

Humanitarian Engagement and Access in situations of armed conflict

November 2019

Conflict Dynamics' Humanitarian Engagement and Access 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 humanitarian engagement and access 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**. 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**.

Audience

The target audience for Conflict Dynamics' Humanitarian Engagement and Access Program includes humanitarian practitioners working at all levels (beginning at the field and local levels, extending to capital and headquarters), 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*](#) (2014)
2. [*Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Handbook on the International Normative Framework*](#) (2014)

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 continuously seeks to catalyze the impact of its work by partnering with organizations that are mutually complimentary to its mission. Partnerships with a variety of actors have helped multiply the update and use of core resources (e.g. Somalia NGO Consortium and Nigeria INGO Forum), achieved change in organizational culture (e.g. Norwegian Refugee Council and the United Nations World Food Programme), and contributed to the financial sustainability of the Humanitarian Engagement and Access Program (e.g. self-funded training engagements with Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council, Medair, Norwegian Church Aid, 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 engagement and access.

Track Record and Field Engagements

Conflict Dynamics maintains a strong track record of presence and willingness to support in conflict situations all over the world. Conflict Dynamics has partnered with and trained staff from numerous organizations including the International Committee of the Red Cross, 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 contexts such as Afghanistan, Cameroon, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Conflict Dynamics Humanitarian Engagement and Access Team has facilitated over 85 workshops and seminars for more than 1,300 practitioners on a variety of urgent needs in the field.

Focus Areas

Based on extensive needs assessments and consultations with local practitioners operating in conflict-affected areas, Conflict Dynamics is actively implementing engagements in three key areas:

1. Increasing Capacities of Humanitarian Practitioners

Conflict Dynamics utilizes its core resources to present its unique methodology for improving humanitarian access with a variety of actors including government authorities, armed opposition groups, civil society, and humanitarian practitioners, among others. Through the Training of Future Facilitators Program, Conflict Dynamics aims to increase individual local practitioners' capacity to facilitate trainings for improved access. Providing critical training and capacity building to national and local staff on the frontlines of conflict enable practitioners to assist populations outside the reach of larger, international organizations as well as guarantee sustainability in institutional trainings.

2. Engaging Influential Actors and Pertinent Humanitarian Issues

Conflict Dynamics engages influential actors in order to positively impact the way they facilitate humanitarian access, utilizing a specific methodology rooted in the humanitarian principles and the International Normative Framework. This approach has been implemented recently in the Sudan and Cameroon, where engagement of authorities has reduced blockages and cleared misconceptions about the humanitarian community.

Conflict Dynamics also explores and engages a variety of audiences within the humanitarian community on pressing issues related to access. Drawing on its extensive networks, partnerships, and engagements, Conflict Dynamics continues to identify critical topical issues in the field on which it conducts research and analysis to develop guidance. Identified areas of focus for 2020 include humanitarian mediation, counterterrorism's effect on humanitarian engagement, and support to local practitioners, among others.

3. Evolving Policies and Practices for Key Humanitarian Stakeholders

Conflict Dynamics continues to enrich the debate surrounding humanitarian access and engagement by contributing to high-level discussions and sharing experiences and lessons learned through a variety of outlets and publications. Colleagues maintain a presence at major conferences; sharing expertise on pressing issues including innovative strategies to defeat challenges of humanitarian access and the impact of counterterrorism measures on humanitarian action, among others. Conflict Dynamics also maintains [the Humanitarian Negotiations Information Portal](#), a virtual resource that promotes knowledge and learning among the humanitarian community. In 2020, Conflict Dynamics will expand its work with international organizations to evolve their humanitarian policies and strategies, ensuring their practitioners and negotiators are sufficiently supported and able to effectively apply their skills.

Contact

Gerard Mc Hugh, President
Ph: +1 (617) 661-1066 x 101
Cell: +1 (617) 306-3157
E: gmchugh@cdint.org
Cambridge, US

Emmanuel Tronc, Senior Program Manager
Humanitarian Access and Engagement
Cell: +41 76 490 65 03
E: ETronc@cdint.org
Geneva, Switzerland