



SDC Conflict and Human Rights Network Summary Report of the F2F meeting in Sigriswil, 2-6 March 2014

The second F2F meeting of the Conflict and Human Rights Network (CHRnet) took place with almost 60 participants from the field and HQ in Sigriswil, Switzerland from 2-6 March 2014. This summary report includes the network priority themes and working modalities as discussed during the working groups and the main conclusions of the Focal Points. The key findings of the online evaluation are reflected in the conclusion. A short visual summary of the evaluation can be found in Annex 2. Another source of documentation is our blog, where you can find [general impressions](#), [video messages](#), a [library](#) and [who is who videos](#), where network members introduce themselves¹.

1) CHRnet - a community of SDC practitioners

With approximately one third of CHRnet members present, the F2F confirmed that active CHRnet members are interested and committed to ensure the application of “good technical practice” in Conflict and Context Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM), Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and programs related to people’s security and justice reform as well as in Protection and programs of basic service provision in humanitarian crisis. Though, the CHRnet is still a “young” network, existing only for three years, staff changes and rotation as well as new and additional regional focuses created again new dynamics in the CHRnet membership. The F2F helped to translate the [clear objectives and mandate of SDCs networks](#) – ensuring thematic quality within the application of SDCs management and project cycles – into the priority themes and working modalities (see below) for the CHRnet. Support and animation of the outlined activities will constantly come from the [Focal Point and partly from SDCs Thematic Unit CHR](#) within their mandate as “knowledge broker”.

2) Network priority themes and working modalities

The network members confirmed with the work in “think tables” and “working groups” the following themes that are relevant and important for the CHRnet. The members are committed to this agenda and contribute to the development of the network in these thematic priority areas. A more comprehensive list with working modalities and issues that shall be addressed can be found in Annex 1. The work streams listed below are not set in stone. If there is a need for an additional work stream the network members are free to approach the Focal Points and launch a new subject. In order to avoid creating too many inactive work streams, the ones where no clear tasks and responsibilities are identified, will be put on hold from the Focal Points after consultation with the CHRnet members interested in these topics. The description of the work streams will be listed on the blog and can be complemented and regularly updated. This gives also the opportunity to the colleagues, who were not able to attend the F2F meeting, to contribute and commit to a work stream.

¹ Some contents of the blog are password-protected and are accessible with the following password: sigriswil2014

Human Rights

The relevance of addressing human rights in international cooperation is largely undisputed. There seems to be a high degree of interest by SDC staff to integrate human rights into their programmes and to better understand how the HRBA can be used. However, the discussions have also shown a need for clarification and communication of terms and concepts (i.e. HRBA, governance, transition / transformation and CSPM) and how they are related. Within this subject some contents are covered by the policy work of the Thematic Unit. However, interest for two informal work streams has been expressed: i) sensitivity towards working on human rights in Islamic or other cultural contexts and ii) Protection of human rights defenders.

Protection

Protection issues (e.g. lack of access, forced displacement, forced recruitment, sexual and gender-based violence, etc.) and the incapacity of a state to prevent and / or address them can be as much a result as a driver of conflict and fragility. This work stream aims at taking stock of SDC's efforts to deal with access issues and enhancing humanitarian / development space in fragile contexts.

Civil Society / Participation

The Civil Society plays a crucial role in fragile contexts for anchoring human rights, creating ownership for justice and security reforms and guaranteeing democratic control of state institutions. As such support to civil society organizations (CSO) will translate peace and state building into nation building, and collaboration with CSOs as partners and drivers of change will be essential for stronger support to governmental development agendas as well as use of country systems in fragile states and conflict prone societies. This work stream aims at taking stock of good practices of CSO-support within SDC.

Gender

Women and men living in fragile states and conflict affected contexts have special needs. Especially women face obstacles to participation in peace processes or security reforms. Male and female ex-combatants, perpetrators and victims of war crimes and human rights violations need different but special assistance and support. For SDC it is crucial to integrate a gender-lens in conflict analysis in order that gender-specific needs are better reflected in these processes. This joint work stream with the Gender network aims at a cooperation on three levels: Policy, Tools and Topics.

Monitoring and Fields of Observations for context changes

After setting the [normative standards and adapting the tools to work in fragile states](#) it is important to use them adequately. Monitoring of context (MERV), domain outcomes and their contribution to positive change and out of fragility, and finally the assessment of possible negative side effects of project, need different fields of observations and indicators. This work stream will focus on result frameworks of cooperation strategies, their link to fields of observation of the MERV as well as to program monitoring.

Communication

Network communication is a working modality and not a theme as such. Due to its importance for virtual exchange it is among the networks priorities. In accordance with the evaluation on network communication the CHR Thematic Unit is improving existing tools (e.g. Newsletter and Blog) and adapting them to the members' needs. This work stream is used

as a sounding board for the development and adaptation of communication tools in order to enable dialogue, exchange and more participation within the network.

3) Conclusions of the Focal Points and way forward

This agenda is the way forward for the CHRnet, but not all policy and institutional issues are addressed by it. Other aspects are worked on by the Thematic Responsible, the Focal Points and the CHR Thematic Unit.

The online evaluation revealed that most participants appreciated the F2F as an opportunity to exchange with colleagues facing the same challenges. The event contributed to building up confidence and was showing that we are on the right path, which was perceived as highly motivating by the CHRnet members. One of the main objectives of the F2F – creating a platform for thematic exchange of ideas and experiences – has been successfully achieved. Further, it was appreciated that the programme provided an insight in the normative framework and institutionally endorsed tools to increase our engagement in fragile states. The Focal Points aim to translate these commitments into concrete actions and tangible results. The objective will also be to find communication tools that make these work streams available to all CHRnet members.

Nevertheless, the F2F affirmed existing institutional questions, which go beyond the CHR net's reach and are already discussed in an ongoing external SDC network evaluation. Among others these topics were the sometimes missing institutional support for applying good operational standards, the role of SDC networks in times when SDC is more and more integrated into FDFA and by this operationalization of SDCs standards depends largely on other federal agencies, finally, the role and participation of line management in SDCs networks. Other issues from the evaluation concern the lack of clear relations between different tools and standards, such as CSPM, HRBA, security and justice sector reform, rule of law and access to justice, resilience concepts within disaster risk reduction, protection (of civilians in armed conflicts) and political economic issues as well as governance and democratizations. Here the Focal Point will use its [role as policy advisor to SDCs directorate and thematic representative within and outside SDC](#) and will take these issues up in the appropriate SDC and FDFA discussions as well as with line management of CHRnet members if necessary. The Focal Points will be [assisted by the Thematic Unit according to its mandate](#).

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Focal Points Conflict and Human Rights