ESCR & Sustaining Peace on the Ground

findings of a joint learning process

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Overview

- **Context Honduras:** «the neoliberal dream of some, the nightmare of many»
- **Defending ESCR:** «in memoriam of Berta Cáceres»
- **Conflicts, mistrust & polarization:** «difficult state – society relations»
- **Focus on dialogue, relations & process:** «a response from a peacebuilding perspective»
- **Conclusions:** «towards a just and peaceful Honduras»
Context Honduras: “The neoliberal dream of some, the nightmare of many”

- Neoliberal model with three characteristics since the coup d’État in 2009
- Precarious human rights situation
  - Political & civil rights: insecurity, violence, militarization, surveillance, control
  - ESCR: poverty, lack of employment and income, inequality, discrimination (women, LGBTI)
- No protection of rights by state institutions:
  - weak institutions in the hands of the elites & criminal networks, corruption = the operating system (Chayes 2017).
  - Police and military = main perpetrators (84%)
Defending ESCR: “in memoriam of Berta Cáceres”

- 3 civil society organizations of learning process:
  - COPINH: indigenous resistance to hidroelectric power
  - MUCA: land conflict between palm oil industry and farmers
  - Arcoiris: LGBTI community
- 120 defenders killed since 2009 (Global Witness 2017)
- ESCR defenders: «They challenge power where it hurts»
  - Production: Control over territory and land
  - Consumption: Control over society
Conflicts, Mistrust & Polarization: “difficult state –society relations”

- Risk of exacerbating conflicts & polarization
- Mistrust & lack of dialogue
  - With government (e.g. Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders)
  - With international institutions (e.g. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights)
  - Among civil society (e.g. strategies against youth violence)
- Missed opportunities to improve human rights situation
Focus on dialogue, relations & process:
“a response from a peacebuilding perspective”

- Reframing for dialogue on both sides:
  - ESCR = basic needs (the onion)
  - HR violations = root causes and symptoms of conflict
- Improving relations within civil society
  - Leveling the playing field with knowledge exchange
  - Safe spaces & trust building measures
  - Interest-based solutions
- Protect and promote processes of social & political change
Conclusions:
“towards a just & peaceful Honduras”

• ESCR defenders are at special risk, because they threat the foundations of wealth and power of the elites
• Human rights violations and politics against ESCR defenders lead to increased mistrust, polarization and conflicts at all levels
• Peacebuilding approaches contribute to overcome these, in order to make use of opportunities to promote ESCR
• Need for knowledge exchange on ESCR & Sustaining Peace on the ground / in the local context
Thank you!