

Joint Assessment of Case Examples re their 'out of fragility relevance: Dialogue and Trust building in Community Development

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WORKING TEAM 1

Resource Person: Alma Zukorlic

Expert and facilitator: Andrea Iff

Rapporteur to the plenary: *Designated by the working group*

Case Example Dialogue and Trust building in Community Development

In some countries in the Western Balkans, ethnic divisions are a reality of life, pervading politics and often hampering initiatives that could have worked in another context effectively. Government legitimacy is undermined due to incompatible visions of the state by different ethno-national groups. However, people are prepared to set ethnic differences aside when they have a sufficiently important common interest – most often a common economic interest. Therefore, generating common interests across ethnic lines by identifying, facilitating and financing community initiatives of common interest in service delivery, economic development or knowledge exchange may be a relevant contribution of SDC “out of fragility”.

Aim of working group

- The team has analysed fragility in the context of the case example;
- The team has developed supportive and “critical” arguments on the relevance of the case example for its contribution to “out of fragility”.
- The team reflected on how the “out of fragility” dimension could potentially be further developed;

IMPORTANT: This team work is NOT about judging the quality of the project that inspired the case example, but to enrich SDC's perspective on the link between governance reforms and contributions to “out of fragility”.

SETP 1: Short introduction of 5 minutes by resource person Alma Zukorlic

STEP 2: How does the lack of dialogue and mistrust in and between different societal groups influence community development?

Discuss the following questions:

- On what basis do communities act collectively if they are divided by ethnicities? Is ethnicity the strongest divider or are there other strong dividers within and between communities? How do these dividers hamper community development?
- What kind of social capital (e.g. personal relations, shared values and understandings in the community that enable individuals and groups to dialogue and trust each other and to work together) would be necessary for effective community development?

Remember: Bonding in social capital means to strengthen relations (e.g. trust) between individuals that are already members of the same network. **Bridging** in social capital means strengthening relations (e.g. trust) between members of different networks. The latter can contribute to overcome divides among different social groups.

- What role has the state in local development? How does bonding (within groups or networks) or bridging (across different groups and networks) influence the state-society relationship and vice versa?

[STEP 3: What may be the out of fragility relevance of including dialogue and trust building in community development?](#)

Please elaborate, taking the relevance requirements and the hints below into account;

Remember: General requirements for 'out of fragility' relevance

(Amended from Peacebuilding and State building Policy of SDC)

- (1) *Improves living conditions* and development perspectives of many (in an ideal case all) citizens visibly and short to medium term.
- (2) *Reduces causes of conflict* and makes many citizens socially, economically and politically better included short to medium term.
- (3) *Increases the state- society capacity to cope with crisis* e.g. if a natural catastrophe hits or an external stress such as an inflow of migrants/refugees suddenly increases.
- (4) *Makes processes and institutions more legitimate* in the eyes of many citizens; they believe public matters are done "right" and in the interest of the majority of the people.

Possible arguments for the out of fragility dimension of the 'local community development with a dialogue/trust building' component could be:

- Community development projects with a participative approach and local accountability mechanisms improve service delivery for many (ideally all). Citizens may feel treated "fairer" and may perceive local government therefor more legitimate (relates to (1) above).
- The aim of integrating a dialogue/trust-building dimension into community development is to help diversify perceptions of the 'other', dispel negative myths about the "other" and facilitate positive changes in perceptions and attitudes towards the "other" (ethnic) communities. Created safe spaces for dialogue may be utilized in situations of renewed tensions or shocks (relates to (2) and (3) above).
- Shocks in communities with a conflict history often resurge into violence between different groups. A dialogue/trust building dimension to community development may foster relationships of bonding and bridging, that could mitigate the effects of shocks (relates to (3) above).
- When community based projects are supported, enabled or overseen by (regional/central) government, they can help to reconnect the state with local communities and citizens. Such projects may support the development of a 'shared belief legitimacy of the state' with bottom up and top down contributions (vertical dimension). This new social capital between certain communities and (regional/central) government may be scaled up country wide (relates to (4) above).

[STEP 4: Prepare a 7 min input and list your open questions to the plenary](#)

Based on steps 1 to 4, please visualize on a flip chart:

- What is the team's assumption on how a community development with a strong dialogue/trust building dimension could make a relevant contribution to 'out of fragility'? The team is welcome to visualize the causes and effects leading to a (positive) change in fragility ("theory of change");
- Does the case example already have a good 'out of fragility' relevance? If yes: why? If not so clear: how could the case example be further developed to make a relevant contribution out of fragility? The team is welcome to think hypothetical, including ideas that may be costly, unusual or include risks;
- Please summarize questions for the fragility experts from swisspeace, ISSH or SDC that came up during the discussions.