

IFP SECURITY CLUSTER

IMPROVING THE UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN EU SECURITY- BUILDING PROGRAMMES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past decade or so, the EU has gradually adopted the concept of 'human security' in its support for security and justice programming. A commitment to human security implies that security and justice strategies and programmes should proactively seek to take into account and address citizens' needs and concerns, as primary recipients of security and justice provision. One way to ensure these requirements are met is to promote public participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of security and justice mechanisms.

The EU has a number of policies, tools and frameworks which commit its institutions to taking a 'participatory approach' to programming, including in the areas of security and justice. These commitments are gradually, if unevenly, being translated into practice. However, research by the Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) Security Cluster has identified a number of institutional, cultural and operational challenges which hinder the understanding and use of participatory approaches by EU institutions. This paper gives an overview of the challenges faced by EU actors in understanding and using participatory approaches and suggests steps that EU institutions can take to overcome them.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATION?

Simply put, 'participation' or 'participatory approaches' refers to the involvement of local communities and/or civil society in the design and delivery of donor plans and programmes. Notions of 'participation' can be represented on a spectrum ranging from basic information-sharing to full co-operation and joint decision-making between government and non-governmental actors. Ultimately, the question of who participates, how and when depends on the emphasis of the programme and what type of participation is required to ensure that the programme is legitimate and effective.

THE EU AND PARTICIPATION

Several policy agendas and reform processes have contributed to shaping a stronger participatory culture in the way EU institutions design their policies, strategies and implement their development co-operation programmes. The EC is launching strategies and setting up mechanisms to enhance its partnership with civil society around the world, and the Council of the EU is also making progress by building relations from one operation to another and by showing an interest in participatory approaches. Where participation has been actively sought, there is evidence that EU programmes have been rendered more relevant, better understood and ultimately more effective.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO THE USE OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES BY EU INSTITUTIONS AND ACTORS

Despite the robust policy framework and the existence of numerous tools and guidance on participation EU personnel face numerous challenges to undertaking local consultation and participation more systematically. These challenges include aspects of institutional culture, programme management and practical operational issues.

At the **institutional level**, the issue is not well-understood or prioritised by senior officials across the Brussels institutions. This has a knock-on effect on the strategies, programme management procedures and incentives which determine the priority given to participatory approaches and the resources (both human and financial)

made available in-country. Positive relations with partner governments are often considered more important than responding to the needs of communities leaving little incentive for programmers to involve communities or civil society in the design, implementation or monitoring of security-building programmes.

EC **programme management procedures** are not always conducive to participation from communities and civil society. There are various disincentives to EU staff in prioritising participation, including interpretations of programme mandates which emphasise state stakeholders over the public as key beneficiaries and insufficient flexibility and time in the design phases of EU tender processes to allow for protracted consultation.

At the **operational level** in-country delegations and others working on EU-supported programmes cite various obstacles, including poor security, geographic distance, poor infrastructure, a lack of time, human and financial resources, expertise and a lack of suitable civil society partners as barriers to greater public participation in programming. Some consider the available tools and guidance too theoretical, with inadequate attention paid to the *practical implications* of pursuing different levels of participation in different contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN EU-LED SECURITY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The EU is on a positive trajectory with regards to implementing its commitments to engaging with civil society and the public in the design and delivery of its programmes. However, if it is to realise the full potential of its commitment to participation in the field of security and justice and reap the rewards that this can bring further down the line, there are several areas which require attention at the highest level.

AWARENESS, ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES

What is required above all else is a **cultural shift** so that policy commitments to participation become genuinely **shared values and objectives** across EU institutions, are taken seriously and integrated into everything the EU does. This is a long-term process that cannot be easily achieved by implementing a short list of actionable recommendations. It is primarily about **leadership** to develop an **institutional culture which supports and rewards greater use of participatory approaches** in security-building programming – even where there is resistance. This should include:

- reviewing and where necessary changing programme design, management and tender procedures, staff incentives and reward structures, funding and human resource allocations, operational tools and training
- senior diplomatic and political support for security-building programmes which seek to take a participatory approach in difficult circumstances
- proactive promotion of participation at senior and operational levels with host government partners
- using programme leverage to encourage government beneficiaries to be more participatory in their own work
- potentially making some degree of participation a formal condition of EU financial assistance

Other actors have a key role to play in continuing to **raise awareness and advocate** for more participatory approaches. They need to be able to demonstrate both the added value and the *practical implications* of engaging with communities and civil society using participatory approaches by:

- documenting and presenting evidence based on programme evaluations.
- changing the way the EU views and supports security-building activities such as SSR, DDR and SALW control primarily as highly technical, state-centric exercises
- addressing the prevailing culture which views CSO primarily as implementing agencies rather than as partners

PROGRAMME DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND TENDER PROCEDURES

Once the importance of participatory approaches has been recognised and prioritised at the institutional level, corresponding changes to programme design, management and tender procedures must follow to create an

environment conducive to implementation. These reviews and changes should be led at senior management level and should include:

- a review of programme priorities and mandates to redress the balance between the current focus on the needs of the state and the need to recognise people who are affected by security-related programming as key beneficiaries
- a review of existing programme design, management and tender procedures to, inter alia, ensure they allow adequate time to conduct consultation and participative processes and to make participation part of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks
- a review of existing guidelines and staff training relating to civil society and community engagement
- a review of existing policies, guidelines and staff training on themes relating to security-building to ensure they address participatory approaches not only in theoretical terms (why they are necessary) but also in practical terms (how they can be used in security-building interventions)
- the development of a long-term roadmap/civil society engagement strategy at national and regional levels to enable more strategic and sustainable engagement with civil society
- a review of staff targets and incentives to reward efforts towards participation
- changes to funding and human resource allocations at both Brussels and delegation levels to respond to the practical implications of undertaking participatory approaches

OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

Once participation has been integrated more effectively at the institutional and programme management levels, EU staff need the appropriate tools and guidance to make good on the commitment. Building on the existing guidance, and in the frameworks of sector-based support, programmes and projects, practitioners should:

- develop a roadmap to guide more strategic and sustainable engagement with civil society at country level. This will entail:
 - mapping out relevant stakeholders
 - developing a time line and consultation strategy
 - engaging with the public more in order to build trust and dispel misconceptions
 - providing financial and logistical support where consultations can not take place at the local level to ensure that representation is broad
 - formulating clear and appropriate expectations on respective stakeholders' roles to get the most out of these processes
- explore opportunities to link with other relevant programmes
- measure success according to people's perceptions by including indicators relating to communities' perceptions and experiences of their interactions with security and justice institutions
- use international NGO expertise and knowledge of the context to set up and facilitate participatory processes

INTRODUCTION

Security and access to justice are key requirements for a peaceful, democratic society and sustained social and economic development. They are critical for the creation of a stable environment within which human rights and the rule of law are respected and where communities can address grievances and manage social and political change through peaceful means. Efforts to support and promote the reform and development of security and justice policies, institutions and practices are therefore key elements of international assistance to developing countries, including those that have been affected by or are at risk of violent conflict, fragility and insecurity.

Over the past decade or so, the EU has gradually adopted the concept of 'human security' in its support for security and justice programming. In contrast to 'national security' and traditional 'hard' security, human security approaches take the position that the basic unit of security is not the state but the individual and that the state's role is therefore to provide security for its citizens. A commitment to human security therefore implies that security and justice strategies and programmes should proactively seek to take into account and address citizens' needs and concerns, as primary recipients of security and justice provision. One way to ensure these requirements are met is to promote public participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of security and justice mechanisms.¹ Participation ensures that a wider range of voices is heard and that more detailed and accurate information is available to those with ultimate responsibility for decision-making. As a result, security-building activities such as police reform, weapons control and community safety initiatives which involve participative processes are less likely to be solely state-driven and focused, and more likely to be sensitive to local contexts and respond to people's actual security needs.

As a major donor and development partner of states around the world, the EU has a number of policies, tools and frameworks which commit its institutions to taking a 'participatory approach' to programming, including in the areas of security and justice. These commitments are gradually, if unevenly, being translated into practice. From *ad hoc* relations through to formal consultations, civil society is increasingly becoming a partner for EU institutions and public participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of security and justice-related programming is increasing.

However, research by the Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) Security Cluster indicates that there is still a significant gap in the implementation of these commitments. The research has identified a number of institutional, cultural and operational challenges which hinder the understanding and use of participatory approaches by EU institutions; the research also demonstrates the impact of a limited uptake of participatory approaches on the effectiveness of EU programmes.

This paper draws on the findings of IfP research activities undertaken in Brussels² and in ten countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Timor Leste and Ukraine³) to give an overview of the challenges faced by EU actors in understanding and using participatory approaches and to suggest steps that EU institutions can take to overcome them. Section I gives a brief definition of what is meant by 'participation' in this context. Section II looks briefly at the way the EU has integrated a commitment to participation into its policies and programming. Section III gives some examples of where taking a participatory approach to EU security-building interventions has had a positive impact. Section IV outlines the challenges and barriers which hinder the understanding and use of participatory approaches by EU actors in Brussels and in-country and Section V offers recommendations to overcome some of these challenges.

1 As also reflected in : *A European Way of Security, The Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group*, Madrid, 8 November 2008. The report argues that a "bottom up approach" through the involvement of local people is one of the six principles of a Human Security approach.

2 Including: *Responding to people's security needs: Improving the impact of EU programming*; Initiative for Peacebuilding, April 2009; and *Participatory approaches to security-building by the EU: Frameworks, Practices, Challenges and Opportunities*, Initiative for Peacebuilding, November 2010

3 Available on the Initiative for Peacebuilding website: <http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/index.php>

SECTION I: WHAT IS ‘PARTICIPATION’?

Simply put, ‘participation’ or ‘participatory approaches’ refers to the involvement of local communities and/or civil society in the design and delivery of donor plans and programmes. In fact, notions of ‘participation’ can be represented on a spectrum ranging from basic information-sharing to full co-operation and joint decision-making between government and non-governmental actors.

- Outreach & information campaigns – keeping people informed
- Consultation – civil society as a source of information
- Engaging civil society as a source of ideas
- Civil society as the initiator of dialogue
- Deciding jointly with civil society on the design and implementation of programmes/mechanisms



This is closely reflected in the EC’s project cycle management guidelines, which elaborate four levels of participation: information-sharing, consultation, decision-making, initiating action.⁴

However, there is no blueprint for participation. Different levels and forms of participation will be appropriate for different programmes at different stages. For example, civil society can be engaged at various stages in the project cycle: at the preliminary stage when their needs are assessed; during the actual implementation of an activity or project to ensure that it addresses the right issues; during monitoring, reviewing and evaluation processes that take stock of progress and identify ongoing challenges; and by playing an ongoing oversight role relating to the services and institutions which the intervention aims to develop or reform.

Similarly, the question of *who* should participate also depends on the context. Since local communities and individuals are the ultimate beneficiaries for security and justice provision, they would ideally be the primary target and actor for many participatory activities. However, logistical practicalities (such as time, available resources, risks of travelling to certain areas) mean that this is not always possible, especially in fragile environments, and often it is necessary to engage with proxy groups who can act as a conduit for such engagement, such as more structured civil society organisations (CSOs).

It is also important to note that communities should not be idealised as naturally benevolent actors that have all the answers. Communities are affected by national and sub-national political, economic, institutional and cultural dynamics. They are full of internal tensions that can themselves be sources of insecurity, particularly for marginalised or vulnerable sections of the community, such as women, youth and people with disabilities. Furthermore their knowledge and experience of the technical and institutional aspects of security and justice development may be limited.

Ultimately, the question of who participates, how and when depends on the emphasis of the programme and what type of participation is required to ensure that the programme is legitimate and effective.

⁴ Project Cycle Management Guidelines, Aidco, Aid delivery Methods (2004).

SECTION II: THE EU AND PARTICIPATION

This section draws on an IfP mapping document which outlines in more detail the relevant EU policy and practice framework relating to participation.⁵

Several policy agendas and reform processes have contributed to shaping a stronger participatory culture in the way EU institutions design their policies, strategies and implement their development co-operation programmes. These include, *inter alia*, the Cotonou Agreement (2000), the White Paper on Governance (2001) and the EU Consensus on Development (2005). The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the related Accra Agenda for Action (2008) are further developments in the broader participatory agenda. The Paris Declaration commits partner countries to ‘take the lead in co-ordinating aid...in dialogue with donors and encouraging the participation of civil society and the private sector’,⁶ while the Accra Agenda for Action states directly that ‘we will deepen our engagement with civil society organisations’.⁷ By recognising the importance of civil society and its participation in the design and delivery of aid in partner countries, the aid effectiveness agenda has contributed to the increasing focus on civil society consultation and participation within the EU.

The EC has strengthened its participatory agenda by: issuing related guidelines⁸; establishing institutional capacity (Civil Society Helpdesk, appointment of civil society focal points and desk officers); launching processes (such as the ‘structured dialogue’, the Civil Society Dialogue Network⁹ and the participation of Non State Actors in new aid modalities); and using specific opportunities (like the elaboration of Country Strategy Papers and mid-term reviews) to become more strategic in its support to, and relations with, civil society. Similarly, in the field of crisis management, there is a growing recognition that co-operation with international NGOs and local CSOs can be an advantage both in the planning process and practically on the ground.¹⁰

Thematic guidelines provide more substance on specific topics, crosscutting issues, and ways to approach programming in different areas. Some of these thematic tools include sections aimed at enhancing the role of civil society and its participation in the wider policy-making process.¹¹ However, in most thematic guidance, including that relating to security and justice work, participatory approaches do not constitute a central element of the programming process.

In addition to the guidance mentioned above, EC staff in Brussels and in-country can benefit from training organised by EC headquarters, although civil society participation does not yet form part of the general pre-posting training curriculum. Specific training on civil society has been elaborated recently and is dispensed by Aidco, although practical details on ways to enhance the participation of civil society in the design, implementation and review of policies and programmes on-the-ground are not covered. The EC has also developed new communications tools to disseminate training, guidance and to exchange practices and experiences through diverse web portals

5 *Participatory approaches to security-building by the EU: Frameworks, Practices, Challenges and Opportunities*, Initiative for Peacebuilding, November 2010.

6 The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005, point 14.

7 The Accra Agenda for Action, 2008, point 20.

8 Such as: *Guidelines on Principles and Good Practices for the Participation of Non-State Actors in the development dialogues and consultations* (November 2004); *Programming fiche on consultation of Non State Actors & Local Authorities (NSAs & LAs) within the framework of the preparation of the CSPs* (European Commission, March 2009). *Analysing and addressing Governance in sector operations*, Aidco, Tools and methods Series, Reference Document no.4, November 2008.

9 The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project run by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) funded by the European Commission and aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and the EU institutions

10 *Review of “Recommendations for enhancing cooperation with NGOs and CSOs in the framework of EU Civilian Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention”*, 10 June 2008 – doc. 10340/2/08.

11 EC Handbook on promoting good governance in EC development and cooperation, Aidco, pp.63-70. *Analysing and addressing Governance in sector operations*, Aidco, Tools and methods Series, Reference Document no.4, November 2008. *Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EC Development Cooperation*, Aidco, 2004.

and virtual networks.¹² These have the potential for interactive exchanges to enhance learning on participatory approaches between EU actors and other donors.

While in areas such as security-building there is still some way to go, it is clear that overall there is much greater openness towards civil society and much greater understanding of the benefits of civil society participation across EU institutions and activities.

12 For example, the 'Rosa Network'; 'Train 4 Dev'; and 'Capacity 4 Dev'. See *Participatory approaches to security-building by the EU: Frameworks, Practices, Challenges and Opportunities*, Initiative for Peacebuilding, May 2010.

SECTION III: THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION ON PROGRAMMING

Box 1: Burundi

According to the mid term review of the 'Gutwara Neza' programme, 'participatory approaches involving populations, political parties, local elected representatives, medias, civil society in all decisions, (...) have been crucial for the activities' sustainability.'

Les bailleurs européens et l'approche participative dans le secteur de la sécurité et la justice au Burundi ; Initiative for Peacebuilding, August 2010.

According to recent research, supporting the emergence of civil society in specific sectors and in the policy-making process as a whole contributes to strengthening and broadening local ownership and to increasing the responsiveness of EU decision-making to the context in which it is operating.¹³ Despite the relatively recent recognition of the importance of local participation in EU planning and programming processes, evidence suggests that it has had a positive impact on the ground in some cases and that neglecting to take such an approach can result in missed opportunities and unintended (negative) consequences.

One positive example of the EU taking a proactive stance on participation is in its CSDP missions, which now regularly include civil society focal points as well as gender and human rights advisers that proactively liaise with civil society and communities. Through formal and informal initiatives, they have sometimes been able to enhance a mission's effectiveness by acquiring a deepened understanding of people's needs and concerns in terms of security and justice (such as the EULEX Kosovo and EUFOR Chad missions¹⁴). In Ethiopia and Somalia, non state actor platforms and networks participated in the elaboration and review of EC regional and country strategies, leading to increased relevance and improved levels of buy-in on the part of civil society.¹⁵ And IfP research found that outreach and consultation with communities and/or civil society has improved the understanding of, and support for, EU programming in both Burundi and Moldova/Ukraine (see boxes 1 and 2).¹⁶

Box 2: EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM)

"There is a demand in the communities for more information about EUBAM's role and impact. EUBAM is an institution that some people mistrust as merely an expression of a greater geopolitical game. Raising awareness helps dispel some of the misperceptions, and highlights the positive achievements that the mission has accomplished (...). Had EUBAM carried out this form of community consultation itself, it could have allocated resources efficiently to improving awareness – in this way, consultation should precede any awareness raising activity to ensure it is locally appropriate."

Public security needs and perceptions in Ukraine; Initiative for Peacebuilding, 2009.

13 PARTICIP, Cideal, Channel Research and South Research (2008): p.61; EC (2007): p.28 ; presentation made by Dominique Dellicour (EC - AidCo) during the DCI CSP mid term review meeting (September 2009).

14 *Participatory approaches to security-building by the EU: Frameworks, Practices, Challenges and Opportunities*, Initiative for Peacebuilding, November 2010.

15 European Commission, 20 December 2007. *Evaluation of EC aid delivery through CSOs; Vol.1*, PARTICIP, Cideal, Channel Research and South Research, December 2008. Contract number: EVA/116-833. *The Commission's management of non-state actors' involvement in EC Development Cooperation; Court of Auditors; Special report no. 4/2009.*

16 *Les bailleurs européens et l'approche participative dans le secteur de la sécurité et la justice au Burundi ; Initiative for Peacebuilding, August 2010 ; Public security needs and perceptions in Ukraine; Initiative for Peacebuilding, 2009.*

In many of the places where IfP research was carried out, the picture was quite mixed. For example, in Haiti it was found that there is a large gap between donors and the people and that the actors who fill this gap (usually international NGOs and/or local authorities) are not necessarily the most appropriate to represent the needs of local people; independent research which relies on a participatory approach is therefore crucial. The research highlights a successful EC project which reflects the mainstreaming of a human security approach and appears to respond to people's needs as an exception to the norm where too many development projects fail because donors do not listen to the voices of the people.¹⁷

IfP research also illustrates the potential pitfalls and missed opportunities of insufficient engagement with the public and civil society, as with the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) in Kyrgyzstan. For example, the research suggests that because BOMCA does not seek to understand or respond to the needs of the local population, there is a risk that some activities could deepen tensions and mistrust, either between local populations and local authorities and/or between different population groups, particularly ethnic groups who are distributed across state boundaries. Its focus on the technical aspects of border management and the subsequent lack of adequate consultation with local communities also means the programme is missing important opportunities to tackle corruption, address cross-border crime, address intimidating behaviour by border guards and raise the knowledge of border crossing regulations.¹⁸

17 *What role for the EU? Finding a niche in the Haitian peacebuilding process.* Initiative for Peacebuilding, 2009

18 *'With or without you' – participatory approaches in EU-funded security and justice programmes. Country case study: Kyrgyzstan;* Initiative for Peacebuilding, November 2010.

SECTION IV: CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO THE USE OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES BY EU INSTITUTIONS AND ACTORS

Despite the robust policy framework and the existence of numerous tools and guidance on participation, IfP research involving EU officials in Brussels and in-country, as well as recent evaluations and reviews of the EC's activities relating to aid delivery through non state actors,¹⁹ have highlighted numerous challenges to undertaking local consultation and participation more systematically. These challenges include aspects of institutional culture, programme management and practical operational issues, as outlined below.

At the **institutional level**, the issue is not well-understood or prioritised by senior officials across the Brussels institutions. With some exceptions, there is a general lack of recognition of the benefits and practical implications of participatory approaches for EU programming, and thus the issue is not given suitable emphasis or priority. This has a knock-on effect on the strategies, programme management procedures and incentives which determine the priority given to participatory approaches and the resources (both human and financial) made available in-country.

For example, existing good practice and opportunities to engage with communities and civil society are not underpinned by coherent and consistent strategies (at political and operational levels) that could enhance participatory practices. Were they to be prioritised and encouraged by senior officials in Brussels and in-country, such national or regional strategies could aim to define a shared vision of long-term peace- and statebuilding for the country or region concerned and to identify more clearly the contribution civil society can make and its broader role, as a driver of change, in achieving this goal.²⁰ These strategies could also identify long-term capacity and training needs of civil society partners and the EU resources necessary to support them.

Many interviewees stressed that despite recent progress the prevailing institutional culture still tends to consider NGOs and CSOs as implementing agencies rather than partners in the development process. Furthermore, the EU participatory agenda is very much focused on the 'organised part' of civil society: NGOs, CSOs, and other NSAs. In this regard, the cultural shift towards participation has yet to translate into practice. When it comes to security-related issues, despite the relatively conducive policy commitments, the participation of communities and civil society in security-related decisions is still seen as premature or too sensitive to address by some. Positive relations with partner governments are often considered more important than responding to the needs of communities leaving little incentive for programmers to involve communities or civil society in the design, implementation or monitoring of security-building programmes. Those who do see the value and benefit of engaging in more participative processes often cite programme management and operational constraints as barriers to their uptake (see below).

19 *Non State Actors & Local Authorities consultations in the elaboration of the 10th EDF CSPs in ACP countries*; European Commission, 20 December 2007. *Evaluation of EC aid delivery through CSOs*; Vol.1, PARTICIP, Cideal, Channel Research and South Research, December 2008. Contract number: EVA/116-833. *The Commission's management of non-state actors' involvement in EC Development Cooperation*; Court of Auditors; Special report no. 4/2009.

20 *Evaluation of EC aid delivery through CSOs*; op. cit. See also Maurizio Floridi, Beatriz Sanz-Corella, Stephano Verdecchia: *Capitalisation study on Capacity building support programmes for Non State Actors under the 9th EDF*; June 2009.

EC **programme management procedures** are not always conducive to participation from communities and civil society. There are various disincentives to EU staff in prioritising participation, including interpretations of programme mandates which emphasise state stakeholders over the public as key beneficiaries and insufficient flexibility and time in the design phases of EU tender processes to allow for protracted consultation. Delegation staff struggle with heavy time and disbursement constraints, as a result of which their role can become very focused on the administrative and financial aspects of a programme or a sector. Linked to this, there are not enough incentives to encourage staff to be proactive in involving civil society in various processes; instead, incentives are often related to quantitative aspects such as levels of disbursements. Several interviewees also mentioned the lack of political support from higher levels of the hierarchy as an impediment to pursuing participatory approaches.

At the **operational level**, interviews with in-country delegations and others working on EU-supported programmes exposed a wide range of opinions and attitudes towards the use of participatory approaches in-country. Some consider involving the public in security-related programmes to be inappropriate, while others recognise the need for consultation and participation where possible but cite various obstacles, including poor security, geographic distance, poor infrastructure, a lack of time, human and financial resources, expertise and a lack of suitable civil society partners. There appears to be a general awareness of the existing policies and commitments to participation among EU staff in-country, but some consider the available tools and guidance too theoretical, with inadequate attention paid to the *practical implications* of pursuing different levels of participation in different contexts.

In addition, it is sometimes politically delicate to engage with communities and civil society in countries with low democratic standards in terms of political and social debate and participation. In contexts where civil society is stigmatised and/or repressed by the ruling regime, international demands for consultation with civil society can result in diplomatic struggles and could in some cases be detrimental to civil society and community representatives themselves. Some interviewees felt that stronger leadership and institutional level support would help overcome some of the diplomatic and political barriers faced by those promoting wider public debate and participation in security and justice-related fields.

SECTION V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN EU-LED SECURITY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The EU is on a positive trajectory with regards to implementing its commitments to engaging with civil society and the public in the design and delivery of its programmes. The EC is launching strategies and setting up mechanisms to enhance its partnership with civil society around the world, and the Council of the EU is also making progress by building relations from one operation to another and by showing an interest in participatory approaches. Where participation has been actively sought, there is evidence that EU programmes have been rendered more relevant, better understood and ultimately more effective. However, most examples to date which deal with security-related programmes tend towards the shallower end of the participation spectrum and typically involve information-sharing, ad hoc consultations and occasional partnerships with civil society.

Many of the challenges cited by EU personnel relate to very practical constraints such as time, human resources and funding, most of which are determined by institutional procedures and directives. If the EU is to realise the full potential of its commitment to participation in the field of security and justice and reap the rewards that this can bring further down the line, there are therefore several areas which require attention at the highest level.

This section outlines a number of recommendations and suggestions for further consideration by key stakeholders. The recommendations may be grouped into three categories, requiring changes respectively in:

- awareness, attitudes and approaches of senior management and operational personnel towards participatory approaches and in particular civil society and public participation in EU security-building programmes
- design, management and tender procedures of EU security-building programmes
- operational implementation and management of EU security-building programmes

AWARENESS, ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES

What is required above all else is a **cultural shift** so that policy commitments to participation are taken seriously and integrated into everything the EU does. Rather than 'participation' being just another box that programme managers need to tick, a willingness to be participatory – to inform, to consult, to share, to include – must become **shared values and objectives** across all EU institutions. This is a long-term process that cannot be easily achieved by implementing a short list of actionable recommendations, for it is primarily about **leadership** in putting these principles into action throughout. This leadership needs to come right from the top, including *inter alia* Commissioners and Directors of Directorates-General (DG) with responsibility for external affairs, Heads of Unit, senior leadership within the Council of the EU and the forthcoming European External Action Service and senior representatives of Member States engaged in EU programming in this area.

Other actors have a key role to play in continuing to **raise awareness and advocate** for more participatory approaches. They need to be able to demonstrate both the *added value* and the *practical implications* of engaging with communities and civil society using participatory approaches. This will require, *inter alia*:

- documenting and presenting evidence at the highest levels of the positive contribution participatory approaches make to the relevance, effectiveness and ultimately impact of EU (and other donor) security-building programming through targeted programme evaluations and information-sharing activities
- changing the way the EU views and supports security-building activities such as SSR, DDR and SALW control primarily as highly technical, state-centric exercises (despite a policy framework that commits it to a people-centred approach to these issues) by documenting and communicating the positive impact of participatory approaches on EU and other donor programming, and the potential negative consequences of not doing it. It needs to be continuously emphasised that security-building is always a political endeavour, and that technical, state-centric approaches, however appealing they are to donors, are inappropriate as they gloss over but cannot avoid key drivers of insecurity and ignore key beneficiaries.
- addressing the prevailing culture which views CSO primarily as implementing agencies rather than as partners, by documenting and communicating examples of successful partnerships in broader EU planning and programming processes, in particular on issues relating to security and justice

Leadership is essential to drive change, but there needs to be a shift in **institutional culture** throughout the EU with regard to security-building programming, in Brussels, in delegations and in CSDP missions. What is required is an **institutional culture which rewards greater use of participatory approaches** in security-building programming – even where there is resistance. This should include:

- reviewing and where necessary changing programme design, management and tender procedures, staff incentives and reward structures, funding and human resource allocations, operational tools and training to reflect the increasing emphasis on participation and to encourage and enable its implementation on the ground (see below)
- senior diplomatic and political support at both Brussels and delegation levels for security-building programmes which seek to take a participatory approach in difficult circumstances
- proactive promotion of participation at senior and operational levels with host government partners
- using programme leverage to encourage government beneficiaries to be more participatory in their own work
- potentially making some degree of participation a formal condition of EU financial assistance

PROGRAMME DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND TENDER PROCEDURES

Once the importance of participatory approaches has been recognised and prioritised at the institutional (Brussels) and senior field operative (Heads of Mission) levels, corresponding changes to programme design, management and tender procedures must follow to create an environment conducive to implementation. These reviews and changes should be led at senior management level and should include:

- a review of programme priorities and mandates to redress the balance between the current focus on the needs of the state and the need to recognise people who are affected by security-related programming as key beneficiaries
- a review of existing programme design, management and tender procedures to, inter alia, ensure they allow adequate time to conduct consultation and participative processes during the different phases of a project, including the design and implementation phases and to make participation part of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks
- a review of existing guidelines and staff training relating to civil society and community engagement to identify and address gaps and to include lessons learned from ongoing experiences
- a review of existing policies, guidelines and staff training on themes relating to security-building to ensure that those relating to SSR, DDR, SALW control, border management and other related topics, as well as other knowledge management tools, address participatory approaches not only in theoretical terms (why they are necessary) but also in practical terms (how they can be used in security-building interventions)
- the development of a long-term roadmap/civil society engagement strategy at national and regional levels to enable more strategic and sustainable engagement with civil society by defining a shared vision of long-term peace- and statebuilding for the country or region and identifying the contribution civil society partners can make, their long-term capacity and training needs and the EU resources necessary to support them

- a review of staff targets and incentives to reward efforts towards participation and reduce the pressure on personnel to follow strict administrative cycles and disburse funds rapidly at the expense of more participative approaches to programme design and delivery
- changes to funding and human resource allocations at both Brussels and delegation levels to respond to the practical implications of the above recommendations and to make sufficient time, expertise and money available for staff to undertake genuinely participative processes

OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

Once participation has been integrated more effectively at the institutional and programme management levels, EU staff need the appropriate tools and guidance to make good on the commitment. As mentioned above, the EU has already developed several tools to guide engaging with civil society and initial research showed that for some practitioners, 'another toolkit' would not be as useful as the elaboration of guidance that is more targeted at the practical implications of taking a human security approach to security related programming. Building on the existing guidance, and in the frameworks of sector-based support, programmes and projects, practitioners should:

- develop a roadmap to guide more strategic and sustainable engagement with civil society at country level. This will entail:
 - mapping out relevant stakeholders (civil society organisations, think tanks, international NGOs) in the field of security, justice, conflict prevention
 - developing a time line and consultation strategy based around key periods in the project cycle where input from civil society would be important
 - engaging with the public more in order to build trust and dispel misconceptions
 - providing financial and logistical support where consultations can not take place at the local level to ensure that representation is broad
 - formulating clear and appropriate expectations on respective stakeholders' roles to get the most out of these processes
- explore opportunities to link with other relevant programmes. Consult and co-operate with actors familiar with applying participatory approaches in security-building activities (in particular NGOs) to exchange experiences and lessons learnt. Increase flexibility in the implementation of programme activities to enable closer integration with other programmes dealing with similar issues
- measure success according to people's perceptions by including indicators relating to communities' perceptions and experiences of their interactions with security and justice institutions. To track evolution across time, it is necessary to use the same methodology (perception survey, focus groups) or a combination of different methods to triangulate findings, and compare them to baseline data
- use international NGO expertise and knowledge of the context to set up and facilitate participatory processes. Their experience can also be used to build capacity of local organisations to articulate their grievances into actionable recommendations. Working with or through NGOs with local experience and relationships can ensure higher and more meaningful levels of community participation

IfP Security Cluster member organisations are keen to support EU institutions in improving their understanding and use of participatory approaches and to contribute to the development and implementation of recommendations made above as appropriate.

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