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## Humanitarian Access and Negotiations in Situations of Armed Conflict November 2017

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Conflict Dynamics' Humanitarian Access and Negotiations program **supports humanitarian practitioners and engages influential actors toward improved humanitarian access in situations of armed conflict.**

### **Approach**

Conflict Dynamics has developed a **structured approach** to access and negotiations that guides practitioners and influential actors through a methodological process firmly rooted in the core **humanitarian principles** and the relevant provisions of **international laws, policies and norms**. Given the close link between humanitarian access and negotiations, Conflict Dynamics has integrated its methodologies in these two areas. The approach encourages sound **analysis**, including thorough actor analysis, creativity in developing **options**, skills-building related to humanitarian negotiations, and a clear way of working through **dilemmas**.

### **Track record and comparative advantage**

Conflict Dynamics has a strong comparative advantage in the areas of humanitarian access and negotiations that is derived from highly experienced staff, expertise in workshop facilitation, robust research and analysis, structured methodologies that are grounded in the humanitarian principles and international laws and norms, established partnerships and extensive networks, and a track record of presence and willingness to support in conflict situations. Conflict Dynamics has partnered with and trained staff from numerous organizations including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations World Food Programme, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Norwegian Refugee Council and many other international and local NGOs in conflict-affected contexts such as Afghanistan, DR-Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

In the area of 'engaging access influencers', Conflict Dynamics engages influential actors in order to positively impact the way these actors facilitate humanitarian access. To guide this work, Conflict Dynamics has developed a unique methodology for engaging access influencers rooted in the humanitarian principles and the international normative framework.

Some of Conflict Dynamics' key achievements related to humanitarian access and negotiations include:

- ✓ Co-developed core resources to assist humanitarian practitioners in securing and sustaining humanitarian access (see 'Core Resources' below)
- ✓ Co-developed the United Nations Manual on humanitarian negotiations with non-State armed groups (see 'Core Resources' below)
- ✓ Facilitated 70 workshops and seminars (as of October 2017) for approximately 1400 humanitarian practitioners on humanitarian access and negotiations since 2013
- ✓ Engaged parties to conflict in South Sudan and Nigeria on their role and responsibilities related to humanitarian access
- ✓ Produced topical policy guidance on humanitarian access-related themes such as the use of technology to improve access and the impact of counter-terrorism measures on access.

### **Audience**

The target audience for Conflict Dynamics' humanitarian access and negotiations programs includes **humanitarian practitioners** working at all levels (HQ, capital and field levels), with emphasis on national staff and national

organizations. The target audience extends as well to other **individuals, groups and governments with the power and influence to improve access** for humanitarians and for people in need of assistance and protection.

### **Core Resources**

In partnership with the government of Switzerland, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross, Conflict Dynamics has developed a unique methodology for improving humanitarian access. The methodology is captured in the following resources:

1. *Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Practitioners' Manual*
2. *Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Handbook on the International Normative Framework*



Conflict Dynamics co-developed the United Nations guidance [Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups](#) (2006). More recently, Conflict Dynamics has updated its humanitarian negotiations methodology based on a decade of conducting, researching, and providing training on humanitarian negotiations. The updated methodology is presented in *Negotiating Humanitarian Access: Guidance for Humanitarian Negotiators* (2017).



### **Strategic partnerships**

Conflict Dynamics catalyzes the impact of its work through strategic partnerships with individual humanitarian organizations and consortia. These partnerships have: helped multiply the uptake and use of the core resources (e.g. NGO Consortium Somalia, INGO Forum Nigeria); achieved changes in organizational culture within individual organizations (e.g. NRC and WFP); and contributed to the financial sustainability of Conflict Dynamics' Access and Negotiations program (e.g. self-funded training engagements with Mercy Corps, NRC, Medair and others). Conflict Dynamics will continue to invest substantially and strategically in partnerships that have the greatest potential to further the intended impact of the initiative on humanitarian access and negotiations.

## **Activity areas**

Building on achievements to date, Conflict Dynamics seeks to deepen and expand its contribution to improve humanitarian access and negotiations in situations of armed conflict. Conflict Dynamics seeks donor support to enhance its impact through **four strands of activity in 2017-2018**:

**I. Direct support to humanitarian practitioners.** Conflict Dynamics' unique structured approach helps fill a gap in the humanitarian sector in methodological guidance on humanitarian access and negotiations. Conflict Dynamics' trainings aim to increase individual practitioners' capacity to improve access and to advance their skills in humanitarian negotiations. Additionally, where possible, these engagements aim to support organizations to institutionalize policies and practices that improve access and negotiations. Conflict Dynamics provides support on humanitarian access and negotiations in locations where practitioners operate, and also encourages complementary approaches between organizations working on these issues.

Potential activities in 2017-18 related to directly supporting humanitarian practitioners include:

- ✓ Identifying teams and contexts that can most benefit from training and workshop facilitation on access and negotiations, typically conducting workshops in situ;
- ✓ Contextualizing and tailoring workshop content for specific audiences;
- ✓ Running training-of-trainer workshops for pre-identified and highly dedicated teams;
- ✓ Developing an updated **training manual on humanitarian negotiations** based on Conflict Dynamics' significant experience in direct negotiations as well as training;
- ✓ Updating the **Humanitarian Negotiations Information Portal**, a virtual resource that promotes knowledge sharing and learning amongst the humanitarian community on humanitarian negotiations.

**II. Engaging Access Influencers.** This area of work aims to increase the awareness and positively change the actions of influential actors in selected contexts toward improved humanitarian access.

In 2015, Conflict Dynamics successfully piloted its 'Engaging Access Influencers' (EAI) initiative in South Sudan. Through a series of workshop-style engagements with government and opposition representatives, Conflict Dynamics contributed to increasing the awareness of these influential actors regarding their role and responsibilities related to humanitarian access. Since then, Conflict Dynamics has extended EAI activities to Nigeria and has laid the groundwork for potential EAI activities in Sudan, Somalia, and the Persian Gulf region with emphasis on Yemen. Potential activities in 2017-18 related to EAI include:

- ✓ Extensive actor mapping to identify key access influencers (collective as well as individual);
- ✓ Relation-building with selected access influencers;
- ✓ Workshop facilitation with selected access influencers focused on increasing their awareness of humanitarian principles, relevant provisions of international laws and norms, as well as exploring their role related to humanitarian access and potential options to improve it;
- ✓ Bi-lateral and smaller group engagements aimed at identifying access bottlenecks, exploring options to improve access, monitoring and implementing commitments, and reinforcing relations.

**III. Evidence-based policy guidance.** Conflict Dynamics draws on its extensive networks, partnerships and engagements with humanitarians and influential actors to identify critical topical issues related to humanitarian access and negotiations, on which it conducts research and analysis and develops guidance. For example, in 2016 Conflict Dynamics published an 'Access Brief' that identified the opportunities and challenges posed by the use of new technology to improve humanitarian access. Conflict Dynamics has also developed a unique training module on counter-terrorism measures and humanitarian access. We have also partnered with Humanitarian Outcomes on

access-related research and have extended the research to further explore the question ‘What Works?’ to secure and sustain humanitarian access.

Potential activities and thematic areas in 2017-18 related to developing evidence-based policy guidance include:

- ✓ Undertake research on thematic issues related to humanitarian access and negotiations;
- ✓ Produce publications based on research, and integrate findings into workshops and distance learning modules;
- ✓ (Further) explore specific themes including:
  - **Access by People in Need** – gather experience and perspectives from organizations and people in need on access challenges and solutions; develop general guidance with case examples
  - **Remote Management (RM)** – RM increasingly becomes the default solution to gain/maintain access in conflicts yet may generate different forms of risk or compromise
  - **Customary Practice** - no compiled resource exists on customary practice – particularly for non-State armed groups – regarding humanitarian access; compile customary practice regarding humanitarian access (1990 – present)
  - **‘What Works?’** to secure and sustain humanitarian access, building upon research conducted in 2016 and drawing upon the contributions of more than 1000 workshop participants to date
  - Further forward-looking research on **technology** and humanitarian access

**IV. System-level change.** Drawing on our staff’s extensive field experience, engagements with practitioners and influential actors, and research, Conflict Dynamics contributes to global system-level debates on issues that fundamentally impact humanitarian access such as United Nations ‘structural integration,’ and the practical value of humanitarian principles to access. In 2016, for example, Conflict Dynamics co-organized an event at the World Humanitarian Summit promoting the value of investing in a structured approach to access and negotiations rooted in humanitarian principles and international normative framework.

Potential activities in 2017-18 related to system-level change:

- ✓ Engage in various forums and with various humanitarian and political actors on themes related to the effectiveness and functioning of the humanitarian system.

### ***Personnel***

The personnel configuration for Conflict Dynamics’ access and negotiations program includes a Program Director, a Senior Program Manager, a Senior Program Officer (part time), Research Assistant(s), and a roster of Senior Consultant Facilitators. The team is highly experienced and draws upon a wide range of experience, academic credentials and specific skills.

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