Dear Friends of Conflict Dynamics,

If the past three months have shown us anything, it is that no society is immune from the strife that follows exclusion. With colleagues working in the United States, East Africa, and Europe, we are living, as you are, with the strife, inequalities and other consequences that follow when people are excluded. This can be exclusion from political, economic, or socio-cultural opportunities, or some combination of these.

The root causes of exclusion are many, and include structural racism, exclusionary ideologies, hunger for power at the expense of certain groups, greed, and unresolved past grievances. Unfortunately, recent events in the United States have added to the list of cases that confirm a dynamic that I and colleagues have seen hold true 100 percent of the time: *if people are excluded from political, economic, and socio-cultural opportunities, sooner or later it leads to strife in society, which invites conflict*. We call this the **Exclusion-Strife-Conflict, or ‘ESCape’ dynamic**.

As we have been forging ahead with our work to support people building peace in Somalia, Sudan, and elsewhere, it is clear that many of the experiences of those societies, including the challenges around exclusion they face, resonate in the United States and other countries.

It is why we are exploring use of our political accommodation methodology and other approaches in the United States. We will keep you updated on that work in future newsletters. Please stay tuned for the publication of our Political Accommodation Handbook and we invite you to join the conversation about how an inclusive approach can bring peace in the contexts in which you live and work.

Thank you as always for your support and interest in our work.

**Gerard Mc Hugh**

*Founder and President*

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**Where In The World Is Conflict Dynamics?**

**On Televisions across Sudan**

*Khartoum –* Mai Tarig Amir Taha was interviewed on a Sudanese TV show (Sudan Bukra channel) in May to discuss how to achieve progress on critical issues that are impeding the transitional period in Sudan. Mai spoke on several topics including the reasons for conflict in Sudan; the concept of political accommodation and its role in bringing peace; how the peace process can be linked with other key transitional processes; the need for dialogue to bring political actors together to develop concrete plans; considerations for planning the constitution process and timing with elections; and options for sub-national civilian governors during the transition. The interview
What is Happening on the Ground?

Continuing to Strengthen Somali Local Capacities in a Time of COVID-19

While COVID-19 has kept the Somali Team in the office and out of the field, colleagues have been busy developing materials and preparing for a return to in-person trainings and engagements.

The team is currently developing a discussion paper on the federal system in Somalia and has brought on a highly experienced research consultant to adjust our consultation methodology to account for COVID-19. The team is also developing a program for District Peace Committees (DPCs) on inter-governmental relations and division of power.

COVID-19 continues to spread throughout Somalia, the total number of cases at 3,220 with 1,598 recoveries and 93 deaths. The lockdown continues in Mogadishu and other parts of south and central Somalia while it has been eased in Somaliland. The program team is working on ways to support the DPCs in conducting their routine work of conflict resolution in light of the new restrictions. Given the disruptive nature of COVID-19, the DPCs in the 17 districts of Mogadishu participated in awareness creation around COVID-19 working with the Benadir Administration, Health Ministry, and other relevant sector ministries. You can read more about the effects of COVID-19 on local peacebuilding in Somalia in Rukiya’s piece listed in the What are We Reading Section below.

Photo Credit: SOYDEN (Deynile DPC secretary in the awareness campaign)

Adapting Peacebuilding in Sudan to a Virtual World

Since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, CDI’s Sudan Team adapted their approach to engage virtually with Sudanese actors. This has focused on three main methods: conducting virtual consultations; sharing products through an online document-sharing platform; and media outreach, including being featured in the TV interview highlighted above.

In April, the team developed and disseminated three draft options on how political dialogue processes can be sequenced and linked effectively to inform a comprehensive plan for the transitional period (Options for Transition Period Processes: Linkages and Sequencing of Political Dialogue Processes in the Sudan). To
date, this has been shared with more than 200 individuals (Sudanese actors and regional/international actors) through email and WhatsApp. Using this product as a basis for discussion, the team conducted virtual (phone/Skype) consultations with 47 different Sudanese actors from across the country to refine the options and inspire comprehensive thinking on the transition period processes.

Virtual consultations offer many advantages including the ability to reach a wider number and variety of groups from all across Sudan, more diversified inputs and points of view, and their use as a tool for raising awareness and providing new ideas to target groups. However, challenges include the amount of time needed to conduct one-on-one consultations, poor connectivity due to unreliable internet and electricity especially in conflict-affected areas, and the lack of discussion among participants. Going forward, the team is planning to continue virtual consultations on a variety of topics and will explore technologies and approaches that will allow for small group discussions.

Accountability for Children in Armed Conflict Must Come in all Shapes and Sizes

2019 has been another devastating year for children in armed conflict. According to the United Nations' Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, over 25,000 violations against children were verified in 2019. Children in conflicts across the world continue to be recruited and used, killed and maimed, abducted, victims of sexual violence, and left without education and humanitarian assistance.

COVID-19 exacerbates many of the problems children in armed conflict face. According to the United Nations, countries in conflict already experience strains on their healthcare and humanitarian systems, putting children at a greater risk. Many pandemic responses include restrictions on movement and closures of schools and other activities, contributing to the push and pull of child recruitment and other violations such as sexual violence and abduction.

Now more than ever, it is crucial to address accountability for violations committed against children in armed conflict. As illustrated in the graphic from CDI's Children in Armed Conflict Accountability Framework, effective prevention and remedy of violations require efforts along all four components: assigning responsibility, enforcing laws and norms, reforming systems, and empowering children. CDI joins other non-governmental organizations in urging the UN to use all available mechanisms to the fullest extent, including the annexes of the annual report, to assign responsibility to perpetrators of violations against children. CDI also supports incorporating children's voices into these conversations, including Mariam's address at the UN Security Council Open Debate. In order to address past violations and prevent them in the future, we must empower children to inform accountability mechanisms and ensure they work in the best interest of children.
CDI is excited to announce it is one of 130 local non-profits to receive grants through the Cummings Foundation’s $20 Million Grant Program. Supporting nonprofits based in Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties in Massachusetts, the Cummings Foundation has awarded more than $280 million to greater Boston nonprofits. In addition to giving back to local communities, the Cummings Foundation works through the Cummings Institute for World Justice to use education to prevent future genocides and other intercultural violence and injustices as well as aid in the post-genocide recovery and rebuilding of Rwanda. Their aim is to support those working with the next generation of world citizens to confront injustice, intolerance, and inequity that might lead to genocide.

CDI, with the support of the Cummings Foundation, will produce a practical handbook on the Political Accommodation Methodology which will be publicly accessible to everyone who is interested in preventing and challenging exclusion. Practical workshops will be offered both in Greater Boston, as well as CDI’s program contexts in East Africa, covering the implementation of the tool.

“Now, more than ever, the world needs the tools to have a conversation about the roots of inequality and suffering,” said Arlan Fuller, Chief Operating Officer of Conflict Dynamics. “The Cummings Foundation Grant means that we can publish our Political Accommodation Methodology and share it with all who are looking to bring everyone to the table to discuss the issues in their communities. Exclusion from opportunities is at the root of conflict and this tool presents important steps towards progress.”

Employee Spotlight

Terry Kamau
Senior Program Administrator, Somali Program

Meet Terry, CDI’s Somali Program Senior Program Administrator. Terry is the glue that holds our Nairobi Office together and is always working behind the scenes to make sure everything is running smoothly. Since 2014, Terry has been working in program administration at CDI and is involved in all aspects of the Somali Program operations including logistics, travel, finance, procurement, security, staff support, and much more! One of Terry’s favorite aspects of her job is how every day brings new tasks and challenges. Working alongside her teammates, she enjoys interacting with people from local District Peace Committees all the way to sub-national and regional
Terry’s commitment to peacebuilding and conflict resolution started long before she came to Conflict Dynamics. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Project Management and has previously worked with humanitarian and security organizations in Somalia utilizing her knowledge in security and emergency logistics and operations. Through this work, Terry realized that security and humanitarian issues were worsened by the gap in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Somalia. Terry met the Conflict Dynamics team while working as a security trainer in Hargeisa. By joining CDI, Terry works to help the Somali people achieve their dream of peace for their country.

Peacebuilding in conflict-affected contexts is extremely difficult and the Somali Team faces many unique challenges in their work. One of the most difficult challenges Terry faces is planning field travel for the team with travel restrictions, security concerns, and issues convening program participants. Many of these obstacles are out of CDI’s control but Terry, and the team, constantly work over the long term to adapt to meet these challenges. Despite the obstacles, Terry continues to pull the strings together for the Somali Team and for CDI. Although logistics and planning is often done behind the scenes, our project implementation could not get done without Terry’s help and we are so grateful!
a comprehensive piece through the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative exploring the local impact of conflict on the civilians of the Donbas region. Based on over 250 interviews from field trips to Ukraine and Russia, this report covers the dynamics of the conflict on various levels, the consequences suffered by the civilian population, the operational and policy challenges experienced during humanitarian response, and potential ways forward for peace and reconciliation. This report offers a unique look at the challenges of humanitarian operations in a 'deadlocked' conflict.

Starting Small and Making It Big: Hands-on lessons in Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy

Our Development Team recommends the book, *Starting Small and Making It Big*, written by Bill Cummings of our partner the Cummings Foundation. This inspiring story tells of Bill's journey as an entrepreneur and philanthropist. From washing windows as a child to building a multi-billion dollar enterprise in Cummings Properties, Bill exemplifies hard-work, opportunism, kindness, and determination. These characteristics are important in philanthropy and not-for-profit work as well as business. This story teaches us a lesson in what is required to achieve the change we wish to see through our work.

Gender, Climate & Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change

The effects of climate change are felt all around the world, but vary drastically between different people and places. CDI's Gender and Political Accommodation Team studies the unique effects of conflict on women and the obstacles they must overcome to participate in its resolution. This report from the UN presents a framework for appreciating the link between gender, climate, and security through case studies and analysis. Recommendations are made for policymakers, development practitioners, and donors on how to progress towards peace and security, climate action, and gender equality.

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We look forward to seeing you on the ground (and in the skies) soon!

Stay connected for news on our activities!

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

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