



Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law Annual Conference 2020

Thursday, 15 October
Harnessing Potential

The Security & Rule of Law sector is consumed by very real problems: violence, conflict, injustice, abuse of power, corruption; making the sector a natural theater for cynicism. However, the KPSRL Secretariat has come to recognize the value of mobilizing around promising ideas, new approaches, and catalytic innovations.

Particularly in times when adversity appears to be mounting from every direction, it is essential to seize upon the creativity and ingenuity that difficult circumstances demand (and even inspire). With this in mind, the 2020 Annual Conference will channel our community's collective energy to focus on those small, emergent possibilities that hold the prospect for large, sweeping changes. We are inviting our community to call attention to and rally around the potential they see to improve SROL policy and programming.

Consider mobile courts, direct cash transfers, deep democracy, human rights accompaniment, legal empowerment for the poor, or open source intelligence. All these were once just a nascent idea. In order to scale them proportionate to the challenges they sought to tackle, their potential had to be harnessed.

Harnessing potential

The first step in harnessing potential, is identifying where potential lies. Putting forward untested ideas or elevating unheard perspectives can reveal opportunities to do things differently. From there, the hardest part can simply be getting out of our own way, quieting the doubts and dissent that argue for following the status quo. Recognizing potential not only involves the ability to see what others may have missed, but also the courage to challenge convention.

Once potential has been recognized, the hard work of 'harnessing it' is next. Here, much could be learned from the design community. Their 'design thinking'¹ pioneers in methods for thinking problems through, and mobilizing the creativity, ingenuity and iterative adaptation needed to build workable solutions.

¹ Design thinking approach is a non-linear, iterative process which seeks to understand users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions to prototype and test.

The 2020 Annual Conference will be a place to harness potential at any phase of development, from the first kindling of a radical new idea, to the tough but necessary process of submitting to scrutiny and honest critique, to the transformative stages of taking working models to scale. Progress is valued at each of these critical junctures, and at the 2020 KPSRL Annual Conference there will be room for potential at all stages.

Objective

The 2020 Annual Conference offers a space for interaction around initiatives that will either *expose & test* or *accelerate & scale* ideas that can improve the outcomes of SRoL policy and programming. The aim here is to push ourselves out of the cyclical and cynical rut of re-hashing problems, and instead channel our collective energy into where we can encourage, support, critique and nudge forward workable solutions.

Where are you on your journey to a solution?

By adopting the ‘design thinking’ approach, the Conference will look to include potential solutions at all stages of development. Each session will be framed around a specific stage of development – from articulating the idea to scaling up working modalities – providing each and every session with a framework for engagement, collaboration and progress.

- ***Empathize* – How can we prioritize the perspective of those experiencing the problem most directly?**
These sessions seek to recognize the urgency, discuss what success would look like, and make it a priority.
- ***Define* – What are key considerations that need to be taken up?**
These sessions will dig into the realities of an issue, the obstacles and opportunities to seize potential from top-level policy all the way to local implementation.
- ***Brainstorm* – What would you suggest if nobody could tell you ‘no’?**
These sessions are about generating radical ideas in an inclusive space where all suggestions are worthy of consideration.
- ***Prototype Testing* – Are you ready to put your idea to the test?**
Working in unexplored territories means working and reworking an idea to navigate towards its full potential. These sessions provide constructive, candid feedback, to encourage one another to reach further.
- ***Scale* – Are you ready to take this idea to the next level?**
These sessions will offer some tried and tested models the opportunity to explain what they need to expand their impact in a responsible way.

Where are we looking for potential?

Though the Secretariat hopes to receive proposals from a wide variety of different topical areas, the following are, in our view, particularly ripe with potential for new voices, budding ideas, emerging evidence and fresh approaches:

Strengthening the social contract; Mobilizing peaceful movements; Access to justice; Modes of governance; Land rights; Transparency and accountability; Legal empowerment; Human security; Mental health & psycho-social support; Youth, peace & security; Mediation and peacebuilding; Gender based violence; Climate & conflict; Engaging traditional leaders; Digitalization; Transformative resilience; Localization; Co-creation of knowledge; Assembling communities of practice.

Benefits of participating

The KPSRL Secretariat aims to use the 2020 Annual Conference to provide our community with the necessary backing - the encouragement, the visibility and, if necessary, some travel support – to see your idea take the next step forward. In return, we ask applicants to be bold in their visions, to honestly gauge and to take a responsible amount of risk, and to explain how their idea could prove transformative. By presenting at the KPSRL Annual Conference, your idea or project will:

- Gain exposure among the couple hundred policy officers, donors, researchers and programming specialists in our network who attend our Conference from around the globe.
- Be given the opportunity to have your idea or pilot program pitched, debated, tested, interrogated, encouraged and improved by the sharpest minds in our community.
- Enrich your creativity and re-energize your ambitions by getting into contact with some of the freshest thinking in the field. Tap into topical potential and engage in new likely and unlikely partnerships to see it through.
- Consolidate a ‘buzz’ around your idea, helping to build momentum to mobilize a critical mass of support.

Key Dates

Call for Session Proposals	May 18 - July 3
Attendee Registration Opens	June 18
Session Selection Announced	July 17
Final Session Outlines Due	September 10
Annual Conference	October 15