



Annex 5

Conversation with ...
Afghan National NGO workers

6 September 2011



TRANSCRIPT FROM EMAIL EXCHANGE

Partners of a British INGO in Afghanistan were encouraged to answer some of the same questions that were posed in a workshop setting with other groups, as a way to contribute to the conversation because they were unable to attend the workshops. The aim here is to represent their inputs verbatim; organisation names, however, have been removed.

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What examples of UK aid have you personally experienced or know about?

- » Alternative livelihoods
- » ARTF (NSP); also support in terms of coordination through Badak development forum, otherwise no direct funding at all
- » Change management in MAIL
- » Civil society support including Tawanmandi
- » Counter narcotics
- » CTAP
- » Developing programmes and support through the ARD cluster
- » DFID consultants focus groups
- » DFID is now trying to support a project of change management that would be implemented in various ministries
- » DFID-funded AG programming in Helmand
- » Election assessment mission
- » FCO-funded economic appraisals
- » From working in DFID it seemed that most funding channeled through PRTs and stabilisation unit
- » Governance and development projects
- » Helmand Growth Programme
- » Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Program
- » HRDAP (Helmand Rural Development and Agriculture Program)
- » Informal justice mapping assessment in Helmand
- » INVEST – vocational training in Helmand
- » Mostly focused on Helmand
- » NSP Community Development in Helmand Province
- » Over a long time I have worked with UK funded emergency projects, demining project, NGO supported projects, and government of Afghanistan projects; capacity building, training, has also been part of the experience
- » Peace Dividend Trust
- » Private sector development
- » Research on drivers of radicalization
- » Scholarships to Afghan students for masters degree (Chevining)
- » Training for business community
- » TVET
- » TVET partnership
- » UK aid is majorly involved in NSP project
- » What I have heard so far of UK's aid in Afghanistan is the one done through DFID

Looking back ... what lessons have you learned from past experience?

Aid distribution

- » Aid distribution largely based on politics rather than needs (i.e. Helmand)
- » Aid is not really targeted to what people need and want and there is very little consultation with real Afghans. When Afghans are consulted they are always powerful influential people who have only their own interests at heart.
- » Blurring of lines between development and military through PRTs
- » Earmarking districts and provinces not considering other areas that are equally poor
- » Focus on winning hearts and minds over development priorities
- » Fund is not coordinated with official government budget to meet the need accurately
- » Fund is very politicized
- » Little attention has been paid to gender empowerment projects
- » Little research is done by DfID to identify REAL priorities
- » Negative impacts of single province selection on UK reputation and community confidence and support
- » Political decision making over needs-based
- » Programmes determined by ideology rather than practical needs
- » Programmes not needs-based but dictated by British military interests
- » Should be focus on priority projects which will help the Afghan people directly, but instead most of the donor projects including UK's focus on short term solutions – should be equal attention to big and long-term tangible projects
- » Some funds are problematic as not according to the need of specific project and the government is not able to plan it accurately since it's less than need – at the end the fund is returned to donor
- » Theory that development can win heart and minds has proved wrong, particularly in areas where security is not good and there are more chances for corruption
- » UK aid office is militarized, representing themselves together with military at sub-national level (using military language and culture with local people)
- » UK fund is totally donor-driven instead of needs-driven which makes it less efficient and effective. There still strong dependency of Afghan institutions on UK or any other donors. The donors are not perfectly aware of ground situation. In humanitarian

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What examples of UK aid have you personally experienced or know about?

- » I have been working in the Community Rights Mobilization and Response project, which is a useful project. Through this project we have solved a lot of problems of women regarding their rights – the majority of our project women were illiterate and they did not know about their rights or how to submit their legally complaints to justice's office. Through this project, women became organised, literate and brave – many of them returned their legal difficulty to justice offices, issues like marriage by force, and marriage of children (under 18 age), obstacles against a widow's second marriage. This project is appreciated by Faryab province residents.
- » UK aid within 12 years is appreciable as by sound financial support of UK through our INGO partner we have been able to implement numerous emergency and development programs which resulted in the most major marginalised peoples accessing safe drinking water, protecting their homes by construction of protection wall, providing irrigation water through construction of Dams and rehabilitation of karizee with a positive impact as never before in the coverage areas.
- » We have implemented different projects funded by UK aids: 1) Emergency responses such as drought and cold mitigation, DRR Projects 2) Development projects such as livelihoods, safe drinking water supply, Environmental projects, cross-sectional issues such as advocacy, awareness, gender and health
- » As long as we know there have been projects on advocacy, peace building and conflict resolution, women affairs development

What lessons have you learned from past experience?

- » Afghans need three kinds of supports from UK; infrastructure development, capacity building and provision of jobs by implementation of proper projects to prevent people from displacing and migration and help to stable peace and insure socio-economic progress and education (Primary and High education)
- » In our British projects before when a need assessment carried out in a specific village they had three priorities: one - water supply, two - irrigation water, three - animal husbandry, but the donor only funded the first priority which is water supply. Our lesson learnt is to design the three priorities under

a project/program ranked by the people during the need assessment. Only then can such programs bring changes in a village level.

- » How to change the emergency project to development programs.
- » Community contribution is essential in program sustainability.
- » Since working with these projects we have obtained higher level of capacity, learned about systems and mechanisms working with transparency and accountability. Besides, we learned about international standards such as HAP and SPHERE.
- » If the question is from the past experience with the UK aid agencies; I would like to brief it into some words that, the flexibility of the donors and support in building capacity of the partners is one the important aspects.

What should the international community learn in preparation for 2014?

- » Last experiences are showed if the international support decreased or disrupted our country will be battered by terrorists and warlords and Afghanistan neighbouring countries, therefore International Community to learn about 2014 preparation need to:
- » Keeping good relation with all sides of Afghanistan case
- » Looking for Afghans real needs
- » Support Afghan military force and provide its needs
- » Funding to the which projects that projects be cause for stability and sustainability of Afghans socio-economic status
- » Design and support project according Afghan needs no politic needs
- » Extending education opportunity in whole Afghanistan
- » Extension of Agriculture
- » Using and exploring underground recourse as mines
- » Before 2014 the international community preparation should be focused on bringing peace in Afghanistan and the thinks should be considered that when we able to bring peace in Afghanistan to increase job opportunity by improving all sectors in Afghanistan such as Agriculture sector, health sector, social sector, economic sector and education sector. Further, proper coordination between Afghan Government and International community, in case of assistance, which is supposed to be donated by international community in all aspects.
- » We believe that the grassroots of all problems can be resolved through political interference in regional

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conflict of interests. Afghanistan has been the victim of conflict of interests of regional competition.

- » The international community should lay there policies and strategies in coordination and consultancy with Afghan specialists living in Afghanistan and has actual experience of existing problems.
- » As far as I think, in every community development starts from the basics. As per me education and educating is the most important aspects. Secondly, poverty can lead people to violence, so provision of jobs, provision of vocational and educational facilities are important in terms of development. People can reach to their desires once there is good governance, so people will have the opportunity to think about their future and initiate the ways for a better life; despite the political facts that prevents development in Afghanistan.

What is it like for you to live in Afghanistan today?

- » Proper job and peace and having education opportunity for children and young will be insuring our stay in Afghanistan
- » We like to serve marginalized community, by implementing emergency and development programs could be able to reduce poverty.
- » We are happy living in our country and serving our countrymen, but insecurity through insurgency has put our life in risk and there is not guarantee for living in complete security. Although we are hopeful, we have been suffering from long term war and instability.
- » Serving my people and country; despite all difficulties women face in Afghanistan.

How would you describe the international community's understanding of what it is like to live in Afghanistan today?

- » Afghanistan people are tolerating many difficulties and adversities from war during more than 32 years all infrastructures are destroyed, lack of skill, knowledge, financial resources are main obstacles against Afghanistan progress, Afghans, during Russian aggression and also during Internal war have been giving many sacrifices ,International community need to stay in Afghanistan to insure security in the American and Europeans countries, because, without peace in security and stability in Afghanistan, western countries will becoming

insecure, terrorist will be threatened these countries

- » They have to stay in Afghanistan not only for Afghans security, For human security as threat by Taliban and Al-Qaida, moreover the international community should make a phase out plan in case of sustainability of democracy, Afghan military support and reducing the poverty.
- » We appreciate international community's cooperation in helping Afghans to resolve problems. On the other hand, we would like to remind them of the fact that an ordinary Afghan, however illiterate, never likes to bring instability and insecurity in his country. This is regional political issues and the countries interested in this issues exporting war to Afghanistan. Therefore, the solution to the crises in our country should be through political interventions.
- » People of Afghanistan are happy by existence of international community beside the government; the international community considering the situation of Afghanistan must not leave this country in unstable situation. We believe that developments of Afghansitan today are because of existence of International community.

What are your long term ambitions and dreams for your life, family and friends?

- » Proper job opportunities, learning opportunity for children to improve skills and knowledge, peace and prevent Afghans from all types of conflicts, will be help us to meet our dreams on future
- » We wish all the best for our family and friends as they are comorting that we are working in a risk area, we wish peace all over the country and job opportunity for better living ant unity among the each other.
- » Security and stability in Afghanistan, poverty mitigation and eradication, law enforcement and justice for all, no discrimination against ethnicity, religious and gender issues
- » I personally want to get highly educated and live in a peaceful environment, of course see Afghanistan a developed country.

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What does it look like around December 2014?

- » Improving capacity of all ministries, organizations, existing strong Afghan force, continuation of International support in all needed sections will be return the stability in our country,
- » Peace and stability by support of International community
- » Rehabilitated infrastructures and progress toward sustainability,
- » Continuation of development project by support of UK government and developmental organizations and other country
- » Obliterating all kind of corruption,
- » Having good governance in national level
- » Currently the responsibilities transition ongoing well, further we hope have more success in this process as never before. Furthermore implementing of development program by government and NGOS can insure peace as well as improve unity and reduce poverty.
- » Related to international community and Afghan Government. We are optimistic that the conditions get better. However, current states show that it might not get better.
- » The situation still does not seem stable, but let us hope for better.

What are the big issues you must overcome in the meantime?

- » Security
- » Lack of education opportunity
- » Leave of international community and forget Afghanistan without developmental plan and support for Afghanistan progress
- » Our police and army should be increased, equipped and empowered it should be considered the public benefits.
- » Economic condition improved
- » Job opportunity available for the jobless people
- » Infrastructures projects accomplished⁵
- » To invest on the resources of Afghanistan
- » Security issues, lack of law enforcement (injustice), corruption, low capacity and illiteracy
- » The country requires Security, education, improved economy and good governance for the first stage

What can the international community do to help?

- » Support for Afghanistan stability(improve and equip Afghan all relevant Forces)
- » Support peace building activities
- » Continuation of developmental project according Afghans needs
- » Helping to build capacity of government and civil society organizations
- » Obliterate corruptions and help to improve Afghans style structures and formations
- » Developing community base formations
- » Insuring involvement of Community in the all country affairs
- » Spending money according Afghans priorities
- » Continuing their assistance in Afghanistan
- » Physical and financial support of Afghan government, NGOs and civil societies
- » Removing corruption among the afghan government.
- » To improve law in Afghanistan
- » Intervene to resolve regional political and conflicting issues and working on infrastructures
- » The international community must consider the above mentioned issues.

Why should they help?

- » If the International community do not help Afghanistan, our country will be falling in the unpleasant condition, conflict and war will be returned to Afghanistan as before of 2001-2002, may be this condition will be effected the current life status in western countries, stability in Afghanistan will be insure progress and peace in the world, also Afghanistan people help to western countries to broke USSR during cool war, now Afghanistan is become the field of competition of foreign countries, which country will be conquered to support stability and peace in Afghanistan.
- » To finish war in Afghanistan
- » To bring peace
- » Improve human security
- » Decreasing poverty
- » To facilitate job opportunity
- » To handle Afghanistan recourses

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- » To support democracy, human right and gender equality
- » To cope against cultivating and trafficking poppy
- » Afghanistan is a member of international community and must be helped. Besides, bad situation in Afghanistan will affect international community.
- » To save the humanity and end-up the violence

