WHO WE ARE
We are one of the world’s leading peacebuilding organisations, with nearly 30 years of experience laying the foundations for peace. We work with local people around the world to help them build peace, and we advise governments, organisations and companies on how to support peace.

WHAT WE OFFER
We help diaspora communities working to build peace in their countries of heritage and where they currently live by:

- Providing training and capacity building on non-violent communication, conflict-sensitive dialogue, conflict analysis, policy advocacy and reconciliation;

- Facilitating the formation of pro-peace networks that link diaspora organisations and individuals from different sectors, across geographical, political and ethnic boundaries;

- Supporting these networks to maximise their contribution to peace, including the design and implementation of conflict-sensitive economic and aid activities seeking to build peace; and

- Linking diaspora members with other civil society actors and policymakers, both in the UK and in conflict-affected countries, to better address conflict dynamics.

WHY IT MATTERS
Strong lines of influence and interaction exist between diaspora communities and their countries of heritage. Diaspora groups are a critical conflict and development actor because of their prominent role in the transfer of financial, social and political support. They are particularly active in fragile and conflicted-affected countries, especially in areas where conventional overseas development is less able to reach. Diaspora communities play important roles in shaping policies, such as those regulating local economies and the movement of peoples. Beyond their political, social and economic influence,
the diaspora also provide important clues regarding conflict dynamics. Relations between diaspora members often reflect the conflict divisions and conflict realities that are playing out in their country of heritage. They provide important perspectives on conflict and can play a significant role in conflict transformation, reconciliation and post-conflict recovery. Understanding, engaging with and supporting diaspora communities can make an important contribution to maximising peacebuilding change in their countries of heritage.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

Alert has played a pioneering role in developing a peacebuilding approach with diaspora communities. Examples of our work include the following measures and countries.

**United Kingdom**

In 2011, Alert established a number of partnerships with community-based organisations to engage new diaspora groups in peacebuilding and development issues in their countries of heritage – principally, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Tunisia. Our work has resulted in:

- Increased knowledge and understanding for over 300 young people of how conflict in their heritage countries affects their lives, including tensions that they face as young people living in the UK;
- A safe space for Muslims from a variety of diaspora groups to explore identity, religion and conflict – this resulted in 18 community events undertaken to raise awareness of how these issues combine, leading to violence;
- Youth-led action research on class, caste and drug use in communities in the UK;
- Increased understanding among the UK government of diaspora experiences and capacities for peacebuilding and development; and
- A toolkit for youth workers engaging young people interested in the root causes of conflict and peacebuilding – this toolkit was disseminated by the National Youth Agency to its members.

**Sri Lanka**

Since 2008, Alert has provided open spaces for dialogue among and between communities of Sri Lankan heritage, and among young politicians and youth political activists in Sri Lanka and Britain. Our work has resulted in:

- Engagement of individuals from Muslim, Sinhalese and Tamil communities in the UK to discuss Sri Lanka’s health policy, and to jointly develop strategies and training models. This initiative has provided a model for members of different ethnic and religious groups to work together on other issues. It has also helped them to overcome the sense of mutual mistrust and disengagement that had grown between different communities both in the UK and Sri Lanka;
- Public debate among young parliamentarians in Sri Lanka and the UK, following the end of the civil war, through a series of dialogues among diaspora communities. These dialogues have continuously challenged the common perception among some in Sri Lanka of the diaspora as a negative force. The initiative has resulted in a greater acknowledgement of the positive role of the diaspora by the Sri Lankan government; and
- A strong peacebuilding constituency within the Sri Lankan diaspora community in the UK, including links between young British-Sri Lankans, British and Sri Lankan parliamentarians and civil society groups engaged in conflict-sensitive development and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

**Syria**

In 2014, Alert identified the Syrian diaspora as an important bridge connecting internal and external humanitarian and stabilisation efforts that can also contribute to peacebuilding. Syrians in the UK are connected to a multiplicity of actors, with networks in hard-to-reach areas and an understanding of realities on the ground. Our work has resulted in:

- A mapping of and better links among diaspora Syrians, including to previously less visible Syrian diaspora in the UK;
- Research outlining how Syrians in the UK can contribute more to building peace in Syria;
- A new Syrian Diaspora Network, which aims to work towards developing contributions to peace efforts in their country of heritage; and
- Strengthened capacities of Syrian diaspora organisations to use peacebuilding processes that lead to greater coherence and strength of advocacy towards the UK government and others, such as representatives from the United Nations.

FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about what we offer, please visit www.international-alert.org or contact Debbie Ball on dball@international-alert.org or +44 (0)20 7627 6800.