BUILDING A SOCIAL CONTRACT IN SOUTH SUDAN

MP/Public dialogue, Wulu, Feb 2013, South Sudan Photo: Crispin Hughes

Oxfam Programme Insights

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INTRODUCTION

South Sudan is one of four Oxfam country projects delivering the Within and Without the State (WWS) programme,[1] funded by DFID from 2011 to 2016[2] under the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Programme Partnership Arrangement (CHASE PPA). WWS is piloting innovative approaches to working with civil society to promote more accountable governance in conflict-affected and fragile contexts – and is sharing the experience and learning within Oxfam and with the wider development world.

WWS in South Sudan

In South Sudan, WWS is working to strengthen civil society and to facilitate its engagement with those in positions of authority at all levels of governance, using the model of the social contract. The social contract model promotes **constructive engagement** between citizens and state; encourages both parties to respect each other's rights and fulfil their responsibilities; and promotes mutual accountability. The social contract model is particularly appropriate in a fragile context, where government may be nervous about the role of civil society and where there is little tradition of political engagement or experience of effective governance.

Figure 1: WWS works in Lakes State and Central Equatoria State, South Sudan (areas highlighted in orange)

SOUTH SUDAN: BACKGROUND

Box 1: Development indicators

All indicators rank South Sudan as one of the least developed countries in the world (2010 data, unless otherwise stated):

- Life expectancy at birth: 53.5 years[3]
- Under-five mortality rate: 366 per 1,000 (2012 data)[4]
- GDP per head: $214 per annum (2012 data)[5]
- More than half the population live below the poverty line[6]
- Infant mortality rate: 70 deaths per 1,000 live births (2013 estimate)[7]
- Only 19.4 per cent of births are attended by a skilled health worker[8]
- Health expenditure per head: $32[9]
- Only 27 per cent (male 40 per cent, female 16 per cent) of the adult population are considered literate.[10]

Governance and accountability: in comparison with other countries, South Sudan ranks low on key governance indicators (2012 data):[11]

- Control of corruption: bottom 4 per cent
- Rule of law: bottom 7 per cent
- Government effectiveness: bottom 3 per cent
- Voice and accountability: bottom 12 per cent.

Note: South Sudan only became an independent nation in 2011 and is one of the poorest countries in the world. Data on development and governance is therefore very limited.

South Sudan is Africa's newest country, having gained independence from Sudan in July 2011 after a long-running civil war. While South Sudan stands to benefit from inheriting the bulk of Sudan's oil wealth, there has historically been limited development of agriculture and industry. As a result, the economy is extremely weak.

During colonial rule (first by Egypt and then Great Britain), those regions which now make up South Sudan experienced under-development and marginalization in relation to the Arab-speaking and Islamic north of the country, with the national government based in Khartoum. The prospect of continued marginalization after independence from Great Britain sparked violence which led to civil war in 1955.

The civil war (1955–72 and 1983–2005), fought under the leadership of the South Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M),[12] whose aim was to achieve independence for South Sudan. More than two million people died in the conflict and four million were internally displaced or became refugees. The proclamation of independence in July 2011 was a remarkable achievement, but South Sudan still faces many challenges. A number of disputes with neighbouring Sudan remain unresolved, notably concerning border demarcation and control over oil, and the country now faces the daunting challenge of instigating effective democratic governance. Since 15 December 2013, South Sudan has again been plunged into conflict,[13] in part as a result of unresolved issues of power and accountability between rival factions.

The new government has little experience of nation building or governance (many political figures were previously fighters in the SPLA), and many politicians and officers are seeking to build their own power and resources. Civil society has little understanding of its rights, together with low expectations

of government and no tradition of political engagement. However, some elements of civil society – in particular returning refugees whose experiences have been shaped outside South Sudan – have begun to call for greater accountability and citizen participation in governance.

Box 2: Civil society in South Sudan

'Civil society' is often taken to mean constituted groups, such as community-based organizations (CBOs), non-government organizations (NGOs), and international non-government organizations (INGOs). Technical definitions vary, but Oxfam's understanding of civil society goes beyond organized voluntary associations to include trade unions, faith and religious groups, tribal and traditional leaders, communities, and citizens. Oxfam often partners with established civil society organizations (CSOs), but also works with a range of other civil society actors appropriate to the context.

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT MODEL

The WWS project in South Sudan has been developed around the model of a social contract between citizens and the state. The social contract refers to the agreement by citizens to submit to the authority of government in exchange for protection of their rights, including access to public goods, basic services, security, justice, and development. Citizens will maintain public order and respect the law, while government will govern according to law. While the idea of the social contract has developed from Western thinking, it is now widely accepted across the world as the basis of a democratic state.

The assumption of WWS was that the social contract model would be particularly appropriate to governance work in a fragile context, such as that of South Sudan, as it emphasizes the rights and responsibilities of both citizens and state, and promotes constructive engagement (rather than confrontation) between them. As such,the social contract should be less likely than explicit, demand-focused advocacy or popular mobilization to provoke hostility from a government nervous about the role of civil society.

Box 3: The social contract

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),[14] the social contract emerges from the interaction between:
- the **expectations** that a society has of a state;
- the **state's capacity to provide services**, including security, and to secure revenue from its population and territory to provide these services;
- **elite will to direct state resources and capacity to fulfil social expectations**;
- **political processes** through which the bargain between state and society is struck, reinforced, and institutionalized.

WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE STATE

The WWS project team identified that to strengthen governance using a social contract model in South Sudan, they needed to both build the understanding and capacity of **civil society** and broker opportunities for it to engage with, and influence, **power-holders in the state**.

Context and power analyses showed that, to do this, WWS would need to work at local, regional, and national levels; with different actors within civil society; with power-holders from different levels and functions of the state; and within a number of distinct channels – including influencing legislation, harnessing the power of the media, and holding face-to-face discussions with officials and power-holders.

WWS therefore worked with five partner organizations to design a project that includes a range of activities to target different actors and levels of governance through appropriate channels. The project is working at the national level in the capital Juba and at local/regional levels in four counties in Lakes State (Rumbek Centre, Rumbek North, Wulu, and Cueibet).

Partner selection process

Initially it was difficult for WWS to select appropriate partners, as the long-running civil war meant that there had been no accurate mapping of organizations in South Sudan. To identify potential partners, the project team consulted a range of stakeholders to draw up a wide group of relevant CSOs, representatives of which were then invited to a round-table meeting in Juba. Using a set of criteria agreed at the round-table, 13 CSOs were then shortlisted as potential partners.

These 13 organizations were interviewed and their capacity assessed. Oxfam also consulted with grassroots communities, relevant government institutions, and other donors to triangulate this information. From the shortlist, five partners with diverse interests were selected, including organizations working on gender justice, disability rights, media freedom, and governance and accountability. The rigorous process ensured that the most appropriate partners were selected, and also that the wider group of CSOs understood *why* these five organizations were selected. The extended selection process also enabled better dialogue with a wide range of civil society groups and actors, which enriched Oxfam's analysis and informed project planning.

Box 4: WWS partners in South Sudan

- Agency for Independent Media (AIM)
- Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO)
- South Sudan Domestic Election Monitoring and Observation Programme (SSuDEMOP)
- Sudanese Disabled Rehabilitation and Development Agency (SDRDA)
- African Partnership for Rehabilitation and Development (APARD)

WWS PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Strengthening civil society

Building the capacity of partners

Since 2012, WWS has been building the capacity of the five selected partner organizations. New funding has enabled partners to recruit staff, purchase essential equipment, and rent office space – in some cases for the first time. Training has also been provided in effective organizational governance, programme management, finance, working with the media, and social accountability.

The quality of Oxfam's own engagement with partners, from the participatory selection process to working together on project implementation, has perhaps been the most successful and valued aspect of its capacity-building programme. WWS has involved partners in project design and delivery at every stage, promoting a relationship of transparency, accountability, and equality. One partner commented: 'This is a true partnership, not just a donor relationship. We have designed the project ourselves – with Oxfam supporting us.'

All five partners also received intensive mentoring from a consultant, who worked alongside them in their offices and in the field. This approach was particularly successful as it allowed the consultant to fully understand the context and constraints under which partners were working, and helped them to resolve practical issues. Another innovative approach to capacity building was to work with UK agency Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) to place a long-term, skilled volunteer with one of the partners. WWS staff saw this approach as particularly useful as it went beyond what could be achieved through a one-off training or workshop, and facilitated ongoing learning and skill sharing.

Strengthening civil society networks and self-organization

WWS identified that working through organizational networks at local/regional levels was also an effective way to build solidarity and strengthen the voice of civil society.

In Lakes State, WWS revived and reconstituted an existing network, which now includes WWS partner organizations and other locally based CSOs representing different interest groups, including women's organizations. WWS supported the network to establish a steering group (which now includes representatives from the women's organizations) and to agree a shared mission and ways of working. Network members now meet regularly to share information and plan joint action; they have also benefited from training in advocacy, media work, and social accountability.

The network has been able to engage with government bodies in a way that individual organizations may be too weak or vulnerable to do; for instance, initiating a dialogue with the state legislative assembly, which led to a series of MP/public dialogues (see below). The chair of the network said: 'If you speak to government as just one organization you will not be listened to. But if we speak as a network, we are more likely to make our voices heard.'

At the national level, a strategic choice was made not to work through the established civil society network in Juba, as this was seen as structurally weak and not completely independent. Instead, Oxfam chose to work with individual partners and informal groups of allies. The round-table that was convened at the start of the WWS project also continues to meet in Juba and has created a wider forum for civil society dialogue and engagement. The strength of working through networks has become increasingly apparent, however, and WWS is now working with partners and wider civil society to explore the possibility of convening a national network that is able to represent civil society effectively.

Promoting gender equality at national and community levels

Women in South Sudan are extremely marginalized and find it difficult to participate in community life, let alone in the public and political spheres. Oxfam realized that, as well as working at national level, it was necessary to work at community level to challenge the practices and beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality.

National level: The South Sudanese Constitution guarantees 25 per cent representation of women in parliament, but an assessment by WWS partner SSuDEMOP indicated that the actual figure is more like 12 per cent – and that this level of representation does not result in effective participation or policy development for women.

To tackle this, SSuDEMOP organized a number of round-tables and public events to mobilize women leaders and raise MPs' awareness of the need for women's political participation and representation. The government maintains that there are few women qualified to take up official positions, but one of WWS's achievements has been the development of a database of skilled women to facilitate their recruitment to government positions. An informal network of women willing to work to improve political engagement has also been established. Overall, however, women's representation has not increased, and women's issues have not been raised in parliament. SSuDEMOP's focus and expertise in election monitoring rather than in women's rights means that it has found it difficult to make as much progress in this area as it had hoped, even though time has been limited. New partnerships and approaches are now being explored to ensure that women's voices are heard in national politics.

Community level: In remote rural communities in Lakes State, women often have no say in how household resources are allocated, and are treated merely as family service providers. Mobilizers, trained by partner organization APARD, visit individual households and communities and hold meetings to discuss issues around power and resources in order to help shift attitudes about women's roles.

Potential mobilizers are identified by their communities for their integrity, communication skills, and ability to read and write, and include both women and men. They are trained in how to organize and lead community meetings, and provided with bicycles so they can travel more easily between households and villages.

Although opinions and traditions are deeply held, there is evidence that attitudes are starting to change. Women in North Rumbek report that their husbands now seek their opinion before deciding to sell a goat or a cow belonging to the family; and that men and women now eat together, whereas in the past they would have eaten separately – a small but important step towards greater equality in the household. Many men are coming to appreciate the importance of allowing women opportunities to participate in public life.

Developing channels of engagement and influence between civil society and power-holders

Oxfam's context analysis highlighted the fact that some politicians and public officials in South Sudan may be willing to engage with citizens in this newly formed democracy, but may not have the capacity, understanding, or resources to do so. A key focus of project activity is therefore around enabling opportunities for citizen/state engagement through a number of channels and forums.

MP/public dialogues

South Sudanese MPs rarely return to visit the constituents who elected them. However, a series of public dialogues organized by WWS partner SDRDA in Lakes State has given communities the opportunity to question their local MPs and attempt to hold them to account.

Before each dialogue, MPs sign a commitment to participate for the good of their communities and the state. Communities pledge to perform their roles and meet their obligations (such as desisting from violence and cattle-raiding), so that government can function effectively. SDRDA's initial consultations with communities help to identify the issues they would like to raise. MPs are briefed on these issues and invited to attend a village meeting one week later. A month after the dialogue, SDRDA goes back to both the MPs and the community to assess progress.

Box 5: MP/public dialogue, Wulu, February 2013

Hundreds of people attended the MP/public dialogue in Wulu, near Rumbek, in February 2013. Mary, a community member, commented: 'Those MPs said, *"If you vote for me we will provide boreholes and tools for the community."* I want to ask the MPs where those things are now.'

The local MP commented: *'The people elected me to represent them in Parliament … so I need to know what their concerns are … to be their voice.'*

MPs were able to explain why some issues had not been addressed – for instance, that school scholarships had not been awarded because the community had not yet put forward their nominations – and to reassure constituents that they were making progress on other issues. The dialogue helped each side understand the other's constraints and capabilities, and strengthened their accountability to one other.

Public accountability forums

> *'Government money" is actually the people's money … so it is important to show how it is being spent.'*
> CEPO, 2013

The ability to account for public money and ensure that it reaches the communities for whom it is intended is a key aspect of good governance. However, there is little transparency regarding how public money is spent in South Sudan. WWS is creating opportunities for citizens to question authorities about state budgets and hold them accountable.

WWS partner CEPO has initiated a series of public accountability forums in Rumbek County, in Lakes State, to raise questions about the County Development Fund. This fund, supported by donors such as the World Bank, is earmarked for communities and is distributed through the local government system, but much of the funding does not reach the intended communities.

The first forum, hosted in conjunction with the government-funded Anti-Corruption Commission in January 2013, was extremely well attended, including by state officials and elected politicians. The meeting was scheduled to last a couple of hours, but in fact lasted all day. As a result of the forum, the state government admitted publicly that a pension fund of SSP 14m ($55,000) had been misappropriated – something that the government would not have been willing to do without Oxfam and WWS partners facilitating the interaction with citizens. At the request of the Anti-Corruption Commission, the forums are now held every month.

The Anti-Corruption Commission had previously attempted to establish state governance forums in partnership with the World Bank, but with little success; buy-in from power-holders was low, and the appointment of state governors to chair the forums undermined impartiality. The WWS model is seen as being effective because the approach has strengthened the Anti-Corruption Commission's constitutional mandate as a watchdog, rather than trying to replace it.

Influencing legislation

Without the right legislative framework, there can be no basis to hold citizens and government accountable. Citizens' engagement in the development of legislation is therefore another key approach of the WWS programme.

NGO bill: In 2012, WWS partners became aware that an NGO bill, closely modelled on Ethiopia's NGO legislation, was about to be passed into law in South Sudan. The bill would have put onerous obligations on organizations to re-register each year and to submit all funding proposals to the government for approval before submitting them to a donor, as well as severely limiting the amount of external funding they would be able to receive. The bill referred only to humanitarian organizations and did not recognize the existence of organizations working on governance issues, effectively denying them space to operate.

WWS partners decided that this was an issue on which they should take joint action (along with many other civil society and non-state organizations, as the bill had provoked a general outcry). First, they made contact with NGOs in Ethiopia to learn from their experience. They then submitted an analysis of the proposed legislation to the appropriate ministry and held meetings with relevant parliamentary sub-committees to discuss the draft bill, which helped them to understand the effect it would have on the NGO sector. At one stage, WWS partner CEPO was able to enlist support from an ally close to the president to stop the restrictive bill being passed into law – a potent example of the importance of understanding where power lies and being able to leverage influential allies to achieve change. The revised bill (as of late November 2013) is more progressive, and while it still refers only to humanitarian organizations, additional legislation that will define the space for organizations working on governance is currently being drafted – a testament to the power of civil society voice.

Media bill (including freedom of information): WWS has also undertaken intensive work around the development of a new media and freedom of information bill. WWS partner AIM organized public information forums with marginalized groups, such as youth, women, and traditional leaders, to raise awareness about the proposals and to gather citizens' views and opinions. Meetings were then held with key legislators and these views were put to them. The bill was redrafted in the light of this feedback, resulting in a more progressive piece of legislation. However, as of November 2013, conservative interests are currently preventing its ratification.

As one member of AIM stated, *'The government is interested to know what citizens think of proposed legislation and how it can be strengthened; they have no other way of obtaining this information. Women and youth, in particular, are outspoken in these particular forums at grassroots level – but they have no formal channel to communicate with government at national level. This is why WWS is important.'*

Building a quality media

> *'The right of access to information empowers the local community by allowing them to know what the politicians are doing … so they can make informed decisions.'*
> AIM, 2013

A strong media is able to contribute to the rule of law, good governance, and freedom of expression. However, the media in South Sudan is currently unable to play this role and the public is not able to use the media to express their views. WWS is therefore working on a number of initiatives to improve the quality of media and to ensure that citizens' voices are heard.

For example, WWS has provided support to enable AIM to publish a quarterly journal through which civil society can express its views. AIM has also been training journalists in conflict-sensitive reporting and raising awareness of their role in communicating civil society views. In February 2013, AIM organized a national forum to bring together media representatives, political figures, and civil society

leaders to explore the role of media in good governance. The forum was attended by key government institutions, such as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, diplomatic missions, UN agencies, and CSOs. The forum and other activities have contributed to a more progressive attitude to the media, as reflected in the new draft media bill (see above).

Working through regional institutions

WWS has found working through the African Union (AU) to be an effective way to share experience and ideas with civil society across the region, and a useful channel to influence government in South Sudan.

The AU is an increasingly powerful institution through which issues such as development and security are discussed by African nations. Heads of state agree policy through its assembly; there is a strong civil society platform sharing experience from a wide range of contexts; and international institutions and foreign embassies also have influential relationships with the AU.

WWS made initial contact with the AU through the Oxfam International office in Addis Ababa, where the AU is based. WWS partners subsequently built their own contacts with the civil society platform to share and learn from its experience, for example on NGO legislation. They also developed relationships and held useful meetings with representatives of other governments, including those of Sudan and Australia.

This regional advocacy allows civil society to learn from groups and actors facing similar challenges and to raise issues with influential external actors (such as diplomats or embassies), which it may not be able to confront directly inside South Sudan. These external actors can in turn raise issues with the South Sudanese government, which is often subsequently more willing to engage with its own citizens on these issues. For example, having seen representatives of WWS partner AIM talking about the draft media bill on television in Ethiopia, the government became more willing to engage directly with AIM around the bill, with positive results.

IMPACT AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Partner selection process: WWS's partner identification and selection process was hailed by partners as a model of best practice and as being much better than the common INGO practice of hand-picking partners to deliver projects. Although the top-down selection of partners can sometimes be justified on the grounds of efficiency, CSOs have long felt uncomfortable with this approach and found the WWS selection process both motivating and empowering. The process modelled accountability, transparency, and participation – and was itself an example of good governance.

Capacity building of partners: WWS has undertaken extensive and successful capacity building of partners. The project's understanding of 'capacity building' has included not only conventional training and workshops, but also intensive mentoring by consultants and long-term volunteers. Perhaps the most effective capacity-building approach was exemplified by the quality of Oxfam's own relationship with its partners, which was seen as a model for the potential relationship between citizens and state. In particular, Oxfam has noted improvements in partners' analytical skills and in their confidence to engage with power-holders during the first phase of the WWS project. The value of Oxfam's capacity building is recognized by other CSOs who have expressed the desire to work with Oxfam in the future.

Civil society engagement with state actors: Activities such as the MP/public dialogues and the public accountability and media forums are creating positive opportunities for citizens to engage with

different levels of state governance. Politicians and officials have welcomed the opportunity to interact with citizens in an organized and safe space, and have shown willingness to talk honestly about the difficult issues raised. The events have been well attended, have received positive feedback, and have led to further engagement, such as requests for training of government officials. Key to WWS's ability to build such positive relationships with state actors is the fact that it has taken time to communicate with them effectively and to provide detailed feedback about the activities they have been involved in.

Raising awareness about rights and responsibilities: Activities such as the dialogues and forums with state leaders, and grassroots dialogues about legislation and other issues, have started an important process of civic education for both citizens and state actors. **MPs and other officials** have become more aware of their roles and responsibilities and have actively pledged to fulfil them (for example, by signing formal agreements at the MP/public dialogues). The call by political leaders for Oxfam to extend the MP/public dialogues and to help establish and train County Councils (community councils that help to oversee the allocation of public funds), as well as to offer support in other areas, is a demonstration of their growing understanding of the value of accountability. **Citizens** have shown increased understanding of the role of elected representatives (by asking them to follow up on election promises) and of their own responsibilities (by agreeing to desist from cattle-raiding and working to persuade others to do the same). Their confidence to participate in public life has also increased, as shown by their taking part in grassroots discussions and national debates.

Influence on legislation: WWS and partners have had a significant influence on both the NGO and media bills – resulting in the development of more progressive draft legislation (although, as mentioned above, the media bill has since been held up by more conservative forces in government). These successes have been achieved by working with able and well-connected partners who have a good understanding of power analysis, political processes, and advocacy techniques and who, with the project's support, have been able to engage citizens and politicians around the issues. These successes show that even in a fragile context it is possible to achieve change, although it may be difficult to protect these gains if the context changes quickly as power shifts.

Impact on Oxfam's wider country programme: WWS has also acted as a catalyst for the rest of Oxfam's South Sudan programme; this had been mainly focused on humanitarian intervention but is now making a step change in programming, towards governance work. WWS has been described by the country director as the 'vanguard' of the country programme, and has encouraged the whole team to look at issues in greater depth, and to consider new perspectives and areas of work. The South Sudan programme is now exploring partnerships with national organizations and new, challenging thematic areas such as extractive industries – something it has been able to do only since WWS demonstrated that it is possible to undertake governance work in a fragile context.

KEY LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The social contract is a useful model

WWS's experience in South Sudan shows that the 'social contract' can be a useful tool to promote constructive engagement between citizens and state (e.g. MP/public dialogues and accountability forums) and to promote good governance in a fragile context. The constructive nature of the engagement can help prevent any negative backlash that might be provoked by popular mobilization or more explicit demand-led advocacy.

Governance programmes in fragile contexts may consider using the social contract model to underpin their work. The model may be most appropriate where elected politicians or public officials at some level or department within government has some interest in meeting citizens' needs and has capacity to do so, and will benefit from working with civil society to develop solutions to shared problems.

Addressing gender inequality is essential

Governance programmes working in fragile contexts may assume that addressing gender inequality is not an immediate priority. However, WWS's experience shows that a gender-neutral approach to governance work will maintain the status quo and that gender inequality is itself a driver of fragility (for example, the high 'bride price' fuels cattle-raiding and tribal conflict in South Sudan). Therefore, addressing gender inequality is an effective way to tackle fragility and conflict.

The WWS strategic gender review conducted in July 2013[15] showed that while the project had demonstrated some success in enabling women's participation in public life in South Sudan, it had not made the progress it had hoped for. The review indicated that WWS should more explicitly address gender inequality in all aspects of its programming (not only in 'gender' activities), and that to do this it would need better gender analysis and to work with a wider range of partners, particularly those with a specific focus on women's rights. WWS in South Sudan has strengthened the gender element of its project since October 2013, building new partnerships with organizations from the rapidly expanding women's sector.

Governance programmes working in fragile contexts should ensure that all programme activities maximize the opportunity to address gender inequalities in power and participation. Working with women's rights organizations and building gender into context and power analysis will help programmes to do this more effectively.

It is important to consider the role of non-traditional actors

The five partners selected in South Sudan were all traditional CSOs, and engaged effectively and positively with the WWS programme. However, there has been a growing realization of the potential benefits of also engaging with a wider variety of non-traditional partners, who may be power-holders in their own right and who may wield influence with the state. These could be tribal or traditional leaders, or other organizations and institutions that share the programme's aims. The Christian Church exerts a great deal of influence in South Sudan. WWS has already worked with Catholic radio to raise public awareness about the impact of cattle-raiding and has used the Church as a means of gaining access to certain rural communities, and it is seen as a potential ally in the future. Tribal leaders may also be able to shift attitudes to women's roles and to practices such as bride price and cattle-raiding, and closer relationships with them could be sought in future.

Governance programmes working in fragile contexts should work not only with established CSOs but with a wider range of influential civil society actors and institutions. Before developing new relationships, programmes need to assess whether the actors or institutions share the programme's aims, and ensure that they are able to work effectively in the interests of civil society and are not politically aligned.

Good process may be as important as outcome

Investment in governance work in fragile contexts is vital and cost-effective – but it should not be measured using only conventional quantitative indicators or judged only by what it can achieve in the short term. The process followed is in itself extremely important, and can make a significant contribution to promoting good governance.

A good process (such as WWS's participatory partner selection process or its building of relationships with power-holders through communication and feedback) can be used to entrench democratic practices and to catalyse opportunities for participation and trust-building. Although harder to measure than conventional project outcomes, it is still possible to evaluate process in governance work, for example through perception surveys and community scorecards.

Unfortunately, gains made in fragile contexts can be threatened as the context changes, as we have seen recently in South Sudan. However, even where there is a need for the international community to give life-saving support to citizens, it is essential also to invest in strengthening governance. Such long-term development work with citizens and states is essential to 'nation building', and is the only way to overcome fragility and ensure stability in the long term.

Governance programmes working in fragile contexts may find that paying attention to good process is slower to yield tangible results and is harder to justify to donors than concentrating on specific, time-bound outcomes. However, good process should be recognized as important in itself in promoting the transparency and accountability needed for good governance.

NOTES

1   WWS is working in Yemen, Afghanistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, and South Sudan.

2   DFID has recently funded a further phase of the WWS programme, from 2014 to March 2016.

3   World Bank, World Development Indicators, 'South Sudan'. http://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan

4   Ibid.

5   Ibid.

6   World Bank, 'South Sudan Overview'. www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview

7   Estimate from CIA (2013) *The World Factbook 2013–14,* Washington DC: Central Intelligence Agency. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html

8   World Bank, World Development Indicators, 'South Sudan', op. cit.

9   Ibid.

10 CIA (2009) *The World Factbook 2009*, Washington DC: Central Intelligence Agency.

11 World Bank, World Governance Indicators. http://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan (Aggregate indicators are based on 31 underlying data sources reporting the perceptions of governance of a large number of survey respondents and expert assessments worldwide.)

12 The SPLA/M has itself been divided, with different factions fighting during the civil war, and once again since 15 December 2013.

13 An official ceasefire was declared in January 2014, ending the recent fighting. At the time of writing it is not clear how the situation will develop.

14 OECD (2008) 'Concepts and dilemmas of state building in fragile situations', off-print of the *Journal of Development* 9(3). http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/41100930.pdf

15 Jenny Enarsson (2013) 'A Push and a Shift, Light Strategic Gender Review of WWS Programme', Oxford: Oxfam GB.

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