



# **Bridging the Gap: Rhetoric and Practice in Security & Rule of Law**

7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Summary Report | December 2019

# BRIDGING



# THE

# GAP

#KPAC19

## Acknowledgements

The Secretariat of the Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law would like to thank some of the individuals and teams that contributed to the success of the 2019 Annual Conference. Thank you to our designers, Lammert Jonkman and Errol Konat, for their creative energy and the hard work that went into the design of the Annual Conference. Marije Sant and the Congress by Design team were a tremendous help in the registration and organization of the event. Mariska Kerpel photographed the Annual Conference beautifully and captured the unique moments of learning that took place throughout the day. Galin Shopov, our videographer and video editor, created the Annual Conference Video that recapped our signature event, with the additional help of his colleague, Natália Lienerova, who conducted the interviews in the video. Thank you to all of the interns and colleagues who took notes throughout the day to make sure each session received thorough coverage. We appreciate the hospitality from our venue hosts at the COMM Museum, now known as “Beeld en Geluid”, in The Hague. Last but not least, we want to thank our network members for your active participation, creative ideas, commitment to learning and willingness to engage in dialogue at every event we hold. We appreciate everyone’s dedicated efforts to ensuring the Conference was one of our best yet.



## Chapter 1

# Introduction

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The Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law brings together practitioners, researchers, and policy makers working in the field of Security & Rule of Law (SRoL). We are a vibrant network of over 2,500 experts working on generating, sharing, interrogating and applying evidence to strengthen SRoL policy and programs, making them more efficient, effective and people-centered. At the heart of our collective mission, is the desire to improve the learning capacity and knowledge base of the SRoL sector.

The Annual Conference is our signature event, which we hold each year to enable our network participants to showcase their latest ideas, most revelatory discoveries and freshest initiatives. Every year, we hope this day is seized by all attendees to challenge themselves and one another, to set aside assumptions and be open to different perspectives, and to establish partnerships even with unexpected collaborators.

### The theme of the day: Bridging the Gap

“Bridging the Gap” speaks to a kind of ‘tension’ that exists in our sector. While we are working diligently, we are not always living up to our words, our goals, our policy rhetoric, and our commitments.



The day focused on the gaps that exist between our aspirations for the Security & Rule of Law sector and how things actually operate. Our speakers and participants felt challenged to be bold and honest in discussing these gaps, specifically in the following areas:

1. **Partnership & Power:** we must work together, but we don't always acknowledge power imbalances
2. **Learning & Innovation:** the best way to learn can be through failure; it requires risk & investment
3. **Rhetoric & Policy:** SRoL policy rhetoric reflects vision and ambition, but the policy and practice often falls short

### Aims of the 2019 Annual Conference:

- Bring together our community to exchange insights, share new evidence and data, and to challenge one another to strengthen current Security & Rule of Law (SRoL) policy & practice
- Mobilize national and international participants to forge new collaborations and pursue innovative ideas in the spirit of equal partnerships
- Encourage attendees to embrace the obstacles, missteps and failures that can lead to real learning, as a necessary part of closing the gap between our rhetoric and practice

Participants worked in different workshops and sessions, designed to go beyond simply ‘describing’ the gaps identified. Rather, the sessions delved deeper into why

these gaps exist and persist. Attendees were asked in the Opening Plenary to focus on the following key questions throughout the day:

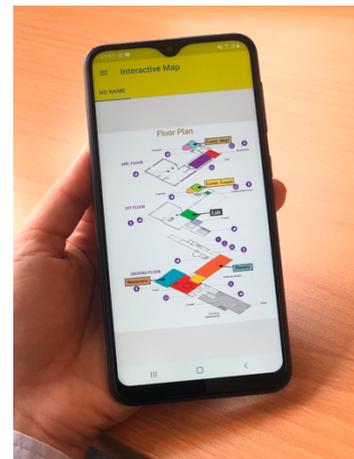
- *What are the deeper political or structural factors that create, contribute to, and perpetuate these gaps?*
- *How can I, as an individual – but also as a member of an organization, an empowered group, or a community of action – work to address the gap?*

### Practical information about the day:

On 10 October 2019, the Annual Conference took place at the COMM Museum, now known as “Beeld en Geluid”, in The Hague. Beeld en Geluid is conveniently located in the center of The Hague, a stone’s throw from the Peace Palace.

After the morning Opening Plenary, the Annual Conference was organized into five breakout rooms for 18 sessions to take place throughout the day, with five sessions taking place simultaneously for most of the event.

This year, to review the conference agenda, timetable, create a personalized schedule for the day, view the interactive venue map, message and set up meetings with other attendees, and find links to social media platforms, we created an Annual Conference App. We were happy to learn that the majority of our attendees reviewed the App positively in the post-Conference survey.



### Survey Data:

Disseminated via the Annual Conference App and e-mail, the post-Conference survey gathered data from 98 respondents this year. Overall, the event was rated a **4.2/5** average - a score that we are both proud of and eager to continue to improve. Participants seemed quite happy with the opportunities to network, the clarity of information, and the venue & catering quality.

The majority were initially inspired to attend the Annual Conference because the session topics and the conference theme were relevant to their work, and because they had the desire to simply meet people in the network. 80% of our survey takers felt that they learned something the day of the Conference that made them reconsider their assumptions or ideas. 84% felt that they would follow up with someone new that they met at our event.



## Chapter 2

# Who was there?

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### **Diversity of audience, diversity of thought**

Each year, we strive to expand the reach of our Annual Conference to attract a diverse audience of practitioners, researchers and policy makers working in the fields of security and rule of law. We always make a concerted effort to expand beyond the Dutch borders, involving experts from other parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, North America and beyond, with the hope of including representative experiences and ultimately breaking out of our echo chambers.

Together with geographic diversity, two other dimensions of diversity that we try to ensure are gender representation and professional expertise.

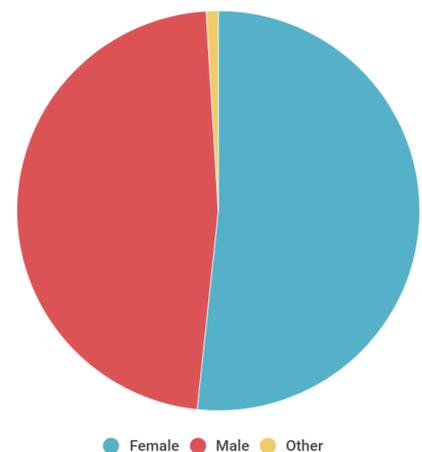
#### Geography:

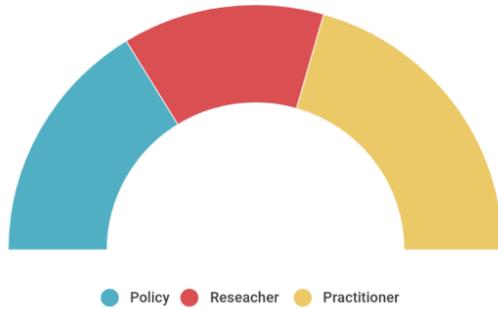
This year we welcomed participants from **52** different countries, a 19% increase from last year's Annual Conference. Of the 52 countries represented at the Conference, 37 were from non-EU countries. Out of our total number of participants in attendance, approximately **21%** were from the Global South. While the most represented country at the Conference was the Netherlands, this year we were excited to welcome more guests from further away, such as Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, China, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Curaçao, Myanmar, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe.



#### Women's Participation:

This year there were **52%** women represented at the Annual Conference, which we have taken note is slightly lower than last year's 57%. The Opening Plenary however, was entirely led by women this year, as we welcomed Marriët Schuurman, Director of Department of Stabilization & Humanitarian Aid (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to present her opening remarks, followed by our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Priscilla Schwartz, Attorney General and Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone, and Irene Khan, Director of International Development Law Organization, who concluded the Opening Plenary by joining in conversation with Dr. Schwartz.





#### Professional Expertise:

The majority of this year's Conference participants registered themselves as practitioners, at **41%**. We were very happy to see our participants from the policy community increase from last year, to **32%** this year. Researchers remain the fewest in numbers at **26%**, however we did see a slight increase in representation from last year. Overall, we are moving in the direction of an increasingly balanced professional expertise composition, and we will continue to work toward this goal for next year.



## Chapter 3

# The Sessions

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### Opening Plenary

As earlier mentioned, the Opening Plenary this year was entirely led by women. After a warm welcome address by Platform Secretariat Head of Office, Megan Price, Mariët Schuurman, Director of Department of Stabilization & Humanitarian Aid (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) presented her opening remarks. Her candid and reflective speech set the tone for the rest of the Conference, challenging participants to boldly speak up about the gaps that exist in their respective sectors.

### Keynote Address

Mrs. Schuurman introduced to the stage the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Priscilla Schwartz, Attorney General and Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone, where Dr. Schwartz continued the tone-setting for the learning that would take place throughout the day. The theme of her keynote address was rhetoric on local ownership and accountability, in relation to actual practice and “bridging the gap”. The address was structured into four parts: 1) issues of local or national ownership, 2) the importance and value of local ownership drawing examples from Sierra Leone, 3) the dilemmas and obstacles that impede ‘local ownership’ and 4) explaining what mix of local and international ownership will produce sustainable gains in ‘bridging the gap’. Areas where Dr. Schwartz concluded we must focus our efforts and work together internationally are on data, gathering evidence of what works and on making the case and mobilizing the investments that are necessary for success.



*“Countries do not have hearts, but they have brave people who carry their hearts to defend the rights of the poor, the vulnerable, the disadvantaged and the oppressed in societies across the world. This is local ownership; this is accountability; and this is bridging the gap!”*

*– Dr. Priscilla Schwartz*

Following the keynote address, Dr. Priscilla Schwartz was joined by Irene Khan, Director of International Development Law Organization. The discussion between Irene Khan and Dr. Schwartz highlighted and flagged some of most the important gaps that exist in the justice sector, including the gender gap that exists with regard to who holds seats of power. The three speakers who opened the Annual Conference were regarded as the highlight of the day for many who participated in

taking the post-Conference survey, noting that the speakers presented concretely and with passion.

There were five breakout rooms in which the 18 Annual Conference sessions were held throughout the day. These room are: Plenary Room, Newsroom, Lab, Comm Meet and Comm Create.

### What topics were presented in the sessions and by whom?

#### **Working Principles for Developing RoL Contexts**

Anne Marie Brinkman & Douwe Buis, Bureau Ensemble



This session was an open invitation to join the Bureau Ensemble team in looking for informed divergence of existing routes in policy-making & implementation through a combination of five perspectives: breaking complexity down, stacking communication; gathering creativity; seeking consensus; commitment to action. Based on insights from research in Libya, Mali and Niger on the role of traditional authorities in stabilizing the complex context in the Sahel, the aim was not to call for a



‘system innovation’, but rather for incremental adjustment fueled by the reflections and follow-up actions of the involved professionals. What does it mean to be a policy-maker or implementer and how does that affect your ability to contribute to change processes?

#### Key arguments:

In the discussions that took place in this session, participants learned that when it comes to research, the aim is not just to generate more knowledge, but also to consider the consequences for policymakers. It is too easy for policymakers to tell researchers, “We already know that”; there needs to be more personal involvement on the part of policymakers. Research existing in and of itself has become an excuse not to act, because it is not being paired with effective action.

Bureau Ensemble proposed 5 working principles for policymakers and researchers alike:

- 1) Breaking down complexity
- 2) Stacking communication
- 3) Gathering creativity
- 4) Seeking consensus
- 5) Commit to action

### Main gaps outlined:

The main gaps identified by session participants varied, but one of the biggest gaps that was raised exists between the practitioners and the donors. Some found that on paper, projects are seemingly perfect, but the reality is far different for the practitioners. Others felt there is a problem with selective research, where donors or practitioners/policymakers will only commission research that supports their program or identifies a convenient problem. When discussing the differences between research and practitioner roles, session participants discussed how researchers can analyze a situation and be explicit about how bad or hopeless it is, meanwhile practitioners still need to try to find a way to work within such conditions.

### Recommendations/findings:

After group work took place in the session, the participants reconvened to discuss the recommendations and findings from their conversations. Some of the outcomes include the following:

- There needs to be a culture of learning from each other within this sector – whether donors, researchers or practitioners. Only through learning can really innovative projects be created
- Trust is the essential component between all elements of the donor-researcher-practitioner relationship. It can take over a decade for sufficient trust to be established before an effective working relationship can exist

## **Co-creation: Bridging Research, Policy & Practice?**

David Betge, ZOA / Faisal Khan, ICCT / Daniel Blocq, Empatix  
Jair van der Lijn, SIPRI / Catrien Bijleveld, NSCR



Security & Rule of Law research, policy and practice sometimes seem two worlds apart, while they should be of mutual value. During this session, stakeholders from different backgrounds reflected on and discussed the enabling and disabling factors of a co-creation approach when it comes to bridging gaps between theory and practice. The focus was on three gaps: External interventions & Local perceptions, Practice & Science, and Knowledge & Change.

Participants were invited to share and reflect on how a co-creation approach to policy-oriented research can contribute to filling these gaps

#### Key arguments:

The objective of this session was to explore if/how the co-creation approach can help bridge gaps between policy, practice and research. The definition of 'co-creation' that is used in ARF6 calls for proposals is based on the idea that different stakeholders are involved at different times. The idea is that practitioners will be able to have better, more evidence-based policies. Together, practitioners and researchers define and conduct research as well as communicate on progress and results, in order to produce jointly valued outcomes. One lesson learned when it comes to co-creation is that it is not necessarily about balance of power and all being equal – it is more about complementing powers.

#### Main gaps outlined:

The three main gaps identified in this session were generated from the group work discussions. The first gap addresses the fact that external interventions often do not take into account or include the diversity of local practitioners. The second gap is that stakeholders (research and practice) are not convinced of the mutual benefits of collaboration. The third gap notes that the creation of knowledge does not always lead toward uptake and change.

#### Recommendations/findings:

After group work took place in the session, the participants reconvened to discuss the recommendations and findings from their conversations. Some of the outcomes include from the different groups include the following:

- Local perceptions can be a big 'rabbit hole' of different perceptions. Co-creation can be very helpful, but you can also fall down into the rabbit hole; as a researcher you can never get started. At the local level there are gatekeepers and local NGOs etc. that might see different things and priorities. The main challenge of co-creation is that it can cause a lot of delay. Operationalizing co-creation involved bringing all different parties together. The key benefit of co-creation is that it can create an atmosphere where policy advisors will come back to meet and consult at a local level. Local authorities, in turn, recognize their power and potential
- Co-creation is not a 'shop front', but should be there at every stage. We should heed the poor balance between academics and practitioners. Co-creation requires attention, time and money
- Uptake happens on different levels – uptake on the ground needs a different strategy than for example at the UN level. Local ownership is important for uptake that takes place on the ground. An unresolved question that arose after this particular discussion was, "Should knowledge really lead to change?"

## **Making Development Programs PVE Sensitive**

Sudi Suleiman, Fia van der Klugt & Jeroen Muntinga, MFA /  
Fulco van Deventer, Human Security Collective



The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has built a toolkit to facilitate the design of development programs in environments of violent extremism. It helps to enhance conflict sensitivity, to improve risk management and analyze root causes of violent extremism from a conflict transformation perspective. The toolkit can also be seen as an innovative modality to enable and encourage learning. It helps policy officers and practitioners to think beyond the



traditional pillars of development and security and provides guiding steps for PVE programming. During this session, the speakers explained the background of the toolkit and exchanged experiences with participants on its implementation.

## **Less Pretension, More Realism: Evaluating Programs & Partnerships**

Marriët Schuurman, Rens Willems & Wilma van Esch, MFA  
Remco van der Veen, Cordaid / Marijke Twerda, Netherlands Red Cross



The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (known by its Dutch acronym, IOB) recently published an evaluation of three important programs under the policy priority, Security and Rule of Law: Reconstruction Program, the Strategic Partnerships Chronic Crises Program and the Addressing Root Causes Tender Process. IOB'S report contains lessons and recommendations that have a wider bearing on

formulating program and policies for addressing the root causes of conflict aimed at providing sustainable benefits to vulnerable people in situations of insecurity. In this session, participants discussed the main insights emerging from the evaluation, and what each party involved can do to facilitate the necessary changes.

#### Key arguments:

One of the key statements that the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs made clear was that it will take the outcomes of the evaluation – and the lessons incorporated in it – to heart, focusing specifically on the question how to enhance learning. It is evident that there is a need to define more realistic ambitions – and to apply more focus in the programming, allowing for more capacity to actually learn. Ultimately, we need to move towards M&E for learning instead of for accountability. KPSRL plays key role in that. Fun and failure is required, and learning should be incorporated in an iterative process.

The MFA underlined that contracts are based on proposals. If proposals ‘overpromise’ then organisations will be held accountable to that as that will be the central element of the contract. However, if the proposal underlines the need for learning, then that will be the central element of the contract – and not just the accountability issue. The MFA does not shut the door when someone comes to them and says “it’s not working – we have to adjust the programme”. Contracts and programmes can be adjusted (and have been adjusted in the past) – so what is stopping implementing organizations to do so?

#### Main gaps outlined:

One of the main gaps outlined was discussed in terms of ‘fragmentation’. It was underlined that there needs to be a more honest debate about fragmentation, specifically with a focus at the country level in order to keep the debate concrete and practical. The reality is that at the moment, the MFA funds too many distinct projects – not in a coordinated manner. This is partly the result of projects being funded out of different budget lines, and partly the result of the embassies not being able to play a coordinating role in developing the country programming. The key challenge is to get to more comprehensive country programs – and embassies have to be key partners in that. Another gap discussed is the need to create a new framework that allows NGOs to change the existing contract modalities and partnerships they have with local partners. This will require a conversation with the MFA, in order to create a shared sense of ‘ownership’ over such new modalities.

#### Recommendations/findings:

Overall, there was agreement on the fact that results frameworks and logframes take too much time and capacity, and don’t provide the flexibility required nor serve the needs of Parliaments. What is needed is human-interest stories on the one hand, and solid research providing evidence on the other. However, it is important to acknowledge that the current paper realities come out of the fact that some funds have been misused. How do we create a space to really hold people accountable to learning? It was also underlined that there is a culture underlining the need to spend the bulk of the money in the field on ‘actual’ activities – which leads to a pushback within organisations to spend too much money on learning as this is seen as an ‘extra’ activity – not as part and parcel in achieving the results and having an impact. It’s this notion that has to be central in the debate moving forward.

## **After 4 Years of SDG 16+: How to Accelerate Local Impact?**

Peter van Sluijs, Cordaid / Wilma van Esch, MFA /  
Wouter Dol, NIMD / Pascal Richard, GPPAC / Katie Davis, HiIL



After four years of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) the United Nations SDG-review aims at mobilizing 'further actions to accelerate implementation'. The 2019 SDG report notes that progress on SDG 16+ and realizing 'peaceful, just and inclusive societies is still a long way off'. This is worrisome; delivery on SDG16+ impacts progress on all goals, after all. Actors working on peace, justice and inclusion must reflect on how to expedite implementation. This session offered a space for a joint civil



and government rethink of actions needed to accelerate progress on SDG 16+ targets where they matter most: at national and sub-national levels.

### **Key arguments:**

During the session, participants emphasized that speaking about SDG16+ means taking part in a multi-level conversation that requires a holistic, yet concrete approach. SDG16+ has to be kept on the global political agenda and, at the same time, implemented locally through innovative strategies, effective use of (financial) resources and dynamic partnerships. But how to best go about this?

Because SDG16+ is fundamental to all other goals (for instance in peaceful societies is easier to tackle climate change), it also remains intangible. Its local, contextual implementation therefore requires actions from different actors, on different levels through different strategies. In this process, collaboration between civil society organizations, local NGOs, decision-makers and the private sector is needed. The inclusion of civil society into institutionalized SDG processes (i.e. preparations of VNRs) also open space for dialogues between government and its population.

### **Main gaps outlined:**

There were numerous gaps identified during this session, one being a gap between data collection and data delivery. In the process of translating the goals and tracking the progress of SDG16+, many data are not measured or provided. A reason for this, is the lack of partnerships and concrete dialogue between local communities and civil society and policy-makers. The meaningful local implementation of SDG16+, which should be a "people-goal", is slowed down and, by implication, people on the ground are negatively affected.

Another gap was the “justice gap” and therefore a gap between what SDG16+ aims to achieve (peace, justice and inclusion) and how it is actually performing. Research shows that there are still 1.5 billion people who do not have access to justice. What is needed are innovative and strategic solutions such as “micro-justice initiatives” and a “friendly justice”: a justice system that it is easy to use and that puts people in the center. Everyone should have access to justice, which needs to be recognized as a transformative tool. One final gap that was discussed in this session was the “inclusion gap” in the localization of SDG16+. At local level, governments should open more space for civil society organizations to allow them to influence and contribute to the SDGs agenda, among others. This calls for greater support for those initiatives and systems which empower local communities through local budgeting, local education and capacity-building.

#### Recommendations/findings:

Some of the recommendations and findings that were identified by participants in this session aimed to accelerate the implementation of SDG16+. These include the following:

- The need for innovation and inclusion also by opening spaces for participation for new actors in the discussion about SDG16+. For example by collaborating with and establishing more overarching SDG16+ communities. In The Hague the Humanity Hub and HiIL are initiating a community of practitioners on SDG16+
- Developing stronger national commitment and a stronger political will as well as more efficient data collection and exchange
- Setting up unusual and dynamics partnerships for example with the private sector
- Coming up with concrete dialogues and actions while building on already existing local solutions. And in the process, map what different stakeholders do in countries and find ways to better complement each other
- To work more with political actors, leaders in parliament, political parties and use them to promote SDGs and related policies
- Developing stronger strategies to finance SDG 16+ implementation (also with the private sector)
- Connecting SDG 16+ with other goals such as climate change to show how SDG 16+ is really fundamental to progress on those goals too
- Striving for a comprehensive integrated SDG 16+ plan at national and regional level

## **Power and Partnerships in 'Crisis Conservation'**

Emmanuel Akampurira & Esther Marijnen, Ghent University  
Saidi Kubuya, ASSODIP



This session aimed to tackle the problems that arise when there is a range of different actors involved in nature conservation in difficult environments, such as in protracted conflict areas. By interrogating dominant power structures, we will try to identify ways to conserve nature that will both contribute to the protection of endangered biodiversity and respect human rights. Going beyond the rhetoric of gender-inclusive, and community-based conservation, this session explored

how we can implement these principles in practice, while assuring accountability and transparency.

### **Key arguments:**

The key argument discussed in this session highlighted that nature conservation is on the margins of the rule of law debate. Nature conservation is often perceived as a non-political issue, which this session underscores – it is not. One of the presented cases was that of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, located in Uganda's Kanungu District. It is a case of 'too many cooks in the kitchen.' International efforts and donor-interests aim at halting human-wildlife conflict in Bwindi, yet unsuccessfully, due ineffective public-private partnerships – a significant number of international NGOs have, ineffectively, become responsible for the park, because it could reinforce the rule of law, yet local park management is needed for this.

Time, effort, and resources should be spent on preventing and mitigating human-wildlife conflict to mitigate the low success rate. Competition over projects leads to failure. There are numerous discourses between international NGOs, government agencies, local NGOs, and tourism operators. Meetings with local elites and few organizations that are thought to be speaking for rest of the local population, yet not representative.

### **Main gaps outlined:**

One of the main gaps that arose from dialogue in this session was the "research gap" that has been highlighted by media attention to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature's 'secret war', in which the not-for-profit financed park guards who committed and are engaged in human rights violations. Despite media coverage and BuzzFeed's investigative report, the opinions of donors have remained unaltered.

The research gap, bridged by the two presented cases, raises questions of decolonisation and nature conservation in Africa and structures of inequalities that remain. For who decides which area of nature requires protection, how, and by who? Who has power and decides to take responsibility for nature conservation? Who is accountable for the lack of sustainable nature conservation and the violation of human rights in relation to this?

#### Recommendations/findings:

Some of the concluding remarks and outcomes of this session included the following:

- Time, effort, and resources should be spent on preventing and mitigating human-wildlife conflict to mitigate the low success rate
- Competition over projects leads to failure
- There are numerous discourses between international NGOs, government agencies, local NGOs, and tourism operators. Meetings with local elites and few organizations that are thought to be speaking for rest of the local population, yet not representative
- There is no differentiation between those who are harming the conservation efforts due to their livelihood-related needs and those that aim at overexploitation (i.e., those who take water for use are also sent to prison)
- Vulnerable populations are at higher risk; one can buy himself out of the prison and indeed the poor are forced out of the park and the arrests did not go according to official rules and the rule of law
- Different parties are blame each other for human rights violations, often the park guards are the perpetrators

### **Innovating for Human Rights: Breaking Barriers to Partnership**

Catriona Hands, FROLIC studio

The complex challenges faced by those operating in SROL and human rights cannot be solved alone. But how do we overcome the structural and political impediments that often inhibit genuine collaboration? How can we nurture partnerships between (non)traditional actors and encourage genuine learning and innovation? FROLIC Studio shared the experiences of their KMF-funded collaboration in this session, with a human rights NGO to redesign a covert camera used to document human rights abuses around the world. This interactive session dove into the murkier waters of perceived and real barriers to innovate partnerships, with participants sharing and evaluating their own experiences and proposing viable solutions.



#### Key arguments:

One of the main arguments that were presented and discussed in this session was that unconventional partnerships can work. FROLIC, a product design studio that produces products embedded in technology, partnered with a human rights NGO that documents and exposes human rights abuses in conflict affected countries using camera technology. The partnership works with a network of researchers and provides material support to local activists, such as cameras. The speakers emphasized that great design can mean great impact, and that includes redesigning an existing device that can then lead to a bigger humanitarian impact.

#### Main gaps outlined:

The main gap identified was simply that there is a lack of cooperation between organizations and innovation companies. Gaps in this session were more so discussed through the framework of challenges. Duty of care is one of the main challenges that partnerships like the presenters face – often concerning safety and security concerns. Human rights and media organizations can share footage captured, but they have no control on how the information is going to be received, how the information will be stored and who the images will be shared with. Collaboration also involves a lot of luck, as there is a structural problem in our professional fields, that is limited access to organizations that are not in the same sector as you.

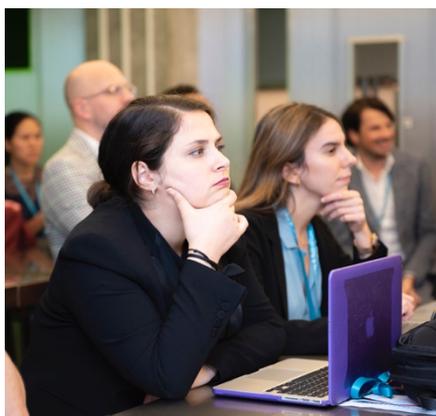
#### Recommendations/findings:

The main recommendation outcome from this session is to try to invest in collaboration and partnerships, even if they seem unconventional at first. Together, our efforts and achievements are much stronger.

### **Community Approaches to Peacebuilding in Securitized Environments**



Rukiya Abdulrahman, CDI / Ali Hersi & Madeline Church, Saferworld



This session discussed evidence generated through the learning agenda: Working in securitized environments calls for support and empowerment of community-level structures. Where prospects of peace seem elusive, local communities are well placed to engage with parties of the conflict – including the strengthening of civil society initiatives. Community-based organizations and civil society organizations are important vehicles for peacebuilding, socio-economic development, addressing the needs of victims/survivors and maintaining relationships across political division. For impactful change, scaling up is key.

## Hybrid Security & Justice in Myanmar & South Sudan

Charlotte Watson, John Bainbridge, Lucian Harriman & Mai Hla Aye,  
Saferworld



International policy and programming continues to focus on state-building, state security and justice provision, despite evidence that ignoring local realities and the existing systems people use undermines these efforts. This session built on Saferworld's research in Myanmar and South Sudan, which focused on how plural and hybrid security and justice systems function, and assessed the legitimacy and effectiveness of security and justice providers from the perspectives of local populations.



This session challenged participants to use their experience to find ways to overcome barriers to ensure programming actually does take into account realities on the ground.

### Key arguments:

In this session, the key argument was that people in South Sudan and Myanmar prefer informal mechanisms of justice and security rather than formal ones, but donors and funding programs focus more on formal mechanisms. Participants in this session were invited to discuss what and where to support in order to increase and strengthen justice and security provisions in the two countries. One of the main points highlighted in the group discussion was that the focus should be spent on the local level – identifying what are the realities at the local level and then strengthening the already existing mechanisms that people use and seem legitimate in dealing with justice and security issues.

### Main gaps outlined:

The main gap identified by this project is that in South Sudan and Myanmar, most people prefer informal mechanisms of justice and security provisions rather than formal mechanisms. However paradoxically, many donors and funding programs in Myanmar and South Sudan are directed to formal mechanisms of security and justice.

### Recommendations/findings:

- Village leaders and traditional authorities should be trained on basic skills on reconciliation and mediation to enable them to deal well with the reality on the ground
- Keep an eye on long-term vision and enhance the cooperation between all actors that operate on the ground (NGOS, donors, and other projects and programmes)

- Legal pluralist approach: Bring together formal and informal mechanism of justice provision. Policies and projects should take in consideration the diversity of actors
- Evidence-based program: what is an evidence? What are the priorities? How data are collected? Who is answering the questions? Western approach? Bias on numbers?
- Participants suggested that more action research will be desirable and that researchers should be aware on the narratives and stories shared during interviews in the research. The distinction researchers make between state groups and non-state groups is not always clear.
- People who take part in interviews and focus group might switch positions and play multiple roles which has a consequence on the evidence and data gathered

### **To Collaborate with Authorities or Not: A Practitioner's Dilemma**



Corita Corbijn, ZOA / Abdel-Rahman El-Mahdi, SUDIA / Noelina Nabwile Opiyo, Saferworld



As NGOs, we aim to promote SRoL across all levels of society, but in practice the partnership between community-based peace building and structures and the state authorities is challenging. Communities trust customary authorities more than the state; and the government does not always welcome influence from the civil society. This session explored how to bridge the partnership and power

gap between community-based peace building work and government authorities at all levels. It explored how organizations can effectively learn to improve programming results.

#### **Key arguments:**

The key focus of this session addressed the relation between community-based peacebuilding structures and different levels of government authorities. It was discussed that NGOs aim to promote Security and Rule of Law across all levels of society, however they often work mainly with community-based peace structures, especially in contexts with fragile governments. Multiple NGOs working in east and central Africa identified a power and partnership gap between these community-based structures and government authorities, and an ARC/KMF-funded learning event was organized by ZOA, Saferworld and SUDIA in August 2019 to address how to establish fruitful and sustainable relations with government authorities.

### Main gaps outlined:

Gaps in this session were mostly discussed through the framework of challenges. One central challenge is the “practitioner’s dilemma”. Participants were invited to think about how collaboration with government authorities affects the independence and neutrality of both community-based peacebuilding structures and NGOs. Participants noted the risk of government authorities seeking to assert influence when there is close collaboration, which would undermine independence and neutrality. This argument was met by the response that this risk can be managed by taking mitigating measures, as well as the comment that the level of the risk depends on how collaboration is defined.

Apart from the lack of trust in government institutions and the risk of political influence harming neutrality, another challenge that was identified in the session is the risk of taking away state responsibility for peace and stability by working with community-based structures. While many participants saw this as a credible risk, it was generally thought to be a manageable risk, since community-based structures and government structures can have a certain complementarity and can thus co-exist. The nature of the formal legal system was also identified as a challenge. The costs, travel distance to and perceived incapacity of government institutions can form an obstacle for community groups to engage with the formal justice sector. The punitive nature of formal justice can also clash with needs of local communities for mediation and reconciliation rather than punishment.

### Recommendations/findings:

Taking the identification of these challenges as a starting point, opportunities and good practices to bridge the gap were identified and discussed. The speakers introduced an ARC-project in Sudan, where communities collaborate with local authorities through the Community Communication System.

- This project allows communities to communicate local issues and needs, generating a wealth of knowledge for government authorities to act upon, and for communities to learn from each other
- This system brings communities and government together through knowledge sharing
- Government authorities often are not familiar with the concept of human security, and feel threatened by the involvement of civil society or community groups in security issues

When a country is in deep or complex conflict, how would collaboration with government authorities take place without practitioners being perceived as complicit with either one side of the conflict, or as legitimizing government actions?

- The central recommendation brought forward on this issue is that collaboration should be context-driven
- Strong conflict analysis, as well as an understanding of the local vision of the future, is needed to avoid doing harm and to protect the independence and neutrality of both community structures and NGOs

- Be more open to taking the risks that come with collaboration and providing careful explanation, rather than to assume that fruitful and sustainable relations might be impossible
- As long as there is transparency and dialogue, there are various possibilities for collaboration between community-based structures and government authorities

## **Gamifying How Citizens & Public Servants Interact – The Role of Aesthetics and Technology**



Nathalie Dijkman & Kakuru Timothy, SEMA / Arthur Steiner, Hivos

Citizens have a voice in shaping the quality of public services. Why don't we ever hear this voice? Technology can be a platform for citizens to give their feedback. But data alone cannot influence governments to improve. Those who are serious about improving the justice sector need to involve new disciplines and narratives to incentivize governments to take responsibility. This session was about the role of data, gamification and aesthetics in influencing the citizen-government feedback loop, based on a pilot in Uganda. The gap here is twofold: on the one hand, how do you



make sure citizens raise their voice in shaping public services directly? On the other hand, how do you bridge the gap for public servants to feel they have a direct hand in improving their performance and can be proud of the services they provide?

### **Key arguments:**

The key arguments of this session centered around perceptions about police officers and the gaps that exist in conversations about perceptions and images citizens have toward police officers, depending on which country and context they are in. Some participants held the opinion that police officers are seen as a threat to their safety and corruptly abuse their power, while others see police officers as protectors of citizens.

The main outcome of the SEMA project was that citizens could engage with police officers and not be afraid to raise their concerns when officers are abusing their power. Data collected through an assessment survey of police officers was monitored in order to foster deeper interaction between citizens and police officers. The project used gamification methods and rewarded police officers for good behavior based off citizen feedback.

### **Main gaps outlined:**

One of the main gaps included in this session is between citizens and public servants in Uganda, and the ways in which the program SEMA implemented aimed to bridge the gap on what police should do and the perception citizens have towards them.

Another main gap identified in this session was with the gamification techniques through which citizens assess and judge police officers. The concerns raised include police officers feeling pressure when they are judged by citizens, for fear of their role and authority being undermined by the survey negative responses. Another concern raised was how citizens may feel reluctance to fill in surveys if their assessment of police performance can be used against them. One gap identified concerned the use of technology, such as gamifying and popular culture, being used as a regime to tighten political space, monitoring the the movements of the opposition.

#### Recommendations/findings:

One of the findings of the SEMA project was that police officers on the bottom level want to provide services and feel a closer relationship to citizens, but feel they lack the resources and means to do so. The Aesthetics in Popular Culture in East Africa (Kenya and Uganda) project found that police often utilized technology to manipulate the public opinion and control the movement of the opposition. Participants in the session also stressed that social media and certain technologies are not very accessible for citizens who live in the countryside, so this could pose as a limitation to the role of changing behavior through popular culture.

### **There's an App... for That? Making Innovation Work for Justice**

Wayne Jordash, GRC / Yousef Wehbe, Syrian Legal Development Program  
Alex Whiting, Prosecutor's Office in The Hague



This session explored contemporary insight on how to create and use innovative justice solutions in expanding access to justice. Drawing on insights from the Basic Investigative Standards App ('BIS') as case study, the session panelists shared their learning experience in developing and integrating technology-based justice solutions for documenting international crimes such as the challenges and risks to its free use, or the accessibility of funds for promoting and practicing change. They also challenged participants to reflect on how this gap exists within their organizational contexts and how to bridge this justice need.

#### Key arguments:

One of the repeating patterns in the field of documentation and strategic litigation is that professionals leading the work acquired the knowledge needed in terms of international investigations, but lacked the technical aspects of the needed investigation standards. There is incredible need for local first responder-collected information coming from civil society, as the international system and courts of law are completely dependent on this "golden hour" right after the crimes have occurred. One of the greatest challenges is the standards by which criminal

investigations are held to, and how to ensure that activists and reporters gathering information are aware of how to conduct investigations on the grounds.

#### Main gaps outlined:

There were several gaps outlined by the different session speakers, one being the need for activists in the field to have accessible, easy and simplified tools. The tools must be practical, such as accessibility in their native language, and they must be designed to consider the threats activists are facing. From the perspective of someone who works at international tribunals, there is a gap between civil society and law enforcement that can be bridged through more tools such as the BIS app. There is a call for more intermediate structures that help sieve the information that comes up; to bridge the gap between the tribunals and the world of evidence collection.

#### Recommendations/findings:

There are many challenges from the different perspectives of professionals involved in the field of documentation and strategic litigation and international humanitarian law. Some of the agreed upon challenges include the immense pressure on activists doing the work in the local context, meeting with victims, and collecting information that then has to be smuggled out. Another challenge from the receiving end of collected data is how to synthesize information without losing meaning, while maintaining standards without losing risk standards. There will be a continued push to strategize the dissemination of tools like the BIS app and an overall aim to utilize international humanitarian law more in general.

### **Influential Actors' Language & Violence: Kenyan Case Study Using AI**

Chris Mahony, World Bank & Peloria Inc. / Eduardo Albrecht, Mercy College / Rohini Srihari, State University of NY



This session conducted a case study on Kenya that takes preliminary steps towards identifying influential actors' language association with violence. To this end, an app was created that connected variations in sentiment in language to an objective measure of political violence – daily fatalities as reported via the ACLED Project. The results indicate that the model can predict both increases and decreases in average fatalities for look ahead periods between 50 and 150 days, with overall accuracy approaching 85%. The session



addressed the report's policy genesis, pointed to future directions of research, and navigated the ethical dilemmas of an emerging field.

#### Key arguments:

One of the key arguments outlined in this session was that AI can be used as an objective metric. It is possible to predict whether there will be an increase in violence or not, up to 85% accuracy, thus indicating that there is both methodological integrity and credibility to this approach. Working on the local level is way more efficient but it can be quite costly. It does however allow for accurate predictions, which in the long run enables cost-saving. Businesses could gain a lot of benefits from using this technology and should invest in it more. One of the counter-arguments is that sentiment data extracted from text is in fact an old technology, already used for instance in the financial sector. What is cutting-edge about this work is the possibility to do this with radio, which now brings about new parameters into play: tone. Being able to detect tone has tremendous predictive capacities.

#### Main gaps outlined:

One of the main gaps or challenges that was addressed in this session is that there is so much data available that it can become very difficult to process it. The velocity of these data differs, thus combining and synthesizing it into one model is difficult. There is a need for a framework for AI developments before continuing development, as it has a tremendous capacity of changing humanity as we know it.

#### Recommendations/findings:

There were a number of recommendations for future policy, research or practice put forward:

- What is next: an app that can intuitively adapt to changes in context to assess violence, but can also give explanations and reprogram itself accordingly
- Use of this technology to do more conflict prevention
- Businesses could gain a lot of benefit from this technology and should further engage in it
- There is a need for a public-private sector partnership
- Approach suggested is to utilize very local data – “hyperlocal”. There is a cost issue, but it is possible to achieve still. This information should be shared to both the public and private sectors to attempt to mitigate these issues

## **Legal Empowerment & the Crisis in Aid for Democracy & RoL**

Stephen Golub, International Development Consultant



With democracy and the rule of law under attack across the globe, the development community needs to take stock of why decades of aid for democratic and legal institutions has proven apparently ineffective. Legal empowerment provides a lens through which to review this crisis. Focusing on empowering people rather than the state – it complements mainstream, government-centered development efforts in some ways and serves as an alternative in others. Does it offer a way forward for efforts to fortify democracy and the rule of law? Or does its potential – to the extent its potential is worth pursuing – lie elsewhere?

#### Key arguments:

One of the main arguments made in this session was that we should drop the whole notion of nation building and state building and be less ambitious. In many countries, we cannot reform a whole democracy or a whole legal system. More money in general should go to civic empowerment, and less should be spent on state building institutions, where a lot of money has been wasted. Another suggestion was to let go of Result Frameworks, which can be counter-productive and push people in negative directions. Rather, a foundation approach to fund such efforts should be adopted, starting off by welcoming proposals/ideas, local empowerment, controlling these ideas on a local level.

#### Main gaps outlined:

The big gap identified in this session is between the promise of what we were hoping for and the reality of the ground now. The projects aimed at building state institutions or improving judicial mechanisms are often failing. Development aid is in crisis – and we are not making progress in that area. Attempts to answer this gap include: efforts were simply too ambitious and money was being spent on the building of state institutions in corruption-affected countries – which does not work. Another plausible answer is that we underestimated the challenges. Changing the judiciary means changing a political and legal culture, because it is a product society in which they are embedded. Political, cultural, economic and historical forces are hard to change. There is a sort of path dependence – meaning institutions and organizations tend to stay the same way.

#### Recommendations/findings:

The overall recommendation that arose from this session was to focus on other aspects of development: education, health. The real impact is in these many sectors and fields – it trickles down. Spending more on civil society and media efforts is important, as is the gradual increase of work with justice systems.

### **Economic Development & Stable Inclusive Governance: Somalia & Beyond**

Jos Meester, Clingendael Institute / Fia van der Klugt, MFA



This session asked the question: how can we focus on economic development in fragile and conflict-affected situations in a way that contributes to more stable, inclusive societies? In other words: how can we link SDG8 with SDG16? The session employed Somalia as an example and shared good and bad practices for mutual learning.



**Key arguments:**

This session focused on economic growth often being conflictual, and the challenges in stabilizing fragile situations, so that peace is not compromised. In the context of Somalia, there is a big divide – as the private sector still works within a localized clan culture. In Somalia, economic growth is influenced by two actors: the diaspora and the private sector. For the diaspora, the value has decreased because of inflation but also there are less remittances being sent back. With regard to the private sector, they are increasingly supplying governance by developing the domestic market and contributing to reopening of ports.

**Main gaps outlined:**

The main gap that was discussed in this session was between the SDG8 and SDG16. The excerpts of the Sustainable Development Goals that were focused on were, “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all,” and, “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. In sum, economic growth is often conflictual, but how can we stabilize the fragile situation? How can we make sure that economic growth, especially Private Sector Development, doesn’t compromise peace in Somali society?”

**Recommendations/findings:**

The private sector also has downsides – for example, people perceive government jobs as preparatory steps for private jobs. Also, major business actors are becoming increasingly powerful and influential, with clientelistic behavior that increases the dependency on the major players. Private Sector Development should only be one of the tools used to improve stability through the conflict sensitive approach. Key drivers of conflict must be identified before incorporating mitigation measures, which then require being monitored throughout the length of the project in order to minimize negative impacts and maximize the positive ones of interventions of this conflict.

In the particular case of Somalia, we must pay attention to the sources of economic growth for example, since Eastern countries, from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to China, these states invest in amounts that dwarfs Western investments while having less strings attached and adopting a less paternalistic approach to development. However, they tend to be less concerned about ethic and human rights, by having ties with warlord and not working towards improving rule of law in the region.

## **Strengthening Capacity of Subnational Governments: Burundi & Rwanda**



Lori Cajegas, CARE Nederland / Freddy Sahinguvu, The Hague Academy



Capacity strengthening of subnational governments in fragile settings remains a challenge for most development organizations. It is either done in a simplistic manner: outdated knowledge or skills are transferred from the Global North to the Global South, or not contextualized enough. What is the best approach to use? Who/what level of subnational government to target? How to contextualize approaches? How to build capacity in a sustainable manner?

These are some of the questions that many organizations engaging with subnational governments are struggling with. This joint CARE NL/THE session attempted to answer these questions through an interactive discussion.

### **Key arguments:**

In Burundi and Rwanda, it appears that targeting sub-represented groups is insufficient – they must actually be actively included in the dialogue, because by having minority status, they tend to exclude themselves from dialogues framework as much as they are excluded from them by other groups.

Active inclusion in dialogue must be followed by capacity building and development on the long term, not by one-off action that could lead to a distortion of messages the further away it gets from the sources, so on-site accompaniment is required to strengthen capacity of fragile communities.

There are four main phases on the ground that were discussed: 1) Assessment of the situation; 2) Training: training the trainers; 3) Implementation of actions plans; 4) Democratic dialogue with Civil Society Organizations.

### **Main gaps outlined:**

The main gaps outlined were between the Global North and the Global South in terms of capacity, and at a more concrete level there is a gap between the local communities and the central government that was discussed throughout the session.

When drafting the action plan, it is important for local authorities to focus on short-term and achievable targets rather than unrealistic commitments since this could cause frustrations and distrust among the less represented communities. When it comes to implementing the action plan, transparency is paramount for the same reason, and local partners must make sure to hold these authorities accountable not to derail from the action plan.

#### Recommendations/findings:

One of the main takeaways was that it is as important to change the mindset of the targeted audiences as much as it is to develop their skills, and for this, experienced bilingual trainers are needed. To this effect, The Hague Academy developed the aforementioned four step procedure. This way, at a conceptual level, they hope to bridge the gap between the Global north and the Global South in term of capacity, and at a more concrete level, between local communities and the central government.

On the Action Plan Approach, through training, the more people are taught, the more they learn about issues that affect them and the more they are able to make their communities and the government aware of these issues, as well as the necessities to solve them. It is thus important to adopt an adaptive approach tailored to the needs and perceptions of each involved actor in order to effectively change their mindset.

### **The Missing Piece in SSR: Lessons from 10 years in the DR Congo**

Patrick Mugula, Julien Niankoye, Adrienne Lemon & Charline Burton,  
Search For Common Ground



This session highlighted a crucial gap in traditional Security Sector Reform (SSR) approaches – addressing the trust deficit between civilians and security forces – and offered locally-anchored, concrete avenues to fill that gap. Panelists explored lessons-learned from 10 years of SSR interventions by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in the DR Congo (DRC) and adapting these lessons to inform interventions in Mali. A participatory role-play exercise enabled participants to engage with challenges of assessing trust-building. An interactive debrief and audience exchange allowed



participants to discuss the implications of incorporating trust-building in SSR.

#### Key arguments:

There are many SSR challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and ways in which traditional SSR approaches have underperformed in this context. SFCG's analysis of trust between security actors and civilians was introduced as a missing piece of SSR, and SFCG has sought to address this through community-driven approaches to SSR. Throughout the exchanges with participants, the question of whether or not trust-building has helped alleviate patronage, corruption and impunity problems with traditional SSR was raised. Donors often expect deliverables on short project timelines that do not match the change organizations like SFCG need to create and the time this takes. Search is developing a Sahel-wide strategy of its own. Donors have a low appetite for risk: donors tend not to engage when it gets

difficult, for example during elections, which does not necessarily support creating real progress.

#### Main gaps outlined:

One of the main challenges outlined in this session is the importance for donors to hear local actors' definitions of what is most salient for progress in SSR. Typical SSR approaches, including approaches centered on training and equipping, institutional reform, and civilian accountability structures, are tied, in design and assessment, to high level ideas of accountability which, while crucial, often do not reach or resonate with the social lived experiences of the ultimate beneficiaries of SSR work. Panelists highlighted the crucial importance of recognizing intangible measures of SSR progress, notably trust between security actors and civilians, in order to comprehensively address SSR.

#### Recommendations/findings:

After a facilitated role play exercise exploring the challenges of measuring improvements in trust between security actors and civilians, there was a debrief session during which participants identified the challenges they encountered in measuring the project's impact. Some of the findings included:

- Respondents can't speak directly to the project or the goals of the intervention. They just know the context they live in;
- Some people were not comfortable in the focus group discussion (FGD): FGD participants said they weren't aware of the program. We need to use information from different sources;
- People were responding to our questions, but it was hard to know if people were honest, because people wanted the project to continue;
- There was not time to reach out to everyone one wants to;
- It takes time to understand the relations between different groups - for example the dynamic between lawyers and judges.

## **Civil Society Influence in Security, Policy & Practice: Creative Problem Solving**



Mariam Abdel Baky & Ilina Slavova, International Alert

With expert speakers who took the participants through examples from Tunisia and Lebanon, the session focused on the 'hot topics' of violent extremism and border security to explore why the policy and practice gap exists in these contexts, and how civil society has tried to overcome it. The session involved a representative of a donor state on what works in influencing policy makers, before the discussion was opened up to a collective, creative brainstorming session aimed at sharing ideas and experiences and identifying effective approaches.



#### Key arguments:

The speakers representing the Civil Society and Western Donor experience outlined the existing problems and offered explanations why the problem(s) exist and what can be done to address the problems constructively. The session was placed into the geographical regions of Tunisia and Lebanon. The main argument outlined was that often the reality on the ground in terms of what people see as their needs (e.g. for health, education, and livelihoods) differs from what the state sees as the need, which centers more around counter-terrorism (CT) and border security.

#### Main gaps outlined:

There are three major issues that hamper donors' ability to adapt interventions to the reality on the ground and moving beyond security-focused approaches:

1. Lack of knowledge of what is exactly happening on the ground, what works, and what does not work. Although attempts to gather evidence exists, there is still a low level of knowledge to make an informed choice and which organizations and projects should be supported and which not
2. Organizational structure which results in a high turnover of the staff at the government agencies, also affects knowledge and skill amongst staff.
3. Political aspect of the donor situation, when the domestic political agenda in the donor country often dictates the intervention – such as a focus on counter-terrorism and migration prevention.

#### Recommendations/findings:

In terms of what works well, the following points were raised:

- The ability of CS to represent local voices though there is a lot of room for improvement, especially between CS and academia
- Local level mechanism which create space for inclusion of local voices in (local) government decision making
- One on one exchanges and meetings, for example with embassy staff, or convening a closed-door round table

What do we need to bridge the gap?

- We need to push for inclusive, holistic SSR strategies
- We need to invest in knowledge management to ensure that policies are evidence-based
- Honest discussion and understanding of each other's political reality, including governments talking to governments, and learning across government to gain shared understanding
- Civil society needs to be part of public discussion on topics as security and invest more in advocacy
- Civil society needs to build relationships with the security sector, a lot of security sector sees civil society as a threat and this perception needs to change





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