PSRP Phase One Projects

Afghanistan

What?
This project considered how negotiations and initiatives to advance national reconciliation in Afghanistan have shaped the political settlement. Afghanistan’s political settlement reflects contrasting priorities and perspectives of different types of actors, including customary institutions, recently established civil society organizations, the Afghan state, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), international aid agencies, and insurgent and criminal networks. It has a large rural population with traditional forms of governance. This has resulted in a new elite of self-appointed warlords and local militias, which have eroded the authority of jirgas in administering disputes. Afghanistan has also seen shifting international responses as to which elites should be bargained with (the process in the early 1990s focused on the Taliban, while the recent process excluded them).

How?
Project research methodology was active and participatory in assessing different elements of Afghanistan’s political settlement, and its relationship with negotiation processes. The research identified options to work with local organizations in order to build mutual capacity: a joint analysis stakeholder workshop; first hand documentation of at least 20 selected case studies of initiatives to support transition in Afghanistan; and development of applied participatory learning to include a joint stakeholder policy learning workshop, using Conciliation Resources ‘Accord’ methodology.

Why?
Afghanistan is an important case study in understanding the relationship between the international conflict, internal conflict, legal regimes and division which shaped post-conflict interventions. It demonstrates how a range of multi-departmental military, development and foreign policy responses interact to affect political settlements. Moreover, gender equality has been used both as a justification for military intervention, and as a key international focus for reconstruction. The project also aids understanding of how international and external actors attempt transformation in practice.

Who?
Jonathan Cohen, Zahbia Yousuf, and Alexander Ramsbottom (Conciliation Resources)

Key Publications

For a full list of publications, search our publications database.