

Capacity Building for Peace and Development: The Afghan Diaspora in Toronto

Community Based Participatory Action Research Project



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Highlights

Research Objective:

The primary research objective was to identify the opportunities and challenges that support and impede the engagement of members of the Afghan diaspora in peace building and development in Afghanistan and in Canada.

Methodology:

A total of 261 Afghan-Canadians living in the Greater Toronto Area completed questionnaires that asked ten questions about Afghan-Canadian relations with Afghanistan (including contributions and barriers to peace building and development), and two questions about relations within the Afghan-Canadian community.

The sample consisted of 83 ‘newcomers’ who had been in Canada five years or less, 95 ‘old-comers’ who had been in Canada more than 5 years, and 83 ‘youth’ (ages 16-25).

Main Findings:

The major themes to emerge from the questionnaires include:

- *A focus on underlying causes: dynamics of conflict and ‘roots’ of peace*
- *An overall willingness to engage in peace building and development*
- *Differential capacities / roles re: contributing*
- *A complex relationship with the ‘host’ country*
 - *Canadian values: positive and negative influences*
 - *Engaging the diaspora: overcoming barriers, creating opportunities*
- *Challenges and opportunities within the Afghan-Canadian community*
 - *Adapting to life in Canada*
 - *Need to connect and unite*
 - *Tradition of non-violent dispute settlement*
- *Other issues of interest:*
 - *Notable differences between ‘target’ groups*
 - *Internet as a new key to building networks*

Suggestions for future research and recommendations re: capacity building and policy are offered.

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Section 1. Introduction

Brief overview of 'Diaspora' and contributions to countries of origin

The term diaspora comes from the Greek diaspeirein, meaning “dispersal or scattering of seeds.” Today, it is commonly used to describe trans-national communities of refugees and immigrants living outside of their countries of origin, most often due to forced displacement. Members of a diaspora generally continue to relate emotionally to their ‘homeland’ and to maintain a sense of ‘ethno-national consciousness,’ while also reshaping their identity to adapt to a new society/context. To varying degrees and via diverse mechanisms, members may choose to be involved in activities of preservation or reconstruction of their country of origin.

Diasporas may contribute financially or materially – for example, through remittances sent ‘home’ to family and friends. This tends to add more to individual well being than to national development, and in fact may worsen polarized tensions, as the ‘poorest of the poor’ are the least likely to have links to diaspora communities. Diaspora members may also choose to channel funds or needed goods to NGOs, either through organizations based in the country of residence or through those working on the ground in the country of origin, thus supporting development directly. A third form of material support can involve investment or business creation.

Diasporas may also contribute intellectually and socially through capacity building and strengthening civil societies. This may include, for example, knowledge transfer of expertise (IT, English language, professional skills and experience, etc.), and/or social transfer of new ideas and values garnered from the country of residence. These knowledge and social exchanges may be ‘mediated’, perhaps via the Internet, international forums, research reports, articles, etc. or they may be done through direct presence, via permanent return or temporary ‘circulation of human capital’.

Yet another potential way for members of a diaspora to contribute to their country of origin is through political advocacy and lobbying, of governments (that of the country of residence and/or of the ‘homeland’). If effectively organized, diaspora networks can have a

voice in foreign policy and development initiative planning and implementation, including issues of cultural appropriateness.

Finally, it should be noted that, in a tangential manner, contributions are also made through efforts to build unity of purpose and vision within diaspora communities, to maintain cultural and social links between members of the diaspora and the country of origin, and to assist newcomers in settling into life in the country of residence such that they can build the social and economic resources they will need to be effective contributors to peace and development.

(Sources: Westcott 2006; Brinkerhoff 2004; Hairdari 2004; Nassery 2003; Meyers 2001; Cohen 1997; Safran 1991.)

The Afghan Diaspora & a synopsis of the recent history of Afghanistan¹

Diasporas are not identical, nor monolithic – as such, it is important to understand the specific social, political, and historical context(s) from which a diaspora community has emerged. Since officially gaining independence in 1919, Afghanistan has experienced a tumultuous path, culminating in the last three decades of foreign ‘interference’ and internal conflict. Indeed, Afghan history is much more complex than existing media formulations of pre- and post-Taliban.

Afghanistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia, about the size of Manitoba, divided into 34 provinces. It is bordered by Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China – and is considered to have strategic regional significance. About 80% of the population live in rural areas, although only 12% of the land is arable. It is an ethnically diverse country where an estimated 30 languages are spoken; the two official ones are Pashto and Dari. Religion is an important binding factor in the country as almost 99% of Afghans are Muslim.

Between 1919 and the 1970s, Afghanistan was a constitutional monarchy that went through cycles of socio-economic reform and resistance to reform. In 1978 the Peoples’ Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power through a bloody coup, assisted by

the former USSR. When their attempts to introduce Marxist reforms were opposed, they called on the Soviet Union for assistance. The Soviets invaded with 120,000 soldiers, igniting a war of resistance that led to upwards of 6 million Afghans (approximately one fifth of the population) leaving the country as refugees. It is estimated that over one million Afghans were killed before the Soviets withdrew in 1989.

While the majority fled to Pakistan or Iran, a much smaller group of middle-class, educated Afghans made it to Europe or North America. Many had been exposed previously to Western ideas and fled the region due to persecution by the Marxists within Afghanistan and by the Islamic fundamentalists in the refugee community in Pakistan.

After the Soviets left, the political situation in Afghanistan remained volatile. Neighbouring countries tried to push their interests in Afghanistan. The various resistance Mujaheddin groups turned from battling Soviet troops to fighting each other. A second wave of refugees to the West took place from 1992-1996 as civil war engulfed the country.

After the Taliban (literally ‘religious students’) took the capital city of Kabul in 1996, a third wave of refugees arose. The Taliban imposed rigid, punitive laws based on their strict interpretation of the *shari’a*. After turning a blind eye for several years, the UN began implementing sanctions, further isolating the country. After the events of September 11th, 2001, the United States launched their ‘war against terrorism’ and through a bombing campaign and weapons provision to the opposition ‘Northern Alliance’, the Taliban were ‘defeated’ in December 2001. Those Afghans who made it to the West during this wave tended to be, again, from the urban educated middle-class, along with a group of less educated. Overall, an estimated 90 percent of the educated population left the country during these waves of exodus.

(Sources: Library of Congress 2006; BBC News 2006; Braakman 2005; MSF 2002; Malley 2002)

¹ See Appendix A for a map of Afghanistan and a table of key statistics; see Appendix B for a more detailed chronology of recent historical events

The Afghan diaspora in Canada

The Afghan diaspora based in Western countries is estimated to number 800,000, with the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Germany having the largest communities. There were over 25,000 Afghans in Canada as reported in the 2001 Census, with almost 14,000 living in Toronto, and slightly fewer than 3,000 in both Montreal and Vancouver. Every year an estimated 1000 new Afghan immigrants arrive in Toronto alone (excluding refugees) as government sponsored, privately sponsored, and family class immigrants. It will be interesting to see what the 2006 Census reveals, as some estimates for the population are as high as 55,000.

The Diaspora, Islam and Gender Project based at York University used 2001 Census data to generate a statistical profile of the Afghan community in Canada. They noted the following interesting trends:

- 1) The largest influx of immigrants was in 1996-2001, with over 42% (10,700 people) of the Afghan population coming to Canada during those years.
- 2) The community is young, with the majority of its population aged between 15 and 44. There are more males than females, and in particular, there are more males than females in the 0-14 and 45-64 age groups.
- 3) The community is highly mobile, and this mobility includes both internal and external moves. This trend suggests both the continuous flow of migration as well as the settlement instability of the “movers” in their adopted country.
- 4) About 57 percent of Afghans have acquired Canadian citizenship.
- 5) The Afghan community has relatively lower levels of post-secondary education, when compared nationally and to Muslims in Canada. Women are less educated than males at the university level.
- 6) In terms of income, Afghans derive their income mostly from employment. There is also, however, a fair amount of reliance on government transfers. Over 61 percent of Afghans live below the low-income cut-offs for Canada.

(Sources: DIG 2005; SAFE 2003; CIC)

It is unclear exactly how many Afghan-Canadian organizations presently exist. Common types of diaspora nonprofits found in Western nations include: professional associations, settlement organizations, cultural foundations and language schools, religious organizations, student associations, development and humanitarian relief organizations, or some combination of these. Their primary focus may be on Afghanistan, on Canada, or both. They may or may not work in collaboration with other Afghan and/or Canadian organizations.

Women and youth tend to be on the forefront of organized diaspora activities. The urban and literate women of the diaspora started forming women's NGOs in their new countries of residence, establishing women as important civil society actors. Women tend to be less divided on ethnic and political lines; they remain more focused on issues of human rights. As the number of educated Afghan youth increases, youth are emerging as the most active and vocal group of the diaspora. They also seem to be the least divided by factional 'baggage' and the most skilled in conflict resolution.

Internationally, it should be noted that prominent members of the Afghan diaspora were well represented in the recent state-building process, including the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, the Tokyo Reconstruction Conference in January 2002, the Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003, and the National Elections in September 2004. Indeed, President Hamid Karzai is a US national. Many cabinet ministers in the current government, and many UN and NGO officials are from the diaspora. Some people within Afghanistan have expressed resentment towards the amount of attention and power the diaspora has been given. (Sources: Karimi 2006; Kerlin 2006; Westcott 2006; Kandiyoti 2005; Norquay 2004)

Snapshot: Current situation in Afghanistan

The process of reconstruction has been conceptualized as multi-faceted, entailing a *political* transition to a legitimate and effective state, a *security* transition to peace and stability, and a *socio-economic* transition to sustainable economic growth. Looking at the current picture it is difficult to consider Afghanistan as in a ‘post-conflict’ reconstruction phase. The associated costs of the continuing conflict on the lives of ordinary people continue to escalate.

Politically, Afghanistan has a new state structure built on presidential democracy and supported by a bicameral national assembly (comprising a Lower House, *Wolesi Jirga*, and an Upper House, *Meshrano Jirga*) where the political representation of women has been enshrined in law. However there is concern about the current government officials, with some having apparent warlord and drug connections, or being seen as basically corrupt.

The Afghan state also faces strong international ‘influences’ from countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the former Soviet Union, the nations of Europe, and the United States. The Taliban continue to receive support from the government of Pakistan. There have been concerns raised that the Afghan state answers more to the international community than to the Afghan people. The Bush administration has been criticized for not pushing Pakistan to stop its support of the Taliban. President Karzai has just called for a Loya Jirga with Pakistan to discuss that very issue.

In terms of security, military expenditure outpaces development and reconstruction spending by 900%. NATO has just taken over the US forces operating in the east, making this the largest ever NATO ground combat operation with over 32,000 soldiers. Some 8,000 U.S. troops will continue to function outside NATO, tracking al-Qaida terrorists and training Afghan security forces. Nevertheless, the levels of violence, especially in the southern parts of the country, are escalating. The lives of prominent ‘peace builders’ also remain insecure, as illustrated by the September killing by gunman in Kandahar of the provincial director of the Afghan Ministry of Women’s Affairs.

Socio-economically, the situation in Afghanistan is alarming as a brief snapshot reveals:

- Human development indicators such as maternal mortality rates, illiteracy rates, life expectancy and per capita income are among the worst in the world.
- Despite constitutional equality, women's rights are far from guaranteed: "Violence against women is pervasive; it includes forced marriage, child marriage, trafficking, immolation and physical violence. Inheritance and property laws leave widows or divorced women vulnerable. Discriminatory provisions in laws and policies are still prevalent and have not been made consistent with the constitution" (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2006)
- Low agricultural production, caused by numerous factors including drought and displacement, are contributing to food shortages and hunger. International contributions to food assistance programs are falling short of the need.
- There is limited access to clean water and sanitation. There is little in the way of health care infrastructure. One in five children die before they reach their fifth birthday.
- While number of schools and enrolment did increase significantly shortly after the Taliban were removed from power, the educational situation has been deteriorating again. About 200,000 Afghan children were forced out of school in 2006 by threats and physical attacks. Adult literacy rates are estimated at below 50% for men and below 15% for women, with a rate as low as 1% in some districts.
- Internal displacement is also a recurring issue, with increased fighting among NATO troops and insurgents in southern and eastern Afghanistan leading to nearly 15,000 displaced families in the Kandahar area alone over the past few months.
- At less than 5% of GDP, Afghanistan's domestic revenue collection is one of the lowest in the world. Yet less than half of the \$15 billion promised in international aid has been delivered. The larger regional centres, especially Kabul, benefit from unequal economic and political reconstruction, causing resentment. More needs to be done to transition people into sustainable livelihoods, especially poppy farmers.

(Sources: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2006; UN WFP 2006; SENLIS 2006; Rashid 2006; Constable 2006; Abrashi 2006; Kandiyoti 2005; UNDP 2004; Zunzer 2004)

Snapshot: Role of Canadian Government

According to the website for CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), Canada is taking a ‘whole of government’ approach towards development in Afghanistan. Since 2002, Afghanistan has been the single largest recipient of Canadian bilateral aid. Canada’s total allocation of development assistance to Afghanistan over the 2001 to 2011 period is almost \$1 billion. Program activities include disarming and demobilizing former combatants and providing micro-financing support to low-income people, especially women. Also of interest, CIDA introduced its new Voluntary Sector Fund in June of this year to support joint development efforts between Canadian NGOs and groups in other countries. CIDA has highlighted the fact that “new partners such as diaspora groups and professional associations will now be eligible for funding.”

CIDA has been publicly criticized recently in terms of lack of transparency and accountability for failing to provide evidence of where exactly their contributions to Afghanistan are going or how program effectiveness is being evaluated.

The Canadian Forces currently have 2,300 troops stationed in Afghanistan, the majority in the southern province of Kandahar, as part of the NATO contingency. Canada has extended the mandate of its Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kandahar from 2007 to 2009. The PRT is a small, joint civilian-military group whose mission is to promote local stability and security, improve local governance structures, and engage in reconstruction activities. The PRTs have been the source of some controversy, as military involvement in development has been criticized by relief agencies who claim that it puts them at risk by blurring the distinction between combatants and humanitarian workers.

(Sources: CIDA webpage; Campion-Smith 2006; Canadian Forces 2006; Zunzer 2004; MSF 2002)

Snapshot: Peace building and development initiatives in Afghanistan

The AiDa (Accessible Information on Development Activities) list on the Development Gateway website lists 1,103 ongoing programs related to development and security in Afghanistan, sponsored by governments and NGOs from countries around the world. The Directory of Development Organizations 2006 outlines over 90 development organizations based in Afghanistan. The directory also lists 9 categories that such organizations may fall into: international organizations, government institutions, private sector support organizations, finance institutions, training and research centres, civil society organizations (including local NGOs, trade unions, faith organizations, etc.), development consulting firms, information providers, and grantmakers

In regards to programs directly targeting the Afghan diaspora, perhaps the best known is the IOM (International Organization for Migration) Return of Qualified Afghans Program. The IOM recruits members of the diaspora from every field – from English-speaking, technologically savvy administrative assistants, to professors, engineers, and civil servants - to work with the Afghan government by ‘importing knowledge’ that is currently unavailable domestically. Recruits are paid a local wage, along with an IOM supplement. Contracts range from three months to potentially permanent. Some Afghan-Canadians have participated in this program, and IOM have a database of more than 5,000 Afghan professionals living abroad.

(Sources: Development Gateway website; Directory of Development Organizations 2006; IOM 2005)

Section 2. Present Study

Overview

The present study is part of a larger research project, spearheaded by the University for Peace (UPEACE) in Toronto, the purpose of which is to initiate participatory action research in partnership with Canadian diaspora communities to identify the challenges and opportunities that support and impede their engagement in peace building and development

The intent of this paper is to ground this understanding of challenges and opportunities in the particular lived realities of members of the Afghan diaspora living in the Greater Toronto Area. The Afghan Women's Organization (AWO), a non-profit organization that promotes the successful settlement of Afghan refugees in Canada and also assists vulnerable Afghans in refugee camps and in Afghanistan, was selected as the project partner responsible for coordinating logistics and collecting data from this group. (For more information on UPEACE and AWO, please see Appendix C.)

This paper will, among other things, serve as a discussion paper at the UPEACE Expert Forum on "Capacity Building for Peace and Development: Roles of Diaspora" in Toronto, October 19-20, 2006. The aim of this research project and the forum is to catalyze a more systematic look at capacity building and policy needs related to harnessing diversity as an asset by tapping into the creativity, energy, and resources of diaspora communities.

Methodology

Settlement staff at the Afghan Women's Organization provided the project coordinator for this study with a list of about 500 clients and 'friends' of the organization as well as other organizations in Toronto. People from this list were called by the facilitators and invited to participate. Others learned of the study through word of mouth (e.g., friends and relatives of people originally contacted, acquaintances of staff members, etc.).

Generally, 10 to 20 people would come together at one time. The 'facilitator' would give a brief explanation of the research project and hand out a waiver for the participants to sign. The 12-question questionnaires, asking about personal contributions to peace building and development, perceived barriers, key conditions and connections, etc., were then filled out individually. (See Appendix D for copy of the waiver and questionnaire; the questions were

originally provided by UPEACE, and then slightly altered by AWO; the questionnaires were in English and Dari – approximately 30% of participants answered in English, the remaining questionnaire responses were translated into English by an AWO staff member.) It took an average 30 minutes for everyone to complete the questionnaires.

Following this, there was time allotted for group discussion of the issues raised. The amount of discussion varied from session to session. Notes were taken at some but not all sessions. As the content of the notes reflected the same ideas as those captured in the questionnaires, only the questionnaire responses were considered in the analysis. At the end of the session people were paid a \$20 honorarium as a thank you for their time.

All together there were 17 group sessions held at 5 different locations across the GTA at various times of day, in August and September 2006. Child-minding services were available for participants but were rarely used. The facilitators were Afghan-Canadians, and included a female AWO settlement worker, a female AWO youth worker, and a male who works in media.

Three ‘target’ groups were considered: ‘youth’ (ages 16-25), ‘newcomer’ adult (< 5 years in Canada), and ‘old-comer’ adult (> 5 years in Canada). Four of the sessions were youth only, while the other sessions were mixed groups and mixed gender, although a few sessions turned out by chance to be women-only. Facilitators circulated the room and put a symbol to mark the appropriate group on each person’s questionnaire. The facilitators were familiar with many of the participants and so knew which group they fit into; when they did not know they asked. The questionnaires were anonymous and no other demographic information was collected.

It is assumed, given the confidential nature of the questionnaire and the general familiarity with the facilitators, that respondents felt comfortable and able to answer honestly. Many people thanked the facilitators and the project coordinator after the session for the opportunity to participate and share their ideas on this subject.

A total of 256 questionnaires were completed during these sessions. An additional 5 questionnaires were completed and returned via electronic mail by individuals unable to attend any of the sessions but still interested in taking part.

Results

Questionnaires were completed by a total of 261 people. As mentioned above, this sample was divided into three groups for analysis, with 83 'newcomers' (< 5 yrs in Canada), 95 'old-comers' (> 5 yrs in Canada), and 83 'youth' (16 - 25 years of age) participating.

The first question asked: *Have you made any contribution towards building peace and helping development work in Canada or in Afghanistan?*

- Overall, 40% of participants said they have not yet contributed towards building peace and helping development work, but indicated that they would like to in the future. Forty-three percent of youth, 42% of newcomers, and 35% of old-comers answered in this way.
- Just below one-third of respondents have contributed somewhat towards peace building and development, most commonly through volunteer work or donating money. Youth are most likely to have raised funds or donated to a cause. Old-comers are most likely to have encouraged / talked about peace with family, friends or through the media. They were the least likely of the three groups to name working with youth or children as their contribution.
- Just over one in ten of the participants have contributed extensively to peace building or development. They have done this through in-depth participation in organizations in Canada and/or in Afghanistan, through multiple significant involvements, or through high-level contributions to the Afghan state and/or in rebuilding infrastructure in Afghanistan. Notably, 22% of old-comers have contributed extensively, in comparison to around 8% each of newcomers and youth.
- Sixteen percent of people reported that they had not contributed to peace building and development, and did not indicate an intention to do so. Most commonly, they explained that they did not know how to contribute or they faced barriers, such as being a newcomer. Such a response was given by 22% of newcomers, 16% of old-comers, and slightly less than 10% of youth.
- Only 1.5% (all youth) did not answer this question.

Table 1. Contributions made towards peace building and development.

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
YES (somewhat)	77	22	26	29
Volunteering, going to meetings / workshops / gatherings	20	7	6	7
<i>Fundraising / donating to charity</i>	20	4	5	11
Encouraging / talking about peace (w/ family, friends, through media)	18	3	12	3
Teaching children, Youth working with other youth	12	6	1	5
<i>Yes, no elaboration</i>	7	2	2	3
YES (extensively)	34	7	21	6
High involvement in Afghan orgs in Afghanistan & Canada	14	3	10	1
Multiple, in-depth involvements	11	1	6	4
Re: Afghan state, rebuilding infrastructure	9	3	5	1
NOT YET, but would like to in future	104	35	33	36
NO, don't know how, am newcomer, etc	42	19	15	8
<i>No answer provided</i>	4	0	0	4

Table 2. Examples of categorized responses to Question 1.

YES, somewhat	NC	Yes, as a teacher I always encourage students towards peace.
	OC	Yes, I have always supported peace efforts and encouraged families and relatives back in Afghanistan to peace.
	Y	Yes, I have volunteered in my school in fundraising for children.
YES, extensively	OC	Yes, I was a delegate to both grand assemblies held for peace and security in Afghanistan and also I was an observer in the presidential election in Afghanistan.
	NC	Yes, in 2004 when I was going back to Afghanistan with my family, I collected money from a group of women here in Canada and purchased medical equipment and donated them to a hospital in Afghanistan.
	Y	Yes, organizing social programs on both small and large scale to bring youth together and make them aware about issues back home and thus encouraging them to contribute towards peace building. Participating in forums, conferences, focus groups, & studies focusing on peace building. Making financial contributions towards rebuilding. Outreach on behalf of homeland and university and schools.
NO, but would like to in future	NC	Due to lack of necessary means and the existence of some barriers, I have not been able to make any contribution yet, even though I have the capacity in the area of development. But I am willing to contribute in the future.
	OC	No, I haven't and the reason is not that I am not interested but I am not really sure how I can help. If there were awareness workshops helping Afghans learn how they can contribute to building peace, then I am sure everyone will participate
	Y	No, due to lack of connections or an opportunity, but I am willing to contribute.
NO	NC	No, just came to this country. No experience of any kind of work yet.
	OC	No, I don't think it's feasible on an individual basis.
	Y	No, youth have not been given an opportunity and I don't know how to help.

The second question asked: *Do you have any peace building lessons that can be shared regarding what works as well as what doesn't work regarding the facilitation of peace building?* With this question, and many of the subsequent ones, respondents gave 'multiple' answers that got tallied into multiple categories, thus percentages will not add up to 100.²

- The most common 'peace building lesson' shared was to promote ethno-linguistic, religious, and political unity (including negotiating between opposition groups to stop the war). This category of response, given by 21% of individuals, was more or less equally common across the three groups.
- This was closely followed by promotion of economic development (more effective, culturally respectful, focused on building local capacity). This category of response was given by 19% of people, and was the most common answer among old-comers.
- Improving education (including literacy & job training) and general infrastructure was the next most common response category, provided by 16% of participants. This was the most common idea given by newcomers.
- Diaspora involvement & empowerment came next (including building links between diaspora, governments, and NGOs). Thirteen percent of respondents gave answers that fit in this category. It was the most common answer given by youth.
- The disarming and removal of warlords was suggested by 11.5% of participants, while stopping the interference of neighbouring countries (especially Pakistan) was mentioned by 10%. Additional responses included dealing with corruption within and strengthening the Afghan government (said by 8% of respondents), promoting civil societies and/or women's rights (5%), and strengthening the police and judiciary within Afghanistan (just under 4% of people).
- The 'Other' category included the following answers: promote peaceful Islam, eradicate poppy cultivation, the USA can bring peace, Afghan media should promote peace, foreign troops should minimize civilian losses, understanding of the Afghan situation should be promoted in Canada through public speakers
- Finally, 16% of respondents failed to provide an answer or indicated that they did not know / had no idea (including almost 22% of youth).

² People rarely mentioned what does not work; where they did the 'mirror' of the response was categorized.

Table 3. What works regarding the facilitation of peace building?

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
Promote ethno-linguistic / religious / political unity	55	18	18	19
Economic development (more & better, culturally sensitive, build local capacity)	50	15	25	10
Education (schools, literacy, training), infrastructure	42	21	11	10
Diaspora involvement & empowerment by orgs & govt (including youth)	35	3	10	22
Disarming & removing warlords	30	13	10	7
Stop interference by neighbours	27	11	13	3
Strengthen Afghan government, deal with corruption, build trust	21	8	11	2
Promote civil societies, women's rights	13	4	7	2
Strengthen law enforcement/judiciary	10	4	5	1
Other	9	1	8	0
<i>Don't know / No Answer</i>	42	10	14	18

Table 4. Examples of responses to Question 2.

NC	- 'Tangible' economic development that directly affects ordinary citizens' lives in the war torn country - Improving education and expanding educational institutions - Supporting the burgeoning civil societies, which are very weak to non-existent, in order to serve the society and off-load govt responsibilities to some extent. - Empowering the diaspora through targeted training and education / providing it with financial and technical resources (by Canadian govt). Canadian govt should involve the diaspora in its peace building and development programs. The diaspora, a potential element, feels marginalized and neglected. - Trust building to achieve peace building. Thirty years of war has damaged trust in govt and other social entities. The trust needs to be regained. - Helping the Afghan govt to streamline its institutions, in particular, law enforcement and judicial systems. - Pressuring the neighbouring countries to stop interference in Afghanistan's affairs.
OC	- If it means peacebuilding in Afghanistan, I would say that military operations there should be along with good governance and the promotion of reconstruction and developmental programs. The Afghan government cannot do this by itself and the international community should help it most effectively in this huge program.
Y	- Education is the best tool in bringing long-term peace: more schools in Afghanistan

The third question had two parts: *a) What are the key conditions that appear to help the diaspora to engage in peacebuilding and development, both in the country of origin (Afghanistan) and the new homeland (Canada)? (For example, political, economic, social, institutional, historical, and cultural factors)*, and *b) What are the barriers?*

Which context (Afghanistan or Canada) respondents were referring to was often not clear. Many gave general answers such as “economic factors are the key conditions for peace and development.” Thus, answers were coded more generally, but some examples will be given to clarify matters as they relate to country of origin or country of residence.

Key conditions:

- About 27% of people mentioned economic conditions as key to engaging in peace building. This response was given more or less equally across groups, and was the most popular response for all groups (tied with institutional / organizational conditions for old-comers). Economic conditions included economic development within Afghanistan and the personal economic situation of members of the diaspora.
- Social conditions - for example, a need for establishment into Canadian society, and unity within the diaspora - were reported as key by just over one-fifth of respondents. A similar percentage mentioned institutional and organizational conditions. Examples include establishing civil society organizations in the diaspora and inside Afghanistan, and recruitment programs of educated, skilled Afghan-Canadians by governments. Both categories of answers were comparatively more common among old-comers (25%).
- Just below 18% reported that political conditions were important, especially minimizing interference by neighbouring countries and creating political stability in Afghanistan. This was a comparatively less common answer for youth (13%).
- Also less common among youth were historic & cultural conditions (mentioned by about 7% of respondents) – for example, “an understanding of the people, terrain, and culture of Afghanistan” (OC).
- About 11% gave no answer or said they did not know (including 17% of youth).

Table 5. Key conditions for diaspora engagement in peace building and development

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
Economic	70	25	24	21
Social	56	16	23	17
Institutional/Organizational	55	17	24	14
Political	46	17	18	11
Historic/Cultural	18	9	6	3
All of the above	7	4	2	1
<i>Don't know / No Answer</i>	30	9	7	14

Table 6. Barriers to diaspora engagement in peace building and development

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
Lack of economic resources within the diaspora	68	22	26	20
Lack of institutional/organizational support for diaspora	65	19	29	17
Lack of education/literacy/ESL-proficiency	40	16	20	4
Other countries' interests/ interference	27	14	10	3
Lack of security / ongoing war	20	10	6	4
Lack of unity within diaspora	19	6	11	2
Lack of engaging youth & women	11	0	3	8
Lack of time	10	3	1	6
Corruption in Afghan gov'n't	8	2	5	1
Low level of economic dev't in Afghanistan	6	2	0	4
Lack of independent press in Afghanistan	1	1	0	0
NO BARRIERS EXIST	4	2	1	1
<i>Don't know / No Answer</i>	34	11	6	17

Barriers:

- The lack of economic resources within the diaspora is the most common barrier to engaging in peace building and development, cited by 26% of participants. This was more or less equally mentioned among the three groups and was the most common answer given by newcomers and youth.
- A similar percentage noted the lack of institutional / organizational support for the Afghan diaspora, including from the Canadian government. This answer was

comparatively more popular among old-comers than newcomers or youth, and was the most common response given by that group.

- Fifteen percent of respondents said that lack of education, literacy, and English-proficiency was a barrier. This barrier was, comparatively, noted much less commonly by youth.
- One in ten people reported that other countries’ interests and interference is a barrier to peace building and development, another answer less common among youth, as were lack of security / the ongoing war (8% of respondents), and lack of unity within the diaspora (7% overall).
- Only 4% of all respondents see the lack of engaging youth and women in peace building and development as a barrier, but almost one in ten youth do.
- Other perceived barriers include: lack of time (noted by 10 people, including 6 youth), corruption in the Afghan government (8), the low level of economic development within Afghanistan (6), and the lack of independent Afghan press (1)
- Four individuals thought that no barriers exist, while 13% of people did not provide an answer or indicated that they did not know (including just over 20% of youth).

Table 7. Examples of responses to Question 3

NC	a) Economic, social and political factors are intertwined and all are important; b) economic barriers – the diaspora cannot afford to engage in such activities, and political barriers – the presence of warlords in the Afghan government is discouraging
OC	- The Afghan diaspora can contribute much toward peacebuilding and development when they are given a chance and the security to work in Afghanistan. The Afghan diaspora not only in Canada but also elsewhere in the western world have now the skills and even funds to use for the good of their motherland provided the Afghan government provide them a safe opportunity. There never were as many skilled Afghans as there are now. Barriers? ...lack of adequate security and inadequacy of payments in the condition of high inflation.
Y	a) Social and cultural: getting more integrated into the Canadian society in order to learn their values as well as share our own cultural values; b) lack of freedom for Afghan women to take part in peace building and development activities

The fourth question asked: *Do the socio-political values of host countries (Canada) affect the ways in which diaspora communities engage in peace and development initiatives 'back home'?*

- Eighty-five percent of respondents believe that the socio-political values of Canada do affect the ways in which diaspora communities engage in peace building and development initiatives.
- About 40% of those who answered in the affirmative did not elaborate (36% of all participants, including 43% of youth). The rest of those who said yes offered one or more specific influences.
- Positive influences included Canada's multicultural values & tolerance of diversity (mentioned by 17% overall, including 23% of youth, 17% of newcomers, but only 11.5% of old-comers), Canada's democratic values & freedoms (mentioned by 15% overall, but only 7% of youth), access to Canadian education & training programs (just over 8%), and cooperation / aid from the Canadian government (3.5% overall, mentioned almost exclusively by old-comers).
- Negative influences named were: the non-constructive nature of Canadian foreign policy (5%), Canadian profiling of Muslims (3.5%), and the lack of diaspora engagement by the Canadian government (3%).
- Seventeen people, or 6.5% of respondents, believed the values of Canada do not affect diaspora communities. Fewer than half of these gave a general 'no', while more than half said Afghan & Canadian cultures were too different to influence each other.
- Almost 9% did not provide an answer or indicated that they did not know.

Table 8. Whether socio-political values of Canada affect how the Afghan diaspora engage in peace building and development

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Long-term	Youth
YES, no elaboration	95	28	31	36
+POS, Cdn multicultural values & tolerance	44	14	11	19
+POS, Cdn democratic values & freedoms	39	15	18	6
+POS, Cdn education & training	22	8	7	7
+POS, Cdn gov'n't cooperation, aid	9	1	8	0
-NEG, Cdn foreign policy not constructive	13	4	8	1
-NEG, Cdn profiling of Muslims	9	3	3	3
-NEG, diaspora not engaged by Cdn govt	8	1	6	1
NO, no elaboration	7	3	0	4
NO, Afghan & Cdn cultures too different	10	1	4	5
<i>Don't know / No Answer</i>	22	7	9	6

Table 9. Examples of responses to Question 4

NC	People have realized that multi-ethnicity is actually a beauty rather than a reason for conflict. Mesmerized by the harmony prevailing in Canada, they want to see this applied to Afghanistan, thus get involved.
OC	Freedom of expression and freedom of practicing religion are great socio-democratic values of Canada that shape the way diaspora engages in peacebuilding and development in terms of expanding Afghans' scope of activities.
Y	Current profiling of Muslims and Muslim communities and the stereotyping in the media here in Canada frightens Afghans and impedes their activities. People are afraid of being associated with terrorism due to their religious or cultural background.

The fifth question asked participants to: *Identify traditional stories of conflict resolution and peace building from your homeland.*

- Forty-three percent provided no answer or indicated that they did not know a traditional story of peace building. There was large range among groups, with 58% of youth, 45% of newcomers, and just 28% of old-comers not able to provide a story.
- Almost one in five respondents mentioned the Loya Jerga or inter-tribal / inter-ethnic Grand Council that comes together to solve national problems. Almost 30% of old-comers but only 6% of youth answered in this way.

- Just slightly fewer people overall noted the tradition of elders within a community solving conflicts or making decisions (including, in this case, 31% of youth):
- Just over 10% of people mentioned a story with a clear theme of unity (only 5% of youth). These stories included, most commonly, one about how a bunch of sticks together is harder to break than a single stick.
- Other ‘unity’ stories included: one about a huge red turnip that could only be pulled out of the ground by a group of people working together; one about not being able to tell the difference between blood from a Muslim and from a Hindu; one about a girl and boy from different tribes falling in love and bringing peace between their groups; and one about an elder brother sharing the family’s farm crop equally with his younger brother in order to keep peace and avoid future conflict.
- Another 5% noted the story of Rostam and Sohrab, an ancient Persian tale about a father killing his son in the heat of battle without realizing what he was doing
- Three individuals mentioned a popular saying along the lines of “one should ignore little mistakes.”
- Two other stories included one about how women play a key role in bringing peace: an old lady came to a conflict and threw her veil down and asked them stop. Throwing a veil is now a symbol of peace in those areas. Another person mentioned how Islamic teachings about solving conflict between opponent groups are commonly used.

Table 10. Traditional stories of peace building and conflict

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Long-term	Youth
Loya Jerga (Grand council)	51	18	28	5
Elders (more generally)	49	10	14	25
Stories of ‘unity’	30	10	16	4
Rostam & Sohrab (ancient Persian tale)	14	6	7	1
Popular Saying	3	1	2	0
Other	2	1	1	0
Don’t know / No Answer	112	37	27	48

Table 9. Examples of specific responses to question 5.

Loya Jerga	The generally accepted mechanism for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Afghanistan is the prevailing tradition of holding Jergas. But unfortunately the long period of conflict and civil wars in Afghanistan have weakened this tradition to a considerable degree but it can still be employed for the solution of conflict.
Elders	Elders usually solve the conflicts between families or other groups and it seems to help well. (NC).
Stories of Unity	There was a family and their father who was a farmer and was very ill and one day he called everyone and told one of his sons to bring a bunch of branches. He took one and showed them that it can be broken very easily. Then he asked his 7 children to break the whole bunch, but when they tried it was hard to break them. He told them: "See how difficult it is to break a whole bunch!" His point was to have unity then no one can break you all apart. And his children always remembered his story. (NC)
Rostam & Sohrab	Rostam ends up killing his own son Sohrab in battle. They are unaware of each other's identity until Sohrab is wounded and during their final conversation they realize they are father and son.

Question 6 asked: *Do different sub-groups within the diaspora (i.e., women, youth, 1st/2nd generation, religious authorities, business sector, etc.) play different roles?*

- A full 90% said yes, sub-groups within the diaspora do play different roles.
- While 58% of respondents overall (64% of those who said yes) gave only a general yes with no elaboration, the rest indicated specific sub-groups that played especially important roles.
- Women & youth were most commonly named as playing unique roles within the diaspora. Interestingly, youth were the comparatively least likely to name youth as a key sub-group.
- Other named sub-groups with perceived important roles include: businessmen, religious leaders, intellectuals & artists, and adults (elders, parents, teachers) who educate children and youth
- Only 4% of participants believed that different sub-groups do not play different roles (8.5% of newcomers, 3% of long-term, and only 1% of youth)
- About 6% did not answer or indicated that they did not know.

Table 10. Whether different sub-groups within the diaspora play different roles.

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
<i>YES</i>	235	73	86	76
<i>YES, no elaboration</i>	151	46	51	54
YES, women esp. important	41	10	19	12
YES, youth esp. important	37	12	17	8
YES, businessmen esp. important	13	5	5	3
YES, religious leaders esp. important	12	3	4	5
YES, intellectuals/artists esp. important	7	3	3	1
YES, esp. adults educating children	5	2	2	1
YES, BUT bigger question is security / unity	4	2	1	1
YES, BUT religious leaders should not be playing a role	2	1	1	0
<i>NO</i>	11	7	3	1
Don't know / no answer	15	3	6	6

Table 11. Examples of responses to Question 6

NC	Businessmen could be very effective. Through investment in Afghanistan, they could create jobs providing people with alternative livelihoods to guns and drugs.
OC	The best role can be played by youth, because youth are more active in this society and also lack partisan political motives.
Y	Yes, women are the ones who keep the hard-working family members together and bring peace.

Question 7 asked: *Do you feel supported in your peace building endeavours by friends, family, community organizations, community members, etc. or do you feel isolated in your work?*

- Seventy-two percent of participants indicated that they do feel supported in their peace building endeavours. This includes the 8% of people who said yes, they feel supported on a personal level, but there are not enough resources or organizational support.
- Nine percent of respondents overall reported feeling isolated. There was a range among groups, from 5% of newcomers, to 8% of old-comers, up to 14.5% of youth.
- Almost 10% noted that they did not know / could not answer because they had not been active in peace building endeavours (including 15.5% of newcomers, 10.5% of long-term, and 6% of youth)
- No answer was provided by 9% of participants.

Table 12. Whether respondents feel supported in peace building

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Long-term	Youth
YES, feel supported (by friends, family, community)	167	54	61	52
YES, personally, but not enough resources / organizational support	21	7	9	5
NO, feel isolated	24	4	8	12
Have not been active / Don't know	25	13	7	5
No answer provided	24	5	10	9

Table 13. Examples of responses to Question 7

NC	Yes, I do feel supported by family, friends, and community organizations.
OC	We do have family and friends' support, but what is missing is organizational support without which our activities are unproductive. We need organizations for this specific purpose.
Y	No, I feel isolated.

Question 8 asked: *What immediate changes would you like to see happen in Afghanistan? How could you assist with these changes?*

Immediate changes:

- Thirty percent of respondents overall would like to see better education and more schools as an immediate change in Afghanistan. There was a broad range across groups, from just over 14% of newcomers, to 24% of old-comers, up to 52% of youth who gave this answer.
- About 23% of people named peace, security and stability in Afghanistan as an immediate change they would like to see (30% of newcomers, 17% of youth).
- The same percentage noted economic development / poverty reduction as a desired immediate change.
- About one in five participants overall would like to see immediate improvement of women's rights, and in disarming & removing warlords (including putting them on trial). While women's rights were mentioned comparatively more among youth (34%

of youth, 16% of newcomers, 13% of old-comers), dealing with warlords was comparatively less of a priority for that group (8% of youth, 23% of old-comers, almost 26.5% of newcomers).

- Strengthening the Afghan government and ending corruption was mentioned by just under 20%, again with a range among groups (31% of newcomers, 18% of old-comers, 7% of youth).
- Stopping interference by neighbours was also a change that about 20% of respondents wanted to see. This was the most common answer given by the old-comer group.
- About 17% of people would like to see immediate reconstruction of infrastructure (including health clinics & hospitals, roads, and agricultural capacity). This was a comparatively less common answer for newcomers.
- Almost 15% see building the capacity of the local labour force as a change priority.
- Other priorities for change include: promoting unity (said by 15 individuals, including 11 youth); more effective engagement of the diaspora (15 individuals, including 10 old-comers); strengthening the Afghan military (10), judiciary reform (7), more accountable and respectful military and aid presence (7), promoting moderate Islam / separation of church and state (4), and improved media coverage (2)
- Only one person did not provide an answer for this question.
- It seems likely that many people missed the last part of the question, or else chose not to answer, as only about 15% made reference to how they could assist with making these changes. Those who did respond most commonly referred to their professional experience (e.g., “As a health professional I can assist in this area.” {OC}; “I can use my experience as a teacher and work in school.” {NC}), or the fact they could not help currently because they are a student. Others mentioned that they would be able to help “when Pakistan stops interfering.” Several youth said they could help by fundraising.

Table 14. Immediate changes respondents would like to see happen in Afghanistan.

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
Better education / more schools	78	12	23	43
Peace / stability / security	61	25	22	14
Economic development / reduce poverty	61	17	22	22
Improve women's rights	53	13	12	28
Disarm / remove warlords, put on trial	51	22	22	7
Strengthen Afghan govt, end corruption	49	26	17	6
Stop interference by neighbours	47	13	29	5
Reconstruction/infrastructure (re: health care, agriculture, roads, etc.)	44	8	17	19
Build capacity of local labour force	38	10	15	13
Promote unity	15	3	1	11
More effective engagement of the diaspora	15	4	10	1
Strengthen Afghan military	10	3	7	0
Judiciary reform	7	3	3	1
More accountable and respectful foreign presence (NGOs & military)	7	1	6	0
Promote moderate Islam, separation of church & state	4	1	1	2
Promote democracy / civil society	4	0	1	3
More & better media coverage	2	0	0	2
<i>Don't know / No Answer</i>	1	0	1	0

Table 15. Examples of responses to Question 8

NC	- Stable peace – Government posts should be given to the qualified individuals – Improving education because ignorance is the cause of many conflicts – Reduction of poverty
OC	The immediate changes to be brought in Afghanistan are the maintenance security and the rule of law. Only when these are assured that the implementation of the programs for reconstruction and development become possible and normal life is restored.
Y	- More rights for women (gender equality can be done through more education) – More focus on economic development / creation of jobs – Separation of religion and government (these two entities should be deal with separately and conflict will be reduced tremendously. I will contribute through fundraising.

Question 9 asked: *Are there any barriers to achieving the goals stated above?*

- Almost 38% of people named interference by neighbouring countries (especially Pakistan) as a barrier to achieving the immediate changes they would like to see (question 8). This was the most common answer given across the three groups.
- Sixteen percent of respondents saw corruption and weak leadership within the Afghan government as a barrier. Comparatively more old-comers gave this answer.
- About 14% of respondents see economic barriers / poverty, both within Afghanistan and within the diaspora in Canada, as a barrier. Newcomers were comparatively more likely to note such economic barriers.
- Lack of education and the presence of warlords each were mentioned by about 12% of participants. Warlords were a comparatively less common answer for youth.
- Just over 6% reported that lack of women's rights (most noted by youth), lack of peace / security, and the presence of too many weapons (most noted by newcomers) each were important barriers. A similar percentage said that yes, there were barriers but did not elaborate.
- Other barriers listed include: lack of unity (within Afghanistan and the diaspora)(by 8 individuals), lack of support for diaspora from governments and organizations (8), lack of a strong Afghan army (5), and inefficient use of aid (2).
- According to 10% of respondents, no barriers exist to achieving these desired changes.
- Thirteen percent of people did not provide an answer or indicated they did not know.

Table 16. Barriers to achieving changes

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
Interference by neighbour countries	98	25	32	21
Government corruption / weak leadership	42	9	20	13
Economic barriers / poverty (w/in Afghanistan & diaspora)	36	16	12	8
Lack of education	33	10	11	12
Presence of warlords	31	11	16	4
Lack of women's rights	17	2	5	10
YES, no elaboration	17	8	5	4
Lack of peace/security	16	7	4	5
Too many weapons	16	9	4	2
Lack of unity (w/in Afghanistan & diaspora)	8	5	1	2
Lack of support for diaspora from govt & orgs	8	2	4	2
Lack of strong Afghan army	5	4	1	0
Inefficient use of aid	2	0	1	1
NO barriers exist	26	10	7	9
<i>Don't know / No Answer</i>	34	9	13	10

Table 17. Examples of responses to Question 9

NC	Obstacles within the diaspora: lack of economic resources; lack of support from the Canadian govt and civil societies who have the needed resources in abundance; Discouraging factors inside Afghanistan: extremely slow and intangible economic development; lack of security and on-going war in Afghanistan; presence of abundant weapons; warlords and other armed groups; neighbouring countries' interference in Afghanistan's affairs; inefficiency and corruption within the government.
OC	Yes, lack of safety / security and existence of warlords
Y	Yes, corrupt officials in Afghan government

Question 10 asked: *Do you have the necessary connections in Afghanistan which would allow you to carry out your peacebuilding and/or development initiatives? If not, how could you establish these connections?*

- Just over one in five participants overall said that yes, they do have the necessary connections to carry out peace building and development initiatives. This ranged from slightly less than 10% of newcomers to 24% of old-comers and 29% of youth.
- The most common source of connection mentioned (mostly by youth) was through family and friends. Many people did not elaborate on their affirmative answer. Other sources of connection include: through Toronto Afghan organizations, and through media and the Internet. Three individuals noted they had connections, but could not act on them due to lack of security and/or resources.
- Thirty percent of people indicated that they do not have the necessary connections, but they had idea(s) how to establish them (from 37% of old-comers, to 30% of newcomers and 23% of youth).
- The most common idea for all groups regarding how to establish connections was through Afghan-Canadian organizations that could take the lead in providing links and economic support. Other ideas included: having governments (Canadian, Afghan) and the UN facilitate initiatives; having diaspora gatherings / talks, and using the diaspora media to share connections; establishing security and removing warlords to facilitate the forging of connections; creating 'recruiting agencies' to find skilled Afghans to meet specific needs in Afghanistan; engaging youth and women; and supporting travel costs & logistics to Afghanistan
- Just below 30% said they do not have the necessary connections and they do not have ideas on how to establish them (34% of youth, 30% of newcomers, 25% of old-comers).
- Just under one-fifth of people overall provided no answer (30% of newcomers, about 14% each of old-comers and youth).

Table 18. Whether respondents have the necessary connections to carry out peace building and development

RESPONSES	TOTAL	Newcomer	Old-comer	Youth
YES	55	8	23	24
Through family & friends	20	1	3	16
Yes, no elaboration	19	3	10	6
Through Toronto Afghan orgs	7	1	4	2
Through media, internet	6	2	4	0
Yes, BUT can't act on connections due to lack of security & resources	3	1	2	0
NO, but have idea(s) how to establish	79	25	35	19
Need organizations to provide links / economic support	48	12	23	13
Need Cdn, Afg, US govts & UN to facilitate initiatives	21	9	10	2
Need diaspora gatherings & talks, media	11	3	3	5
Need security & to remove warlords	11	4	6	1
Need 'recruiting agencies'	8	0	8	0
Need to engage youth & women	4	0	0	4
Need support to travel to Afghanistan	3	1	1	1
NO, & no idea how to establish	77	25	24	28
No answer provided	50	25	13	12

Table 19. Examples of responses to Question 10

NC	No. The Canadian government could be the best initiator.
OC	I, personally, don't have these connections. I hope to build some by volunteering with established organizations.
Y	Yes, my father still lives in Afghanistan.

Question 11 asked: *Do you feel that the Afghan community in Canada, specifically the GTA, is divided or polarized? If so, where do the divisions exist and why?*

- Around 53% of respondents indicated that yes, they feel that the Afghan community in the Greater Toronto Area is divided.
- By far the most common division noted was based on ethnic / linguistic / religious / political differences. Almost 40% of people overall gave this response, including just 27% of newcomers, 37% of old-comers, and 47% of youth (almost half of whom noted that these types of division are less common among younger Afghans).
- Other answers included: due to the war (14 individuals said this), it's natural, every group has divisions (8), based on education level (4), between Afghan organizations (3), based on gender (2), between youth and elders (1), based on when people came to Canada (1). Nine people said yes with no elaboration.
- Just over 30% of people feel that there are no divisions within the community, more or less equally across the three groups.
- About one in ten said they are unsure, most commonly because they are new to Canada.
- Six percent did not provide an answer

Table 20. Whether the Afghan community in Toronto is divided

<i>RESPONSES</i>	TOTAL	Newcomer	Long-term	Youth
<i>YES</i>	139			
Btw ethnic/linguistic/religious/political groups	97	23	35	39
Due to the war	14	5	7	2
General yes, no elaboration	9	3	6	0
It's natural, every group has divisions	8	4	1	3
Based on level of education	4	2	2	0
Btw Afghan organizations	3	1	2	0
Based on gender	2	0	1	1
Btw youth & elders	1	0	0	1
Based on when came to Canada	1	0	1	0
NO, there are no divisions	80	25	27	28
Not sure (e.g., new to Canada)	27	14	4	9
No answer provided	15	6	9	0

Table 21. Examples of responses to Question 11

NC	I have just come to Canada so I don't know
OC	No, I do not think there is any division among Afghans.
Y	I think it is somewhat divided on the grounds of ethnicity and language etc. Tajiks, for example, socialize, work together and help each other and the same with other groups. I think that parents' old ideas and beliefs and their disposition still exist and this reflects in divisions among Afghans in the GTA. The Youth seem to get along and adopt to the new society better and these divisions don't exist among them as much.

Question 12 asked: *Have you ever considered initiating a peace building program within the local Afghan community for the sake of unifying the community? If so, what have you done? If not, why have you not?*

- Just over one in five participants said they had or had considered initiating peace building (Only 8% of newcomers, compared to around 27% of long-term and youth)
- Almost 23% said no, because they were a newcomer or were too busy
- Twenty percent said no, believing they would not be effective due to lack of opportunities, resources, or personal skills.
- Almost 14% said no, with no elaboration.

- Four individuals said no, because there are already organizations to do this, while one person said no, because there is no problem within the community.
- Over 20% of people did not provide an answer (24% of newcomers, 22% of old-comers, only 15% of youth).

Table 22. Initiating a peace building program to unify the local Afghan community

RESPONSES	TOTAL	Newcomer	Long-term	Youth
YES	55	7	26	22
Support / volunteer with / participate in existing organizations & programs	22	2	4	16
Generally promote unity	15	4	8	3
Through media / writing	6	1	5	0
Started an organization / group / committee	5	0	4	1
Yes, no elaboration	3	0	1	2
Yes, BUT it requires access to resources	3	0	1	2
NO, am a newcomer / too busy	59	37	12	10
NO, lack of opportunity, resources, personal skills	52	9	23	20
NO (no elaboration)	36	7	11	18
NO, there are already organizations to do this	4	3	1	0
NO, there is no problem within community	1	0	1	0
No answer provided	54	20	21	13

Table 23. Examples of responses to Question 12

NC	No, because I am too busy making ends meet.
OC	I have not made an attempt. For me, I don't believe that I have the credentials to make this happen. This sort of effort requires someone with the credibility, contacts and resources to get everyone together for discussion. Once the discussion starts, there needs to be some results on which the community can build upon. I am a student, without the credibility or the language skills to make this happen.
Y	Yes, I participated in various Afghan-youth programs in school to bring Afghan youth together in Toronto.

Section 3. Discussion & Conclusions

This final section will explore in greater depth the major themes to emerge in the results. Key opportunities and challenges for diaspora engagement in peace building and development will be highlighted. The complexities of potential actors, roles, strategies, and capacity building needs within the Afghan diaspora community in Canada will be examined, along with policy considerations for the Canadian government.

Major themes to emerge

- **A focus on underlying causes: dynamics of conflict and ‘roots’ of peace**

- “Peace, security and development are intertwined.”

Some participants felt overwhelmed by the severity & complexity of the conflict situation, and discouraged regarding the prospects for peace and development – for example, feeling that “it won’t produce tangible results, so you lose interest”; feeling that “normal people cannot do anything” because the situation is being dictated by foreign interests and interference (the number one perceived barrier to achieving change in Afghanistan, across all groups, was the interference of neighbouring countries); and feeling that development is taking one step forward two steps back, when “more schools are burnt than built.”

Members of the diaspora interested in sharing their professional expertise are reluctant to return to Afghanistan at this point due to the current lack of security within Afghanistan. Respondents across groups recognized an urgent need to address the broader root causes of instability and insecurity through 1) promoting unity across the multiple levels of potential division; 2) implementing tangible economic development that is accountable, effective, culturally sensitive, and sustainable (driven by local needs and focused on building local capacities); and 3) improving education and meeting basic human and infrastructure needs throughout the country. Youth in particular mentioned the need to ensure the rights of women.

“An even more daunting task than ensuring women’s civil and political participation will be securing their fundamental rights to education and health. It is these basic entitlements that constitute the bedrock for their capacity for participation. In a context where the majority are unable to read or write, risk their lives in childbirth, have no access to roads, school or medical facilities, and are deprived access to clean water sources, capabilities and rights are severely restricted” (Kandivoti, 2005).

- **An overall willingness to engage in peace building and development**
- **Differential capacities / roles re: contributing.**

Despite obviously grasping the deep and seemingly intractable nature of many of the underlying issues, there is a keen interest in engaging in peace building and development within the study sample. Over 40% are already involved in some way, and a further 40% expressed their willingness to do so in the future.

Unquestionably, however, members of the diaspora vary widely in their will, and in their capacity, to engage. Of those who report currently contributing there is a wide continuum of activities, ranging from talking about peace with friends, to charitable fundraising, to founding organizations, to sharing professional expertise directly with government ministries in Afghanistan. The ‘old-comers’ in particular had contributed extensively.

Differences within the diaspora will affect how and how much members can contribute. Key factors include: socio-economic status, education level, length of time in Canada, level of involvement with organizations, particular skills, age, and gender. Indeed, 90% of participants believed that different sub-groups within the diaspora play different roles in terms of peace building and development. Generally speaking, businessmen, religious leaders, and intellectuals were seen as ‘skilled’ contributors (e.g., financial investments, moral authority, educated analysis), while the contributions of women, youth, and teachers/parents were valued more generally in terms of dedication, energy, and lack of ‘corruption’.

The most common reasons given for not participating included being a newcomer and not knowing how to contribute effectively (a point addressed further below).

- **The complex roles of Canada, the ‘host’ country**

- **Values: positive and negative influences**

- “Canadian multiculturalism has affected our mentality; what is considered to be the cause of conflict back home is a cause of progress in Canada.”
- “Canadian democracy encourages people to go back home and spread it.”
- “Current profiling of Muslims and Muslim communities, and the stereotyping in the media here in Canada, frightens Afghans and impedes their activities.”

Most of the sample felt that Canada's values had an effect on the diaspora and their approach to peace building and development. Positive influences were seen as originating in Canada's multicultural values, democratic rights and freedoms, educational opportunities, and aid to and cooperation with Afghanistan. Fewer than 10% mentioned negative influences: these were from Canada's "non-constructive" foreign policy, from the profiling of Muslims under the guise of 'national security,' or from the government's failure to engage the diaspora.

Likewise, there was a strong feeling that Afghan values should influence the Canadian government as they develop their foreign policy and development strategies, given that effective peace building is not a general concept but a particular one, reflective of the culture, traditions, people, and history of a region. As one participant put it: "Canadian policy should be based on a thorough study of Afghanistan's recent history and socio-political realities. To prepare the framework for a comprehensive policy, an utmost attempt should be made to take input from all segments of the Afghan population, both in Afghanistan and among the diaspora."

➤ **Engaging the diaspora: overcoming barriers, creating opportunities**

- "Even though the diaspora has learned great democratic values from Canada, it feels marginalized as far as peacebuilding and development is concerned."
- "Given that many Afghans are new to Canada there are many barriers that do not allow them to participate in peace building initiatives, i.e. they are not aware of how to make use of their expertise, they do not know how to engage with government, they do not have the time since they have to make a living etc."
- "The diaspora has to get organized in order to be of any help to Afghan development and peacebuilding. There have to be gatherings, conferences and other functions to share and exchange ideas and experiences, and to mobilize the drive to help Afghanistan in an effective manner."

It is just this desire to provide input, but a lack of awareness concerning how to do so, that was one of the strongest themes to emerge from the results. Time and again, participants reflected that the Afghan diaspora in Toronto did not have the information, links, connections, or organizational support they felt was necessary to ensure meaningful engagement in peace building and development. Often repeated was the idea that they did not know how to access the Canadian government.

Generally speaking, the organization level of Afghan in Canada is low and there seems to be minimal communication between groups. Respondents indicated that they would like the Canadian government especially (along with the Afghan government and NGOs) to help mobilize the diaspora around these issues by provided economic and ‘technical’ support, including targeted training programs, to these communities.

Other suggestions included ‘recruiting agencies’ for skilled Afghan-Canadians to meet specific reconstruction needs, government-sponsored gatherings and forums to share important information and exchange ideas. Particular attention should be paid to including the voices of youth and women.

Essentially, diaspora communities want to be included as contributing stakeholders in development and foreign policy discussions. They would like assistance acquiring the ‘opportunity structures’ (material and organizational resources) to access the various levels of decision-making around peace building and development in their country of origin.

- **Challenges and opportunities within the Afghan-Canadian community**

- **Adapting to life in Canada**

A 2003 study into the mental health needs of Afghans in Toronto found that the most common stressors reported include: unemployment or underemployment (52%), worry about family or friends left behind (43%), financial problems (42%), “adjusting to Canadian culture” (33%), “family conflict” (32%), “racism and discrimination” (20%), and problems with housing (19%) (SAFE 2003)

Indeed, the newcomers in this study named their personal economic situation as the key barrier preventing them from being involved in peace building and development activities. Many participants expressed their belief that the Canadian government should provide more support for settlement and integrating of diaspora members into Canadian society, in part to help them become socially and economically resourceful (e.g. improving English-proficiency). At the same time, these groups require continuing support to sustain and promote their own culture and language; and to nurture connections in Afghanistan that would support peace building efforts, something that only 20% of respondents currently have.

Cultural factors may also be a barrier. As one participant noted: “It often takes outspoken and independent individuals to take part in such projects, and that is a behaviour that is not often encouraged in Afghan culture - especially with females.”

➤ **Need to connect and unite**

-“There is a lack of a strong forum for promoting unity and solidarity and strong economy in the diaspora. --- existence of partisan publications escalating political differences and creating tensions in the diaspora. ----lack of cooperation within the existing Afghan organizations in the diaspora.”

The Afghan community is divided along ethnic, linguistic, class, gender and generational lines. The experiences, values, and expectations of the different subgroups vary. Just considering the size of the Afghan population in Toronto, it is inevitable that there will be tensions and differences within the community. A lack of unity within the local community was noted by just over half of the participants in this study, while one in three said that there were no divisions, and the rest were unsure of did not respond.

The key to peace and stability in Afghanistan, respondents believe, is unity. The same is true within diaspora communities. This can only happen if a foundation of communication is put into place, and the focus is kept on common objectives and the big picture: “what is best for Afghanistan, not yourself. Keep talking, even if you disagree” (Nassery 2003). Reassuringly, over 70% of people reported feeling personally supported in their peace building and development activities.

➤ **Traditions of non-violent dispute settlements**

Despite the divisions within the population, Afghans do have traditions of non-violent dispute settlement to turn to. Respondents mentioned the tradition of the inter-ethnic Loya Jirga or Grand Council convened to resolve major conflicts, and more generally looking to the guidance of groups of elders. Responses to a variety of questions reflected the idea that given how religious Afghanistan is, one of the most effective methods of addressing these ‘root’ conflicts would be through a more concerted effort to promote the moderate Islamic messages of harmony, tolerance, and social justice. It was stated that religious authorities are respected and the moderate ones need to be given platforms to promote peace and development,

including women's rights. There are also a variety of traditional stories people shared with the theme of unity, of how a group standing together is much stronger - stories that people could potentially share and reflect on at diaspora gatherings if divisions surface.

- **Other issues of interest:**

- **Notable differences between groups**

Interestingly, while there clearly were differences between the target groups, they were not very major, nor particularly surprising. Differences that did emerge included: less involvement in and less confidence in regards to peace building and development among newcomers, who are presumably preoccupied with 'settlement issues', such as learning a new language, finding employment, etc, and are generally less familiar with the local Afghan diaspora community and have fewer economic resources. Fundamental, tangible security issues such as disarming warlords and strengthening the Afghan army tended to be the most salient for newcomers. Youth revealed a great deal of passion and commitment to peace building, especially through fundraising, but were also the most likely to not know or not provide an answer to questions. Youth were the most likely to feel isolated, and expressed the most 'progressive' values (for example, re: multicultural tolerance, promoting women's rights, etc.). Old-comers are clearly the most 'established', more extensively involved in organizations, and more concerned with 'broader picture' peace issues and institutional level barriers and opportunities.

- **Internet as a new key to building networks**

The 'virtual' or 'digital' diaspora made possible by Internet technologies have created new opportunities for developing relationships and sharing information, especially sites that provide 'purposive links' that beyond providing information and reports, identify specific actions individuals can take in support of peace building and development in Afghanistan (Brinkerhoff 2004). Admittedly, access to and ability to use the internet in diaspora communities is not equally distributed, so neither are the potential benefits (Westcott 2006). Innovative examples include the well-established Afghans4Tomorrow site (www.afghans4tomorrow.com) and the relatively new Afghan Gender Café site (www.afghangendercafe.org).

- **Suggestions for future research**

While this study provides a unique glimpse into the lived realities of Afghan-Canadians in Toronto as related to peace building opportunities and challenges for the diaspora, it is hopefully a first step to more in depth investigation of the themes that emerged here.

Limitations include the wording of some the questions, including the use of complex vocabulary, and the ‘close-ended’ nature of some of the questions that allowed for a yes / no response without elaboration. Also, given the way the sample was selected, it may not be representative of the whole Afghan diaspora community in the GTA.

It would have been interesting to gather more demographic data in order to compare look at potential impacts of gender, socio-economic status, family status, and immigration status on views of peace building and development. It may also be worthwhile collecting similar data from other major centres in Canada (Vancouver and Montreal), and in other Western nations.

Another interesting avenue for research would be to look at what the attitudes within Afghanistan towards peace building and development involvement by members of the diaspora.

Finally, it is suggested that a follow-up study be carried out with a smaller, but perhaps more representative sample, in the form of open-ended one-on-one interviews, so that responses may be probed for further details.

- **Suggested recommendations re: capacity building and policy**

1) Initially, it would helpful to create a database of all of the Afghan-Canadian groups operating in the GTA and across Canada. From this, establishing a responsive *network* or *coalition*, both within the Toronto area and nationally, could prove to be an effective mechanism for unifying the community and for mobilizing diaspora members around peace building and development issues. The Canadian government and/or NGOs should support the building of this network or coalition with financial resources and with relevant training and capacity building supports. Internet technologies should be used as a connective tool. Such a network would need to set tangible goals in order to cultivate a feeling of effectiveness and meaningful impact. Diaspora groups from different countries should also be encouraged to share strategies.

An interesting case study is available from Partners for Democratic Change, who worked with the largest Afghan community in the US to increase the organizational and leadership capacity of the coalition the community had formed to respond to improve local services and respond to the conflict situation in Afghanistan. They facilitated a series of conflict resolution and cooperative planning trainings, and helped the coalition conduct a series of ‘community dialogues.’ Strategies and committees were formed to focus in on key community concerns and ideas for collaborative action. Contacts with government and other NGOs were established (Partners for Democratic Change 2003).

2) The Canadian government’s military and aid involvement in Afghanistan should be clear and accountable. There should be clear channels of communication and accessible systems of consultations with diaspora groups. The federal government could consider a position such as a ‘diaspora’ ombudsperson to facilitate such consultative processes, and to capitalize on the expertise and willingness of diaspora members.

The follow three points, with minor modifications, come from the recommendations in the Afghans of Tomorrow Conference Report (Faisel 2001), as they clearly encapsulate the major themes to emerge from the present study:

3) The Canadian government “should put pressure on the major powers and neighbouring countries to stop political interference in Afghan affairs and to promote regional cooperation and economic integration.”

4) “For the Afghan diaspora, the Canadian government should give encouragement and support to Afghan scholars and intellectuals living in Canada, as well as Afghan Canadian NGOs and youth groups, to take part in the country's reconstruction. It should fund youth counsellors from the Afghan Canadian community. Canada should continue to accept, and counsel, refugees from Afghanistan. It should encourage a scheme of dual citizenship as a means to attract Afghan Canadians to work in Afghanistan. In supporting [the current] administration in Afghanistan, Canada should continue to consult with the Afghan diaspora and with moderate leaders to ensure a thorough sharing of ideas - with enough time to make well-considered decisions.”

5) Canadian NGOs “should make a special effort to link with the Afghan diaspora, and bring their voices forward to policy and advocacy platforms, and to the designing of development projects. They should support establishment of a clearing-house in Canada to help co-ordinate the use of Afghan-Canadian human resources, and avoid competition for scarce resources. They should support the formation of an Afghan civil society group to monitor the honouring of pledges of development aid from donor countries. They should work to strengthen youth groups from the Afghanistan diaspora.”

There will be a lifelong connection between diasporas and their homelands. Circular migration of professionals, intellectuals and development workers will be key elements in the future. With some institutional support and guidance from governments, and NGO and academic communities, the Afghan diaspora will hopefully be able to tap into its commitment and willingness to carry out a wide range of activities that will support peace building and development in Afghanistan.

Appendix A.

Map of Afghanistan and Table of Statistics



Afghanistan: Statistics

Area	647,500 km sq. (same size as Manitoba)
Provinces	34 (each province with 5 to 15 districts)
Population	25 million (UN 2005); an estimated 3.4 million more live outside the country (UNDP 2004)
Ethnic groups	Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen 3%, Baloch 2%, other 4%
Languages	Official: Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pashtu; (28 other languages are spoken)
Median age	17.5 years
Life expectancy	approx 43 years
Per capita income	US\$232 (excluding poppy production) (2005)
Adult literacy	43% men, 14% woman (possibly as low as 1% in some districts)

Sources: www.cbc.ca/news/background/afghanistan
www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/afghanistan.asp

Appendix B.

Timeline of Afghanistan: A chronology of recent key events

1919 - Afghanistan regains independence after third war against British forces

1926 - Amanullah proclaims himself king and attempts to introduce social reforms.

1929 - Amanullah flees after civil unrest over his reforms.

1933 - Zahir Shah becomes king; Afghanistan remains a monarchy for next four decades.

1953 - Mohammed Daud becomes prime minister. Turns to Soviet Union for economic and military assistance.

Introduces a number of social reforms.

1963 - Mohammed Daud forced to resign as prime minister.

1964 - Constitutional monarchy leads to political polarization and power struggles.

1973 - Mohammed Daud seizes power in a coup and declares a republic. Plays off USSR against Western powers.

His style alienates left-wing factions who join forces against him.

1978 - General Daud is overthrown and killed in a coup by leftist People's Democratic Party. Conservative Islamic and ethnic leaders who resisted social changes begin armed revolt in countryside.

1979 - Power struggle between leftist leaders Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammed Taraki in Kabul won by Amin.

Revolts in countryside continue and Afghan army faces collapse. Soviet Union sends in troops to help remove Amin, who is executed.

Soviet intervention

1980 - Babrak Karmal, leader of the People's Democratic Party Parcham faction, is installed as ruler, backed by Soviet troops. Anti-regime resistance intensifies with various mujahedin groups fighting Soviet forces. US, Pakistan, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia supply money, arms.

1985 - Mujahedin come together in Pakistan to form alliance against Soviet forces. *Half of Afghan population now estimated to be displaced by war, with many fleeing to neighbouring Iran or Pakistan.* New Soviet leader Gorbachev says he will withdraw troops.

1986 - US begins supplying mujahedin with Stinger missiles, enabling them to shoot down Soviet helicopter gunships. Babrak Karmal replaced by Najibullah as head of Soviet-backed regime.

1988 - Afghanistan, USSR, the US and Pakistan sign peace accords and Soviet Union begins pulling out troops.

1989 - Last Soviet troops leave, but civil war continues as mujahedin push to overthrow Najibullah.

1991 - US and USSR agree to end military aid to both sides.

Mujahedin triumph

1992 - Resistance closes in on Kabul and Najibullah falls from power. Rival militias vie for influence.

1993 - Mujahideen factions agree on formation of a government with ethnic Tajik, Burhanuddin Rabbani, proclaimed president. Afghans await US assistance in rebuilding Afghanistan. Civil war erupts in Kabul as Dostom, Masoud, Hekmatyar, and Hizabe Wahadat begin to fight.

1994 - Factional contests continue and the Pashtun-dominated Taliban emerge as major challenge to the Rabbani government. Warlords and renegade generals establish their own rules in the areas they control

1996 - Taliban seize control of Kabul and introduce hardline version of Islam. Rabbani flees.

Taliban under pressure

1997 - Taliban recognised as legitimate rulers by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Most other countries continue to regard Rabbani as head of state. Taliban now control at least two-thirds of country.

1998 - Earthquakes kill thousands of people. US launches missile strikes at suspected bases of militant Osama bin Laden, accused of bombing US embassies in Africa.

1998 - Dostom, Masood, Hekmatyar and Rabbani establish the Northern Alliance with the help of Russia

1999 - UN imposes an air embargo and financial sanctions to force Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden.

1999–2002 - The worst drought in 30 years, affecting half the population of Afghanistan.

2001 Jan - UN imposes further sanctions on Taliban.

2001 Mar - Taliban blow up giant Buddha statues in defiance of international pleas.

2001 May - Taliban order religious minorities to wear tags identifying themselves as non-Muslims, and Hindu women to veil themselves like other Afghan women.

2001 Sept - Eight foreign aid workers on trial in the Supreme Court for promoting Christianity. This follows months of tension between Taliban and aid agencies.

2001 - Ahmad Shah Masood, legendary guerrilla and leader of the main opposition to the Taliban, is killed, apparently by assassins posing as journalists.

2001 Oct - US, Britain launch air strikes against Afghanistan after Taliban refuse to hand over Osama bin Laden, held responsible for the September 11 attacks on America.

2001 Nov - US ground forces begin their attack on Afghanistan, then air strikes begin leaving 1000s dead. Opposition forces seize Mazar-e Sharif and within days march into Kabul and other key cities.

Taliban falls

2001 5 Dec - Afghan groups agree to deal in Bonn for interim government.

2001 7 Dec - Taliban finally give up last stronghold of Kandahar, but Mullah Omar remains at large.

2001 22 Dec - Pashtun royalist Hamid Karzai is sworn in as head of a 30-member interim (6 month) power-sharing government.

2002 Jan - First contingent of foreign peacekeepers in place.

2002 Apr - Former king Zahir Shah returns, but says he makes no claim to the throne.

2002 May - UN Security Council extends mandate of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) until Dec 2002. Allied forces continue their military campaign.

2002 June - Loya Jirga, or grand council, elects Hamid Karzai as interim head of state. Karzai picks members of his administration, which is to serve until 2004.

2002 July - Vice-President Haji Abdul Qadir is assassinated by gunmen in Kabul.

2002 Sept - Karzai narrowly escapes an assassination attempt in Kandahar, his home town.

2002 Dec - President Karzai and Pakistani, Turkmen leaders sign deal to build gas pipeline through Afghanistan, carrying Turkmen gas to Pakistan.

2003 Aug - Nato takes control of security in Kabul, its first-ever operational commitment outside Europe.

New constitution

2004 Jan - Grand assembly - or Loya Jirga - adopts new constitution creating Islamic state under presidential system sought by Karzai, opening way for elections but also exposing enduring ethnic divisions.

2004 Mar - Afghanistan secures \$8.2bn (£4.5bn) in aid over three years.

2004 Sept - Rocket fired at helicopter carrying President Karzai misses its target; it is the most serious attempt on his life since September 2002.

2004 Oct-Nov - Presidential elections: Hamid Karzai is declared the winner, with 55% of the vote (there were more than 10.5 million registered voters; 12 election workers killed in year leading up to vote). He is sworn in December.

2005 Feb - Several hundred people are killed in the harshest winter weather in a decade.

2005 May - Details emerge of alleged prisoner abuse by US forces at detention centres.

New parliament

2005 Sept - First parliamentary and provincial elections in more than 30 years.

2005 Dec - New parliament holds its inaugural session.

2006 Feb - International donors meeting in London pledge more than \$10bn US in reconstruction aid over 5 years.

2006 May - Violent anti-US protests in Kabul, the worst since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, erupt after a US military vehicle crashes and kills several people.

2006 July onwards - NATO troops take over the leadership of military operations in the south. Fierce fighting ensues as the forces try to extend government control in areas where Taliban influence is strong.

2006 Sept - Provincial director of the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs, killed by gunmen in Kandahar

2006 Oct - NATO assumes responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan, taking command in the east of the country from a US-led coalition force.

Source: BBC News (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1162108.stm)

Appendix C.

Information on Project Partners: UPEACE and AWO

The University for Peace (UPEACE)

The University for Peace (UPEACE) was established by the United Nations General Assembly to provide an international institution of higher learning dedicated to the promotion and understanding of peace. In July 2005, UPEACE commenced the preparatory work to launch an international centre in Toronto that would provide a focus for education, training and dialogue on critical issues related to the building of peace and the prevention of violence and conflict. Capitalising on Toronto's strategic location near the United Nations headquarters in New York, as well as its international, multicultural profile, the UPEACE Centre in Toronto will provide an accessible venue to offer a portfolio of professional training courses and Master's programmes and to convene highlevel dialogues, workshops and public events. UPEACE will be launching a range of pilot programming activities in Canada throughout 2006, including curriculum development workshops, public symposia, exhibitions, high-level expert forums and seminars. This high-level forum represents one of the flagship pilot activities for the UPEACE Centre in Toronto.

Digafie Debalke,
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Afghan Women's Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization

Organization Mandate & Mission

Mission Statement: The AWO is a non-profit organization committed to assisting vulnerable Afghans in Canada, in refugee camps abroad and in Afghanistan. The AWO promotes the successful settlement of Afghan refugees in Canada through advocacy, and a wide range of settlement services, which it delivers primarily in the Greater Toronto Area, but throughout the country as well. The AWO also provides assistance and protection to refugees and to internally displaced and vulnerable people in Afghanistan, through advocacy, relief, education and income-generation projects, and through sponsorship to Canada.

In all of its work, the AWO is committed to non-discrimination, equality and providing services that are culturally sensitive and designed to meet the particular needs of the Afghan community.

Mandate: The AWO is a multi-service settlement agency whose mandate is to assist Afghan women and their families, in all aspects of adaptation and integration into Canadian society. The AWO is also mandated to facilitate the resettlement of Afghan and other refugees from overseas through a refugee sponsorship program. Moreover, the AWO provides assistance to Afghan refugees overseas and to vulnerable groups in Afghanistan through lobbying, advocacy, direct assistance, relief, education and income generation programs.

Executive Director: Adeena Niazi, awo@afghanwomen.org, www.afghanwomen.org

Appendix D.

Research Waiver and Questionnaire

PROJECT OVERVIEW & WAIVER

PURPOSE

To initiate participatory action research in partnership with Canadian diaspora communities to identify the challenges and opportunities that support and impede their engagement in peacebuilding and development. The project aims to:

- Analyse the roles played and strategies used by various diaspora groups to strengthen peacebuilding and promote development in their countries of origin.
- Map the ways in which different diaspora actors may contribute positively to sustainable peacebuilding and development in their country of origin and identify factors which may foster or hinder these roles.
- Explore the conditions under which peacebuilding or development initiatives within diaspora communities in host countries might benefit peacebuilding or development in their country of origin.
- Identify opportunities to expand or enhance the effectiveness of diaspora contributions to peace and development including through improved policy frameworks and targeted education, training, or other capacity building programs.

It is planned that the process and results of the research will be:

- shared and discussed with members of additional diaspora communities within Canada;
- shared and discussed at the High Level Expert Forum (“Capacity Building for Peace and Development: Roles of Diaspora, Toronto, Canada, October, 2006);
- UPEACE’s international network of partner institutions of learning; and
- diaspora research organization

WAIVER

I have read the above regarding the purpose of this research and the intentions of the researchers. I give my consent to have my opinions and comments used for these research purposes. I also agree to have my comments published in future research documents.

Print Name

Date

Signature



**“Capacity Building for Peace and Development: Roles of Diaspora”
Community Based Participatory Action Research**

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1. Afghan-Canadian Community relating to AFGHANISTAN

1. Have you made any contribution towards building peace and helping development work in Canada?
In Afghanistan?
1. آیا شما کدام همکاری و کمک در راه تامین صلح و انکشاف در کانادا و یا در افغانستان کرده اید؟
2. Do you have any peacebuilding lessons that can be shared regarding what works as well as what doesn't work regarding the facilitation of peacebuilding?
2. آیا کدام توصیه دارید راجع به اینکه چه کار های انجام شود و چه کارهای نباید انجام شود تا بتواند تا مین صلح را تسهیل نماید؟
3. What are the key conditions that appear to help the diaspora to engage in peacebuilding and development both in the country of origin (Afghanistan) and the new homeland (Canada)? For example, political, economic, social, institutional, historical, & cultural factors. What are the barriers?
3. چه شرایط عمده به نظرمی رسد که باعث سهم گیری اجتماعات مهاجر در تامین صلح، انکشاف و توسعه در افغانستان و در کانادا گردد؟ بطور مثال: عوامل سیاسی، اقتصادی، اجتماعی، سازمانی، تاریخی و فرهنگی.
به نظر شما موانع چه است؟
4. Do the socio-political values of host countries (Canada) affect the ways in which diaspora communities engage peace and development initiatives “back home”?
4. آیا ارزش های اجتماعی – سیاسی کشور میزبان (کانادا) تاثیر به شیوه های سهم گیری جوامع اجتماعات مهاجر در تامین صلح سازی و پیشرفت در وطن اصلی دارند؟
5. Identify traditional stories of conflict resolution and peacebuilding from your homeland.
5. اگر داستان های عنعنوی (سنتی) برای حل منازعه و تامین صلح دارید، شرح دهید.
6. Do different sub-groups within the diaspora (i.e., women, youth, 1st/2nd generation, religious authorities, business sector, etc.) play different roles?
6. آیا گروه های مختلف در بین مهاجرین (بطور مثال، زنان، جوانان، نسل اول، نسل دوم، روحانیون بخش های تجاری و غیره) نقش های مختلفی را بازی می کند؟

7. Do you feel supported in your peacebuilding endeavors by friends, family, community organizations, community members, etc. or do you feel isolated in your work?

7. آیا دوستان ، خانواده ، سازمان های اجتماعی و اعضای جامعه شما از تلاش های شما در تأمین صلح حمایت می کنند و یا اینکه شما در اقدام تان احساس تنهایی می کنید

8. What immediate changes would you like to see happen in Afghanistan? How could you assist with these changes?

8. شما خواهان چه نوع تغییرات فوری در افغانستان هستید ؟ شما چگونه در این تغییرات مساعدت کرده می توانید ؟

9. Are there any barriers to achieving the goals stated above?

9. آیا کدام موانع برای حصول اهداف فوق الذکر وجود دارد؟

10. Do you have the necessary connections in Afghanistan which would allow you to carry out your peace building and/or development initiatives? If not, how could you establish these connections?

10. آیا زمینه ارتباط جهت تأمین صلح و پیشرفت در افغانستان برای شما وجود دارد ؟ اگر نه ، چطور می تواند این ارتباط بوجود بیاید؟

Part 2. Afghan-Canadian Community relations within OWN COMMUNITY

11. Do you feel that the Afghan community in Canada, specifically the GTA, is divided or polarized? If so, where do the divisions exist and why?

11. آیا به نظر شما جامعه افغانی در کانادا ، مخصوصاً (ساحه تورنتوی بزرگ) مجزا و قطبی شده است ؟ تفرقه در کجا و در چه هست ؟ اگر چنین است این تفکیک چگونه و چرا بوجود آمده است؟

12. Have you ever considered initiating a peace building program within the local Afghan community for the sake of unifying the community? If so, what have you done? If not, why have you not?

12. آیا فکر اقدام کدام پروگرام صلح سازی در بین اجتماع افغانی در کانادا به منظور متحد ساختن این اجتماع کردید؟ اگر کرده اید، چه بوده ؟ و اگر نه چرا؟

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