



## WORKING AREA GOVERNANCE AND PEACE

The relationship between the state and its citizens is crucial for development, where the state offers basic services and security to its citizens as clients and partners, and active citizens are able to claim their rights and influence policies in their interest. "Active citizens and effective states" can jointly make a difference for a just and peaceful society. The Governance and Peace strategy is based on more than six years of experience and lessons learned, and comprises five intervention areas:

- Local democratic governance
- Pro-poor policies
- Conflict transformation
- Culture as artistic expressions
- Migration and development

Downward accountability and conflict sensitivity are cross-cutting issues, which will be addressed by projects of all working areas.

## CONTEXT: DEMOCRACY IS ON THE AGENDA AGAIN!

The steady increase of democracies after the cold war had stagnated and the conviction that elections lead to democratic states proved illusionary. Halted democracies, with weak state institutions, and lacking participation and accountability mechanisms, are now confronted with widespread corruption and frequently restricted civil society. Nevertheless, with the Arab Spring, a revival of the idea of democracy is taking place and may offer new opportunities.

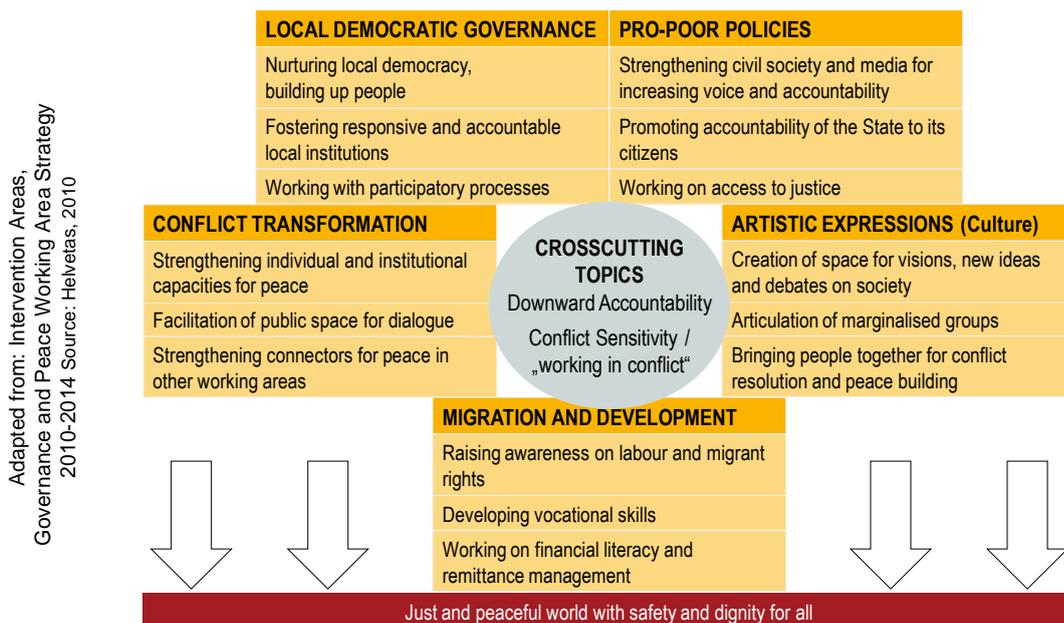
Many agree that governance is key to development. The costs of “bad governance” are enormous. The (ex)World Bank researcher Daniel Kaufmann estimated that the GDP could be increased three times if good governance principles are applied. The relations between State and citizens remain crucial in application of good governance principles and democratic practices. The importance of civil society has been recognised since the Accra meeting in 2008, but governments still prefer NGOs engaging in service delivery rather than advocacy.

International cooperation is often faced with violence, intrastate conflicts and fragile situations. Every year around 700'000 people die because of armed violence and many more suffer from “side events” such as internal displacement. With climate change influencing livelihoods, conflicts over natural resources will increase.

## OVERALL GOAL: JUST AND PEACEFUL WORLD WITH SAFETY AND DIGNITY FOR ALL

Helvetas has the vision of a State that offers basic services and security to its citizens, who in return are able to make claims and influence policies in their interest. To pursue this vision, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation will work with suitable partners from all sectors – State, civil society, private sector – through a multi-stakeholder approach and emphasising inclusion of marginalised groups. Instruments, such as international human rights treaties, build the basis for citizens as right holders to claim their rights and for governments to fulfil their duties. Therefore, local processes need to be better linked with policy making and vice versa. Our projects increasingly find themselves confronted with conflict and fragile contexts. Strengthening conflict transformation and using artistic expressions can contribute to peace and dignity.

In the coming years, the working area “Governance and Peace” concentrates on four intervention areas, whereas the two crosscutting issues ought to be addressed in all projects of all working areas.



## INTERVENTION AREAS

### LOCAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

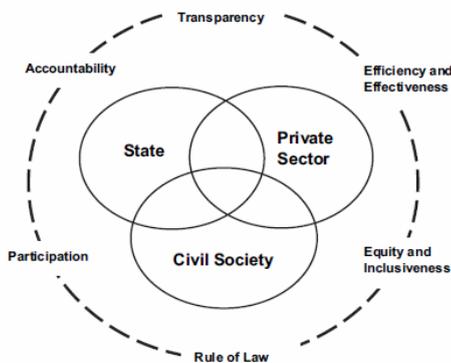
*Aim: Inclusive decision-making on public affairs based on good governance principles and human rights, ensuring that needs, priorities and rights of poor women and men are considered, represented and accounted for by the state.*

Democratic processes only become attractive if people see an impact on their lives. As local governments are closest to the people, they have the most direct relationship and impact. Participation of- and accountability towards - the citizens, especially marginalised and vulnerable groups, bring the government closer to the people. It contributes to improvement of public service delivery and curbs corruption.

Decentralised planning and budgeting is a key process in local governance, where such democratic principles can be practiced.

In order to nurture a local culture of democracy, it is also essential to work with people, engaging them in open discussions and raising awareness on citizenship and human rights, as well as their responsibilities. Therefore, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation will engage in civic education through radio, open hearings, arts, and other means.

As men and women have different needs, priorities and interests, gender aspects need to be looked at particularly. In cases where women are obviously underrepresented and disempowered, special attention will be paid to closing this gap.

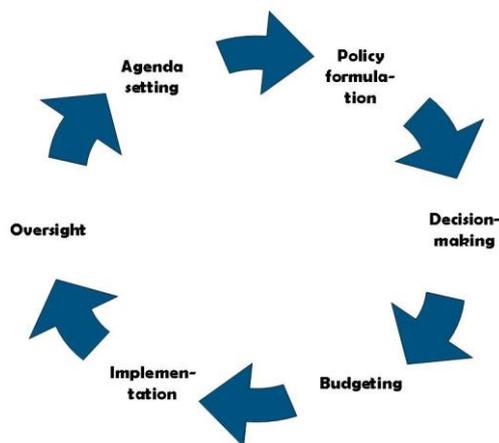


Collaboration of the three sectors according to Good Governance Principles (Source: Helvetas, 2007)

**Governance, Water, and Sanitation Programme, Mozambique:** The joint provision and management of rural water and sanitation services enables local authorities, the private sector and community-based organisations to better fulfil their respective roles. Citizens are empowered to actively participate in local decision-making through local village development committees and councils, where development issues are discussed and planned. Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

## PRO-POOR POLICIES

*Aim: Inclusive policies based on human rights, contributing to social cohesion, justice and sustainable development.*



Public Policy Cycle  
Source: Adapted from ASOCAM, Intercooperation, SDC, 2007

In order to ensure equality before the law and non-discrimination, policy processes need to be pro-poor, according to the “protection of the vulnerable”-principle. Access to information is a prerequisite for claiming rights and a functioning judicial sector is essential for social justice. A multi-level approach with different stakeholders is required to integrate policy making and implementation on the micro (local) as well as macro (national) level. Helvetas will strengthen the capacities of civil society and media, especially in advocacy.

A vibrant and knowledgeable civil society is essential for different perspectives to be heard and for open discussions on policies. Furthermore it ought to oversee the implementation of policies and pressurise for constructive policy-outcomes.

Linked to this, we will also contribute to improved public accountability, using tools such as public audits, monitoring of plans, and local government assessments. In addition, Helvetas will continue to promote access to legal aid for the poor.

**Access to Justice and Judicial Reform, Central Asia:** Funded by SDC, the project aims at increasing respect and protection of the rights of poor and marginalised people in Tajikistan by strengthening the rule of law, access to justice and measures for improved administration of justice.

## CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

*Aim: Strengthened local actors, processes and structures, which enable the prevention of violent conflicts as well as the participatory and non-violent transformation or resolution of conflicts.*

The main focus of Helvetas engagement in peace building is on the prevention of violent conflict. To serve this end, social, institutional and individual capacities for peace are required. Accessible community-based mechanisms are key to address conflicts. Helvetas thus strengthens local initiatives and institutions such as peace councils. As a facilitator, Helvetas fosters dialogue and public space for deliberation. Particular importance is given to strengthening existing factors for constructive social change and non-violence within current development activities.

**Conflict Prevention and Transformation, Mali:** Co-financed by the Swedish International Development Agency, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation facilitates the management of conflicts between farmers, herders and nomads related to access to and use of agro-sylvo-pastoral areas. A network for discussions of conflict resolving strategies is facilitated by Helvetas. The cooperation among local actors is improved by the inclusion of a vast array of different stakeholders.

## CULTURE AS ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS

In the strategy, culture focuses on artistic expressions and considers the potential empowering and peace building effects of artistic activities. Artistic expressions can reach society in ways that other means cannot. It can offer a forum, where societal issues can be discussed critically and imaginary visions can be promoted.

## MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Migration is not only a sector in itself, but a phenomenon that affects all development work. Basing on the recognition of the migrants’ human rights, HELVETAS engages to ensure that migrants and their families have access to information and justice, and can manage remittances effectively for their own well-being.

## CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

### DOWNWARD ACCOUNTABILITY

Helvetas has the duty to be accountable to its primary stakeholders. This increases the credibility of the organisation and raises awareness among the people on transparency and their right to information. See also separate guidelines.

### CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

Development practitioners have to be aware that any intervention they might take – even the most well intended and humanitarian one – will introduce new factors, which might lead to unintended conflict. See also separate guidelines.



Photo: Sarah Niemeier

The *Peace and Co-Existence Committee* of a Sri Lankan village with Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim population decided to carry out a *common initiative* under the Helvetas “Development and Peace in Sri Lanka” project. More than 1’000 people depend on a minor water reservoir for irrigation and bathing water. But during the dry season, the pond loses a lot of water. Plants grow over the banks and make it difficult to enter and take a bath in the shallow depth. Around 800 people that had very little contact before, gathered on a Saturday and cleaned up the shores. The community members consider the activity a success and say:

“ We had serious doubts about this *common initiative*. We thought we would never be able to clean this whole reservoir with our hands. At least some machines would have been necessary, to remove all this vegetation. But with the support of so many people, almost everything is possible. We are sure that this initiative strengthens the relationship between our three communities. We have avoided each other for such a long time, but today everybody was working together and had a tea afterwards. That was really nice! ”

## CONTACT

For more information please contact [gop@helvetas.org](mailto:gop@helvetas.org) or consult the website [www.helvetas.ch](http://www.helvetas.ch).

Address: Weinbergstrasse 22a, CH 8021 Zürich, Switzerland

The full version of the Helvetas Strategy 2008 – 2012 of the Working Area Governance and Peace (previously Civil Society & State) is available at

[http://www3.helvetas.ch/global/pdf/english/Professional\\_competences/Working\\_Area\\_Strategies/CSS\\_strategy\\_2010\\_2014\\_final\\_with\\_annex.pdf](http://www3.helvetas.ch/global/pdf/english/Professional_competences/Working_Area_Strategies/CSS_strategy_2010_2014_final_with_annex.pdf)