



# EU-CIVCAP

Preventing and Responding to Conflict: Developing EU CIVilian  
CAPabilities for a sustainable peace

## **Evaluating international efforts on local capacity building**

Deliverable 6.1

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University of Bristol



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<b>Abstract</b>	This report evaluates international efforts in CB in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Serbia and Somalia. It examines both the concept of CB and its implementation in practice.
<b>Keywords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building (CB)</li> <li>• Capacity development</li> <li>• Effectiveness</li> <li>• Local ownership</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Legitimacy</li> </ul>

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CB	Capacity building
CDI	Capacity Development Initiative
CDSF	Capacity Development Strategic Framework
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DfID	Department for International Development
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EUCAP Nestor	European Union Mission on Regional Maritime CB in the Horn of Africa
EUCAP Somalia	European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Mission Somalia
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force Somalia (Operation Atalanta)
EUTM	European Union Military Training Mission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HM Government	Her Majesty's Government
HQ	headquarters
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IT	information technology
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated
MAG	Mine Advisory Group
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NAP	National Action Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OBP	Oceans Beyond Piracy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PMPF	Puntland Maritime Police Force
PSC	Programme Steering Committee

RACVIAC	Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
ROLSIG	Rule of Law and Security Institutions Group
SAF	Somaliland Armed Forces
SEESAC	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of the Small Arms and Light Weapons
SLM	Sustainable Land Management Program
SNA	Somali National Army
SSR	security sector reform
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSOA	United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNSOS	United Nations Support Office in Somalia
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After the failures that accompanied the UN interventions of the early 1990s, ‘the local’, (local) capacity building (CB) and local ownership have become matters of concern for the international community. This interest in the local stems from the fact that its inclusion is increasingly understood to be essential to successful peacebuilding, providing the crucial element in the search for effectiveness and legitimacy in international peacebuilding initiatives. CB programmes, including training activities, mentoring and advising, and the provision of equipment and large infrastructure have also become a key means of strengthening capabilities at the individual and organisational level. CB has undoubtedly had a positive impact in some areas. But the success of these activities has been limited and uneven.

This report evaluates international efforts in CB in five geographical areas: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Serbia and Somalia. Overall, the findings of the report show that CB programmes have been able to strengthen pockets of capacity in specific organisations and institutions, but they have done so in a manner that has not always been well coordinated with other donor activities or local priorities, and in an environment of wider political, economic and institutional weaknesses that have constrained their impact and on which they have been dependent. Given the enormity of the challenge and the timescales in which such activities have taken place, it is perhaps not surprising that they have struggled to be transformative in nature. Yet, as discussed in this report, there are marked differences between what the international community has been able to achieve in the Horn of Africa and in the Western Balkans. The level of success has obviously varied depending on the local context and the level of resources channelled into each of these cases, with the Western Balkans benefiting from a more intensive international intervention in the 1990s and 2000s. The prospect of EU and NATO membership has also acted as a catalyst in the Balkans, although not without its difficulties.

Nevertheless, there was an agreement among the interviewees about the fact that international CB activities have taken place in the absence of local involvement at the levels of problem identification, and project development and evaluation. This deficit has led to a ‘thin’ rather than ‘thick’ legitimacy amongst local actors, and has exacerbated existing problems of relevance, duplication and sustainability.

In the case of the Western Balkans, however, increasing capacities at the local level, a greater involvement of local civil society actors and regional cooperation has narrowed the gap between the rhetorical commitment to local ownership by international actors and its implementation in practice. In the Horn of Africa, this gap remains to be filled.

The final section of this report concludes that, while CB has had a positive impact in some areas, the success of such activities has been narrow and uneven, due largely to a lack of local ownership on the one side, and problems of sustainability on the other.

**We offer a set of recommendations to improve donors' CB programmes, with specific reference to EU programmes and missions:**

### Recommendations

1. **Local context is key.** Where possible, external donors should use local knowledge and engage meaningfully with interlocutors to determine the nature and scope of the challenge at hand. Local actors should be central to the planning, implementation and evaluation of EU projects and activities. In so doing, EU and other donors should strive for 'thick' rather than 'thin' legitimacy in their programmes, i.e. projects need to be acknowledged and accepted by the wider population rather than just a narrow subset of local elites.
2. **CB is not well served by a top down, 'cookie cutter' approach** that seeks to impose externally derived models of reform on diverse and complex local environments. EU missions and operations should be informed by in-depth fact-finding missions incorporating local expertise. Training of EU personnel should also address issues of local ownership and knowledge of the local context, including language training, where possible. The EU should also give due consideration to the possibility of extending the duration of deployments.
3. **The ambition of donor programmes should be tailored to the resources available to support them.** There is a danger that grand claims of transformation will founder in the face of local challenges and insufficient donor funding, jeopardising the sustainability of the reforms and the credibility and legitimacy of donors. Feasibility and impact assessments should be carried out before and after the deployment of EU missions and operations, both by internal and external evaluators.
4. **'Hard' CB, in the sense of equipment and infrastructure that will endure, tends to be valued more highly by local recipients.** In this regard, the implementation of the new initiative on CB for Security and Development (CBSD) constitutes a key opportunity for the EU, but is also a crucial test.
5. **Beware the fallacy of 'political will'.** Absences of 'political will' generally mask real political problems, which should be understood and addressed as such. There will be winners and losers in any reform process. EU programmes and missions should consider how losers can be incentivised and motivated to engage in the process of reform, or at least not to disrupt it. Importantly, the EU should consider how to broaden the range of winners.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

After the failures that accompanied the UN interventions of the early 1990s, the concept of ‘the local’, the local context, (local) capacity building (CB) and local ownership have become a matter of concern for the international community. Interest in the local context stems from an understanding that it is essential to successful peacebuilding as it provides the crucial link in the quest for effectiveness and legitimacy in international peacebuilding initiatives.<sup>1</sup> Paul Jackson argues that “ownership of the process is critical to the establishment of a legitimate governance system and its absence may lead to the creation of an ‘empty shell’ government or merely replace one form of authoritarian rule with another” (2011: 1816). He adds that the increasing emphasis on local CB signifies “a redefinition of state sovereignty from being an international absolute to a variable one based on state capacity or a state being sovereign only in so far as it is capable of carrying out certain functions” (2011: 1818).

Despite increasing attention being given to ‘the local’ and other related concepts such as ‘CB’ and ‘local ownership’, as a concept ‘the local’ is notoriously unclear and, as a result, perspectives on its place and importance within peacebuilding differ greatly from one scholar to the next. It is particularly difficult to clearly define who constitutes ‘the local’ in any context, as the term “usually comprises a wide range from the population at large to traditional structures, from central state government to civil society organisations, from specialized professional groups to local spoiler groups” (Narten 2008: 375). For its part, local ownership suffers from similar definitional problems. In this case, disagreements refer not only to who the ‘local’ is (vs. the ‘international’/‘external’), but also to the concept of ‘ownership’ itself. First, there is confusion in literature and practice as to “the question of who precisely is the ‘owner’ or ‘stakeholder’ in a peacebuilding process, likewise ‘the notion of who constitutes the international community or the ‘external’ is also controversial given the fact that even a UN presence in a UN-administered territory is usually split into a multitude of actors” (Narten 2008: 375). Thus, local ownership could be claimed where ownership is exercised by local leaders, for example, or conversely where it is exercised by civil society (Jackson 2011: 1816).

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<sup>1</sup> The ‘local turn’ has emerged in response to criticisms to the liberal peace (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). For example, it has been argued that the result of the rigidity and permanence of the West’s concept of peace is the formation of a ‘virtual peace’, which ‘looks far more coherent from the outside than from the inside, and effectively builds the empty shell of a state’ where ‘ordinary people matter less than their mainly hypothetical rights and opportunities’ (Richmond 2010: 28). David Chandler (1993: 29) argues that the (flawed) focus is instead on achieving a ‘neutral political environment’ and ‘free and fair elections’. In this context, Oliver Richmond argues, ‘peace’ means peace amongst democratic states in order to maintain a status quo favouring Western hegemony over the international system (Richmond 2004: 139). The response to this is not passive acceptance amongst the local population, but resistance. Ole Sending attributes this rejection to an incorrect assumption on the part of peacebuilders that ‘the internationally established legitimacy of the liberal principles that they advance will automatically *translate into domestic legitimacy* of the state as viewed by the local population’ (2009: 15, emphasis in original).

Given the increasing focus on local CB in international peacebuilding efforts and the lack of conceptual and empirical clarity surrounding these activities, this deliverable seeks to examine how CB has been conceptualised and implemented by a number of international actors in the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa.

### Scope and Methodology

CB is a flexible concept that is open to debate and interpretation. This deliverable therefore unpacks what various actors – the EU, its Member States and other IOs (UN, OSCE and the AU) – understand by ‘CB’. More specifically, it explores local CB through the following questions:

- **WHO:** Who is the ‘local’? In other words, whose capacity do they aim to build (state, NGOs, civil society, community at large?)
- **BY WHOM:** Who is the ‘international’? Who is in charge of local CB programmes? Where does the authority lie?
- **WHAT:** What (kind of) capacity do these actors aim to build? What constitutes the problem space? What do we mean when we refer to CB (e.g. organisational capacity, building organisational capacity, or delivering CB)?
- **WHY:** What is the rationale behind these CB programmes? What is their purpose? Is local CB understood as a means or as an ends in itself?

This report explores these questions by looking at different policy areas: the security sector (including police, military and maritime CB), development and civil society. This enables a holistic reading of how CB is understood by different actors involved in different sectors and whether this understanding (and strategies to achieve it) varies from actor to actor.

The focus on CB at the policy and strategic level is then complemented by an examination of the implementation of CB strategies on the ground in different sectors/country cases looking at different instruments and resources. This enables a focus on the **how, when and where** of local CB projects. This approach will examine whether there is a gap between the rhetoric and the practice of different international actors and shed light on some of the key issues that have been identified in the literature in relation to local CB, in particular, those of effectiveness, coordination, legitimacy and sustainability of the reforms and, more generally, whether or not it has contributed to the goal of promoting local ownership. Questions addressed by this report include:

- **How** and **when** have local CB strategies been implemented on the ground (instruments, programmes, resources)?
- How **effective** have local CB initiatives been on the ground? What are the main obstacles to achieving an effective implementation of international actors’ goals?
- Have local CB initiatives promoted **local ownership**, if so, in what ways? Has a meaningful partnership emerged between international and local actors, and if so with what results?

- How **coherent** have these initiatives been? Which coordination mechanisms have been established on the ground?<sup>2</sup>
- How **sustainable** are these projects in the medium and long term?
- Are local CB strategies perceived as **legitimate** by the recipient actors?

This deliverable draws on five different case studies from the regions of the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa: Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter Bosnia), Serbia, Kosovo, Somalia<sup>3</sup> and Ethiopia. The Western Balkans has been and remains a key area of engagement for the EU since the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation in the 1990s (Blockmans 2007; Juncos 2013). It has also become a test-bed for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the EU's comprehensive approach. The Horn of Africa has become a focus of activity for the EU more recently, especially given the rise in maritime piracy and terrorism in the region (Germond and Smith 2009; Olsen 2014). These two regions vary in terms of developmental levels and security threats, but also in relation to the nature of international engagement, with the Western Balkans benefiting from the prospect of Euro-Atlantic integration. Both regions constitute key areas of EU and international engagement in CB, however, hence a comparison between the two can provide valuable insights in relation to CB programmes. Given the contextual differences, has CB been conceptualised and implemented differently in these two regions? If so, how?

This deliverable's foundations are established on academic literature and policy documents on peacebuilding, CB and CSDP. The fieldwork for the five case studies took place between May 2016 and March 2017, totalling 69 interviews. Interviews include, but are not limited to, representatives from international organisations, governments (host and foreign) and NGOs (local and international).

### Structure of the report

Following the introduction, the second section of this report will define and discuss the concept of CB, outlining what it is, who it is for, and what types of CB exist. The third section will explore the rationale of CB and, specifically, the tension that arises between donor interests and local needs. The fourth section of this report will evaluate the implementation of local CB programmes so far, with a focus on effectiveness, sustainability, local ownership and legitimacy. The fifth section will conclude and offer recommendations for future action. In particular, it will conclude that, while CB has had a positive impact in some areas, the success of such activities has been narrow and uneven, due largely to a lack of local ownership on the one side, and problems of sustainability on the other.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that the issue of coherence and coordination will be the focus of a specific deliverable in WP6 (DL 6.2). In this report, issues of coherence and coordination are only considered insofar as they might affect effectiveness.

<sup>3</sup> This report also covers Somaliland.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF CAPACITY BUILDING

Building the capacities of partners as a way to enhance their resilience has been identified as a key strategic objective in the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) and other related documents (Council of the EU 2016; European Commission and High Representative 2015, 2016; European Union 2016). In the words of the EUGS, the EU “will work through development, diplomacy, and CSDP, ensuring that our security sector reform efforts enable and enhance our partners’ capacities to deliver security within the rule of law” (European Union 2016: 26). In its definition of capacity (see also Table 1 below), the EU draws on the OECD-DAC conceptualisation (OECD 2006a) and defines capacity as “the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully” (European Commission 2011: 9). The document adds that capacity is an attribute of both individuals and organisations. More importantly, capacity is conceived as being something internal to an individual and/or organisation and that can only be developed/fostered from the outside, rather than created from scratch (European Commission, 2011: 9). CB thus needs to be based on the internal motivation of the recipient actor and cannot be imposed by external partners. This is also in line with the EUGS, which states that interventions should now be focused at the level of an actor’s capacities rather than on the external or international environment (European Union 2016). Thus, the role of the EU now appears to be one of facilitator, mentor and partner – moving away from the liberal peace discourses of ‘external intervention’.

The UN definition of CB is also consistent with that of the OECD and the EU (see Table 1). More specifically, UNDP defines capacity development as “the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time” (UNDP 2009). Crucial to the UNDP definition is the element of transformation implicit in this new approach as ‘a matter of changing mindsets and attitudes’ (UNDP 2009: 5). From this perspective, capacity development also involves learning from previous mistakes since ‘the old model’ was based on the “mistaken assumption [...] that it is possible simply to ignore existing capacities in developing countries and replace them with knowledge and systems produced elsewhere—a form of development as displacement, rather than development as transformation” (UNDP 2009: 7).

CB has played even a more significant (constitutive) role in the African Union (AU) (see Table 1). Right after its foundation, the AU passed a ‘CB Decade’ resolution in Africa at its Durban Assembly in 2002 (Assembly of the African Union 2002). This declaration underscored the AU’s ambitions to foster CB as a basis for economic and social development, calling mainly for increased efforts from external donors to support CB on the continent. The headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa remains more of a recipient of CB programmes than a promoter, however. Due to a lack of financial resources, the number of programmes run entirely by the AU is limited. The implementation of CB activities on the African continent has been mainly led by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). In 2006, the AU agreed jointly with NEPAD on a new initiative – the Capacity

Development Strategic Framework (CDSF). Its concept of CB distinguishes between individuals, groups, organisations and societies and refers specifically to their ability to “sustainably define, articulate, engage and actualize their vision or development goals building on their own resources and learning” (AU and NEPAD Agency 2010: 11). The term capacity is subdivided into tangible and intangible components. Whereas the latter describes the less evident capacities such as visionary and strategic leadership or the capacity to predict, adapt and respond to the volatile and ever-changing environment, the tangible capacities are – among others – institutional and structural, and human and financial resources. Country ownership is endorsed as the epicentre of development; responsibility for capacity enhancement will therefore be located at that level.

EU member states have also developed their own CB/capacity development programmes. For instance, in the case of Denmark, a *Capacity Development Support Programme* has been established to facilitate the country’s strategic focal areas in development cooperation and its “main principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination and transparency” (DANIDA 2014: 3). Its definition of capacities is also drawn from the OECD/DAC approach and describes it as “the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.” Capacity development is “the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole strengthen, create, adapt, unleash and maintain capacity over time” (DANIDA 2014: 5). Capacity development is a fundamental component of German development cooperation too. The German development agency GIZ has developed an approach to capacity development whereby capacity is described as the ability of individuals, organisations and societies to foster their own development in a sustainable manner and to adapt to changing circumstances. Capacity development is the self-driven process of mobilising abilities to reach required capacities. External support should aim to facilitate this process of mobilisation by improving the ability to act (GIZ n.d.a). In the GIZ approach, a distinction is made between the individual, organisational and societal level. Furthermore, the societal level can be subdivided into systems of cooperation and policy fields (GIZ n.d.b). Finally, similar conceptualisation can be found among other international donors. According to USAID, CB support is designed to provide comprehensive management capacity to an organisation so that it can put in place different systems that will help it perform better and in an efficient, effective, transparent and accountable manner.<sup>4</sup>

From a local perspective, CB is also considered to be a priority. In the view of the Ethiopian government, for instance, “without first enhancing the capacity of the nation as a whole on the selected key sectors, the development of the country would have not been realized” (Civil Service Transformation Research Center 2012: 2). A *National CB Strategy* was implemented in 1998 and a dedicated Ministry of CB was established in 2002 (Watson and Yohannes 2005). Following a positive national evaluation, the ministry was dissolved in 2010 and existing responsibilities were transferred back to the sector directorates (Ministry of Civil Service 2013). According to the latest Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) II, capacity development has the objective to enable

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<sup>4</sup> Interview ET05.

institutions to address the rent-seeking political economy, a crucial step to ensure development and good governance. In addition, the development plan stresses the importance of Ethiopian ownership and role of CB for citizens (National Planning Commission 2016). In the case of Somalia, while there is similar agreement among local elites about the importance of building local capacities, the country lacks a national strategy on CB. The 'Vision 2030' document, for instance, states that the country lacks the skilled labour to achieve its national development goals. The document embraces the concepts of good governance, rule of law and democracy, but does not mention CB directly or indirectly (Ministry of National Planning and Development 2011). The Somali Compact, which recognises the weaknesses of Somali institutions in all sectors, sees CB as a precondition for achieving developmental goals (Federal Republic of Somalia 2013). Nevertheless, a local CB strategy is still lacking.

From the previous discussion, it has become apparent that CB has become a priority in political, security and developmental discourses, to the point that one of the interviewees refers to it as a new 'buzzword'.<sup>5</sup> Official rhetoric also emphasises internal capacities as opposed to externally driven processes of reform and the need for local ownership as a key principle both at the design and implementation phases. Official definitions also point to the comprehensive and holistic nature of CB. All these different elements will be discussed below, starting with a clarification of the terms CB and capacity development.

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<sup>5</sup> Interview HA09.

**Table 1. EU, UN and AU conceptualisations of CB**

	EU	UN	AU
<i>CB vs. capacity development</i>	Capacity development is the term generally used by the Commission in relation to development policies. The Council and EEAS refer to CB in the context of the EU's external action and, in particular, the implementation of CSDP missions and SSR.	Capacity development must be preceded by CB defined as “a process that supports only the initial stages of building or creating capacities and assumes that there are no existing capacities to start from” (UNDP 2009: 54).	Capacity development refers to what was formerly known as CB. As the concept has developed from a traditional approach including training or provision of material to a more comprehensive approach, the AU/NEPAD uses the term capacity development in their official language (African Union and NEPAD Agency 2010: 9).
<i>Whose capacity?</i>	The EU aims to promote capacity development at individual, organisational and state levels.	Capacity development takes place at organisational (structures, policies and procedures), individual level (skills, experience and knowledge) and/or system-wide.	The AU/NEPAD strategy targets capacity development at the individual, institutional and system level.
<i>What is ownership?</i>	“The effective exercise of a government’s authority over development policies and activities, including those that rely – entirely or partially – on external resources. For governments, this means articulating the national development agenda and establishing authoritative policies and strategies” (OECD 2006b: 147).	UNDP states that “national ownership is grounded in priorities that are nationally determined, with leadership on national strategies, development decisions and choices” (UNDP 2008: 4). Accordingly, “it is about the ability to make informed choices and decisions” (UNDP 2008: 7).	Ownership “is an imperative that must neither be compromised nor be determined by external parties or by short term CB/development programs designed by development partners. Hence the responsibility for any country strategy or approaches aiming at improved capacity and for the related change processes solely lies with the countries” (African Union and NEPAD Agency 2010: 5).
<i>The rationale behind CB/ capacity development</i>	CB is “a key factor for improving aid effectiveness. Delivering sustainable results and increasing the impact of EU development policy is only possible if there is effective capacity in partner countries” (European Commission 2017a). CB focuses on “building effective, legitimate and sustainable institutions, including effective justice and security sectors, border control and coast guards” (European Commission 2015: 3–4).	“Strong capacity, locally generated and sustained, is essential to the success of any development enterprise. Without it, the integrity of development achievements can be compromised and progress can remain rootless and illusory, separated from the capacities that already exist and vulnerable to the increasingly severe and complex challenges facing the world today” (UNDP 2009: 9).	The AU/NEPAD strategy aims at “addressing Africa’s real capacity challenges in a sustainable manner as it requires a strategic and longer term perspective focused on organisational systems capacities rather than on individuals or hardware alone” (African Union and NEPAD Agency 2010: 1). Capacities in the African institutional framework are required to respond to African problems and opportunities.

### *Local capacity building or capacity development?*

Both 'CB' and 'capacity development' have been used in official documents, but the terminology is not without significance (see Table 1). As with its predecessor 'institution building', CB is the preferred term in security and peacebuilding contexts. This is the case in the EUGS and the EU security sector reform strategy, for instance (European Commission and High Representative 2016; European Union 2016). The term CB is also closely linked to that of 'train and equip', which focuses on institutional capacities and the provision of equipment, but this has more negative connotations because how these programmes were used by different US Administrations. By contrast, in the development sector, capacity development is the preferred term. Thus, one of the explicit goals of capacity development is to promote sustainable development, which it is not always mentioned in the definition of CB. As we have seen before, with its guidance note 'The Challenge of Capacity Development - Working towards Good Practice', the OECD-DAC provided a definition of capacity and capacity development that made its way into the donor society (OECD 2006a), been later adopted by the European Commission, UNDP and other national development agencies (e.g. DANIDA, GIZ). For instance, in its basic strategies on development cooperation, the European Commission refers repeatedly to capacity development rather than CB (European Commission 2009). Both UNDP and AU/NEPAD argue for a new, more advanced generation of building capacities moving beyond simple supply of training and material, pledging a more comprehensive approach called capacity development. Moreover, as the OECD document argues, the "'building' metaphor suggests a process starting with a plain surface and involving the step-by-step erection of a new structure, based on a preconceived design. Experience suggests that capacity is not successfully enhanced in this way." (OECD 2006a: 12). According to UNDP documents, CB addresses fundamental gaps in an environment where no or few capacities exist. In practice, there are always some capacities that need to be fostered rather than created from scratch. For consistency purposes, however, this report will generally refer to these activities as CB, although where relevant it will distinguish between CB and capacity development.

### *Whose capacity?*

CB programmes often imply a binary relationship between international and local actors, with external actors imposing CB initiatives on local ones (Battiss *et al.* 2016: 5–6). The reality appears to be much more complex, as the boundary between 'local' and 'international' is often not so clear-cut. Indeed, there seems to be an entire spectrum of 'internationalness' or 'localness'. In the case of Serbia, for instance, the OSCE is an international organisation, but one of which Serbia is a member – the same applies to Bosnia. The OSCE has a mission in Serbia, sent upon official invitation by the (then) Yugoslav government and this has influenced the way Serbian authorities perceive it and cooperate with it.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, international organisations' field offices and embassies in Belgrade crucially rely in their work on local staff, people who

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<sup>6</sup> Interview SE01.

often have professional background in Serbian NGOs and sometimes move into positions within Serbian institutions.<sup>7</sup> Other international actors such as DCAF have acted as an interface between international funding and national institutions, bearing a Janus-faced appearance as grantees of the EU or bilateral donors (e.g. Switzerland) and donors of Serbian institutions and civil society. They are valued because of their established access into Serbian institutions and the ability to administer large multi-year projects, for which bilateral donors are unwilling or unable to utilise their own administrative capacities.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to a whole panoply of international organisations, there are several regional initiatives which have produced more or less institutionalised structures with influence on Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes in Serbia and Bosnia, such as the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the 'regionally owned international organisation' RACVIAC (Centre for Security Cooperation). SEESAC is also a regional body, working under the mandates of UNDP and RCC since 2002. All these initiatives could be described as international as much as local. On the one hand, Serbia and Bosnia officially participate in them. They build upon the notion that countries in the region should utilise as much as possible their own resources for CB and dialogue facilitation. On the other hand, they were typically launched with external impetus, have external participation<sup>9</sup> and rely on external funding. Finally, it ought to be noted that NGOs in Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia also receive funding from the international donors for their CB projects and hence, they can be said to have a dimension of 'internationalness' in their work. In the case of Serbia, this has been exploited by tabloids and right-wing media, which tend to present NGOs as foreign agents.

In the Western Balkans, CB has been aimed at different levels of government and institutions from state to regional level and from governmental to civil society organisations. Having said that, CB in the framework of SSR has generally targeted state security sector institutions (Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces, Ministry of Interior, Parliament), with the target groups within these institutions typically been high- and mid-level civil servants, high- and mid-rank military officers, and parliamentarians sitting in the committees overseeing the security sector. To a lesser degree, there has been a focus on civil society and NGOs (through grants and seminars) and the academic community (through scholarships and study visits for students).

In the Horn of Africa, foreign governments, the UN, the EU and other regional organisations like the AU are often referred to as the 'internationals'. In many instances, like in the Western Balkans, these international actors do not implement programmes themselves, but sub-contract them to other international or local organisations. These sub-contractors, directly funded, are also conceived as the 'internationals', whether this is actually the case or not. Moreover, it is

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<sup>7</sup> A prominent example is the presidential candidate and national Ombudsman from 2007 to 2017, Sasa Jankovic, who had previously worked in the OSCE Mission in Belgrade.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews SE01 and SE02.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, the EU, UN, NATO, OECD, World Bank, US, Canada and several European countries all participate in the RCC.

rare that there is a clear official statement on where the authority for CB lies. There is little evidence of internationals explicitly claiming authority, in fact, the reverse is often true, with CB programmes described in terms of 'partnership,' or 'supporting', which suggests a more equitable relationship, at least in theory. For instance, the UNSOM website's introduction page speaks of a 'support package' (UNSOA n.d.a). In practice, however, the internationals are the fund-holders and as such have access to much-needed resources, resulting in a power imbalance. Local stakeholders could in principle reject or modify any external offer of CB, but this rarely happens due to the local need for resources. Moreover, who the 'locals' are in the Horn of Africa is also contested. While many of the programmes provide institutional support at the state level, others focus on regional levels. In the context of Somalia/Somaliland, there is also the fact that the Government of Somaliland does not recognise the Mogadishu government and the Federal Government of Somalia government does not recognise the Hargeisa government. Finally, some capacity development programmes provide direct support for civil society organisations rather than state actors, although in the case of Ethiopia, the government has sought to control which civil society actors obtain funding from external donors.

#### *What capacity?*

With the growth of CB programmes, its scope has also expanded over the past few years. Nowadays, CB has become a more comprehensive set of activities targeting a wide range of sectors/capacities at the local level.<sup>10</sup> As argued by a USAID official, one of the most important lessons of the past decade is that

institutional capacity of local organizations is best enhanced through a holistic and systemic approach involving organizational reforms in governance and other management operational areas than a piece-meal and short-term quick-fix approach.<sup>11</sup>

For instance, in the maritime arena, CB incorporates a wide range of activities and initiatives aimed at assisting littoral states to develop effective local mechanisms for managing these maritime threats, risks, and exploiting the opportunities presented by marine resources. The EU's anti-piracy mission in the region, EU NAVFOR, understands CB as consisting of:

activities which are directed at the *empowerment* of governments and coastal communities to efficiently and efficaciously *govern* and *sustainably exploit* the maritime domain, including territorial waters and exclusive economic zones (Bueger 2014: 4, emphasis in original).

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<sup>10</sup> See also Interview BH12.

<sup>11</sup> Interview ET05.

Such a conceptualisation is exceptionally broad in scope. Potentially at least, it comprises a wide range of issues and actors in the maritime arena, from infrastructure development in port areas and beyond, to the rule of law and justice sector reform, administrative reform in governance structures, and security sector reform amongst coastguard and naval forces. In practice, those organisations engaged in maritime CB have focused on discrete areas of this wider agenda. Thus, EUCAP Nestor (renamed EUCAP Somalia from January 2017), the EU's CB mission in the Horn of Africa, focuses on strengthening the security capacity of states in the region to better fight piracy, as well as to effectively manage and protect their territorial waters and maritime resources (Council of the EU 2012: Arts. 2–3). The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has, amongst other activities, focused on the Somali maritime law enforcement capacities for the prosecution and imprisonment of pirates (UNODC 2016). For its part, the FAO works with the Somalia Ministry of Fisheries to strengthen its governance and resource management structures (Glaser *et al.* 2017: 5).

While there is an understanding that CB is holistic in nature, one can still distinguish the organisational/institutional; individual and cross-cutting/system-wide capacities. A look at the policy documents shows that most donors cover all these dimensions, although most of the emphasis is placed on organisational CB. Different external actors provide different combinations of CB interventions depending on their respective strategies. For example, an EU official explained that in the case of Bosnia, the main objective was to build “the capacity within government for it to communicate internally between departments and horizontally with other institutions.”<sup>12</sup> Another interviewee described it as “increasing and developing the skills of the actors within the sector.”<sup>13</sup>

The UK's strategy with regards to CB in the police and military arenas in Somalia is focused on providing financial support and expert advice, although there is also a training component. Yet, overall, the police and defence components of the UK's programmes place significantly more weight on organisational capacity. Hence, when asked for his understanding of CB in the security context, a Somali official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explicitly labelled it “institutional support.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, for a Serbian government representative, the primary association to CB was related to organisational capacities (professionalisation, more efficient budgeting, a better public image, and so on) rather than the acquisition of individual skills.<sup>15</sup> Yet, despite this sense that organisational CB takes priority, the main modality of CB programmes is training, as discussed below.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview BH01.

<sup>13</sup> Interview BH14.

<sup>14</sup> Interview HA04.

<sup>15</sup> Interview SE03.

## Types of CB

The range of activities covered by CB programmes is vast. Overall, these initiatives manifest in practice as four main categories of CB activity: 1) mentoring, monitoring, advising; 2) training; 3) equipment; and 4) strengthening of local infrastructure.

1. The first of these concerns strategic planning and governance through **mentoring, monitoring and advising**. For example, the provision of technical assistance and expertise with regard to new regulation, policies and procedures to be introduced has played a key role in Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo, especially in the context of the enlargement process, mainly through the implementation of twinning programmes and study visits. In the context of CSDP, the EU's Implementation Plan on Security and Defence states that in order to support CB, "the EU may deploy non-executive CSDP civilian and military missions, upon invitation of the host country, to provide strategic advice, training, mentoring and monitoring" (Council of the EU 2016: 13). The EU has adopted this approach in many of its CSDP missions and operations in the Balkans. In Bosnia, the EU Police Mission that was deployed in the country from 2003 to 2012 had a mentoring, monitoring and advising (MMA) mandate. Currently, the EUSR/EU Delegation Rule of Law team consisting of 12 people works at a strategic level and provides expert advice on police reform, corruption, integrated border management, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, organised crime and trafficking of weapons.<sup>16</sup> EUFOR Althea has also embedded advisory teams in key units from brigade level and above to advise the Bosnian Armed Forces on key issues (e.g. IT, budget, and capability development). The current EULEX mission in Kosovo provides expert support at senior level in the area of rule of law, focusing on fighting political interference and supporting the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. In the case of EULEX, the MMA mandate is also complemented with an executive mandate in relation to the prosecution and adjudication of selected criminal cases 'until the progress of local authorities allows complete transition of executive functions to local authorities' (EULEX, n.d). One EULEX representative in Kosovo commented: 'all of our work is about CB—monitoring, mentoring, strengthening—it's all CB in the end.'<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, international organisations and actors have been involved in supporting and encouraging the Somali and Ethiopian governments to produce a number of national strategies, such as the Somali Maritime Resource and Security Strategy in September 2013 (Federal Republic of Somalia *et al.* 2013: 3). Other activities include assistance by organisations including UNDP and EUCAP Nestor on drafting new legislation for maritime governance, such as the new Coastguard Bill for the Somaliland region. Similarly, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Somalia's (UNSOM) Rule of Law and Security

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<sup>16</sup> Interview BH09.

<sup>17</sup> Interview KS04.

Institutions Group (ROLSIG) has provided assistance to the Somali government on the harmonisation of their maritime code with international law (UNSOM 2016). External actors have also provided expert advisors to Somali policymakers, to assist them in the development and implementation of security policy initiatives. The aim in all cases is to encourage good governance practices in the maritime and security arenas, in the sense of local policymaking that takes place in a transparent and accountable manner, incorporating a respect for human rights and democratic principles.

2. The second category of activities concerns the provision of **training** to local actors. For all the cases surveyed in this report (Serbia, Kosovo, Somalia/Somaliland, Ethiopia), CB was foremost understood as the transfer of knowledge and skills in the form of workshops, seminars and training of trainers. For instance, EUCAP Nestor, the IMO and UNODC all provide various courses and training sessions for the Somali and Somaliland coastguards, focusing on skills provision in areas such as swimming, boat handling, marine repair and maintenance, search and rescue and maritime law.<sup>18</sup> The UK has provided training to the Somaliland Attorney General on Serious Crimes, in areas including forensics, crowd control and intelligence, and has also contracted training for Somali coastguards to the private company Aktis Strategy.<sup>19</sup> The IMO, under the auspices of its Djibouti Code of Conduct, has established a Regional Training Centre in Djibouti to provide maritime education and training to local actors from across the region. Training is not always security skills-focused; the coastguard and the Army are currently receiving FCO-funded IT training, under the 'CB' umbrella suggesting a broader scope to include non-military CB too. Another FCO programme aims to build financial management systems and implement Human Resources systems in the Army, Coast Guard and Police Headquarters.

In the case of the UN and EU missions in Somalia, training has also been the main element of CB, especially in the military context. This is evident with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), where UN funds have been used for training in 'financial management and accountability, executive direction [...] information analysis [...] demobilisation and reintegration' (UNSOA n.d.b). Furthermore, in the Police component of the UN strategy, the "strengthening [of] organisational, operational and individual capacity through training and mentoring programs" forms a key priority (UNSOM 2016). The less tangible factors of conduct and behaviour are judged to be equally important for improving the capabilities of these organisations. Altering the long-term working culture of the Police, for example, is mentioned as a major goal of the UN mission in Somalia.

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<sup>18</sup> Interview HA11.

<sup>19</sup> Interview HA07.

In the case of the EU Military Training Mission (EUTM), launched in 2010, the training of over 3600 Somali soldiers focused on “commander up to battalion and company level, in addition to specialist training in the areas of military police, civilian-military cooperation, intelligence, company commander and combat engineering” (EEAS 2016). In 2013, its mandate was extended with “the addition of strategic advisory and mentoring activities to complement the training role” and in 2014 was extended again to focus on “building long term capability and capacity within the Somali Ministry of Defence (MoD) and SNA [Somali National Army] General Staff” (EEAS 2016). This allowed for the passing of the responsibility of all training activities to the SNA by making use of the ‘Train the Trainers’ activities. The idea of training trainers reflects a strategy of promoting self-help and ‘self-training capabilities’ and demonstrates a desire to entrench sustainable CB with a view to transfer EU training expertise to local actors (European Scrutiny Committee 2015).

In the Western Balkans, EU training in the form of workshops, seminars and study visits is funded mainly via the TAIEX programme. In Bosnia, the EUFOR ‘CB training division’ has introduced mobile training teams and regularly organises joint exercises with the Bosnian Armed Forces on a wide range of issues (evacuation, peace support operations, flight safety, etc.) (EUFOR, 2017).<sup>20</sup> SEESAC has also attempted a different training approach by facilitating regional exchanges to help countries in the region learn from each other’s practice. Moreover, SEESAC implemented two projects on gender and security in which they co-developed methodology for gender analysis with the very institutions that were subject to this analysis and encouraged their representatives to apply the methodology themselves (SEESAC 2014: 11).

3. As well as training, international donors have also provided **equipment** and support directly to local organisations and institutions. According to the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, “the provision of equipment and infrastructure is an indispensable part of training and CB activities. It is crucial to allow the EU to provide this assistance in an effective, responsible and seamless way.” (Council of the EU 2016: 13). EUCAP Nestor has provided computers, radios, five second hand cars, an inflatable boat and radar equipment to the Somaliland maritime authorities.<sup>21</sup> The IMO too has donated speedboats to the Somaliland coastguard, as has the UNDP.<sup>22</sup> UNODC provides technicians on the ground in the Port of Berbera to repair and maintain the boats of the local coastguard, as well as two (Finnish) police investigators to the port of Garowe and support to the port police in Bosaso, both in Puntland. Aktis Strategy has assisted in the development of staff records, HR systems and IT skills for the Somaliland coastguard.<sup>23</sup> In all cases, these ‘train and equip’ programmes provide direct skills and material support to those local organisations charged with the management of maritime territorial spaces

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<sup>20</sup> See also Interview BH08.

<sup>21</sup> Interview HA12.

<sup>22</sup> Interview HA12.

<sup>23</sup> Interview HA07.

and resources. In Bosnia, the provision of security equipment is often funded on a bilateral basis by the EU member states, rather than directly by EUFOR Althea. The provision of equipment was also identified as a key area in SSR in Serbia, but some donors seem more reluctant to support this.<sup>24</sup>

4. Finally, there are a range of initiatives by various actors aimed at **strengthening local infrastructure**, again, with a particular focus on the security sector, judicial and penal system. The UK, for example, committed GBP 14.3 million in 2013 to support policing and justice in Somalia, including a GBP 1.5 million project aimed at rebuilding Mogadishu's prison to increase capacity and meet international standards and the building of a new Coastguard Headquarters in Somaliland (DFID 2013, 14; HM Government 2013). The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), funded by the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands and the UK, was involved in the construction of a new 500-bed prison in the Puntland region of the country (UNOPS 2016). UNODC, with EUCAP Nestor and OBP have worked to develop a Maritime Operations Centre for the Somaliland coastguard in the port of Berbera (OBP 2016), while the Mine Advisory Group (MAG) has assisted in the development of armoured coastguard outposts along the Somaliland coast. These initiatives are closely linked to – and justified on the basis of – maritime CB in that they aim to provide secure, humane and locally based facilities in which convicted pirates can be incarcerated. In the context of military CB in Somalia, UN efforts can largely be divided into funding of national military programmes and support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). UNSOS's work with the Somalia National Army (SNA) receives extensive funding, in the region of USD\$13million, through the SNA Trust Fund. UN CB is conditional in many respects. In order to receive UNSOS support, SNA soldiers must meet "several conditions", including the "completion of UN mandatory training in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law" as well as 'registration and vetting' (UNSOS n.d.).

When asked about the main components of CB programmes, both international and local stakeholders identified these different categories, especially training and provision of equipment. "Planning, provision of expertise" and "delivering training" were frequent responses and similarly funding, planning, advising, training, and provision of equipment.<sup>25</sup> An adviser to the Somali MoD, when asked about the role of the EU, could only recall that "the EU contributes office furniture and staff trainings."<sup>26</sup> All parties agree that training falls within the remit of CB but interestingly, for local actors, training is invariably the only definition, explained in large part because it is the only visible output they experience. In addition to this, large infrastructure projects are also highly visible and valued by recipient countries.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview SE02.

<sup>25</sup> Interviews BH10, HA05, HA06, HA10 and HA11.

<sup>26</sup> Interview HA05.

### 3. THE RATIONALE OF CAPACITY BUILDING

In terms of the rationale of CB as it is outlined in the official strategies of the respective actors, the approaches clearly follow a functionalist agenda. The EU considers capacity development as “a key factor for improving aid effectiveness” (European Commission, 2015: 6–7) that is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Thus, achieving the EU development agenda is only feasible with adequate capacities in the partner country. In the same vein, a USAID official working in Ethiopia argued that:

the added value is evident because most local organizations did not have these systems and were struggling hard in their day to day operations of managing projects in an effective, efficient and transparent and accountable manner. With these systems in place their performance showed significant improvement and they have increasingly become USAID compliant. This will also enable them to become trusted partners with other donors.<sup>27</sup>

According to UNDP, without capacity development “the integrity of development achievements can be compromised and progress can remain rootless and illusory” (UNDP 2009: 9). For the AU, CB has been driven by the objective to develop effective management rules that further contribute to sustainable development, accountability and transparency.

Implicit in some of these rationalisations is the understanding that local capacities are weak and in some cases non-existent. For instance, one thing that a majority of the international actors operating in Somalia agree on is that Somalis “lack capacity”. This is illustrated in policy documents such as the *Joint Strategy Paper*, which states that “[c]apacity in all forms is in short supply” and that “the challenge will be to build and extend local capacity, ensuring ownership of institution-building” (European Commission n.d.: 19). In another document, it is stated that significant challenges include “the lack of capacity and collective political will of the Federal Government of Somalia” (European Scrutiny Committee, 2015). Perhaps surprisingly, the perception of a “lack of capacity” also extends to Somalis themselves. According to some interviewees: “people lack skills”, there is a “lack of capacity, capital and experts”, “low human capacity” as well as a “lack of expertise locally”.<sup>28</sup> Many identified a lack of capacity as a lack of knowledge and skills, reinforcing the notion that the solution, which is a form of CB, equates to training. Local actors tend to understand CB as “enhancing skills” or “knowledge transfer”,<sup>29</sup> which can be transferred from one actor to another.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview ET05.

<sup>28</sup> Interviews HA02, HA07 and HA09.

<sup>29</sup> Interviews HA07 and HA13.

While in the Western Balkans there is also a recognition of this problem, here rather than a 'lack of' capacities, interviewees often referred to 'weak' capacities.<sup>30</sup> What is more, in the case of Bosnia, for instance, it was argued that the country had made a lot of progress in recent years to the point that it has gone 'from being the recipient of security to being a provider of security'. While it was still argued that "all of this is achieved within our capacity limitations, given our weak economy", this was perceived as a huge leap for the country.<sup>31</sup> Several interviewees referred to Bosnia's involvement in UN peace support operations and NATO operations as an example of this transformation.

CB activities are also driven by the prioritisation of the so-called security-development nexus. The link between CB and peacebuilding and conflict prevention comprises external (donor) driven and internal (local) interests that are, at least in principle, considered to be mutually reinforcing and mutually beneficial. Such activities take place on the assumption that developing local states' capacities to manage and police the insecurities present in and often emanating from their own regions will in turn contribute to the security of the donors themselves (see above in relation to Bosnia). There is also a common view that doing so will also help strengthen the security and development prospects of the recipient states themselves. Both the EU strategic framework on security sector reform and the EU Maritime Security Strategy echo these rationales (European Commission 2016: 2; Council of the EU 2014). In the latter case it states that:

Several factors, such as illegal activities of non-state actors, cross border crime, international terrorism or piracy, exploit the weaknesses of fragmented local, regional and global governance systems. Using all EU instruments within the comprehensive approach enables the EU to effectively address maritime security threats at and from sea, tackle the root causes and restore good governance (Council of the EU 2014: 9).

EU CB activities in Serbia are also recognised as a means to an end, in this case, peace, stability and human security. The EU defines support for good governance, integrity and sustainability of partner countries' security sectors as a way to achieve its overarching SSR-related goal, which is to help make states more stable and individuals more secure (European Commission and High Representative 2016). Other donors also emphasise similar goals for Serbia (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2014: 3–4). In Bosnia, CB is associated with improving overall security in the country, civilian oversight of the security sector, strengthening the rule of law,<sup>32</sup> but also strengthening the capacities of state level institutions.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> With notable exceptions: see Interview BH13.

<sup>31</sup> Interview BH07; see also Interview BH02.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews BH02, BH09, BH11 and BH14.

<sup>33</sup> Interview BH03.

In other cases too, CB takes place on the assumption of a positive and reciprocal relationship between peace, democracy, development and security (Council of the EU 2015: 2–3; Department of State *et al.* 2010: 1; OBP n.d.; Stabilisation Unit 2014: 5–6). It is concerned not just with the strengthening of specific capacities in a purely operational sense, but also with normative questions about how such capacities should best be employed, managed and governed against a wider framework of democratic governance, state-building and reform. In conception and potential therefore, CB is both highly ambitious and deeply normative, albeit in a manner that nests within wider processes of reform and intervention on the part of both the donor community and local state concerned. It is also noteworthy that despite these assumptions, there are few internal and external assessments/evaluations as to how SSR CB programmes contribute to these stated goals.

Unlike in the Horn of Africa, in the Western Balkans there is an additional rationale for CB initiatives. Here, one of the main objectives of CB programmes is to ensure a closer alignment between the candidate countries and the EU and NATO as part of the Euro-Atlantic integration processes.<sup>34</sup> Thus, EU capacity-building programmes seek to ensure compliance with EU criteria in the areas of rule of law, the judiciary, administration and other chapters of the *acquis communautaire*. According to a Bosnian official:

part of the overall effort in BiH is to bring the administration, procedures and society overall more in-line with what's expected of a modern democracy [...] We're trying to satisfy the requirements of NATO and the EU at the same time, in terms of our procedures.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Donor interests vs. local needs*

While this agenda is often presented, at least implicitly, as being mutually beneficial to both donors and recipients, it can also be at odds with the priorities, practices and interests of the local actors concerned. At a minimum, there may be a fundamental difference in problem definition, or at least prioritisation, between local and international actors. A case in point here refers to the prioritisation of donors' security interests above the developmental needs of the local actors. For instance, concerns raised by the terrorist attacks in Western Europe have injected new impetus into strengthening local capacities to prevent violent extremism and illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans.<sup>36</sup> In the case of EULEX, the fact that EU member states pursue their own interests during the renewal of its mandate was criticised as a potential distraction from its core mission.<sup>37</sup> An interviewee elaborated on this:

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<sup>34</sup> Interviews BH02, BH07 and BH09.

<sup>35</sup> Interview BH07.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews KS16 and SE04.

<sup>37</sup> Interview KS04.

For example, the member states and Brussels ask us to focus on illegal tobacco selling because it harms their revenues, whereas illegal wood cutting is the main thing funding organised crime here, but there's no interest in organised crime in Kosovo where it doesn't directly affect international interests.<sup>38</sup>

In the words of an international representative in Somaliland, each international donor has their own agenda and 'just wants quick wins', which might not always be in line with local interests. One consultant for a UK-funded external actor said "every organisation is protecting their funds and furthering their interests."<sup>39</sup> As stated by another consultant for an FCO-funded private contractor, "[the FCO's] projects always made sure that there was something in place for the interest of Britain."<sup>40</sup> In the Department for International Development (DfID) 2011–16 '*Somalia Operation Plan*', the police department was to be supported by "the construction of a prison facility in Mogadishu" (DFID 2014: 19). The construction of this prison facility, however, could be argued to forward British interests: having adequate local prisons to house inmates in line with human rights conventions allows for some prisoners to be repatriated from Britain. Moreover, while the stated aim for these improved systems and procedures is to allow for greater institutional accountability and legitimacy, there are also other interests these initiatives might serve. For instance, a private sub-contractor argued the aim might be to "ultimately serve the purpose of Somaliland being recognised."<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, the UK government military CB programmes, both in the Somalia National Army (SNA) and Somaliland Armed Forces (SAF), are shaped by an underlying focus on a UK national security agenda aimed at directly tackling terrorist activity. This is in line with the UK's *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review* of April 2015, which states that "we will work closely with our partners to increase their capacity to combat terrorism" (UK Government 2015: 57). According to an interviewee, the emphasis is always on "eliminating Al-Shabaab".<sup>42</sup> A senior Security Consultant of the MoD agreed that 'fighting Al-Shabaab' and clan militia groups was among the UK's priorities in Somalia.<sup>43</sup> CB in this area is therefore a product of a strong desire to weaken and destroy Al-Shabaab.

Another significant driver for international engagement in maritime CB in the region has been the problem of piracy in the Western Indian Ocean. These underlying concerns have persisted since the decline of endemic piracy in the region in 2013, as the mission statements of key international capacity builders illustrate (Council of the EU 2012: Art. 1; IMO 2015: 2; OBP n.d.; UNODC 2016). Such concerns are unsurprising in view of the disruption to global commerce caused by Somali piracy, which is estimated to have added an additional USD 5.7–6.1 billion in

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<sup>38</sup> Interview KS13.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews HA05 and HA15.

<sup>40</sup> Interview HA15.

<sup>41</sup> Interview HA15.

<sup>42</sup> Interview HA05.

<sup>43</sup> Interview HA03.

costs to the shipping industry in 2012 alone (Bellish 2013: 2). Even so, it is striking that local actors articulate a rather different set of priorities in relation to both the maritime arena and to national security more widely. In Somalia at least, the latter remains dominated by the Al-Shabaab insurgency in the south of the country and the ongoing political fragmentation of the Somali state. In contrast, the specific problem of piracy can often seem a relatively low priority for local actors, or even an unfair obsession by the international community. This is particularly the case given that many Somalis view piracy as a legitimate defensive response on the part of impoverished and disempowered coastal communities to rampant illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the dumping of hazardous waste by international actors (Samatar *et al.* 2010: 1384–1387).

By contrast, local actors attach considerably more importance to those aspects of the maritime CB agenda associated with blue growth<sup>44</sup> and human security. For example, anti-piracy activities are barely mentioned in Somaliland's key Five Year National Plan for 2012-16. Maritime CB is framed primarily in relation to issues of fisheries protection and the development of facilities and infrastructure at the Port of Berbera (Republic of Somaliland 2011: 74–76, 172–180). The Somali Maritime Resource and Security Strategy of 2014 places an even greater emphasis on marine resource protection and exploitation. Piracy is only mentioned once, and then as a subordinate issue to maritime crime, and as a problem that has reduced (Federal Republic of Somalia *et al.* 2013: 6). Instead, the most important maritime security risks and threats are identified as IUU fishing and illegal maritime dumping of waste, alongside “transnational terrorist groups, narcotics and human trafficking smugglers and transnational criminals” (Federal Republic of Somalia *et al.* 2013: 8). A similar balance of emphasis can be seen in the AU's Integrated Maritime Strategy for 2050, which, although it recognises a series of maritime security challenges including piracy, remains largely focused on blue growth issues (African Union 2012a).

There are also potential tensions between the normative aspects of the international CB agenda, and local preferences and practices. There are three aspects of friction in this respect. The first concerns the explicitly political normativities associated with key international actors' commitments to principles of democratic politics and good governance in their CB activities. This is clear in the case of the EU, which identifies the following principles underpinning CB: “promoting respect for international law, in particular humanitarian and human rights law, gender perspectives, UNSCR 1325, and principles of democracy and good governance is integral to these efforts” (Council of the EU 2016: 13). But this is also the case with other donors, in the case of UNDP activities in Ethiopia, the objective is to strengthen the “capacities for national actors in terms of promotion and protection of human rights, constitutional rights and access to

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<sup>44</sup> According to the European Commission, blue growth is “the long term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole.” The strategy contains three key components: (1) “Develop sectors that have a high potential for sustainable jobs and growth”, (2) “Essential components to provide knowledge, legal certainty and security in the blue economy”, and (3) “Sea basin strategies to ensure tailor-made measures and to foster cooperation between countries” (European Commission 2017b).

accountable justice” (UNCT Ethiopia 2012: 31). These normativities create considerable implementation challenges. Thus, for example, while states in the Horn of Africa are nascent democracies, they continue to face considerable challenges in consolidating and institutionalising democratic politics, which extend beyond the narrow problem space of the security sector alone. In this respect, the democratic and good governance aspects of the CB agenda are dependent on, conditioned by and mediated through wider process of political practice and development, over which international donors may have little influence (Edmunds 2014: 8–9).

Secondly, CB is also normative in that it tends to be premised on rationalist principles of organisational effectiveness, efficiency and planning. From a purely technical standpoint, such approaches may appear unproblematic and neutral. However, they can often be at odds with established local practices and ways of doing things, which may derive from informal, personalised and pragmatic approaches to problem solving (Bueger 2014: 21). Such tensions are particularly pronounced where formal institutions and practices of governance have been undermined by decades of civil war and state collapse. The danger here is that the prescriptions of the international CB agenda are so at variance with existing practices of governance that they become irrelevant to local circumstances, are counterproductive or undermined to such a degree that they become fundamentally compromised in practice (Edmunds 2014: 9). The manifestations of these tensions are explored in further detail in the second part of this report.

Finally, there is also a prevailing locally held perception that CB is another way of imposing a form of governance that is in effect liberal and western. For many of the interviewees in Bosnia, one of the main challenges was to change the ‘mindsets’ of those participating in CB programmes.<sup>45</sup> According to a local official, “CB is basically all about assimilating the norms, standards and values of the EU [...] it is about filling this framework with the essence, and that essence is democracy.”<sup>46</sup> That these strategies foster a shift towards a more liberal way of thinking and governance, a common Somali perception, can be illustrated by the UK’s attempts to increase the capacities of the MoD. At the moment in Somaliland, the Military General is appointed by the President and has no formal links to the MoD. While this CB programme is a way to increase the accountability of the military, it is also perceived as an attempt to replicate what is done in the West.

The discussion so far has focused on initiatives from the international organisations and western states. These have been conditioned by the rationales and normativities identified above, and might best be described as representing a liberal model of CB. However, there are also other competing actors, which do not share this model, including Russia and Turkey in the Western Balkans and Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Horn of Africa. In the latter case, Turkey has invested heavily in commercial and security infrastructure, including a major

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<sup>45</sup> Interviews BH02, BH18, BH19 and BH20.

<sup>46</sup> Interview BH02.

renovation of the Port of Mogadishu under the auspices of the Albayrak Group, as well as other projects such as road building (Ozkan and Orakci 2015). The UAE-based company DP World has been granted a 30-year concession to run and develop the Port of Berbera in Somaliland, reportedly on the basis of potential investment plans of USD 442 million (Gulf News 2016), including plans to build a military base on a 25 year lease (Osman 2017). The UAE has also donated boats to the Somaliland coastguard and provided financial support to the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF), with whom the EU does not officially work due to its controversial human rights record.<sup>47</sup> The Turkish and UAE initiatives depart from the liberal model in that they do not include commitments to governance reform or the other conditionalities discussed above. Nor have they been coordinated through the UN. Instead, they have taken place primarily for reasons of commercial, strategic or other national interests, and in the context of significant contractual, financial and political opacity (Gullo 2012; Reuters 2014). In this respect they offer an alternative, and in many ways oppositional and even competing, approach to the liberal model that is promoted by western actors and many international organisations.

#### 4. LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING IN PRACTICE: THE RECORD SO FAR

The picture of CB activity in the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa is complex and multifaceted. The donor sector includes a wide range of different international actors and organisations, and of different divisions and agencies within them. The local level too exhibits a significant degree of complexity. In this context, and despite the various efforts and resources that have been devoted to it, CB has not been a straightforward or unproblematic activity. The following section explores these tensions through themes of effectiveness, sustainability, local ownership and legitimacy.

##### *Effectiveness*

Assessing the effectiveness of CB programmes in these two regions is complicated by a number of considerations. A first issue when assessing the effectiveness of local CB is the fact that there are no agreed methodological tools for assessing effectiveness. While the use of quantitative and qualitative assessment procedures and indicators have become standard in the development and security field, they are not always clear or transparent, even for the international staff administering these projects.<sup>48</sup> In general, we lack evidence regarding the impact of capacity-building programmes on issues such as quality of service delivery, increased responsiveness, accountability or conflict resolution (see Barsky 2008; Eade 2007; Honadle 1981; Mcloughlin and Scott 2014). Another issue refers to the fact that it is also difficult to monitor the medium and long term impact of CB programmes once the programmes have been

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<sup>47</sup> Interview HA12.

<sup>48</sup> Interviews KS13 and SE05.

completed, due to a lack of resources.<sup>49</sup> Sometimes there are resources for alumni events or conferences bringing together participants in previously held trainings, for instance, but this seems to be more of an exception than the rule.<sup>50</sup> In most cases, however, local stakeholders are not asked to provide feedback on internationally led programmes, or the evaluation reports are not shared with the local partners.<sup>51</sup>

The sectoral focus of many of these activities also tends to simplify what is a very complex reality. For instance, the maritime arena is only one, comparatively narrow, component of a much wider series of processes of political change, peacebuilding and state reformation in the region as a whole. Despite the sometimes rather grand ambitions and rationales implied by its link to governance reform and security building, maritime CB cannot function as the driver of these wider changes in and of itself, and, in many ways, is dependent upon them for its success. Such tensions point to a wider and ongoing dilemma faced by all such initiatives, at least in their liberal guise; that these activities are, in conception, holistic in nature and require a comprehensive approach (European Commission 2013). In the case of maritime CB, it comprises all elements of the maritime sector – from fisheries, to coastguards to port police and infrastructure, and addresses not only the operational capacities of organisations, but also the wider administrative, governance and judicial systems in which they sit and on which they are dependent. The rationale for what the EU calls comprehensive or integrated approach appears sound: an effective police force or coastguard will only be of limited utility if the suspects they arrest cannot be processed and tried by an ineffective judicial system, or if their staff are not paid due to a dysfunctional human resource management system in the Ministry responsible for their salaries.

The very ambition of this holistic agenda means that it has been difficult to implement in practice, particularly given the relative complexity and diversity of the problem. Indeed, one of the most common criticisms of such projects is that there has been a lack of effective coordination in the conception, planning and implementation of individual initiatives, leading to duplication, redundancy and occasional irrelevance. As such, CB initiatives have tended to manifest as discrete, technically separate activities, rather than as part of a strategically coherent, coordinated endeavour.<sup>52</sup> One obvious reason for this weakness concerns the sheer number of donors involved. The Somali Maritime Resource and Security Strategy of 2013, for example, acknowledges the assistance of 17 international organisations and eight bilateral donors in its preamble (Federal Republic of Somalia *et al.* 2013: 3). Very often, donors earmark resources for the same activity and then compete over delivery, as was the case between Axiom International and EUCAP Nestor in training the Somaliland Coastguard on how to use their

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<sup>49</sup> Interviews BH10, SE05 and SE06.

<sup>50</sup> Interviews SE04 and SE09.

<sup>51</sup> Interviews BH03, BH05, BH10 and BH12.

<sup>52</sup> DL 6.2, 'Policy paper on coordination of local CB', will focus specifically on the issue of coherence and coordination. DL 6.2 will be available after its submission on 31 May 2018. Once available, it can be accessed at: <https://eu-civcap.net/portfolio/deliverables/>.

newly built HQs in Hargeisa.<sup>53</sup> This lack of coordination has led to frustration among local stakeholders. An official in the Somaliland Ministry of Interior noted that the “key challenge” in implementing programmes has been overlap between them and lack of coordination between donors.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, an official in the Somaliland Coastguard observed that there was significant overlap between programmes.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps a deeper problem underpinning complaints about overlap and duplication of activities is a lack of strategic coherence among donors about what CB is attempting to achieve, and how it is to go about doing so. This problem was reported in all the cases surveyed in this report. At a minimum, each donor has their own goals and mission parameters, and each is responsible to its own mandate or contract rather than to the entire international CB project. An interviewee from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made this point and emphasised that “nations have different interests in Somalia.”<sup>56</sup> According to another interviewee, “you might see a UN agency and EU funded project which do not have the same objective. It is because they did not look into our priorities or look into what we have or have not.”<sup>57</sup>

Second, the implementation itself and the lack of collaboration between actors give cause for concern. Many of the interviewees expressed frustration about having to integrate and accommodate varying approaches:

Training the national army is very challenging, particularly when different countries are trying to help, all with different military training approaches – the key challenge is how we integrate such a variety of training approaches and get a cohesive, trained national army. There is significant policy difference between the actors that are providing trainings.<sup>58</sup>

An exception to this frustration in relations between the international and the local occurred where there was a mediating party – generally staffed by internationally educated locals. These individuals speak the language of the donors – figuratively and literally—whilst having a better grasp of local needs than the external actors did. One such organisation in Kosovo served as a local conduit for donor funds through its re-granting function. In response to a question about whether they had experienced any problems with coordination and duplication, they highlighted the institutional complexity and hierarchy within the EU as a key problem. Coordination with USAID was also said to be difficult.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Interview HA15; see also Interviews BH10 and BH11.

<sup>54</sup> Interview HA03.

<sup>55</sup> Interview HA01.

<sup>56</sup> Interview HA04.

<sup>57</sup> Interview HA07.

<sup>58</sup> Interview HA03.

<sup>59</sup> Interview KS09.

In particular, it was highlighted that the continually changing expectations of donors meant that NGOs would have to change their programme proposals from issues that they were expert in to issues that they had no experience in addressing. For example, one organisation noted that they had seen environmental NGOs applying to run gender programmes when they had no experience, let alone expertise, in doing so.<sup>60</sup> In Bosnia another interviewee mentioned that because of donors' current focus, every programme being offered at the moment has to somehow address challenges faced by Roma communities, "even if this was not ever intended, or if it wouldn't work."<sup>61</sup> Another interviewee in Kosovo, who ran a development consultancy, related this contradiction to a lack of government ownership over the development efforts: "The government should identify the gap in what they're providing and then ask donors to fill that gap. But this doesn't happen."<sup>62</sup>

However, there are also tensions between the transformative ambitions of the agenda as a whole, and the specific praxis of what can be accomplished with available resources, within the timescales of the projects concerned, and in the context of the specific organisational requirements of the particular organisation or sector whose capacity is being built. As a consequence, many initiatives have been rather limited in scale and specific in scope. This also refers to the issue of sustainability, which is discussed below. With only two years between each mission renewal period for EULEX,<sup>63</sup> EULEX personnel had relatively little time to focus on their work. One EULEX representative commented: "We're mandate-delimited on two-year mandates. The mandate change occurs in June and then the reconfiguration is completed in November. So we have only a 20-month cycle before the next change."<sup>64</sup> Timeframes were a broader issue for NGOs in Kosovo too. With little core funding available to NGOs, they operated in a precarious state and were unable to plan strategically for the medium- to long-term. Their reliance on grants for programmes meant that they were actively encouraged to produce proposals for new activities, rather than repeat funding for programmes that had already been shown to be successful.<sup>65</sup> Lack of stable sources of funding did not only stunt strategy formulation; it also distorted the job market for high calibre individuals: "You build capacities and then you lose them."<sup>66</sup> In the Serbian case, it was noted that the lack of money for Serbian institutions to cover additional costs of CB activities (for instance, per diems for seminars participants) was problematic.<sup>67</sup> In Bosnia, the lack of resources was perceived as 'capacity destroying', preventing local actors from effectively implementing internationally sponsored reforms.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Interview KS15.

<sup>61</sup> Interview BH06.

<sup>62</sup> Interview KS07.

<sup>63</sup> Interviews KS05, KS06 and KS10.

<sup>64</sup> Interview KS13.

<sup>65</sup> Interview KS08.

<sup>66</sup> Interview KS12.

<sup>67</sup> Interview SE09.

<sup>68</sup> Interviews BH02, BH07, BH12 and BH20.

EUCAP Nestor, for its part, has provided the Somaliland Coastguard with equipment and while such donations are helpful in their own terms, particularly given the low basis of capacity that local actors are often working from, they fall short of providing the level of capability that is required if it is to function effectively as envisaged.<sup>69</sup> As one EUCAP Nestor official put it: “mentoring, monitoring and advising is a multiplication factor of what’s already there. When you have nothing in place, you multiply zero by zero. And you can multiply from here to infinity, it will always be zero.”<sup>70</sup> According to an EU assessment of its own training mission in Somalia (EUTM), the living conditions and teaching facilities in the Jazeera Training Camp in Mogadishu, where the mission was based, “for a long time were inadequate. Their improvement, including construction works, took a considerable amount of time, while the basic support (e.g. water, food, beds, mattresses and blankets) was lacking. These gaps had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the training and carried a reputational cost for the EU” (European Commission 2015: 6). The feeling that the current training programmes are insufficient in the absence of hard capabilities is universally shared among local stakeholders as well. In the words of a Somaliland official, “if you train people and the resources are not there, it’s useless. After the training, people return to empty offices and to projects that have to be implemented in which the resources are not there.”<sup>71</sup>

Where the equipment or infrastructure is available, there are underlying skills deficits among local actors that prevent them from making good use of the equipment they do have. One key donor noted that the first few months of their training programmes (in Somaliland and wider Somalia) are often focused on inculcating basic skills in students, such as learning how to swim.<sup>72</sup> Locals also complain that some of the training with which they are provided is partial and demonstrates a lack of trust. For example, while a range of different donors are active in teaching boat-handling skills and so on to local coastguards, certain essential skills – most notably boarding techniques – were omitted because of a lingering suspicion about their potential use in piracy activities.<sup>73</sup>

Fundamentally, donor programmes have been limited by the sheer scale of the challenge presented by the local environment, where acute shortages of skills, equipment and resources are the norm. A UNDP official has pointed to challenges that are related to low levels of capacities at the beginning of the project and little knowledge to build on. Therefore, project take-off and the first phase of the programme require patience as setbacks are usual.<sup>74</sup> This is how one insider described a meeting during which a EUCAP Nestor official suggested a new command structure to the Somaliland coastguard leadership: “The locals were only listening; they didn’t ask a single question. Most of them had an extremely poor command of English [...].

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<sup>69</sup> Interview HA09.

<sup>70</sup> Interview HA08.

<sup>71</sup> Interview HA16.

<sup>72</sup> Interview HA07.

<sup>73</sup> Interview HA17.

<sup>74</sup> Interview ET01.

They didn't really get what was said. Finally, they promised that they will take a look at this and they never implemented the structure."<sup>75</sup> Many local stakeholders will attend training or workshops for the per diems for example, but do not take it seriously.<sup>76</sup> It is even common for ministries or departments to send friends or other clan members who do not even work with them to the trainings, to achieve the numbers required. Additionally, many of the trainings are not appropriate for the local environment and learning is not therefore transferable to the workplace.<sup>77</sup> For example, EUCAP Nestor gave a three-day workshop on how to run an effective coastguard using the Dutch model, which is worlds away from the police, social and security context within which the Somali Coastguard operates, with piracy being a key challenge. Some trainings are necessary but ineffective, others still are simply unnecessary. With the latter, there is more pressure to convince people to attend. EUCAP Nestor has been known to offer attendees over 50 dollars per day. This is in contrast to some of the UK programmes where attendees receive no financial compensation (e.g. the Somaliland Security and Justice Sector Reform Programme). This lack of consistency can cause problems and create unrealistically high standards for training programme remuneration.<sup>78</sup>

The value of training and scholarships for individuals was also questioned in Kosovo: "I've attended about six trainings on CB in the past decade and not a single one has really taught me anything."<sup>79</sup> As far as scholarships were concerned, the EU and other institutions appeared to be putting the cart before the horse insofar as it was training people to a high level without increasing employment opportunities in Kosovo.<sup>80</sup> Where training workshops took place as part of a wider CB programme, actors did not appear to be motivated to attend, at least in part because they felt that they had completed numerous similar trainings before. In a number of instances, their attendance was partially or entirely mercenary. This is particularly evident in the case of Kosovo, where workshops have been held outside the country – in neighbouring Albania, for example – thus allowing those in public service to claim additional fees whilst abroad, such as *per diems*.<sup>81</sup>

Local institutional and political realities have also impinged upon the effectiveness of these projects. Slow administrative procedures in Serbia impede the implementation of set activities.<sup>82</sup> In Bosnia, the complex institutional set-up of the country as a result of the Dayton Agreement complicates the nature of CB in the security sector.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the legacies of war, corruption, and the possibility for the three ethnic parties to veto any reform introduce other major hurdles.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, the Serbian-Kosovo dispute has also had an impact on CB projects in the

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<sup>75</sup> Interview HA15.

<sup>76</sup> Interview HA07.

<sup>77</sup> See also Interviews BH10 and BH12.

<sup>78</sup> Interview HA17.

<sup>79</sup> Interview KS12.

<sup>80</sup> Interview KS01.

<sup>81</sup> Interviews KS09.

<sup>82</sup> Interview SE09.

<sup>83</sup> Interviews BH02, BH05 and BH12.

<sup>84</sup> Interview BH06.

Western Balkans. There has been increased ambition on behalf of international actors to opt for regional rather than national-level CB projects.<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, Serbia does not recognise Kosovo's independence and the MoD, for instance, seems to have red lines when accepting invitations to regional trainings and conferences.<sup>86</sup> Even civil society projects promoting alternative peacebuilding between Serbia and Kosovo are likely to suffer from spikes and tensions, as participants are reluctant to travel.<sup>87</sup>

In the case of Ethiopia, due to the restrictive Charities and Societies Proclamation, CSF II was designed as a domestic fund to bypass the prohibition of international funding of certain local CSO's in the governance sector. However, the selection of prospective beneficiaries is still conducted by an evaluation committee consisting of the EU Delegation, Ethiopian government officials and external assessors. Thus, undesired CSO's that potentially 'threaten' the official Ethiopian development agenda will most likely be excluded from funding and support under the CSF II Fund. Ethiopian selection of CSOs is the political price that is being paid for the added value of CSF II as the "only donor-funded project [that] can support these organisations with a significant fund."<sup>88</sup> As a result, support for 'non-desired' CSOs has stopped. Actors that previously worked in the sector were forced to shut down their local offices and withdraw from the field. Other donors were also facing similar problems: political foundations' programmes, such as the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation programmes on capacity development for political organisations were put on hold as local partners faced severe punishment for interacting with "foreign forces".<sup>89</sup>

For their part, local actors recognise these challenges, and at one level appear to value all the help they can get. Respondents were cautiously positive about these programmes on their own terms, noting for example that: "The help we receive from donors is our lifeline",<sup>90</sup> and that "our capability is slowly growing".<sup>91</sup> One respondent estimated, that "around 40 per cent" of programmes were effective,<sup>92</sup> while another suggested that there had been some successes, but there would have been more with better coordination and a focus on local needs.<sup>93</sup> Set against these positive views, there was also a common feeling among all the respondents that donor programmes were insufficiently ambitious to meet the scale of the challenge faced on the ground, and in the face of the wider economic and governance challenges facing these countries.<sup>94</sup> More specifically, there was a general lack of patience with donor initiatives that do not result in concrete outcomes. In particular, this impatience was directed towards what were

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<sup>85</sup> Interviews SE01, SE07 and SE09.

<sup>86</sup> Interview SE09.

<sup>87</sup> Interview SE07.

<sup>88</sup> Interview ET03.

<sup>89</sup> Interview ET04.

<sup>90</sup> Interview HA02.

<sup>91</sup> Interview HA01.

<sup>92</sup> Interview HA03.

<sup>93</sup> Interview HA01.

<sup>94</sup> Interviews HA02, HA03, HA04 and HA05.

seen as multiple and often duplicated exercises in strategic planning and assessment, and – again multiple and often duplicated – workshops, meetings and conferences.<sup>95</sup> In contrast, those initiatives that were most valued were those that delivered capacities that would remain in place once the donors had left. This included equipment and, particularly, infrastructure.

In sum, any assessment of the effectiveness of international CB activities thus needs to be set in context. In particular, they have simply not yet taken place on the scale – or yet over the timescales – necessary to inculcate transformative change in what are often still very weak states that are attempting to build these capacities from scratch. Where they have had an impact, it has been limited to the specific cohort or project concerned, in a piecemeal fashion, rather than across the sector as a whole.

### *Sustainability*

Sustainability is considered to be a key issue as far as CB is concerned. According to European Commission guidelines, a prerequisite for sustainable results is “considerable investment in a partner-led identification and formulation of the CD programme and of the support that this programme may require” (European Commission 2009: 11). For the EU in Ethiopia, the sustainability of the CSF II programme is ensured by building capacities of grantees to diversify financial resources to sustain and scale-up project results. This is to be achieved by education on EU-EDF procedures, project components that aim to develop domestic resource mobilisation strategies or facilitating buy-in from other stakeholders or the government. In the case of German capacity-development activities in Ethiopia, the SLM has been designed in close cooperation with Ethiopian Ministries and administration.

In the case of Bosnia, an example of sustainable project was the Peace Support Operations Training Centre – PSOTC – which was an international project consisting of 12 countries helping Bosnia to develop capacity for training its own personnel before being deployed to Peace Support Operations. In the past five years, it has become completely self-sustaining, it has turned into a Bosnian structure, and now hosts international officers from several countries (particularly from the Western Balkans). The centre has been given NATO certification, there are two courses which are EU and UN certified, and at the end of 2016, it hosted a big international conference with 65 participating countries.<sup>96</sup> Another example of successful sustainable reform is the establishment of the higher judicial and prosecutorial council.<sup>97</sup>

There are two elements of vulnerability in relation to sustainability, however. The first concerns the sometimes-finite nature of donor projects, budgets and personnel appointments. Such initiatives are often self-contained, in the sense that they are conceived and implemented on

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<sup>95</sup> Interview HA10.

<sup>96</sup> Interview BH02.

<sup>97</sup> Interview BH09.

the basis of producing a specific deliverable, whether that is the delivery of strategic advice, a training programme or equipment donation. Even if these activities are successful on their own terms, they may founder over time if they are not sustained by appropriate follow-on support, or if they create isolated islands of capacity in otherwise unreformed organisations.<sup>98</sup> For instance, some of the respondents noted that the donation of equipment, such as boats or computers, would have little impact if subsequent training was not provided for how these should be used. And vice versa, many training programmes provide the skills, but not the equipment.<sup>99</sup> For instance, it was noted that much of the training is of little use if the resources required are not available in the workplace.<sup>100</sup> As one EUCAP Nestor staff member put it, the knowledge the coastguard receives “will be lost because they are not going to the sea. My advice would be to give them boats and then train them. Otherwise it’s useless.”<sup>101</sup>

This also refers both to the security sector institutions’ inclination to maintain practices established in the course of CB programmes and civil society initiatives towards the security sector in the follow-up of completed projects. A good example may be work on gender mainstreaming in the security sector in Serbia, mostly focused on drafting and executing the National Action Plan for Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 Women, Peace and Security. Between 2009 and 2013, international actors worked directly with Serbian security sector institutions and allocated grants for civil society projects regarding gender and security.<sup>102</sup> However, with international actors withdrawing or shifting their funding to other topics, gender and security seems to be going ‘out of fashion’.

This weak sustainability can also be linked to the inability to ensure local ownership and genuine legitimacy of gender mainstreaming. Some interviewees argued that it was pressure from international donors and civil society – which was receiving funding from the same donors – or simple opportunism that was behind Serbian institutions’ interest in gender mainstreaming in the first place.<sup>103</sup> According to a Serbian civil society representative, the problem was that the international actors either directly funded the government activities (“the government may have had ownership of the policy, but it did not have ownership of the money”) or supported civil society organisations to implement the activities foreseen in the National Action Plan (NAP) instead of the national institutions. Once the external funding ceased, the government did not have a genuine interest in further implementing UNSCR 1325, which is best indicated by the fact that the adoption of the new NAP is delayed.<sup>104</sup> According to a representative of an international actor in Serbia, honest baseline analysis is key to future sustainability of CB initiatives.<sup>105</sup> This resonates with the assessment of a government representative that the

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<sup>98</sup> Interview BH03.

<sup>99</sup> Interview HA01.

<sup>100</sup> Interview HA16.

<sup>101</sup> Interview HA15.

<sup>102</sup> Interview SE10.

<sup>103</sup> Interviews SE02 and SE04.

<sup>104</sup> Interview SE10.

<sup>105</sup> Interview SE05.

successful twinning projects are those whose capacities are in line with the general practice of Serbian institutions.<sup>106</sup>

In Somalia, many of the CB projects are also short-term and have suffered similar sustainability problems. EU mission mandates are limited to one year, for example. Such a high project turnover rate combined with a donor-led approach offers little scope for sustainability. Most are conceived overseas by external actors with their own ideas of what they want to do, regardless of what has been done in the past, what has worked, what has not and what the current needs are.<sup>107</sup> Locals see the same types of projects time and again and, while international actors claim impact, local stakeholders are simply of the belief that 'something is better than nothing'. Another locally held view, this time in Bosnia, is that much of the CB has the opposite effect and increases dependency because there is no motivation for local actors to try and resource their own equipment or train up their own staff effectively and at their own expense.<sup>108</sup>

Second, wider structural impediments may blunt the impact of individual projects. Specific successes in training personnel will only have a limited influence if those same personnel are not then employed in positions for which they have been trained, for reasons of organisational politics or even simply a lack of communication, awareness in the institution concerned. Such problems have been apparent in Somalia, where many appointments to positions of responsibility within organisations, such as the coastguard, are determined by clan politics or informal power-sharing agreements rather than technical expertise or relevant qualifications.<sup>109</sup> This is also a recurrent problem in Serbia, where frequent personnel changes mean that new contact persons are introduced after new elections. This is especially troubling since effectiveness of communications between Serbian institutions and international actors hinges on personal relationships.<sup>110</sup>

Another problem is the absence of experts in civil service where decision-making is centralised and in the hands of politically appointed ministers. As one EUCAP Nestor official explained: "There is no middle in their bureaucracy. In my home country you engage civil servants because with politicians you don't have the continuity [...] In Somalia you don't have that. All the people that work now might disappear after the next elections."<sup>111</sup>

In the case of Serbia, the security sector institutions are also highly centralised to the point where every time a mid-level civil servant is invited to participate in a workshop, the minister has to authorise it.<sup>112</sup> These difficulties are indicative of the wider tension, discussed above, between the donors' often holistic ambitions for reform, local circumstance, and the narrow,

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<sup>106</sup> Interview SE03.

<sup>107</sup> Interview BH10.

<sup>108</sup> Interviews BH02 and BH15.

<sup>109</sup> Interview HA01.

<sup>110</sup> Interview SE01.

<sup>111</sup> Interview HA07.

<sup>112</sup> Interview SE01.

specialist or organisationally specific demands of the CB agenda in practice. They also illustrate the pitfalls of assuming that individual reforms will be sustained by formalised principles of organisational effectiveness, in societies that may operate very differently in practice.

Problems of sustainability are even worse when it comes to civil society, which largely depends on international funding. Civil society has not been able to reach government funding or effectively persuade private sector into supporting its initiatives.<sup>113</sup> With the increasing tendency among some international donors to withdraw from the Western Balkans, the extent to which NGOs will be able to continue operating is questionable.<sup>114</sup> Another major issue is the sustainability of particular initiatives undertaken by civil society, such as gender mainstreaming or transitional justice. Most interviewees agreed that Bosnian and Serbian NGOs are donor-driven in their working agenda, at least to a certain extent.<sup>115</sup> This means they are unlikely to uphold their work in specific fields once the project grants have expired and need to achieve the continuity necessary for longer-term impact. On the positive side, a representative of the international community pointed out that the Western Balkans in general has gradually garnered considerable expertise, which could further be shared through South-South cooperation.<sup>116</sup>

Donor-dependency was particularly acute in Kosovo, where civil society organisations were unable to survive without donor grants;<sup>117</sup> one academic with a long career in civil society organisations commented, “Even now, the civil society organisations here aren’t sustainable. Even the best ones are pretty much 100% funded by donors.”<sup>118</sup> Worse, the EU responded to this ineffectively: by providing bigger grants in the hope of achieving more impact, it prevented smaller local NGOs from applying for funding (even though these small projects had a proportionately larger impact).<sup>119</sup> The lack of awareness was due to poor impact measurement; one representative of an external actor commented:

Measuring success—the benchmarking is fairly weak. One of the indicators in most cases would be the number of meetings between KP North and KP South, or the number of pieces of intelligence collected by the police: these are pretty meaningless. What we’re doing isn’t sustainable: I’m not sure training has been passed on or passed down.<sup>120</sup>

Without the ability of government to contribute as a donor due to the need for civil society to appear politically impartial,<sup>121</sup> the problems for international trainers and donors alike merged

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<sup>113</sup> Interview SE07.

<sup>114</sup> Interviews BH02, BH03, BH06, BH14 and BH17.

<sup>115</sup> Interviews SE02, SE05, SE07 and SE08.

<sup>116</sup> Interview SE04.

<sup>117</sup> Interview KS03; see also Interview BH16.

<sup>118</sup> Interview KS12.

<sup>119</sup> Interview KS15.

<sup>120</sup> Interview KS13.

<sup>121</sup> Interview KS12.

around a lack of understanding of the problems at hand and how to deal with them effectively, but also a deeper issue: a lack of understanding about how their programmes, or funds, were changing the situation.<sup>122</sup> Bearing this in mind, wherever the Kosovo government did not decide on how money was used, internationals – including EU officials – would decide on its behalf.<sup>123</sup> This was linked to a broader, difficult issue: that without genuine local ownership, sustainability could not exist.<sup>124</sup>

### *Local ownership*

Underpinning many of these problems of effectiveness and sustainability is the question of 'local ownership'; or the extent to which the demands of the CB agenda are 'owned' by the institutions and political communities in which they take place, both in terms of formulation and implementation of projects. Almost all donors recognise the importance of local ownership in CB projects, at least rhetorically. Thus, for example, the EU Toolkit states that projects must be owned by those who seek to develop their capacity; "otherwise it simply does not happen". According to this document, local partners should be in the driving seat in the design of projects "to such a degree that their ownership and commitment remains intact or even boosted" (European Commission 2011: 9). Similar views are expressed by other donors (DANIDA 2014: 5; United Nations Development Group 2006: 5). Consultations and involvement in decision-making are means to foster local and national ownership. Moreover, local partners tend to feel a "strong sense of ownership of initiatives when their own systems and procedures are used for implementing programmes and projects" (UNDP 2009: 29). AU/NEPAD takes a more radical position in putting local ownership on a level with condemnation of external intervention. Ownership as a principle is "an imperative that must neither be compromised nor be determined by external parties" (African Union and NEPAD Agency 2010: 5).

In relation to SSR, the EU's strategic framework emphasises "the participation of all stakeholders" and the importance of "inclusive consultation processes" as baseline principles for its SSR initiatives. The same document notes that to be "applicable and effective", programmes should be "developed on the basis of nationally owned processes", and that "[r]eform efforts will be effective and sustainable only if they are rooted in a country's institutions [...] owned by national security and justice actors, and considered legitimate by society as a whole" (European Commission and High Representative 2016: 5, 7).<sup>125</sup> The UK's Building Stability Overseas Strategy also notes the importance of "effective local politics and strong mechanisms which weave people into the fabric of decision making" (HM Government 2011: 12). In this vein, an international official in Bosnia argued that the job of international organisations in the country should be:

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<sup>122</sup> Interview KS13.

<sup>123</sup> Interview KS07.

<sup>124</sup> Interview KS14.

<sup>125</sup> In relation to the Horn of Africa, see also Council of the EU (2011: 2).

to enable people to stand on their own two feet [...] Very often they [our Bosnian partners] would give up and say, 'We can't do this, we need your help.' But we'll turn around and say, 'Our help will help you do it, but we won't do it for you.' [...] It's about enabling ownership.<sup>126</sup>

Despite these multiple commitments, the reality of local ownership is often more questionable. There are differences, however, depending on the context with (lack of) local ownership being more of an issue in Somalia/Somaliland, where state capacities are weaker. In the Serbian and Bosnian contexts, for instance, some international actors' representatives suggest that the institutions they cooperate with would approach them with particular demands or they agree on what programmes are required in communication with local partners.<sup>127</sup> At the same time, international actors do have agendas of their own, with particular topics or capacities to be developed which they regard as important.<sup>128</sup> An example of 'meeting halfway' could be the practice of the UK bilateral cooperation with the Serbian MoD, in which the UK Embassy annually sends to the MoD a list of proposed CB activities. The MoD disseminates this list to its organisational units, which decide whether they are interested in taking up particular activities or not, before the MoD responds to the UK Embassy. The list is prepared based on the previous bilateral cooperation plans. It could happen that the UK wants to work with Serbian the MoD on certain areas, but the MoD shows no interest in such cooperation, so no CB is planned, as was the case recently with cyber security.<sup>129</sup> In some cases, such as gender and security, it may be that Serbian institutions officially propose cooperation, but with the international donors' agendas in mind. In other cases, Serbian institutions did not really know what they needed even when they had an opportunity to communicate their needs to international partners.<sup>130</sup> According to a Serbian government representative, it took time before Serbian institutions realised that "foreign consultants were there for them, to help them and not just communicate the knowledge they came with and to collect their pay cheques."<sup>131</sup> Likewise, a Bosnian official argued that "there is enough external assistance available, but we're not ready to use it."<sup>132</sup> But there were also many complaints for not involving local stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of projects.<sup>133</sup>

By contrast, Somali respondents were nearly unanimous in their view that CB projects were driven by donors, with very little involvement of local actors in either the planning or the assessment of projects.<sup>134</sup> Thus, for example, a Somali Coastguard official noted that locals have a "very limited role in shaping the planning and deliver of programmes", that "external actors

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<sup>126</sup> Interview BH09.

<sup>127</sup> Interviews BH04, SE01, SE02, SE04, SE05 and SE09.

<sup>128</sup> Interviews SE01, SE02, SE04 and SE09.

<sup>129</sup> Interview SE09.

<sup>130</sup> Interview SE02.

<sup>131</sup> Interview SE03.

<sup>132</sup> Interview BH07; see also Interview BH11.

<sup>133</sup> Interviews BH03, BH07, BH11 and BH15.

<sup>134</sup> Interviews HA02, HA03, HA05 and HA06.

do not listen to us – they come with their plans and implement”, and that donors “do not value local knowledge.”<sup>135</sup> There is a strong feeling that external actors ‘do things their own way’ and that Somalia’s priorities are not always considered; “it is frustrating when a programme that the country (Somalia) thinks would be better is turned down in favour of a programme that might not be priority or even necessary.”<sup>136</sup> A Senior Security Consultant at the Ministry of Defence expressed his discontent at the country’s’ inability to fulfil its own security and military needs: “It is frustrating that you do not have the capabilities to train your own army, and it is more frustrating when countries who are supposed to focus on your priorities do not want to listen.”<sup>137</sup> Other respondents noted that, while local involvement in the planning process was a key element for the success of programmes,<sup>138</sup> there was a “lack of communication between locals and external stakeholders”<sup>139</sup> and that “the impact is not felt, because everything is top down.”<sup>140</sup> In general, the picture is one of local actors who engage with external programmes, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, but who feel left out of the processes through which these activities are conceived, developed and evaluated. There was also a strong feeling that the locals did not have a choice in the matter as they were too dependent on external resources.<sup>141</sup>

In the development sector, local ownership is considered by the majority of interviewees as a key element to improve the sustainability and legitimacy of the initiatives. Despite the consensus of the role of local ownership in general, the practical implementation of the approach differs in terms of timing and scope. In the case of EU programmes in Ethiopia, local ownership is considered a basic element of CSFII as it targets local organisations. Those grantees are to some extent consulted for new phases of programmes in the formulation and development circle. Some of the decisions are endorsed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as a government counterpart, the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) including civil society representatives. In addition, local grantees and the PSC play a role in midterm and final evaluations. But the current EU practice of involving local partners at a later stage of consultations has been criticised by interviewees.<sup>142</sup> Due to current EU organisational procedures, project proposals are not discussed with local partners before they are formally agreed on by relevant EU institutions. It is this practice that hampers effective and sustainable local ownership. This also affects other policy areas such as CSDP. In the case of EUCAP Nestor, the mission was agreed by all member states without being discussed with affected states. No local consultation had taken place until the initiative was presented by the EU to the countries in the region. In the end, several states refused to host for the mission (e.g. Djibouti and

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<sup>135</sup> Interview HA01.

<sup>136</sup> Interview HA04.

<sup>137</sup> Interview HA03.

<sup>138</sup> Interview HA02.

<sup>139</sup> Interview HA04.

<sup>140</sup> Interview HA01.

<sup>141</sup> Interview HA07.

<sup>142</sup> Interview ET02.

Kenya).<sup>143</sup> Occasionally, the 'rally for local partners' also rules out smaller implementing agencies that neither have the financial nor the political leverage.<sup>144</sup>

The reasons for these problems are multiple, and mirror similar experiences with similar initiatives in other post-conflict environments, on land as well as at sea (Edmunds 2014, 9-10). Among the most notable concerns are the difficulties of developing close relationships with local actors and gaining local country knowledge when donor postings and projects may only be short term in nature. This is particularly the case in environments where local power structures and ways of doing things may be informal and take place in parallel to, rather than within, formal institutional structures and procedures. For instance, external judges and other incoming EULEX staff were said to be ill-prepared for the roles they were due to take-up; it was often their first time in the Balkans, and most had no knowledge of Kosovo or the region.<sup>145</sup> A Serbian government representative complained that many foreign consultants who came to work with Serbian institutions came with prejudices about Serbia, including expectations that the country was starting from zero.<sup>146</sup> Bosnian interviewees also complained about the high rotational turnaround of international staff and the lack of local knowledge, including knowledge of the local language.<sup>147</sup> Only some of the training material is translated into Bosnian, for instance.<sup>148</sup> In the words of a local expert in Somaliland, "one of the biggest weaknesses of EUCAP Nestor is that they don't understand the local context, the dynamics of the institutions that they work in."<sup>149</sup> Other interviewees expressed the same frustrations.<sup>150</sup> Under such circumstances, building knowledge of local needs and practices – and even of the key stakeholders for any given project – can be difficult to accomplish on a short timescale. As explained by an official of the Attorney General Office of Somaliland: "Most of the EUCAP Nestor staff are not local. They don't hire local staff. By the time they get a certain degree of understanding of the local context, they leave the mission."<sup>151</sup> Certainly, local respondents in Somalia bemoaned the apparent lack of local knowledge among donors, noting that they "do not know much about this country."<sup>152</sup> Even the role of diaspora Somalis as interlocutors was criticised because they had been out of the country for too long to really understand local circumstances, needs and structures.<sup>153</sup>

Such difficulties can be compounded by what are often chronic lacks of human capacity and resources at local level, creating a 'chicken and egg' dilemma for many donor programmes. Even a local needs assessment requires some specialist knowledge to identify which capacities need to be strengthened and why. However, in the Somali case, decades of war and state weakness –

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<sup>143</sup> Interview ET02.

<sup>144</sup> Interview ET04.

<sup>145</sup> Interview KS13.

<sup>146</sup> Interview SE03.

<sup>147</sup> Interviews BH03, BH10, BH11 and BH12.

<sup>148</sup> Interview BH08.

<sup>149</sup> Interview HA14.

<sup>150</sup> Interviews HA05 and HA10.

<sup>151</sup> Interview HA13.

<sup>152</sup> Interviews HA01 and HA03.

<sup>153</sup> Interview HA01.

and indeed the very fact that so many institutions are being built from scratch – means that local actors are often dependent on donors for the very competencies that are necessary for local ownership to be meaningful.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, a lack of financial resources can create a dependency of local actors on donor contributions simply to function, let alone assert ownership over a programme or initiative. In essence, locals may know that they should be coordinating activities, but simply lack the capacity to do so. Indeed, a Somaliland official was blunt in his assessment that there could be no meaningful local ownership in the face of a fundamental lack of resources at local level.<sup>155</sup> Such problems can create frustration for donors who are anxious to get things done and achieve their goals within project timescales. As Christian Bueger notes, they can also lead to a distrust of local actors, who can be seen as feckless, disorganised or corrupt (2012: 10).

While problems are evident in the implementation of local ownership, some international actors have made additional efforts to facilitate local ownership of programming, implementation and project evaluation. SEESAC has conceptualised CB in the form of regional dialogues where countries could discuss the issues they often have in common. What should not be underestimated in the regional approach is also a tendency among countries to compete with each other.<sup>156</sup>

Another approach by SEESAC aiming at local ownership was taken in its gender projects, when the institutions i.e. their representatives were engaged in developing and applying methodology for gender analysis. At project management level, DCAF has made efforts to include representatives of targeted institutions in project boards.<sup>157</sup> However, because the coordination of these sorts of efforts in the Western Balkans remains with the internationals, local institutions have typically remained weak. In a vicious circle, institutional weakness has led to a situation where, as a local policy researcher put it, “everything is, therefore, donor-driven, including civil society itself. Those donors only have short-term ambitions.”. The researcher continued: “The first lesson is that Kosovo institutions didn’t *want* responsibility.”<sup>158</sup> This issue affected civil society organisations as well.<sup>159</sup>

### *Legitimacy*

In general terms, the CB activities examined by this report have enjoyed some degree of legitimacy as local actors have welcomed the (much-needed) transfers of funds and assistance, although in most cases these activities have come with political and normative conditionalities attached. In Bosnia, the legitimacy of internationally led reforms might sometimes be

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<sup>154</sup> Interviews HA02 and HA05.

<sup>155</sup> Interview HA04.

<sup>156</sup> Interview SE04.

<sup>157</sup> Interview SE05.

<sup>158</sup> Interview KS06.

<sup>159</sup> Interview KS15.

undermined by what it is perceived as biased in favour/against one of the three ethnic groups.<sup>160</sup> For instance, while overall there is support for EU integration, some of the EU initiatives (such as the police reform) by promoting centralisation were seen as having a negative impact on the Bosnian Serbs, undermining the legitimacy of this reform (Juncos, 2011). Moreover, NATO programmes do not have the same degree of support in Republika Srpska, which explains why Bosnia has recently made little or no progress in the implementation of PfP conditions.<sup>161</sup> CB programmes and projects supported by international actors have officially been welcomed by the Serbian government. Nevertheless, there has been suspicion, if not resistance, towards international actors' involvement in Serbia in general and within the security sector. Some major international donors have been perceived by the Serbian public as a threat to national security – for instance, a public opinion survey by BCSP in 2012 showed that the US and Germany were ranked first in terms of countries threatening the national security of Serbia (BCSP 2012). These perceptions might affect the legitimacy of these programmes. Moreover, politicians and civil servants may also privately share some of the negative views towards the international partners. Distrust of international partners is also evident at the operational level. According to a government representative, there have been attempts by international partners to cross the line of cooperation and turn it into assigning 'homework' to Serbian institutions – from attempts to impose particular persons as consultants to attempts to influence Serbian security policy goals.<sup>162</sup> On the other hand, international actors are also frustrated with Serbian institutions' attitudes to cooperation. According to an international actor's representative, the institutions are not always ready to cooperate; in fact, they sometimes take international partners as 'cash cows' and expect them to give money without interfering in programme planning and implementation.<sup>163</sup> Even at the micro level, it is a challenge to explain to participants that study visits are not shopping trips.<sup>164</sup>

What seems crucial to facilitating cooperation are 'entry points' and political support. 'Entry points' are typically individuals working within the institutions (not necessarily on the highest level) who take an interest in and have an understanding of CB initiatives.<sup>165</sup> Such individuals could also influence their peers at regional level – for instance, in a regional CB project for police it was the director of one of the regional police forces who first understood the importance of the project and persuaded his peers to engage.<sup>166</sup> Political support means that decision-makers at the highest level proclaim that they are behind a certain initiative.

Interviewees in Kosovo disagreed over whether the aforementioned direction of programmes by the EU and other international organisations inhibited the legitimacy of CB programmes among the local population – legitimacy was, indeed, identified as a contentious issue in

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<sup>160</sup> Interviews BH07 and BH15.

<sup>161</sup> Interview BH14.

<sup>162</sup> Interview SE03.

<sup>163</sup> Interview SE02.

<sup>164</sup> Interview SE02.

<sup>165</sup> Interview SE05.

<sup>166</sup> Interview SE04.

Kosovo.<sup>167</sup> Whereas one view (advocated in this instance by a civil servant) was that such direction foreclosed the possibility of a bottom-up approach to CB and therefore inhibited the local legitimacy of those organisations,<sup>168</sup> others reached the opposite conclusion: “When it comes to legitimacy, CSOs are uncontested. There is a general assumption that they are legitimate. This legitimacy is given by the donors; it doesn’t matter what kind of work the CSOs are doing.”<sup>169</sup> Thus, a distinction must be made between the organisations themselves and the programmes. The legitimacy attributed to funded organisations seemed to be more along the lines of credibility, in terms of being able to keep programmes running. But where programmes themselves were being assessed, local legitimacy was paradoxically hindered by international involvement, and this was especially the case where those programmes were visibly controlled by internationals and/or where the programmes did not seem to be designed for Kosovo.<sup>170</sup> In some cases, due to their links to international donors, CSOs in Kosovo were not necessarily trusted by local populations, instead being perceived as agents with foreign masters. However, the relationship was more complicated than this: international involvement (especially funding) seemed to both legitimise and discredit organisations at once.<sup>171</sup>

Legitimacy was an important issue for international actors intending to remain in Kosovo, and for some it was not just an issue of progress, but one of safety and security also. One external actor highlighted legitimacy, or the lack thereof, as effectively their biggest hurdle in engaging in Kosovo, and one that in turn had fatal consequences:

Because of our executive mandate to arrest and prosecute, we were hated. This made it a lot harder to strengthen local institutions. One of our customs officers was shot in 2013, which meant that we started using armoured vehicles, security vetting local staff, etc., and this meant distancing us from the locals.<sup>172</sup>

The same interviewee argued that the executive mandate also undermined EULEX’s legitimacy in other ways: “because we were bypassing and not even consulting locals, the process lacked sustainability and also had security ramifications.” But he then went on to explain how they had changed this (“we then started working side-by-side with locals”).<sup>173</sup> Therefore, the result of a lack of local legitimacy was an increased distancing of international actors from locals – what Mark Duffield calls ‘bunkerisation’. In this instance, international actors are presented with a choice: “either you resolve a given threat at its root or, alternatively, you change and adapt your behaviour, so increasing your resilience to this threat” (Duffield 2010: 459). In its security management EULEX initially chose to move from acceptance – whereby legitimacy amongst the local population is used for protection – to protection and deterrence, in which locals were

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<sup>167</sup> Interview KS04.

<sup>168</sup> Interview KS02.

<sup>169</sup> Interview KS03.

<sup>170</sup> Interview KS11.

<sup>171</sup> Interview KS12.

<sup>172</sup> Interview KS13.

<sup>173</sup> Interview KS13.

treated as suspicious and internationals were physically removed from the risk of face-to-face contact, at the cost of local legitimacy (Brooks n.d.: 10–15). Therefore, a lack of local legitimacy was a self-perpetuating downward spiral.

In Somalia, local actors see local CB strategies mostly as legitimate and in the main, external international actors are not perceived as a threat and thus encounter little resistance. One exception is UN involvement with AMISOM, of which CB is an explicit component. As argued by a local interviewee, “We have learned that it is very difficult to build a national army while you are dependent on foreign countries which are sometimes your prime enemies.”<sup>174</sup> International involvement in AMISOM, in this case including the input of the Ethiopian army, means the UN mission, whilst technically extensive and effectively managed and funded, lacks national and thus local involvement and ownership. Given Somalia and Somaliland’s history of disputes with Ethiopia and the ongoing animosity, this is a particularly sensitive area, and one which has the potential to escalate, seriously damaging the legitimacy of external actors. The issue of the renaming of the EUCAP Nestor mission to EUCAP Somalia is also a controversial one that could undermine its legitimacy (and effectiveness) in Somaliland.

For its part, maritime capacity programmes have been welcomed by actors in the region because they at least aspire to address self-evident local weaknesses, and because they bring new resources, both human and financial, into the often chronically under-funded institutions and organisations concerned. The contribution of international donors is generally valued and seen as necessary: “as Somalia is a fragile state, CB is important since the majority of government staff are inexperienced” and “they are everything for the project.”<sup>175</sup> “They fund, they plan, they monitor and they evaluate”, “their funding and expertise are crucial.”<sup>176</sup> However, legitimacy is undermined by the (perceived) lack of effectiveness. Moreover, as the discussion above suggests, an embedded sense of local ownership of these programmes – of their goals, implementation and impact – is largely absent.<sup>177</sup> At a minimum, local actors perceive these activities as serving a narrower purpose than that conceived of by many donors.<sup>178</sup> Indeed, almost without exception, local respondents understood such activities in terms of basic skills development and equipment and infrastructure provision, with little to no engagement with their wider goals of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development.<sup>179</sup>

More widely, there is little connection between these activities and the wider societies of the countries in which they take place. The vast majority of people in the states concerned are unaware of the CB activities that have occurred in this area. In one sense this is to be expected. CB is a rather technical and specialised activity, and in any society is likely to be of interest only to professionals and enthusiasts. However, it does mean that what local legitimacy is conferred

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<sup>174</sup> Interview HA03.

<sup>175</sup> Interview HA10.

<sup>176</sup> Interview HA11.

<sup>177</sup> Interviews HA04, HA10 and HA15.

<sup>178</sup> Interview HA04.

<sup>179</sup> Interviews HA01, HA02, HA03, HA04 and HA06.

by a thin layer of local elites, who see CB as a way of empowering their personal, institutional or political positions in a context of local competition for scarce resources.<sup>180</sup> There are some exceptions to this absence, in that large, very visible infrastructure projects that make a tangible contribution to the local economy and environment – such as the Turkish renovation of the Port of Mogadishu for example – can have wider purchase and support. Yet the lack of transparency surrounding such initiatives, and questions over how the benefits of such investments are shared, point to further problems of popular legitimacy and ownership.

Accordingly, it might be said that CB programmes generally have a 'thin' legitimacy – in the sense that they have been broadly accepted and often welcomed by a small section of elite local actors,<sup>181</sup> even if they are not always seen to be successful in practice, particularly cognisant of local needs. It is also clear that such initiatives have yet to be fully internalised and adopted by local actors on their own terms, and have little purchase in wider society. In most cases, locals do not decide what programmes are needed and why, and they have little or no role in driving their implementation and assessment. In this sense, and to date at least, such activities lack the 'thick' legitimacy of the CB agenda being accepted and understood in its entirety, which would make them self-sustaining and enduringly effective over time in the absence of external tutelage, funding and direction.<sup>182</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

CB has become a buzzword in the discourse of international donors thanks to the growing realisation that external peacebuilders can only foster internal capabilities, and that any attempt to create local capacity from scratch will not only be unsuccessful, it is also fraught with ethical difficulties. Yet despite this having been recognised as a key 'lesson' from previous international interventions, international actors still find very difficult to 'let go' and increase the inclusivity and participatory nature of these programmes. In practice, these activities have largely taken place without local involvement in problem identification, project development or evaluation. This deficit has led to a 'thin' rather than 'thick' legitimacy amongst local actors, and has exacerbated existing problems of relevance, duplication and sustainability.

CB had a positive impact in some areas, but the success of these activities has been narrow and uneven. They have been able to strengthen pockets of capacity in specific organisations and institutions, but have done so in a manner that has not always been well coordinated with other donor activities or local priorities, against a background of wider political, economic and institutional weaknesses that have constrained their impact and on which they have been

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<sup>180</sup> We are grateful to Filip Ejdus for this point.

<sup>181</sup> Interviews BH13 and BH14.

<sup>182</sup> This conceptualisation of thick and thin legitimacy is drawn on Walzer (1994) and related literatures. See Gilley (2007) for a review.

dependent. Given the enormity of the challenge and the timescales in which such activities have taken place, it is perhaps unsurprising that they have struggled to be transformative in nature. Hence, the EU and other international donors should be more strategic (by concentrating where they can make a difference), but also more realistic about what can be achieved in the medium and long term. While mentoring, monitoring, training and advice are crucial in building individual and organisational skills, (lack of) appropriate equipment and infrastructures should not be underestimated. As well as material constraints, these programmes have been affected by local politics and international and local power asymmetries.

There is also a need for better (external) evaluations of the impact of CB programmes on conflict resolution, increased capacities, accountability and oversight of security actors. In the case of CB programmes, this report identified regionally owned programmes in the Western Balkans that not only enhance regional cooperation in the region, but build confidence, facilitate learning from others and ensure the sustainability of the reforms. While notions of best practice in CB can be important, they should be best considered in terms of general principles rather than as a formulaic guide to action.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Local context is key.** Where possible, external donors should engage meaningfully with local knowledge and interlocutors in determining the nature and scope of the challenge at hand. Local actors should be central to the planning, implementation and evaluation of EU projects and activities. By doing so, the EU and other donors should strive for 'thick' rather than 'thin' legitimacy in their programmes, making their programmes as inclusive as possible.
2. **CB is not well served by a top down, 'cookie cutter' approach that seeks to impose externally derived models** of reform on diverse and complex local environments. EU missions and operations should be informed by in-depth fact-finding missions incorporating local expertise. Training of EU personnel should also touch upon issues of local ownership and knowledge of the local context, including language training, where possible. The EU should also give due consideration to the possibility of extending the duration of deployments.
3. **The ambition of donor programmes should be tailored to the resources available to support them.** There is a danger that grand claims of transformation will founder in the face of local challenges and insufficient donor funding, putting the sustainability of the reforms at risk. Donor credibility and legitimacy can be undermined if this happens. Feasibility and impact assessments should be carried out before and after the deployment of EU missions and operations, both by internal and external evaluators.

4. **'Hard' CB, in the sense of equipment and infrastructure that will endure, tends to be valued more highly by local recipients.** In this regard, the implementation of the new initiative on CB for Security and Development (CBSD) constitutes a key opportunity for the EU, but also a crucial test.

5. **Beware the fallacy of 'political will'.** Apparent lacks of 'political will' generally mask real political problems, which should be understood and addressed as such. There will be winners and losers in any process of reform. EU programmes and missions should consider how losers can be incentivised to engage in the process of reform, or at least not to disrupt it. Importantly, the EU should consider ways in which the range of winners can be broadened.

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