Decentralisation and Local Governance in Fragile Contexts

DeLoG 15th Annual Meeting, July 7 – 16, 2020 (online)
Input 1: The Status Quo Defied: The legitimacy of traditional authorities in areas of limited statehood in Mali, Niger, and Libya
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The Status Quo Defied: The legitimacy of traditional authorities in areas of limited statehood in Mali, Niger, and Libya
Challenges and Problems

1. **Politicization of traditional authorities:**
   - Attempts to change the status quo
   - Increased importance of money in elections

2. **Violence:**
   - They abandon their area of influence
   - They are kidnapped and/or assassinated
   - They align themselves with armed groups
   - Entrenched in armed governance
   - They are fragmented

*DeLoG Annual Meeting - 16 July 2020*
Consequences

- Short-term: instrumental & beneficial
- Long-term: undermining legitimacy of traditional authorities
- Armed actors determine leeway for traditional authorities
- Community members increasingly turn to armed group actors
- Traditional authorities: danger of moving from mediator to conflict actor & security threatened

Focus Group Discussion with Traditional Authorities in Mali.
Source: Clingendael CRU
Implications for programming

Traditional Authorities as governance actors

- Embedded in different post-colonial governance structures
- Traditional structures are increasingly rejected
- Sole governance structures in areas of limited statehood
- Crucial as entry points to improve governance and security

Recommendations

- Address the politization / exclusive tendencies of TA’s
- In Niger: codification of traditional authorities’ customs
Implications for programming

Traditional Authorities under armed governance

- Relationship TA’s & AG’s marked by TA’s necessity for protection
- Limited authority and legitimacy depending on legal context
- Division of communities also divides TA – which makes inter-communal mediation more challenging
- AG’s perceived by communities as being more effective in governance

Recommendations:

- Positive examples of community reconciliation may lead to improved legitimacy
- Local conflict prevention / de-escalation may prevent further spiraling
Input 2: The Nexus between Decentralisation and Peace: The Case of Burkina Faso
Jerome Schroth (GIZ)
The Nexus between Decentralisation and Peace
The Case of Burkina Faso

DeLoG Annual Meeting, 16th July 2020
Agenda

1. Why this study?
2. How did we proceed?
3. Three main take-aways
Why this study?
Few policy research and concrete approaches by donors on how the promotion of decentralisation and local governance reforms may have a positive impact on peacebuilding

Implicit assumption by donors that local level is crucial for addressing challenges of peace, prevention of violent extremism, social cohesion and stability

Partner governments tend to centralize resources and decision-making processes in times of crisis and instability

GIZ-portfolio today consists of ~70% of fragile states (with a tendency to grow even further), i.e. implementing in fragile contexts has become the new normal

Our commissioning parties demand us to work on conflict, i.e. to actively contribute to peace and address factors of fragility and conflict
How did we proceed?
1) **Analysis of the fragility and conflict situation** in Burkina Faso and the Sahel region according to OECD’s five dimensions of fragility

2) **Description of the relevance** of the local level and a decentralised state structure

3) **Definition of peacebuilding needs and derived recommendations for** GIZ’s decentralisation portfolio in Burkina Faso

4) **Alignment** of these recommendations with the goals and indicators of the **Sahel Alliance**
Nexus between Decentralisation and Peace - The Case of Burkina Faso
Three main take-aways
Go (More) Local!

➢ **Drivers of change** are rather to be found at local level whereas **actors at central level** often do not show consciousness and political will for adopting to the changed context.

➢ **Impacts and quick-wins** for the population are more likely to be achieved at local level than in advising complex and slow reform processes at national level.

➢ However, Sector Ministries and their deconcentrated structures are still crucial for the delivery of public services as many competencies are shared! (*multi-level approach*).

➢ **Central level is not abandoned**, but a shift of stress towards local actors.
Go Beyond the State!

- Population at the local level often does not have access to justice or perceive the legal system as corrupt and inefficient.
- In local conflict resolution and mediation, traditional leaders and religious authorities play an important role as they have a high legitimacy and credibility among the population.
- This system needs to be modernized by making the state a facilitator in local conflict management and formalizing the role of traditional leaders and religious authorities in these processes.
- However, these actors are not without risks and need to be assessed before an official cooperation is started!
Go Towards the Youth!

- **Extremist networks** try to recruit particularly among the young (male) generation in conflict-affected areas.

- **Young people** need to be considered as **specific target group for the provision of public services** as they often do not have access or there are no specific services dedicated to them.

- **Develop alternative offers** (e.g. local youth centres, youth councils, ideas competitions, political and religious education...)

- Competencies in this field are shared between local, regional and central level!
Thank You!

Contact: jerome.schroth@giz.de
News from Members and Partners
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

See you on September 23!