the latest reports and publications on the mentioned thematic areas in general, and in the Afghan context. The review process had made use of primary, secondary and tertiary information sources published in English, Pashto and Romanian available online and/ or in hard copies.

[10] Morten Sigsgaard (ed.). *On the road to resilience. Capacity development with the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan*, UNESCO, Paris, 2011, p. 21.
[11] For more information about the project, please visit the project web-site: http://patrir.ro/en/projects/cpca. The project is implemented with the financial assistance of Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the Official Development Assistance budget UNDP Bratislava Regional Center.
[12] Dr. Prafulla Chandra Mishra, *National Institution Building Project. Capacity Development Plan (2011 – 2014)*, Central Statistics Organisation, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Kabul, 2011, p. 10, http://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/AFGHAN-CDP-CSO-2011-14.pdf, accessed on 23.03.2014.

- Interviews with key informants through face – to- face meetings, phone, Skype and other communication avenues, their use being dependent on the security situation existent in the area of Afghanistan where the identified actors have their headquarters or implement their activities.
- Electronic survey (electronic) implementation with key informants unable to take part in the interview process.

Through the mix of methodological elements presented above, the research team has succeeded in overviewing more than 200 online and hard copy documents of international and Afghan organisations, more than 35 interviews and lectures available online, and conducting more than 60 direct interviews and surveys with Afghan, Romanian and international practitioners with extensive experience in the thematical and/ or geographical scope of the project.

The major limitation affecting the outcome of the assessment process was the fact that the in-country interview and survey implementation coincided with the 1st presidential pre-election, voting, and post-election period of Afghanistan, events that affected the availability of identified peace consolidation and development actors to participate fully in the assessment process.

The interview and survey process followed the Chatham House rule, in order to offer needed confidentiality to those Afghan and international practitioners who requested it.

The following section of the report presents the findings of the assessment and offers a range of policy recommendations towards efficient capacity building in Afghanistan. Chapter 2 is a comprehensive stock-taking of challenges/ needs, achievements, and lessons learned in the international and national capacity building practice in Afghanistan, be that on an individuals, collective or country level, while Chapter 3 features a series of best-fit recommendations for the development and implementation of capacity building processes, content and policies, that have the ability to generate national and local ownership of the programmes and their results, diminishing the dependency level on foreign expertise.

2.
Findings of the Needs Assessment Process

"[…] it is striking that most needs assessments pay scant attention to capacity building issues. One reason for this may lie in the uncertainty over how to approach capacity building of highly politicized institutions."

(Source: Manuela Leonhard, Dr. Herwig Hahn, *Report. Review & Analysis: Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations*, UNDP, World Bank, UNDG, GTZ, April 2004, p.11, http://www.undg.org/docs/9145/Review___Analysis___Needs_Assessments_in_Post-Conflict_Situations.pdf, accessed on 05.03.2014.)

Afghanistan
(Source: www.globeimages.net)

As presented in the introductory chapter, the Needs Assessment Process made use of a mix of research methodologies in order to offer a comprehensive and representative view of the present situation of capacity building practices within Afghanistan towards peace consolidation and sustainable development. The present chapter is divided in three major part, looking at i) needs and challenges, ii) achievements and development opportunities, and iii) lessons identified in peace consolidation and sustainable development capacity and capacity building processes.

The evaluation process looked at the following elements:

1. On personal competency level:
    a. Existing education and experience of individuals engaged in peace consolidation and sustainable development projects;
    b. Rate of participation in training programmes for skills/ knowledge development, and acquisition of new tools and instruments fit for peace consolidation and sustainable development;
    c. Capacity challenges affecting the work of individuals interviewed which hinder the well implementation of existing competencies;
    d. Thematic knowledge needs.
2. On a capability level:
    a. Capacity challenges affecting the ability of organisations to implement their mandate and mission;
    b. Type of capabilities needed within organisations to contribute to peace consolidation and sustainable development;
3. Overall capacity level:
    a. Challenges affecting peace consolidation work in general from a capacity point of view;
    b. Type of capacities needed for enhanced efficacy of work;
    c. Capacity/ capacity building customization to local context and culture
    d. The level of local/ national ownership of peace consolidation and sustainable development capacities;
    e. Knowledge and integration of existing traditional capacities;
    f. Coordination of capacities for cumulative impact;
    g. Alignment of capacity building efforts with national peace consolidation objectives and strategies.

2.1. Capacity/ capacity building needs and challenges

"[…] *it is striking that most needs assessments pay scant attention to capacity building issues. One reason for this may lie in the uncertainty over how to approach capacity building of highly politicized institutions*."[13]

Assessing needs and challenges of existing capacities and capacity building processes for peace consolidation and sustainable development in any war-torn environment proves to be a difficult endeavour due to:

- The often reduced understanding and interpretation of the concepts of peace consolidation and sustainable development by both literature and key informants of interview/ survey processes;
- The conceptualization of capacities in strong relation to the immediate country context and its positioning on the conflict-lifeline;
- The implicit analysis of capacities under general, mainstream phenomena of conflict affected areas, without explicit examination of the capacities implied;

[13] Manuela Leonhard, Dr. Herwig Hahn, *Report. Review & Analysis: Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations*, UNDP, World Bank, UNDG, GTZ, April 2004, p.11, http://www.undg.org/docs/9145/Review___Analysis__Needs_Assessments_in_Post-Conflict_Situations.pdf, accessed on 05.03.2014.

- The existing biased assumption over the componance of the active and passive stakeholders' group for the peace consolidation and sustainable development processes;
- The attribution of political will and agenda to limited number, usually top level stakeholders of the peace consolidation and sustainable development processes; and
- Limited in-country research possibility due to unsecure environment.

These tendencies are easily observable in the case of Afghanistan as well. Firstly, in the eve of the 2014 security transition, peace consolidation has received a very specific, military security and peace-making related understanding, impeding sustainable development to be understood by its broadest connotation, that of human development: "*enlarging people's choices so that they can lead the lives they value, expanding their capabilities, enhancing their freedoms and enabling them to enjoy their human rights. This means putting people at the centre of development efforts, ensuring that they themselves become agents of change and that they are able to live in an environment conducive to the full development of their potential*."[14]

Secondly, while there is a very clear image of the general factors impacting on the successful achievement of the 2015 MDG goals, there is little discussion about the overall capacities that i) contribute to the maintenance of an unfavorable climate for sustainable development, and ii) develop as a result of the maintenance of this unfavorable environment.

Thirdly, and as an immediate consequence of the above mentioned two aspects, there is the lack of a consistent and systematic image of development and peace consolidation stakeholders within Afghanistan; image that is highly dependent on the assessors interests and mandate. While many international actors mandated with development and peace consolidation work look mainly at the capacity needs of international and national Track 1 and 2 counterparts, Afghanistan's development experience has clearly shown, that "weak performance of local institution and organizations is one of the greatest bottlenecks to development."[15] Such an approach hinders the possibility of creating an accurate capacity needs and challenges map of the country, and, further on, the development of a coherent, integrated national strategy and implementation plan for capacity development and strengthening.

Fourthly, use of capacities and their development and strengthening is closely related to existing political goals, agendas and will. Recognizing only a part of this palette, and failing to attribute them to each development and peace consolidation stakeholder acting in the field leads to a misperception about what capacities are objectively needed for peace consolidation and sustainable development, and which of these are supported, desired, promoted or rejected, based on the variety of existing agendas. Missing the opportunity of an honest discussion on these political agendas represents a major challenge of the country[16] and has a direct impact of the country's capacity building strategy and future.

On such background had the assessment process attempted to identify a series of challenges and needs of Afghanistan's capacity and capacity building scene, in order to uncover processual, thematic and policy related gaps to be bridged. The following section represents a concise stocktaking of the findings on the three levels of capacity building for peace consolidation and sustainable development: personal competency, collective capabilities and joint capacity.

1. There is a series of interlinked historical and contextual factors that directly affect and are affected by inadequate/ missing capacities for peace consolidation and sustainable development. In the case of Afghanistan, the most stringent ones are related to the general state-building project, the military security

[14] UNDP, *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007, CHAPTER 1: The state of Human Development and the Afghan Millennium Development Goals*, UNDP, 2007, p. 17, http://www.undp.org.af/MDGs/nhdr07_chap1.pdf, accessed on 17.02.2014.

[15] Serge Michailof, *Review of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building in Afghanistan, Discussion Paper for the Afghanistan Development Forum, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS*, World Bank, 2007, p. 20, http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/twg/Afghanistan%20TA%20study%202006.pdf, accessed on 07.03.2014.

[16] Observation made by Dr. Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv during the interview process serving the present assessment. Dr. Hoogensen Gjørv is Associate Professor of the Department of Sociology, Political Science and Community Planning at the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway, and Research Associate of the Department of Security and Conflict Management at NUPI.

situation, the socio-economic and cultural realities, and the available human resources. The most often quoted factors by the participants of the interview process are:

- The precarious security situation that impedes relevant human resources to access capacity building programmes, and organisations to develop and implement programmes in all districts of Afghanistan;
- The commitment of certain leaders and powerful individuals towards personal interests and patronage, attempting to keep conflictive or fragile situations alive, enforcing them for their own benefits.
- The inefficiency of the central government institutions in country-wide service delivery, including the offering a country-wide, integrated and comprehensive capacity building strategy and programming for peace consolidation and development to relevant national and local actors;
- Endemic corruption affecting the quality of the existing state and social competencies, capabilities and overall capacities due to the system of nepotism. People with low education are recruited based on their relevant relations to power holders, while at the same time post-graduates are jobless or have fewer opportunities to fulfill important functions. This is one of the causes for people to lose their trust in good governance, justice and fairness. It may also encourage people to join anti-government groups, paving the way for more conflict.
- The politicization of the state and civil society institutions, leading to mixture of the political interests in capacity development and competency hiring processes;
- Lack of sustainable income sources for civil society representatives working at the grassroots level, leading to the practice of peace consolidation and development related activities on part-time bases, fatigue and low level of efficiency in work implementation and achievement of impact/ change;
- The existent socio-economic context, coupled with the cultural realities, which lowers in many cases both the opportunities, the incentives and interest for developing individual competencies needed for becoming an active part of the grassroots level peace consolidation and development programmes;
- Lack of understanding the process-oriented nature of any capacity building process, coupled with the relationship-based culture of the Afghan society: national and local capacity building or existing capacity implementation is often interrupted by the continuous change of international capacity at donor, technical assistance, strategy and mentoring level, leading to loss of institutional memory, funding allocation, and discontinuity of the ongoing or planned programmes;
- Lack of trust between local, national and international capacity building partners;
- Language barriers of the capacity building programmes delivered by the international community, as the frequent use of English poses an impediment to the participation of those speaking only Dari and/ or Pashto. Most of the capacity building materials are of foreign origin, translated from outside and implemented. There are few cases in which the organizations have translated the material and also contextualized it into the cultural and social differences of the country to be acceptable and understandable for people in the community.

> *"Very little* [customization]*. Since 2004, the emphasis has been on imposing foreign solutions as opposed to encouraging Afghan ones. From 2002-4 there was more understanding of cultural and societal idiosyncrasies of Afghanistan."*
> /British international expert/
>
> *"Capacity building is a newly introduced phenomenon in Afghanistan and has not yet found its proper significance within the national institutions. The layers at which it can be implemented are not appropriately identified and institutionalized. It must be context-specific and inclusive enough to accommodate and cover all needs and requirements of the donors and also the beneficiaries."*
> /Afghan local NGO representative/
>
> "*The majority* [of the programmes] *are customized to Afghan realities and functional, otherwise their efficiency will be strongly diminished, as there are no general suitable programs."*
> /EUPOL personnel/

Under such circumstances, both national and international capacity builders have found themselves numerous times in the situation of developing capacities almost "from scratch and on their own […]: 'You were thrown into an ocean and now you have two options: either to swim or sink'."[17]

2. Achieving sustainable change through Afghanistan's peace consolidation and development work requires the alignment of the capacities and capacity building programmes to its contextual and cultural particularities. After the fall of the Taliban government and the Bonn conference a vast majority of implemented projects addressed capacity building, with the aim of opening a window for community problem solving. Respondents have highlighted that at the beginning of this process most of those who would have profited from the new knowledge and skills were not aware of the benefits of these programs, so they showed disagreement with implementation. However, the last three to four years awareness grew and attitudes changed, which consequently led to an increase in programme participation. Even so, the research had shown that the satisfaction level of participant with such programmes is hindered by the manner in which the programmes are customized to the local context and culture. Among bad practices we may mention: the participants of the training programmes were from a different expertise or the training was on another subject; developing and implementing training programmes on gender issues in areas where the culture was not ready for it, due to the sensitive nature of the subject; the word-by word translation of foreign materials, which lead to losing the meaning of the texts.

   The assessment had shown quite a diverse understanding and implementation of this requirement based on the types of actors, showing the need for a set of jointly agreed criteria by all actors and sectors, which would aid the customization process. While 50% of the responses had evaluated their programmes as well or adequately adjusted to the local particularities, 46% had considered that this process is lagging behind, with 4% having no awareness of such endeavours. Most of the respondents making up the first category pertained mostly to the military sector, where the second by mostly civilian interlocutors. Contradictorily, it is precisely the security sector that is identified by Isaak Kfir as having a significantly low level of cultural awareness, stating: " A second reason for ISAF's failure to establish security stems from its mandate, which emphasizes how little understanding there was of Afghan identity and society and how they clash with the neoliberal ideals of peacebuilding."[18]

3. Peace consolidation and sustainable development experiences capacity related challenges and needs in four major areas:
   - the existent thematic knowledge of those active in the domain, allowing organisations to implement their mandate in an effective manner;
   - the utilization of practical skills, tools and methods available for peace consolidation and sustainable development work, and their adaptation to the particularities of Afghanistan;
   - the low institutional capacity of organisations working in the field for significant impact/ change generation, due to the above mentioned gaps, coupled with the infrastructural, financial and policy deficiencies of the system they are activating in;

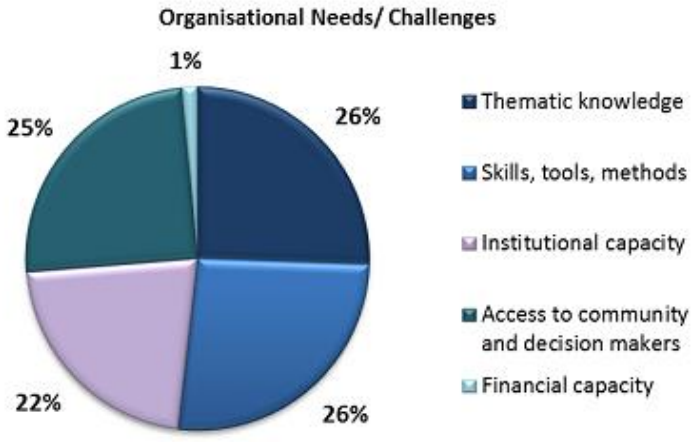

Figure 3 - Organisational needs/ challenges for peace consolidation and sustainable development

[17] Frederik Ferdinand Rosén (2011) No Words will Deliver Anything: Coaching and Mentoring as Neoliberal Governance Strategy in the Afghan State Administration, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 5:2, 151-173, DOI: 10.1080/17502977.2011.541780

[18] Isaac Kfir (2012), 'Peacebuilding' in Afghanistan: A Bridge Too Far? , Defence Studies, 12:2, 149-178, DOI: 10.1080/14702436.2012.699721, p. 159.

- links and access to communities and their decision makers/ leaders, which would facilitate entry points into various social groups, and would provide a higher level of legitimacy of programmes implemented.

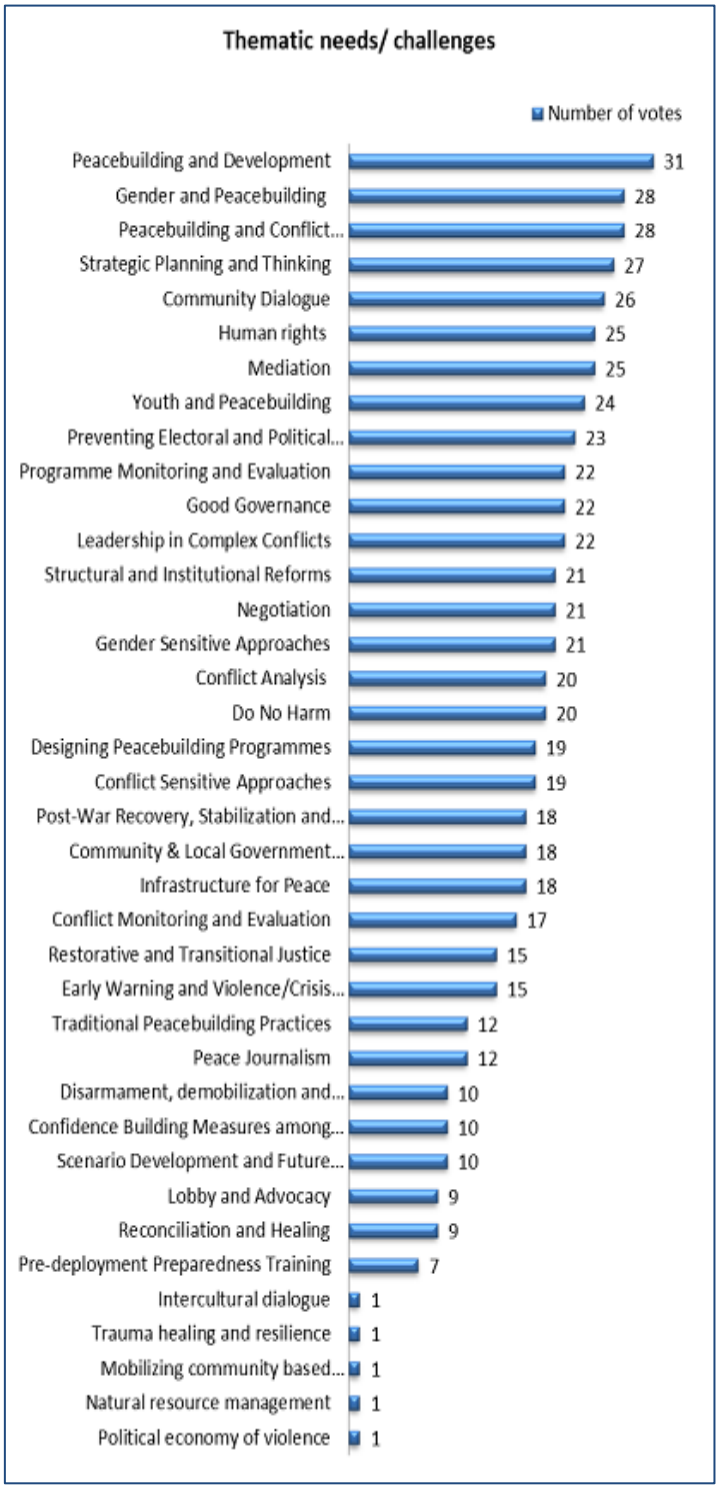

Figure 4 - Thematic needs of peace consolidation and sustainable development

4. The first two ranking organisational needs and challenges are connected to a series of thematical areas linked to both the process and content of peace consolidation and development programmes. Out of the 39 topics assessed through the assessment process, among the most needed are: peacebuilding and development, gender and peacebuilding, conflict transformation, strategic planning and thinking, community dialogue, human rights, mediation, youth and peacebuilding, preventing electoral and political violence and programme monitoring and evaluation. Figure 4 offers a comprehensive view of the ranking according to the interview/ survey results.

5. While close to 90% of the respondents have considered that their colleagues and overall organisational staff are adequately trained and possess the necessary skills to effectively contribute to the consolidation of peace and development on Afghanistan, a little over half of them considered that they have received training on the thematic topics needed for mandate implementation. The inconsistency clearly indicates the need for competency criteria required by peace consolidation and development positions, and more comprehensive evaluation of programme impact and efficiency in relation to the used capacities.

6. Local and national ownership of the capacities serving peace consolidation and sustainable development is relatively low in Afghanistan. While Afghan peace consolidation capacity is much better than in most of the countries in similar situation, due to high number of Afghans educated in western countries[19], the dependency rate of foreign capacity and support is quite high. The dependency rate is at its highest at the central government and security provision level, requiring both financial and technical expertise input, whereas civil society and grassroots organisations are mostly financially dependent on foreign support, agenda, "ideas and implementation [of projects] are internal"[20]. This presents a transition process towards complete independency on the long-term.

[19] Observation made by Ms. Lisa Schirch during the interview process serving the present assessment. Ms. Schirch is the Director of Human Security at the Alliance for Peacebuilding.
[20] Observation made by Afghan programme coordinator during the interview/ survey process.

Among the sources of this dependency there is the late recognition and involvement of existing local capacities in peace consolidation and development project established by the international community, and the character and build-up of the capacity building programmes that create dependency within themselves. As the joint UNDG – World Bank report has found: "In the long run […] international assistance supported the establishment of parallel NGO structures, which became a major impediment to building a strong and professional civil administration."[21]

> *"The success indicator* [of capacity building programmes] *should be that at the termination of your tasks the national, local actors do not need you anymore."* /Romanian international expert/
>
> *"The Norwegian 100-year approach to Afghanistan is a good example of a general forward thinking that Afghanistan would need international expertise for that amount of time."* /Norwegian academic/

7. The cumulative impact of the capacity building programmes in Afghanistan is quite low. Though all respondents have identified different cooperation mechanisms through which they share and mutually strengthen capacities and implement peace consolidation and development work, there is still a siloed work practice among actors in the field. This usually leads to initiative duplication and diffusion of efforts. "As a female teacher in Khost stated: There is no one strategy for Afghanistan; only different countries, different ideas, different agendas. We need one plan, one set of goals."[22]

8. Cumulative impact in capacity building should be further enhanced by linking initiatives with existing national objectives for peace consolidation and sustainable development. Though there is widespread agreement about the existence of such links to a certain extent, there are also quite considerable concerns that such links are created only if political agendas match, thus not all capacity building programmes are accepted and recognized.

9. Capacity building programme development poses concerns as well, due to their supply-driven nature. Even though many programmes are implemented upon request from various national and local actors, participants to the assessment have considered that few were integrating lessons learned from the field and building on community-based capacities and infrastructures. According to respondents, donor–driven programs are less acceptable to the community, as they are not reflecting existing challenges and needs. Programs that are implemented based on a needs assessment are more effective due to their link with the community and their culture.

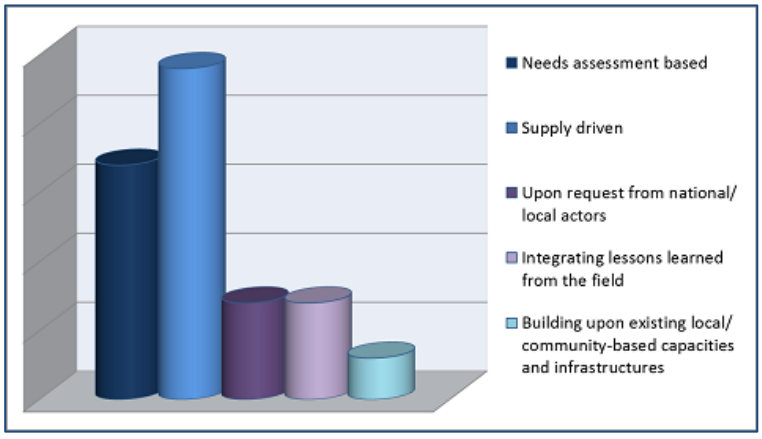

Figure 5 - Capacity building programme methodology

Further on, as highlighted by the International Labour Organisation, "one of the key weaknesses of the existing capacity development and job creation programs – international and local, public or private, governmental or non-governmental – is the poor link to the labour market: 1) private institutes or public universities are insufficiently market-driven and generally prioritize a reduced set of basic skills that do not meet the demand of both employers and employees for advanced levels of proficiency; 2) government TVET[23] training initiatives –

[21] Manuela Leonhard, Dr. Herwig Hahn, *Report. Review & Analysis: Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations*, UNDP, World Bank, UNDG, GTZ, April 2004, p.20, http://www.undg.org/docs/9145/Review__Analysis__Needs_Assessments_in_Post-Conflict_Situations.pdf, accessed on 05.03.2014.
[22] Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace. Laying the Foundations for an Inclusive Peace Process*, AIHRC, Kabul, 2011, p. 5, http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/People%27s%20Dialogue%20FINAL%20report.pdf, accessed on 7.02.2014.
[23] Technical and Vocational Education and Training - http://www.cesp.gov.af/anqa/Documents/TVET_Overview.pdf

such as those developed through NSDP[24] training centres – train rudimentary, out of date and barely marketable skills to thousands of beneficiaries; 3) international and non-governmental organisations tend to exclusively focus their analysis on direct (e.g. participation in training) without taking into account longer term employment outcomes."[25] Such supply-driven approach raises difficulties in the recruitment process for any sector contributing to peace consolidation and development, further lowering organisational capacity and resilience against fragmented planning, lack of project ownership, aid coordination and weak follow-up and change management process.[26]

> *"It differs by regions of Afghanistan and type of program, particularly when it is about women. Northern region of Afghanistan is more liberal than other parts and there are less security problems, it could be said that there is adequate access for people living in districts."*
> /Afghan UNAMA staff/
>
> *"Everything is geared to a tiny, urban elite, educated according to the secular system, so the more training and capacity-building that is conducted, the more the divisions in Afghan society tend to grow."*
> /British international expert/

10. A further impediment in building sustainable Afghan capacity for peace consolidation and sustainable development is represented by the difficult access to existing programmes of those living and working in the rural areas. Besides the security concerns, challenges are related to the existing financial resources for capacity building, infrastructural obstacles for long distance travel, availability of programmes for different, often marginalized social groups, awareness of the existence of such programmes by those who would benefit from them, interest and incentive of the target group in taking part.

11. While the assessment took under scrutiny the capacity building scene in Afghanistan, it is also important to take account of the needs and challenges of the international scene. As the major provider of such services, the international community can easily import into Afghanistan its own fault lines, and build strategies, programmes, policies and structures based on them, with little awareness of such aspect.

2.2. Capacity building strengths

«*Building capacities to deliver services for reaching the MDGs and thereby restoring citizens' confidence in government functionaries are important in* post-violence situations[27]. *In Afghanistan, Ministries of Education, Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Public Health and Agriculture (with recently developing potentials) provide models for service delivery that earn citizens' confidence and contribute to state legitimacy. Institutional development of other ministries to this end is advisable.*»[28]

Having a comprehensive profile of the peace consolidation and sustainable development capacities and capacity building scene within Afghanistan requires reflection on the planned/ implemented efforts to date. Though the existing literature puts a higher emphasis on existing needs and challenges, there is a wide array of activities and programmes that aim at strengthening capacities, and attempt to respond to some of the needs outlined above. Engaging in such analysis also raises the chance of: i) obtaining a better understanding of existing and ongoing capacity building objectives; ii) achieving a better alignment with these for better change generation; iii) getting acquainted with existing local, national and international actors, structures, abilities and programmes for

[24] National Skills Development Programme - http://nsdp.gov.af/en
[25] Samuel Hall, International Labour Organisation, *Afghanistan: Time to Move to Sustainable Jobs. Study of the State of Employement in Afghanistan*, ILO, Kabul, 2012, p.42, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_182253.pdf, accessed on 22.03.2014.
[26] Federiga Bindi, Marco Amici, Andrea Amici, *Learning from Afghanistan and Somalia: How to improve capacity building in fragile situations*, p. 17-18 http://www.ue.uniroma2.it/public/jeanmonnet/file/paper.pdf, accessed on 19.02.2014.
[27] N.B. Author's change.
[28] Ministry of Finance Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, [28] Ministry of Finance Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Kabul, 2010, p. 54, http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_MDG_2010.pdf, accessed on 24.02.2014.

handling deficits in the capacity building sector; iv) identifying entry points into the capacity building field in a manner that the planned efforts genuinely contribute to peace consolidation and sustainable development; v) analyzing the impact of capacity building efforts till date; and vi) recognizing and acting upon capacity building synergies.[29]

1. Creating sustainable change in Afghanistan's capacities and capacity building programmes towards enhanced peace consolidation and development requires upholding a set of principles, some of which can be easily identified in the country's capacity building practice, while others are recognized as needed and worked towards. The assessment process has highlighted as most important principles the followings: "unity of vision and plan"[30] of capacity building strategies, assessment based programming, country-led processes, dialogic approach to all capacity building engagements, inclusiveness of processes towards all stakeholders, systemic view, trust, plurality, and participatory/ bottom-up approaches. Such values may assure that a) governmental reforms are coherent, aligned and harmonized, b) the possibility is opened for a legitimate multi-actor cooperation at all levels of society, c) relevant national and local actors have the necessary buy-in into programmes implemented by international actors, and have a strong ownership of the overall country capacity building strategy, and d) a lasting bridge is created between state and non-state actors for better capacity development and capacity building strategy development and implementation.

2. Based on its 2011 assessment, Counterpart International has concluded that "there are eight major groups of CSOs working in Afghanistan today: Community focused organizations, youth focused organizations, women focused organizations, CSO support organizations, professional interest organizations, community development councils, shuras, and local education committees […] About 40 percent of all organizations implement just one type of activity, and another third are engaged in two or three activities. Gender mainstreaming, promoting human rights, strengthening independent media, coordinating other organizations, protecting the environment, and implementing religious activities are more prevalent in rural settings, while providing health services and education are more prevalent in urban settings."[31] The below Actor Map, while it is not an exhaustive one, is an attempt to offer a visual representation of international and national actors working on peace consolidation and sustainable development

3. While there is a general reduction in interpreting what peace consolidation activities entail in the overall Afghan context, the assessment has found that respondents can easily relate their organisational and individual mandates and capacities to the peace consolidation and development efforts. Countering the siloed strategy development and programming practices, the respondents had shown a relatively high awareness of systemic interconnectedness between the different thematic areas that can directly, structurally and culturally support capacities and capacity building efforts.

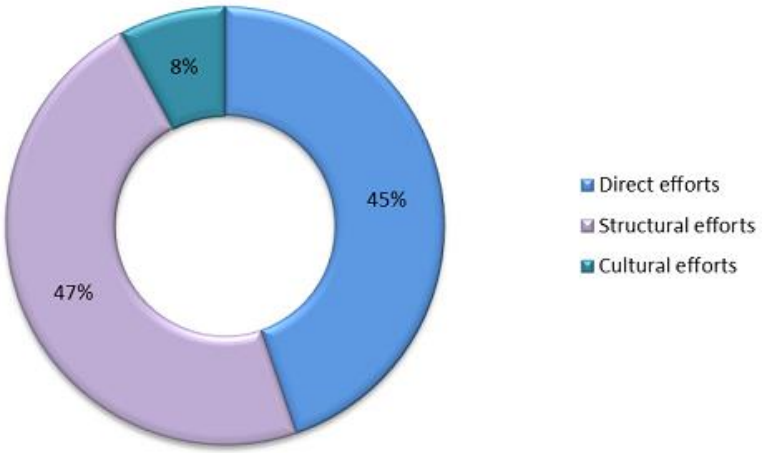

Figure 6 - Proportion of efforts towards peace consolidation and sustainable development

[29] Adapted after the Peace Profile: Peacebuilding Center, *Early warning – Early Response Handbook*, Version 3, Peacebuilding Center, Ottawa, 2013, p. 10 – 11, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EWHandbookFinalEngv3%20April%202013%20%281%29.pdf, accessed on 01.05.2014.
[30] Academic Perspective, *Afghanistan: Lessons Learned from State-Building*, http://en.akademikperspektif.com/2014/03/11/afghanistan-lessons-learned-state-building/, accessed on 05.04.2014.
[31] Craig Charney, Lucig H. Danielian, Sean Flowers, Irina Novikova, Dina Smeltz, *2011 Afghanistan Civil Society Assessment*, Counterpart International, USAID p. 6, http://www.charneyresearch.com/pdf/2012June19_Afghan_Civil_Society_Assessment_Report.pdf, accessed on 02.02.2014.

Figure 7 - Afghanistan's actor map for peace consolidation and sustainable development

Direct efforts mentioned by respondents include training and education, mentoring processes, conflict management activities, exchanges of experience and networking, research and analysis. Among the structural efforts state-building related activities were most frequently mentioned, together with social service reforms, policy and law development. Cultural efforts included conflict management efforts through integrating traditional and cultural sensitive tools and mechanisms into programme design and implementation.

Next to these aggregated efforts respondents have also mentioned: good governance through modernizing administrative systems; fighting corruption; maintaining security and human rights; sustainable economic growth through using new technology for infrastructure projects in order to eliminate poverty and enable employment; the raise of educational levels; and legal awareness. Next to that, designing new methods and information through trainings about conflict resolution, negotiations and mediation in communities by active civil society members and improving relations with neighboring countries can support peace consolidation. Finally, establishing peace education as subject in schools and as course in universities creates opportunities for capacity building and peace.

4. The awareness over the existing systemic interconnectedness is further manifested in the recognition given to the role of certain sectors, such as civil society and women's groups in the different peace consolidation and sustainable development efforts, including the security system reform, violence prevention and peacebuilding. Among the Afghan state-building lessons learned, the independent think tank Academic Perspective states: "The civil society involvement in the SSR program is noteworthy, because this involvement shows that the peace-building efforts, in the case of Afghanistan, are overlapping with the state-building mission and there are contributions of peace-building to SSR program."[32] On the other hand, high level statements of the Afghan government about its recognizing and supporting the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 represents a notable step towards offering recognition to women, as an important capacity for peace consolidation and sustainable development.

Figure 8 - Mechanisms for sharing and jointly developing capacities for peace consolidation and sustainable development

5. Enhancing the effectiveness of existing capacities and capacity building programmes benefit from a range of cooperation mechanisms that aim at shared and joint development, while mitigating the effects of siloed work. Multi-stakeholder workshops allowing for exchange of experiences and practical working groups are among the most used and preferred mechanisms. Joint projects are a frequently used avenue of cooperation as it allows for pooling and sharing human, knowledge, financial and infrastructural resources. Building on the Afghan culture of informal relationship building and maintenance, several of the respondents have highlighted informal meetings as a way of acquiring knowledge about existing capacities and developing cooperation for their joint use.

6. Capacity building, establishment and implementation strategies prove a comprehensive change generation vision, planning impact for short, medium and long term. This allows the employment of both operational and structural efforts for peace consolidation and sustainable development in parallel, opening up the

[32] Academic Perspective, *Afghanistan: Lessons Learned from State-Building*, http://en.akademikperspektif.com/2014/03/11/afghanistan-lessons-learned-state-building/, accessed on 05.04.2014.

possibility to assess and utilize synergies between the efforts, and produce direct and indirect impact on the assessed thematic areas. Figure 7 offers examples of such efforts from the best practice pool of Afghanistan, highlighting their operational and structural nature, while attempting to assess their impact generation capacity for the short, medium and long term.

7. Peace consolidation efforts build not only on modern capacities, but also on traditional Afghan mechanisms. The 80% respondents that had knowledge of at least one of these mechanisms were divided in what their usefulness and appropriateness is concerned, towards their full/ partial integration in activities fulfilling the organisational mandate. While some consider that "unfortunately these mechanisms are the main obstacles in the process of modernizing Afghanistan"[33] and others are strong advocates of these mechanisms "driving the process"[34], there is a growing tendency of national and international actors to involve these is various peace consolidation and development strategies and programmes, boosting thus the legitimacy and ownership of activities and outcomes.[35]

   The local conflict resolution mechanism "jirga" is often seen as an institution to create order and peace in and between communities. Since decades jirgas follow customary law for decision-making. In some cases, however, these decisions and customary laws are in conflict with pillars of certain interpretations of Islam and other civil and human rights laws. In accordance with the customs of these jirgas, some organizations and civil society actors are involved in the creation of new shuras. These shuras have regular meetings and different sorts of (non-)governmental organizations provide them with training and workshops for better, righteous and fair decisions in accordance with rules of Islam, civil and human right law. As such, these organizations specifically contribute to peace by direct mediation, peace building training and capacity building workshops. As several respondents point out, these contributions are in line with other related policies and projects that advocate human rights as subject in schools. The development of local peace shuras and working with graduated students for understanding peace concepts and conflict management and/or resolution helps to build peace locally. Moreover, designing professional workshops and academic seminars for governmental institutions about conflict resolution, anti-corruption and good governance helps to create a culture of peace too. Another approach is to develop theories, collect people's perception on community challenges and needed development projects, and sharing these findings with policy makers. This will contribute to peace, and enables better trust

"The ANDS capacity development objective is to assure that the skills needed to effectively implement programs and projects included in the ANDS exist or can be developed within the required time frame for implementation. The institutional responsibility will be with Inter-ministerial Commission for Capacity Development (ICCD) that will serve as a single reporting point for both government and donors. ICCD will provide a coordinated approach to support the effective management of funds and aid flows, to cut down on duplication and to ensure that critical capabilities for program and project implementation are well defined and (most importantly) that capacity development and technical assistance programs are properly focused on meeting these critical needs."
/Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013/

"The situation is now worse than twelve years ago, when the current phase of attempted stabilization of Afghanistan commenced. To my mind, this alludes to a lack of alignment of various interests with Afghan priorities, or at least alignment of interests with Afghan cliques that do not truly represent the Afghan people."
/International media expert/

"In most cases, the programs well in line with Afghanistan development priorities. However, there is need for a study to find out the gaps.
/Afghan UNHCR staff/

"In most cases, the programs well in line with Afghanistan development priorities. However, there is need for a study to find out the gaps."
/Afghan UN-HABITAT staff/

[33] EUPOL personnel
[34] British international expert
[35] Isaac Kfir (2012) 'Peacebuilding' in Afghanistan: A Bridge Too Far? , Defence Studies, 12:2, 149-178, DOI: 10.1080/14702436.2012.699721, p. 160.

between the people and the government. A third mechanism for conflict resolution highlighted by respondents is represented by local elders and mullahs (Religious persons) of the village. People listen to them and respect them. These people also can help the implementation of some projects, in peace building for example, passing the message in prayer time to the people.

The textbox below presents some of the Afghan traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, courtesy of Dr. Khesrow Sangarwal from Discourse Afghanistan.

8. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) for 2008 – 2013 outlines a series of developmental objectives for areas with strategic importance for peace consolidation: security; governance, rule of law, justice and human rights; economic and social development; regional affair, counter-narcotics, anti-corruption, gender equality; aid effectiveness and coordination; and monitoring of results. The ANDS also reserves a section for capacity building, looking at both direct, training oriented activities and structural, institution building ones. Thus the role of the ANDS is quite important. On the one hand it offers a strategic line to which capacities and capacity building programmes for peace consolidation and sustainable development may adhere. On the other hand, it provides guidance for national level action, while offering entry points for working with and enhancing local capacities, as the document is "fully reflective of the aspirations of the Afghan people"[36]. Results of the interview/ survey process had shown that 53% of the respondents consider that their organisation and individual work is partially aligned with such national objectives, while 18% consider full alignment. 29% of the respondents however consider that there is no such alignment, identifying a worsening trend.

[36] Afghanistan National Development Strategy Secretariat, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy 1387 – 1391 (2008 – 2013)*, Afghanistan National Development Strategy Secretariat, Kabul, http://www.undp.org.af/publications/KeyDocuments/ANDS_Full_Eng.pdf, accessed in 28.02.2014.

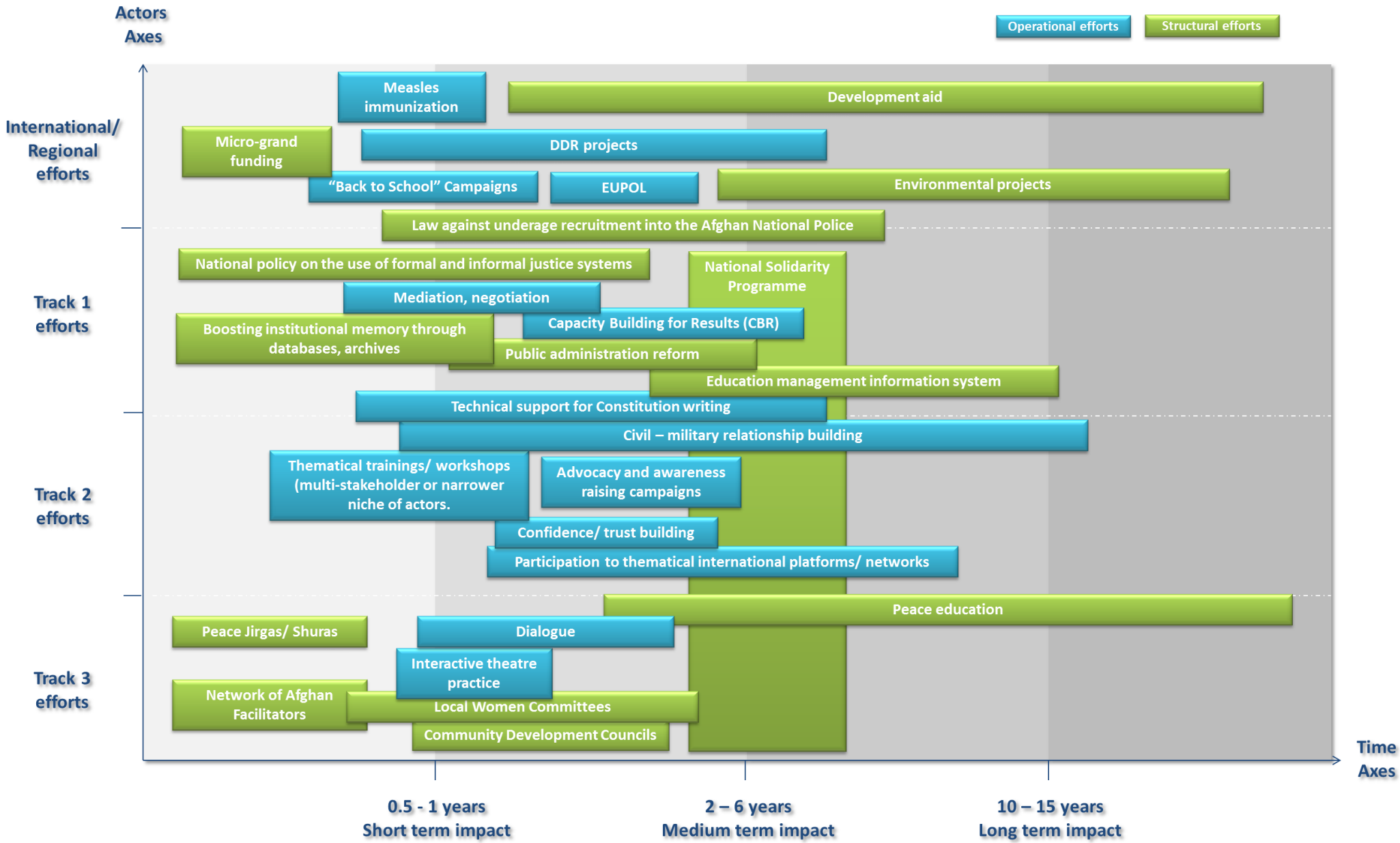

Figure 9 - Operational and structural peace consolidation and development efforts in Afghanistan

Traditional Conflict Resolution institutions
- an outline –

By Dr. Khesrow Sangarwal, Discourse Afghanistan

The following is an outline of a number of traditional conflict resolution institutions and approaches used by Afghans for many centuries in Afghanistan, and the areas that are currently in the neighbouring states of Afghanistan. This is not an article, but more supplementary paragraphs for Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan Survey.

Jirga

Jirga has centuries old presence in Afghan history, from the days of the mythical Afghan king, the great Yama. In contemporary Afghanistan the term Jirga is a constitutional terminology used for both houses of the parliament, *the wolesi Jirga,* and *De Mushrano Jirga.* However, more traditionally, Jirgas are extensively used for conflict resolution all over the country. The traditional Jirgas are the gatherings of elders of all parties involved in a conflict. The opposing parties in a Jirga declare at the beginning of the Jirga meeting their willingness to hand over their decision making rights to the Jirga. At the end of long periods of negotiations, whatever decision the Jirga makes, the parties involved in the conflict are bound to accept the decision. If any of the affected parties refuses to accept the Jirga decision, they must pay an agreed fine, which tend to be quite significant in amount.

Maraka

The Maraka has similar proceedings to Jirga, but it tends to be smaller in scale, and has little national recognition. Marakas tend to take place between families and small tribes. One party to a conflict who accepts its wrongdoing in a dispute sends a delegation of independent elders and tribal chiefs to the affected party, and seeks a peaceful resolution. The Maraka tend to pass offers fine and Tawan from the accused party to the affected party. The affected party negotiates the terms of agreement and the amount and type of fine payable by the opposing party.

Nanawati

Nanawati is similar to Maraka, with one fundamental difference that one party has committed, or accepted accusation of a major wrongdoing, deliberately or accidentally, that has affected the opposing party significantly. The accused party sends a delegation of influential and impartial figures for Nanawati to the affected party, and seeks forgiveness and offers fines, and Tawan.

Tawan

Tawan is the amount of money, the number animals (usually Cows, camels, Sheep etc.), and land given as Tawan from one party to other in order to resolve a conflict. Tawan is usually facilitated by Jirgas, Marakas, and Nanawati.

Bado Ki

Bado Ki is one of the much controversial conflict resolution tool in Afghanistan. It is still practiced in Afghanistan, and despite its controversial features, it remains one of the effective conflict resolution practices between families. The practice involves marrying one or several women from one family into the second family who has committed a crime, usually murder that has affected one of the families. This is usually done without the consent of the women. The women who are married Bado Ki tends to have a hard and abusive life marriage, usually in polygamy with elderly spouses.

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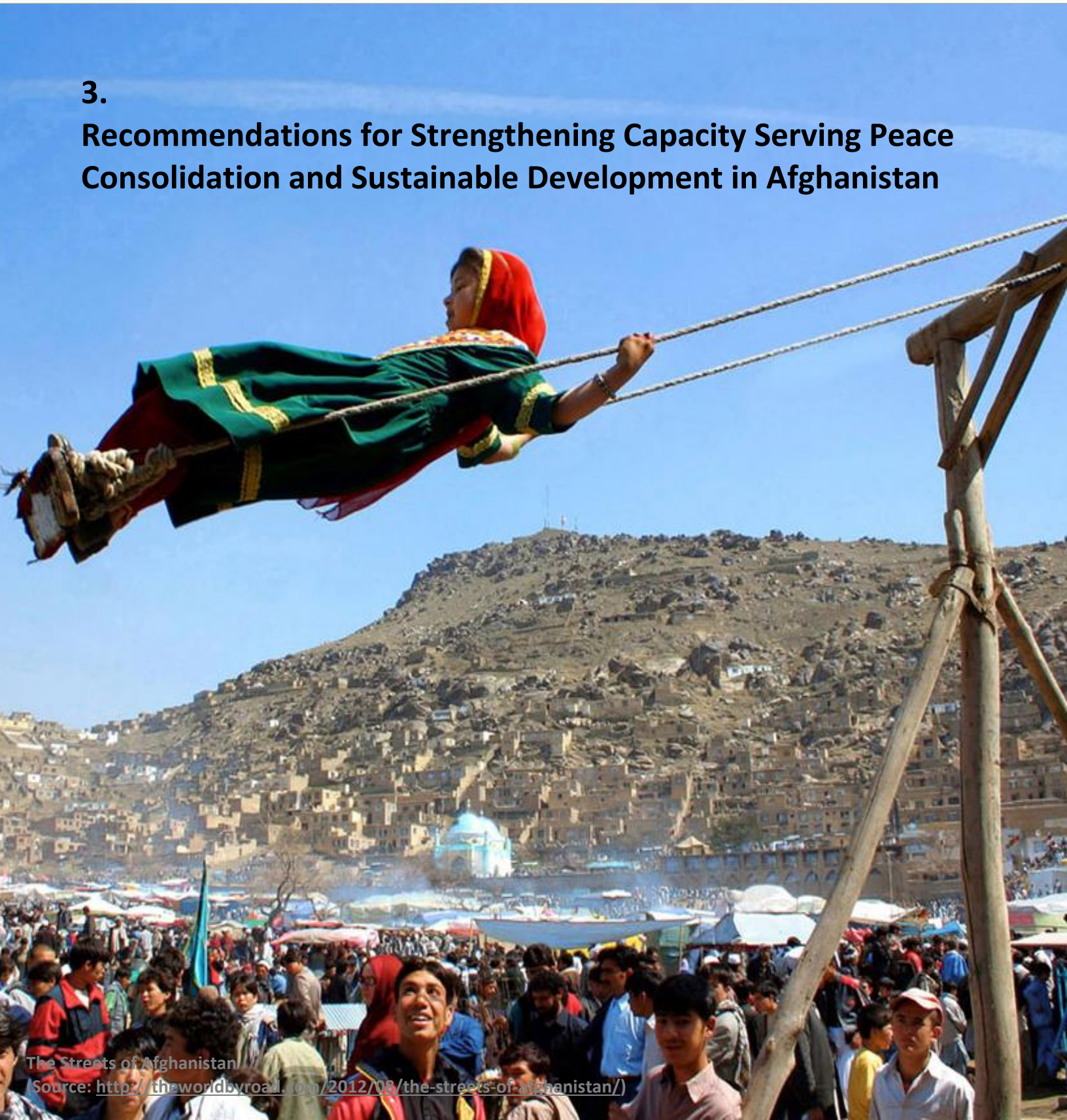
3.
Recommendations for Strengthening Capacity Serving Peace Consolidation and Sustainable Development in Afghanistan



The Streets of Afghanistan
(Source: http://theworldbyroad.com/2012/08/the-streets-of-afghanistan/)

*"**The** four components or pillars of a durable peace articulated by all Afghan men, women and youth involved in the People's Dialogue are […]: establishing security; addressing corruption, injustice and lack of rule of law; realizing economic progress and social justice; and, promoting and protecting human rights, including women's right"..*[37]

1. Peace consolidation and sustainable development capacities should be programmed through a rigorous strategy development and implementation process, which should include the following steps:
    a. Situation assessment
    b. Visioning and goal setting
    c. Strategy development
    d. Customized planning
    e. Capacity building for strategy implementation
    f. Strategy implementation
    g. Reflective learning: monitoring and evaluation.

2. Develop the vision and strategy of capacity building in line with existing national and local objectives for peace consolidation, sustainable development and related capacity building. Make sure that the vision is a long term one, mixing strategies and activities with short, medium and long term impact.

3. Peace consolidation and sustainable development related capacity building strategies and programmes should rest on a systemic and conflict sensitive understanding of Afghanistan's historical and contextual particularities. Thus, all such strategies and programme developments should be based on thorough conflict and peace assessments, processes which look at:
    a. Conflict Profile

• Contradictions, attitudes and behaviours within a conflict setting • Direct, structural and cultural manifestations of existing or possible violence • The conditionality between the elements of conflict and violence	• Actors/ stakeholders • Issues/ goals and interests • Related conflicts and issues • Root causes, sources and pillars of conflict • Relationships between actors/ stakeholders • Violence enablers and risk factors

    b. Peace Profile[38]

• Existing peacebuilding objectives • Conflict handling capacities	• Peace structures and actors in place • The impact of the peace efforts so far

"Conflict drivers should be identified and addressed. Programs should not be implemented based on the symptoms of a problem but rather they should be designed based on the needs and requirements of the community. Also not based on the interest of the donor country."
/Afghan UNAMA staff/

"Identify the root-causes, geography of conflict, main actors, concentrate more on community empowerment."
/Afghan NGO representative/

[37] Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace, *Laying the Foundations for an Inclusive Peace Process*, 2011, http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/People%27s%20Dialogue%20FINAL%20report.pdf, accessed 19.02.2014.
[38] Adapted after the Peace Profile: Peacebuilding Center, *Early warning – Early Response Handbook*, Version 3, Peacebuilding Center, Ottawa, 2013, p. 10 – 11, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EWHandbookFinalEngv3%20April%202013%20%281%29.pdf, accessed on 01.05.2014.

• Peace opportunities and entry points into the conflict • Ongoing peace efforts	• Blockers and challenges faced by peace efforts • Peacebuilding gaps • Peace synergies

4. Existing conflict and peace assessments should be complemented with organisational self-assessments of those implementing mandates contributing to peace consolidation and sustainable development, which evaluate and offer a comprehensive understanding of the role of existing/ planned capacity the intervening/ peacebuilding organisation in the targeted conflict, and ii) the internal values, mandate and resource available for a successful peacebuilding programming. The assessment should include[39]:

• The geographical and thematic expertise of the organisation in relation to the planned future programmes • The place of the organisation in the developed actor map • Its relations with local stakeholders • The values, motivation and mandate of the organisation	• Organisational capacity to engage in peacebuilding in the selected conflict setting • Organisational resources to engage in peacebuilding in the selected conflict setting • Opportunities, restraints and challenges • Entry points into the conflict setting • External support and legitimacy

5. In order to reach the national objectives set for peace consolidation and sustainable development, all actors should pursue the creation of cumulative impact in capacity building and capacity implementation. Thus, those approaches should be selected that i) bring added value/ new perspective to the transformation of problems, ii) build on previous efforts of stakeholders, iii) can be implemented with the use of national and local resources and capacities, and iv) would enhance local and national resilience towards conflict and improve indigenous conflict handling capacities.

6. Enhance applied monitoring and evaluation practices, together with lessons learned identification, so to contribute to a better reflective practice, and promote the integration of lessons learned into capacity building processes. Ensuring a continuous positive cycle between capacity building – capacity implementation – capacity building programme enhancement will also contribute to the maintenance of living institutional memory and knowledge management.

7. Open up the access to capacities and capacity building programmes to areas with security concerns through linking up with local and national organisations that have offices, networks and other infrastructural elements in those regions. Such cooperation would also lead to reduced effort duplication, sharing of various resources and develop future joint project ideas between the local, national and international capacities for peace consolidation and sustainable development.

8. Based on the existing national development strategy goals, initiate and develop capacity sharing and joint delivery mechanisms between Afghan government agencies and civil society organisations, bringing forward the technocratic resources available within the country. Joint state – civil sector cooperation will enhance Afghan ownership of peace consolidation and sustainable development, create mutual legitimacy of the two sectors, and reduce the dependency level on foreign capacities.

> *"If traditional mechanisms are recognized, people are more encouraged to speak out."*
> /International practitioner – interactive theatre for conflict resolution/

9. Acknowledge, accept and invite the cooperation of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms with modern, international ones, exploring the opportunity to select and utilize the most

[39] Developed from: Lisa Schirch, *Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security*, Kumarian Press, Boulder, 2013.

appropriate peace consolidation elements from the different mechanisms.

10. Invest further in the capacity development of marginalized groups such as women, children and youth, building on already efforts, in order to bring forward their extraordinary capacity to contribute to peace consolidation and development initiatives. Such effort may include: "long-term support and investment, creating safe spaces for […] participation; changing attitudes towards peace and valuing […] contributions; recognizing the diversity of […] experiences."[40]

11. Depending on the capacity building stage of the actor engaged with, there are 4 possibilities to be used for strengthening individual competencies, collective capabilities and overall capacities. These should be phased according to existing needs and available resources:
    a. Complement weak national government capabilities with resources from other/ neighbouring countries based on mutual agreement;
    b. Complement weak national government capabilities in cooperation with the different international and regional agencies also active in the country in question;
    c. Develop temporary capacities for short term results by attracting nationals from the diaspora with good technical skills and knowledge and suggesting their integration into senior government positions as managers and/ or advisers;
    d. Support and implement long term capacity building that builds on the existing internal resources and capabilities of the country, by focusing on wide-spread training programmes in all regions of the country in order to establish good leadership skills and create incentives for engagement.[41]

> *"Coordination and communication should be established to the highest level between international donors/ partners and the government of Afghanistan."*
> /Afghan activist/

12. Building relationships between the local, national and international actors contributing to peace consolidation and sustainable development will contribute to the reduction of siloed work approaches, enhance the possibility of cooperation towards cumulative impact, and show respect to the relationship oriented culture of Afghanistan. The process of relationship building can include the following steps:
    a. encountering – meeting/ discovery;
    b. mutual understanding and confidence building;
    c. joint problem analysis;
    d. cooperative problem solving and generating mutually acceptable outcomes;
    e. generating multiple options;
    f. practical strategies and implementations[42]

13. In order to reduce the negative effects of the high personnel turnover of international organisations managing funds and process development for the Afghan peace consolidation and development processes, and maintain a continuous relationship with their Afghan partners, it is advisable to increase and maintain institutional memory and knowledge management. This can be achieved among others though: updated databases on ongoing projects, funds and their results, archives on past projects and cooperation, efficient handover processes at the end of personnel mandates, progressive phasing-out of personnel, building on existing documented efforts and relationships, etc. Such mechanisms will also contribute to enhancing the capacity to jointly design, implement, monitor and evaluate peace consolidation and development project.

[40] Ivan Cardona, Patricia Justino, Becky, Mitchell and Catherine Müller, *From the ground up. Women's roles in local peacebuilding in Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sierra Leone*, ActionAid, Institute of Development Studies, Womankind, 2012, p. 8, http://www.womankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/09/From-The-Ground-Up-FINAL.pdf, accessed on the 27.02.2014.
[41] Recommendations developed based on Alastair J. McKechnie, "Building Capacity in Post-Conflict Countries" in *Capacity Enhancement Briefs. Sharing Best Practices and Lessons Learned*, World Bank Institute, 2004, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCDRC/Resources/CDBrief05.pdf, accessed on 01.03.2014.
[42] Adapted from: Amy L. Smith, David R. Smock, *Managing a Mediation Process*, USIP, Washington DC, 2008.

14. Customization of peace consolidation and development capacities and capacity building programmes to the contextual and cultural particularities of Afghanistan is important. Benefitting from cultural competency and proficiency entails an improved "capacity of people to increase their knowledge and understanding of cultural differences, ability to acknowledge cultural assumptions and biases, and willingness to make changes in thought and behavior to address those biases." [43]

15. Capacity building programmes should be language sensitive, making sure that they are available for those who are not proficient in English as well. Creating capacity multipliers who are Pashto and Dari speakers, developing resources and research papers in local dialects, offering co-facilitation and co-training opportunities between English and Pashto/ Dari experts are just some of the possibilities to open such access.

> *"Support for capacity building is needed, especially in support for university-educated young people who have been tasked to rebuild their country. They need assistance in finding a balance for their cultural norms, history, pride of country with their new place in the world market place. In addition, young Afghans need support in critical thinking as their country looks at exportable services and natural resources. Environmental issues, gender issues, etc."*
> /American INGO staff/

16. "The Afghan government should be supported for a few more years to be able to complete the socio-economic and political transition and as will have the support of international community to walk through the decade of transformation (2014-2024). I believe that Afghanistan should still enjoy the support of international community on institutional reform//building especially the law enforcement bodies (police and judiciary). Afghanistan should rethink about the free market (contextualize it) in order to make more economic growth, prosperity through supporting national product and creating job opportunity for youths. Trauma healing and trust building programs should be designed at the national level in order to create more national unity and decline ethnic tensions. Service provider agencies especially at the urban areas should receive more technical support to be able to provide services to their people as urbanization is rapidly growing in Afghanistan. The Afghan government along with international community and other actors should all work together to increase accountability, transparency and minimize corruption in the public sector that will foster peace and development process in Afghanistan."[44]

17. Peace education and peacebuilding should be progressively introduced into the Afghan formal education system, curricula and methodology at all levels.

18. All capacities and capacity building programmes should be evidence-based and demand-driven, taking into consideration the needs of the constituency/ community they engaged with, and the organisational challenges of the local/ national partners.

19. Integrate peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity and do not harm elements in all capacity building programmes that address any of the areas contributing to peace consolidation and sustainable development.

20. Institution and capacity building should "be given adaptive and open architectures to accommodate asymmetrical roles and development across the country and over time. Programmes should be oriented toward creating effective and viable alternatives to unsuitable aspects of the current governance arrangements; attempting to entirely replace such arrangements will only produce perverse outcomes."[45]

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[43] http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64076/ , accessed on 30.04.2014.
[44] Observation made by interviewed Afghan UN-HABITAT staff.
[45] Hamish Nixon, *Subnational State-Building in Afghanistan*, AREU, Kabul, 2008, p. v, http://areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/806E-Subnational%20State-Building-SP-print.pdf.pdf, accessed on 12.04.2014.

21. Work towards transparency in communicating peace consolidation and sustainable development needs, challenges, achievements and lessons learned among the different tracks of society, state and non-state actors. Develop accessible and trusted communication channels that can raise awareness and promote national and local dialogue on these issues.

22. Within the cooperation between international and national actors for peace consolidation and development, correlate the process of delivering aid through governmental institutions to local actors with the process of increasing capacity of the government to both manage the funds and oversee the programmes utilizing the funds.

23. Make sure that all capacity building programmes and capacities themselves have a human security approach, having at the center of policies and infrastructures the people of Afghanistan.[46]

[46] Yuji Uesugi, *Toward Bringing Stability in Afghanistan: A Review of the Peacebuilding Strategy*, IPSHU English Research Report Series No.24, p. 6, http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/heiwa/Pub/E24/yujiuesugied.pdf, accessed on 11.03.2014.

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