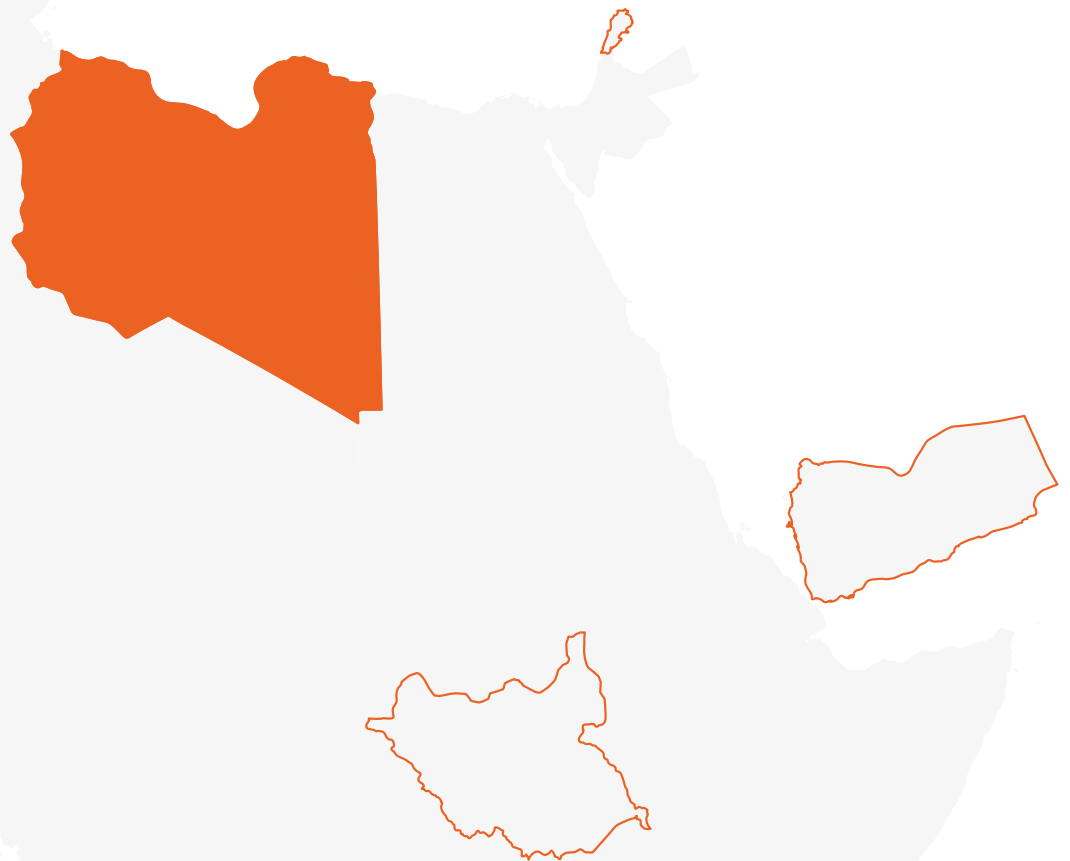**CONFLICT SENSITIVITY COMMUNITY HUB**

Supporting conflict sensitivity through country-focused facilities
Case Study: Libya Conflict Sensitive Assistance Forum

Contents

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Acronyms

Conflict Sensitive Assistance Forum (CSA Forum)

conflict sensitivity (CS)

European Union (EU)

European Union Trust Fund (EUTF)

Global Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub (CSC Hub)

Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO)

Peaceful Change initiative (PCi)

Theory of Change (ToC)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Methodology note

This case study is one of three on the conflict sensitivity (CS) facilities in Libya, South Sudan, and Yemen that were produced between April and September 2021. Together with a smaller case study on a slightly different type of facility in Lebanon, the case studies accompany an overall Lessons Paper.[1] Collectively, the Lessons Paper and case studies contribute to a learning initiative for the Global Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub (CSC Hub).[2]

The authors also exchanged analysis and key points with a research team led by CSC Hub member International Alert, who were producing a lessons and design report in the same timeframe for the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to inform a new CS facility in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Libya case study is based on a literature review and a small number of key informant interviews. The literature review included programme proposals and activity descriptions, annual reports, and an evaluation. Six interviews were conducted, four of which were with current or former staff or associates of Peaceful Change initiative involved in developing and implementing the CS facility. Two interviews were conducted with partners (see Annex for full interview list).

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[1] Conflict Sensitivity Community (CSC) Hub (October 2021), 'Supporting Conflict Sensitivity through Country-focused Facilities: Lessons from Libya, South Sudan, Yemen and Lebanon'.
[2] https://www.conflictsensitivityhub.net/

I.   Origin and structure of the facility

Background and interest in the facility

The Libya Conflict Sensitive Assistance Forum (CSA Forum) came into being in 2012, when Peaceful Change initiative (PCi) and the Swiss Embassy initiated a conversation among international agencies about conflict-sensitive international assistance in the aftermath of the overthrow of President Muammar Gadaffi.[3] At the time, expertise on Libya was limited among international actors, and there was a need to help them make sense of the context and their potential contributions to peace, especially given the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) involvement and Western interests in reducing irregular migration to Europe through Libya. PCi first reached out informally to donors and international agencies to highlight the importance of conflict sensitivity (CS) and the opportunity to get things right from the start at this pivotal moment in the country's history.

PCi then convened, in collaboration with the Swiss Embassy and a few other donors, the first CSA Forum meeting in 2012. Some of the initial work was funded by USAID, but it did not continue its support. At this first Forum meeting, the concepts of CS were explained and the utility of such a forum discussed, and it was agreed that collective conflict analysis would be useful for donors and implementing agencies. In subsequent meetings, a participatory conflict analysis was developed with the Forum members, based on an outline structure that PCi developed, which focused on conflict drivers and resources for peace. Each identified issue became an indicator that was updated and discussed at the next meeting, while participants could also add new issues over time.[4] The meetings took place more or less every two months.

Contracting/support modalities

The CSA Forum was integrated and funded from the start as a strand of PCi's overall programme of work in Libya. In this format, the Forum went through several phases of funding (see Box 1), each drawing on the lessons and progress of the previous phase. There was an increase in resources for this work from 2016 onwards as the Libyan Political Agreement was implemented.[5]

Box 1: Phases of funding for the CSA Forum

Contractually, the CSA Forum work has been broken up into several short phases (2012-2014; 2015-2017; 2017-2019; 2019-2022). The first phase of the CSA Forum activities was supported by the Government of Switzerland.[6] From 2015-2017, the CSA was incorporated within a broader project funded by the European Union (EU) Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the United Kingdom (UK), and Switzerland, but with Switzerland contributing funds for the CSA. From 2017-2019, Switzerland and the EU provided support for the CSA Forum work.[7] This support from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the EU has continued into the current phase of the CSA Forum programme (2019 to 2022).

PCi implements a range of peacebuilding-related programming in Libya. In the past, this has been organised under a single project to which donors contribute, in some cases earmarking funds for

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[3] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 3.
[4] Interview, 4 June 2021
[5] PCI (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 22.
[6] PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 7.
[7] Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) (2019), 'Evaluation of Peaceful Change initiative, Final Report', 24 April 2019, p 4.

particular parts of PCi's activities. Since 2019, different programmatic strands have been separated out, but the CSA Forum continues to be combined in a single project with PCi's work to support a Libyan national-level, civil society, peacebuilding practitioner network (see Section II below on the programme's overall Theory of Change).[8] This combination of activities under one project has been a result of the way PCi has tried to ensure a broader strategic logic to its programming. It has also been influenced by convenience for donors who would like to fund different strands of work without administering several contracts.

Even though there has been continuity in the Swiss and EU funding for the CSA Forum and PCi's wider programming since 2017, this has not been set up as a joint funding mechanism. In fact, an evaluation of the overall 2017-2019 programme recommended more coordination between the donors as well as a combined logframe and reporting requirements that would be less onerous for PCi as the implementer. It went further to suggest developing the overall project idea with all three donors (including the UK, which has been funding the sub-national work) in order to produce a coherent and commonly agreed programme of work.[9] Currently, PCi still allocates specific funding to specific outputs – of which the CSA Forum is one – and reports separately to the donors according to their different reporting timeframes, although this has become less onerous.[10]

As PCi is an active implementer of other peacebuilding-related programmes in Libya beyond the CSA Forum, the PCi team are aware that there could be a perception of conflict of interest because of its role as a facilitator of a forum that brings together different organisations to think critically about international assistance. PCi is anxious to avoid this, and the team implementing the CSA Forum keep a degree of separation from PCi's other work. Overall, the CSA Forum team has successfully established itself as a trustworthy facilitator, critical friend, and technical expert on CS issues. PCi is very transparent with all the stakeholders with whom it works about these different programmatic strands and objectives and monitors any sensitivities carefully. The team also included PCi programmes in an early peer review exercise on CS practice in Libya, in order to acknowledge PCi's dual role as facilitator and adviser, as well as implementer, and to open itself up in the same way as other participating organisations. No concerns have been raised about conflicts of interest between the CSA Forum and PCi's other programmes.

Implementation modalities

PCi's staff in Libya and those working on Libya from Tunis, Tunisia, are mandated to lead on strategic decision-making and leadership, supported by an international operations team and international technical advisers who contribute to project design, methodology, ongoing mentoring of staff, and facilitating the planning and learning for the teams on the ground.[11] The staff working on the CSA Forum, who conduct the conflict analysis and engage with international aid actors, are based in Tunis.[12] Initially, only one staff member was fully dedicated to the CSA Forum work, but this has grown slightly over the years to two more or less full-time staff (in Tunis, one international and one Libyan) and one part-time staff (in the UK, international). While the level of active participation has varied slightly, in recent years there has been a marked increase in interest from international agencies to receive support from the Forum, and PCi's small team has

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[8] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 3.
[9] Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) (2019), 'Evaluation of Peaceful Change initiative, Final Report', 24 April 2019, p 26.
[10] PCi (2019), 'Final Operational Report: Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya, 01 December 2017 - 28 February 2019', 31 August 2019, p 3.
[11] PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 24.
[12] Project proposal to the EU for the project 'Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya', n.d. p 23.

done well in responding to the resulting requests for support. However, the team feels that they are too stretched to pursue and leverage more extensive opportunities that arise and to fundraise properly in order to expand the team and its resources.

During most of the CSA Forum's existence, international agencies have been based in Tunisia rather than Libya for security reasons. Currently, there is an increased potential for agencies to move back, and the question of whether to maintain the CSA Forum's activities in Tunis or move back to Tripoli is coming to the fore. There are clear pros and cons to this, including the political optics of being in Tripoli while still trying to discuss issues that cut across the whole country, and the risk that the Forum could become associated with one conflict party or another.[13]

Despite operating from outside the country, PCi has been able to involve analysts and researchers from Libyan organisations to provide specific briefings or presentations at Forum meetings by flying them to Tunisia (pre-COVID-19).[14]

Emerging lessons on the origin and structure of the facility

- The CSA Forum came into existence because of PCi's direct influencing that helped create or tapped into existing interest among the international community on CS assistance in Libya and appeared to resonate with the Swiss Government. This has led to nine years of the CSA Forum facilitating a space for analysis and reflection for the international community as a foundation from which other areas of work developed.
- The funding set up of the facility has allowed PCi to integrate the CSA Forum into its overall programming, but has also come at a high administrative cost because of short projects and separate donor reporting requirements.
- The CSA Forum was designed to focus – and remains focused – on the international aid system, and PCi has had to be physically present with international donors in Tunisia in order to build and maintain the necessary relationships with international actors.
- While the Forum does not target or consistently involve Libyan actors, PCi has drawn on its work with the Libyan national peacebuilding network to fly in experts on particular topics to Tunisia to brief CSA Forum meetings, which has helped inject Libyan perspectives into the discussion despite the international agencies being outside of Libya.
- The CSA Forum has not been set up as a separate, independent entity and is in fact closely associated with PCi, which has worked well and is actively managed internally.
- The focus of the Forum at the start was almost exclusively on doing and providing collective context analysis and a space for reflection given the complex political situation. This provided a 'hook' of interest for international actors and laid the foundation for more activities to develop over time (see Section III).

II.   Approach of the CSA Forum

Defining conflict sensitivity

PCi recognises the challenges of being conflict sensitive in a context as complex as Libya and with such divergent foreign policy positions among the Western states, as well as with others like the Arab States and China. On the one hand, it is therefore clear that influencing CS at the strategic level remains hugely challenging. On the other hand, PCi through the Forum work has been able to play the role of critical friend and support for problem-solving the unavoidable dilemmas

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[13] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[14] Interview, 2 June 2021.

implementers face when operating in Libya. This has included components of directly providing agencies with analyses and other CS resources when necessary, but also informally talking through issues, for example, during in-person coffee sessions.

Formally, the CSA Forum uses the standard CS definition: "A conflict-sensitive approach involves: gaining a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between activities and context and acting to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of intervention on conflict, within an organisation's given priorities/objective".[15] It further explains that CS means "equipping actors with the skills and the environment to analyse the context in which they are working, enabling them to engage with multiple stakeholders, and designing interventions in a targeted way with a view, not only to not exacerbating observed drivers of conflict, but also identifying opportunities whereby different types of interventions (humanitarian, development, etc) may lay the foundation for stronger relations between communities, actors and stakeholders".[16]

The Forum also recognises that having to operate remotely is an additional challenge to international organisations in terms of understanding the nuances of the context and their interaction with it. When international operations eventually move back to Libya, new CS challenges will arise, ranging from where international agencies are based (given the regional dimensions of the conflict to date), through to who they hire and who provides services to them.[17]

PCi's approach further aims to raise awareness among international actors of CS as an "essential obligation and standard", and to build the skills of international actors to meet these standards.[18]

One respondent felt that gender could be integrated more strongly in the Forum discussions, supporting participants in how to undertake gender and conflict sensitivity as an integrated effort. PCi is committed to including gender in all CS work, particularly as part of a broader agenda for inclusive peace, and includes issues relating to gender into its conflict analysis and framing work for the Forum. Gender is also included in the training packages, and PCi is currently working on a resource that looks at the relationship between peace, conflict, and gender in Libya and teases out gender-specific CS interactions. This resource is part of a bigger effort to strengthen discussions about gender in Forum discussions. Mainstreaming gender is also a requirement for the funding to the Forum from the EU's IcSP.[19]

Overall intended impact, outcomes, and Theory of Change

The CSA Forum targets international assistance providers to ensure their interventions are conflict sensitive. This work has been embedded from the start in PCi's broader programme of work as the 'international' change component of a multi-level intervention, expressed as follows in 2017-2019 project documents (and illustrated in Figure 1):[20]

- Local partnerships for peace and social development

[15] Conflict Sensitivity Consortium: https://www.conflictsensitivityhub.net/index.php/conflict-sensitivity/, cited in Project proposal to the EU for the project 'Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya', n.d., p 19

[16] Project proposal to the EU for the project 'Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya', n.d., p 19.

[17] PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 4.

[18] Project proposal to the EU for the project 'Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya', n.d., p 12.

[19] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 16.

[20] Project proposal to the EU for the project 'Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya', n.d., p 19.

- National networks that cut across conflict lines and connect local activists in their peacebuilding work
- International actors that are more conflict sensitive, better understand the context, and are better able to promote peace.

As such, the Theories of Change (ToCs) articulated in project documents for the most recent phases apply to the overall programme rather than the Forum on its own. The evaluation of the 2017-2019 programming phase found the ToC of this particular phase to be sound and convincing.[21]

In the current project (2019-2022), the overall programme goal is articulated as **"Reduced incidence of violent conflict, and increased stability, in Libya"**, with a specific objective on **"International assistance providers and local peacebuilders integrate peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity and context-specific knowledge and skills sustainably into their interventions"**.[22]

Figure 1: PCi's areas of work in Libya

The ToC cited in Box 2 below only sets out two of the three areas of work as the local peacebuilding strand was taken out into a separately funded project, but it gives a sense of the underlying logic of PCi's overall programming in Libya.
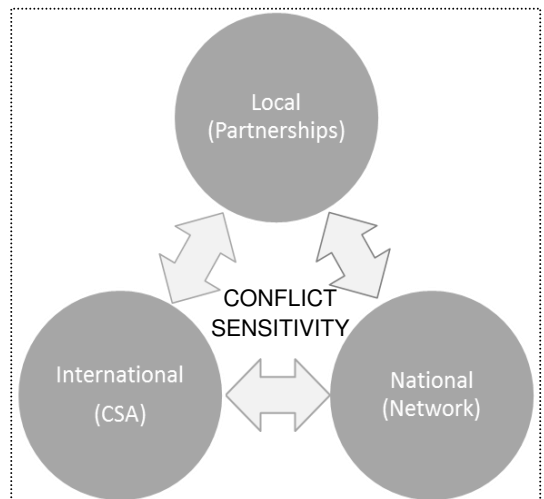

Box 2: Theory of Change for the overall 2019-2022 project

IF Libyan peacebuilders from different locations, communities, and specialisations have sustainable **access to a network** permitting them to collaborate and support each other, and develop their individual and collective **capacity to build peace**,

AND international assistance providers operating in Libya are **well-informed** about peace and conflict dynamics, and how these interact with their own actions, and how to ensure that their actions reduce the risk of violence and promote peace,

THEN the actions of both international and Libyan actors will contribute sustainably and more effectively to stability and peace in Libya.[23]

(Author's emphasis)

Drawing on the documents and interviews, a specific ToC for the CSA Forum component of the programme could be something like the following:[24]

IF international assistance providers operating in Libya are well-informed about conflict dynamics and the interactions between international assistance and the peace and conflict context (through increased access to information, research, and analysis focusing at national and local levels)

[21] Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) (2019), 'Evaluation of Peaceful Change initiative, Final Report', 24 April 2019, p 7-8.
[22] PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 2.
[23] PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 9.
[24] Author's suggested framing.

AND their technical skills and expertise are strengthened (through trainings, advice, guidance, and awareness)

AND they do joint reflection and peer learning in facilitated spaces with other international (and sometimes local) actors (through their participation in the CSA Forum meetings and other facilitated CSA discussions)

AND decision-making within their organisations starts taking into account CS considerations,

THEN they will be able to adjust their assistance in Libya to be more appropriate to the context, to minimise CS risks, and maximise positive contributions to peace.

Focus areas of work

Although the first activities of the CSA Forum focused on conflict analysis and CS learning and reflection, the scope of the activities has broadened over the years and can be summarised under the following headings (see Box 3 for more details on the current activity areas):

- Analysis, research, and advice: including through the ongoing update of the Online Political, Social and Economic Context Analysis (OPSECA)[25] platform and the production of or support for thematic or local geographically targeted research and analysis from which tools and resources are produced;
- Skills enhancement and accompaniment for CS practice: including training workshops, guidance documents, ad hoc advice on request and working with specific programme teams on CS challenges;
- Collective reflection and strategic discussions: including working with the Leadership Group (heads of mission or similar) on policy responses to CS issues, facilitating the Forum meetings, and conducting peer review exercises.

Box 3: Summary of project activities (2019-2022)

The current project (2019-2022) structures the Forum activities with the international agencies around seven activity areas:
1. Update a peace and conflict context analysis on an ongoing basis, and share with international assistance providers operating in Libya;
2. Half-day CS forum meetings for 30-40 staff of international assistance providers (x 17);
3. Detailed research conducted on specific topics, and shared and discussed with international assistance providers (x 6);
4. Leadership Group meetings for ambassadors, agency heads, or deputies to consider specific policy responses to major CS issues (x 8);
5. Workshops held to explore CS in particular locations, with international assistance providers operating there (x 12);
6. Develop and deliver Libya-specific CS manual and accompanying training curriculum (x3); and
7. Provide ad hoc advice to EU programmes regarding specific CS priorities (x 9)[26]

A set of Libya-specific "Principles of Conflict-Sensitive Assistance" was also developed in 2014 with the input of Forum participants and heads of mission in the CSA Leadership Group.[27] These principles set out some strong recommendations about how the international community should be providing aid in Libya and reflected the situation at the time, after the military overthrow of the

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[25] https://www.humanidev.tech/opseca_info.html
[26] PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 28-30.
[27] n.a. (2014), 'Potential Principles / Guidelines for Effective ('Conflict Sensitive') Assistance', 14 February 2014.

Gadaffi regime in which NATO played a role. The principles were used in the Forum's discussions and were, for instance, used to structure CS peer reviews with Forum members. While they were not an accountability measure per se, the principles did set out a certain level of ambition that Forum participants could use collectively or in their own institutions to prompt discussions about CS. Over time, the principles became less used, possibly because the heads of mission who originally signed up to them had left and their successors did not have the same commitment to the document; and/or because agencies became more focused on how to operationalise CS rather than the broader principles behind it.

Before initiating the CSA Forum, in 2013, PCi had also worked on integrating CS into national policies in Libya, accompanied by community-level work to pilot and build evidence for this approach. The political crisis in 2014 interrupted this work, but the intention to contribute to national conversations wherever possible remained. This may be an area for PCi to return to if the context allows – but probably outside of the CSA Forum activities given the political sensitivities.

Adaptive management

The CSA Forum's focus is on maintaining a safe and collective space where international agencies discuss the context and how to respond to the CS challenges and dilemmas they face. With this in mind, PCi has consistently monitored and adapted the Forum to ensure that it remains as useful a space as possible and have framed the Forum's activities in a way that the content of each activity (e.g., trainings, workshops on local conflict dynamics, and on-call support) remains flexible to respond to the demands of the participating agencies.[28] Thus far, any proposed activity changes have been accepted by the donors,[29] even though changes have to go through a formal budget amendment process.[30]

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PCi, like most agencies, had to make certain adjustments. These have included switching all activities to online formats, postponing the CSA Forum meeting that was planned for the end of March 2020, [31] and including COVID-19 into discussions and other content produced for the Forum to the extent that this was helpful and relevant. The project team also had to prepare a budget amendment to reflect changes in planned activities.[32]

It is therefore possible for PCi to manage the Forum activities flexibly and to adapt to needs, albeit with an administrative cost.

Multi-stakeholder elements

The CSA Forum is a multi-stakeholder space for international aid actors that PCi sees as a sort of 'public good' as it presents opportunities for connection, collaboration, and collective learning that would not otherwise exist. The Forum includes many Libyan staff members or advisers who work for international agencies and regularly attend Forum meetings. In this way, the variety of perspectives in the discussions is increased.[33]

Local Libyan networks – notably those working with PCi in its other programmatic work on supporting a country-wide peacebuilding network – have been involved in briefing or presenting their analyses to the CSA Forum group, but not as Forum members.[34]

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[28] Project proposal to the EU for the project 'Embedding social peace and conflict transformation during the transition in Libya' n.d., and PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 13-15.
[29] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[30] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4.
[31] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 12.
[32] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4.
[33] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[34] Interview, 2 June 2021.

The question of whether / how to involve Libyan organisations more in Forum activities is a live one and not easy to resolve (see also Section IV). On the one hand, the Forum is a safe space where international actors can freely discuss the political complexities, for example, of having two contesting 'governments'. This could be much more difficult if there are Libyan organisations in the room. On the other hand, one would have to decide which Libyan organisations to invite to the Forum meetings, in a way that is transparent, that ensures the whole country and different constituencies are represented, and that the Libyan participants are not put at undue risk.[35]

While more than one donor has supported the Forum over the years, the funding per se is not a multi-stakeholder mechanism as the project proposals and reporting for the donors have remained separate, and there is no funding-related or administrative mechanism to facilitate a more coordinated approach between them in their support for the Forum.

The implementation of the Forum is only done by PCi's small team, sometimes drawing on PCi associates or consultants for particular technical support.

Emerging lessons on the approach of the CSA Forum.

- The CSA Forum, as conceived by PCi, recognises that conflict-sensitive aid requires changes on a number of fronts, including: context knowledge at different levels; the ability of staff and partners to use the context knowledge to adapt how they work; and collective spaces for reflection, discussion, and peer learning. It has also put in place an overall set of principles for international assistance, that initially helped articulate the challenging positioning of international aid actors in Libya and potential conflict-sensitive ways forward.
- PCi also recognised from early on that the move of international actors from Libya to Tunisia brought particular CS challenges – and anticipates a similar situation when they eventually move back to Libya.
- The Forum meetings and related activities have been designed to be flexible, facilitated, and/or guided spaces that can be filled with the content that is most relevant to Forum participants and partners. In this way, they are designed to be adaptive and responsive, even if this comes at an administrative cost for PCi.
- PCi has been delivering this work with a very small team and minimal resources, but can also draw on external international and Libyan advisers, researchers, and individuals involved in its other work streams in Libya to contribute to Forum-related activities.

III.   Evolution and changes to which the Forum has contributed

The CSA Forum has evolved over the last nine years from a collective, participatory conflict analysis forum to adding and refining multiple strands of work. These are dealt with below under the broad focus area headings, but recognising that there are strong linkages and overlaps between, for instance, the analysis and research activities and the collective reflection and learning. In each sub-section, examples are mentioned of changes that the Forum's activities contributed to and challenges and dilemmas the Forum encountered.

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[35] Interview, 2 June 2021.

Focus area 1: Analysis, research, and advice

From collective to PCi-led analysis

The collective national-level conflict analysis was initially facilitated and documented by PCi in a participatory way that drew on the knowledge and insights of participants as well as PCi's own research and context contributions.

However, when the international community withdrew to Tunis in 2014, shortly after the Forum was established, many internationally supported programmes were suspended amidst the uncertainty of who should be considered the legitimate government. PCi remained active in Libya, through local staff and a network of local partners, but it became clear that they had to be physically present in Tunis to most effectively continue the work and re-engage the international aid community in the CSA Forum.[36] PCi therefore established a small team presence in Tunis.

As the crisis deepened, the international community in Tunis became increasingly detached from events inside Libya. In addition, more international staff came into post in Tunis with little or no knowledge of the Libyan context, and with insufficient organisational resources to do this type of conflict analysis themselves. As a result, the quality of discussions within the Forum declined, becoming more theoretical about the context and less critical in assessing the work of international agencies in Libya.[37] International agencies found it difficult to keep track of events on the ground and to verify information.

PCi then decided to take a lead role in developing the conflict analysis themselves, eventually capturing this in an online conflict analysis tool called OPSECA (see Box 4). All Forum members have access to OPSECA and can use it to extract information they may need for their work, and several have reported doing so.[38] PCi continues to lead on producing and updating OPSECA.

Box 4: OPSECA[39]

In 2015, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) did some work on a detailed national-level conflict analysis and used this to design its programming. At the end of the year, UNDP realised it did not have the resources to keep this analysis going. As the CSA Forum had already been running at this stage with two-monthly meetings, UNDP made the analysis public and agreed that PCi could use it as the basis for the CSA Forum.

From 2016, this analysis was hosted on OPSECA and became a core part of the Forum meetings. While it is a lot of work for PCi to keep this updated, all users can enter data and can extract data sets as well. Due to the long-running nature of the analysis, there are now several years of data that can be drawn on for this type of analysis.[40]

The OPSECA system helps organisations to conduct step-by-step context analyses; map existing interventions in order to identify gaps and make strategic decisions; update context analyses over time, which assists in monitoring and tracking the situation; and use the information to evaluate their work and assess the impact of their assistance.

PCi's own reflections and monitoring show that some users have found this tool very useful, and it is certainly seen as a unique contribution to facilitate conflict-sensitive practice in Libya.[41]

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[36] Interview, 4 June 2021.
[37] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[38] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[39] More information on: https://www.humanidev.tech/opseca_info.html
[40] Interview, 4 June 2021.
[41] n.a., (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 2.

Using this analysis, PCi started presenting the main findings at the start of every meeting, after which participants would review and discuss the analysis together, and reflect on the implications for their aid programmes.[42] As a result, the meetings became very popular among embassies and other staff, who realised the utility of this analysis for their own agencies.[43] For PCi, it was necessary to make this shift, given the lack of information among the international community and the fact that most organisations were not investing in their own analysis capacities. PCi therefore felt it needed to offer this service to help fill the gap, at least in terms of the general, national-level analysis, in the hope that agencies would still supplement this with their own, more focused, analysis work.

Partners found this information useful, with one partner reporting that they were initially unaware of CS concepts, but realised that for their long-term work on migration to be successful, they had to think very carefully about their positioning and how to continue the work through multiple crises. The CSA Forum analysis helped them think through the challenges, and they received further useful knowledge and tools through the training and accompanying support.

This repetition of one analysis has had the benefit that Forum participants are very well aware of the main issues they need to look out for. However, there is perhaps a risk that the analysis too strongly reflects the perspective of PCi and is not challenged sufficiently. Hopefully bringing in people from PCi's Libyan peacebuilding network and doing other separate research pieces would help mitigate this risk.

From national- to sub-national analysis
The initial focus on national-level analysis made sense as international actors were initially grappling with their overall positioning in Libya. However, international actors initially invested heavily in national institutions and became caught up in the dynamics related to who gains control of the state. At the same time, nothing changed for ordinary people across the country, and conflicts continued at other levels of society.

Over time the international community realised that more support was needed at the sub-national level, and this led to an increase in locally focused analysis and assessments. This work was not particularly well-coordinated, resulting in multiple analyses being undertaken in the same places with varying levels of relevance to programming activities.

In response PCi, through the Forum, supported joint analyses in locations where multiple actors worked, to try and reduce the duplication of efforts and to stimulate conversations around more collaborative intervention and programming approaches.[44] These local analyses have been used as the basis for area-based discussions with several groups aimed at enhancing coordination, including the EU's Implementers Forum on EU support to Libyan Municipalities and the UN-led Nexus Working Group.

Taking on a research role
The above two evolutions led the PCi CSA Forum team, with support from the rest of the organisation, to take on a research role as well in order to produce relevant research and support some of the more local-level analysis exercises. It also provided an opportunity to connect the work of PCi with the Libyan peacebuilding network members from across the country, who collaborated on the research with PCi.[45]

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[42] Interview, 4 June 2021.
[43] Interview, 4 June 2021.
[44] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[45] Interview, 2 June 2021.

In addition, in-depth studies on specific CS themes and tools for agencies to use in their work in Libya were produced. These included 'Conflict Sensitivity Risks, Dilemmas and Opportunities in Libya – A Resource for Assistance Providers', which provided a format for implementers to log, manage, and monitor CS risks; and 'Conflict Sensitivity Considerations Relating to Local Governance Assistance in Libya', which contained recommendations for donors and implementing organisations to strengthen the CS of their assistance.[46]

This approach means that PCi and its network are an important provider of research and analysis for Forum partners, and PCi then uses the analysis to facilitate discussions on important CS issues. Increasingly, organisations in Libya have been doing their own analysis as well. On the one hand, this is very useful when it informs their work; on the other, it is really challenging if the analysis is poor quality or if multiple agencies undertake overlapping analysis exercises. From this perspective, it could be seen as more resource-effective for the Forum to produce and share analysis. Having a more shared, collective vision of the conflict also helps avoid CS challenges that relate to contradictory or inconsistent engagements from international agencies.

Creating more 'spaces' to address different needs
In the early years of the Forum, PCi and the donors actively co-facilitating the Forum discussions realised that while agencies were very interested in the conflict analysis, they did not seem to connect this to their work. As a way to make the connections and further shape the Forum's work, PCi led on a sector-focused peer review of programming. They chose the governance sector as at the time a lot of resources went into supporting local government. The review revealed several interesting findings, including that most donors were supporting the same municipalities, with large parts of the country left out; that different governance approaches were encouraged from different donors in the same places; and that very few international agencies understood what CS meant or how to apply it. This really helped PCi frame the Forum's activities and develop CS support at both individual agency and collective aid system levels.[47]

From early on, PCi supported the establishment of a Leadership Group that consisted of heads of mission or senior officials and met quarterly. The Swiss Embassy played a convening role, sometimes informally at the Ambassador's residence, and this helped create the space for open discussions.[48] One respondent described the ongoing support role of the Swiss as crucial: "They are a small donor, but put themselves at all the right tables."[49] This group was involved in developing the CS principles for assistance in Libya, referenced above, and were in a position to make strategic and policy decisions about issues flagged in the Forum meetings. Engaging with this group provided important political support and senior buy-in to the process, and offered opportunities to address some of the CS interactions at the policy and strategic levels.[50]

However, in 2020, PCi adjusted the format of the Leadership Group to focus instead on technical representatives. This was because the representatives on this group were facing increasing demands on their time from other high-level coordination forums, while high turnover of senior personnel (like ambassadors) required iterative efforts to bring new people on board. In addition, the inability to meet in person during the COVID-19 pandemic proved a real challenge to this high-level relationship-building.[51] Furthermore, PCi felt that technical focal points were well

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[46] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4.
[47] Interview, 4 June 2021.
[48] Interview, 4 June 2021.
[49] Interview, 4 June 2021.
[50] Project proposal to the EU for the project 'Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya', n.d. p 15.
[51] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4; feedback from two respondents, August 2021.

positioned to both advocate to senior levels in country and to headquarters, while also being able to influence programmatic outcomes and the operationalisation of any CS-related commitments.

Also in 2020, PCi changed the format of the CSA Forum meetings to accommodate two distinct target audiences that had emerged within Forum participants: those who had been working on Libya for some time, are aware of CS concepts and tools, and are able to have substantial conversations about CS considerations; and those who were new to the context and had not engaged with CS assistance in this context before. PCi's own monitoring shows that the more experienced participants most appreciated the practical tools and specific focused analysis provided by the Forum.[52]

In response, the CSA meetings now alternate between more introductory sessions (on CS concepts and the overall context analysis) and CS workshops that work through scenarios, apply tools developed by PCi, discuss research outputs, or delve into specific CS topics and dilemmas identified by participants.[53]

The scenario-based workshop was a new format that was positively received by participants, particularly with regards to the COVID-19 response.[54] One partner did raise a challenge that, if one is in a workshop group that is not well-prepared, it can limit the utility of participatory exercises like scenario brainstorming. Otherwise, they found it very helpful to discuss the context with others who do not work in the same sector and to hear about examples of challenges they face, which then makes it easier to think about the implications of their own work from different perspectives.

The constant staff turnover remains a challenge as the repeated introductory sessions could become frustrating for the experienced participants. But at the same time, this is clearly useful as an induction for new staff on both the context and CS concepts and approaches.

The other major challenge is how to support and encourage agencies to use the analysis that they obtain through the Forum meetings in a good quality interaction mapping, so that they really reflect on their impacts from a CS perspective and adjust their activities accordingly.[55] The Forum provides interaction resources to facilitate this, and PCi has seen some organisations use these to good effect.

Emerging lessons on analysis, research, and advice

- Starting from a participatory conflict analysis initially brought everybody together, but a stronger lead from PCi was needed once the international community was based outside Libya and struggled to access good quality context information.
- PCi's strong lead on the analysis is a deliberate decision meant to address the lack of good quality analysis, make best use of collective resources, and help facilitate collective understanding of the CS challenges. Thanks to the higher levels of CS awareness among aid agencies in Libya, more organisations are doing their own analysis and some are using the Forum inputs as a stepping stone to more in-depth or programme-specific analysis. This is positive in many cases, but also challenging if the analysis is poor quality.
- Adjusting its analysis from only national level to also include sub-national assessments enabled the Forum to remain relevant as donors increased their focus on local-level work. The intention is for this adaptation to help reduce repetition of local analyses,

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[52] n.a. (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 2.
[53] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4, 12, 17.
[54] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 12.
[55] n.a. (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 4.

> - increase the potential for collaboration, and bring in more Libyan perspectives by working with Libyan researchers.
> - This shift in providing more research and analysis necessitated an increase in capacities for the CSA Forum team.
> - Within the international agencies, the needs evolved and became more diverse, requiring different approaches to accommodate those who are new and those who have been working on Libya for some time.
> - Engagement with the heads of mission has been a feature of the Forum from the start, providing important political engagement to help ensure that Forum discussions are taken forward. Due to demands on their time, high turnover, and the restrictions of COVID-19, this has become more difficult and engagement was instead ramped up with technical focal points who can influence high-level leadership as well as operationalise commitments programmatically.

Focus area 2: Skills enhancement and accompaniment for CS practice

PCi's work on improving the skills and practice of CS among international agencies has had some important results (see Box 5 for some examples). One element is its strong contribution to very widespread awareness and knowledge about CS concepts among international actors in Libya and that it has created a long-standing space for CS discussions within this group. Most aid actors are aware of CS concepts and many have written CS into their contracts and grants as a requirement for implementing partners. Given this broad level of awareness, the need has now shifted to deepening skills and capacities to operationalise CS in practice.[56]

With this in mind, PCi developed and delivered a training package targeting a range of international agency staff, including programme staff.[57] The evolution of the training materials was based on PCi's recognition of where the weaknesses were in terms of agencies taking up conflict-sensitive approaches: namely, that it is often seen as only applicable to projects, thus leaving out non-project staff, such as those working on communications and resources, and therefore reducing opportunities for cross-organisational conversations about CS.[58]

The latest training package builds on the basic knowledge already acquired through participation in the CSA Forum meetings (and contingent on participants having attended the Forum), and offers courses on conflict analysis and CS monitoring and evaluation for projects, communications, resource management, and other staff.[59] The intention is to stimulate and support cross-organisational and cross-functional conversations about CS in order to support stronger uptake. There is also a training course for Libyan staff of international agencies, which is delivered in Arabic[60] and has been useful and more accessible to field staff. However, this is a fairly new component, and PCi would like to make sure that the Libyan staff who participate in these trainings are better connected into the cross-organisational discussions, which is challenging for some organisations at the moment.[61]

For organisations who would like to go further, if their staff have completed all the other courses, they can do a CS Master Class which provides a guided space to apply the learning to their own work.[62]

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[56] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[57] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[58] Interview, 9 July 2021.
[59] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 17-18.
[60] PCi, 'Conflict Sensitivity Trainings: for Assistance Providers Working in Libya', February to March 2021.
[61] Interview, 9 July 2021.
[62] PCi, 'Conflict Sensitivity Trainings: for Assistance Providers Working in Libya", February to March 2021.

The training has moved online for the moment, which has been more challenging but has allowed teams to do homework between sessions and benefit from feedback and support from the training facilitators before coming back together as a full group. This has helped to build a stronger accompaniment approach into the training, which was cemented by ending the training with an action plan and a follow-up discussion six months later to check in on progress.[63]

The training courses have consistently been fully booked or oversubscribed, indicating high interest in the content.[64] Participants who have gone through the whole series of courses have found this extremely useful, and one partner has used the training to start their own process of conflict analysis and CS integration and training in their work on migration. They acknowledged that doing the whole training package was a significant investment of staff time, but overall have found the engagement with PCi on the training and beyond has changed the way they work for the better. They applied the tools themselves and then reached out to PCi for a 'coffee session' to discuss what they had done and any emerging challenges. They appreciate PCi's availability for this type of informal outreach support.[65]

The other need that has become clearer over time is problem-solving support to international agencies on their specific programmatic dilemmas and challenges.[66] The Master Class that is now part of the training package is an excellent opportunity to do this, and PCi has also created an 'on-call' facility to provide more tailor-made support. PCi has already delivered this kind of work previously with the EU Trust Fund (EUTF) for Migration, when it provided targeted training, support, and mentoring on CS for EUTF implementing partners and enabled information-sharing on CS risks and challenges.[67]

PCi staff and associates remain concerned that this type of support could become 'CS white-washing', whereby international actors may undertake the steps for CS practice and still not really be conflict sensitive because they do not challenge some of the policy-level decisions that are really conflict-blind. The Forum team therefore continues to see a need for engagement on policy-level CS through activities such as the Leadership Group.

PCi staff recognise that this 'problem-solving' function was previously provided informally, including over coffee sessions that they used to run when everybody was in Tunis together (now with the COVID-19 pandemic, this has become much more difficult).[68]

PCi has also started additional work on tools for operationalising CS, including on CS decision-making, which it feels is the next hurdle in the process of moving from conflict analysis and CS reflection to changing practice.[69]

Box 5: Reported changes to which the CSA Forum contributed

- Feedback forms from training participants showed marked improvement in understanding and ability to integrate CS into their work, and a high level of satisfaction.[70]
- In the 2017-2019 project, team mentors, who PCi trained on conflict skills under another programme strand, started providing conflict and CS advice and inputs to other

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[63] Interview, 22 June 2021.
[64] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4.
[65] Interview, 15 June 2021.
[66] Interviews, 2 June 2021 and 22 June 2021.
[67] PCi (2019), 'Final Operational Report: Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya, 01 December 2017 - 28 February 2019', 31 August 2019, p 4.
[68] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[69] Interview, 2 June 2021.
[70] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 14.

> - international agencies. In this way, results from PCi's other areas of work fed directly into the CSA Forum objectives.[71]
> - Project reports noted evidence that some of the international actors involved in the CSA Forum process had started embedding CS principles into their programming by either starting to integrate conflict-sensitive approaches into their programming or to require it of their grantees. All of them credited the project-led process (Forum meetings, analytical papers, or trainings) for the CS adaptations they have made.[72]

Despite the successes, some challenges remain. As in other contexts, many organisations have still not yet absorbed CS practices as a routine part of their processes and culture, and so CS often relies on the personal commitments of individual managers and staff members. In addition, even though donors and organisations are investing more time in analysis and in understanding how assistance programmes may interact with the peace and conflict context, that understanding still does not always translate into changing project actions or organisational decisions in practice.[73] The quality of conflict analysis products and interaction analyses is also a problem and makes it more likely that organisations go through the process but still do not confront the important CS challenges.[74] One respondent suggested that occasionally presenting on examples of how these challenges are dealt with in other contexts might be helpful to get people out of the 'Libya bubble'.[75]

> **Emerging lessons on skills enhancement and accompaniment for CS practice**
> - The Forum has evolved from broad awareness-raising, to basic CS training, to more in-depth CS training for multiple functions within organisations. It has now started engaging on CS decision-making and problem-solving, as organisations grapple with the complexities of delivering their work in the Libyan context.
> - Some notable successes have been achieved where organisations have used and adopted tools (or donors have required their partners do so) that improve the CS of their work.
> - Challenges remain, relating to the extent to which organisations in fact use the conflict and CS assessments to change their work rather than just go through the process. Political and policy-level challenges often undermine the potential for real progress to be made.

Focus area 3: Collective reflection and strategic discussions

At its heart, the CSA Forum started out as a space for collective reflection and influencing of CS policies and practice – based on a shared conflict analysis. PCi took the approach that CS is not about 'naming and shaming', but about recognising the challenges donor and implementing agencies face in complex contexts like Libya. With this in mind, the Forum aimed to create a safe space for critical thinking and self-reflection, without the fear of reputational risk.[76] Several respondents remarked how the atmosphere in these meetings is remarkably candid, self-critical, and productive – something PCi has deliberately worked to achieve.

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[71] PCi (2019), 'Final Operational Report: Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya, 01 December 2017 - 28 February 2019', 31 August 2019, p 4.
[72] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4; PCi (2019), 'Final Operational Report: Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya, 01 December 2017 - 28 February 2019', 31 August 2019, p 4.
[73] n.a. (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 4.
[74] n.a. (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 4.
[75] Interview, 15 June 2021
[76] n.a. (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 2.

The Forum meetings also reach a larger constituency of international agencies, and stimulate interest in other activities like the trainings and ad-hoc support opportunities. In this way, they have been effective entry points for engaging international actors on CS while offering them the useful resource of the conflict analysis discussions.

The context in Libya has heightened the importance of this work, but the evacuation of international actors to Tunisia also necessitated that the CSA Forum operates from outside Libya. Initially, it was easy for PCi to build up relationships with the small number of donors and international agencies. But over time, the international community grew, and so did the involvement in the CSA Forum. By 2019/20, Forum meetings had on average more than 30 people per meeting, representing more than 22 organisations, which makes it much harder to have the same quality relationships with people across the board.[77] This has also made it more important to recognise the different needs and knowledge gaps of participants (see Focus area 1).

The Forum has also channelled its research and analysis into some of the aid coordination groups as additional influencing opportunities, such as the EU Implementers' Forum for Support to Municipalities and the Nexus Working Group conversations in Libya.[78]

At the more political level, despite positive working relationships with the CS Leadership Group, this has also had its challenges when CS conclusions are in tension with the apparent foreign policy agendas of donor countries. For instance, at some point the Forum – and PCi by extension – was used by some international actors to pressure others into changing their policies by accusing them of being conflict-blind. This incident was related to a 2017 peer review process that focused on international assistance to migration programmes. The discussion of the findings of this process, including in the Leadership Group, were robust and challenging, with political sensitivities coming into the conversation. Subsequently, it became difficult to convene the Leadership Group for some months, and the next peer review exercise was changed into a reflection event.[79]

While robust policy conversations are clearly needed in the complex Libyan context, particularly on contentious issues such as migration, PCi is in a difficult position as facilitator.[80] More recently, the COVID-19 restrictions have moved this group online, and there is a sense that it has been more difficult to keep this group going in the absence of personal contact.[81] Nevertheless, it is clear that the group represents an interesting space where some more sensitive but important conversations could continue to take place.

This is particularly important as most of the work on CS in Libya (and elsewhere) tends to focus on changing the practice and improving the capacities of implementers only, which more easily turns CS into a tick-box exercise rather than a fundamental change in approach. Some problems may not be within the control of implementers to resolve and need broader change across the donor and implementer community – but incentives for this type of change are weak.[82] Not taking

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[77] Interview, 2 June 2021; PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 4.
[78] Interview, 9 July 2021.
[79] PCi (2019), 'Final Operational Report: Embedding Social Peace and Conflict Transformation during the Transition in Libya, 01 December 2017 - 28 February 2019', 31 August 2019, p. 13.
[80] n.a. (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 4; Interviews with Tim Molesworth, Senior Adviser for Conflict Sensitivity and Peace Technology, PCi, 2 June 2021 and Interview, 4 June 2021.
[81] Interview, 9 July 2021.
[82] n.a. (n.d.), 'Suggestions for Thematic Inputs at Bern LL Event', p 3.

a collective approach also misses opportunities to have a more peace-promoting collective impact on the conflict and peace dynamics in Libya.[83]

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Emerging lessons on collective reflection and strategic discussions

- Setting the right tone in the collective Forum space has been important, so that people are honest and do not try to 'look good' in front of colleagues and donors.
- A small initial Forum made it easy to build quality relationships with all members. As it grew, this became more difficult, and a change in approach was necessary to accommodate the different needs of participants (notably those new to the Libyan context and CS and those who have been there for longer).
- Engaging with senior leadership has been an important component of the Forum, to connect the more 'implementer-level' discussions with the policymakers. However, when there is strong disagreement on major foreign policy issues, it can be tricky for PCi to manage and can impact on the Forum's functioning. This is probably to be expected and highlights the challenge of CS as an approach also influencing the political level – beyond the 'technical' programming level.
- A collective approach remains important as a means to change some of the blockages to CS practice in the overall aid system – beyond what individual agencies can change.

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Measuring change

It is challenging to measure the type of change resulting from the CSA Forum work due to so much of it being informal and iterative and happening in several different spheres at the same time. In addition, as the CSA Forum is embedded in PCi's overall programme of work in Libya, the Forum's impacts are monitored as part of the overall programme as one of the Output areas (see Box 6).

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Box 6: CSA Forum outputs and indicators (2019-2022)[84]

The overall output within which the CSA Forum falls is: *"The conflict sensitivity of international assistance to Libya is strengthened"*.

It then has two main indicators for the three years of the programme:
- Number of organisations that adopt and resource organisational changes in Libya, designed to improve the conflict sensitivity of their actions
- Number of measures adopted by international organisations to incorporate conflict-sensitivity measures or responses into specific actions or interventions.

The anticipated changes are articulated as follows:
- Improved understanding among their staff of the peace and conflict dynamics in Libya, and of how these interact with assistance provision and can have either positive or negative effects on stability and long-term peace
- The adjustments of organisational policies to enable conflict sensitivity, such as diplomacy and programme design, approval and evaluation frameworks; staffing; security and procurement
- The explicit integration of conflict sensitivity into programming and other actions.

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[83] PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 7-8.
[84] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 7; PCi (January 2019), 'Project Document: Strengthening International and Civil Society Capacity to Build Stability and Peace in Libya', p 31.

Nevertheless, as indicated above (in Box 5), some important changes have been reported at the level of individual knowledge as well as institutional behaviour and policies.

PCi staff on the ground in Tunis lead on monitoring Output 2 activities.[85] They have followed a combination of structured and unstructured approach, which has included formal surveys and feedback opportunities on activities like the trainings; and more informal follow-ups with Forum participants and those who have benefited from ad-hoc support to see how they have used the inputs. They also reach out to those who have used the Forum's research products and are monitored by a third-party monitoring mechanism for EU grantees that helps them triangulate their own monitoring and observations.[86]

IV. Sustainability – what could this look like in future?

While it has been challenging to resource the CSA Forum, PCi has already successfully delivered and even expanded the work of the Forum with very few staff and resources, over a period of nine years. It still has funding until 2022 on its current grants.

All respondents felt that there will always be a need for this type of CS function in Libya because there are flaws in the aid system that a function like the CSA Forum helps mitigate. One felt that the constant quick staff turnover – aggravated by international actors being outside of Libya – really undermines institutional memory on both the context and programming lessons, which the Forum helps address. In addition, the wider aid system does not enable CS or can, in some cases, incentivise against it. At the same time, others hope that agencies will over time at least do good quality conflict analysis and CS integration, reducing the need for this to be done externally.

A Forum participant said that a donor could potentially host the Forum meetings, but the facilitation role would still be useful to make the most of this collective space. They also felt that the technical advice and accompaniment PCi provides is valuable, especially for organisations like those who cannot justify appointing a full-time conflict adviser. They suggested that the Forum could perhaps be substituted by on-call support – potentially funded through a donor requirement for grantees to budget for a certain number of CS advice days. They felt such pressure from donors would help ensure that agencies keep CS on the agenda if the Forum and PCi's work stopped.[87] PCi however feel that this ad-hoc model has not been effective in the past.

Another point that was raised is how to transfer the knowledge of those trained to the rest of their organisations to ensure larger uptake and sustainability. One suggestion here was for PCi to support a training of trainers approach to help those who do the full training package to take this forward with their colleagues.[88] PCi recognises, however, that the trainings only lay the foundation and much more in-depth work is then needed for an organisation to change its practice across the board.

Respondents felt that one of the benefits of PCi facilitating this function was that it is a small, low-key organisation and therefore not perceived as a powerful agency with a specific agenda, as UN agencies would be. At the same time, PCi's long-term work in Libya with a range of Libyan and international partners has also helped it be seen as credible and informed.

The other important question has been how and/or whether to engage with Libyan actors more in the work of the Forum. On the one hand, it is an important principle for international aid to be

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[85] PCi (April 2020), 'Annex VI: Final Narrative Report', PCi, p 17.
[86] Interview, 9 July 2021.
[87] Interview, 15 June 2021.
[88] Interview, 15 June 2021.

shaped by local perspectives and experiences, and for Libyan actors also to be conflict sensitive in their work. On the other hand, the Forum is currently conceptualised as a 'safe space' for international actors to frankly discuss the challenges they face and to influence aid decisions to become less damaging. Bringing Libyan actors into this space could be a risk in that international actors may be less honest about the challenges; while the political sensitivities about who is invited into this space could be difficult to manage as well. There are also ongoing sensitivities about what information is shared and with whom – among international actors, among Libyan actors, and between the two groups. One respondent said people seemed even more unwilling to share information in the online meetings.

PCi has been grappling with this question – and continues to do so – as it considers the CS implications of relationships between international actors, local partners, and communities; and how to best engage with Libyan actors across the board, given the many lines of polarisation within Libyan society and governing structures.[89] PCi has made some effort to bring Libyan actors into this space, by connecting the Libyan peacebuilder network to the CSA Forum through the research and analysis work, and encouraging international agencies to involve their Libyan staff and partners wherever possible in the Forum activities and trainings.

In the context of the international commitment to the localisation of aid, the role of local organisations in facilities like the CSA Forum is set to remain a live discussion.

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[89] Interviews, 2 June and 9 July 2021.

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Interview List

No.	Name	Organisation	Position
1	Anonymous	International Centre for Migration Policy Development	
2	Anonymous	International Centre for Migration Policy Development	
3	Bayne, Sarah	Independent Consultant	Associate Conflict Sensitivity Adviser, Peaceful Change initiative
4	Foreman, Anthony	Peaceful Change initiative	Senior Peacebuilding Advisor
5	Molesworth, Tim	Peaceful Change initiative	Senior Peacebuilding Advisor
6	Raunkiaer-Jensen, Kristine	Peaceful Change initiative	Conflict Analysis and Conflict Sensitivity Advisor

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