



EXPERIENCE-SHARING BETWEEN VICTIM GROUPS

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

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The Learning Process

1. The Teaching and Learning Groups

From May to November 2020, Victim Advocates International (VAI), supported by the Knowledge Platform Security and the Rule of Law, facilitated groups of Rohingya victims of atrocities from Myanmar to produce short videos to share their experiences and advice with groups of victims of atrocities from South Sudan. The Rohingya groups engaged in this project have experienced significant successes in terms of gaining international recognition and support for their cause, and in building a sense of purpose amongst Rohingya communities and individuals displaced in Bangladesh.

1.1. The Teaching Groups

The Rohingya groups engaged for this project (the 'teaching groups') include the Arakan Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH), as the lead group, with Voice of Rohingya (VOR) and the Shanti Mohila providing experiences and lessons learned in specific areas. These groups have been operating in the refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, since soon after their arrival in August 2017. ARSPH and VOR are two of the biggest groups in the camp. The Shanti Mohila is a women's group whose base consists primarily of women with limited formal education, most of whom are illiterate, and who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Focus area → Organisation ↓	Civil and Political (CP) Rights	Economic, Social and Cultural (ESC) Rights	Interests of specific communities
ARSPH	Primary focus. ARSPH is focused on advocating for justice; elevating the voice of Rohingya refugees to high level conversations about the future of Myanmar; and advocating for refugee rights within the camp.	Some projects increase access to ESC rights through rights-based advocacy, e.g. interventions with employers on behalf of employees; information sharing with humanitarian actors and medical providers when health needs within the camp are not being met.	ARSPH includes committees of women, elders and youth. However, see discussion on the impact of women committees on page 14.
Voice of Rohingya	VOR have been involved in interventions to with high-level decision-makers, requesting that their needs and priorities be considered.	Primary focus. VOR is primarily focused on improving living conditions of Rohingya within the camp.	VOR's leadership includes youth and community elders. VOR's membership includes women, but their visibility is limited, as detailed on page 14.
Shanti Mohila	The Shanti Mohila advocate on behalf of the women within their group; conduct trainings and skills-building amongst these women to increase their confidence and advocacy skills; and collect information for use in international justice processes.	In addition to their focus on justice and elevating the voices of women in the Shanti Mohila, the group are involved in an education programme which includes literacy classes. This type of project spans a CP and ESC rights focus.	Primary focus. The Shanti Mohila are focused on the rights of the women within the Shanti Mohila; a specific group, comprised of women who have historically been marginalised.

These groups have different focuses. ARSPH and the Shanti Mohila are more focused on meeting the civil and political rights of the refugees. Both have a primary focus on justice, including by gathering information from the community that may be used as evidence before the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). ARSPH is also concerned with processing complaints of a broad spectrum of people within the refugee camp, including by operating an office that is open 24/7; having committees of women, youth and elders to receive feedback from these communities; and regularly meeting with authorities to advocate for increased

rights and freedoms within the camp. The Shanti Mohila's focus is on advancing the interests of the women within their group, including by undertaking activities to help women feel more comfortable to speak up and to advocate for their own rights and the rights of their communities. VOR have more of a focus on meeting the economic, social and cultural rights of camp residents. Their projects include building shelters for those unable to build their own; organising blood drives; and clean-ups of the camp.



L-R: Members of VOR building a shelter; ARSPH Chairmen organising volunteers; representative of Shanti Mohila addressing a crowd.

1.2. *The Learning Groups*

The South Sudanese groups receiving the videos (the 'learning groups') are newly formed victim associations in Juba, Bor, and Yei in South Sudan, and from the refugee camp in Northern Uganda. These groups have been formed around both shared goals of justice for their communities, and a shared needs- they have, for example, been advocating for better vocational and livelihood programming, as most currently lack any form of income. They were established at various stages throughout 2019, but are still in fledgling form. They meet regularly, and discuss progress and updates on the peace process in South Sudan.

Organisations involved in coordinating these groups, including the Dialogue and Research Initiative (DRI) and the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice (CIGPJ), explain that while the establishment of these groups has been helpful in sharing information with communities, they are not yet developed in their thinking around the type of action they could be proactively taking to demand justice and claim their rights. It is in this area that the South Sudanese groups stand to benefit from learning more about the experiences of ARSPH, VOR and the Shanti Mohila, who have been prolific in taking proactive action to promote and protect both the civil and political and the economic, social and cultural rights of their communities.

1.3. *Similarities and Differences Between the Groups*

The victims of crimes in the Rohingya groups have had comparable experiences to the victims of crimes in the groups in South Sudan and Northern Uganda. Many people from both groups have lost family members to the violence; they have been displaced; and they must grapple with the thought of either remaining in a situation of displacement, or returning home and living alongside the perpetrators of the crimes, with no guarantee that the violence is over. Despite progress in the form of the cases at the ICC and the ICJ, real justice is as yet elusive for the Rohingya, who were victimised by the same people currently in power in Myanmar- as it has been for the South Sudanese.

Despite these similarities, the Rohingya groups have been more visible, proactive and creative in advocating for their rights, particularly with members of the international community. The Chairman of ARSPH and a representative of the Shanti Mohila have addressed the United Nations. The Chairman of ARSPH has met the President of the United States. ARSPH and VOR have filed a submission to the ICC; the Shanti Mohila have filed two. ARSPH and VOR have had high level phone meetings with the Head of Human Rights at Facebook and Senate and Congressional offices in the United States. ARSPH and VOR are active on social media, despite internet restrictions in the camp, and are regularly asked for interviews and quotes with the national and international media.

The purpose of this project was capture knowledge and advice from the Rohingya groups about how these successes were produced; transfer this knowledge to the groups in South Sudan; and gain feedback and input from the South Sudanese groups about how they received and were or were not assisted by the information shared. While the project was initially conceptualised to involve trainings designed by the Rohingya groups and delivered in person by staff from VAI and our South Sudanese partners, a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and insecurity and a series of natural disasters in the Cox's Bazaar refugee camp meant that the project had to be reimagined to take the form of short educational videos made by VAI and the Rohingya groups, and shared with the groups in South Sudan.

Videos were produced in English; Juba Arabic; Nuer; Dinka and Kakwa, so that all group members were able to access the videos in the language most comfortable for them. VAI's partners DRI and CIGPJ in South Sudan and Remembering the Ones we Lost in Northern Uganda then conducted focus group discussions around the videos, to gain feedback and suggestions from them about what they learned, and what they felt they still needed to know.

2. Main takeaways

The purpose of this project was both to facilitate the transfer of information from the Rohingya groups to their South Sudanese counterparts, and to assess the knowledge transfer process in order to extract best practices and lessons learned for future exchanges of information and advice. This document contains a description of what was learnt: both in terms of effective strategies, and lessons learned about what could be improved upon in future.

The most effective strategies employed during the project were the following:

- **Based Advice on Questions from the Learning Group:** Not every part of the Rohingya groups experiences were relevant or of interest to the South Sudanese groups. We asked these groups to formulate specific questions about what they would like to know. This enabled the Rohingya groups to produce material which was relevant, targeted, and included the more interesting details of the Rohingya groups' experience.
- **Distinguish Between "Advice" and "Experience Sharing" by the Teaching Group:** The topics the South Sudanese groups informed us they were most interested in included areas in which the Rohingya are not experts. Regardless, both the Rohingya and South Sudanese groups reported that it was a positive experience for them to hear about the experiences of groups in a similar position to them - even if these interventions do not take the form of expert advice.
- **Acknowledge Experience Gaps and Supplement Group Advice with Expert Advice:** Successful interventions by victim groups sometimes require the assistance of international experts who can advise on more technical matters. Educational and advisory materials should acknowledge where expert input is needed, and seek to include that input alongside the advice from the groups where appropriate.
- **Addressing "Imposter Syndrome" Amongst the Teaching Group:** The objective of this project is to increase feeling of agency, control and pride in the Teaching Group as much as it is to transfer information to the Learning Group. Particular focus was required to build the confidence of the groups to provide advice, and reassure them that they did not need to have all the answers to be able to provide experiences that would be interest to other victim groups around the world.
- **Allow Time for Revisions and Re-recordings:** Putting the Rohingya groups into the role of teachers and advisors was a new experience which required a mental shift. Getting answers from the groups to sound like 'advice', rather than describing a list of their activities took several rounds of interviews and experimentation with different formats and styles.
- **Translation into local languages:** Different ethnic groups feel included and considered when materials are produced in their local languages, even if they are also able to speak English and/or Juba Arabic.

Key lessons learned in terms of what to amend in future projects are as follows:

- **Facilitating Conversations is More Effective than Delivering Lessons:** The Rohingya and South Sudanese groups both suggested that they would benefit from more direct conversations. These were not possible under the circumstances due to lack of internet connectivity on both sides. However, future

programmes would benefit from developing strategies to facilitate more of a conversation, rather than a one-time transfer of information followed by a one-time response.

- **Dedicate Time to Establishing Shared Experiences and Similarities Between Groups:** In future, increased time should be dedicated to describing the situation of the other group, and highlighting shared experiences between the two.
- **Create an Experience Sharing Platform Between Groups Globally:** Through this project, we recognised an opportunity to make videos for the Rohingya groups containing advice from Georgian groups, who have had a much longer engagement with the ICC. This experience points to a need for a larger knowledge-sharing platform, shared between many victim groups around the world.
- **Teaching Methods Need to be Discussed and Agreed on Beforehand:** The groups engaged through this project wanted to make videos in which one representative answered all of the questions put to the group. The information could have been presented in a way that was more interesting and engaging, and more time should have been dedicated to discussing different teaching styles and agreeing how to present the information before making the videos.
- **Experience Sharing Between Women's Groups Requires a Stand-Alone Project:** The initial findings of this project suggest that Rohingya and South Sudanese women groups have a lot to teach and learn from each other- but effectively facilitating this knowledge transfer would require additional resources, attention, and a project of its own.

Effective Strategies

This section of the report, on 'Effective Strategies' for transferring knowledge between victim groups, is designed to provide guidance to VAI for future projects designed to transfer knowledge between victim groups. It may also be used by other organisations interested in transferring knowledge between community-based groups across two or more different countries. In addition to being relevant to victim groups, these strategies are likely to also be relevant to civil society groups, activists, human-rights defenders and other associations and individuals that are formed at the community level and who want to be listened to by an international audience.

1. Base Advice on Questions from the Learning Group

In the first iteration of the project we formulated a list of questions and conducted interviews with the Rohingya groups that tried to cover every area of their operation and experience. These questions were long and detailed. VAI formulated them with the assistance of the Ferencz International Justice Initiative at the Holocaust Museum, who is in the process of developing a guidance manual for victim groups and has dedicated almost a year to thinking about the questions of importance to these groups as they establish themselves, decide on their activities and objectives, and look for ways to pursue justice.

The questionnaire proved to be unwieldy in practice. Interviews were lengthy, without going into detail about any issue. Realising the need to make the advice videos more targeted, VAI requested our South Sudanese partners to ask the groups they work with what experiences they were most interested in hearing about.

EXAMPLE

In the original interview, ARSPH said it had projects to help all Rohingya in the camp, including at work and during the Coronavirus pandemic. This does not provide detail which would be helpful or interesting to the South Sudanese groups in deciding in their activities.

In the third round of interviews, in response to specific questions about how ARSPH helps Rohingya who are trying to work and earn money, and how they help them access better healthcare, ARSPH explained that they:

- Intervene on behalf of members with employers engaging in unfair practices, to negotiate for better conditions; and
- Document instances where healthcare provided in the camp is insufficient and raise this with donors and humanitarian agencies.

Unlike the answers given in the first interview, this level of detail provides examples which may be of interest to the South Sudanese groups.

The South Sudanese groups came back to us with very specific areas of interest: evidence collection and transitional justice; reconciliation and forgiveness; and medical and economic recovery of communities. We realised that not every part of the Rohingya groups experiences were relevant or of interest to the South Sudanese groups- and that in fact, whole areas of questions could be removed.

Focusing the questions in this way enabled us to produce answers more relevant to the South Sudanese groups. It also enabled us to go into more specifics, which was better at getting to the more interesting details of the Rohingya groups' experience.

2. Separate Between "Advice" and "Experience Sharing" by the Teaching Group

'Reconciliation and forgiveness' and 'facilitating the medical and economic recoveries of their communities' are two areas in which the South Sudanese groups indicated they would like advice from the Rohingya groups. The expertise of Rohingya groups in these areas is limited in comparison to areas relating to international justice mechanisms or international advocacy. They live in Bangladesh, away from the perpetrators of violence- and are therefore not experts in living side by side with perpetrators. They have some economic and health programming in place, but the extensive restrictions on their ability to operate by the Bangladeshi government mean that these programmes are subject to significant limitations. Rohingya living in Bangladesh do not have the right to work. This makes their situation different from South Sudanese groups in South Sudan and Uganda, both of whom have the right to work, but lack employment opportunities.

	Rohingya groups in Bangladesh	South Sudanese groups in Uganda	South Sudanese groups in South Sudan
Right to work	No	Yes	Yes
Live side by side with perpetrators	No	Yes, in some camps	Yes

We decided that despite these differences, we would still ask the groups to share their opinions about these issues. VOR requested time to think about the issue of forgiveness and reconciliation, and to discuss it within the organisation- indicating that this was an opportunity for introspection about a topic that will be of great importance to the Rohingya people. They were initially reluctant to share their experiences in this area, as they did not consider themselves experts (see the discussion on page 9). However, after considering the matter and recording an audio about their thoughts, they reported feeling comfort in knowing that other groups were also grappling with this difficult issue. Likewise, initial feedback from the South Sudanese groups indicates that they appreciate hearing the experiences and opinions of others in a position similar to theirs- even if these interventions do not take the form of expert advice.

3. Acknowledge Experience Gaps and Supplement Group Advice with Expert Advice

The underlying rationale of this project is that the people who are best placed to advise newly established victim groups are other, better established victim groups. Through this project, it became clear that successful interventions by victims in fact require a combination of actions undertaken by the groups themselves, and by international experts who can assist the groups in more technical matters.

An area in which this is particularly acute is the area of documentation of crimes. Self-documentation by victim groups of the crimes committed against them is a much-discussed phenomenon amongst international justice practitioners. Victim groups will almost always record details of the crimes committed against their communities- for many reasons, which generally include the intention that these records will be able to be used in future justice processes. At the same time, national and international justice processes require a specific type and level of quality of information and evidence, which often means that the documentation collected by victim groups who are unfamiliar with these standards cannot be used.

The Detail of Rape or Gang rape, Killed People, Judicial Killed, Arrested People and Injured People of Rohingya

Sabay tau (Barbar)

Committed by Myanmar Military, BGP and Radical Buddhists Since October, 2016.

Sl	Name	Father's Name	Age	Sex	Kinds of Crime	Address in Myanmar	Date/Time	Location	Battalion/ The Name of Major or Captain	Remarks
01	Enam Ullah	Nojin Ahmed	40	M	shot dead	Sabitaw	27/8/17 7am	Sabitaw, Barbar	BGP, Army.	
02	Md Toyob	Rahmot Ullah	35	M	shot dead	"	"	in home	"	"
03	Amin Ullah	leou	18	M	"	"	"	"	"	"
04	Futuni	Abdul Amin	18	F	raped, killed	"	"	in field	"	"
05	Nojin Ahmed	Amjad Husin	20	M	shot dead	"	"	"	"	"
06	Amin Ullah	Noor Md	23	M	"	"	"	in home	"	"
07	Anu miq	Nojin Hasin	87	M	beat dead	"	"	"	"	"
08	Tahisa Begon	Nobi Husin	60	F	beat, dead	"	"	"	"	"
09	Jamal	Soyod	53	M	beat, dead	"	"	"	"	"
10	Omar Halkim		70	M	beat, dead	"	"	"	"	"
11	Noor Md.	Kalu	60	M	"	"	"	"	"	"
12	Abdu Salan	Nojin Ahmed	62	M	"	"	"	"	"	"
13	Enayot Ullah	Amjad Husin	18	M	shot dead	"	"	"	"	"
14	Asuku	Abdullah	22	M	"	"	"	"	"	"
15										
	Total									

Example of one of the many lists of victims of crimes committed in Myanmar collected by ARSPH

Attempts at addressing the gap between efforts of people within communities to conduct their own documentation and the type of documentation able to be used by international mechanisms is often addressed through projects supporting either international investigators to come in and collect statements from victims, or local civil society organisations to build internal capacity to carry out documentation initiatives.

In both Bangladesh and South Sudan, supporting organisations who have decided to try documentation for the first time has led to low quality documentation which cannot be used by international courts, as well as documentation undertaken without sufficient safeguards in place to prevent re-traumatization of victims.

In Bangladesh, "overdocumentation" is an additional problem, with many people providing the information reporting that they have told their story to various organisations many times, without knowing why or what is being done with it.

ARSPH is an expert in documentation in the sense that it carried out an ambitious initiative collecting hundreds of the types of lists shown above from different groups of Rohingya throughout the refugee camp. It is known amongst both camp-based groups in Cox's Bazar and amongst international organisations and journalists for having conducted this exercise. As a group, it has by far the greatest volume of information about the violence in Myanmar of any other national or international organisation working in this area.

However, this does not mean that the lists collected by ARSPH constitute strong evidence in themselves. ARSPH required the assistance and advice of lawyers to put the lists into a format that would be able to be shared with international courts and justice mechanisms.

Capturing a Crisis: What lessons can we learn from the "overdocumentation" of the Rohingya crisis?

Posted on May 20, 2020 by Mark Kersten

Eva Buza joins JiC for this guest post on the documentation of human rights abuses and atrocities committed against the Rohingya people. Eva is an Australian lawyer, and the Executive Director of [Victim Advocates International](#). She lived in Cox's Bazar between November 2017 and September 2019.



A Rohingya refugee camp in Cox Bazar, Bangladesh (Photo: RedR Australia)



VAI Senior Counsel Kate Gibson explains the documentation process

When we conducted our first interview with ARSPH, we realised their description of collecting the evidence, if followed by another group, would not have resulted in the collection of information that could be shared with international justice mechanisms. This indicated to us both that we need to continue our conversation with ARSPH about what kind of evidence can be used in court, and that for some, highly technical issues, international experts are better placed than victim groups to give advice about what process should be followed to reach a particular goal.

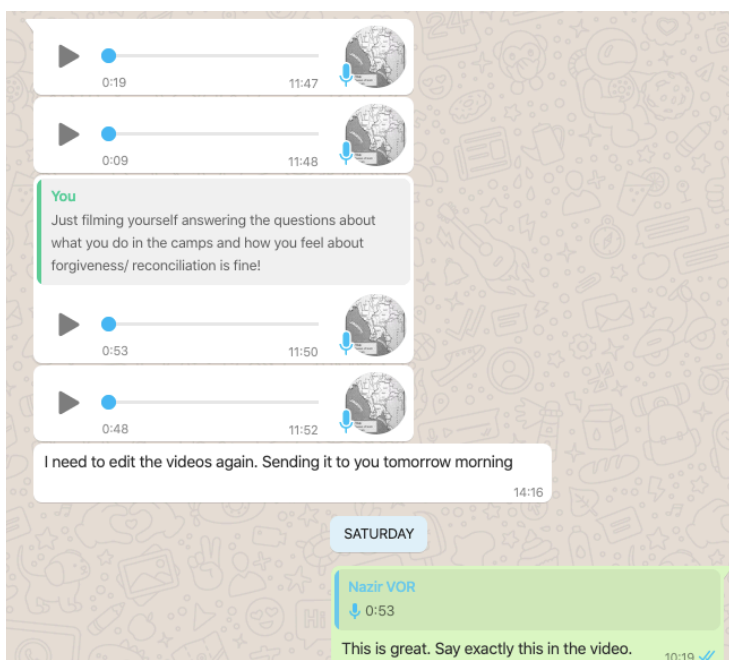
4. Addressing “Imposter Syndrome” Amongst the Teaching Group

The objective of this project is to increase feeling of agency, control and pride in the Teaching Group as much as it is to transfer information to the Learning Group. Rohingya victim groups are not used to being asked for advice. The reluctance amongst one of the groups in particular to provide advice to anyone else was compounded when the South Sudanese groups asked specific questions about topics in which the group did not consider itself an expert.

After many weeks of this group indicating reluctance to share videos with us on certain topics, they told us it would be because they did not consider themselves to have special knowledge in the area in which the South Sudanese groups were asking for advice.

We told them that the South Sudanese groups would appreciate hearing from groups who shared many aspects of their experience and who were grappling with the same questions and challenges. We reassured them that they did not need to have all the answers to be able to provide experiences that would be of interest to other victim groups around the world.

After sharing the videos, this group has had a keen interest in getting feedback about the response of the South Sudanese groups to their advice.



One of the groups in the camp sent numerous messages and voice notes indicating they felt they were not experts in certain topics

To date, we have received feedback from the South Sudanese groups that they found it a positive experience to learn that other groups are going through a similar process and facing similar questions to what they are. We have not yet received detailed feedback from the South Sudan groups, but will update this section when we do.

5. Allow Time for Revisions and Re-recordings

Rohingya groups are not used to providing advice; but they are used to being asked to explain what they do as an organisation. In the first interviews with the groups, they presented their activities in a well-rehearsed way. This would not have been interesting for South Sudanese groups who want advice relevant to their own situations, rather than descriptions of activities in Cox's Bazar. Facilitating groups to change the way they speak about their experiences required three rounds of interviews; experimentation with different formats within each round; and feedback, questions, voice notes, with practice answers in between.

When groups understood that they were not being asked to describe their organisations, but to provide specific advice to people who hoped to learn from these experiences, it produced both more interesting answers and increases in reported feelings of agency, control and pride.



Various iterations of the interview with ARSPH

6. Translation into different languages

We had originally intended that the educational videos would be produced in English and Juba Arabic- the languages cutting across ethnic groups in South Sudan. The South Sudanese groups specifically requested that we include materials in Dinka, Nuer and Arabic. This reportedly made the groups feel more like they were being spoken to and engaged directly. When discussions that are ostensibly for the benefit of these groups take place in English or Juba Arabic, the groups report feeling that they have been sidelined rather than centred in the conversation.

Yambio residents push to have peace agreement translated into local languages



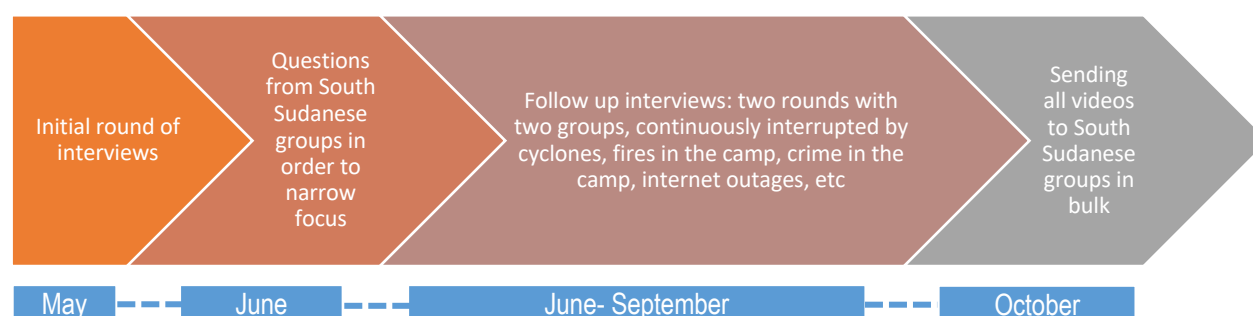
There have been many calls in South Sudan for initiatives relating to peace and security to be conducted in local languages to promote inclusion of all ethnicities.

Lessons Learned

1. Facilitating Conversations is More Effective than Delivering Lessons

After several months of transferring questions and requests for advice back and forth between the South Sudanese and Rohingya groups, both suggested that they would benefit from more direct conversations. This was not possible under the circumstances. Internet fast enough to allow for a conference was not available in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp for most of the project period- and when it was reconnected, the groups lost access to reliable internet in South Sudan. Language would have also been in issue, with Rohingya groups communicating in English, though often with very thick accents, or Rohingya, and victim groups using one of four different languages in South Sudan.

However, the challenges that made a conversation between groups difficult to facilitate are the same reasons that made the alternative- the sharing of lessons through a series of video- at times feel stilted. It also created a situation where the project was carried out along the following timeline:



There was there a long gap between the questions initially asked by the South Sudanese groups and the responses sent, and there is expected to be a gap again to be able to communicate the responses of the South Sudanese groups back to the Rohingya.

Lesson learned: In future iterations of this project, we will develop strategies to facilitate more of a conversation, rather than a one-time transfer of information followed by a one-time response. One of these strategies will be to deal with one topic at a time, rather than gathering information about all the topics over months and then sending them all to the South Sudanese groups at once. The South Sudanese groups are undertaking focus groups on these topics in which they discuss two or three at a time. This could have been done earlier in the project period, and the process of feeding information back to the Rohingya groups could have been carried out in parallel to them making videos about new topics- which would also help them develop an understanding of who the South Sudanese groups are and the kind of information they are interested in.

2. Dedicate Time to Establishing Shared Experiences and Similarities Between Groups

It can be difficult for groups who have experienced atrocities, who are displaced, and who feel forgotten or ignored by the global community to understand or appreciate that there are other groups in other countries in similar positions. We realised this to some extent, but did not fully appreciate the extent to which both groups would feel that their situation was completely unique and that no other group of people in the world were likely to have been subjected to persecution and violence to the extent they had been.

The exception to this was Mohib Ullah, the Chairman of ARSPH, who has indicated- both during this project and on other occasions- that he has studied the situation of other victim groups around the world. Mohib joined a delegation of victims of serious international crimes on a visit to the United States, where they met the President. He has exposure to other victim groups and other global conflicts that other members of ARSPH and the other groups in the camp do not benefit from.



Mohib Ullah from ARSPH meets President Donald Trump at the White House in 2019

We provided both groups with an overview of the situation of the other. The first video in the instructional series explains the history of persecution against the Rohingya. However, it is described in only 30 seconds, and does not draw specific comparisons to the situation of the South Sudanese groups.

Both groups, in the final stages of the project, asked VAI questions about the other that indicated that not enough time had been dedicated to describing the situation of the other group, or highlighting shared experiences between the two.



Lesson Learned: When sharing experiences between groups, spend time providing a more detailed explanation of each groups' histories and experiences.

Focus on highlighting the ways in which the experiences of the group may be similar, and on comparable challenges in being able to move forward, obtain justice and reclaim their rights.

3. Create an Experience Sharing Platform Between Groups Globally

The Rohingya groups wanted to make one of their videos exclusively about the case at the ICC, which they see as very important. South Sudan is not a state party to the ICC, so case against South Sudanese perpetrators at this court is unlikely (though not impossible; Myanmar is also not a state party to the ICC). However, other options for criminal justice for international crimes committed in South Sudan may be established.

When the Rohingya groups recorded their advice about how to engage with the ICC, we realised that they themselves need advice in this area. The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber only authorised an investigation into the situation in Myanmar in November 2019, and no-one has as yet been indicted. By contrast, many of the other open cases at the ICC have been open for many years, giving victim groups in those countries time to develop an arsenal of tools for engaging and conducting advocacy with the Court, and the decision-makers associated with it.

The investigation into crimes committed in Georgia has been ongoing since January 2016, and the Georgian-run organisation Justice International has developed a specialisation in supporting victims to engage with, put pressure on, and make requests and demands of the court.



1 of 6 videos produced with Justice International on advice in engaging with the ICC

VAI has been working with Justice International for several months. We asked its Executive Director, Nika Jeiranashvili, if he would help us to create advice videos for the Rohingya- similar to those the Rohingya groups are making for the South Sudanese groups, but with a particular focus on best practices and lessons learned for engaging with the ICC.

Nika assisted us in making these videos, which were circulated amongst the Rohingya groups- not just to ARSPH and VOR, but to all the groups VAI works with in the camps.

This experience points to a need for a larger knowledge-sharing initiative, in which multiple organisations with expertise in different areas are supported to share their experiences with multiple organisations who lack experience in those same areas.

Lesson Learned: Look for opportunities to progress from one-off, bilateral experience sharing initiatives between victim groups into a sustainable knowledge sharing platform, which can be accessed by groups from all over the world. Speak to victim groups about the ways in which such a platform could be designed which would be most useful for them.

4. Teaching Methods Need to be Discussed and Agreed on Beforehand

In designing this project, we had conversations with ARSPH and VOR which involved multiple members of each organisation providing input on what topics they felt comfortable talking about and what they would say. However, when it came time to conduct interviews with the group, the elected leader would be the only person to answer questions. After the initial round of questions, we tried to encourage both organisations to bring together a group of people to have a discussion about each question, rather than having all questions answered by a single representative. This was not successful. ARSPH, VOR and VAI's Rohingya Project Officer all had ideas about the way to share the information, and- we later realised- had very limited experience in 'group discussion' or 'Socratic method' types of learning.



Mohib answered the questions while group members sat beside him.

VOR indicated a strong preference to have one person represent the group. ARSPH made two attempts at a 'group discussion' format. In the first one, in which three people, including one woman, were present, the questions were asked first to one man, and then the other man. The two did not interact with each other; the woman did not have any questions directed at her. In the second attempt, Mohib, the chairman, answered all questions, while two members of the organisation, including one woman, sat beside him. Each one was asked to introduce themselves and answer one question. Otherwise, Mohib answered all the questions himself.

Different types of teaching methods, especially those likely to be effective in short video format, is a particular area of expertise in itself. VAI had conducted research into how to best structure these videos. However, more time should have been spent discussing different teaching methods and learning styles with ARSPH and VOR, so that they also played a role in deciding on the most interesting way to transmit the information. Mohib, the ARSPH Chairperson, was a teacher in Myanmar. His experience and skills in this area could have been better capitalised on.

Lesson Learned: Dedicate time at the beginning of any teaching project to conversations around different teaching methods and different learning styles. Encourage discussions and debates about what works best. Make suggestions; show examples. Encourage every person involved in these initial conversations to present their opinion. Providing people with all the available information about effective teaching strategies and gaining

the inputs from as many people as possible will strike a balance between using novel and strategic approaches, and having the ownership and buy-in of those in the Teaching Group.

5. Experience Sharing Between Women's Groups Requires a Stand-alone Project

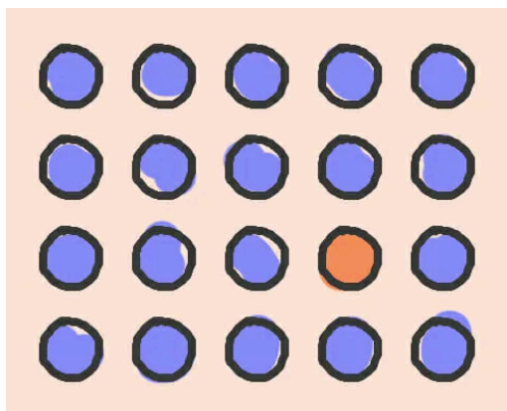
This project was intended to include a focus on transferring information and advice from women-led groups and female victim advocates in Rohingya to the women in the victim groups in South Sudan.

The South Sudanese victim groups are majority women- but high numbers alone have not reduced the numbers of challenges they face trying to speak up for themselves and demand their rights in a society with deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and beliefs. We wondered if the presence of women in these mixed groups, even when they constitute the majority of members, might dilute their power and influence. In Bangladesh, we noticed that groups comprised entirely of women had female leaders who frequently spoke at meetings and addressed the international community, whereas the women in mixed groups were rarely visible.



The women of the Shanti Mohila discuss the lessons they have learned since their establishment

Attempts to interrogate this further were largely unsuccessful, for many reasons. First, it was not possible to work with the three women-only groups in the camp. The reasons for this are related to both internal politics and resource constraints amongst the groups. These will not be discussed in detail, but for the purposes of this report, it is sufficient to observe that there is a need for more women-led or women-only victim organisations operating in the space. The three groups that exist currently each represent particular communities and have specific areas of focus- but because there are only three of them, they are often put in the position of representing 'all' women, or asked to carry out gender programming with international partners intended to reach all of the camp. Decisions about which group will carry out what gender programming in the camp have become highly politicised, and the availability of funding has become a key determining factor.



Studies indicate that including one woman in a process will have no impact on its outcome.

We were able to rely on some materials provided by the Shanti Mohila earlier in our relationship with them, but wanted female victim-advocates to speak to a range of issues of interest and relevant to the South Sudanese groups. Both VOR and ARSPH informed us that their organisations included women, and that these women led their own programmes and were seen as leaders by their communities. However, in efforts to include these women in the interviews and interviews, they were either unavailable or present but almost entirely silent. Studies by the UN, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others have consistently found that including a small number of women in peace and justice programming is not enough to meaningfully change or give a gendered lens to those programmes.

In fact, these studies have found that including women even in high numbers is not enough. Women's participation in peace and justice processes is only meaningful if they have the power and capacity to influence the way those processes are carried out. This project was a micro example of what happens if they do not have such capacity: male participants in the process feel that women have been included, but their inclusion has not been meaningful- in this case, we were not able to get to the crux of the issues with the women of ARSPH or VOR, or to obtain from them advice that would be useful for the women in the South Sudanese groups. By contrast, the information provided by the Shanti Mohila- who spoke with no men present- provided the South Sudanese groups with a powerful example of what women's groups are able to achieve.

Training and Discussion Tools

Questions for South Sudanese Groups

1. Participation in criminal justice processes

- a) Is it important to you that people are held criminally accountable for crimes they committed during the South Sudanese conflict?
- b) If so, would you prefer this happen through South Sudanese criminal courts, the special criminal court set up through the peace agreement, or an international criminal court? Why?
- c) The Rohingya groups talk a lot about how long criminal justice takes. If it takes many years, will it still be justice? Do you want to take action, like the Rohingya groups are doing, to speed up the process?
- d) Have you been documenting the experiences of your community? Is this something you would consider doing?

2. Participation in other types of justice processes

- a) Do you know of any attempts outside of the peace agreement justice processes to try to get justice for the crimes committed in South Sudan?
- b) Do you think other strategies- like, for example, asking other countries to bring a case at the ICJ, or taking cases in other countries- should be attempted? Or do you think it is better to concentrate efforts on justice processes within South Sudan? Why?
- c) Mohib speaks about the case in Argentina having the ability to result in restricting the ability of people in the Myanmar military and government to travel, freezing their funds, shut down their international bank accounts, etc. Would you consider this to be a form of justice if similar measures were taken against perpetrators from South Sudan?
- d) Do you know of any perpetrators of crimes in South Sudan who have connections (such as families living in, or property or businesses in) other countries, where such cases could be taken?
- e) Do you see a role for your group in pushing for these types of cases?

3. Documentation

- a) Do you see a role for your organisation in documenting evidence of the atrocities committed against you?
- b) If you do, what processes would you put in place to make sure it could be accepted in court?

4. Other options for speaking out for the rights of your community

- a) Does this video give you ideas about different ways that you could advocate for justice?
- b) If so, what are they?
- c) If you were to release a joint letter or advocacy message, what would it be about?

5. Reconciliation and forgiveness

- a) Do you feel the same as the Rohingya- that some people from the community that have been involved in violence can be forgiven, but some can't?
- b) What role do you want your group to play in these conversations about reconciliation? Would you be interested in any of the activities that Mohib describes?

- a) Are there any activities the Shanti Mohila have carried out that you think your group would be interested to carry out? Which ones and why?

6. Medical and Livelihoods Projects

- a) Do you do anything similar to the projects carried out by the Rohingya groups?
- b) Could similar projects to the ones they are undertaken be possible or useful in your community?
- c) By providing useful services to people, Voice of Rohingya has increased its membership to 1000 people. Would you be interested in growing your groups by providing services to the community, or do you prefer it to remain smaller and more targeted?

7. Getting the attention of the international community

- a) Have you ever asked a high-level decision maker visiting South Sudan for a meeting? Would you consider doing so?
- b) If so did, what would you discuss with them at the meeting?

8. Advice for women

- b) For the women in the groups- are the challenges you have experienced similar to what the Shanti Mohila have described?
- c) Is it easier for women's voices to be heard as part of women-only groups, or when women are part of mixed groups? Why?