

Key messages from the learning basket « Just Societies»

@ F2F 2019 CHRnet «X-Change 4 Peace & Human Rights»

“More Gilmores and less Cowboys”.
(Participant at the F2F CHR, June 2019)

General insights and remarks from learning basket on justice / human rights:

- We should see human rights as an overall umbrella of our work.
- A just society means human rights for all.
- A just society is also a peaceful and inclusive one.
- The human rights-based approach is key for SDG implementation.
- SDGs and human rights are mutually reinforcing.
- Justice and human rights are not static and abstract but **a transformative, empowering process**. Sometimes, an empowering and participative process that fosters accountability and transparency is also an important result in human rights terms.

Thematic policy frameworks, processes, approaches and tools

- We need to ensure that tools are a means to an end.
- We need coherence between policy framework, processes and tools and should keep in mind that it is about contributing to human dignity and realization of human rights for all.
- We need a **bottom-up problem identification**: we need to start with a proper problem identification in the context and sector we are working in and ask ourselves: what are the human rights and gender issues? => taking the international human rights framework as our starting point.
- As a next step, ask ourselves “what is it that SDC should do to help fix the identified problem?” => prioritization of tools and interventions / strategic choices based on where we can make a difference as Switzerland.
- **Processes are key**: ensure that processes we support are participatory, empowering foster accountability and gender equality.

Justice for whom? What peace are we talking about?

- It is important to be clear about what justice we are talking about and for whom, for example, justice needs and problems of women are often not the same as those of men.
 - Need to focus more on women and girls’ needs regarding justice.
 - Justice needs to be socially accepted, inexpensive and accessible!
 - Long-term engagement of SDC in partner countries and SDC’s systemic approach is a comparative advantage compared to other donors.
- SDC needs to support justice that is human rights based.
- We should not only think of individual rights but also **what the respective communities need in terms of access to justice**.
- **A just society is a society that supports their citizens to defend their rights** (see SDC project in Pakistan)

Close link between HRBA and Leave No One Behind (LNOB): it is both about exclusion and discrimination

- LNOB is not a new lens but an additional element to sharpen that what we already do.
- HRBA brings legal accuracy to the Leave no one behind concept.
- We need to adhere to the SDG promises and actually do the job!
- LNOB is about civic space, change of structures, harmonization of policies.
- We need to ask ourselves: What does “behind” mean in the LNOB?
- Discrimination on the basis of gender is a key issue for exclusion (=> LNOB & HRBA).

Trust: trust building is a key ingredient for almost all of our interventions

- It is key to build trust between government institutions and civil society.
- When applying HRBA to our interventions, we should not forget to act as a connector between duty bearers and rights holders and foster constructive engagement between them.

What do we need to move forward?

Sub-themes and approaches:

- Act on the “**youthquake**”!! We need to involve youth more and give them a voice!
- There is a need to increasingly address corruption and impunity in our thematic work.
- We should invest more in data collection about human rights.

Communication:

- Invest in communication with taxpayers. Build trust and interest of taxpayers in our thematic interventions.
- Invest in narrative that peaceful, just and inclusive societies worldwide are a Swiss interest. Explain to the Swiss public why!
- Sometimes you need to sit with people that don't like you or criticize you, for example with rights holders that criticize you because you work with duty bearers that they consider as not credible, corrupt etc.
- Human rights and legal standards need to come into SDG implementation. The new SDC Guidance on human rights gives momentum for this!

Perception of HRBA / human rights:

- There is a need to reinvest in the perception of human rights in development cooperation.
- Emphasize / be aware that human rights are not static! (see for example developments around the question of mother earth's rights / children's rights regarding climate etc.)
- Human rights based approach as a lens not a new tool!

Justice programming

- Further invest in dialogue what justice means for respective communities / civil society in the contexts we work in.
- Recognize that there are formal and informal answers to contribute to just societies.

- Guidance on principles of engagement regarding working with non-state actors, especially in justice sector support.
 - We need to have the courage to put our resources into empowering excluded groups / those who don't have rights!
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(a) what does it mean for SDC as an institution / for SDC at policy level?

- Participants expressed the need more commitment from SDC HQ to human rights. (“Walk the talk when it comes to credit proposals”).
- Participants expressed the need for clearer guidance from SDC management regarding principles of engagement with informal justice actors / customary justice mechanisms.

(b) what does it mean for the CHRnetwork (learning journeys, capacity building)?

- Activate a group of network members interested in work on customary justice and access to justice for women and girls.
- There is definitely an interest in some cooperation offices to have **an HRBA refresher**. Invest more in **capacity building in the area of human rights / HRBA**.
- Follow up exchange with network members **on hybrid threats / e-governance / fake news** and what they mean for our themes.
- Organize exchange on **emergence of “new” rights** (e.g. water and environment).
- Elaborate guidance / fact sheet on human rights and anti-corruption, including examples of best practices?
- Dealing with the past: a session on DwP had been planned for the F2F and there is clear interest of several network members for more exchange on it.
- Elaborate work tool on DwP / transitional justice in the context of implementation of new SDC guidance?

(c) what it means for the Peace, Governance and Equality (PGE Cluster) in the future

- Simplify tools and increase coherence in application of terms.
- Cluster PGE should take a leading role in alleviating the burden for the field to apply multiple thematic approaches and tools at field level. Network members from the field expressed a strong need to simplify tools!
 - “No paralysis by analysis!”
 - “Let’s take small steps in our operations instead of too many theoretic discussions.”
 - “Huge challenge to apply multiple lenses and tools at field level.”
 - “Tools are a means to an end”.
 - “Why do we have so many terms for similar things? Is it really necessary?”
- Clear standing on corruption / how we tackle corruption and impunity in a coherent way within the Cluster PGE. Ensure that new SDC’s guidance on anti-corruption has a strong human rights angle.
- Elaborate work tool on anti-corruption within the Cluster PGE?
- Integrate corruption / accountability questions in common training tools.