

ARC Global Closing Event_Concept note
December 7th and 8th,2022
Beel een Geluid (The Hague) and virtually accessible

Background

For the past decade, addressing the root causes of conflict and irregular migration through "bottom up" civil society engagement and fragile states has been a priority for Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The Addressing Root Causes fund(ARC fund-2016-2021) has been the latest centrally managed tender program that the MFA's department for Stabilization and Humanitarian Aid(DSH) has launched and managed to this effect¹.

Beyond implementation, the ARC program had the ambition to build a community of practice in which members take collective responsibility for learning, reflect on common challenges, encourage innovation and develop a repertoire of collective resources (experiences, stories, tools etc.). Building from lessons learned as part of ARC implementation and learning related endeavors, regional learning symposiums have been organized by ARC partners² in order to capitalize on experience from peace, security and justice programs through collaborative learning and knowledge sharing, to establish shared understanding on lessons learned and best practice, as well as analyze challenges and opportunities on dealing with addressing root causes of conflict and insecurity in the Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa and Sahel Region.

Building from the said regional events, a global learning event will be organized in The Hague on December 7th and 8th, 2022³ by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs(BZ), the Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law(KPSRL) and ARC partners. The global event will offer space to discuss common lessons which can be learned across the programs and how they could be fed into portfolio reflection for future programming and policy.

Objectives

Specific objectives of the ARC Global Learning event include:

- Offering safe space for both implementing partners and the MFA to discuss/cross-discuss emerging thematic trends⁴ and methodological approaches(harvesting and sharing resources included)⁵ which have proven to be effective(for scaling up purposes) or counter-effective during ARC implementation;

¹ The ARC program has been implemented between 2016 and 2021 by 21 consortia comprised of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local civil society organizations (CSOs) in 12 fragile and conflict-affected countries, namely Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Syria. In these countries, ARC-funded projects contribute to 1) Human Security; 2) Rule of Law; 3) Peace processes and Political Governance; and 4) Social and Economic Reconstruction.

² The learning and exchange symposiums fell within the ARC global learning agenda/trajectory; and aimed to provide opportunity for practitioners to come together, network and connect with people working in this space, and share best practices, lessons learned, results, and evidence from across the broad spectrum of activities in peacebuilding programming.

³ Anticipated participants are MFA policy officers(DSH/DSO),IOB, implementing partners(HQ and field office representatives),KPSRL and CRU(researchers working with the MFA on its adaptive programming trajectory).

⁴ Under the following ARC results areas: 1. improved human security, 2. a functioning rule of law, 3. inclusive political processes and legitimate governments and 5. equal access to employment opportunities and basic services.

⁵ It was proposed to study the possibility of compiling (on teams or dropbox for example) the various resources produced within the framework of ARC so that the various partners can have access to them (before the event).

ARC Global Closing Event_Concept note
December 7th and 8th,2022
Beel een Geluid (The Hague) and virtually accessible

- Discussing whether learning (and adaptation) have genuinely happened, with what results, and what enabled/ disenabled it within the ARC program;
- Discussing the nature of the relationship and cooperation between partners on one side (consortia dynamics) and on the other side between DSH/MFA and partner organizations, and how this aspect has influenced learning (and adaptation);
- Distilling and unpacking lessons⁶ to be fed into current (and future) programs and portfolio learning trajectories (learning at the portfolio level)

Key areas of learning

Based on recommendations developed by ARC regional events' participants⁷, the following learning aspects have been identified as potential catalyzers of a learning reflection at the portfolio level (for future programming and policy):

1. **Scaling up of interventions:** The IOB evaluation(s) has/ve revealed the limitations of the Peace Committee model, and overall, of the ARC model, in influencing the root causes of conflict at society-wide level. However, ARC grantees reported from the bottom-up that the peace committees led to concrete signs that they interpret as change towards better social cohesion⁸. In ARC, high level policy objectives and concepts might not have been matched by interventions that generated contribution at the required scale, even though they did generate humbler positive contribution (mainly at the local level). As the new DSH policy level theory of change contains DSH's ambition to influence root causes of conflict and strengthen the social contract(s) in partner countries, **the same dilemma of ambition versus actual capacity to create contribution might arise in future programmes**⁹. How should the Ministry and its programmatic partners deal with this dilemma?
2. One of the learning points emerging from ARC is the need for a **holistic support to peacebuilding, including, where appropriate, support for livelihoods and public investments**. However, DSH's policy prohibits¹⁰ the funding of livelihoods activities through peacebuilding programmes. One solution could be to blend funds from different departments into holistic programmes. When and how does this form of support is possible and useful?
Based on ARC lessons, How can we ensure that both donor (MoFA) and implementing NGOs stop working in the development, humanitarian, and peace building silo's and ensure that we have

⁶ Lessons should include overarching learning of programme design, innovations, implementation and scalable models which not only inform MOFA future programming but to discuss how MOFA plans to engage other donors specially EU to pick on some of the scalable models which aligns with their strategy including local governance, civil society and rule of law.

⁷ The report mentions clearly that recommendations issued are not to be understood as simple solutions to the challenges of programs like ARC, but as inspiration for continuing the discussion. Hence, the rationale of using them as a basis to shape the upcoming ARC Global Learning Event.

⁸ This is one of the key points reported during the ARC regional events.

⁹ Dilemma of wanting to have impact on society/country wide level vs. limited scale of interventions on a local level which might have local impact but not necessarily measurable society wide impact

¹⁰ MFA's funding structure at this moment does not know such a holistic approach, which leads to the limitation of DSH funds to be used for non SRoL goals.

ARC Global Closing Event_Concept note
December 7th and 8th,2022
Beel een Geluid (The Hague) and virtually accessible

strategy overarching our departments(As our structure and strategies in our silo's are contradicting the philosophy of **triple nexus**: bridging and cross-pollination).

3. **Exit strategies/sustainability**: The ARC programme has ended and DSH does not plan a direct follow up in the form of phase 2. Some of the change processes underway under ARC might, therefore, come to an abrupt halt unless taken up by other programmes. Have ARC's loose ends all been tied or do some remain open?
4. **Feedback loop and adaptation(adaptive programming)**: The ARC programme had the ambition of being adaptive but did not use tools designed specifically to be adaptive (such as contracts, learning events, management tools etc.). What can we learn from ARC about **which tools and processes DSH and other departments should adopt to facilitate adaptation?**
5. **Partnerships efforts**: The ARC programme was rather traditional in its partnership set up, contracting a Dutch or North NGO to lead consortia. The Dutch MFA and its programming partners have since embarked in a change process through new programmes such as Power of Voices or learning trajectories such as the community of practice on localisation. Despite being implemented withing consortia made of INGOs and local partners, did ARC have **a real localisation strategy?** What gaps in equal partnerships that ARC highlighted remain unaddressed to this day? And what could be the way forward?
6. The ARC programme had a **global learning agenda**. Did the ARC programme, through the MEL activities of its grantees, obtain answers to some of the global agenda's questions? Which ones, how, and why? And which questions remain unanswered and why? What does that tell us about ways to organise **cross-consortia and multi-level learning processes?**

All these aspects will be discussed by highlighting the key results achieved and the factors and approaches that contributed to the achievement (or non-achievement) of the said results.

Format

We aim to be as inclusive as possible in the organization and realization of this learning event. However, given that this event builds on the achievements of the regional learning events of last May, and given budgetary constraints and the challenge of virtual participation over two full days, we propose a **hybrid format, that combines a "live" in-person event with a "virtual" online component.**(See below the format proposed). This will allow remote participation of in-country partners.

ARC Global Closing Event_Concept note
December 7th and 8th,2022
Beel een Geluid (The Hague) and virtually accessible

Agenda

Day 1 - online

09:00– 10h40 - **Successful implementation approaches(parallel sessions for different ARC results areas)**

- Sub-session 1: Human Security
- Sub-session 2: Functioning Rule of Law
- Sub-session 3: Inclusive political processes
- Sub-session 4: Socio-economic reconstruction

10h50-12h00 - **Learning from partnerships**

Partnership game with role reversal, task being coming up with MoUs that detail who is in the consortium, how the consortium is organised. Then reflection on why they organised the consortia in such a way.

12h15 – 13h:15 - **Lessons from the ARC Global Learning agenda**

Day 2 – hybrid

09:00 – 09:15 - **Setting the scene**

09:15- 10:45 - **Adaptive management** : CRU team presents what reforms are being discussed in the adaptive management trajectory, and lead to ARC partners feedback.

10:45-11:05: break

11:05 – 12:30 - **The holistic approach to peacebuilding**: Case studies presented by the partners in terms of results and mechanisms to make it work with the different departments(with a emphasis on the triple nexus approach).

12:30 – 13:30 – lunch

13:30 – 15:00 - **ARC level of ambition: the case of Peacebuilding committees.**

15:00 – 15:30 – break

15:30 – 17:00 - **Reflection on exit strategies and loose ends after ARC.**

MFA presenting their perspective and partners providing feedback.

17:00 – 17:15 - **Closing remarks by the MFA**

17:15 – 19:00 - **Social event/networking**