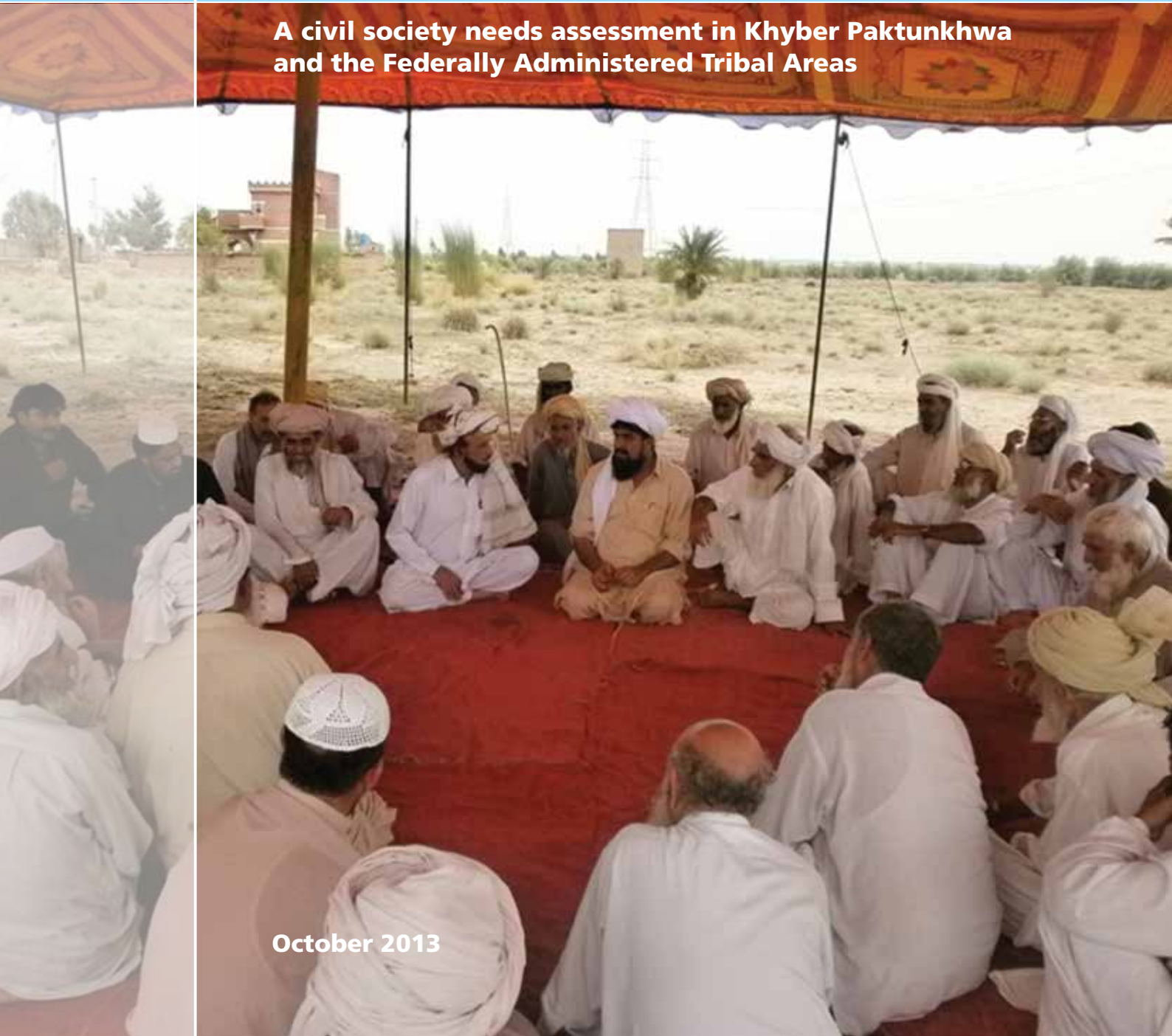


**CAMP (Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme)
and Saferworld**

Promoting participatory approaches to peacebuilding

**A civil society needs assessment in Khyber Paktunkhwa
and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas**



October 2013



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Glossary

Hujra A place for guests and gatherings of the male population in the Pakhtun community.

Jirga A traditional method of community-based mediation among Pakhtun communities, it refers to the practice and to the institution. A *Jirga* is a gathering of elders among Pakhtuns, convened by an intermediary between contesting parties, to hear the arguments of the parties.

Madrassa Arabic word for 'school' (any type of school). In Pakistan this refers to a religious school.

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Pakistan



This map is intended for illustrative purposes only. Saferworld takes no position on whether this representation is legally or politically valid.

Acronyms

CAMP	Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
CSO	Civil society organisation	PCNA	Post-Crisis Needs Assessment
EDO	Executive District Officer	PKR	Pakistani rupees
EU	European Union	SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IDP	Internally displaced person	UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
INGO	International non-governmental organisation	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IT	Information technology	USAID	US Agency for International Development
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa		
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation		

Executive summary

PAKISTAN'S NORTH-WESTERN REGIONS of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have emerged as key conflict zones. Instability and underdevelopment have paved the way for the crisis unfolding in this region, with some capitalising on the frustrations of local communities by pushing conflict and insurgency. Alongside domestic problems, the conflict in Afghanistan perpetuates a regular flow of militants between Afghanistan and Pakistan, contributing to instability by spreading extremist ideologies and increasing the risk and incidence of violence in KP and FATA. In this context, it is challenging for national, let alone international, non-government organisations (NGOs) to operate; so local civil society organisations (CSOs) have stepped into this space, providing a range of essential services and support to local communities, with limited external backing. This report presents findings from local CSO perceptions in KP and FATA, to assess the needs of these organisations.

Acute insecurity and instability are now characteristic of north-west Pakistan and exacerbate already pressing safety needs, particularly among vulnerable groups including children and women. There is a high mortality rate in the region, with more than 10,000 civilian deaths reported in 2010, and a high incidence of displacement – approximately 800,000 people displaced between 2009 and 2011. Poverty resulting from unemployment (which has also led to a growing illicit economy), natural disasters, and constraints on access to basic services such as food, shelter, and medical care have all increased violence and instability. Longstanding economic deprivation (there are economic disparities when compared with national standards) and the associated weak human development indicators are compounded by a systemic failure by the state to protect citizens' basic rights.

The aim of this report, which details perceptions of local CSOs, is to identify how these non-state actors can contribute to peacebuilding efforts in the north-west of Pakistan. These are regions that national and international organisations find difficult to access, so long-term peacebuilding work would necessarily involve building the capacity of these local organisations. By identifying the challenges in the work being carried out, there is an opportunity to shape the character and work of CSOs in KP and FATA, in order to produce context-specific and efficient peacebuilding approaches. The report also provides practical recommendations to build CSOs' capacity and promote their strengths in this field. In order to do so, the assessment seeks to establish a baseline of the peacebuilding capacity of the local CSOs.

Scope and Methodology

Given the focus on participatory approaches to peacebuilding, the needs assessment engaged exclusively with community-based local CSOs in KP and FATA. A sample of 121 CSOs was selected from seven agencies in FATA and seven districts in KP,¹ with research being carried out between April and September 2012 (and an additional validation workshop being carried out in July 2013). The criteria for selection was that they were community-based local CSOs operating in KP and FATA with at least one to two years' experience in implementing peacebuilding or conflict resolution-related projects. It was also important that there was representation of ethnic and religious minorities and women and youth.

This assessment builds upon the recommendations of the Post-Crisis Needs Assessment (PCNA)² and forms part of a wider project funded by the European Union (EU) which aims to promote and develop participatory approaches to peacebuilding initiatives in KP and FATA. The assessment will initially inform the development of a 'Training of Trainers' manual on people-focused peacebuilding that will be used by CAMP and Saferworld to train 70 selected CSOs in KP and FATA, enhancing their expertise and knowledge of key issues in the field of peacebuilding. This training will enable the development and implementation of community-driven initiatives for peace, where these CSOs will work jointly with communities to identify pressing conflict concerns and barriers to peace, and develop and implement action plans to address these concerns jointly with local and national authorities. The overall purpose is to enhance community participation in peacebuilding activities as a precondition for sustainable peacebuilding.³ To this end, the assessment analyses the CSOs' capacities to promote community participation.

By necessity there were constraints on this research: the intention was to measure local capacities for peacebuilding, and so the structural and skills-based aspects were the main focus. In addition, though 121 local CSOs were canvassed, it is not clear how many similar organisations operate in the north-west of the country, and so less well-known organisations may have been excluded from this research. For this reason, the data refers only to the participating CSOs. In addition, although local CSO staff interviewed members of their communities and they were assured of confidentiality, it is possible that the regional security concerns may have shaped their responses.

Key Findings

Organisational

The findings show that a majority of participating CSOs (89 out of 121) in both KP and FATA were established in the ten years prior to data collection, with most of them having only a small workforce, including a majority who are voluntary or unpaid. Women are generally poorly represented in participating CSOs, particularly in FATA, and are more likely to be in voluntary positions. The requirement of reporting in English, particularly to donors, is also problematic for participating CSOs' employees, whose first languages are Pashto and Urdu. As well as externally, internal reporting mechanisms in both KP and FATA are in need of improvement, being largely ad hoc.

Finance and management

Participating CSOs in both KP and FATA have meagre structures for financial management, with only 37 out of the 121 CSOs reporting that they have a finance manager (10 in FATA and 27 in KP). However, despite these challenges, the majority of participating CSOs (86 out of 121) reported having formal financial plans in place. By and large any grants received by participating CSOs are for small amounts, especially in North

¹ Agencies and districts are administrative areas in FATA and KP respectively.

² The Governments of KP and FATA, Asian Development Bank, the EU, the United Nations and the World Bank (October 2010), *Post-Crisis Needs Assessment for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas*.

³ See Barakat S, Zyck S (2009), 'The evolution of post-conflict recovery', *Third World Quarterly* 30 (6), pp 1069–1086.

Waziristan, South Waziristan, Bajaur, and Orakzai in FATA, which has resulted in the majority of participating CSOs reporting that they are not currently implementing a funded project. Grant amounts for the largest projects implemented by participating CSOs ranged from 8,000 to 25,200,000 Pakistani rupees (PKR) (approximately 58 to 181,737 euros).⁴

Funding problems were identified as a major challenge by local CSOs in both KP and FATA, with participants identifying peacebuilding as rarely attracting specific and targeted funding. This has meant that this area often gets incorporated into other work. Participating CSOs consistently identified four main challenges when securing funding (not in order of priority): 1) lack of contact with donors; 2) lack of collaborative partnerships with donors; 3) lack of knowledge of and access to funding opportunities; 4) changes to donor priorities and lack of knowledge of such changes.

Operations and project implementation

Overall, participating CSOs indicated that security risks present a real obstacle to their operations, particularly (but not only) in FATA, with some staff receiving threats from militants. This difficult environment is made more problematic when the target communities may well have high expectations: impoverished communities may prioritise infrastructure development over other projects, thus creating a hostile environment for local CSOs engaged in other work.

Target groups

Almost all participating CSOs target the local community through their operations, with only seven out of 121 CSOs reporting that they do not (one in Swat, KP, and six in Khyber and Orakzai, FATA). In both KP and FATA CSOs reported that they generally do not engage with national authorities and policy decision-makers, but they do engage with local authorities (overall 59 out of 121 CSOs work with local authorities). However, there was a regional difference with CSOs in KP engaging with local authorities more than those in FATA: 42 out of 64 in KP, compared with only 17 out of 57 FATA. In terms of national-level engagement, 24 out of 121 CSOs communicate with parliamentarians and policy decision-makers (sixteen in KP compared with eight in FATA), and 15 out of 121 engage with government (ten in KP and five in FATA). Engagement with the international community and/or donors was the least frequent – only 31 out of 121 participating CSOs target these actors. Those in FATA are much less likely to engage with international organisations than their KP counterparts (10 out of 57 and 21 out of 64 CSOs, respectively).

Women

The cultural and security influence of militants in FATA is evidenced by the fact that women are rarely targeted by FATA CSOs though their activities compared with their counterparts in KP. Fifty two out of 64 CSOs in KP include women as a target group for their activities, while in FATA the figures are 26 out of 57. In South Waziristan, FATA, no participating CSOs worked with women, exacerbating the already difficult social and security context for women in the region. At the same time, security risks are a significant obstacle to the involvement of women in participating CSOs' work.

Subject knowledge and skills

In both KP and FATA CSOs positively rated their knowledge or expertise in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and dialogue and mediation: 51 out of 121 CSOs rated their expertise in conflict prevention as good or excellent; 60 rated their expertise in peacebuilding as good or excellent; and 66 rated their expertise in mediation and dialogue

⁴ Using an exchange rate of 138.662 PKR to 1 euro, as on 9 September 2013.

as good or excellent. Mediation and dialogue were the highest-rated areas in both KP and FATA, though generally CSOs in FATA expressed greater confidence. This positive perception perhaps indicates the importance of community-based interaction, where local level disagreements could escalate into wider conflict, and connect with wider conflict dynamics. However, there are areas where participating CSOs considered their level of expertise to be limited or weak, including on security and police reform, small arms issues, emergency preparedness, policy formulation/public policy processes, donor funding processes, and international institutional frameworks. Seventy out of 121 CSOs rated their knowledge of policy formulation/public policy processes as weak or very poor; 62 rated their knowledge of donor funding processes as weak or very poor; and 72 rated their knowledge of international institutional frameworks as weak or very poor. In particular, CSOs in FATA expressed less confidence in policy formulation, knowledge of donor funding processes, and knowledge of international institutional frameworks compared with their counterparts in KP. Participating CSOs have not received formal training on peacebuilding methodologies; they engage in strong traditional practices (such as *jirgas*), and their activities are largely ad hoc and responsive to specific local contexts and conflicts.

Monitoring and evaluation

One hundred out of 121 participating CSOs reported that they carried out formal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) during or at the end of a project or when requested by donors. Only six CSOs said that they also carry it out when the organisation itself requires some information. Eleven out of the 121 participating CSOs reported that they had never conducted formal monitoring or evaluation, and 13 (12 in KP and one in FATA) specifically said that they conduct verbal (undocumented) M&E, where staff go to the field or project site to observe progress without documenting their findings or using specific M&E tools and practices.

External relations and communications

The outreach work conducted by CSOs is perceived to be strong across the board, with good levels of consultation with project beneficiaries. However, comparatively few of the CSOs said that most of their work with external actors was with representatives of local government or the media. Besides print and electronic media, CSOs conducted seminars, hosted public meetings, held corner/*hujra* meetings, organised community walks and peace rallies, organised sports events and school debates, held *jirgas* with community elders, engaged in wall-chalking, printed and distributed banners and informative material, used placards, involved *madrassas* and Friday sermons in mosques, made telephone calls, published reports, held open days, engaged in regular correspondence and networking with key actors, held training workshops, and celebrated special days (such as holidays and ceremonies, particularly of minority faiths).

Conclusion

There are positives and negatives to a situation where the vast majority of participating CSOs in both KP and FATA were established within ten years prior to data collection (2002 or later). The recent establishment of so many participating CSOs suggests a responsive nature to their work – engendering targeted responses to developing challenges in the north-western region of Pakistan – and should be welcomed. However, as many of these CSOs are inexperienced in attracting funding from external donors, there is a challenge in implementing projects. While this is a clear challenge, it is not unlike the challenges faced by many NGOs around the world and presents an opportunity to shape the character and work of local CSOs in KP and FATA.

The geographical scope of participating CSOs' activities and the reach of their influence are also fairly limited. Many CSOs lack key organisational skills and resources, and

some possess insufficient knowledge of key issues in the field of peacebuilding. Participating CSOs have identified their capacity needs, and so with support from key stakeholders, local CSOs could expand and enhance their contributions to participatory peacebuilding in KP and FATA and fulfil their potential to be instrumental in building a meaningful and lasting peace in the region. It is a harsh irony that until the security situation improves, the potential for CSOs to contribute to peacebuilding is likely to remain limited – but peace must be restored for the security situation to improve. Nonetheless, the contribution that these CSOs have already made in improving the lives of many communities is significant.

Key recommendations

There are several areas that CAMP and Saferworld have identified as ones that can be developed and improved.

Strengthening organisational structures and representation

- In order to work more effectively, CSO registration regulations, laws, and practices should be strengthened for existing unregistered CSOs, and guidance should be provided to new CSOs, especially in FATA.
- Representation of women in CSO workforces should be promoted and enhanced in a sensitive manner that takes into consideration the security risks of such an approach, especially in FATA. Assistance and support should be provided to female staff and volunteers already working for CSOs in both KP and FATA to secure better working conditions, including paid positions.
- Training should be given on reporting mechanisms and the development of reporting systems, combined with language training and/or facilitating reporting in the writer's first language with the assistance of a translator.
- Existing practices of CSOs in FATA, covering 'sensitive stakeholder' management and balancing familiarity with the local community and actors in the conflict with specific peacebuilding objectives, should be documented and shared as best practices across the network of CSOs in the north-western region of Pakistan.

Securing financial support and promoting best practices in financial management

- CSOs require fundraising support and training, particularly in order to support larger projects and increase the impact of their work, as well as to secure resources to meet organisational capacity gaps such as communication and management skills. Newer CSOs and those in FATA may require additional support in this regard.
- CSOs need more information on donors and their strategies and priorities in order to improve the likelihood of securing donor funding, which would positively impact peacebuilding efforts in KP and FATA.
- Given the lack of contact between donors and many local CSOs, particularly new ones and many of those in FATA, international and national donors, NGOs, and government and private sector organisations are encouraged to reach out to CSOs, improve accessibility, establish more cooperative relationships, and review their policies to ensure they are aligned with community needs.
- CSOs should be supported in identifying, recruiting, and training staff to assume financial management responsibilities. The best way to do this would be for CSOs to secure resources to financially attract the best candidates and to institute staff training.

Overcoming project implementation challenges

- CSOs should target and work with local and national government, parliamentarians and other policy decision-makers, the international community, and the media. International or national NGOs could advise these CSOs on the best way this can be done.
- CSO training and/or dissemination and sharing of information is required on key areas including peacebuilding and related issues, monitoring and evaluation, donor funding processes, policy formulation/public policy processes, and international institutional frameworks.
- Some of the newer CSOs in particular require support and training (such as mentoring) in peacebuilding and related issues, monitoring and evaluation, programme management, communication, financial management, and fundraising.

Strengthening external relations

- In order to reach out to more influential stakeholders and those in a position to provide institutional and operational support, CSO reporting and communications skills need to be enhanced.
- CSOs should be supported in accessing print and electronic media outlets, where appropriate, and, through information sharing and training, in developing media liaison, communication, and outreach skills.
- High-level decision-makers should be targeted in order to communicate the perspectives of local communities as well as to attract funding for local peacebuilding projects.

1

Introduction

THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEEDS ASSESSMENT is to analyse the peacebuilding capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, identify the challenges they face in engaging in peacebuilding activities, and provide practical recommendations to build CSOs' capacity and promote their strengths in this field. In so doing, the assessment seeks to establish a baseline of the peacebuilding capacity of 121 CSOs in KP and FATA.

This assessment builds upon the recommendations of the Post-Crisis Needs Assessment (PCNA)⁵ and forms part of a wider project funded by the European Union (EU) which aims to promote and develop participatory approaches to peacebuilding initiatives in KP and FATA. The assessment will initially inform the development of a 'Training of Trainers' manual on people-focused peacebuilding that will be used by CAMP and Saferworld to train 70 selected CSOs in KP and FATA, enhancing their expertise and knowledge of key issues in the field of peacebuilding. This training will enable the development and implementation of community-driven initiatives for peace, where these CSOs will work jointly with communities to identify pressing conflict concerns and barriers to peace, and develop and implement action plans to address these concerns jointly with local and national authorities. The overall purpose is to enhance community participation in peacebuilding activities as a precondition for sustainable peacebuilding.⁶ To this end, the assessment analyses the CSOs' capacities to promote community participation.

The assessment report presents CSOs' existing capacities and challenges under the following themes: i) organisational; ii) financial and management-related; iii) project implementation-related; and iv) external relations-related. A concluding chapter collates the findings and provides an overall assessment of the 121 participating CSOs. Recommendations are presented as a plan of action at the end of each chapter.

In order for the voices of people who are most affected by insecurity and violence to be heard, the capacity and influence of CSOs – who have a direct role to play in local peacebuilding initiatives and can bring local needs to the attention of decision-makers – needs to be enhanced. This focus arises out of an appreciation for the unique position of local CSOs, who understand and represent the interests of communities not only in local peacebuilding efforts but also at the national and international level.

⁵ Governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas Secretariat, Asian Development Bank, European Union, United Nations, World Bank (October 2010), Post-Crisis Needs Assessment for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

⁶ See Barakat S and Zyck S (2009), 'The Evolution of Post-Conflict Recovery', *Third World Quarterly*, 30 (6), pp 1069–1086.

1.1 Scope and methodology

Given the focus on participatory approaches to peacebuilding, the needs assessment engaged exclusively with local, community-based CSOs in KP and FATA. The criteria for selection of participating CSOs were as follows:

- i) community-based local CSOs
- ii) at least one to two years' experience in implementing peacebuilding or conflict resolution-related projects
- iii) operating in KP and FATA
- iv) representation of ethnic and religious minorities, women and/or youth.

A sample of 121 CSOs was selected from 7 agencies in FATA and 7 districts in KP.⁷

KP	FATA
1. Buner District – 11 CSOs	1. Bajaur Agency – 6 CSOs
2. Chitral District – 9 CSOs	2. Khyber Agency – 13 CSOs
3. Lower Dir District – 9 CSOs	3. Kurram Agency – 6 CSOs
4. Malakand District – 14 CSOs	4. Mohmand Agency – 8 CSOs
5. Shangla District – 5 CSOs	5. North Waziristan Agency – 8 CSOs
6. Swat District – 11 CSO	6. Orakzai Agency – 9 CSOs
7. Upper Dir District – 5 CSOs	7. South Waziristan Agency – 7 CSOs

Field research was carried out between April and September 2012. The assessment draws upon quantitative and qualitative data. The research design combined self-assessment by participating CSOs with quantitative analysis of survey responses and qualitative analysis of responses to open-ended questions. The data was collected using a questionnaire to guide semi-structured interviews with up to two representatives of each participating CSO.

A brief orientation on the questionnaire was conducted for the assessment team to familiarise all team members with the questions and overall methodology. Where possible, interviews were conducted with two representatives of each CSO to verify information provided.

In order to establish a baseline of participating CSOs' peacebuilding capacity, the data was analysed to identify patterns in the behaviours and needs of the CSOs. The analysis was guided by the underlying aim of supporting context-specific participatory approaches to the peacebuilding practices of CSOs in KP and FATA.

1.1.1 Limitations

The needs assessment is limited in its scope both by design and by necessity. The questions in the research tool directly addressed capacities relevant to peacebuilding, and while some broader information was collected, the focus of the assessment remained on the structural and skills-based capacities of participating CSOs. The resources allocated for the assessment necessitated a narrow focus.

The data was collected over a relatively short period (5 months) and draws from a sample of only 121 CSOs out of an unknown total number of CSOs in KP and FATA. In this way smaller, less well-known CSOs may have been excluded. As such, the statistical significance of the assessment findings cannot fully be determined. For this reason, findings are presented with reference to participating CSOs, rather than CSOs in KP and FATA generally.

Cultural barriers to data collection and potential mistrust on the part of participating CSOs were mitigated by using CAMP's local staff to collect the data, who could speak the local language.

⁷ Agencies and districts are administrative areas in FATA and KP respectively.

Security concerns remained a significant risk. While participating CSOs were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and consent was obtained when conducting interviews, these concerns may have affected how freely participants spoke about the threats they face when undertaking peacebuilding activities.

1.2 Socio-political context

Pakistan's north-western regions of KP and FATA have emerged as key conflict zones. Instability and underdevelopment have paved the way for the crisis unfolding in this region. Actors pushing conflict and insurgency in the region in recent years appear to have capitalised on the frustrations of local communities regarding instability and underdevelopment. The conflict in Afghanistan perpetuates a regular flow of militants between Afghanistan and Pakistan, who spread extremist ideologies, thus increasing the risk and incidence of violence in KP and FATA.⁸

Acute insecurity and instability are now characteristic of north-west Pakistan and exacerbate already pressing protection needs, particularly among vulnerable groups including children and women. There is a high mortality rate in the region, with more than 10,000 civilian deaths reported in 2010,⁹ and a high incidence of displacement – approximately 800,000 people displaced between 2009 and 2011.¹⁰ Poverty resulting from unemployment (and a growing illicit economy), natural disasters, and constraints on access to basic services such as food, shelter, and medical care are both a cause and a symptom of increased violence and instability in the north-west of Pakistan. Longstanding economic deprivation, weak human development indicators, and acute economic disparities with national standards are prevalent in KP and FATA, alongside very limited economic opportunities.¹¹ There is also a systemic failure by the state to protect citizens' basic rights (both in law and in fact).¹²

The “state's inability to provide basic amenities” was identified by 38.4 per cent of respondents in CAMP's report *Understanding FATA* as one of the most important human rights issues that needs to be addressed.¹³ Of further concern is that governance deficits have opened up political space that militant groups are able to exploit by portraying themselves as viable alternatives to the state and providing development projects, justice, and employment. The PCNA has clearly identified the reasons for the existing trust deficit between citizens in KP and FATA and the state, including underdevelopment, lack of service provision, weak governance, marginalisation, and insecurity exploited by militants.¹⁴

Militants are also exploiting weaknesses in the security and justice sectors, providing security and ‘speedy justice’ and thereby increasing their support among the local population. State security services lack the trust and confidence of the public and the resources to maintain law and order.¹⁵ Combined with a highly complex security situation, this has resulted in a breakdown in law and order and a proliferation of insurgent groups. In *Understanding FATA* CAMP showed that in 2009–10 the breakdown in law and order was the biggest challenge faced by one third of survey respondents in FATA, with 41 per cent of research respondents identifying “terrorist attacks” as the main threat to life in FATA in 2010.¹⁶

⁸ Governments of KP and FATA et al, PCNA, *op cit*.

⁹ Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (January 2011), Pakistan Security Report 2010 (http://san-pips.com/index.php?action=reports&id=psr_list_1).

¹⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Norwegian Refugee Council (31 May 2011), ‘Returns continue in some areas but comprehensive IDP policy needed’ ([www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/688A668D7EF0915AC12578A10047C22C/\\$file/Pakistan_Overview_May2011.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/688A668D7EF0915AC12578A10047C22C/$file/Pakistan_Overview_May2011.pdf)).

¹¹ Governments of KP and FATA et al, PCNA, *op cit*.

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ Shinwari NA (2010), *Understanding FATA: Attitudes Towards Governance, Religion and Society in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, Volume IV, Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme (CAMP). (www.understandingfata.org/files/Understanding-FATA-Vol-IV.pdf).

¹⁴ Governments of KP and FATA et al, PCNA, *op cit*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Shinwari NA, *op cit*.

There is no end in sight to the conflict, particularly if an exclusively military solution continues to be pursued. There is no quick fix to the problems of conflict and fragility affecting KP and FATA. An integrated political solution implemented by a range of stakeholders and informed by conflict-affected communities and individuals is ultimately required to enable a transition towards greater stability. While positive steps have recently been taken by the Government of Pakistan and its law enforcement agencies, not least in terms of reforming the political process in FATA and how people can participate in it, much remains to be done in all areas both to seek the lasting political solutions required to transition to peace and to address short-term security, justice, and governance needs.

1.3 Peacebuilding: terms and general practice

While the term ‘peacebuilding’ can encompass a broad range of actions, here it is defined as the range of initiatives, processes, and structures (formal and informal) that support the peaceful transformation of conflict dynamics.

Participation and local ownership are core values in the work of CAMP and Saferworld, and this is integrated in the peacebuilding work of the organisations. Through a participatory approach, CAMP and Saferworld seek the active engagement of a wide group of stakeholders representing the range of views and perceptions in a given context. This approach aims to build the capacity of local actors to identify their needs and concerns and work together to solve them, as well as to articulate these needs and ideas to decision-makers. In so doing, the aim is to raise awareness among local actors that their views and ideas are legitimate and to convey to policymakers the need to listen to local voices.

1.3.1 The role of CSOs in peacebuilding

The role of CSOs is central to the sustainability of inclusive peacebuilding. CSOs have a key role to play in peacebuilding, both in helping to identify and engender a response to short-term security, justice, and governance needs, as well as helping, through inclusive representation of vulnerable groups, to facilitate the political solutions required to secure a sustainable and positive peace. Indeed, the role of CSOs is particularly vital in filling the void between the state and the population left by a mutual lack of trust, widespread public dissatisfaction that basic needs are not being met, and limited opportunities for public participation in local governance and decision-making processes on issues that directly impact communities.¹⁷

In particular, given the apparent high levels of disaffection and concern with governance and rule of law issues among local communities in KP and FATA, CSOs in north-western Pakistan can play a particularly valuable role in reaching out to local communities and sharing the views and needs of those communities with local and national authorities and other policy decision-makers including parliamentarians. Responding to those views and needs could positively impact security and governance in the region as well as increasing public confidence in local and national authorities and state institutions. There are numerous CSOs in KP and FATA that represent a wide variety of interests and communities, including vulnerable groups – children, women, youth, and ethnic and religious minorities – whose voices might otherwise not be heard.

As a prerequisite to successful realisation of this potential, CSOs in KP and FATA need full organisational and operational capacity to be able to influence key stakeholders. In establishing a baseline of the capacities of CSOs in KP and FATA, this assessment identifies thematic areas where support is required in order that targeted and effective assistance can be offered to them in support of their work to promote peace, security, and development in the north-western region of Pakistan.

¹⁷ Shinwari NA, *op cit.*

2

Organisational challenges

THIS CHAPTER WILL PRESENT AND ANALYSE DATA related to organisational challenges faced by participating CSOs, including those concerning management skills and knowledge, human resources, and internal and external reporting. It will conclude with a number of recommendations.

2.1 Establishment and registration status

The majority of participating CSOs in both KP and FATA are recently established, with 56 of the 121 having been established in the 5 years prior to the data collection period (2007 to 2012), and 89 in the 10 years prior to data collection (2002 to 2012). Participating CSOs in FATA are on the whole more recently established – and thus less experienced – than those in KP (20 out of 57 participating CSOs in FATA were established before 2007, in contrast to 45 out of 64 in KP).

Although the majority (91 out of 121) of participating CSOs are registered, it is not always clear whether this was formal registration in accordance with national laws or following informal registration procedures. It is important for CSOs to be registered so that they can work with relative ease, within the remit of national laws. The 30 unregistered CSOs are almost exclusively based in FATA (only one participating CSO in KP was unregistered), however six of these – including the one in KP – have registration procedures underway and are awaiting the conclusion of these processes. This was particularly prevalent in North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and Bajaur, where there were more unregistered CSOs than registered ones. Where participating CSOs were registered, there was often a delay between establishment and registration, leaving a period of several years of non-registration. It is not clear what impact this long period of non-registration has on the operations of the participating CSOs.

In the absence of a specific legal analysis of the registration laws and regulations in Pakistan in general, and in KP and FATA in particular, it is not clear why there is such a difference in registration rates between CSOs operating in KP and those in FATA. There is a clear need for targeted assistance to CSOs in FATA to enhance registration policy and practice among CSOs. This also suggests that many CSOs in this region, particularly parts of FATA, may require substantial capacity-building assistance, given the extent of their experience and legal status.

2.2 Management skills and knowledge

It is assumed that some of the newer CSOs may also lack the requisite management skills and knowledge. However, staff from many of the newer CSOs surveyed said that a change in the CSO's management would not have an impact, or at least not a considerable impact, on their work. While newer CSOs may lack some of the skills and knowledge that older CSOs possess, they can be more flexible and able to absorb management changes. Nonetheless, most of the 121 CSOs that participated in the needs assessment said that a change in management would have little or no impact on their operations. This is not a reflection on the quality of management, as most CSOs positively evaluated the impact of governing boards, where they exist, for instance. The expectation that a change in management would not adversely impact operations bodes well for the future of most CSOs and signals that the organisations are resilient and have the ability to overcome challenges that may present themselves. It could also be that while most CSOs have a management and governance structure, they have flexible structures and can therefore absorb change more easily.

While most participating CSOs have governing boards and generally viewed them as having a positive impact on organisational activities, some boards meet infrequently and most have either no, or very few, female members. Most CSOs identified the responsibilities of the boards as being: managing the organisation and its staff; liaising with relevant contacts in the community; securing financial resources for the organisation; formulating policies; and the hiring and firing of staff. While many CSOs positively evaluated the impact of boards on organisational activities, many also considered the boards' role in policy formulation to be weak and identified knowledge of management issues as a key concern for the organisation. However, despite this concern, structures appear to be in place in many participating CSOs for enhancing awareness of management issues and improving overall institutional and operational management: for example, many CSOs have regular monthly staff meetings, regular (often quarterly) board meetings, and strategic plans and other key documents, such as mission and vision statements.

Most participating CSOs in ten of the fourteen districts and agencies said that they had a strategic plan for their organisation. Only in Malakand, North Waziristan, Orakzai, and Kurram were there more CSOs that did not have a strategic plan than those that did. Most CSOs also consult key stakeholders when planning their programmes in order to build trust and confidence in the programmes and help to ensure their success. Many CSOs have also developed and adopted mission and vision statements, which can be very effective management and communication tools. Nonetheless, strategic planning and management were repeatedly identified by the CSOs as areas in need of improvement.

2.3 Human resources

The average workforce of participating CSOs in both KP and FATA is small, around 10–15 people including both paid and voluntary staff. Most participating CSOs have a staff comprised predominantly of part-time or volunteer workers, who have paid jobs in other fields. Consequently, the workforce of most participating CSOs can be transient and in need of the requisite focus and skills for targeted peacebuilding work.

In FATA, the low rate of paid employment among participating CSOs' workforces, combined with the fact that the majority (37 out of 57) of participating CSOs in FATA are newly established¹⁸ and have fewer large grants for projects, has resulted in difficulty getting and retaining skilled and experienced staff. This has had a negative impact on these CSOs' capacity and cumulative institutional knowledge.

¹⁸ Established in the 5 years prior to the research (in or since 2007).

In terms of human resource management, approximately half of participating CSOs reported that they provide their staff with job descriptions, staff policies, and/or signed employment contracts. However, many of these CSOs stated that staff were employed on the basis of informal verbal agreements. Many newer CSOs that have not secured significant funding do not provide any written documents or contracts of employment, probably due, at least in part, to a lack of paid staff and the perception that such documents are therefore not needed. Nonetheless, the development of personnel regulations and the formalisation of contractual relations and job descriptions can improve organisational management and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the organisation. On the other hand, the holding of monthly meetings by most CSOs is very positive and provides a good forum in which to share information as well as provide direction and guidance. The use of organigrams by many CSOs is also a positive point.

2.3.1 Women's representation

Women are generally poorly represented in participating CSOs in both KP and FATA. Female literacy rates in these regions (32 per cent and 3 per cent respectively) fall below, and in the case of FATA well below, the national average of 44 per cent.¹⁹ By area, the lowest representation of women in the workforce of participating CSOs occurs in South Waziristan and Kurram (both in FATA), where no CSOs have any women on their staff – either voluntary or paid. This is followed by North Waziristan Agency (FATA) where only one of eight CSOs has women workers and Shangla District (KP) where one of five CSOs has women workers.

Most staff members are men. Many participating CSOs do not employ any women, particularly in FATA, where there are additional restrictions on women working outside the home due to cultural norms and a more conservative society, as well as security concerns. The gender balance in KP CSOs is much better, with 46 of 64 CSOs employing women (although in smaller numbers than men) compared with 19 out of 57 in FATA. There are also, however, many examples of women working for CSOs in particularly conservative areas. Many CSOs in both KP and FATA identified lack of female staff as being one of their biggest concerns.

Overall, participating CSOs in FATA are less likely to have women working for them in either a paid or voluntary capacity; only 19 out of 57 participating CSOs in FATA have women in their workforce. By comparison, 46 out of 64 participating CSOs in KP include women in their work force. In any event, in both KP and FATA, where women do form part of participating CSOs' workforce, they are far outnumbered by men and are more likely to be in voluntary roles or non-essential positions.

There was broad agreement among the participating CSOs in both KP and FATA that it was a major challenge that they did not have enough female staff. However, under-representation of women may be explained by the cultural practices prevalent in KP and FATA. Direct threats from militants against female staff and CSOs engaging women in their workforce are a further limitation, especially in FATA. Against this background, any efforts to promote women's involvement in participating CSOs' work require due consideration to cultural norms and careful stakeholder management and risk mitigation.

2.4 Internal and external reporting

Most participating CSOs provide regular reports to stakeholders, including donors, partners, and their governing board and staff members. Most of these tend to be reports to donors. Several participating CSOs have also published reports for public dissemination. The number and nature of reports is, of course, likely to be impacted by the size of the CSO as well as the number of projects (which warrant at least partner

¹⁹ Governments of KP and FATA et al, PCNA, *op cit*.

or donor reports) and staff members (to fulfil the reporting duties). Nonetheless, it is clear that reporting processes could be improved in order to make them more systematic while remaining manageable for participating CSOs' sizes and available human resources. It is also evident that there is room for improvement in reporting and communication skills: some CSOs also identified communication as a key area in need of improvement. This problem is further aggravated when CSOs have to report in English, given that English is not their staff members' first language. This can significantly disadvantage CSOs whose members have had limited access to formal education, for instance. Additionally, this can restrict their ability to articulate clearly their project outcomes and the impact they are having on the lives of ordinary people.

While skills and resources may be limited, an increase in the number and quality of reports targeting key stakeholders would raise the profile of organisations and their activities, support advocacy and outreach efforts, and help solicit the required support and engagement from key external stakeholders. The capacity and sustainability of CSOs is thus likely to increase with an investment in improving external reporting and communication. With respect to internal reporting and communication, it is vital that staff members and governing boards are regularly apprised of organisational developments. This helps establish trust and commitment to the organisation as well as ensuring that everyone is aware of CSO activities, priorities, and aims, and can therefore better contribute to organisational development. Misinformation and lack of information can undermine the efforts of CSOs to implement projects and fulfil strategic aims and objectives.

2.5 Other organisational challenges

Many participating CSOs identified organisational policies as another key area for improvement. Instability and weak rule of law in both KP and FATA also combine to create an environment that obstructs the effective operation of most participating CSOs. The security situation in particular presents serious risks to CSO staff and project implementation. Even where the security situation is well understood by participating CSOs and their staff members, security risk management and the establishment of security systems remains a high priority.

In terms of skills required to ensure organisational sustainability, many participating CSOs prioritised strategic development, better fundraising skills, improved financial management, greater contact with communities, increased collaboration with national or local government, networking with other CSOs, project planning and design, and heightened visibility within the international community. Very few CSOs identified improving recruitment or staff retention to be a priority; this can be attributed to the fact that most participating CSOs rely largely on volunteer staff. While CSOs' priorities are influenced by whether or not they have already received significant donor funding, the nature of their work, and their perceived skills and knowledge, it is clear that CSOs in KP and FATA have several capacity gaps (institutional and operational) and that participating CSOs are aware of these.

2.6 Recommendations

Management skills and knowledge

- CSOs and other stakeholders should follow up the legal issues relating to registration in order to ensure local CSOs are better positioned to carry out their operations on the ground without obstructions.
- Newly established CSOs and CSOs in FATA, in particular, should be provided with guidance and training to register and fully operationalise their organisations through

the sharing of best practices, utilising support networks between local and national CSOs, and ensuring the dissemination of clear guidance for new CSOs.

- In order to reach out to target groups and better reflect and respond to the communities they represent, the composition of CSO governing boards should be broadly representative of their communities and, where appropriate, maintain a gender balance or at least aim towards increasing the representation of women.
- CSOs should receive training to further improve their management skills, which are important to their organisational development (both in terms of institutional and operational capacities).
- Good practice is often more easily embedded into an organisation through ‘learning by doing’ rather than through training and other more formal forms of capacity building. Therefore, it is recommended that donors, international and national NGOs, and other stakeholders who engage with these local CSOs institute a ‘learning by doing’ approach to capacity building. Direct engagement with local CSOs by these stakeholders should involve a substantial amount of focus on enhancing their management skills.

Human resources

- Representation of women in CSO workforces should be promoted and enhanced in a sensitive manner that takes into consideration the security risks of such an approach, especially in FATA. Assistance and support should be provided to female staff or volunteers already engaged with CSOs in both KP and FATA to secure better working conditions including paid positions.
- CSOs require training in human resource management, including the development of personnel regulations and the drafting of employment contracts and job descriptions.

Internal and external reporting

- CSOs should endeavour to secure the skills and resources to ensure the optimum quantity and quality of internal and external reporting, by attracting people with communication and, where appropriate, language skills, and soliciting training or financial support.
- CSOs should be advised on how best to attract people with reporting skills, as well as securing training and other means of support to enhance the skill-sets of their members, not least communication and external liaison skills.

Other organisational challenges

- CSOs should receive training or similar forms of support to develop strategic planning, communication, and outreach skills which can be applied to the specific needs of the CSO, particularly in targeting specific stakeholders, whether local communities, donors, local and national government, or the international community. As discussed below, many CSOs also require training to develop fundraising and financial management skills.
- Given the serious security risks, despite their familiarity with the security situation all CSOs should promote formal security risk management within their organisations and ensure they have a staff security plan in place.
- Existing practices by participating CSOs in KP and FATA of sensitive stakeholder management and balancing familiarity with the local community and actors in the conflict with specific peacebuilding objectives should be documented and shared as best practices across the network of CSOs in the north-western region of Pakistan.

- While the security situation in KP and FATA presents risks and challenges for most legitimate activities, other stakeholders (government, international community, national and international NGOs, etc.) should also take steps – wherever they can – to ensure the safety and security of local CSOs’ staff. This can help create the vibrant civil society that will be key to building a meaningful and sustainable peace.

3

Financial support and management challenges

THIS CHAPTER WILL ANALYSE THE KEY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS related to financial support and management challenges, including those challenges concerning fundraising and donor liaison, and financial management and book-keeping. The chapter will conclude with a number of recommendations related to this field.

3.1 Fundraising and donor liaison

Funding was identified as a major limitation by participating CSOs in both KP and FATA. The needs assessment solicited information on the extent of financial support received by CSOs, specifically the size of grants awarded. Of the largest projects implemented by participating CSOs, grant amounts ranged from 8,000 to 25,200,000 Pakistani rupees (PKR) (approximately 58 to 181,737 euros).²⁰ The grants for most participating CSOs were relatively small, particularly in FATA – notably North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Bajaur, and Orakzai. In other areas, such as Chitral, a number of larger-scale projects were implemented, which indicates the capacity of CSOs and the extent of their impact there. Some CSOs stated that they had not received any grants in the previous year, and a relatively large number said that they currently have no funding (i.e. they are not currently implementing a funded project).

Larger projects tended to be funded by international (and some national) NGOs and large national and international donor agencies, including the US Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), World Bank, Embassy of the Netherlands, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), Islamic Relief, and Relief International. The smaller grants came from national NGOs, local officials, local communities, and from the CSOs' own staff members. A number of the larger grants were for projects involving infrastructural development (such as the construction of roads and bridges), food provision, distribution of seeds or livestock, agricultural or livelihood support, and awareness-raising and advocacy projects (regarding civic engagement, gender issues, or the dangers of drugs, for instance). Smaller projects included relief distribution at camps, disaster management, infrastructural projects, advocacy, awareness raising, dialogue, and training.

²⁰ Using an exchange rate of 138.662 PKR to 1 euro, as on 9 September 2013.

Most participating CSOs said that they have formal plans for the generation of funds, which include activities to strengthen their capacity to raise money or develop project proposals and target them at potential donors. Such plans are particularly important given the limited funding that many of these CSOs receive. Nonetheless, many of these plans warrant further development to incorporate longer-term planning. CSOs could certainly do with external assistance in this area.

Participating CSOs consistently identified four main challenges that they face with regard to securing funding (not in order of priority):

- i) lack of opportunities for direct contact with donors
- ii) lack of collaborative partnerships with donors
- iii) lack of knowledge of or access to funding opportunities
- iv) concerns about changes to donor priorities and to lack of knowledge of such changes.

New CSOs, in particular, are more likely to have very few if any opportunities for interaction with donors and have limited or no fundraising training. These factors play a particularly significant role in FATA, which helps to explain why projects implemented by local CSOs in FATA tend to be smaller than those in KP. Given that most CSOs rely entirely upon grants, it is imperative that fundraising skills are enhanced and that there is improved contact, collaboration, and consultation with donors in the capital.

For instance, all participating CSOs in Mohmand, North Waziristan, and Bajaur in FATA and Swat in KP said that they rely entirely upon grants. Outreach strategies of CSOs could also be usefully reviewed, although it is recognised that the harsh security situation is a key factor in the lack of contact and established relationships between CSOs and donors, as well as other key stakeholders.

Another obstacle faced by participating CSOs is new governmental regulations which have made it mandatory for CSOs to seek permission in writing before commencing or continuing with implementation of projects in specific areas. Problems arise when permission is not granted or there is a substantial delay in granting permission. This is particularly challenging for projects which have already begun or secured significant donor funding.

While almost all participating CSOs are financially dependent upon the grants they receive for projects, some CSOs have found novel ways of addressing funding shortfalls, including hosting charity and fundraising events, inviting donations from the local community, providing services (such as tuition for students) in exchange for a nominal fee, and other income-generating activities.

3.2 Financial management and book-keeping

Overall, the financial management structures within participating CSOs can do with further improvement. Only 37 out of all 121 participating CSOs reported that they have a finance manager (of which 10 are in FATA and 27 in KP). Nonetheless, the majority (86 out of 121) of participating CSOs reported having formal financial management plans in place. The numbers of participating CSOs with financial plans in KP and FATA were about equal, whereas the comparative numbers of finance managers indicate a clear area-specific need for developing CSO structures to manage finances.

Very few participating CSOs have a finance manager. Financial management is generally undertaken by staff in less senior positions and often on a part-time basis (finance secretaries or officers) – although many CSOs referred to these staff members as finance managers – or, less frequently, those with other managerial responsibilities (such as the president or general secretary of the CSO) or related portfolios (such as human resource or programme officers). This could be due to a lack of resources. The reason could also be a belief among some CSOs that the small size of many of their projects does not require such a senior or full-time position; CSOs that do employ

finance managers tend to have the largest projects. Most CSOs do not have a formally structured finance department to manage cash flow and project funds, which may also be due to their limited experience, management and planning skills, or difficulty in obtaining staff.

Additionally, many CSOs do not have a plan for the management of funds. This may be partly explained by their limited funds, but also signals a need for further improvement in financial management procedures.

Most of the CSOs assessed use a manual system, rather than computer software, to manage their accounts. This shows that organisations have restricted or no access to modern technology and need support in setting up appropriate systems that could significantly improve their financial management processes. They also require financial support to secure the necessary resources, including computer equipment and trained staff. Most of those who use computerised software use MS Excel, and only a few CSOs use more advanced accounting software such as Peachtree and QuickBooks.

When asked how financial management can be improved, the vast majority of the participating CSOs indicated that more training on financial management is a key priority. The majority also said that they should have a more experienced finance manager and better book-keeping. Many also said that financial management could be improved by creating a business plan, which would also include an organisational strategic plan – identified by many CSOs as an area that requires significant improvement, as mentioned above. CSOs also agreed that they needed assistance with access to technology as well as training in information technology (IT) skills.

3.3 Recommendations

Fundraising and donor liaison

- CSOs require fundraising support and training, particularly in order to support larger projects and increase the impact of their work and to secure resources to meet organisational capacity needs such as thematic issue expertise, and communication and management skills. Newer CSOs and those in FATA may require additional support in this regard.
- CSOs should be helped to secure long-term funding, particularly to ensure their sustainability between projects.
- CSOs need more information on donors and their strategies and priorities, in order to improve the likelihood of securing donor funding. This would positively affect peace-building efforts in KP and FATA.
- Given the lack of contact between donors and many local CSOs, particularly new ones and many of those in FATA, international and national donors, NGOs, and government and private sector organisations are encouraged to reach out to local CSOs, improve accessibility, establish collaborative partnerships, and review their policies to ensure they are aligned with community needs.
- In particular, donors should take steps to improve their contacts and collaborative partnerships with local CSOs, which would ensure that donors become more informed by and responsive to the needs and concerns of those directly affected by conflict in their daily lives. To overcome the obstacles of security and accessibility, the government and third parties are encouraged to assist.
- Local CSOs should be helped to identify novel ways of addressing funding shortfalls and ensuring long-term engagement. They should also improve external communication and outreach to ensure that their presence and work is made known to potential donors.

Financial management and book-keeping

- Local CSOs should be supported in identifying or recruiting and training staff to assume financial management responsibilities. The best way to do this would be for CSOs to secure financial resources to attract the best candidates and to institute staff training.
- CSOs in KP and FATA should receive training and similar forms of support to develop comprehensive plans for the generation as well as management of funds.
- KP and FATA CSOs should receive training and similar forms of support to set up computerised financial systems and financial support for securing the necessary resources, including computer equipment and trained staff. It is also important that they receive IT training, particularly in the use of spreadsheets and other software programmes that would assist their work.
- CSOs in KP and FATA should be supported by donors, NGOs/INGOs, and other interested stakeholders with financial management training, including book-keeping.

4

Operations and project implementation challenges

THIS CHAPTER WILL ANALYSE THE KEY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS related to operational challenges, including challenges concerning project implementation, target groups, subject knowledge and skills, monitoring and evaluation, and other operational challenges, including security issues. The chapter will conclude by proposing a number of recommendations related to this field.

4.1 Fields of activity

The 121 CSOs that participated in the needs assessment have very diverse areas of focus under the umbrella of peacebuilding. The most common fields of activity include mediation and dialogue, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, human rights and protection, and development and poverty reduction. Other popular issues addressed include climate change, health and education, emergency preparedness, counter-terrorism and countering extremist violence, and access to security and justice, and religious faith. Such diversity suggests an ad hoc character to the peacebuilding activities of CSOs in both KP and FATA. While this may be a positive indication that they are tailored toward the specific needs of particular localities, it also suggests a lack of clear frameworks for project implementation. This may make it difficult for CSOs in the region to engage in peacebuilding activities that are coordinated with, or complementary to, the activities of other CSOs.

4.2 Target groups

Participating CSOs work both at a general level with the communities where they are based, as well as more specifically with particular vulnerable groups. After local communities, vulnerable groups are the second priority for participating CSOs' work, particularly children and young people.

The majority of participating CSOs, 100 out of 121 (56 out of 64 in KP and 44 out of 57 in FATA), reported that they work with youth. A smaller majority of participating CSOs – 90 out of 121 – work with children.

4.2.1 Local focus

Almost universally, the operations of participating CSOs target the local communities in which they are based. Very few cover their whole province or region; only seven out of 121 CSOs reported that their operations do not target the local community (one in Swat, KP, and six in Khyber and Orakzai, FATA). That the operations of participating CSOs do not extend beyond the local community may be indicative of the size and capacity of many of the CSOs in the area.

Local government and the media are also targeted, but to a lesser extent, which may be surprising given that the activities of many of the CSOs include advocacy, awareness raising, information dissemination, and the promotion of dialogue. In some areas, very few CSOs said they target local government (in Mohmand for instance). Very few CSOs target national government, parliamentarians, and other policy decision-makers.

In both KP and FATA, participating CSOs reported limited levels of engagement with authorities and policy decision-makers. In KP the figures are higher than in FATA, and local authorities are more likely to be targeted by CSOs in both KP and FATA than national authorities. Overall, 59 out of 121 participating CSOs work with local government authorities: these include 42 out of 64 CSOs in KP, compared against only 17 out of 57 in FATA. Whereas between three and ten participating CSOs from each district in KP engage with local government, no participating CSOs in Orakzai reported doing so. Moreover, in FATA the number of CSOs which engage with local government in each agency falls to between one and six.

Engagement with national authorities and policy decision-makers by participating CSOs in both KP and FATA is more limited than with local authorities. Overall, 24 out of 121 CSOs engage with parliamentarians and policy decision-makers (16 in KP compared with eight in FATA) and 15 out of 121 engage with national government (ten in KP and five in FATA). The difference between KP and FATA suggests that the environment in KP makes it easier for CSOs to engage in high-level advocacy than in FATA. It is likely that CSOs' level of experience also contributes to their ability to carry out high-level advocacy activities. Participating CSOs in FATA were largely established more recently – and are thus less experienced – than those in KP (20 out of 57 participating CSOs in FATA were established before 2007, in contrast to 45 out of 64 in KP).

The local focus of almost all participating CSOs can limit their ability to influence national policy. On the other hand, it is also a strength in that it enables CSOs to develop community-based conflict resolution techniques and promote local ownership of peacebuilding processes, which can have a significant impact for the communities where they work.

Engagement with the international community and donors was the lowest out of all the target groups. Overall, only 31 out of 121 participating CSOs target these actors. Those in FATA are much less likely to engage with international actors than their counterparts in KP (10 out of 57 and 21 out of 64 CSOs respectively). This is a significant obstacle, not only to attracting targeted funding for peacebuilding activities, which participating CSOs generally reported they do not have, but also to ensuring the representation of local communities at the highest advocacy level and helping shape donors' strategies to reflect the realities on the ground.

4.2.2 Women

Participating CSOs' targeting of women through their activities is not consistent across KP and FATA. This reflects local cultural practices and the influence of militants on security, particularly in FATA. Whereas 52 out of 64 CSOs in KP include women as a target group for their activities, less than half of those in FATA (26 out of 57) target women. Moreover, while every district in KP had at least four (and a maximum of twelve) participating CSOs working with women, only six out of seven agencies in

FATA had at least two (and a maximum of seven) CSOs working with women. South Waziristan, FATA, had no participating CSOs working with women, exacerbating the already difficult social and security context for women in FATA.

Notwithstanding broader involvement of women in KP, cultural and social barriers hindering the involvement of women (e.g. as project beneficiaries and CSO staff) were consistently cited by participating CSOs as an operational challenge in both KP and FATA. For instance, one CSO in KP said that they received threats from militants “because we work for the education [of women] and women’s rights”. Similarly, some spoke of the challenge of working in an environment where vulnerable groups – such as women, children, and youth – were marginalised, overlooked, and widely considered to be unimportant.

4.3 Subject knowledge and skills

Local CSOs have a key peacebuilding role to play in KP and FATA, helping to identify and engender a response to short-term security, justice, and governance needs as well as to facilitate the political solutions required to secure a long-term, sustainable, and positive peace.

The peacebuilding activities of participating CSOs are largely incorporated into their other thematic work (such as health or infrastructure development, depending on the focus of the CSO) and do not attract specific funding or projects. Neither is peacebuilding training widely available to these CSOs. Rather, they engage in highly responsive, ad hoc peacebuilding activities. Some examples provided by participating CSOs are presented below to illustrate the range and nature of peacebuilding activities in KP and FATA:

“We have played an active role in peace and conflict resolution in our area. [We] arranged several jirgas in the last four years in Kurram Agency to solve the conflict between Shia and Sunnis. We brought both the sectarian rivals to the table to solve different problems. Due to our efforts and continuous contributions, we were able to open the road for both the rivals which had remained closed in the last four years. Schools were blown up in various parts of our agency. We stood together and safeguarded the schools and today all our schools are safe.”

(CSO in FATA)

“We are holding community meetings and jirgas to keep people away from militancy and inform the people about how to keep our area peaceful.”

(CSO in FATA)

Jirgas, a traditional method of community-based mediation, are an important element of the peacebuilding activities of participating CSOs in FATA. This reflects the more traditional social context in FATA compared with KP.

In KP, participating CSOs have been able to engage in broader peacebuilding activities, such as awareness raising and counselling to assist with conflict trauma. The comparative freedom to work with women in KP is also clear from the activities carried out by participating CSOs in the province:

“[This area] was severely affected by the conflict between the army and the militants. This conflict badly disturbed the mental health of local women and children especially. We ... arranged sessions for them. To highlight the importance of peace we held seminars and rallies in which hundreds of people participated. We also did some relief activities for women and children.”

(CSO in KP)

“During militancy in Swat, all the schools and colleges were destroyed by the militants and the people migrated from Swat to other parts of the province. When the situation got

normal and the people returned to their homes, we started work on community mobilisation for peace. We held several community meetings with men and women to make them aware about the ... intentions of militants who exploit innocent people in the name of religion and honour and use them [to achieve their own goals]. We opened a vocational centre for women for the purpose of economic empowerment. For maintaining peace and security in the area we cooperated with the Pakistani army and kept them informed whenever we felt any unpleasant movement. We also held several meetings with the EDO (Executive District Officer) for Education to open the schools so that the girls and boys could continue their education. We also convinced the parents to send their children to schools as then the situation was normal.”

(CSO in KP)

Participating CSOs in both KP and FATA reported successful efforts to mediate between conflicting parties using community-based techniques, whether they are individuals within families, neighbours, or entire communities. Indeed, this is one of the benefits of the strong context-specific local focus of almost all participating CSOs. Promoting dialogue between neighbours in dispute or between different religious sects, for example, was also highlighted by a number of CSOs in both KP and FATA. Others mentioned reports and poetry they had published promoting peacebuilding and the rule of law, for instance, and poetry events they had hosted. Some CSOs in both areas reported that they had hosted peace seminars and peace talks. The provision of conflict resolution training was also cited by some of the CSOs who participated in this assessment as an example of their efforts to build a lasting peace in the region. Many CSOs also mentioned the provision of counselling and aid to those in need [such as flood victims, internally displaced people (IDPs), and people traumatised from the conflict, including women and children]:

“Our organisation’s main target group is women, therefore we have decided to help women in this hard situation because militancy-related conflict affects women directly. We knew that women have no access to education, businesses, and decision making, etc., therefore we chose all these aspects and organised sessions on conflict prevention, promoting peace mediation, and skill training when these women were in the IDP camps. A large number of women participated in training on peace, conflict resolution, and mediation. We arranged therapy sessions for women where they shared their problems and tried to find solutions.”

(CSO in KP)

Many also highlighted the awareness-raising work they do and how they endeavour to disseminate information about how to promote conflict resolution and peacebuilding:

“We delivered awareness sessions on peace to the community members. Secondly, during community group gatherings we disseminated information about the different tools of security.”

(CSO in FATA)

4.3.1 Self-assessment

Participating CSOs were asked to rate their areas of expertise and skills from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). On the whole, CSOs in both KP and FATA positively rated their knowledge and expertise in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and dialogue and mediation, with mediation and dialogue being the strongest in both KP and FATA. 51 out of 121 CSOs rated their expertise in conflict prevention as good or excellent; 60 out of 121 rated their expertise in peacebuilding as good or excellent; and 66 out of 121 rated their expertise in mediation and dialogue as good or excellent.

Conflict prevention skills appear to be marginally stronger in KP than in FATA, with 28 out of 64 CSOs in KP rating their conflict prevention expertise as good or excellent compared with 23 out of 57 in FATA. However, according to the self-assessment, peacebuilding expertise seems to be stronger among CSOs in FATA than in KP, with

29 out of 57 rating their expertise as good or excellent in FATA compared with 31 out of 64 in KP. Similarly, CSOs in FATA appear to be stronger in mediation and dialogue than those in KP, with 33 out of 57 rating their expertise as good or excellent compared with 33 out of 64 in KP. In KP, participating CSOs from Upper Dir exhibited the lowest confidence in these areas, and in FATA participating CSOs from South Waziristan had the least confidence in their expertise on these areas.

Depending upon the focus of the CSO, staff members also said that their organisations have good levels of expertise in many other areas, including community empowerment, protection, or human rights issues, and climate change.

Participating CSOs indicated areas where their expertise could be improved, including small arms issues, climate change, security and police reform, and emergency preparedness. It was procedural knowledge, however, that concerned CSOs in both KP and FATA the most. According to the self-assessment, the weakest areas in the CSOs' expertise and knowledge include policy formulation and public policy processes, donor funding processes, and international institutional frameworks, with knowledge of the latter ranking the lowest. Out of 121, 62 CSOs rated their knowledge of donor funding processes as weak or very poor; 70 out of 121 rated their knowledge of policy formulation and public policy processes as weak or very poor; and 72 out of 121 rated their knowledge of international institutional frameworks as weak or very poor. By and large, CSOs in FATA exhibited less confidence than their KP counterparts in all areas, although in both KP and FATA figures on CSOs' weaknesses in relation to international institutional frameworks were almost equal for both areas.

Many participating CSOs engage in similar activities including advocacy, public awareness raising, facilitating dialogue, information dissemination, training, and engaging the media. Other activities undertaken by CSOs, but to a much lesser extent, include engaging parliamentarians and policy decision-makers, civic education, strategic planning and campaigning, business income generation, networking, and conducting research. Depending upon the aims and objectives of the CSOs and their programmes, certain activities may be complementary; it is perhaps surprising that research, networking, campaigning, civic education, and engaging parliamentarians and other policy decision-makers does not feature more highly among the activities cited by participating CSOs, particularly given these are activities that can often augment and help realise their aims.

Most participating CSOs were fairly modest in ranking their abilities to undertake these activities, with very few saying that they possessed excellent skills in any of these areas. Nonetheless, many CSOs said that they possessed good skills in information dissemination, networking, public awareness raising, facilitating dialogue, training, and community empowerment. Perceived weak areas for most CSOs, particularly newer CSOs and those based in FATA, included strategic planning, research, fund-raising, financial management, and engaging parliamentarians and policy decision-makers. Enhanced management and communication skills would help address some of these capacity gaps.

While their own staff members have knowledge and skills training gaps, many participating CSOs said that they have the ability and capacity to provide training to other organisations and groups. Indeed, some of the CSOs said that they had provided training to other organisations to enable them to implement projects. CSOs identified the following areas where training has already been provided to others:

Knowledge-based: peacebuilding, conflict resolution, health and hygiene, maternal care, income generation and micro-enterprise development, governance issues, development issues, disaster management and preparedness, human rights and protection issues, women's rights and empowerment, child rights and development, education, career counselling, climate change and environment protection, rural issues, skills training for people with disabilities, access to justice, and police reform.

Skills-based: project cycle management, financial management, book-keeping, improving organisational structures, proposal writing, report writing, leadership and management skills, communication and presentation skills, information technology, training of trainers, and community participation methodologies.

4.4 Monitoring and evaluation

On the whole, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes are understood by participating CSOs as mainly relevant to donors, or are carried out verbally (without being documented) by staff who go to the field or project site to observe progress without documenting their findings or using any specific M&E tools or practices. Of the 121 participating CSOs, 100 reported that they carried out formal M&E during or at the end of a project or when requested by donors, while only 6 out of 121 participating CSOs said that they also carry it out when the CSO itself requires some information. Eleven out of 121 CSOs in KP and FATA reported that they had never conducted formal M&E, and 13 specifically said that they conducted verbal/undocumented M&E (12 in KP and 1 in FATA). This suggests a lack of standardised M&E processes and practices within participating CSOs in both KP and FATA. This is especially problematic considering the often high turnover in the workforce, which, in the absence of written records and appraisals of activities, frustrates the development of institutional knowledge. It also shows widespread disregard for the value of the information arising out of M&E processes. By and large, the 100 participating CSOs that engage in M&E activities rarely have the internal structures to carry them out in a systematic and methodical manner.

It is unclear whether gaps in conducting M&E are due to lack of resources, skills, or awareness of the importance of M&E. CSOs need to be familiarised with the importance of M&E in ensuring, measuring, and communicating the change needed to fulfil projects' intended aims and objectives, respond to strategic plans and mission statements, and maximise impact and sustainability. Monitoring during project implementation is a particularly useful management tool that helps identify developments that may impact project implementation (whether resource-based, security, political or other) and keeps the project on track by ensuring sufficient resources are deployed in the most effective and efficient manner.

In terms of the impact of their projects, many of the CSOs do not have the capacity to do detailed evaluations or measure long-term impact on communities. However, most participating CSOs articulated the immediate changes that they can see among target groups and communities resulting from projects they have implemented. Projects have resolved disputes, improved safety and the sense of security among communities, empowered communities, improved community-level development and economic opportunities, raised awareness of peacebuilding issues and women's and children's rights, increased participation of women and girls in public life, increased the number of girls in education, deterred young people from militant organisations, and contributed to reconciliation between communities. CSOs also reported short-term benefits including increased public support for CSOs, increased public awareness of ways in which they can contribute to improving community security in their localities, and increased public demand for peace and development. One CSO representative in FATA said of the impact of their work: "A sense of volunteerism has developed among the community and they are recognising the importance of working on a self-help basis." A representative from KP said: "People are now beginning to demand their rights and combining efforts to maintain law and order." Many CSOs said that the long-term impact of their work would be seen in lasting peace and a change in behaviour by the people in their communities, who are developing the knowledge and skills required to build peace in their communities and beyond.

In short, while formal evaluations of the short and long-term impact of projects have not been undertaken by many CSOs, the impact of local CSOs – often with very limited resources and support – has been significant. The potential contribution of local CSOs in KP and FATA to participatory and effective peacebuilding is significant and invaluable and, if harnessed, could be instrumental in bringing sustainable peace and prosperity to the region.

4.5 Other operational challenges

Aside from the knowledge and skills gaps already mentioned, there are a number of other challenges that CSOs face in their daily work. The most significant challenge that many participating CSOs said they face is the security situation, particularly in the conflict zones of FATA, as mentioned in section 2 on organisational challenges. Staff have faced death threats and been attacked, kidnapped, and even killed because of their work with CSOs. Threats come from militants, particularly against CSOs working on women's rights, for instance. Threats also come from the prevalence of mistrust among communities – perhaps due to trauma resulting from conflict – which has been manipulated by widespread propaganda that these CSOs are working for the benefit of Western donors and not local people, are working against Islam, or have a political agenda. Suspicions on the part of local and national government that CSOs in this area have been working against state interests has also limited the extent of the support afforded CSOs and consequently the impact of their work. However, in many areas, public mistrust and misconceptions of CSOs have diminished as a result of the tireless work of local CSOs to reach out to communities, establish and maintain dialogue with communities and key leaders, and engage them in their work to build a more peaceful and secure society. This has led to increased public support of CSOs, and in some areas a spirit of volunteerism has been ignited, as mentioned above. However, many CSOs have had to restrict their activities and visibility to minimise risks to personal safety.

Even where relations between communities and local CSOs have improved, the security situation remains a serious concern, particularly in FATA, posing threats to CSO staff, disrupting daily activities, and jeopardising the implementation of projects. The security situation also often deters donors from visiting certain areas (particularly foreign donors and non-Pakistani staff whose travel is usually restricted). This may in part explain the very limited contact with international donors reported by CSOs in FATA, where there are heightened security risks in comparison with KP.

Managing the expectations of target groups and communities was reported by participating CSOs as a challenge to efficient operations. High expectations, particularly among impoverished communities who might prioritise infrastructure development over other interventions such as promoting peaceful dialogue or collaborative partnerships between communities and authorities, result in a hostile environment for participating CSOs' targeted projects. Again, local CSOs have endeavoured to overcome these challenges by outreach, trust building, dialogue, and inclusive approaches to their work. Lack of staff with appropriate expertise and skills, lack of knowledge of conflict management and mitigation issues, and lack of resources, however, frustrated these endeavours and were also common challenges for many CSOs. In addition, the strategies of participating CSOs for managing expectations appear to be somewhat ad hoc rather than a systematised approach to ensuring local ownership of their work. There is a clear need to build the capacities of individual staff with regard to stakeholder management, as well as enhancing CSOs' existing institutional knowledge and developing new systematised methodologies for promoting local ownership, both in KP and FATA.

When asked what lessons they had learnt from project implementation, most CSOs said they had learnt that it is crucial to get the support of the community at all levels, from grassroots levels to influential leaders. This, said many, depends upon networking,

outreach, effective communication, building and maintaining good relationships, and a consultative and participatory approach to project development and implementation. These approaches can also help, as mentioned above, in countering mistrust and misconceptions of CSOs. Participating CSOs also emphasised the importance of consulting with all stakeholders during project planning and implementation processes, engaging the media, respecting cultural sensitivities and social norms, and developing in-depth knowledge of the communities in which they work. The CSOs identified needs for skilled and experienced staff, investing in staff development and training, improving organisational planning and management, standardised monitoring and reporting, finding ways to address their own capacity gaps, and learning from lessons. They also emphasised the importance of needs assessments, baseline surveys, and ensuring all staff and beneficiaries have a clear understanding of project aims and objectives. Many also spoke of learning to identify novel ways of raising funds to support their work because they lack external financial support.

4.6 Recommendations

Operations: field of activity and target groups

- Given the potential for local CSOs to contribute to peacebuilding and the limited size, experience, and capacity of many of the CSOs in KP and FATA, a support network could help share lessons learned, guidance, and resources, where appropriate.
- CSOs should aim to influence local and national government, parliamentarians and other policy decision-makers, the international community, and the media. International or national NGOs could assist local CSOs to enhance their policy advocacy skills.
- Where the environment effectively prohibits CSOs from addressing women's issues, CSOs that target women in their activities should be provided with all the assistance they require for doing so, with particular emphasis on their safety and that of their beneficiaries.
- Local and national government should recognise and help realise the potential of local CSOs to contribute to peacebuilding and help build security, stability, and development in KP and FATA. The political space afforded to CSOs and the legislative framework within which local CSOs operate should be reviewed.

Subject knowledge and skills

- There are some clear knowledge and capacity gaps, and a few local CSOs also feel they lack expertise in key areas. Training and information are required on key areas, including donor funding processes, policy formulation and public policy processes, and international institutional frameworks.
- CSOs with limited expertise in key areas such as peacebuilding will need support in developing their skills, while CSOs that already have considerable expertise can significantly benefit from external support to advance their skills (both in terms of formal training and 'learning by doing'). They could also do with external assistance in securing resources to hire staff with the right expertise and formulating procedures to identify and attract the right staff.
- Local CSOs should ensure organisational activities and aims are aligned and could carry out a greater variety of activities to help realise their institutional and programmatic aims and objectives. They need to be provided with the skills and support to do so (particularly for research, communication and outreach, and advocacy and awareness raising).

- Setting up a local CSO network to share knowledge, skills, and new tools among CSOs could be useful to address thematic issue-related capacity gaps. Such an initiative could be supported by peacebuilding NGOs and INGOs in Pakistan and elsewhere.

Monitoring and evaluation

- CSOs need to be familiarised with the importance of M&E, and to be supported to develop the capacity and resources to engage fully in M&E activities, including through M&E training. The ways in which CSOs review their programmes and operations and engage in M&E should be identified and enhanced where necessary. Alternatives to the technical terminology used in M&E could be used by donors as well as international and national NGOs that work with these local CSOs in order to encourage them to adopt methods enabling them to measure and communicate change, respond to change, enhance their impact and celebrate success.

Other operational challenges

- Local CSOs require support to overcome the more serious challenges that threaten their staff members and their projects. These include the security situation, public mistrust and misconception of CSOs in many areas, and lack of resources and capacity. CSOs should be commended and supported (including through public statements of commendation) in their efforts to overcome some of these challenges through outreach, dialogue, and promoting participatory approaches to their work.
- There may be value in sharing lessons learnt within CSO networks, which would be particularly useful for the many newer CSOs in KP and FATA.

5

External relations and communication challenges

THIS CHAPTER WILL ANALYSE THE KEY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS related to external relations, including challenges concerning communication and outreach, media liaison, and government and other stakeholder support. The chapter will conclude with a number of recommendations related to this field.

In terms of external relations, local CSOs should prioritise the target groups who possess the greatest influence (local and national government, parliamentarians, and other policy decision-makers), those who can support their activities (the international community), those that can reach the greatest audience (the media), and those in most need (local communities, particularly vulnerable groups). The impact of these CSOs is likely to be greater if local and national government, the international community and the media are targeted more often. Of course, targeting these groups alone will not ensure that the message is heard, let alone responded to. CSOs need to have the confidence to target these groups in a way that will positively impact project and organisational aims and objectives. Moreover, these groups need to be encouraged to be more responsive to local CSOs, not least because they tend to represent communities that might otherwise not be heard, address issues that might otherwise be overlooked, and possess the potential to significantly contribute to participatory peacebuilding in KP and FATA.

5.1 Communication and outreach

Most participating CSOs, unsurprisingly, work predominantly with members of their local communities. CSOs also reported that they work with women's and youth groups, religious institutions, and other CSOs or non-state actors, particularly those working in related fields such as peacebuilding, mediation, and dialogue. Working with other CSOs in related fields is key to consolidating and empowering CSO messages and efforts. Moreover, working with communities, particularly vulnerable communities such as women, youth, and religious and ethnic minorities, is essential in order to earn trust and confidence as well as delivering messages and developing projects that are aligned to the needs of these communities. Indeed, many participating CSOs said they consulted key stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries in the community,

during the project planning process, which helps ensure enhanced mutual trust and increases the potential for project success. Project success and organisational longevity are dependent upon establishing good relationships with communities and target groups. With respect to liaising with other CSOs, the strength and vibrancy of civil society is dependent, in part, upon good relationships between CSOs and other civil society actors.

Comparatively few participating CSOs said that most of their work with external actors was with representatives of local government or the media. Very few said they worked with donors, international NGOs, parliamentarians, or the private sector (exceptions include Swat, where many CSOs said they sometimes worked with these stakeholders, which is indicative of good relationships between CSOs here and influential stakeholders; and Malakand, where CSOs also reported good relations with government authorities). Even fewer CSOs said they work or cooperate with representatives of the national government. Limited cooperation with these more influential stakeholders can hamper the work of CSOs and limit their influence on national policies. Thus, there is a need to improve collaborative partnerships between local CSOs and policy decision-makers. This may require increased outreach activities, improved communication skills, and raising awareness within the CSO community and among these stakeholders about the mutual benefits of closer cooperation.

5.2 Media liaison

Developing and implementing media campaigns that can reach multiple actors, raise institutional and operational profiles, increase public awareness, and indirectly highlight the activity and support (or inactivity and absence of support) of certain actors, can be particularly effective in influencing key stakeholders and garnering their support. Almost all CSOs that participated in the needs assessment said that it is important to engage with the media in order to influence the public policy decision-makers and donors. However, many CSOs also said that they did not utilise tools such as radio or television broadcasts, which may be attributed to lack of access, resources, or planning. Nonetheless, almost all CSOs identified a multiplicity of ways in which they try to disseminate key messages, promote their work, and influence key actors. The promotion of positive messages by local CSOs is particularly important in countering the messages and doctrines disseminated by militants and helping to dissuade youth and other vulnerable groups from militants' discourse. Besides print and electronic media, CSOs conducted seminars, hosted public meetings, held corner/hujra meetings, organised community walks and peace rallies, organised sports events and school debates, held jirgas with community elders, engaged in wall-chalking (writing slogans on the walls of buildings), printed and distributed banners and informational material, used placards, involved madrassas and Friday sermons in mosques, made telephone calls, published reports, held open days, engaged in regular correspondence and networking with key actors, held training workshops, and celebrated special days (such as holidays and ceremonies, particularly of minority faiths). Meetings with communities were frequently held, and some CSOs also said that they utilise social media, such as YouTube and Facebook. The many and varied ways in which CSOs endeavour to reach external actors is highly commendable and shows high levels of commitment and creativity. The power and reach of print and electronic media should be utilised to further extend the influence of local CSOs and secure much-needed support.

5.3 Government and other stakeholder support

In terms of their influence over external actors, most participating CSOs said that of all stakeholders they have the most influence over their communities and the target groups they work with, particularly women and youth groups. This is a good sign of the level of trust and confidence in these CSOs among local communities. Fewer CSOs said that their sphere of influence extends to the media, the wider general public, and local government. Very few CSOs said they have at least a little influence over donors, parliamentarians, and the national government. Some CSOs said that influence over some of these actors (particularly donors) is not essential. Of course, the type of external actor that a CSO may aspire to influence is dependent upon the nature of the CSO's work. Nonetheless, the value of influencing stakeholders who can have an impact on policy decisions (the government and parliamentarians), reach wide audiences (the media), or support CSO activities (donors and others) should not be overlooked. Enhancing local CSOs' outreach and communication skills can help extend the reach of their influence, as can raising awareness among external actors of the role they can play in peacebuilding through supporting the work of these CSOs. Some CSOs who believed they had some influence over decision-makers and donors said that they endeavoured to shape their opinions through advocacy, public awareness raising, and facilitating dialogue between these actors and CSOs. Others highlighted the importance of monitoring policy-making and implementation as well as providing research and recommendations relevant to the actor concerned.

Of course, the level and nature of the support given to local CSOs by external actors is related to the type of activities undertaken or projects implemented by the CSOs and the way in which these activities are performed, as well as the impact of the projects. Actors such as government or media representatives are often influenced by the activities or opinions of other actors, particularly those they wish to influence (such as the electorate or a media-savvy public). Actors are also, of course, driven by their own aims and agendas. If CSOs can identify and tie into these aims, this could result in cooperation being more mutually beneficial. The lack of influence over actors that have the greatest authority (in terms of impact on policy decisions, reaching large audiences, or providing support) is, however, probably reflective of the environment within which CSOs operate. An environment more conducive to inclusive, public participation in political processes is one in which civil society can often flourish. In order for local CSOs to extend the reach of their influence and increase the impact of their contributions to participatory peacebuilding, it is important that their value in this regard is recognised and that they are provided with the political space and legislative framework that can support their work.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4 Communication and outreach

- To increase the impact of local CSOs and their projects, outreach efforts are required targeting more influential stakeholders and those in a position to provide support – including local and national government, the media, national and international NGOs, donors, and the private sector. These stakeholders should be reminded of the value of active engagement with and support for these CSOs in peacebuilding in KP and FATA.
- In order to reach out to more influential stakeholders and those in a position to provide institutional and operational support, CSO reporting and communications skills need to be improved.

Media liaison

- The many activities CSOs engage in to influence external actors should be used to provoke media interest and help broaden the impact of these activities. Media contacts could be kept informed of events and activities, and activities could be developed to increase the likelihood of media interest.
- CSOs may want to investigate the viability and usefulness of promoting media liaison within their organisation and launching media campaigns with a view to targeting and influencing a wider audience and key external actors. There needs to be very careful consideration of the way this should be done, because of the security risks that may present themselves as a result of increased visibility.
- CSOs should be supported in accessing print and electronic media outlets, where appropriate, and, through information sharing and training, in developing media liaison, communication, and outreach skills.

Government and other stakeholder support

- CSOs should identify the external actors whose opinions and support are key to their organisation and each project, identify the specific form of support that is required, and ascertain how best to establish good relationships with these key stakeholders. Networking, media liaison, and outreach activities are particularly important here.
- Conversely, external actors should be reminded of the role they play in creating a vibrant civil society and, in so doing, contributing to participatory and sustainable peacebuilding initiatives. The government and other key stakeholders should review the extent to which they can and do support local CSOs and wider civil society.

6

Conclusion

THAT 56 OUT OF 121 PARTICIPATING CSOs in both KP and FATA were established within five years prior to the data collection period (2007 to 2012) and 89 of 121 within ten years prior to the data collection period (2002 to 2012) is both a positive and negative point. First, the recent establishment of so many participating CSOs suggests a responsive nature to their work – engendering targeted responses to developing challenges in the north-western region of Pakistan – and should be welcomed. Conversely, it means that many CSOs are inexperienced in attracting funding from external donors and implementing specific funded projects. While this is a clear challenge, it is not unlike the challenges faced by many CSOs around the world and presents an opportunity to shape the work of CSOs in KP and FATA in order to produce innovative and efficient approaches to peacebuilding in this region.

The geographical scope of participating CSOs' activities and the reach of their influence are also fairly limited. There is a clear absence of working relationships between many local CSOs and influential external actors, principally donors, government representatives (particularly at the national level), the media, and parliamentarians/policy decision-makers. Many CSOs lack key organisational skills – particularly management, financial management, fundraising, and external communication – and some lack sufficient knowledge of key issues in the field of peacebuilding, including conflict prevention, dialogue and mediation, research and advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation. There are also resource shortages, a heavy reliance on volunteers, and significant underrepresentation of women. The human resource management and staff training capabilities of many participating CSOs require development.

Local CSOs are fully aware of their capacity needs, and with support from key stakeholders – including local and national government, donors, and national and international NGOs – CSOs could expand and enhance their participatory peacebuilding activities in KP and FATA. This would allow them to play an instrumental role in building a meaningful and lasting peace in the region.

It is a harsh irony that until the security situation improves the potential for local CSOs to contribute to peacebuilding is likely to remain limited – but peace must be restored for the security situation to improve. Nonetheless, the contribution that these local CSOs have already made to improving the lives of ordinary citizens affected by the conflict is significant. Not least among these is enhanced awareness of peacebuilding and increased knowledge and skills within communities for building positive peace. Public trust and confidence in local CSOs has increased as a result of the tireless work of many CSOs, and with public support the potential contribution of CSOs to participatory peacebuilding is significant.

If all stakeholders (government authorities, donors, and national and international NGOs) work together with local CSOs in KP and FATA to realise the recommendations proposed in this needs assessment, local CSOs can be helped to overcome the institutional and operational challenges they face and achieve their full potential. This will significantly contribute towards achieving lasting peace in Pakistan's north-western region.

Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme (CAMP) is a Pakistan based non-profit and non-governmental organisation established and registered in May 2002, under the Societies Act of 1860. We work with some of the most underprivileged communities in Pakistan; responding to emergencies, improving access to quality health and education, creating livelihood opportunities and working closely with communities and government departments to promote human rights, peace and security.

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COVER PHOTO: A dispute over a large area of land, in the frontier region settlement of Bannu, FATA, was heading towards a bloody feud, but the *jirga* helped resolve the dispute peacefully. © CAMP



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