



WPS ACTION PLAN ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

SUMMARY

December 9, 2020

**PREPARED BY THE WOMEN,
PEACE AND SECURITY
NETWORK-CANADA**

This report was made possible by the time and volunteer commitment of our generous note-takers from the Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security (Ambika Varma, Natalia Valencia, Olivia Compton and Rosalyn Martin) and the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (Ayesha Talreja, Charlotte Akin and Greer Donaldson). With special thanks to Alexandria Kazmerik, Katrina Leclerc, and Shayne Wong for their contributions as editors of the report.

The sections of the report outlining the presentations by representatives of the CNAP government implementing partners have been reviewed and revised by staff from each department.



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The WPSN-C gratefully acknowledges the financial contribution from Global Affairs Canada that supports our active participation in the WPS Advisory Group.

Background

Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) (CNAP) 2017-2022 established an 'Action Plan Advisory Group.' According to the CNAP:

The Group will comprise civil society experts and government officials and will be co-chaired by a Peace & Stabilization Operations Program (PSOPs) official and a representative of civil society through the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C). The Group will meet regularly throughout the Action Plan's life cycle to exchange experiences and best practices, discuss challenges and develop innovative solutions related to the implementation of the Action Plan. The Group will also engage with staff from Canadian embassies abroad and women's groups' leaders to learn from experiences from the field.

The Group will improve progress monitoring by means of a continuous dialogue between civil society experts and government officials who are responsible for implementing the Action Plan. WPS Champions will attend meetings as defined in the Group's terms of reference.

The Advisory Group has met once or twice a year since 2018. Ideally, the fall meeting will review progress as set out in the annual progress report which is to be tabled in Parliament each September. In 2020, the report was delayed so an alternative agenda was proposed. The focus of the meeting was on the six departmental CNAP implementing partners that do not often share the limelight.

The previous meeting of the Advisory Group was held June 30th, 2020. It had approximately 100 participants and discussed five themes.¹ Participants answering the post-meeting survey after the June meeting reported that the meeting was worthwhile and the discussion productive. There was significant interest in the topics and support for the format as an ongoing exchange platform.

In addition to two annual meetings, the Advisory Group organizes special meetings dedicated to specific topics on an ad-hoc basis. In 2020, the Advisory Group organized a meeting on Disarmament and WPS in November and a session on WPS and GBA+ in January.

The objectives of the December 9, 2020 meeting were:

- Share and learn how other CNAP implementing departments – Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), Department of Justice, and Public Safety - are addressing WPS issues and explore future possibilities.
- Advance the discussion on how to advance the WPS agenda inside large organizations.

¹ Supporting and protecting women peacebuilders; Programming and other forms of support for the WPS Agenda during COVID-19; Implementation of the UN Secretary General's Appeal for a global ceasefire; Peace and security in Canada: What does implementation of the WPS agenda look like at home?; Action Plan reporting and mid-term review: Strengths and areas for improvement

participation and strengthening the analysis of GBA+. Within the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 231 Calls for Justice are directed to the Canadian Government and civil society.

Beginning in December 2019, the government provided funding to Indigenous organizations to identify: (1) short, medium, and long-term priorities within the Calls for Justice; (2) community-led practices for addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people; and, (3) how Indigenous partners want to be included in the development of the National Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. A committee continues to meet bi-weekly to discuss progress and plan development, multilateral collaboration with regards to collaborating on the final report.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, online engagement is being done to ensure everyone's safety. This allows the department to learn from others across the country and hear about regional best practices. Several working groups have been established, including core working groups made up of Indigenous women, survivors, and families. There is also a focus on data, specifically around groups such as the 2SLGBTQQIA community.

Kahlil Cappuccino | Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

The speaker noted that within the context of WPS, it is important to ensure that all Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples are permitted to live in safety and without fear of violence.

CIRNAC and ISC's joint-implementation plan is to be aligned with supporting documents including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice. They also hope it will help to fulfil their mandate.

ISC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and an accord with the Native Women's Association of Canada. ISC also has established an Advisory Committee on Indigenous Women's Wellbeing in 2019 in response to the critical issue of forced and coerced sterilization. The Indigenous-led interdepartmental Committee has evolved and now provides a forum for National Indigenous Women's Organization's and other partners (National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and AFN Women's Council) to provide distinctions-based advice and guidance on addressing issues impacting Indigenous women's health and wellness. The Committee has been actively engaged throughout the pandemic, highlighting the need for mental wellness supports and action on the increased violence that Indigenous women and children are facing, and developing an action plan centred around family violence; cultural safety in health care; and GBA+. They would like to employ the committee's model and funding structure in other areas that they are serving.

In the fall economic statement a specific budget has been allocated to address systemic discrimination and gender-discrimination against marginalized populations including Indigenous women and girls and the LGBTQ+ community in remote and rural regions as the primary beneficiaries.

Claudia Sosa | Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE)

WAGE is marking the 50th anniversary of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. One hundred and sixty-seven recommendations were made to address critical issues for women including education, affordable child care, and wage equality. The Commission's report also led to the establishment of a Minister for Status of Women. In 2018, WAGE was formalized as an official department that coordinates information, develops policy, delivers programs, and provides advice related to gender equality. WAGE has five primary areas of work:

1. GBA+ and expanding it across a variety of fields
2. GBV
3. Women's programs dedicated to advancing equality
4. Indigenous women & girls
5. International and intergovernmental relations.

While they have made progress, they hope to grow by:

- Understanding and implementing intersectional approaches
- Developing a step-by-step tool of policy and program development cycles
- Improving capacity and analytical tools and reviewing trainings for CNAP partners
- Creating a web-based portal for GBA+ tools and resources
- Creating a performance measurement framework for improved learning
- Enhancing governance and collaborative networks

Olivia Matthews | Public Safety Canada

There are three public safety portfolios to support CNAP:

1. Serious and Organized Crime
2. Correctional Services of Canada (CSC)
3. Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence

In September 2019, the Government of Canada launched the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking (National Strategy), which is supported by an investment of \$57.22 million over five years and \$10.28 million ongoing. The National Strategy brings together federal efforts under one strategic framework. Public Safety oversees the implementation of the National Strategy in partnership and coordination with other federal partners. Through the federal Human Trafficking Taskforce (HTT), Public Safety works with federal departments to implement, coordinate, and manage efforts to address human trafficking in Canada and abroad. Public Safety continues to incorporate WPS priorities into its responses to human trafficking. Similar to the WPS Action Plan, Prevention is a key pillar of the National Strategy. Furthermore, the National Strategy

recognizes the importance of GBA+ and promotes victim-centered, trauma-informed, culturally-relevant, and gender responsive responses to human trafficking.

CSC's main contribution to CNAP is through international training activities, funded by Global Affairs. Priority areas include promoting the importance of women as correctional officers in peace operations activities, increasing gender issues and human rights for prisoners (in accordance with international human rights standards), and promoting the inclusion of women within leadership/management positions in correctional organizations. As part of WPS activities, CSC participates in the Group of Friends of Corrections in Peace Operations, a forum for the provision of political, technical and personnel support and advocacy towards corrections contributions in UN peace operations. CSC has also developed and is leading the delivery of an international women-centered training entitled "Effective Practices for Gender Responsive Treatment of Women Prisoners." Striving for gender-balance among participants and the facilitator cadre is a central component in all training delivery models.

Since its inception in 2017, the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (the Canada Centre) coordinates the Government of Canada's efforts to counter radicalization to violence. In 2018, the Canada Centre launched the National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence with an emphasis on building, sharing, and using knowledge; addressing radicalization to violence in the online space; and, supporting interventions. Through the Community Resilience Fund (CRF), the Canada Centre provides funding to research institutions and intervention programs to help build the evidence base and capacity to prevent and counter radicalization to violence. For example, through the CRF the Canada Centre has begun funding research projects on ideologically motivated violent extremism, including violent misogyny. Through the Canada Centre, Public Safety contributes to work led by other government departments, like the Digital Citizen Initiative and Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy at Canadian Heritage, and Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence at Women and Gender Equality. A common challenge within the Public Safety Portfolio includes how to meaningfully operationalize WPS within our domestic departments. Each department has its own implementation plans; however, the general CNAP primarily focuses on international targets. This can create a language barrier while trying to raise awareness departmentally on WPS initiatives. GBA+ has served as an analytical tool to support the WPS agenda. Public Safety is continuing to look forward to furthering engagement on the WPS agenda in Canada.

Patrick Mcevenue | Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

IRCC first joined the Action Plan Advisory Group, as a supporting department to Canada's current 2017-2022 National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (CNAP-WPS), under former Minister Hussen. IRCC supports women and girls through refugee resettlement programs, settlement programs, and provides funding towards the development of a new online "gender hub" tool to support the gender-responsive implementation of the Global Compacts for Migration. While IRCC does not directly engage in Canada's conflict and peacebuilding efforts abroad, the department is linked

to Canada's efforts in the current WPS agenda in a number of indirect ways, with gender and inclusion as core considerations.

The department contributes to the CNAP through the following initiatives:

1. **Programming to resettle refugees:** IRCC supports specific streams that focus on the success of resettled women and girls, including women at risk, human rights defenders, and LGBTI refugees. In 2019, approximately half of the more than 30,000 individuals who resettled in Canada were women and girls.
2. **Programming for newcomers:** IRCC's Settlement Program supports all permanent resident newcomers to successfully integrate into Canadian society and the economy. Although migration to Canada can include many opportunities, IRCC recognizes that it can also involve distinct and multiple challenges. To address these challenges, considerations for gender, age, identity, and circumstances of migration are included in the design and delivery of Settlement Program policies.
3. **Programming for visible minority newcomer women:** Visible minority newcomer women can face multiple barriers when entering the Canadian labour market, including gender and race-based discrimination, precarious or low-income employment, a lack of affordable childcare, and weak social support. To better address these challenges, IRCC introduced programming in 2018 to support the employment and career advancement of visible minority newcomer women.
4. **Measures to support foreign nationals from abusive job situations:** Some foreign workers in Canada face diverse challenges that can be exacerbated by their immigration status. Some individuals may feel obligated to remain in an abusive work situation out of fear of jeopardizing their immigration status. In June 2019, IRCC introduced the Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers. The new permit is intended to enable workers with an employer-specific work permit to leave situations of abuse (physical, psychological, sexual or financial) quickly, transition to a new job, and maintain their immigration status in Canada.
5. **Measures to support foreign nationals from family violence:** Some foreign nationals in Canada may feel obligated to remain with an abusive spouse or partner out of fear of jeopardizing their immigration status. In July 2019, IRCC implemented two initiatives to support newcomers in situations of family violence and whose immigration status can be considered precarious: the ability to apply for an expedited temporary resident permit and the option to apply for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.
6. **Internal GBA+ training:** IRCC offers training and the dissemination of tools across the department to raise awareness of the utility of GBA+ and the development of inclusive policies and practices.
7. **International migration diplomacy:** Canada is seen as a leading country when it comes to immigration. We aim to lead by example and use our status as a leading country in immigration to promote issues of gender diversity and inclusion.

Janet McIntyre | Department of Justice

All forms of discrimination against women, rights of the child, and rights of persons with disabilities are relevant to the CNAP.

Canada contributes very actively to GBV issues. Through the former Bill C-75, the Government of Canada has strengthened criminal laws in intimate partner violence, made amendments to the *Divorce Act* and created broad definitions of family violence (physical, psychological, sexual, financial, etc.). They also included the direct or indirect exposure to family violence of children after conducting consultations and research in this area.

In October 2020, Justice Canada participated in the Global Week for Justice, a weeklong series of events including the Global Dialogue of Justice Leaders, which looked at the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on justice and actions the justice community is taking in response. The events highlighted the disparities that COVID-19 has exposed.

The Federal Victims Strategy and Victim's Fund aim to support provincial governments in providing legal advice for victims of intimate partner violence and sexual violence. In the context of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the Victims Fund has also supported the development of Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs) across Canada to enhance access to services for family members of missing or murdered Indigenous women.

The FILUs represent a new and unique model of service for family members, which contributes to access to justice by ensuring a culturally-grounded and trauma-informed team who actively works with government institutions and agencies on behalf of family members to obtain the information they are seeking about what happened to their missing or murdered loved one. It is a unique model to access justice and is culturally grounded in trauma informed care.

Justice Canada is focusing on a people-centred approach to justice and advancing SDG 16. Justice Canada will advance these efforts at home and abroad and will continue to partner with international organizations working on SDG 16 such as the OECD.

Break out Groups

Group 1: Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE)

The group's wide-ranging discussion covered many topics. Civil society representatives highlighted the importance of understanding the broad context of issues. For example domestic violence and human rights abuses often intersect with immigration and refugee issues. They recommended that WAGE be more aware of issues that come to affect all initiatives that are interconnected.

It was noted that the Government could strengthen its intersectional approach and link up with new actors and players. For example, also relating to domestic violence and immigration, they could collaborate with Canada for Africa Group. WAGE could

advocate for such partnerships and consult with local communities and discuss how the issues affect them.

Government representatives acknowledged that Indigenous women and girls are not a homogenous group, there are distinct experiences of Métis women and girls and LGBTQ2+ folks. WAGE is currently working towards a National Action Plan in response to the National Inquiry for MMIWG. It was acknowledged that the development of this NAP must include Indigenous voices and based on this input, the focus can slowly narrow to issues pertaining to specific groups such as the Métis.

It was acknowledged that the Government needs to focus more on intersectionality (e.g. geography, gender, and race). WAGE is currently working on the 2021 budget and will be relaunching programs fostering dialogue with local groups with the goal of integrating other issues into their agenda.

The group also discussed the need to involve more women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) professions.

Group 2: Department of Justice

Government representatives were interested in exploring insights that have been picked up from the international community that could help the implementation of SDG 16 at the domestic level. They noted difficulties with measurement, data collection, and the need for more research. There is a survey coming into the field in February 2021 from Statistics Canada titled the “Canadian Legal Problems Survey” (CLPS). Approximately 30,000 people will be surveyed plus an oversampling of Indigenous Peoples and questions will include the kinds of problems people are having, if they have sought legal advice, and what kinds of resolution pathways are available to them.

The work of the Assembly of First Nations Women’s Council and the Chair on education and GBV prevention against women was acknowledged. There are 231 calls that are specific for the justice system and the reforms required. The government was asked what kinds of immediate action they are taking, particularly in light of the shift in priorities during the pandemic. There is a need for more resources to help implement services across the country such as victim services, emotional support, and assistance for Indigenous peoples in navigating the legal system.

There was discussion on the topic of pathways from child welfare to youth criminal justice. The University of Manitoba is currently undertaking groundbreaking work on this issue and is looking into how to share the research more broadly so it can be applied elsewhere. It was noted by civil society representatives that previously, a “strength-based” method to have more prevention programs to prevent paths from child welfare to crime has worked. As a result, there was less crime but maintaining funding for the long-term was difficult making it hard to implement it on a more permanent basis. The Government is currently working on restorative justice and identifying the strengths of the model. The main focus at this time is the problems and crimes at hand and how to address them so they do not escalate as opposed to prevention methods.

Group 3: Public Safety Canada

The group discussed the rise of domestic violence during the pandemic. The issue of how to engage women with little to no access to technology or who are not technologically literate was also raised. This issue is of ongoing concern to the Government of Canada. The NAP on GBV could be a way to work with all levels of government and ensure that hard to reach women and girls are being reached as this is an ongoing issue.

Government representatives inquired into whether there are areas that individuals and groups are currently working in that could impact CNAP but are not getting attention. One participant raised that there was a recent suicide of a human rights defender in Canada; it is believed that she did not receive material supports, including mental health support. Female human rights defenders are being overlooked by CNAP and there is a lack of support such as physical and mental security for these women.

The need of the Government to engage and collaborate with women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and those working at the grassroots level was acknowledged. Although the Government has formalized a collaboration with the current advisory group, it is clear that they need to engage more with other people and groups at the grassroots level.

Current media coverage and research find that there is a rise in hate crimes and hateful incidents in the online space during the pandemic due to misinformation surrounding COVID-19 with particular impacts on visible minorities and equity-deserving groups. Also, research to better understand how the pandemic affects intervention programs aimed at countering violent radicalization is revealing that clients report increased stressors as a result of the pandemic; such as heightened anxiety, increased isolation and increases of stressful and harmful social media and internet content, including conspiracy theories.

Group 4: Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

The group discussed the gaps in CNAP reporting. Going forward, the government is trying to improve the consistency of reporting. ISC joined in 2018 and have since been assisting with the implementation plan and plan to publish more going forward. This interruption in publication was likely a gap year.

Regular reporting on how the WPS agenda benefits and can support Indigenous communities and the ISC would be beneficial to demonstrating the importance of a domestic implementation of the agenda. Regular reporting can assist in identifying goals within the WPS agenda that can be linked to the work being done by other government portfolios and hold the government accountable to the agenda at a domestic level. Internal capacity building and raising awareness of the WPS agenda need to occur at various fronts (i.e., government and civil society levels).

It was noted that having a holistic model is important to the development of the report. The intersectionality of issues raises the question of what is a WPS issue and where does the government draw the line. It was additionally mentioned that parameters are important but they need to be established in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

Group 5: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)

CSO representatives asked how to best address the Calls for Action and justice and where the government is in their development of an action plan. Additionally, it was asked whether the government could share if women and women's organizations were being included in the discussion and development of the action plan.

The Action Plan in response to the National Inquiry for MMIWG is being developed via the use of working groups who will each develop an evergreen plan. The working groups consisted of individuals and groups from the federal level, urban environments, the family of survivors, and the LGBTQ2+ community. The government is working to ensure that it is grassroots focused so the ideas are coming from the people who are the most impacted. The meetings are being attended by Indigenous leaders as well as leaders from Provincial/Territorial representatives. They include presentations highlighting the work being done in the regions, best practices, and what has been successful and what has not.

The government acknowledged the need to adapt the WPS agenda to be understood and used domestically, rather than simply as an international issue. It is a challenge to translate international issues to work inside Canada. Officials noted that we need to work together to translate this agenda domestically and how it can be most effectively used at the national level. It can be hard to travel to the UN and rationalize this travel to partners, when there are domestic issues such as a lack of clean drinking water. However, agendas such as WPS are easier to understand at the national level particularly with the focus that we have seen in recent years on Indigenous women and girls and ending systemic racism.

WPSN-C participated in a study a few years ago focusing on women peacebuilders and what sustaining peace means for different communities. Everyone experiences conflict differently so the study included diverse groups such as Indigenous women. The first question of the study was do you live in a peaceful community but everyone has a different idea of what peace is. Civil society representatives inquired whether the government would be integrating the WPS agenda domestically, meaning that they would not be integrating as a foreign policy but as a domestic one. Additionally, how can the government use the WPS agenda in terms of the work they are currently doing?

The government representatives noted that the more knowledge they have of the agenda throughout the department, the more they can use it both internationally and domestically. They are still waiting for the implementation plan to be approved. Concerning the WPS agenda, the government has signed onto the agenda standards however, they noted that some of the elements of the agenda are not relevant for Canada. They are currently working very hard on CNAP.

There is a planned review of CNAP by GAC, how can this midterm evaluation help us look forward to what can be included in the future CNAP? Additionally, this is an opportunity for the inclusion of both international and domestic aspects of the WPS agenda to be established more clearly. Members of civil society were invited to share

any thoughts on how the WPS agenda can be implemented with the government as the civil society representatives have more experience with the agenda.

There have been various countries around the world who have implemented both international and domestic views of the WPS agenda in their NAP. Canada is slowly getting there and we can see the benefits that can be achieved from the cohesiveness of implementing the agenda in such a way. Civil society has explored the connections between international and domestic implementations of the agenda and have written a number of blogs on the topic.

Group 6: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

The government is currently working on how to implement GBA+ on different agendas and seeking ways to help push the agenda forward.

CSOs asked, when considering CNAP, how have diaspora communities been consulted in developing the policy framework? Currently the government is not doing a lot of consultations, particularly in light of COVID-19. They are however, looking at the impact of the pandemic on certain communities. This is a concern as they wish to ensure that recipient communities are included in the designing of such frameworks. This has been a challenge for the government.

CSOs inquired into how the IRCC integrates GBA+ into integration/settlement programs. When programs and services are designed, GBA+ is taken into account. It is not used as a specific tool per se, but is more used as a broad-based approach in the design process. GBA+ is used in budget planning, it is present in Cabinet proposals and Treasury Board submissions, and currently the government is trying to implement it across the department. The settlement program was noted as being a good example of how the GBA+ framework can be used.

In the context of work regarding refugees and other vulnerable populations, do the policy tools include how to address sexual exploitation internally within the system? Are there complaint mechanisms in place? As you work on WPS, is this integrated internally with respect to sexual exploitation and abuse? The government is not sure how they would address this concerning an analysis of their internal systems. GBA+ is more focused on policies and programs which is an outward-facing issue. The government does follow guidelines on sexual exploitation, but this is a topic that they acknowledge they need to look more into at an internal level. There is further exploration needed.

Closing session - Advancing the WPS Agenda Inside Organizations: Lessons Learned

The closing session was a short panel featuring the WPS champions and Natasha Lewis (Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor, Gender in Emergencies and Humanitarian Response, for CARE International). Canada's WPS Ambassador, Jacqui O'Neill, chaired the discussion. The panel was asked to explore: How do you move WPS

issues from the margins inside large organizations? What have you learned about being a champion? How do you explain this agenda/these issues to people within your organization? The panel was conducted under Chatham House Rule.

Panelists noted the importance of being mindful of language and to view WPS as a team effort. This includes ensuring the swift engagement of men in WPS, and soliciting their buy-in and to use examples whenever possible. To get engagement from leadership, they need to be convinced of the benefits of the work. It is very important for people to understand and empower the decision-making process. Small, simple and achievable victories such as understanding women being on the ground are critical to acknowledge. The language used needs to be clear and easy to understand with sharp examples of things that need to be addressed. The government representatives noted that the energy and passion of the CSOs shows in their advocacy and carries weight.

CSOs inquired into how to convince senior officials of the realities on the ground and the importance of having WPS implemented into programming. There is awareness being raised within women-led organizations for WPS and forming connections between the agenda and social movements. This work needs to be relevant to the people it affects and serves. Government representatives noted that fostering relationships make and effect change. CSOs should use their influence and connections to work with the people and engage and convince people of the benefits of the work being done. The government is working under a feminist policy framework and leaders and ambassadors have been encouraged to engage with women peacemakers. This aids them in developing their work to ensure that the intended results can be obtained.

How have CSOs who often have diverse membership hold the government accountable to the WPS agenda and compel them to implement the agenda? The most effective way that CSOs have done this is to engage at the local level. These groups are keeping WPS work relevant and implementing the agenda. Although these may seem like they are micro reports, they are important in the overall work.

The government has been using a GBA, liaising the community and the government. They need to help knit communities back together, to help build relationships and unveil truths and root causes. There needs to be an understanding of the WPS agenda and how important and beneficial the work is so it can be mainstreamed. The government needs to sit down and engage in dialogue with the communities rather than dictating their needs.