ABOUT ARC

THE CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON CONFLICT (ARC) was formed in 2013 to improve the effectiveness of field-based peacebuilding and conflict resolution practices. Violence often persists or reignites despite large-scale efforts to manage and reduce conflict, challenging peacebuilders to assess critically what works and what doesn’t. The mission of ARC is to conduct rigorous, evidence-based research to evaluate strategies and models of intervention intended to prevent, mitigate, resolve, and recover from, violent conflict. The Center’s applied research will provide peacebuilders, officials, and policymakers with the information necessary to improve the impact and effectiveness of conflict prevention work in fragile and conflict-affected countries. ARC is developing applied research programs in five areas:

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

WHY DO INDIVIDUALS JOIN VIOLENT EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS? Who joins such movements? What can be done to prevent their growth and weaken their appeal? Over the past decade, efforts to mitigate violent extremism have proliferated, despite lingering uncertainty about the drivers of extremism and how to address them. Through applied research and the development of programming toolkits, ARC is testing widely-held assumptions about the conditions leading to extremism, evaluating CVE interventions, and building the evidence base for improved programming.

PREVENTING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

AWARE OF THE RISKS and opportunities presented by elections in fragile countries, the peacebuilding community remains surprisingly ill-equipped to evaluate and prioritize efforts to prevent election violence. To overcome this gap, ARC is working in Bangladesh, Honduras, Malawi, Moldova, and Thailand to test interventions aimed at preventing electoral violence, and to advance the design of effective election-support practices.

RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT RECOVERY

RECONCILIATION IS THE CRITICAL PHASE of post-conflict peacebuilding in which groups reestablish trust and learn to live together again. Without progress in this area, peace is often unsustainable. Yet little is known about what kind of interventions are being used and whether they have a tangible impact. ARC’s applied research will assess the efficacy of practices in this area and strengthen the empirical and conceptual foundations of reconciliation programs.

RESILIENCE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

RESILIENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS RECOGNIZE that even in conflict-affected and fragile settings, communities often possess the capacity to mitigate stresses that threaten to draw them into violence. The focus of USIP’s resilience research aims to sharpen our understanding of community resilience and the conditions that promote or erode the capacity of communities to resist violent conflict. The findings of ARC’s research will improve the ability of peacebuilders to act effectively to strengthen the resilience of communities that are vulnerable to violent conflict.

ECONOMICS AND PEACEBUILDING

ARC’S APPLIED RESEARCH ON ECONOMICS AND PEACEBUILDING aims to improve the causal and empirical foundations behind USG interventions that address economic drivers of conflict and the effects of conflict on economic behavior. The Center is currently investigating the effects of conflict on private sector investment in Afghanistan, specifically whether economic activity mitigates or contributes to violence, and how to test the effectiveness of development interventions in addressing drivers of violence. The EPC also convenes practitioners, researchers, and officials to disseminate current research and ensure that programming decisions are based on the best-available data drawn from field-based programs.