MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF AFGHANISTAN

London Roundtable - 16th December 2015

REPORT WRITTEN BY LINDSAY ALEXANDER

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BAAG
BRITISH & IRISH AGENCIES AFGHANISTAN GROUP

About BAAG (www.baag.org.uk)

The British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) is a unique advocacy network with 29 current members. BAAG's vision is to contribute to an environment where Afghans can take control of their own development and bring about a just and peaceful society. We seek to put our vision into practice by:

- Bringing member agencies and the wider relief and development community together to advocate for continued international commitment to the development of Afghanistan;
- Sharing information and knowledge to improve policy debate and decision-making processes with a particular emphasis on ensuring that those processes reflect the views, needs and aspirations of the Afghan people; and
- Enhancing the abilities of Afghan civil society in influencing national and international policies on Afghanistan.

About the Media4development programme

Funded by the European Commission, Media4Development is a three year programme delivered by a consortium of eight non-government and media organisations: Mondo (Estonia), Estonian Public Broadcasting Company, People in Need (Czech Republic), MVRO (Slovakia), Green Liberty (Latvia), House of Europe (Lithuania), Finnish Foundation for Media & Development VIKES (Finland) and BAAG (UK/Ireland). The programme's overall objective is to inform and raise the awareness of EU citizens about global interdependencies and aid challenges. Specifically it engages the national media and policy makers in EU member states so that they may better inform their citizens about global interdependencies and challenges of the post-2015 development framework.

About RUSI

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) is an independent think tank engaged in cutting edge defence and security research. A unique institution, founded in 1831 by the Duke of Wellington, RUSI embodies nearly two centuries of forward thinking, free discussion and careful reflection on defence and security matters.

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About the report writer

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INTRODUCTION

"Flights from Kabul to Europe and buses to the Iranian border are getting busier. Schengen, Turkish and Iranian visa applications are on the rise. Whole families are now selling up and moving out. Second-hand furniture stores in Afghan cities are full and house prices are falling as properties flood the market" (roundtable participant).

There are 10 million refugees globally today. Over the past few decades there has been a massive increase in movement of people from fragile and conflict-affected states. European governments appear to be struggling to keep up with this 'tide', and public confidence in them to manage the challenges that come with it is low. As one participant argued, "At present, the West is employing a sticking plaster approach to deal with the problem by taking in refugees and supporting containment in the Middle East. This is not enough."

It is within this context that the Migration and Development Roundtable, hosted by BAAG and RUSI in London on 16th December 2015, tried to address the following questions:

1. In the context of western interventions in fragile states, what role can development play in reducing extremism, crisis-driven displacement or migration; and what are its limits?
2. With a large youth bulge in Afghanistan facing worsening security and economic prospects, what implications do differing perceptions of Western intervention in this group have on both extremist ideologies and decisions to leave the country?

The Roundtable was attended by 24 participants from think tanks, academia, NGOs and the UK Government (FCO and DFID), representing a wide range of sectoral expertise.

This report aims to present some of the key discussion points and recommendations that came out of the roundtable for consideration by policymakers and development practioners. While the focus of the roundtable, and this report, is largely on Afghanistan, many of the discussion points have wider application for engagement in all fragile states.

NOTE: For the purpose of this report, the term 'migrant' covers anyone who has moved for social, security, political or economic reasons, thus including asylum seekers/refugees and economic migrants.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Europe is struggling with the largest migrant influx since World War II, and fears are being raised that 'the West is employing a sticking plaster approach to deal with the problem by taking in refugees and supporting containment in the Middle East.' (roundtable participant). The BAAG and RUSI Roundtable on Migration and Development explored the causes of Afghan migration and asked why development efforts in Afghanistan are failing the Afghan people.

The **push factors within Afghanistan**, of insecurity, bad governance and economic issues, are more compelling migration determinants than the pull factors of Europe.

However, **social media and global family networks** are also providing information to Afghans about life in Europe and the possibilities of asylum seeking. In contrast, Europe's reputation as a safe haven may be questioned as media reports of xenophobia and attacks on migrants reach Afghanistan.

Significant numbers of Afghan **refugees and migrants are young men**, often sent by their families to secure incomes and a home for members of their family. **Afghanistan is losing its best and brightest**, with large numbers of educated, urban young men leaving. In addition, families who fled to and settled in countries including Iran and Pakistan are adding to the numbers of **secondary migrants**. Facing increasing hostility in these host countries, and

insufficient repatriation and reintegration support in Afghanistan, these groups now turn to Europe.

Those who remain in Afghanistan are often the poorest. As the economic and security situation deteriorates, some consider joining the ranks of the insurgents. This is more often for income and protection reasons than ideological ones.

The **response of host countries in Europe** has raised concerns. Whilst their media are seen to stoke the fire of **xenophobia**, so far their **domestic policies appear unable to address** the economic burden of immigrants and address the root causes of crisis migration.

Western development approaches struggle to achieve meaningful results in Afghanistan and other fragile states **where insecurity and poor governance hinder nearly every activity**. The wider-reaching state-building approach, focused on governance institutions, delivery of basic services and protection of basic human rights, is also failing to deliver the desired results.

Participants discussed the merits and challenges of **integrating Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and development approaches**. Both can aim to limit involvement in extremism by seeking to promote good governance, human rights, basic service delivery and rule of law.

But wider flaws in these current approaches were raised, which include: better understanding the **cultural and social dimensions** that predicate Afghans towards militancy and extremism; addressing **regional influences in radicalisation**; the **ethnicisation** of politics and perpetuated ethnic divisions; the **economy of conflict** which sees some groups benefit from maintaining the status quo; and guarding against **unintended consequences** when working with certain groups.

Recommendations:

Building security for all

- Civil society and the international community need be more aware of, and directly address the root causes of conflict. In Afghanistan, this includes examining the issue of ethnicity;
- Build a hierarchy of interventions. This includes preventing extremism through building the basic conditions for peace, addressing grievances and on-going impacts of violence as they arise, and supporting multi-track diplomacy;
- Better understand localised economies of conflict by looking at how business and criminal groups can contribute to and/or benefit from a war economy;
- Reduce the over-emphasis on the military approaches to counter-extremism and, in Afghanistan, approach it as a product of cultural and social factors;
- Supervise the higher education curriculum, develop stricter monitoring controls on mullahs and madrassas in Afghanistan and the wider region;

Creating more & better jobs

- Take heed of long term goals but also ensure that there are immediate, visible gains. Focus, for example, on building and supporting small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) while investing in future riches through resource extraction or massive infrastructure projects;
- Build working economic alternatives to migration and extremism by prioritising investment in a viable economic framework for SMEs, and work on transitioning the workforce from working in micro-enterprises to SMEs;
- Better manage public expectations by redressing the imbalance between vocational training and employment opportunities;

Doing development differently (conflict-sensitive aid):

- Reconsider how social and cultural concepts around development are designed and introduced within each local context. A more listening, collective approach is needed that allows time for change at a pace acceptable to the community;
- Work out who to work with across all actors to a conflict, but learn from history and be aware of unintended consequences;
- Share more detailed lessons of work in global coalitions to convince others to consider more closely the links between CVE and development; and
- Consider the implications for ODA of rapid urbanisation, and increased reintegration and resettlement of refugees in fragile and conflict-affected states.

1. MIGRATION CAUSES, TRENDS & IMPACTS: AFGHANISTAN CASE STUDY

"There is a lot of media coverage in Europe about the 'surge' but little is known about the origins of where people move from or who they are. Some are long-term (Afghan) refugees from Iran and Pakistan. This includes single men, families and unaccompanied minors" (roundtable participant).

According to the roundtable experts, since the withdrawal of international combat troops in 2014, more people are leaving Afghanistan, from a wider range of backgrounds and for longer. This is despite state building and development efforts over the past 15 years.

The roundtable participants drew on their experiences from Afghanistan to assess the causes and impacts of migration, as well as the possible rationale behind choices of migration and recruitment to extremist groups. As one participant asked, "What separates one individual who migrates, from another that joins an extremist group?" Should the Afghan and international governments' support focus on development and economic progress or countering extremist ideologies?

1.1. Why do migrants leave?

The roundtable participants agreed that push factors from within Afghanistan, rather than pull factors from Europe, are by far the most significant cause for migration amongst Afghans. Despite the political and security transition in 2014 (or perhaps because of), hope for the future of Afghanistan is dwindling both in and outside the country. In 2015, according to the Asia Foundation, only 37 per cent of Afghans felt that the country was moving in the right direction (compared to 55 per cent in 2014).[1]

Insecurity and bad governance were deemed the most significant causes for displacement from Afghanistan itself, though economic drivers and other social problems were also key, especially for secondary migration. Secondary migrants, one participant argued, "tend to move first for security reasons, and then again for economic purposes". The core causes for migration were identified as follows:

Insecurity

Thirty-five of 398 Afghan districts were under Taliban control in October 2015, with another 35 contested by the group[2]. There are widespread perceptions that security is deteriorating and militants of various groups are gaining ground, argued the participants.

Weak governance

Since the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), confidence in the Government has fallen, and protests demonstrate the growing expectations and frustrations of Afghans. Late September 2015, for example, saw the fall of Kunduz to Taliban forces, whilst Afghan youth stormed the Presidential Palace in November during a mass protest demanding better security from the Government. The current power-sharing Government are also seen to, "represent the mafia, power and wealth in Afghanistan" where the ethnicisation of politics and business inhibits equal access to power and jobs.[3]

Un/Under-employment and the youth bulge

Participants reflected that unemployment is at 50 per cent in Afghanistan causing huge frustrations, particularly among Afghanistan's growing youth bulge.[4] As one participant argued, "With 400,000 to 500,000 youths coming onto the job market every year, education is wasted". The high unemployment rate, rising population and youth bulge has also, one participant reported, driven up crime.

Raised expectations

These frustrations have only been magnified by the significant rise in expectations among Afghans over the past decade, triggered by a growth in awareness of their rights and exposure to global standards of living. "Whereas a decade ago, a man would have been happy with an old Chinese bicycle, now he expects a Toyota car" (roundtable participant).

1 Afghanistan in 2015: A Survey of the Afghan People, Asia Foundation, 2015.

2 Contested means the Government may control the district centre, but little else, and the Taliban controls all or many other areas, The Long War Journal, October 2015.

3 Patronage continues to influence political appointments, as reported in Foreign Policy on 29th September 2015, NUG one year on: Struggling to govern.

4 Central Statistics Organisation reported unemployment in 2015 as 40 per cent, though economists consider it closer to 50 per cent when the large number of underemployed are added.

Global communications

The explosion in global communications was identified by roundtable participants as a key pull factor for Afghan migrants. This includes, one participant noted, "uncles who Facebook from Turkey, and cousins who Snapchat from Germany." After all, according to one participant, 62 per cent of Afghans now own a television and 30 per cent have access to social media, rising to 60 per cent of youth in urban areas (Asia Foundation, 2015).

Chances & perceptions of asylum

Increased communications and global family networks have also demonstrated to those back home the likelihood and benefits of successfully claiming asylum. One participant argued this point by stating that, in 2015, 70 per cent of Afghan asylum applications in Europe were accepted[5], and only 40 per cent of those that failed were deported. This has impacts on perceptions back home when weighing up risk. However, one participant stated that as attacks on immigrants in Europe and the US are reported, this may change perceptions in Afghanistan of the West as a safe haven.

Overall, the workshop participants agreed that current migration trends look set to stay as their causes remain unaddressed.

1.2. Who goes?

"Afghan families are pragmatic and hedge their bets by sending one family member abroad to build assets and networks before whole families are moved" (roundtable participant).

The majority of migrants to Europe from Afghanistan are single, educated, young men from urban areas[6]. Some of these men have worked with the international forces, governments or NGOs in Afghanistan. Whilst this may put them at risk of targeting by extremists at home, it has also (in the case of the US and German governments) provided more favourable odds for securing visas.[7]

Nevertheless, families from all income backgrounds are increasingly sending their sons to Europe as basic survival strategies. The number of families and unaccompanied minors travelling to Europe is also increasing[8]. These groups, argued the participants, are commonly secondary refugees, who have already been long-term refugees in Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. As Pakistan and Iran's stance on Afghan refugees becomes increasingly hostile, fewer Afghans are likely to consider it an option to migrate or remain there. Furthermore, despite efforts by the UNHCR and regional powers to support voluntary repatriation for Afghan refugees in the region, continued insecurity and limited livelihoods in Afghanistan has made this difficult.[9]

Of those migrants who have been forcibly returned from Europe to Afghanistan, anecdotal evidence from one participant claimed the majority return back to Europe. This is in spite of memories of the perilous journey the first time. This is particularly the case for the 18 to 24 year old age group.

1.3. Who stays?

Participants agreed that it tends to be the poorest who stay or who are internally displaced within Afghanistan. These are the people who do not have the resources or social networks to move. As a result, they can be vulnerable to criminality and extremist groups as their coping strategies are limited. This supports one participant's proposition that, "the majority of recruits in Afghanistan have joined militant groups for basic survival needs, rather than for ideological reasons".

However, the participants recognised that linking the causes of extremism to poverty alone risks over-simplifying a complex issue. That is, attraction to extremist groups is not a binary relationship between those that can and those that cannot leave. One participant argued, for example, that the strong social and cultural dimensions of extremism in Afghanistan are under-estimated. Another argued that it should not be assumed that poverty alleviation reduces inequality as a potential cause of extremist recruitment.

1.4. With what implications?

There are many benefits to migration such as increased education and income (through remittances), industrialisation and a softening of narrow identities (including through urbanisation).

5 Almost half of the 135,200 asylum applicants to EU Member States during the third quarter of 2015 were accepted (i.e. granted a type of protection status). Syrians have received by far the highest number of protection statuses in the EU Member States; ninety per cent of Syrians who applied were recognised. This is compared to 2,700 Afghans, or 70 per cent of those who applied (Asylum Quarterly Report, December 2015, Eurostat).

6 Afghanistan in 2015: A Survey of the Afghan People, The Asia Foundation, 2015.

7 Between 2007 and 2015, the US State Department awarded 14,963 Special Immigration Visas to Iraqi and Afghans employed for, or on behalf of, the US Government, and a further 22,814 visas for their dependents (Immigrant Visa Statistics, Bureau of Consular Affairs, US Department of State, 2015)

8 The number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the EU has increased steadily since 2010, reaching a total of 24,075 in 2014, or 4 per cent of the total number of applicants. Most of these minors are 16 to 17 year old boys from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria, Somalia, The Gambia and Morocco (European Migration Network Synthesis Report: Policies, practices and data on unaccompanied minors in the EU Member States and Norway, European Commission, May 2015).

9 Of the 2.6 million Afghan refugees around the world, around 95 per cent are hosted by Iran and Pakistan. In 2012, the Pakistan, Iranian and Afghan Governments, with UNHCR support, agreed the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees aimed at supporting voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration.

There are also both perceived and actual threats from migration such as loss of intellectual and skilled labour, the export of extremism, and increased inequality and conflict as host-country resources are shared and redistributed. These benefits and threats need to be better understood and harnessed for greater global security and development.

1.4.1. Country of Origin

Outward migration is denying Afghanistan its best and brightest. Participants argued that until there are jobs and opportunities to keep Afghans at home, the brain drain will continue. This will only weaken Afghan governance and may impact the countering of traditional, often highly conservative, views and practices.

Remittances from migrants were not deemed to have the positive economic contribution that they have in other countries in the region. Afghans, it was argued, are unable to compete with the significant and better-educated Nepali, Indian and Pakistani international labour force.

The participants also highlighted that the pace of urbanisation is also symptomatic of displacement. While some internationals view it positively as part of the industrialisation process, among many Afghans it is seen as a product of forced internal displacement for the poorest, resulting in lost tribal land, ethnic identity and increased criminality. Furthermore, with the rise in the (often forced) return of refugees, particularly from the region, there is increased pressure on urban areas and growing need to support the reintegration and resettlement of refugees in Afghanistan.

1.4.2. Host Countries

Following the Paris attacks in particular, there has been a rise in xenophobia and attacks on immigrants from the right in host countries in Europe. In Finland, for example, since 32,476 asylum seekers were registered in 2015, 14 asylum centres have been attacked. One participant argued this perceived fear is only being stoked by media outlets over-emphasising crimes supposedly committed by refugees and migrants, whilst those individuals who romanticise Nazism "that carry out these attacks (on Finnish asylum centres) are not called 'terrorists' in the press".

This is just one example of the conflation of issues related to asylum, migration and terrorism in some public attitudes and the media in Europe.

One participant asked why the media are not showing the root causes of migration. To do this, it was argued, the media needs to change how it reports on 'the South' by ensuring ethical reporting practices are observed and more foreign news reporters and experts speak to migrants and ideally also to their families/communities in their place of origin.

This perceived public threat is also reflected in national policy in some countries as new asylum regulations have been brought in. It was also noted that while most host countries are reluctant to send asylum seekers home due to concerns for their safety and well-being, the immigrants that stay are not supported to work or integrate. This can result in immigrants being attracted to criminality, perpetuating community disharmony.

The declining public confidence in European governments to deal with the problem was also recognised as an issue of concern. This includes managing the economic burden of immigrants and addressing the root causes. It was agreed that the efforts of European governments to communicate a strategic response to these crises needs to be improved. This includes communicating the importance and implications for overseas development spending in this regard.

2. POLICY ANALYSIS: IS DEVELOPMENT AID AN APPROPRIATE TOOL FOR REDUCING MIGRATION AND EXTREMISM, AND WHAT ARE ITS LIMITS?

"Policy-makers are looking towards development funding for home-based initiatives in response to migration" (roundtable participant)[10]

While there were inevitable challenges resulting from data gaps, there was universal agreement amongst roundtable participants that insecurity, economic inequality and failed governance in countries of origin are the key drivers for the movement of people globally. Recognising that host countries and communities are struggling to absorb these population shifts, the participants then asked why development has failed to address these key causes. After all, if European governments are unable to evidence the impact of their overseas interventions, then should their public not expect those resources to be diverted (e.g. to support host communities in absorbing immigrants)?

There was agreement amongst the roundtable participants that many development approaches are ineffective in conflict-affected countries. As one participant put it, "When looking at environments where there is such high insecurity (and no accountable governance), development goals cannot be fulfilled." Development, in isolation, cannot provide meaningful alternatives to recruitment by extremists or incentives for populations to remain in their country of origin. For the past decade the international response to this challenge, in Afghanistan and other fragile states, has been to take a state/nation-building approach, focused on building governance institutions for delivery of basic services and protection of basic human rights. However, the participants argued that this international approach too has failed. So now what?

Integrate lessons from CVE and development approaches

Many suggested that lessons could be learned and better shared from integrated countering violent extremism (CVE) and development approaches, such as those piloted by the UK Government, the EC, US and Canadian Governments.

One participant highlighted that the response of development actors to violent extremism has so far focused, fairly singularly, on tackling only the drivers of radicalisation and recruitment. Instead, it was argued, analysis of how development actors can engage with CVE points to the need for a hierarchy of interventions.

The most significant contribution development can make, it was argued is preventative, by seeking to limit involvement in violent extremism through promoting good governance, human rights, development and rule of law. This represents the bottom layer of interventions, and seeks to address the basic building blocks for a peaceful society. This overlaps with the second layer, which seeks to address both the grievances that have driven people into violent extremism, as well as the impact of violent extremism. The top of the hierarchy is the most difficult and relies on multi-track diplomacy and careful timing. Negotiating with strategic groups, diminishing support for utopian groups and catching breakaway groups at this level has the greatest potential for transformation, it was argued.

It was also noted, however, how cautious development practitioners remain to linking CVE with development approaches, due to the perceived risks of securitising aid, undermining development aims and increasing risks to beneficiaries and staff.

Better understand the social and cultural dimensions of Afghanistan

It was argued that most CVE initiatives are proving counter-productive in Afghanistan as they have missed the socialisation and cultural dimensions that predicate its society towards militancy and extremism. This includes how education has, and is being delivered in Afghanistan. The higher education system and madrassas (including for girls) are a major source of extremist thinking and mullahs are unchecked in how they preach. Of the 250,000 mullahs in Afghanistan, the majority are unregistered, noted one participant.

Many participants argued that western-influenced concepts around nationhood, statebuilding and gender have also threatened the identities of some Afghans. As one participant argued, entering a village and telling people that they must liberate their women or accept different ways of governing

10 November saw international media reporting that Sweden was considering a 60 per cent cut to its overseas development budget and redirecting much of this to address rising migrant numbers.

themselves is threatening, especially when villagers already feel insecure. Participants stressed the need to reconsider how social and cultural concepts around development are designed and introduced within each local context. A more listening, collective and peacebuilding approach is needed that allows time for change at a pace acceptable to the community.

Several participants argued that significant numbers of recruits in Afghanistan have joined militant groups for basic survival needs, rather than for ideological reasons. These needs might include access to basic services, to protection or the need to belong. As one participant asked, "How many of these extremists are absolutely convinced and how many have joined because they have no other choice?" From anecdotal evidence, one participant suggested that, "the irrecuperables are a very small percentage."[11]

Address regional dimensions to radicalisation

The participants also argued that policy-makers need to take greater heed of various regional/international factors. For example, there are massive, Saudi-sponsored radicalisation programmes as part of Hajj visits from Afghanistan to Mecca. These people return to their local communities to spread radical views. The impact of these programmes needs to be better monitored, argued the participants, and stricter monitoring controls on mullahs are needed.

"Address the ethnicity issue before it raises its ugly head"

All the participants agreed that civil society and internationals need to tackle community grievances resulting from the 'ethnicity issue'.[12] There are perceptions that Pashtuns, Tajiks and Hazaras are respectively prioritised in Government and NGO recruitment, whilst little is known about how the benefits of aid are spread across ethnic groups.

Linked to this, transitional justice at the national level, it was argued, needs to be given more attention: "Peace has been prioritised over justice. Yet we have neither." The fact that western-led, state-building processes have left power in the hands of those that are "anti-state and disloyal to human rights or democracy" only maintains old power structures and grievances.

Stop building people up to fail

Donor-funded development initiatives have not helped to build a working economic alternative to extremism and migration but instead have raised unachievable expectations, argued the participants. Millions of dollars have been pumped into vocational training programmes with few opportunities of getting a job at the end of it. This only drives frustration, and hence migration and support for extremist alternatives. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), one participant argued, are important for job creation, particularly in contexts where there is no large-scale foreign investment and the main source of salaried work is in the NGO sector. Yet, SMEs have received little support from the Government or international community.

Better understand the Economy of Conflict

Some argued that it is too simplistic to say that solutions are just about addressing poverty and unemployment. One participant cautioned, for example, "Do not assume that development means inequality is reduced." Another participant stressed the need to better understand what drives conflict amongst the middle layer of society ('above the foot soldiers'). This might include looking at how business and criminal groups can contribute to and/or benefit from a war economy.[13] Whether this participation is inadvertent or active, there is a business and/or criminal interest in maintaining a conflict status quo.

Keep a long term perspective to guard against unintended consequences

Several participants suggested that CVE approaches still do not overcome the challenge of who to work with or channel ODA through without reinforcing elite capture, corruption and inequality. One participant urged caution towards an overly pragmatic approach and too narrow a historical and global perspective. He reminded the roundtable that in the past the British and others have actively supported 'moderate-radical' regimes that have used theology for political ends, with disastrous consequences. Another argued that, "working with the devil is difficult but sometimes we have to."

11 Child and underage recruitment is also evident, with recent research showing that 'in the case of Kunduz province where fighting has been the most fierce in recent months, families have been forced to offer up young sons to the local armed groups.' Briefing on the situation of underage recruitment and use of children by armed forces and insurgent groups in Afghanistan, Child Soldiers International, June 2015

12 Between 2013 and 2015, there has been an increase in people citing ethnicity as their core representation of identity in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, being Afghan, followed by being a Muslim, remain the primary two aspects of identity, above ethnicity (The Asia Foundation, 2015).

13 This could include, for example, a business benefiting from a war economy due to lack of regulation or law enforcement, a business inadvertently contributing to a war economy by paying protection bribes or active participation in a war economy through people or drugs smuggling.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS: ADDRESSING THE CAUSES OF MIGRATION AND EXTREMISM

In October 2016, the Afghan leadership and international community will meet in Brussels to commit to aid funding in Afghanistan beyond 2017. However, with increased domestic pressures resulting from the migration 'surge' in Europe, there may be pressure on donors to review long term ODA spending in conflict-affected countries, especially where there is limited demonstrable impact on the ground.

The participants at the BAAG/RUSI Migration and Development Roundtable agreed that development aid struggled to help people build their lives at home in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, they still felt development has its place in finding workable solutions to global poverty, insecurity and forced displacement. In Afghanistan they argued that this meant doing development differently, and prioritising insecurity and un/under-employment as the drivers of both extremism and migration. Their recommendations to the Afghan Government and civil society, international donors and development practitioners were as follows:

Building security for all

- Civil society and the international community need be more aware of, and directly address the root causes of conflict. In Afghanistan, this includes examining the issue of ethnicity;
- Build a hierarchy of interventions. This includes preventing extremism through building the basic conditions for peace, addressing grievances and on-going impacts of violence as they arise, and supporting multi-track diplomacy;
- Better understand localised economies of conflict by looking at how business and criminal groups can contribute to and/or benefit from a war economy;
- Reduce the over-emphasis on the military approaches to counter-extremism and, in Afghanistan, approach it as a product of cultural and social factors;
- Supervise the higher education curriculum, develop stricter monitoring controls on mullahs and madrassas in Afghanistan and the wider region;

Creating more & better jobs

- Take heed of long term goals but also ensure that there are immediate, visible gains. Focus, for example, on building and supporting small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) while investing in future riches through resource extraction or massive infrastructure projects;
- Build working economic alternatives to migration and extremism by prioritising investment in a viable economic framework for SMEs, and work on transitioning the workforce from working in micro-enterprises to SMEs;
- Better manage public expectations by redressing the imbalance between vocational training and employment opportunities;

Doing development differently (conflict-sensitive aid):

- Reconsider how social and cultural concepts around development are designed and introduced within each local context. A more listening, collective approach is needed that allows time for change at a pace acceptable to the community;
- Work out who to work with across all actors to a conflict, but learn from history and be aware of unintended consequences;
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