



Improving EU capabilities for peacebuilding

EDITORIAL

EVALUATING CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

International actors are increasingly striving to include ‘the local’ within their peacebuilding programmes, with varying success. The rising interest in the role of the local owes to the perception that local actors provide an essential link allowing international peacebuilding initiatives to be effective while retaining legitimacy. The resultant local capacity building (CB) programmes — including training activities, mentoring and advising, and the provision of equipment and large infrastructure — have therefore become key to strengthening capabilities at the individual and organisational levels. But CB’s success has varied significantly from one context to the next, and even where it has been successful it has often been so only in a narrow sense.

EU-CIVCAP’s Deliverable 6.1 evaluates international CB efforts in five geographical areas: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Serbia and Somalia. Overall, the findings of the report highlight 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 scale of the challenge and the timescales over which such activities have taken place, it is perhaps not surprising that they have struggled to be transformative. Yet, as discussed in this report, there are some 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 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 past two decades. The prospect of EU/NATO membership has also acted as a catalyst in the Balkans, though not without difficulties.

Despite the differences between the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa, there was agreement among the report's interviewees about the extent to which international CB activities have occurred without local involvement in problem identification, project development and evaluation. We have in particular identified a lack of local ownership, and the need to fully integrate affected communities, in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Increased capacity and local ownership correlates with increased representativeness, improving the sustainability of peace processes, especially regarding vulnerable groups, e.g. women or minorities.

Our research demonstrates that the EU cooperates with civil society in myriad ways to prevent conflict, e.g. funding civil society conflict prevention activities; sharing information and analysis; and multi-level collaboration with civil society to influence peace processes. But problems remain with low public participation, weak local ownership practices and low participation and protection of women and minorities in conflict areas, demonstrating a need to reach out to vulnerable groups or non-organised civil society.

The following implications arise from this:

- 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.
- 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.
- 3/ The ambition of donor programmes should be tailored to the resources available to support them.
- 4/ 'Hard' CB, in the sense of equipment and infrastructure that will endure, tends to be valued more highly by local recipients.
- 5/ Beware the fallacy of 'political will'. Apparent absences of 'political will' generally mask real problems of politics, which should be understood and addressed on their own terms.

To address these implications, EU-CIVCAP is pleased to launch a new impact project entitled "PeaceCapacity: Building capacities in civil society for inclusive peace processes in the Horn of Africa and the Western Balkans". PeaceCapacity will support the meaningful integration of civil society actors in Kosovo and the Horn of Africa (particularly marginalised groups, e.g. women/girls) into peace processes. It will achieve this by enabling the dissemination of and engagement with EU-CIVCAP's findings with a wider variety of civil society practitioners in three key conflict areas: the Ogaden region in Ethiopia (also known as Somali Regional State or Somali region of Ethiopia); Somaliland; and Kosovo. For more information, see the section on PeaceCapacity later in this issue of the EU-CIVCAP newsletter, or [click here](#) to consult the

project website.

Gilberto Algar-Faria



Gilberto Algar-Faria is the Project Officer and Senior Research Associate for EU-CIVCAP at the University of Bristol, where he is also the Co-Investigator of the PeaceCapacity impact project and a PhD Candidate in the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies.

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PUBLICATIONS

Contested Implementation: The Unilateral Influence of Member States on Peacebuilding Policy in Kosovo

Steffen Eckhard and Hylke Dijkstra

In an academic article published in *Global Policy*, Steffen Eckhard and Hylke Dijkstra analyse how member states try to unilaterally influence policy implementation by international organisations. The article presents evidence from peacebuilding missions by the UN, OSCE and EU in Kosovo after independence in 2008. Despite the fact that the member states within these international organisations fundamentally disagree on the legal status of Kosovo, the organisations have deployed substantial peacebuilding missions which make them targets for member states' influence. Eckhard and Dijkstra find that since the implementing agents in the UN and OSCE have, by default, more autonomy than those in the EU, there are considerable opportunities for member states to affect peacebuilding policy on the ground in Kosovo.

The article is available via Open Access through the link below.

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[Report on Workshop 3](#)

On 18 May 2017, the third EU-CIVCAP workshop under the title "Implementing the EU Global Strategy: EU civilian crisis management and the integrated approach in perspective" was held at the Maastricht University Campus Brussels, as reported in our previous newsletter. A longer report and pictures from the event are now available by clicking below.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

11 September 2017: "In reform we trust: improved EU-UN cooperation in preventing and responding to conflicts?", Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Forum, Brussels.

The fourth Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Forum under EU-CIVCAP will consider EU-UN cooperation in preventing and responding to conflicts. Panelists and an expert audience will debate how a reformed EU-UN partnership can effectively cooperate with key humanitarian, development and security actors. The public event will be hosted by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels.

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SAVE THE DATE

11 September 2017: "A year on: implementing the EU Global Strategy", Research Meets Policy Seminar, Brussels.

The second Research Meets Policy Seminar will take place at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels on 11 September 11, 2017.

The first part of the seminar, chaired by CEPS, will focus on the first year of implementation of the EU Global Strategy, assessing progress on the strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action. The second part of the seminar, chaired by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), will be devoted to a deep dive on gender, including the role women in the implementation of the new framework as well as the prevention and response to gender-based violence.

The Research Meets Policy seminar is a closed-door discussion, by invitation only (up to 30 participants) and is designed for EU policy-makers and experts to exchange views and identify key research gaps that can feed into the EU-CIVCAP research agenda.

SAVE THE DATE

11 October 2017: "The EU as a Global Crisis Manager", EU-CIVCAP Academic Event at the Belgrade Security Forum.

Speakers from more than 15 research institutions working on different aspects of the EU's crisis management and peacebuilding efforts will present their work, including the latest EU-CIVCAP findings on the EU capabilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa.

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PAST EVENTS

Workshop: Broadening the Debate on EU-Africa Relations

On July 19-20, Gilberto Algar-Faria represented the EU-CIVCAP project at a workshop organised by the European Studies Association of Sub-Saharan Africa (ESA-SSA), which included a panel on "security and securitisation". The workshop was hosted by the University of Pretoria's

Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation and funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

EXPERT NETWORK

Our Expert Network presently numbers 45 people in total from around the world, all experts in their fields. You can consult their profiles [here](#).

EXPERT OF THE MONTH: AUGUST



Gaudence Nyirabikali

Gaudence Nyirabikali is a senior consultant at the African Development Imperative, with expertise in peacebuilding, governance and international development.

In August, she wrote our Expert of the Month blog under the title, "Inclusive peacebuilding and statebuilding in emerging and multicultural states".

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EXPERT OF THE MONTH: JULY



Rok Zupančič

Rok Zupančič is a Marie Curie Fellow at the Centre of Southeast Europe, University of Graz, and Assistant Professor at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Defence Research Centre. His research interests focus on regional security in Southeast Europe, conflict prevention, post-conflict stabilisation, reconciliation and the role of the EU and other international organisations in these processes.

In July, he wrote our Expert of the Month blog under the title, “Challenges of (academic) fieldwork in post-conflict societies”.

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EXPERT OF THE MONTH: JUNE



Richard Caplan

Richard Caplan is Professor of International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. He has been a Specialist-Advisor to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in the UK House of Commons; a Research Associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Editor of World Policy Journal, and New York Director of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR).

In June, he wrote our Expert of the Month blog under the title, “How effective is UN peacekeeping?”.

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CATALOGUE OF LESSONS IDENTIFIED

The Catalogue of Lessons Identified has been updated, with five new lessons (11-15) now available online. This is a living document that is being updated throughout the project.

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IN OTHER NEWS

As outlined in the Editorial of this newsletter, EU-CIVCAP launched an impact project under the title “PeaceCapacity: Building capacities in civil society for inclusive peace processes in the Horn of Africa and the Western Balkans”. For more on the project, consult its social media accounts via the buttons below. To get in touch, write to peace-capacity@bristol.ac.uk.

[WEBSITE](#)

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Michael E. Smith, member of our Expert Network, has published a new book. “Europe's Common Security and Defence Policy: Capacity-Building, Experiential Learning, and Institutional Change” is available from Cambridge University Press. For more information, click below.

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You can access EU-CIVCAP social media by clicking the buttons below.

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