Your Quarterly Update
April 2019

Dear Friends of Conflict Dynamics,

Greetings from Cambridge! Since our last newsletter Conflict Dynamics has turned 15! It’s hard to believe a decade and a half has passed since the organization set off on its journey, with the first small step of filing the incorporation papers. That was in March 2004. As President, I feel immense pride and humility in what we as a family, and our partners and supporters, have achieved. Did I believe this was possible when starting out with the first steps? I dreamed and imagined it, yes, and yet I am still in awe that we have been able to grow the seed of an idea into a vibrant organization working to help people affected by conflicts around the world.

Many thanks to all of you, Friends of Conflict Dynamics, for all of your support over the years. I am looking forward to the next 15+ years with excitement and optimism.

Gerard Mc Hugh
Founder and President

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Spotlight: Mai Taha,
Deputy Director, Sudan Program

Meet Mai Taha, Deputy Director of Conflict Dynamics’ Sudan Program and a peacebuilding practitioner with over 10 years of experience in governance and conflict management.

Mai has been passionately fighting for a peaceful Sudan long before her time at CDI. As a student studying Development Planning and Environmental Management, she was active with the Environmental Conservation Society in Sudan as an advocacy coordinator campaigning against the destruction of the environment. It was within this role that she discovered the leverage of political power and came to realize that the issue was not about simply protecting the environment, but deep down it was about good governance.

This was a turning point for Mai’s work and she soon became very involved in federalism and governance. She began to wonder what was missing that was preventing those in Sudan from attaining peace and it was at a workshop in South Kordofan that CDI President, Gerard Mc Hugh first introduced her to the concept of Political Accommodation. It was elements of Political Accommodation including effectiveness of public participation, equity in influence in decision making, and overall representation that were missing, preventing success in the Sudanese peacebuilding efforts.

Sudan Program

On April 11th, following months of protests, President Omar Al Bashir was ousted from government. Overnight, the Sudan’s political landscape was transformed, and the country entered into a new phase in its history.

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), a coalition of trade unions and professionals, coordinated the largest mass demonstrations in Sudanese history. SPA released a “Declaration of Change and Freedoms” which was signed by most of the political actors, named the Forces of Change and Freedoms (FCD) and that lead to building a movement that has encompassed millions of people from across the country.

One of the most striking features of the demonstrations has been the strong presence of women on the frontline of the movement. Whilst Sudanese women have a long and proud history of political leadership, the demonstrations of the last few months have been exceptional even by Sudanese standards.

At the time of writing the demonstrations are ongoing, with hundreds of thousands of people converging en-masse in front of the military headquarters in Khartoum and in town centers across the country. The reason being a stand-off between the leaders of the SPAFCD and the
Over her seven years at CDI, Mai has focused on governance arrangements and dialogue processes, working to both stop the current conflict while also engaging women and youth groups to foster an attitude of Accommodation and representation in political processes. Political Accommodation to her is an attitude that should be practiced every day as a part of life. It is not only political, but accommodation is the basis of everything. Through her work, Mai wishes to plant the seeds of peace and stability. If people can start to think differently and consider the thoughts and needs of other groups, then one day Sudan can reach peace.

Over the last few weeks our team has developed a range of new materials to help with this work, including presentations on transitions in South Africa, Sierra Leone and Burundi as well as running workshops with youth groups, women’s organizations and members of the SPAFCD.

With growing demand for our work the team is being expanded to include two new members and we are working around the clock to meet the needs of our partners including civil society groups, political parties, youth movements, women’s organizations and armed groups.

The Humanitarian Access and Negotiations Team focused its efforts this quarter on two important initiatives in Africa. The Team just returned from Maiduguri, Nigeria where, with the help of the Nigerian Red Cross Society, it has reached over 50 frontline humanitarian workers this quarter from local and international non-governmental organizations active in North-East Nigeria. CDI is implementing a series of "responsible negotiation" trainings related to humanitarian access challenges in conflict settings, specifically for local, senior humanitarian field staff. This is the first time such a training has been done in Nigeria and at the conclusion of the third workshop, there will be 16 facilitators trained to spread skills and experiences on responsible negotiation throughout their local Nigerian contexts. Local participants and co-facilitators were able to work together to share experiences and tackle the unique challenges of operating in the insecure environment of Borno State. CDI looks forward to returning for the final session of the workshop in June.

Conflict Dynamics continued to implement an “Engaging Access Influencers” initiative in Cameroon by completing a successful round table discussion on improving the delivery of humanitarian programs in the country. In collaboration with the government of Switzerland, the central authorities and stakeholders from a variety of sectors and organizations gathered to discuss current access challenges, in order to define new perspectives and prospective approaches to
resolve existing and emerging conflicts.

At the national and state level, CDI is working to support federal and state senior decision makers, their advisers and influencers, civil society and thought leaders to develop increased consensus on the shape of federalism in Somalia. Negotiations between the federal and member-state level powers have been particularly difficult over the last six months and this remains a priority for Conflict Dynamics’ expertise.

...analysis and programming in 2019. Alongside this, a field mission and analysis on the access challenges and on violence against civilians in the North-East region have been undertaken, in order to identify specific training support to offer to local field practitioners. Participants from the field as well as the policy table agreed that strengthening humanitarian programming in Cameroon is a long-term process that requires regular and systematic dialogue between national authorities and humanitarian practitioners. CDI looks forward to returning for additional programming soon.

While the humanitarian access initiatives have been completed in both Somalia and Sudan, important challenges remain and CDI continues to reflect and seek ways to assist more field practitioners in affected environments.

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### Who’s New at Conflict Dynamics?

**Join us in welcoming the new members of the Conflict Dynamics Team**

#### Abdinasir Farah Hussein
**Senior Program Officer, Somali Program**

Abdinasir Farah Hussein is the Somali Program’s Senior Program Officer for ADMEL (Analysis, Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning). Before coming to CDI, Abdinasir worked with Oxfam, Save the Children, and government departments in the Somali Region of Ethiopia on a variety of projects including Oxfam’s Category 1 Drought Response. Abdinasir holds a BA in Public Administration and Development Management and a BS in Animal and Range Science. He is a humanitarian by passion and belief, interested in supporting grass roots community-led humanitarian and Peacebuilding Initiatives.

#### Mohamed Abdirizak
**Managing Director for the Dialogue Platform, Somali Program**

Mohamed Abdirizak is Conflict Dynamics’ Managing Director of the Platform for Political Dialogue and Accommodation in Somalia. He previously served as a Senior Adviser to the President on Democratization and Elections. He is also a former candidate for President of the Federal Republic of Somalia and has served as country director for the National Democratic Institute in Nairobi from 2010 to 2014. Mohamed has worked vigorously to promote unity and stability in Somalia since 2007 and is highly regarded among his Somali colleagues as well as the diplomatic community for his leadership and ability to forge ties between various political and regional actors and opposition members in the country and the diaspora.

#### Johanna Wilkie
**Deputy Managing Director for the Dialogue Platform, Somali Program**

Johanna Wilkie joins Conflict Dynamics as the Deputy Managing Director of the Platform for Political Dialogue and Accommodation in Somalia. Previous to joining CDI, Johanna worked for the US Agency for International Development as the Country Director for Somalia.

#### Airokhsh Faiz Qaisary
**Research Assistant, Peacebuilding**

Airokhsh Faiz Qaisary is the Research Assistant for the Peacebuilding Team and the newest member of the Research and Methodology Team. Prior to joining Conflict Dynamics, Airokhsh served as an intern and fellow at...
Development for eight years and has experience working on issues of good governance, inclusion, participation, and accountability, particularly through electoral and constitutional processes. Originally from Boston, Massachusetts, Johanna has spent the last five years living in Nairobi although occasionally missing walking on the beach!

Sahar, a non-profit working to improve girl’s education in Afghanistan where she focused on designing their program to prevent early marriage among school girls. Airokhsh is a passionate speaker and advocate for women’s rights and education around the world, encouraged by her mother’s work running a secret school for children in her home community in Afghanistan and motivated by her personal experience fighting for her own right to be educated under the Taliban regime.

Israa Dawood
Program Assistant, Sudan Program

Israa Dawood is Conflict Dynamics’ new Program Assistant for the Sudan Program, working as a Data Collector and Analyst. Before joining Conflict Dynamics, Israa volunteered in many youth initiatives including founding one of her own in her hometown in Eastern Sudan to promote healthcare services. She also worked for the Sudanese society as a project coordinator for care of the elderly in Darfur. Israa is politically oriented and is interested in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, especially as it pertains to her country.

Stay Tuned for More!

Conflict Dynamics is in the final stages of hiring a Chief Operating Officer, an Executive Coordinator, and a Somali Program Director so stay tuned to hear more about our new colleagues!

Where in the World is CDI?

Visiting SOYDEN in Mogadishu

Courtesy of our friends at the Somali Youth Development Network, a photo of Gerry and Ahmed visiting their headquarters in Mogadishu and discussing the strengthening of our collaboration on a variety of programs and initiatives.

Birthday Party in Nairobi

Conflict Dynamics celebrated its 15th anniversary with our Nairobi staff, colleagues, friends, and supporters. Keep your eyes out for an announcement about upcoming events in your area and help us continue the celebration all year long!

Reading in Dadaab

Conflict Dynamics has facilitated a donation of 240 books to the Dadaab Book Drive to support secondary school students in Dadaab. The

Celebrating IWD in Nairobi

Our Nairobi Office celebrating International Women’s Day. Conflict Dynamics is enriched by all the women in our lives and we will continue
Dadaab refugee camp was established in 1991 in the wake of the civil war in Somalia and currently has a population of 235,269. According to UNHCR, education is one of the most pressing unfulfilled needs in Kenya camps.

Donation and join us in our work

Our regular digest of governance and peacebuilding scholarship - click image above to sign up!

Stay connected for news on upcoming celebrations for CDI's 15th anniversary throughout 2019!

Conflict Dynamics is an innovative, independent, high impact not-for-profit organization seeking to prevent and resolve violent conflict and alleviate human suffering through dialogue, convening, mediation, technical support, and humanitarian policy development.

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