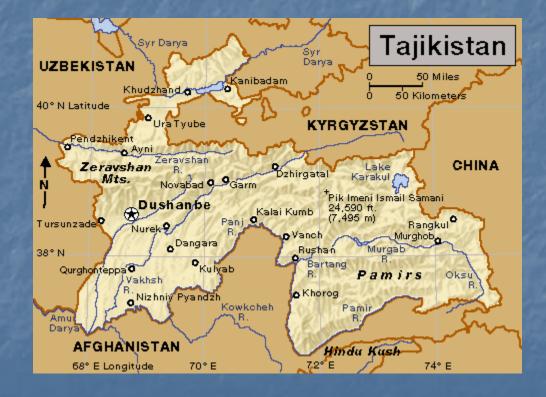# The Sustained Dialogue Process in Tajikistan 1993 - 2005

Randa Slim

International Institute for Sustained Dialogue

Map of Tajikistan

Causes of conflict

- Historical divisions that hindered the development of a strong Tajik identity and strengthened the influence of regional identities-- localism (mahalgerai)

- A Soviet policy of institutionalizing political and economic power in the northern district of Khojand

- The advent of perestroika which paved the ground for the formation of new political movements (democratic, islamist, and nationalist)

- Sudden independence creating conditions for local elites to challenge old power formula

- Regional politics which played themselves out in internal alliances

The Sustained Dialogue Process in Tajikistan

- Pre-negotiation: March 1993 – April 1994

- Negotiation/Mediation: May 1994 – June 1997

- Transitional Period: 1997 – 2000

- Peace-Building: 2000 - present

The Inter-Tajik Dialogue: From pre-negotiation to peace-building

- Pre-negotiation: Paving the ground for negotiations, first meeting in March 1993
- Negotiation/Mediation: Supporting the official peace-making process
- Transitional period: Focusing on designing a process for national reconciliation
- Peace-building: Promoting and strengthening civil society institutions in Tajikistan

Building Blocks in SD Conceptual Framework

- Concept of Relationship

- Dual agenda

- Five-Stage Dialogue Process

- Theory of Change

SD Concept of Relationship

- Identity

- Interests

- Power

- Perceptions/Misperceptions/Stereotypes

- Patterns of Interaction

Dual Agenda

- Focuses on problems and issues of concern to dialogue participants and to their societies

- Deals with the dynamics of the relationships that have prevented resolution of problems and seeks to change and transform them

Five-Stage Dialogue Process

- Stage One: Deciding to hold a dialogue
- Stage Two: Naming problems and mapping relationships
- Stage Three: Analyzing Problems and Relationships
- Stage Four: Designing Action Scenarios
- Stage Five: Acting Together

SD Theory of Change

- Establishing dialogue spaces → Mediating institutions
- Promoting and training community leaders → the first to promote wide-based coalition building
- Developing a common body of knowledge → a basis for a new political narrative (s)
- Acquiring joint problem-solving capacities → participatory practices to define new terms of engagement with societal problems

Peace-building Phase

- Dialogue transformed itself into an NGO: Public Committee for the Promotion of Democratic Processes

- Four track initiative:

1. Establish a network of regional dialogues
2. An educational program in conflict resolution and peace-building
3. Establish a network of regional economic development committees
4. Launch a National Tajikistani Issues Forums Network

Limitations

- Moderator-driven
- Requires long-term commitment to work
- Works best with people who are in the "middle"
- Works within parameters set by official structures
- Difficult to evaluate the exact impact in a dynamic political environment

Strengths

- Works as an incubator for sustainable, long-term change in the society
- Is based on an outsider-insider partnership
- Builds on indigenous resources and traditions
- Provides benchmarks for moderators and participants
- Can lead to a long-term solution as opposed to management of protracted conflict