



Learning Journey: Governance in fragile contexts

1 Background and introduction

During the last DDLG F2F in 2015 in Pemba, Mozambique, the participants expressed the need to engage on the topic of 'DDLG and Fragility'. While 'out of fragility' as well as conflict-sensitivity is an important and well developed concept for SDC, the participants formulated the need and interest to bring together specific evidence and guidance on what 'out of fragility' and conflict-sensitivity means for programs in democratization, decentralization and local governance (DDLG). With the participatory learning journey on 'Governance in fragile contexts' the thematic unit (TU) takes up this request in collaboration with the CHR network.

2 Aim, objectives and outputs

The overall aim of the LJ 'Governance in fragile contexts' is to capitalize on experience from DDLG programs in fragile contexts through collaborative learning and knowledge sharing, to establish shared understanding on possible approaches and guidance on the planning, implementing and monitoring of DDLG programs in fragile contexts and to make these experiences available for colleagues that are embarking on similar projects elsewhere.

The specific objectives to achieve the aim are:

- a. *Understanding the state of the art and (research and practice) and setting out a framework for analysis:* Mandate for a study on 'Governance Interventions in Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts'.
- b. *Participatory Learning:* Reflect on SDCs own programmes in 6 case studies, focusing on (1) how SDC included CSPM in DDLG programmes and (2) what the contribution of DDLG programmes was to out of fragility'. Generally, learning journeys follow the rule that 'we learn as we proceed' meaning that the new knowledge generates new questions.
- c. *Dialogue, knowledge sharing and partner engagement:* Knowledge exchange throughout the learning journey enables the members of the DDLG and CHR networks to profit from the capitalization of experiences for their own work. Exchange with other institutions working on this issue through dialogues or joint events (International IDEA, FoF, DFID) and raising awareness of the topic in the operations.

The concrete outputs of the learning journey are:

- a. *Working paper* on: 'Governance Interventions in Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts'; accompanying video message from author (Patricia Justino).
- b. *6 case study reports* and *one summary paper* on learning experiences of COOFs; accompanying story telling (video material) from cooperation offices.
- c. *Guidance Paper* on how to plan, implement and monitor DDLG programs in fragile contexts, including examples of hypotheses of change for DDLG programs in fragile contexts.
- d. *Presentation* of findings during DDLG F2F in 2018.
- e. *Shareweb page* informing about the learning journey and making available relevant material as well as video messages and summaries of 'lessons learned'.
- f. *Event on:* "Fragility and Governance CoPs – two sides of same coin?"

3 Organization and participating country offices

The lead of the learning journey is with TU DDLG (HCO) in collaboration with TU C&HR (RON). The coordination group is led by DDLG (IFA), with support, collaboration C&HR (SAV, core group member DDLGN) and KLC (MRH).

Six country offices have confirmed their interest to participate in the learning journey: Afghanistan, Burundi, Egypt, Honduras, Mali, and Ukraine. The methodology for the case study will be qualitative, through desk-research and semi-structured interviews either over phone or during a mission.

IDS will be supporting and accompanying the learning journey, and will be responsible for the different outputs of the learning journey.

4 Gathering evidence, literature review and setting out a framework for analysis

DDLG mandated a paper on the particular challenges that fragile contexts pose to governance interventions and how best to mitigate the risk of having a negative impact on peace and sustainable development. It serves as a basis for discussion for DDLGs engagement with partners as well as its operations in the field. The mandate was given to Prof. Dr. Patricia Justino of IDS, University of Sussex within the overall mandate with IDS. Apart from giving an overview on the current discussions, the paper shall 'aliment' the 6 case studies that SDC is conducting with interested cooperation offices in partner countries and possible other pistes of the learning journey.

The concrete aims of the paper are:

- In a short introductory chapter, *problematize the linkages and possible dilemmas* that exist between peacebuilding- and governance- 'communities of practice' in terms of underlying values (i.e. good governance principles) as well as entry points of interventions (i.e. local governance vs. central government programmes).
- Summarize the evidence-based impact hypotheses of *how governance interventions contribute to prevent violent conflict and reduce fragility?* Include a discussion on the indicators with which such a contribution could be measured.
- Discuss the *particular issues/processes with regards to conflict sensitivity that need to be integrated in governance interventions*. What are the CS-issues that are of particular relevance for governance interventions?

A *presentation* of the paper to the core group and a larger audience will be discussed, as well as a possible engagement during the F2F early 2018. The author will be asked to prepare a short video on the Shareweb discussing the three main things that stroke her as particularly interesting when writing the paper / getting feedback from SDC. The paper will be published in the IDS paper series with reference to SDC's financing of the research. The main criteria for the paper for SDC remains the usefulness for its Learning Journey and the understanding for its practitioner's in the field offices.

5 Case studies

Together with the interested COOFs short case study reports will be established (approx. 15 pages) that (a) collect lessons learned with regards to DDLG programs in fragile contexts and (b) presents opportunities with regards to context-specific challenges that the cooperation offices faced or currently face. For the qualitative country analyses the following generic comparative questions which will be further specified after a discussion with the COOFs depending on the specificities of the program in the country:

1. *What are the main challenges when planning and implementing DDLG projects in fragile contexts? What factors did you take into consideration in the risk analysis? Did you conduct a PEA?*

2. *Did you include an 'out-of-fragility' objective in the DDLG projects? If yes, why, if not, why not? How did you include them?*
3. *How did/do you adapt your DDLG projects to a deteriorating situation? What are the methodologies you used to do that?*
4. *How did/do you apply the CSPM approach in your projects? Is there any specificity in the application of conflict-sensitivity for DDLG projects?*

Additionally to those four questions, four additional questions per cooperation offices that are of particular interest to the office and reflect current challenges with regards to the DDLG programmes in Planned work for 2017/2018.

Finally, the offices will choose one of the questions above (or an additional question) that is most relevant for them. They will document answers to this questions through telling a story on video in order to launch a discussion. The offices are free to use any kind of format they want (i.e. interviews with office members, story of a beneficiary, pictures related to question, etc.). The offices will be supported to make this video (3min) by a learning expert.

6 Knowledge sharing and synthesis

The different activities and outcomes will be launched and documented on Shareweb. The website will be designed and organized in a way as to support exchange and communication among members of the two networks as well as a broader audience. Additionally, the communication on the different case studies will be organized via *closed user groups (CUG)* on the Shareweb and serve as communication platform for the participants of the learning journey (DDLG core group as well as involved COOFs).

The learnings of the journey will be collated into a guidance paper or H2N on lessons learned and recommendations for COOFs with regards to planning, implementing and monitoring of DDLG programmes in fragile contexts (including a discussion of relevant stakeholders, issues of political economy and particular risks connected to these programs, as well as good practices with regards to hypotheses of change). This H2N will be informed by the case studies and in-country experience so as to highlight the factors that contribute to good practices.

7 Dialogue and partner engagement

Engaging with partners and stakeholder in the two policy communities will be an important part of the learning journey. Exchange is thought with different partners: (a) through IDS on DFID's activities in this field, (b) with the UNDP Governance and Peacebuilding Unit (facilitated by STORM and the Swiss contribution to the Core Government Functions Project), (d) with DeLog's working group on fragility, (e) as well as with International IDEA's constitution building unit and FoF (DDLG strategic partners) who are also working in fragile contexts. With those partners, opportunities for joint meetings and/or workshops will be explored.

8 Key outcomes

- a. Strengthened evidence and enhanced, shared understanding of successful approaches to DDLG programming in fragile contexts.
- b. Cooperation offices advance understanding and receive guidance on planning, implementing and monitoring DDLG programmes in fragile contexts.
- c. Reinforced network of development cooperation partners working on governance in fragile situations and strengthened links between CHR and DDLG.
- d. Internal and external recognition of good practice in the nexus between governance and peacebuilding.