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EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS: SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND
ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

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There were no major conflicts of interests in the writing of this report. Some papers reviewed were authored by the authors of this report; those papers were allocated to different researchers to review to avoid conflict of interest.

Contributions
The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of International Development. Responsibility for the views expressed remains solely with the authors.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUSAid	Australian Agency for International Development
CO	Community Officer
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FSU	Family Support Unit
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEPE	Multi-Ethnic Police Element
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN	UN Development Programme
US	United States

GUIDE TO REFERENCE NOTES

EXP	Experimental methods
OBS	Observational methods
OR	Non-systematic review
P	Primary evidence
QEX	Quasi-experimental methods
S	Secondary evidence
↑	High-quality evidence
→	Moderate-quality evidence
↓	Low-quality evidence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evidence synthesis examines the following research questions:

1. What is the evidence on the relationship between organisational capacity building interventions and (i) improved accountability; (ii) increased responsiveness; and (iii) improved capacity to deliver among security institutions and agencies in low- and middle-income countries?
2. What factors enable or hinder these improvements?
3. What is the evidence on the relationship between organisational capacity building interventions and the longer-term outcome of increased stability and reductions in outbreaks of conflict?

Sources of evidence are drawn from the security sector reform (SSR) database that the Governance and Social Development Research Centre (GSDRC) has compiled for the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

Capacity building constitutes a core component of many development programmes, including SSR, and is central to efforts to improve the delivery of citizen security in an effective, responsive and accountable manner. Yet, while much has been written about SSR, including critiques of its effectiveness, understandings of 'capacity' and 'capacity building' remain under-explored. It is therefore not clear to what extent capacity building interventions have led to the improved security outcomes this synthesis is concerned with.

METHODS

This synthesis involved the review of 215 studies compiled by the GSDRC's SSR database, supplemented by studies recommended by five SSR experts. Each study was graded according to a template developed by the Overseas Development Institute in collaboration with DFID. This assessed overall evidence quality according to DFID's 'How to Note on Assessing the Strength of Evidence' (2014) and relevance to the research questions. A total of 149 studies were found to be of moderate to high relevance and were drawn on in developing the findings.

LIMITATIONS

Three key challenges emerge in relation to the limited articulation of, or engagement with, the concept of capacity building, its components and the outcomes that stem from these in the SSR literature. First, only a few studies look explicitly at the relationship between SSR interventions (some of which involve capacity building) and the above outcomes. Second, the literature does not generally distinguish between capacity building efforts and wider SSR; rather, these tend to be conflated, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions about effects of discrete capacity building activities. Finally, the literature under review tends either to talk about capacity building in broad terms, failing to disaggregate this into different activities (such as training or technical assistance) or to talk about some of these activities, but not explicitly as part of 'capacity building' efforts. As a result of these limitations, it is often difficult to distinguish where there is an absence of evidence and where there is an absence of impact. This important distinction is highlighted throughout the review.

The SSR database included 18 evaluations, which were among the most useful studies. It is likely that more evidence could be drawn from such evaluations and would help avoid publication bias. The fact that the literature included in the database includes only that explicitly related to SSR means important contributions in wider fields – such as anthropology, criminology and legal studies – are not drawn on here.

KEY FINDINGS

The literature suggests capacity building is overwhelmingly operationalised in a limited manner, resulting in a fall back on train and equip approaches. These tend to treat the problem as one of capacity deficit, neglecting the fact that dysfunction is often the result not only of weak capacity but of a particular constellation of political incentives.

The reviewed literature overwhelmingly suggests a weak relationship between capacity building and improved security outcomes. Even where positive outcomes are acknowledged, most papers reviewed put those in the context of limited change. However, it is often not always clear whether the literature is claiming no improved capacity or no evidence of improved capacity.

The security outcomes under examination do not in all cases push in the same direction and are at times in tension. This is especially the case with improved capacity to deliver security and improved accountability – where a more operationally capacitated security sector can come at the expense of a more accountable one that respects human rights.

Capacity building is widely viewed in the literature as unsustainable, with a heavy reliance on international personnel and finance. Studies suggest that, when these resources are removed, there would likely be a reversal in any gains made, particularly where there is limited local ownership of reforms. However, there are no longitudinal studies that assess the long-term impact of capacity building interventions.

In relation to specific research questions, the following findings emerge:

IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY

- Issues of accountability, oversight and security sector governance are frequently neglected in SSR.
- Where oversight and accountability mechanisms are established, they are often not engaged in ongoing capacity building efforts.
- Accountability tends to be a difficult area in which to achieve results because of vested political interests that can block change.
- Approaches to improving accountability tend to engage with either the security sector itself, oversight institutions or communities, with only a few examples of working across all three.
- Activities that developed oversight mechanisms with senior (but not necessarily mid-) level buy in, used 'best fit' rather than 'best practice' approaches to peer learning and sought to build relationships between the security sector, oversight institutions and communities emerge from the literature as most effective.

IMPROVED RESPONSIVENESS TO CITIZEN NEEDS

- The extent to which improved responsiveness to citizen needs can be achieved through capacity building remains unclear.
- Common approaches to improving responsiveness including training, restructuring (vetting and gender-balancing) and developing new forms of security provision, such as community policing, gender desks and decentralisation of policing functions.
- A consistent message emerging from the literature points to a failure of capacity building to improve responsiveness owing to political influences that lead the security sector to serve group or private interests and poor conditions of service that make it difficult to incentivise improved responsiveness.
- More information is particularly needed on the effect of gender reforms in terms of making the security sector more responsive to women and girls and on how non-state security actors can be supported to provide improved security.

IMPROVED CAPACITY TO DELIVER SECURITY

- There is more evidence supporting the relationship between capacity building and improved operational capacity to deliver security than for the other outcomes under consideration here.
- However, this outcome sits most in tension with the others. Improving capacity to deliver can come at the cost of improved accountability or respect for human rights.
- Training on operational and management procedures is the most common form of capacity building but is often poorly tailored to context and learning needs.
- Other interventions, such as equipment supply and infrastructure development, can be effective where they are attuned to local needs rather than international best practice but are rarely transformational in and of themselves.

FACTORS THAT ENABLE OR HINDER IMPROVEMENTS IN CAPACITY

- Capacity building is more successful where it acknowledges the political nature of reforms and is designed accordingly. This includes a number of dimensions, recognising that capacity building is itself deeply political as it involves changing power relations; that capacity building must be tailored to the political realities of the context; and that political support for reform efforts is key.
- Less explored is how the political nature of donors and donor countries themselves influence capacity building.
- Capacity building activities must be appropriately tailored to the context and local levels of capacity, including by ensuring 'capacity-builders' have the requisite local expertise, language and professional skills.
- Local institutional forms should also be acknowledged and potentially engaged rather than there being a focus on developing best practical institutional arrangements.
- Where donors are more flexible, devolve decision-making, engage beyond the short term, work on specific security and justice problems and coordinate among themselves, reforms are more likely to see improvements in outcomes.

IMPROVED STABILITY

- The literature dealing with this issue suggests SSR can play an important stabilising role in the short term, although it is unclear whether this is because of capacity building or simply because of the presence of foreign troops and significant aid funds.
- However, there is little evidence that SSR and capacity building contribute to longer-term security, although there is no longitudinal analysis of its effects.
- A small number of papers point to the potentially destabilising effects of SSR that can actually exacerbate or increase the risk of conflict.

KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building has a weak conceptual basis in the SSR literature. Since it is rarely defined or disaggregated, this review cannot point to any robust causal relationships between capacity building activities and outcomes. Only a very small literature breaks capacity building down into types in considering effects. Experimental and quasi-experimental methods could be helpful here but cannot be stripped of their context. Even where there is robust evidence of a form of capacity building successfully producing improvements, no studies considered how evidence from one context translates to another. Given large donor investments in capacity building, this is a surprising gap and more must be done to link SSR literature with the capacity building literature from other fields.

There is a paucity of robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) by donors to inform learning. Much M&E appears to simply fulfil reporting functions and demonstrate uncritical results. There is a need for much more robust M&E that can inform broader learning in the sector.

Despite common reference to the importance of politics and context, many studies provide this only in broad brush strokes. What is needed is a more detailed account of the political dynamics of the local security sectors being reformed so capacity building activities can be better fit for purpose.

The importance of non-state actors is regularly acknowledged in the literature but we lack information on how these actors have been, or could be, engaged in capacity building efforts.

This synthesis recommends that:

- Specific M&E of the research questions under examination here should be required of all security and justice programmes to help build an evidence base about what does and does not work in this field.
- Research should be commissioned to explore the concepts of capacity and capacity building within SSR, including questions around whose capacity needs to be built, in what ways this is most effectively done, by who, at what level, for how long, etc.
- Given that capacity deficits are often not the only, or the primary, blockage preventing improved security, further research and pilot programming could usefully explore how capacity building fits within wider programming approaches that attempt to tackle issues such as lack of incentives for change, political deprioritisation, politicisation of reform targets, etc.

Yet, while it seems logical to call for further research and monitoring of practice to help fill knowledge gaps and inform improved programming, this is only helpful if such knowledge can lead to improved donor behaviour. An important question remains as to why lessons learnt processes to date have not led to changes in donor behaviour. Also, issues internal to donor organisations that need to be addressed in order for changes in practice to take place. Considering the political economy of donor organisations – including their constraints, in part because of their own domestic interests – is thus also critical if we are to move towards more evidence-based capacity building within SSR.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Capacity building constitutes a core component of many development programmes, including security sector reform (SSR).[1] Building the capacity of relevant ministries and agencies is a key feature of SSR, as it is considered central to improving the way these organisations deliver their services and ensure citizen security in an effective, responsive and accountable manner. Yet, while much has been written about SSR, including critiques of its effectiveness, understandings of 'capacity' and 'capacity building' remain under-theorised and under-explored. It is therefore not clear to what extent capacity building interventions in SSR have led to the improved security outcomes sought.

This review was commissioned to establish a clearer assessment of the evidence base on the relationship between capacity building and various outcomes, which can inform policy and programming decisions.

To this end, the following research questions are examined:

1. What is the evidence on the relationship between organisational capacity building interventions and (i) improved accountability; (ii) increased responsiveness; and (iii) improved capacity to deliver among security institutions and agencies in low- and middle-income countries?
2. What factors enable or hinder these improvements?
3. What is the evidence on the relationship between organisational capacity building interventions and the longer-term outcome of increased stability and reductions in outbreaks of conflict?

In addition, as the literature yielded information on additional outcomes to those listed above, Research Question 1iv) was added to briefly capture the relationship between organisational capacity building and other outcomes. Gaining a deeper understanding of what capacity building efforts within SSR involve, and the evidence base regarding their impacts, is critically important in supporting evidence-based programming. It is also a valuable exercise in filling a major gap in knowledge of this dominant feature of SSR.

2. METHODOLOGY

This synthesis draws on evidence compiled in a SSR database by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) on behalf of the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Below, we set out the methods both developing the database and for analysing the relevant papers within it for the purposes of this synthesis paper.

2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SSR DATABASE

The database was compiled by GSDRC through two phases. First, a search strategy was developed and tested, specifying sources to be searched and the search terms and inclusion criteria to be used. Citation and journal indexes and bibliographic databases were searched, along with online search engines, evaluation repositories and resource centres, including websites of research institutes. Inclusion criteria specified:

- Studies to be published from 2005 onwards;
- Journal articles, peer-reviewed materials, working papers, grey literature, books and book chapters that are available online and at no cost to the reader;
- Studies exploring relationships between SSR interventions and a given set of outcomes;

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[1] SSR is broadly construed in this paper to cover security and justice sector reform; it thus covers reforms related to the military, police, intelligence services, judiciary and penal system, and the management and oversight structures that support them, as well as to 'non-statutory' security forces (or non-state/informal security providers) (OECD, 2007: 22).

- Studies focusing on low- and middle-income countries;
- Studies published in English; and
- Studies with primary, empirical research or evaluation (quantitative or qualitative) or secondary research designs. Theoretical and conceptual papers to be excluded.

Search strings were developed related to a range of outputs and outcomes (see Annex 1 for a list of search terms used). These were tested and refined before the search was implemented. Eighteen experts were also consulted for their recommendations of relevant studies (see Annex 2 for the list of experts).

Second, the compiled materials were catalogued, coded and entered into the SSR database, specifying intervention category, outcomes, research type (primary/secondary), research design, geographical focus and focus of reform (police/military/non-state actors, etc.). The SSR database includes 276 studies in total.

2.2 ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT EVIDENCE FOR THIS SYNTHESIS

For the purposes of this review, the ODI research team used a subset of the database, capturing all studies coded as relevant to 'capacity building'. This yielded 214 studies. We contacted five independent experts at the outset of this synthesis to solicit their opinions on relevant studies related to the specific research questions under consideration here (see Annex 2 for the list of experts). Four of the five experts responded to our request. The only paper suggested that met the inclusion criteria of the SSR database and was not already included in the sample was the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's Review of UK Security and Justice Assistance (2015), which three of the four experts who responded suggested. This study was thus added to our sample, bringing the total number of studies reviewed to 215.

Limiting the evidence drawn on to the SSR database means some important literature is missing from this synthesis. In particular, because the database is limited to literature specifically focused on SSR, the wider literature on capacity building, as well as insights from anthropology, criminology and critical legal studies that examine local processes of order making and dispute resolution, for instance, are not included here. This means the evidence drawn on, while broad-based within the literature on SSR, is limited to that focusing explicitly on SSR.

A research protocol was developed to grade the quality of the studies under examination and the relevance of each study to the research questions examined here, and to draw out material relevant for answering the research questions. A framework for assessing the quality of evidence was developed according to DFID's 'How to Note on Assessing the Strength of Evidence'.[2] Each study was given a grade of 1-11 (1-4 representing low evidence quality; 5-7 representing moderate evidence quality; and 8-11 representing high evidence quality). The 11 marks available related to key DFID principles of research quality: conceptual framing, cogency, methodology, transparency, reliability and validity. The protocol aimed to ensure a robust assessment of evidence quality (according to DFID's criteria) without this becoming too cumbersome, given the number of studies to analyse and the need for protocols to also provide significant analysis of each study's content as it related to the research questions. Annex 3 provides a copy of the research protocol developed.

The studies reviewed are overwhelmingly single-case study, observational and qualitative in nature. Application of DFID's evidence principles is not always immediately apparent in such studies, not least because their focus on measurement, internal and external validity aligns more easily with quantitative studies. Given this, we applied the evidence principles in a manner that attempts to recognise the merits of different research designs and then acknowledge quality accordingly. The evidence quality scores reflect the extent to which the studies meet DFID's specified criteria for evidence quality and are not statements as to the broader value of the research.

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[2] DFID 2014: 14.

2.3 QUALITY CONTROL

To ensure consistency and overall quality of the gradings, all researchers completed a grading for one common study at the outset, which the lead researcher then provided feedback on. Two additional gradings from each researcher were reviewed to ensure consistency across researchers. As the protocols were completed, the report authors read all protocols for studies that received a relevance score of moderate or high to inform responses to the research questions. This process also enabled the report authors to adjust evidence and relevance scores as necessary.[3] Through this process, 149 studies were graded as being of medium or high relevance to the research questions. The synthesis presented here draws on these 149 papers of the wider 215 that were reviewed.

3.   WHAT THE EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE

There is a large body of mixed (primarily moderate- to high-)quality evidence analysing the effectiveness of SSR in low- and middle-income countries, which often also includes capacity building elements. Table 1 sets out the spread of evidence quality scores of the 215 studies reviewed.

Table 1: Spread of evidence quality

High	Moderate	Low	Total
69	106	40	215

In some cases – primarily in middle-income and non-conflict settings – the SSR and capacity building studied are small-scale, targeted interventions (e.g. in Brazil and India). These more discrete examples enable a clearer disaggregation of capacity building types (training, technical assistance and so on). The majority of the studies, however, deal with large-scale reforms being undertaken in a conflict-affected setting (e.g. in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste). Capacity building interventions in such contexts are multifaceted (including training, technical assistance, equipment supply, capital works projects and organisational development) and rarely disaggregated in the manner necessary for understanding the relationship between particular capacity building interventions and outcomes. The literature also bundles together capacity building carried out by donors internationally as well as that carried out by governments domestically (although the majority focuses on the former). We draw on both examples in response to the research questions.

Most studies rely on a combination of qualitative fieldwork (interviews, some focus groups and a few perception surveys) as well as secondary literature. Of the 215 papers, just four use experimental methods. Complicating matters, no studies focus explicitly on the causal relationship between capacity building interventions and the outcomes under consideration. In order to extract as much information as possible out of the 215 papers, we thus adopted a broad approach to relevance, interpreting wherever possible from the literature to shed light on the research questions. Asking researchers to rate each study in terms of its relevance in answering the research questions was important as not all high evidence quality papers speak to the relationship between capacity building and the outcomes under investigation. As such, papers are drawn on only where they are of moderate to high relevance for the research questions under examination here. Table 2 sets out the spread of relevance ratings.

Table 2: Spread of evidence relevance

High	Medium	Low	Total
53	96	66	215

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[3] While every effort was made to ensure consistent application of the research protocol, inevitably some differences will have emerged. This highlights the degree to which evidence reviews are a subjective process (for more on this see Mallett et al. 2012: 449).

Thus while there is a large body of moderate- to high-quality evidence that is relevant to the research questions, there is weak causal evidence pointing either to a positive or a negative relationship between capacity building and the security outcomes under examination here. The messages emerging from the evidence base set out below – some of which are highly consistent across the literature – must thus be understood to be about contribution (or lack thereof) of capacity building to security outcomes.

3.1 UNDERSTANDINGS OF 'CAPACITY BUILDING' IN THE LITERATURE

The literature itself is not consistent in its understanding of capacity or capacity building. Few papers unpacked these concepts, although a handful of studies defined what was meant by improved capacity.[4] This is surprising given the massive investments in capacity building as part of SSR, as well as the dominant assumption underpinning much SSR that improved capacity will lead to better service delivery. Overall, the literature was vague on what activities count as 'capacity building' and equally what the broad term 'capacity building' includes in terms of activities. While some papers specify particular modalities of assistance, such as training or technical assistance, many simply refer to 'capacity building' as a shorthand to capture a variety of forms of assistance. This makes it difficult to interrogate what activities are in fact being discussed and is a weakness of the literature.

In terms of the capacity building activities covered, the GSDRC's evidence mapping methodology used search strings specifying training, equipping, organisational development and technical assistance. Our review of the literature revealed further categories of capacity building, with some sub-categories to enable us to provide more refined analysis of intervention types:

- Training;
- Technical assistance (advice, mentoring, legal drafting);
- Organisational support/development (vetting, right-sizing, gender-balancing, setting up new departments/processes);
- Infrastructure development;
- Supplying equipment;
- Awareness-raising.

Many of the papers analysed did not discuss capacity building explicitly; therefore, we analysed the activities listed above, which were commonly discussed as part of larger-scale SSR processes. Some of the findings we outline below were not made explicitly about capacity building but can be inferred from the evidence provided.

We also found that the majority of evidence was vague in relation to the specific outcomes of SSR. Improvements – or lack of improvement – are rarely specified as being in relation to accountability, responsiveness or capacity to deliver (the three outcomes under discussion here), but rather discussed in broad terms, often as successful or unsuccessful SSR. These challenges highlight that the concepts of 'capacity' and 'capacity building' are mostly not disaggregated and are often imprecise, all-encompassing categories. In addition, the outcome categories of accountability, responsiveness and capacity to deliver are equally rather vague. We drew on definitions provided by the GSDRC (see Annex 3) in assessing whether outcomes discussed in the literature matched these categories. However, few studies were explicit in discussing these outcomes.

We describe the size and quality of the evidence base as relevant to each research question in our responses below. To give a broad sense of where stronger and weaker evidence was found, however, we also provide a brief overview here. Whether a body of evidence is small, medium or large is of course a somewhat arbitrary measure. Here, we consider the size of the body of evidence for particular research questions and sub-themes relative to the wider body of relevant evidence available in the literature.

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[4] Collantes-Celador 2007 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑]; den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; Dinnen et al. 2006 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑].

- Research Question 1 has a medium-sized amount of moderate- to high-quality evidence to draw on, but it comes overwhelmingly from papers that provide evidence in relation to specific interventions in single countries. This means it is not possible to say, for instance, that *x* intervention helps improve accountability.[5] Rather, it will be possible to say there is evidence from country *y* that a given intervention has helped improve accountability. This provides useful evidence on which future programmes can draw but requires an appreciation of the features of the successful (or unsuccessful) case and how they might or might not apply to other contexts. It is thus important that the evidence on the effects of interventions remains embedded within its particular context, as this provides much of the rationale for why an intervention did or did not work.
- Of the outcomes under examination, 'improved responsiveness' (research questions 1 ii) (38 papers) and 'improved capacity to deliver' (research question 1iii) (39 papers) were covered more extensively than 'improved accountability' (1i) (23 papers).
- Research Question 2 has by far the most relevant material to draw on (63 papers) – covering factors that enable or hinder improvements. This is the only research question where findings are consistent enough to produce generally applicable principles for programming.
- Research Question 3: 'What is the evidence on the relationship between organisational capacity building interventions and the longer-term outcome of increased stability and reductions in outbreaks of conflict?' is the question with the least evidence from the papers reviewed; those that cover this topic refer primarily to experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan (17 papers).

4. GENERAL FINDINGS

Before addressing the research questions in turn, we provide a brief overview of some general findings emerging across the studies reviewed that frame the more specific findings for each research question. Four broad points are noted.

4.1 CAPACITY BUILDING IS OVERWHELMINGLY OPERATIONALISED IN A LIMITED MANNER

A large body of mixed quality literature consistently notes the tendency of SSR to fall back on train and equip approaches.[6] This understands the problem being faced as a deficit of technical skills and resources that, once filled, will result in an improved security system. What this misses are the deeper layers of capacity, about how the various components of a complex system work together and relationships between the security system and the communities they serve.[7] It also neglects the fact that dysfunction is often the result not only or primarily of weak capacity, but also of a particular constellation of political incentives, often underpinned by the nature of the prevailing political settlement.[8] In such cases, a focus on building capacity when these other blockages remain unaddressed is noted as likely to produce limited returns. The dominant focus on state providers of security also overlooks the existence of alternative forms of security provision and assumes resource constraints of the state are the chief hindrance, rather than issues of legitimacy and trust.[9] Donors

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[5] This point was also raised by Ball and Walker (2015) in their 'What Works?' study commissioned by DFID.

[6] Ball 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Boshoff et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, expert analysis; →]; Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Downes and Keane 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →]; Kohl 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Kristoff 2012 [P; OBS, case study, interviews ↓]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑]; Sedra 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2014 [S; OR, political analysis, literature review; →].

[7] Downes and Keane 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →].

[8] Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑]; Hills 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, political analysis; ↑].

[9] Bakera 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Lubkemann et al. 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, legal analysis, high-level dialogue with policy-makers; ↑].

appear to engage non-state security providers very rarely in capacity building activities, although there are examples of non-state justice mechanisms – such as alternative dispute resolution and mediation – being supported.[10]

Operating with this logic, SSR programmes frequently rely on security personnel from donor countries as well as private firms to provide training or technical assistance to transfer technical knowledge. Yet, as Downes and Keane note, improving capacity is not just about the 'capacity or integrity of individual police officers, judges or prison guards'.[11] Building a more effective, responsive and accountable security sector requires much more than technical trainings by security personnel. Wilson notes the contrast between approaches in SSR and other development fields: 'It is of note that no one would consider establishing a health service by putting 1,000 doctors on a plane and flying them to a postconflict situation.'[12] Perhaps even more surprising is that, despite the overwhelming reliance on training as part of capacity building, the literature makes very little reference to learning methodologies.[13] That is, even though training constitutes the dominant form of capacity building, it is usually done on the basis of assumed modes of knowledge transfer with no explicit consideration of *how* targets of capacity building learn or the ways in which training should be tailored accordingly. As Peake notes:

> *The UN police do not provide their officers – who are often in a country with which they are not linguistically or culturally familiar – with training about how to transfer knowledge. Despite the prominence given to the goal of capacity building, how one actually goes about transferring learning and experience remains thinly understood. Incoming officers receive little guidance to assist, leaving them to default back to learning – good and bad – gleaned from their home countries.[14]*

The problems of training are highlighted in the responses to the research questions below but a broader point relates to the fact that the logic on which the need for training is based, as well as the way training is then operationalised, is very weakly substantiated and glosses over a host of other problems preventing improved security outcomes. A similar argument is made about some forms of technical assistance, with staff tasked with 'building capacity' having little to no background in teaching or knowledge transfer, with the result that they often end up constituting capacity rather than building it.[15]

4.2 MAJORITY OF LITERATURE SUGGESTS CAPACITY BUILDING DOES NOT LEAD TO IMPROVED SECURITY OUTCOMES

The majority of the literature reviewed is negative in its assessment of the relationship between capacity building and improved security outcomes.[16] This message emerges consistently from a large, mixed-quality literature and cuts across country contexts – from Afghanistan to Liberia to the

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[10] Kyed 2010 [P; OBS, case study; →].

[11] Downes and Keane 2006: 188 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →].

[12] Wilson 2012: 75 [P; OBS, interviews; →].

[13] This point was also made by Goldwyn et al. (2014) in their Evaluability Assessment commissioned by DFID.

[14] Peake 2009: 226 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑].

[15] Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓]; Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑]; Murray 2007 [P; OBS; historical analysis, institutional analysis; ↑]; Wilder 2007: ix [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[16] Armstrong et al. 2012 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; document analysis; ↑]; Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Collantes-Celador 2005 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; Dahrendorf 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical research, desk research; ↑]; den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; Friesendorf 2011 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Giustozzi 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, policy analysis; →]; Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS; case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; La Rose and Maddan 2009 [P; OBS, historical analysis, interviews, survey; ↑]; Lubkemann et al. 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, legal analysis, high-level dialogue with policy-makers; ↑]; McDougall 2012 (P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Onoma 2014 [S; OR; ↑]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS; interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS; interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS; interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilson 2012: 75 [P; OBS, interviews; →].

Solomon Islands. In fact, even where positive outcomes are acknowledged, most papers reviewed put those in the context of overwhelming limitations of change. The reasons for this will be reflected in answer to Research Question 2.

However, it is difficult to separate out where the literature is claiming no improved capacity or no *evidence* of improved capacity, as the studies do not themselves readily make this distinction. Given the nature of the research designs, however, most studies provide no evidence of improved capacity and the argument that capacity building does not lead to improved security outcomes emerges as a consistent message but one based on limited evidence. For instance, in assessing a trial community policing project in the Solomon Islands that involved four weeks of training for community officers (COs), Dinnen and Hayley claim that 'There is simply no reliable data to establish categorically whether or not COs are contributing to improved security.'[17] However, the standard by which studies assess 'success' is also vague.

Studies do not articulate the failures of SSR (and capacity building within it) specifically in relation to the outcomes under investigation here. Rather, studies highlight, for instance, that competent security forces have not been built,[18] that state forces are not the most widely relied on,[19] that corruption continues[20] and that predation and politicisation by the security sector remains.[21]

4.3 SECURITY OUTCOMES ARE AT TIMES IN TENSION

A small, mixed-quality literature suggests capacity building efforts within SSR are not always cognisant of the ways different outcomes can compete with each other. Importantly, improving accountability, responsiveness and capacity to deliver do not always push in the same direction and there are under-acknowledged tensions and trade-offs between these outcomes.[22] For instance, building a security sector that is more capable of delivering can involve being more effective at crowd control around elections or more offensive policing in stabilisation contexts. Such improvements can come at the cost of improved accountability, or respect for human rights.[23] This also highlights the trade-offs between short-term security process and longer-term institution-building.[24] This highlights how improving capacities in some areas does not necessarily lead to other improvements in the security sector, and there is a need to be clear about what outcomes are being prioritised and the potential implications of this. These tensions are not made explicit in the literature in relation to capacity building and these outcomes, but in relation to SSR more broadly.

4.4 CAPACITY BUILDING IS WIDELY VIEWED AS UNSUSTAINABLE

A large body of mixed-quality evidence points to the unsustainability of capacity building efforts within SSR.[25] Heavy reliance on international actors – in terms of both personnel support and financial

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[17] Dinnen and Hayley 2012: 43 [P; OBS, interviews, community consultation; ↑].

[18] Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilson 2012: 75 [P; OBS, interviews; →].

[19] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑];

[20] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[21] Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[22] Armstrong et al. 2012 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; document analysis; ↑]; Giustozzi 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR, historical analysis; →]; Milton-Edwards 2014 [P; OBS, ethnography, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[23] Dahrendorf 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical research, desk research; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS; interviews, historical analysis; →].

[24] Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓]; Dahrendorf 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical research, desk research; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[25] Albrecht and Jackson 2014b [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Armstrong et al. 2012 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; document analysis; ↑]; Ashraf 2007 [P; OBS; ↓]; Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →];

resources – was consistently pointed to as a reason for concern, in the belief that the removal of those resources would see a reversal in any improvements gained. This was especially noted as a problem where studies considered there to be a lack of ownership of reform efforts. However, there were no examples in the sample of a long-term assessment of whether particular capacity building interventions had been sustained over time, although some studies on the UK's long-term involvement in SSR in Sierra Leone suggested improvements in the security sector but not systematically measured.[26] Many of the assessments of unsustainability were forward-looking predications rather than after-the-fact evaluations.

5. RESEARCH QUESTION 1I) WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING INTERVENTIONS AND IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY?

5.1 KEY FINDINGS

- No studies explicitly consider the relationship between capacity building and improved accountability.
- Issues of accountability, oversight and security sector governance are frequently neglected within SSR.
- Where oversight and accountability mechanisms are established, they are often not engaged in ongoing capacity building efforts.
- Accountability tends to be a difficult area in which to achieve results, given the vested political interests that can block change.
- Approaches to improving accountability tend to engage with either the security sector itself, oversight institutions or communities, with only a few examples of working across all three, which tended to be most effective.
- Activities that developed oversight mechanisms with senior (but not necessarily mid-) level buy in, used 'best fit' rather than 'best practice' approaches to peer learning and sought to build relationships between the security sector, oversight institutions and communities emerge from the literature as most effective.

Accountability is a key component of a democratic, civilian-controlled security sector. It is intended to ensure that a more capacitated security sector is deployed for the purposes of serving and protecting its citizens, rather than political or other interests. It is also an important component of addressing corruption in the security sector – widely seen to be a key reason for the lack of confidence in many parts of the security sector around the world.

5.2 WHAT THE EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE

In reviewing the relationship between capacity building interventions and improved accountability, this section draws on 23 studies from the database. The literature on this topic was relatively small – with no papers explicitly looking at the relationship between capacity building and improved accountability. Rather, most papers discussed accountability within a broader focus on SSR and not for the purposes of evaluating effectiveness of interventions to improve it. For that reason, a broad approach to relevance of papers was adopted in order to capture as much available evidence as possible. The spread of evidence quality of the relevance studies is set out in Table 3, highlighting that

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Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Bøås and Stig 2010 [P; OBS, historical analysis, expert analysis; →]; Castillejo 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, case study; →]; EC 2011 [P; OBS, case studies, interviews, survey, document review; ↑]; Hood 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, institutional analysis; →]; ICAI 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case studies, evaluation; ↑]; Kartas 2014 [S; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Milton-Edwards 2014 [P; OBS, ethnography, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Mobekk 2009 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; ↑]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑]; Schroeder et al. 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies, desk research; ↑].

[26] Albrecht and Jackson 2014b [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

the majority of studies relied on here are high quality according to DFID's assessment criteria (we do not exclude reference to studies with low evidence quality scores given the limited research available but draw primarily on findings from high and moderate studies). Overwhelmingly, these studies are country case studies. While this poses some challenges in terms of comparative analysis, many of the messages emerging regarding accountability of the security sector are consistent across multiple locations. Where there is mixed evidence, this is highlighted below.

Table 3: Relevant studies for RQ 1i by evidence quality

High	13
Moderate	7
Low	3
Total	**23**

5.3 WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

A consistent message emerging across the studies reviewed highlights that issues of accountability, oversight and security sector governance are frequently neglected within SSR, with a much stronger emphasis on the capacity of the security sector organisations themselves.[27] For instance, Sedra highlights that, 'From 2002-2008, only USD 8 million in total was dedicated to building the capacity of the entire Afghan Parliament, a paltry sum in light of the tens of billions of dollars spent to build the security forces.'[28] Similarly, Lala and Laudemiro note that 'none of UNDP's [the UN Development Programme's] programmes [in Mozambique] contain any concrete accountability or oversight processes.'[29]

Where oversight and accountability mechanisms are established, at least two studies suggest they are often not engaged in ongoing capacity building efforts.[30] This implies that accountability and oversight institutions are often not sufficiently supported to fulfil their purpose of overseeing the security sector. This is seen to be especially worrying given donor investments in improving the *capacity* of the security sector, without concomitant investments in improving the bodies and processes that hold the sector to account. This poses a danger that SSR creates a stronger but unaccountable security sector and is connected to the aforementioned challenge that the SSR outcomes under consideration do not all push in the same direction, but may involve trade-offs and prioritisation.

In part, this relatively weak engagement with issues of accountability in SSR capacity building interventions is likely connected to the fact (highlighted by a small literature) that it tends to be a particularly difficult area in which to get traction.[31] Cox and Ok Serei detail how attempts to improve accountability and oversight of the criminal justice system in Cambodia 'run[s] counter to the fundamental interests of the ruling party and are unlikely to progress.'[32] Similarly, Downes and Keane note that politicisation of the police is the most intractable problem to address in Serbia.[33] That is, where local political dynamics are themselves opposed to increased accountability and oversight, it is unlikely reforms will be able to make much meaningful headway. Accountability of the security sector is thus a critical component of a citizen-oriented democratic security sector but a difficult arena in

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[27] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Boshoff et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, expert analysis; →]; Dahrendorf 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical research, desk research; ↑]; Giustozzi 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Hood 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, institutional analysis; →]; Lala and Laudemiro 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Milton-Edwards 2014 [P; OBS, ethnography, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS; interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[28] Sedra 2013: 379 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[29] Lala and Laudemiro 2006: 176 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →].

[30] Mobekk 2005 [P; OBS, case studies; ↓]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS; interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[31] Castillejo 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, case study; →]; Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑]; Downes and Keane 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →].

[32] Cox and Ok Serei 2012: 8 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑].

[33] Downes and Keane 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →].

which to achieve results. Moreover, it is an arena in which improved capacity alone is unlikely to reverse the interest and incentive structures that undermine efforts to strengthen accountability.

Setting aside the fact that capacity building in support of improved accountability is often overlooked, a review of approaches covered in the literature reveals three dominant modes of engagement, which are not mutually exclusive: 1) engaging with the security sector; 2) engaging with oversight institutions and other parts of government; and 3) engaging with communities. The evidence is not of sufficient depth or breadth to provide a basis for generalisable approaches that have led to improvements, but a number of examples of improvements claimed in the literature are set out below. These are useful resources for those designing security sector accountability interventions to draw on but do not form robust enough an evidence base to simply transplant from one context to another.

5.3.1 WORKING WITH THE SECURITY SECTOR

Five studies cover examples of improvements in accountability through capacity building of the security sector itself. This involves training police and military officers in human security and their role as part of a democratic security sector, as well as a range of organisational development interventions involving new procedures and systems.

In India, a randomised trial with strong senior police buy-in saw the introduction of decoy visits to target police stations in an effort to improve police performance.[34] The pilot included a number of features, including in-service training in investigation and public relations, community observers, a freeze on police transfers and the introduction of regular scheduled days off, but only the decoy visits, training and the transfer freeze were found to be significant. The decoy visits (conducted at random by community members to ensure they were not easily identifiable as outsiders) prompted improvements in case recording (quality and quantity) and courteousness to the public. The study hypothesised that this was a result of incentivising improved police behaviour, given their inability to know whether they were being monitored (this is in contrast with the community observers discussed later, which were found to have no effect on police behaviour, likely because police were only incentivised to alter their behaviour when a monitor was present).

In Colombia, a pilot programme in eight cities paired a seven-week police training programme combining community policing and problem-oriented policing with the assignment of officers to regular patrols of the same neighbourhood with a view to increasing officers' sense of accountability to that community.[35] The training covered interpersonal skills, patrol methods, crime prevention and diagnostics, management skills and criminal justice coordination and was reportedly well received by officers but had little effect on most management indicators over the four months the pilot ran. While the most significant result of the pilot was a reduction in crime rates, police culture surveys conducted before and after the pilot also showed a 4% increase in officers' sense of social accountability to the communities they were assigned to patrol.

In Georgia, Kupatadze reports that corruption in the traffic police was reduced almost entirely by disbanding the unpopular and demoralised traffic police and establishing a new 'patrol police'.[36] The patrol police benefited from new personnel recruited competitively by the police academy, higher salaries and a full social package. According to the 2010 Global Corruption Barometer, the Georgian police are perceived to be one of the least corrupt police services in the world, alongside the Swiss, Norwegian and Danish police.

In Sierra Leone, Horn et al. and Gbla point to sensitivity campaigns conducted by the police and military, as well as internal reforms, as key to improving relations with communities and promoting an accountable security sector.[37] Activities included regular live press briefings by the police and the

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[34] Banerjee et al. 2012b [P; EXP; ↑].
[35] García et al. 2013 [P; EXP; ↑].
[36] Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR, historical analysis; →].
[37] Gbla 2006 [S; OR, historical analysis; ↓]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

military, publishing institutional newspapers to provide information and dispel rumours, holding open days and establishing internal complaints and investigations departments, alongside more stringent disciplinary regulations. Horn et al. argue this led to greater civilian control of the security sector, although they acknowledge ongoing difficulties, including a dependence on international advisors, particularly in the military. They also point to relatively simple procedures introduced in the police to reduce opportunities for corruption and misuse of resources, including vehicle log books and 'proper monitoring' (it is not clear what this entailed), which stopped a significant amount of fuel theft (claimed to be approximately 15% of the total budget).

5.3.2 WORKING WITH OVERSIGHT INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER PARTS OF GOVERNMENT

Six studies covered examples of working with oversight institutions and other parts of government to improve security sector accountability. Targets of capacity building included parliaments, ombudsmen, the media, civil society and government departments. Mostly, capacity building was through training, study visits, technical assistance and relationship-building with the security sector itself.

In Burundi, Ball highlights tentatively successful efforts by the Dutch to strengthen security sector governance. Parliamentary and Senate committees on security, defence and financing have received training and technical assistance, focused on providing theoretical information (e.g. on the role of parliament and legal drafting). A study visit to Senegal was then made to see the application of this learning in practice. Importantly, the use of Senegal as a study visit location suggests a 'best fit' rather than 'best practice' approach to peer learning. Capacity building has also involved promoting increased interaction and relationship-building between the security sector and its oversight bodies. While the study was conducted at the mid-term mark of the project, these interventions had 'resulted in a modestly more assertive stance of at least some parliamentarians toward the executive branch. Some oral and written questions are now being asked of ministers. The rules of Parliament may be revised to enable the defence and security committees to have a role in assessing the budgets of security ministries.'[38]

In Sierra Leone, Gbla highlights how improvements in wider government budgetary processes led to greater security sector accountability. Budget requests had to be detailed and justified by managers, with three-year forward estimates that could then be compared with future requests.[39] Horn et al. also suggest that training with the media in Sierra Leone led to more accurate reporting and improved information flows regarding the police.[40]

Where reforms are taking place in a context of wider political transition, constitutional change may also offer opportunities for improved accountability. In South Africa following Apartheid, for instance, constitutional change empowered the Auditor-General to report on the accounts of all government bodies, including the security sector.[41]

5.3.3 WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

The popularity of demand-side work to improve service delivery makes working with communities themselves another entry point to improved accountability. Only two papers deal explicitly with examples of such engagement.[42]

In India, Banerjee et al. found using community observers within pilot police stations as a trigger for improved police accountability did not to have a significant impact.[43] They authors hypothesised that

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[38] Ball 2014: 42 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑].
[39] Gbla 2006: 90 [S; OR, historical analysis; ↓].
[40] Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].
[41] Africa 2009 [P; OBS, historical analysis; institutional analysis; ↑].
[42] Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑]; Banerjee et al. 2012b [P; EXP; ↑].

this was because the police were incentivised to alter their behaviour only when a community observer was present – thus did not alter their behaviour across the board. However, it was also noted that the activity was not consistently implemented, with community observers often not showing up regularly; this may have influenced the results.

5.3.4 WORKING ACROSS SECURITY SECTOR, OTHER PARTS OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES

In Brazil, Alves and Arias found working with the community was effective at improving accountability but in conjunction with working with the security sector and other parts of government.[44] The pilot programme involved three elements. First, police received training in community policing and human rights and a 40-hour technical course in crime analysis and response planning, undertaken with the wider criminal justice sector to promote cross-agency collaboration. Second, community-led groups were established that provided activities and training to local youth and acted as a community liaison with the police and other parts of government. Third, strong emphasis was placed on building relationships between the three sets of actors – providing multiple entry points for communities to complain about police behaviour and to enable them to hold police to account. Police were engaged both at the station level but also at higher levels of the hierarchy, and social service departments within government were engaged at a sufficiently senior level that they could deal with the police on an equal or superior footing. In addition to reducing homicide rates, the authors point to the 'ways in which state social programmes working side-by-side with police forces can promote different forms of local knowledge, civic capacity and, ultimately, horizontal accountability that can help community policing to function effectively in the context of poor and peripheral neighbourhoods in Latin America'.[45] This suggests a high degree of senior-level political buy-in is important to act as a check on, and thus an incentive for, improved police behaviour.

5.4 WHAT THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ADDRESS

The literature does not sufficiently disaggregate different kinds of accountability – for instance vertical accountability (to the people) as opposed to horizontal accountability (to other parts of government). These tend to be conflated in the literature and we are therefore not able to distinguish between interventions focusing on these different forms of accountability. In addition, understandings of capacity building (e.g. whose capacity is being built and for what purpose) and the different activities that constitute it need much greater attention. Without this, it is very difficult to make any clear judgments about the contribution (if any) of training, technical assistance, etc. to improved accountability.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS QUESTION

While many studies do not provide evidence that capacity building leads to broad improvements in security and justice, the relevant literature reviewed here provides a small number of examples of interventions argued to be effective in their respective locations. However, there is insufficient consistency of findings on intervention types to be able to point to a clear relationship between activities and outcomes. The examples do provide useful information that those designing accountability interventions should draw on, cognisant of the contextual features of each intervention and considering how these apply elsewhere. More broadly, weak articulation of capacity building itself limits our ability to make clear claims about relationships with outcomes.

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[43] Banerjee et al. 2012b [P; EXP; ↑].
[44] Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑].
[45] Alves and Arias 2012: 103 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑].

6. RESEARCH QUESTION 1II) WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING INTERVENTIONS AND INCREASED RESPONSIVENESS TO CITIZEN NEEDS?

6.1 KEY FINDINGS

- The extent to which improved responsiveness to citizen needs can be achieved through capacity building remains unclear.
- Common approaches to improving responsiveness including training, restructuring (vetting and gender-balancing) and developing new forms of security provision, such as community policing, gender desks and decentralisation of policing functions.
- A recurrent message in the literature points to a failure of capacity building to improve responsiveness owing to political influences that lead the security sector to serve group or private interests and poor conditions of service that make it difficult to incentivise improved responsiveness.
- More information is particularly needed on the effect of gender reforms in terms of making the security sector more responsive to women and girls and on how to support non-state security actors to provide improved security.

If security institutions demonstrate increased responsiveness, then security provision will be more reflective of citizen concerns and responsive to their needs and priorities. This is determined in part by whether service delivery itself is informed by citizen perceptions; the extent to which provision reflects the needs of citizens and society rather than those of the state or political elites; whether provision responds specifically to the needs of marginalised or vulnerable groups; and whether there are improved perceptions or wider evidence of better service delivery.

6.2 WHAT THE EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE

While many papers deal with whether SSR writ large has resulted in improved security for citizens, this is not broken down to look at capacity building activities specifically, and no studies explicitly use the language of improved (or not improved) responsiveness, making it more difficult to identify relevant literature. As a result, the findings set out below are extrapolated from the literature that one could interpret as shedding some light on the research question. Table 4 sets out the spread of evidence quality of the relevant studies used in this section, highlighting that the majority of studies relied on here are high quality according to DFID's assessment criteria. Given that many of the studies reviewed for this evidence synthesis were relevant for this section, the authors deliberately focused on higher-quality evidence studies. One low quality study was included because of the information it provided on increased gender responsiveness.[46]

Table 4: Relevant studies for RQ 1ii by evidence quality

High	22
Moderate	15
Low	1
Total	38

Consistent with the wider literature on SSR, almost all of these studies are country case studies,[47] although there are some high-quality regional comparative articles, such as on Liberia and Sierra Leone.[48] This means the context in each is important to understanding why an intervention did or did

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[46] Moser 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, survey; ↓].

[47] Den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; McDougall 2012 (P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑]; Padurariu 2014 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Sedra 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[48] Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Onoma 2014 [S; OR; ↑].

not succeed in improving responsiveness and limits our ability to generalise from specific cases to generally applicable findings.

6.3 WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

The extent to which improved responsiveness can be achieved through capacity building approaches remains unclear. The literature consistently identifies a number of ways donors have sought to increase security sector responsiveness through training,[49] restructuring (including vetting and gender-balancing)[50] and developing new approaches to security provision, such as community policing, gender desks and decentralisation of policing functions.[51] Less prominent in the literature (although some argue more successful) is support to community-level security and justice processes, both state and non-state.[52] For each activity, it is important to distinguish the scale of reform, since they vary from one-day human rights training to wholesale reform of the police and army.

A recurrent message in the relevant literature (38 studies) suggests capacity building interventions have largely failed to lead to improved responsiveness, and the reasons outlined for that failure are covered in detail in response to Research Question 2. Two consistently reported factors behind these failures were that interventions were not able to alter the political context that led the security sector to serve particular group or private interests and, particularly in relation to the police, that poor conditions of service meant it was difficult to incentivise improved responsiveness.

Where the literature does note improvements in responsiveness, it can be difficult to know whether these are attributable to capacity building programmes. In an evaluation of Swedish support to the South African police, Hedvall and Busisiwe demonstrate that programme areas in the Northern Cape have seen reduced response times from the police and improved citizen perceptions of the police.[53] These improvements took place on the back of a range of capacity building interventions, including technical assistance on human resource management, institutional capacity building, training programmes and affirmative action programmes. However, the evaluation concludes that, given the wide remit of the programme, it is difficult to disaggregate how the activities have had an impact. Furthermore, the programme is only a minor contribution relative to broader donor activities, and a range of other contextual elements could have influenced the observed changes.

The following sections outline approaches to SSR with capacity building elements within them that aim to improve security force responsiveness: force training, restructuring and vetting; increased gender responsiveness; community policing and localised security provision.

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[49] Banerjee et al. 2012a [P; EXP, surveys, interviews, large-scale randomised control trials; ↑]; Banerjee et al. 2012b [P; EXP; ↑]; Hedvall and Busisiwe 2005 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Mobekk 2008 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑].

[50] Collantes-Celador 2010 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Giustozzi 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, policy analysis; →]; Hendricks and Valasek 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; ↑]; Ivkovic and Shelley 2005 [P; OBS, historical analysis, survey; ↑]; Murray 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →; Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Onoma 2014 [S; OR; ↑]; Padurariu 2014 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Perito and Kristoff 2009 [P; OBS, meeting report; ↓]; Sedra 2006b [S; OR, expert analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑]; Stojanovic 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, institutional analysis; →]; Wilcke 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[51] Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑]; Arias and Ungar 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, questionnaire; ↑]; Baker 2006b [P; OBS, interviews, participatory research; ↑]; Baker 2008 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Deljkić and Lučić-Ćatić 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Downes and Keane 2006: 189 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →]; Vasquez 2012 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; Wassell 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].

[52] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Baker 2006b [P; OBS, interviews, participatory research; ↑]; Baker 2008 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Dinnen et al. 2006 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[53] Hedvall and Busisiwe 2005: 32 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

6.3.1 SECURITY SECTOR TRAINING

As noted earlier, training is the dominant approach to capacity building in SSR, potentially crowding out attempts to improve responsiveness in more thoroughgoing ways. At least 12 high-quality studies addressed this issue and are drawn on here. Training to improve responsiveness involves courses for security sector organisations on human rights, citizen needs and priorities, community policing methods and problem-oriented policing. A consistent message in the literature is that training of security forces alone will likely fail to improve responsiveness, given that many SSR contexts are characterised by histories of state violence and predation.[54] In DRC, the army went through an obligatory 45-day training, which covered human rights and sexual violence components, but Mobekk argues this was insufficient to deal with legacies of violence.[55] Mobekk claims that, despite the training, the merging of different factions and other capacity building efforts, the army is still currently committing the majority of human rights abuses within DRC.

A key deficiency of much training is that it is often short term (in some cases only one or two days), largely theoretical without in-service demonstration of its practical application and often provided by inappropriate personnel (a combination of donor security sector personnel or private contractors) who are unfamiliar with the local context and local language.[56] In Afghanistan, the national police were ostensibly undergoing training for democratic policing, but the focus on military tactics, as well as the poorly planned and executed nature of the training, meant it had little impact on their responsiveness.[57] Even when taken to scale, such as when the police and army are radically restructured and undergo more sustained training in the aftermath of conflict, the literature overwhelming suggests training is likely to be ineffective if broader incentives do not exist to change behaviour.[58]

6.3.2 SECURITY SECTOR RESTRUCTURING AND VETTING

Restructuring of security forces commonly aims both to dismantle accountability to factional leaders and replace it with accountability to citizens, and to break down divisions between different fighting factions. At least thirteen mixed-quality studies addressed this issue in-depth. This challenge is approached in different ways: in some cases, all fighting factions are incorporated into the national army or police; in others, they undergo a vetting process to weed out those deemed to have committed human rights abuses.[59] These interventions involve multiple forms of capacity building – including organisational support, technical assistance and training – which makes it difficult to attribute outcomes to specific forms of capacity building. In Sierra Leone, members of previously warring parties were screened (along with new recruits) for the army, which included medical, physical, educational and military tests. Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs argue that, despite this incorporation, the army is somewhat more responsive to citizens: it is no longer considered a security

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[54] Arias and Ungar 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, questionnaire; ↑]; Baker 2008 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Banerjee et al. 2012a [P; EXP, surveys, interviews, large-scale randomised control trials; ↑]; Deljkić and Lučić-Ćatlć 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Mobekk 2008 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑]; Vasquez 2012 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; Wassel 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].

[55] Mobekk 2009: 283 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; ↑].

[56] Mobekk 2008 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Mobekk 2009 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; ↑]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Wassel 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].

[57] Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑].

[58] Banerjee et al. 2012a [P; EXP, surveys, interviews, large-scale randomised control trials; ↑]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Mobekk 2009: 283 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; ↑]; Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑].

[59] Giustozzi 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, policy analysis; →]; Murray 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑]; Sedra 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Wilcke 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

threat and soldiers have increased trust from the population.[60] This may also be because the SSR reform process as a whole is seen to have involved consultation with civil society.[61] In contrast, in Liberia the entire army was disbanded and new recruits were retrained. Great efforts went into recruiting soldiers from different ethnic groups, in itself responding to what had been a long historical grievance in the country. However, the literature suggests the practical responsiveness of the army beyond this remains unclear, since their public activities have been limited to training drills.[62] These related examples show the need for restructuring and vetting processes to be based on a range of context-specific factors as well as taking into account short- and long-term factors.

In aftermath of the Dayton Agreement, the Bosnian police went through a large-scale retraining, restructuring and vetting process under the auspices of the UN and the EU to try and bring them in line with 'democratic policing' ideals. The literature focuses on the mismatches between international ideals and the reality of police reform in this context, with responsiveness to citizens' needs and preferences a side issue.[63] Collantes-Celador highlights how assumptions that setting quotas for minority police and having mutual training would build police morale in Bosnia were misplaced.[64] In a high-quality and focused study, Ivkovic and Shelley measure the 'integrity' of Bosnian police officers in the aftermath of this restructuring and training. The indicators used include inaction and neglect of duty, and violence or harassment of civilians. The study 'suggests in no uncertain terms that integrity problems are broad and heterogeneous, apparently numerous, and often severe'.[65] These papers suggest that, owing to a long history of political interference in the Bosnian police, corruption in the criminal justice system and ineffective internal and external police oversight mechanisms, the restructuring process has had only limited effects on police integrity, which includes important aspects of citizen responsiveness.

Barnes Robinson and Valters highlight how, in Liberia, the police have historically been responsible for murder and rape, but they also indicate that the Liberian police are rarely seen as perpetrators of mass violence and that there is an increased desire for the police to play a role in security provision. This has been achieved in part through the restructuring and vetting process, however flawed, that they have been through.[66] These changes need to be seen in light of ongoing dissatisfaction with the role of the police in the country, but help illustrate that, while progress is small and relative, it is significant nonetheless.

Two studies of moderate quality consider gender-related restructuring but do not examine the effects of such processes on responsiveness.[67] For example, in the South African army, Hendricks and Valasek outline how women came to be offered the same salaries as men, and were trained and employed on the same basis as men, but do not show what effects this has had in practice on the conduct of the army in relation to citizens.[68] Similar findings from Stojanovic in Serbia outline the reform process but do not make clear what impact this had on responsiveness.[69]

6.3.3 INCREASED GENDER RESPONSIVENESS

The evidence in relation to capacity building approaches and improved responsiveness to the needs of women and girls is both small and weak. A small number of studies (five) explicitly review attempts to improve gender policies and practices in the security sector, but they do not elaborate on concrete

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[60] Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑].
[61] Onoma 2014 [S; OR; ↑].
[62] Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑].
[63] Collantes-Celador 2010 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Ivkovic and Shelley 2005 [P; OBS, historical analysis, survey; ↑]; Padurariu 2014 [P; OBS, interviews; →].
[64] Collantes-Celador 2005 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑].
[65] Ivkovic and Shelley 2005: 457 [P; OBS, historical analysis, survey; ↑].
[66] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑].
[67] Hendricks and Valasek 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; ↑]; Stojanovic 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, institutional analysis; →].
[68] Hendricks and Valasek 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; ↑].
[69] Stojanovic 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, institutional analysis; →].

examples of how new gender policies and structures have changed security sector responsiveness.[70] New laws, procedures and codes of conduct are documented as having been successfully put in place and facilitated by technical assistance, training and sensitisation from donors. Direct attempts to improve responsiveness commonly involve setting up new units (such as family or gender units), training of staff members in gender awareness and dealing with gender-based violence in a sensitive manner, recruiting more women into the security sector and sensitising the public to the role of the new units/desk and the importance of reporting crimes against women and children.[71]

The limited evidence within the sample on gender reforms in the security sector suggests there is weak evidence supporting the idea that they lead to improved responsiveness. It is important to distinguish here between improvements in terms of better policies, structures and procedures and improvements in the actual responsiveness of the security sector to women and children's needs. This distinction is often not clear in the literature. Horn et al. claim the introduction of Family Support Units (FSUs) in Sierra Leone improved the standard of service to victims of sexual and domestic abuse but there is limited broader evidence to support this.[72] In Rwanda, the Moser found the introduction of new facilities, communication campaigns and training had mixed effects – and what improvements that have been seen are based on weak evidence. It is unsurprising that training in gender responsiveness was ineffective, for example, because the manual had not been translated into the local dialect.[73]

In Sierra Leone, there was a specific focus on gender reform in the police, which led to the establishment of the first FSU in 2001.[74] A gender mainstreaming policy was adopted in 2008 and was accompanied by gender training modules and an accelerated promotion scheme for women. Ibrahim sought to look explicitly at whether these reforms had made the force more gender responsive, but argues that the impact to date has been largely on developing holistic gender frameworks, which has not had an observable effect on police responsiveness. The Sierra Leone police 2009-2011 Strategic Plan notes that, 'despite the training and development, there still remains a lack of capacity within the organization to adequately respond to community safety and security issues and to sophisticated criminal activities'.[75] This is unsurprising, since the gender training is for less than 3% of the total staff in the FSUs. Setting up such services is inevitably a long-term endeavour that also requires shifts in societal attitudes, as well as further improvements in the justice system so that cases are reported in the first place, then investigated and then prosecuted.

6.3.4 COMMUNITY POLICING

A dominant approach to improving responsiveness discussed in the literature is community policing, which is often made up of a mix of training police officers in the community policing philosophy and patrol techniques and setting up community–police forums. This review identified eight moderate- to high-quality papers that looked at effects on responsiveness. The evidence on this front is not consistent, in part because the practice of community policing itself is not consistent across contexts. Broadly, the literature highlights how, even where community policing delivers improved responsiveness at the local level, these are usually pockets of effectiveness and the police as a whole remain unchanged.[76] Community policing does not tend to deliver improved responsiveness where community policing officers are segregated from the rest of the police, as they become isolated, making it less attractive for career advancement and limiting the community orientation to just one

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[70] Hendricks and Valasek 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; ↑]; Ibrahim 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; →]; Moser 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, survey; ↓]; Stojanovic 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, institutional analysis; →]; Wilen 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑].

[71] Hendricks and Valasek 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; ↑]; Ibrahim 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; →]; Moser 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, survey; ↓].

[72] Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

[73] Moser 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, survey; ↓].

[74] Ibrahim 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; →].

[75] Ibrahim 2012: 34 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; →].

[76] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Vasquez 2012 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; Wassel 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].

part of the service.[77] There is also some danger of community policing initiatives simply becoming an intelligence-gathering mechanism – which without proper oversight mechanisms could be dangerous in some contexts.[78]

The literature does highlight some more promising examples, particularly in Latin America. Alves and Arias detail how community policing initiatives in Belo Horizonate in Brazil were based on the idea of building community capacity to control crime and police capacity to reduce violent crime (in this case homicides).[79] The programme demonstrated some success through building connections between communities, police and the state. Police spent time in the community building an in-depth knowledge of crime dynamics and, by involving community members (including youth leaders), they moved from incident-based response policing to preventative policing based on deep knowledge of communities. In Colombia, Vasquez shows how, through the police working more closely with citizens in poor neighbourhoods, they have managed to initiate deals between youth gangs that have reduced violent deaths.[80] However, the community policing project in Colombia failed overall, in part because it faced considerable resistance from within the force itself and had limited resources. Arias and Ungar explore community policing approaches in two cities in Brazil and four in Honduras. The rather ambitious programme in Honduras (operating in 30 of the highest crime areas in the country) showed reductions in crime in project areas (based on government-filtered statistics that must be viewed with caution) and reports of improvements in perceptions of security and confidence in the police. In Rio de Janeiro, there was substantial variation in impact across the five programme sites, based on diverging commitment from the state, police and civil society.[81]

In both Brazil and Honduras, the authors demonstrate that community policing is effective only when there is political commitment (high level and in local districts), police cooperation (throughout the rank structure) and societal incorporation.[82] Since consistent application of these preconditions is difficult, community policing effects tend to vary substantially from site to site.[83] Overall, evidence from various contexts, including Bosnia Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, reinforces the argument that community policing often results in pockets of effective police response that can be displaced by a lack of serious commitment from senior politicians and police.[84]

6.3.5 LOCALISING SECURITY PROVISION

A small, high-quality literature points to examples of capacity building that aimed to decentralise or localise security provision, thereby enabling it to be more responsive to local needs. This is primarily through setting up new processes or units as part of organisational support.[85] In Georgia, a 'one window principle' was initiated that sought to unite all necessary procedures, including police, customs and notary services, in one building. This has resulted in some basic but important changes in levels of responsiveness: 'Nowadays a driving licence can be obtained in 2 hours and the vehicle can be registered within 7 minutes.'[86]

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[77] Downes and Keane 2006: 189 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →]; Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑].

[78] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →].

[79] Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑].

[80] Vasquez 2012 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑].

[81] Arias and Ungar 2009: 419 [P; OBS, interviews, questionnaire; ↑].

[82] Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑]; Arias and Ungar 2009: 419 [P; OBS, interviews, questionnaire; ↑].

[83] Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑]; Arias and Ungar 2009: 419 [P; OBS, interviews, questionnaire; ↑].

[84] Baker 2008 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Deljkić and Lučić-Ćatlć 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Wassel 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].

[85] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS; interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR, historical analysis; →]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[86] Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR; historical analysis; →].

Security and Justice Hubs in Liberia are part of an attempt to decentralise security and justice and make it more locally responsive, tackling a long-held grievance of the population.[87] These hubs combine police and justice personnel and aim to be a one-stop shop for problems at the local level. The literature suggests that, while in theory a good idea to improve responsiveness, in practice the Hubs have struggled to provide easy access for civilians and there are some community fears they are being used as forward operating bases for riot police.[88] There is also a risk that the design of the Hubs has not considered the real risk of fragmentation and unreconciled ethnic/regional tensions in a country with a weak centre.[89] This highlights how making the security sector more responsive cannot be divorced from wider community dynamics and perceptions.

6.4 WHAT THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ADDRESS

Overall, the literature in our sample rarely directly addresses this research question. More information is needed on the relative merits of different training strategies for security institutions in different contexts, and there is a desperate lack of analysis connecting up training of security actors and the responsiveness this may (or may not) lead to. No papers examine the effect of gender restructuring on responsiveness to citizens. There are also very few comparative case studies that would allow for more generalised findings. The literature on improving responsiveness through capacity building interventions with non-state providers is limited, despite the recommendation of several articles.[90]

6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS QUESTION

The literature suggests it is very difficult for external actors to improve the responsiveness of security institutions through capacity building interventions. The extent to which security institutions respond to citizen needs and preferences – in particular those that have been historically marginalised – is tied into the political and socioeconomic history of that country and cannot be shifted in a short space of time. The literature has only very limited examples of success, and, when it does so, the causal mechanisms between activities and outcomes are not clear. They are also difficult to disaggregate from other activities and outcomes. This is not necessarily to suggest that capacity building interventions cannot play a role but rather that the literature suggests, in and of themselves, they are insufficient and do not always address the biggest obstacle to change.

7. RESEARCH QUESTION 1III) WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING INTERVENTIONS AND IMPROVED CAPACITY TO DELIVER SECURITY?

7.1 KEY FINDINGS

- There is more evidence supporting the relationship between capacity building and improved operational capacity to deliver security than the other outcomes under consideration here.
- However, this outcome sits most in tension with the others. Improving capacity to deliver can come at the cost of improved accountability or respect for human rights.
- Training on operational and management procedures is the most common form of capacity building but is often poorly tailored to context and learning needs.

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87 Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

88 Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑].

89 Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

90 Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Dinnen et al. 2006 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

- Other interventions, such as equipment supply and infrastructure development, can be effective where they are attuned to local needs rather than international best practice, but are rarely transformational in and of themselves.

In order to provide quality security and justice services to a population, the security sector must possess the capacity to deliver these services – in terms of operational capability, skills, leadership, management and performance systems and so on. These capacities often form the foundation of much capacity building work, on the basis that strengthening these capacities will enable improved delivery.

7.2 WHAT THE EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE

Perhaps because of the breadth of focus, at least 39 studies from the database were relevant in examining the relationship between capacity building and improved capacity to deliver. This outcome area is also, however, the vaguest, thus the studies within this category cover a broad range of areas related to different types of capacity (from the investigative skills of police officers, to the inmate capacity of prisons, to the strategic leadership of the security sector). Table 5 sets out the spread of evidence quality of the relevant studies, indicating high quality evidence in this area.

Table 5: Relevant studies for RQ 1iii by evidence quality

High	23
Moderate	15
Low	1
Total	39

In keeping with the wider sample of literature used in this synthesis, the majority of studies drawn on here are single country case studies, although two studies are comparative (both of Liberia and Sierra Leone) and two analyse multiple country contexts. While the literature is consistent on a number of key themes discussed below, there is a mixed picture as to the contribution of various forms of capacity building to improving capacity to deliver.

7.3 WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

There is more evidence supporting the relationship between capacity building and improved capacity to deliver than the other outcomes under consideration here – although this is primarily in reference to improved operational capacity, and not improved management or strategic leadership.[91] In part, this is a not altogether surprising result when training, materials and other support are provided to a security sector that cannot get much worse.[92] Improvements in capacity to deliver are also often the caveat in the studies to wider perceived failures (e.g., while the police might be better equipped to deal with election violence, the security sector remains unresponsive, unaccountable, etc.).[93] In contrast with this relatively consistent message across most of the literature, studies of Afghanistan note capacity building failed to improve capacity to deliver because of the prioritisation of donor short-term interests over longer-term local needs (such as focusing on supporting regime security rather than fostering democratic policing focused on citizen security).[94] Improving capacity of

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[91] 'Improved capacity to deliver' refers to improved capacity to deliver security. This outcome is articulated in the GSDRC database in the following way: 'Do state or non-state actors demonstrate improved capacity to deliver security? What is the overall quality of institutions and organisations? Key indicators include levels of operational capability, performance, effectiveness, skills, professionalisation and leadership; the ability to plan; the presence of management and performance systems, including recruitment and management and human resource processes' (GSDRC, 2015: 8).

[92] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑].

[93] Den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑].

[94] Murray 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

management procedures appears to have been less successful, with a number of moderate evidence quality studies noting limited results in this regard.[95]

A small number of moderate- to high-quality studies note that assessments of improved capacity to deliver tend to focus on tangible, quantifiable outputs rather than changes in quality.[96] Reforms often target individuals and structures that can be trained, increased or refitted, with less emphasis on the overarching norms, culture and governance processes that determine quality. In part, this may be driven by the need to demonstrate visible changes in the short term to bolster confidence, but it appears also to be a more sustained feature of capacity building, likely linked to reporting incentives. Connectedly, it is noted that improvements in capacity to deliver do not necessarily translate into improved security outcomes for people.[97]

A small number of moderate- to high-quality studies also highlight that this outcome sits most in tension with the others. Improving capacity to deliver is often operationalised as a short-term objective to prevent or contain violence, for instance around elections or other potential conflict triggers. Police training in crowd control or more offensive policing tactics (such as use of non-lethal force) in stabilisation contexts is thus a feature of this support. However, improvement of such capacities can come at the cost of other capacity building outcomes (like improved accountability or improved respect for human rights).[98] Milton-Edwards highlights how, in the West Bank, police training has improved capacity to deliver but has also 'reinforced militarised control and authoritarian tendencies within the regime'.[99] Similarly, in Georgia, while SSR has seen improvements in capacity to deliver and responsiveness, this has been in the context of a politicised security sector accountable to the regime, implicated in intimidating political opposition activists.[100] Improving capacity to deliver does not necessarily lead to other improvements in the security sector and donors need to be clear about what changes they prioritise and the implications of those decisions.

7.3.1 TRAINING

Training is overwhelmingly the most common type of capacity building relied on to improve capacity to deliver. This includes training both on operational capacities (patrolling, crime investigation, etc.) and on management procedures, to improve managerial processes such as human resources, payroll, procurement, etc. At least 14 mixed high- and moderate-quality studies looked at this issue in-depth. Training is primarily classroom-based, with a common criticism that there is insufficient on-the-job training or post-training follow-up to reinforce knowledge learned and to demonstrate its practical application.[101] Train the trainer approaches are also used in order to maximise coverage, but concerns arise about the extent to which this embeds learning.[102] The content of training is also noted as being supply-driven, focusing on what donors have to offer rather than on the needs of the security sector being trained.[103]

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[95] Albrecht and Jackson 2014a [P; OBS, case study; →]; den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; Lala and Laudemiro 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Wilder 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[96] Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Jensen 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; Schroeder et al. 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies, desk research; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilcke 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilder 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[97] Armytage 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; →]; EC 2011 [P; OBS, case studies, interviews, survey, document review; ↑].

[98] Dahrendorf 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical research, desk research; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[99] Milton-Edwards 2014: 15 [P; OBS, ethnography, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[100] Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR, historical analysis; →].

[101] Jensen 2011 [P; OBS;, historical analysis; ↑].

[102] Friesendorf and Krempel 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[103] Armytage 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; →]; Boshoff et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, expert analysis; →]; Kohl 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →].

There is no agreement on the ideal length of training. While many studies argue training is too short to achieve behaviour change,[104] longer-term training is also criticised for being too ambitious, slow and a drain on limited capacity as trainees (judges, police, etc.) are kept away from their regular duties.[105] Ultimately, the problem does not appear to be one of trainings not meeting an ideal length but rather one of trainings often not being appropriately tailored to the purpose it is attempting to serve. The quality of trainers – often security personnel from donor countries or private security firms – is criticised by a moderate number of high-quality studies.[106] The quality of training is further undermined by the lack of any clear learning methodology. The literature is not clear on whether this is because such a methodology is absent or whether it is simply not made explicit. In either case, it would seem training programmes do not appreciate the fundamental importance of an appropriately tailored learning methodology in order to ensure knowledge transfer and learning.[107] Given training is intended for adults with often low levels of literacy and primarily to inform practical tasks, training approaches should be tailored accordingly – rather than treated as a straightforward mechanical transfer of knowledge.[108]

Afghanistan's experience of police training provides illustration of many of these problems. Police training was variously conducted by Germany, the US and the EU. Initially, the Germans put in place a three-year training course for commissioned officers and a 1.5 year training course for non-commissioned officers.[109] While providing comprehensive training, this was seen to be too slow in delivering the force size planned by the Government of Afghanistan. The US thus stepped in and trained 70,000 officers through an eight-week course delivered by private sector firm DynCorp.[110] While successful in getting high numbers trained, the course focused overwhelmingly on military tactics, with just one of the eight weeks dedicated to basic police skills.[111] Moreover, once officers were trained, there was no follow-up training, so knowledge uptake is questionable, and officers were returned to the districts under the command of untrained superiors.[112] Police trainers were not professional instructors and did not speak the local language, so translators unfamiliar with policing terminology were used.[113] Ultimately, Afghanistan is noted as perhaps the least successful case of capacity building in SSR of any case under consideration. Overwhelmingly, studies note that capacities have not improved. Given the huge investments in capacity building, the literature suggests the key challenge in improving security is in fact not a lack of capacity but rather related to the political dynamics of the ongoing conflict.[114] The case is rather depressingly captured by Murray, who notes that training:

> *is largely developed and delivered by operational police. They know their metier functional roles and responsibilities but are not experienced trainers and have received little or no guidance from a professional trainer. The achievement of training objectives, such as*

[104] Murray 2007 [P; OBS, historical analysis, institutional analysis; ↑]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑].

[105] Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓]; Giustozzi 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[106] Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Giustozzi 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS,interviews, historical analysis; →].

[107] Goldwyn et al. (2014) highlight that much of the evidence on training and adult learning methodologies emerges from the fields of health care and education. Much more could be learnt from these fields to improve training within SSR.

[108] Murray 2007 [P; OBS, historical analysis, institutional analysis; ↑]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑].

[109] Friesendorf and Krempel 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[110] Jensen 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑].

[111] Jensen 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; Friesendorf and Krempel 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[112] Jensen 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑].

[113] Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑].

[114] Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Murray 2011 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

knowledge transfer and competency development, are thus sabotaged by ineffective training methods, poor learning materials, bad examples and sometimes out- dated information. It takes extraordinary motivation for an Afghan police officer to learn anything from sitting on a hard seat in a classroom that is too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter, listening for several hours a day to an instructor speaking an unintelligible language, which has to be translated by, often untrained, interpreters uncertain of police terminology, without the support of words written in the local language on the board, good training materials or any sort of audio-visual support. The inexperienced trainers make little use of proven adult learning techniques such as group discussions, scenarios, role playing and analysis of case histories, which promote participation, learning and retention of information. [115]

At the other end of the spectrum, Chemin uses experimental methods to highlight the effectiveness of judicial training in Pakistan.[116] In this case, courts with high case backlogs were selected as being in need of improved capacities. Ten judges were selected with the support of the judiciary and initially participated in a study visit to Singapore's 'state of the art' Subordinate Courts to learn how they function. The judges then participated in a series of five three-day training sessions every three months, focused on case management techniques. In addition, a bench/bar liaison committee was established in each pilot location to monitor case management and enable communication and coordination among judges, lawyers and other relevant actors. The pilots resulted in judges disposing of 25% more cases following the reform – a total of 444 cases. While Chemin notes that the improvement may partly be responsible to a Hawthorne effect – judges performed better because they knew they were being monitored – it appears the combination of regular, ongoing training with a practical study visit and a continuous support mechanism helped embed behaviour change.

7.3.2 EQUIPMENT SUPPLY

Equipment is often supplied as an incentive to attend trainings and to enable application of knowledge learnt. Equipment supplied varies considerably – from uniforms, to radios, to vehicles, to weapons. A large body of mixed-quality evidence suggests it is ineffective in improving capacity to deliver because of problems of maintenance and a lack of consideration of context. We draw on six of those studies here. In South Sudan, a digital library provided by UNDP for judges was deemed ineffective because so few judges were computer-literate, few had access to computers and electricity in Juba was intermittent.[117] Similarly, in Liberia, the introduction of an information technology database for prison management was seen to be wasteful given that most prisons did not have electricity.[118] And in Afghanistan, a preoccupation with equipping the police overlooked the extent to which the problems afflicting policing were to do with leadership, not with available resources.[119]

Yet, where equipment was delivered in a more targeted manner, more in tune with the capacity of personnel, it could yield important – albeit relatively modest – improvements.[120] This recognises that technological innovations (often quite low tech) when appropriately sequenced and in tune with the context, can enable improved security outcomes. In the Solomon Islands, for instance, den Heyer points to the provision of uniforms and basic equipment to the police as key to increasing their visibility and perceived professionalism, as well as force morale, with knock-on effects for law and order.[121] In a similar vein, Horn et al. explain how significant resources were spent on equipment supplies in Sierra Leone with concerns about the sustainability of many of these investments. Yet some had quick dividends: providing basic medicines to the police hospital:

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[115] Murray 2007: 119 [P; OBS, historical analysis, institutional analysis; ↑].
[116] Chemin 2009 [P; EXP, survey; ↑].
[117] Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓].
[118] Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].
[119] Sedra 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilder 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].
[120] Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].
[121] Den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑].

proved particularly beneficial, for many officers were ill with maladies that relatively cheap medicines such as anti-malarial medicine and vitamins could treat. Caring for officers not only improved health and morale but also improved police effectiveness because it meant that more officers could perform their jobs.[122]

Equipment supply thus might not be particular sustainable or transformative but may provide important targeted inputs that can be important – as long as there is a good deal of realism with regard to what it is likely to achieve.

7.3.3 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

A large number of studies mention infrastructure development, or capital works, as a feature of capacity building activities – mostly in the context of larger-scale post-conflict SSR operations where significant amounts of resources need to be spent and where infrastructure has been destroyed. We draw on six moderate to high evidence quality studies here. In many of these cases, it is clear the lack of infrastructure is a constraint on capacity to deliver.[123] In some ways, it can therefore be an unavoidable first step. Yet there is very little in the literature as to its impact. As with equipment supply, maintenance is pointed to as a problem.[124] So too are the challenges of building new facilities to international standards beyond the norm in recipient countries. The perverse effects of this are recorded by Cox and Ok Serei in Cambodia, where new prison facilities built by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) led to prisoners attempting to bribe their way into the state-of-the-art facilities and prison guards opting to sleep in cells because they were of a higher standard than their own homes. For this reason, rehabilitation of existing facilities is seen to be more effective.[125]

Infrastructure development is also used to improve capacity to deliver by transforming the security sector's space and its relationship with citizens – for instance by making buildings more accessible (and thus inclusive) or more transparent (and thus accountable). Yet the two relevant studies that consider this form of capacity building note that the transformative potential of infrastructure is often not adequately understood by partners and beneficiaries.[126]

7.3.4 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Despite the prevalence of technical assistance as a form of capacity building, surprisingly little literature looks specifically at its impacts. Research from Sierra Leone and Burundi points to the effectiveness of technical assistance, where technical assistants have good local knowledge, build trusting and supportive relationships with counterparts and are committed for the long term, alleviating high turnover of staff.[127] Horn et al. note the potential danger of technical assistants substituting rather than building capacity.[128]

7.4 WHAT THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ADDRESS

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[122] Horn et al. 2006: 114 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

[123] Chakrapani 2006 [P; OBS, case studies, desk reviews; →]; Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓]; Hanson-Alp 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, ethnography; →]; Sahin and Feaver 2013 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑].

[124] Albrecht 2010 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; →]; Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑]; Hanson-Alp 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, ethnography; →].

[125] Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑].

[126] Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑]; Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR;, historical analysis; →].

[127] Albrecht and Jackson 2014a [P; OBS, case study; →]; Ball 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]. Charley and M'Cormack 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

[128] Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

A large body of literature (at least 39 studies) deals with capacity to deliver and capacity building interventions in support of this – from training, to equipment supply, to infrastructure development and technical assistance – are routinely mentioned. Yet there is very little that explicitly considers the impacts of these forms of capacity building, with the exception of training, for which more literature is available. Yet, even here, the literature does not speak to what training content tends to be more effective or at what level training is most effective (that is, is training more effective when it focuses on entry-level personnel, mid-level or senior personnel, or some combination thereof?). This underscores again the degree to which training emerges as a default form of capacity building that is not often sufficiently thought through in terms of how its design can be tailored to maximise learning.

7.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS QUESTION

There is more evidence in support of capacity building leading to improved operational capacity to deliver than there is for the other outcomes under consideration here. However, this should be seen in the context of the very low starting point from which many security sectors are recovering – making a small degree of relative improvement rather unsurprising. It should also be considered alongside improvements in other outcome areas – recognising that improvements in capacity to deliver do not necessarily push in the same direction as other outcomes (like accountability and human rights) and there will likely be tensions and decisions needed regarding prioritisation.

8. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAPACITY BUILDING INTERVENTIONS AND OTHER OUTCOMES?

8.1 KEY FINDINGS

- Improved perceptions of the security sector are noted as a common outcome for SSR but are difficult to attribute to specific capacity building activities and are relative to the low regard in which security actors are often held in post-conflict contexts.
- A small body of evidence attributes reductions in crime to community policing and zero tolerance policing methods but in some cases at the expense of accountability and political neutrality.
- A number of studies point to the development of strategic frameworks as stemming from capacity support but the extent to which these lead to meaningful changes on the ground is disputed.
- The literature consistently argues that capacity building overlooks the contribution of non-state security and justice actors within SSR processes.

In the course of the review, a number of other outcomes were repeatedly mentioned in the literature in relation to capacity building interventions and SSR. These include citizens reporting greater confidence, trust or satisfaction; actual crime rates reduced; strategic frameworks developed; and the inclusion of non-state actors in reform processes or negotiations. While we do not examine these relationships here in great depth, we flag some of the emerging themes around these issues that may be of interest to develop further in future evidence syntheses.

8.2 WHAT THE EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE

We do not seek to provide summaries of the characteristics of the evidence base for each individual outcome listed here, as they are not the main focus of this review. These are areas that would benefit from further inquiry. The evidence base for each of these outcomes is small. As a result, it does not provide generalisable conclusions. While there are a number of high-quality studies cited here, they do not make explicit causal claims for the outcomes below.

Table 6: Relevant studies for RQ 1iv by evidence quality

High	16

Moderate	11
Low	0
Total	27

8.3 WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

The extent to which capacity building interventions can lead to a number of other outcomes remains unclear. For example, improvements in public attitudes towards the police were noted, but to what extent these related to specific capacity building activities is unclear.[129]

8.3.1 CITIZENS REPORTING GREATER CONFIDENCE, TRUST OR SATISFACTION

The literature suggests a common outcome is improvements in public attitudes towards the security services, often ascribed to community policing efforts (involving training, organisational support, supply of resources and in some cases capital works and technical assistance). This was discussed in at least 14 mixed-quality papers. For example, community policing in Serbia led to improvements in public attitudes towards police, related to municipal-level security committees created and public opinion surveys integrated into policing.[130] Similarly, in Nigeria, Hills demonstrates as a result of community policing, fear of crime went down, perceptions of corruption decreased and the police were seen as more cooperative and less abusive.[131] Banerjee et al. note how a freeze on transfers and training led to improved effectiveness and public image in Rajasthan, India.[132]

However, these improvements are often achieved from a very low starting point. It is not all that surprising that communities in a post-conflict setting have an improved view of the security sector that was previously involved in conflict and a source of major insecurity. This raises the question of whether improvements seen are attributable to SSR or capacity building efforts. In Timor-Leste, for instance, Wassel outlines how there have been improvements in the perceived professionalism of police responses in areas where community policing initiatives have taken place. However, he goes on to note that 'Any changes in perceptions could be attributed to a number of factors and initiatives undertaken.'[133]

Improvements in public perceptions of safety also face considerable methodological issues in knowing whether capacity building has been the key factor. For example, in the Solomon Islands, den Heyer points to a survey between 2003 and 2007 that showed increased public perceptions of security and safety, but argues it remains unclear whether this owes to improvements in police responsiveness (on the basis of capacity building interventions) or to disarmament of combatants. Similarly, in Liberia, improvements in public perceptions of safety is partly linked to SSR but more so to the political dynamics in the country.[134]

8.3.2 ACTUAL CRIME RATES REDUCED

A small number of high-quality studies, particularly focusing on the Latin American context, provide some evidence regarding SSR efforts to reduce crime rates (especially homicide).[135] These studies

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[129] Ball 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Godwin and Haenlein 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →]; Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR; historical analysis; →]; Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2013 [P; OBS, interviews; ↑]; Osse 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, expert analysis; →]; Smith-Höhn 2010 [P; OBS, focus groups, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Wassel 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑]; Wilson et al. 2011 [P; QEX, case study, household survey; ↑].

[130] Downes and Keane 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →].

[131] Hills 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, political analysis; ↑].

[132] Banerjee et al. 2012b [P; EXP; ↑].

[133] Wassel 2014: 22 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑]

[134] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑].

[135] See for instance Alves and Arias 2012 [P; OBS, case study; interviews; ↑]; García et al. 2013 [P; EXP; ↑].

argue community policing can be effective in reducing crime, although the evidence is mixed.[136] In Bogota, the homicide rate declined by 78% between 1993 and 2006 on the back of a holistic and lateral (taking into account society and the state) police reform process.[137] In Trinidad and Tobago, a model police station initiative led to reductions in fears of crime and perceptions of crime problems in the neighbourhood, although it is tough to know if this reflects an actual crime reduction.[138]

According to interviewees in one study, a community policing unit in Mozambique did manage to reduce crime, but at the cost of an increase in police violence.[139] Kupatadze highlights that crime rates were reduced by zero tolerance policing in Georgia – alongside improvements in police capacity and responsiveness – but politicisation and lack of accountability continued.[140] Again, this highlights how the various outcomes that can be ascribed to SSR do not all push in the same direction, and there are trade-offs and tensions between them that require careful consideration.

8.3.3 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS DEVELOPED

The literature commonly criticises reform efforts for resulting in new laws, policies or frameworks but little change in practice.[141] However, a small number of high-quality studies highlight the development of strategic frameworks as meaningful outcomes. In Bogota, a police code of conduct was revised, increasing collaboration between police and communities through a participative process that included historically marginalised groups. This was part of a broader reform process that improved public perceptions of the police.[142] In Liberia, 'external efforts to strengthen civilian democratic control within the Liberian police force met with some success in supporting the development of formal policies and procedures, as well as stronger internal disciplinary mechanisms, and systems of merit-based recruitment and advancement. Yet progress was slow: in one appraisal only 10% of what existed on paper was deemed "real."'[143]

Studies suggest strategic frameworks tend to gain greater traction if they are designed in keeping with the understanding of security forces' own perceptions of their roles. In the Solomon Islands, a planning document was developed that embedded sustained capacity development plans and measures for the future, which was developed with major inputs from members of the police force.[144] Tjønneland et al. suggest training delivered by the Southern African Defence and Security Management Network to a range of high-level officials made major efforts to open space for debate on national and regional security priorities.[145] In DRC, this training and follow-up processes contributed to wide discussion of (and improvements to) the draft bill on the reform of the police.

8.3.4 THE INCLUSION OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN REFORM PROCESSES OR NEGOTIATIONS

There is only a small body of high-quality literature that discusses capacity building in relation to non-state actors. In Afghanistan, programmes funded by the US Institute for Peace that focused on training and capacity building with informal justice actors were deemed relatively successful as the activities were locally led, meaning they were informed by a good understanding of local power dynamics and social networks and there was an incentive to focus on long-term justice processes.

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[136] Arias and Ungar 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, questionnaire; ↑].
[137] Moncada 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, survey, desk research; ↑].
[138] Wilson et al. 2011 [P; QEX, case study, household survey; ↑].
[139] Kyed 2010 [P; OBS, case study; →].
[140] Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR, historical analysis; →].
[141] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Jaye 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, expert analysis; →]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑].
[142] Moncada 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, survey, desk research; ↑].
[143] Schroeder et al. 2014: 222 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies, desk research; ↑].
[144] Den Heyer 2010a: 366 [P; QEX, survey; ↑].
[145] Tjønneland et al. 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, surveys, evaluation; ↑].

These programmes were not deemed particularly sustainable, however, not least because there were simply too many elders involved in these informal justice forums who need to be trained.[146]

In Mozambique, the expansion of community policing units involved the integration of non-state actors. These members were heavily relied on by police officers, both doing the 'dirty' work of the police and attempting to control crime in their areas.[147] However, more common in the literature is a critique of SSR for failing to be inclusive of non-state actors.[148] This is deeply problematic, since it does not take into account the reality of security and justice provision in many countries, particularly those affected by conflict. As Baker notes in the context of Liberia, as against a top-down statist approach to SSR, 'A multi-layered approach to policing policy that takes into account the combined contribution of state, community-based, and commercial policing is a much more viable option.'[149]

8.4 WHAT THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ADDRESS

It is clear the relationship between capacity building and these outcomes needs further research. Perhaps the most glaring omission from this literature is how capacity building of non-state actors can be successful, given how important they are consistently noted as being in security provision across a range of developing country contexts. There is also a notable divide in the literature between that focused on reducing or preventing conflict and that focused on reducing crime. The former is not surprising given the conflict-affected nature of many of the contexts in which donor-led SSR programmes are undertaken. However, as criminal violence has increasingly become the most pervasive threat to personal security, more research is needed on the relationship between SSR and capacity building activities and reductions in criminal violence – homicide but also sexual and gender-based violence – which is a glaring omission in the literature under study here.

9. RESEARCH QUESTION 2) WHAT FACTORS ENABLE OR HINDER THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

9.1 KEY FINDINGS

- Capacity building is more successful where it acknowledges the political nature of reforms and is designed accordingly. This includes a number of dimensions, recognising that capacity building is itself deeply political as it involves changing power relations; that capacity building must be tailored to the political realities of the context; and that political support for reform efforts is key.
- Less explored is how the political nature of donors and donor countries themselves influence capacity building.
- Capacity building activities must be appropriately tailored to the context and local levels of capacity, including by ensuring 'capacity-builders' have the requisite local expertise, language and professional skills.
- Local institutional forms should also be acknowledged and potentially engaged rather than there being a focus on developing best practical institutional arrangements.
- Where donors are more flexible, devolve decision-making, engage beyond the short term, work on specific security and justice problems and coordinate among themselves, reforms are more likely to see improvements in outcomes.

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[146] Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑].

[147] Kyed 2010 [P; OBS, case study; →].

[148] Albrecht 2010 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; →]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Baker 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Dinnen and Peake 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Dinnen et al. 2006 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Lubkemann et al. 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, legal analysis, high-level dialogue with policy-makers; ↑].

[149] Baker 2010: 189 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

This section explores which factors enable or hinder improvements in accountability, responsiveness and improved capacity to deliver through capacity building approaches.

9.2 WHAT THE EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE

All papers reviewed (that were assessed as being of moderate or high relevance) gave some indication of the reasons for the successes or failure of SSR interventions. Indeed, this is the only research question that benefited from a broad evidence base with several consistent messages emerging. However, as with the rest of the research questions, often these reasons were not specifically or explicitly in relation to capacity building activities but rather were focused on SSR more broadly. Table 7 presents the studies we found were most relevant to the research question. This includes 36 high-quality studies. Despite this, the evidence in this area is rarely based on a clear causal relationship (except in the cases of the four experimental studies), and derives mostly from examples of failure rather than success.

Table 7: Relevant studies for RQ 2 by evidence quality

High	36
Moderate	26
Low	1
Total	63

In keeping with the rest of this review, the majority of the papers drawn on here are single country case studies. There are a limited number of high-quality cross-country evaluations and comparative case studies.[150] The majority of papers drawn on here relate to countries that have had substantial international engagement, including Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste – capacity building interventions have thus taken place in the context of a much wider SSR process.

9.3 WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

The evidence consistently outlines three broad factors that can both enable or hinder improvement in organisational capacity: political considerations, context sensitivity and donor approaches. The literature points to these three factors consistently, although the emphasis and specifics change depending on the context.

9.3.1 POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While it may have become a seemingly obvious point, the political nature of capacity building as part of wider SSR is a consistent theme. Here, we set out the multiple aspects covered in the literature (although few studies highlight all of these political dimensions).

First, a large number of moderate- and high-quality papers highlight that SSR (and capacity building as a component of it) is not technocratic but deeply political.[151] That is, because SSR (and capacity building) are about redistributing power, about including those who may have previously been

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[150] Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑]; Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑].

[151] Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Dinnen and Peake 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, historical analysis, desk research; →]; Downes and Keane 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →]; McDougall 2012 (P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Moncada 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, survey, desk research; ↑]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑]; Osse 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, expert analysis; →]; Sahin and Feaver 2013 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; Schroeder et al. 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies, desk research; ↑]; Walby and Monaghan 2011 [P; OBS, political economy analysis, discourse analysis, FoI requests; ↑].

excluded and about ending impunity, it is always political. There are winners and losers, and acknowledgement of this and being explicit about how capacity building aims to work around the incentive structures that may jeopardise its effectiveness – or indeed to change those structures in strategic ways – is important if it is to achieve real results.

Second, a large number of moderate- and high-quality papers are consistently explicit that capacity building within SSR is more effective where it is appropriately tailored to the political context.[152] Papers point to the failings of 'off-the-shelf' solutions[153] and the need to adapt interventions to what is possible within the specific political context in that country.[154] This means putting politics and the nature of the political settlement centre stage, creating space to adapt as necessary to changing dynamics and investing in monitoring those changing dynamics.[155]

It is the specific political dynamics and history of a country that contain the enabling and constraining factors for change. The literature highlights that programmes cannot expect to achieve improvements where they are not developed in a manner that is realistic about what is possible in each context. Expectations also then have to be modest: externally imposed reforms are unlikely to achieve a full transformation of the security sector as such changes depend far more on local political dynamics than on the capacity building programmes of donors.[156] The importance of political context emerges both from reforms that are considered successful and from those that are not. In Georgia, for instance, Kupatadze highlights that the critical factor enabling improvements in policing was the political opportunity provided by the Rose Revolution and the small group of leaders with a monopoly of political power in its wake.[157] Similarly, AusAID was able to achieve modest but improvement improvements in the criminal justice system in Cambodia by adapting its support to the difficult political environment in that country.[158] By contrast, in an analysis of Liberia, Podder points to how, 'The realities of local practice in a neo-patrimonial context defy international policy rhetoric of transparency and accountability.'[159] As den Heyer highlights in relation to the reform of police in the Solomon Islands, 'Capacity development is a complicated task that is largely outside of the control of international external providers […] progress was only made in those areas where the [police] themselves recognised the need for change.'[160] Nationally led reform processes also have to be realistic about what change is possible in the political context. Osse outlines a range of reasons for a lack of progress in Kenya's domestically driven police reforms, 'all of which relate to the potential impact police reforms could have on the political and power dynamics in the country'.[161]

Third, across all outcomes under consideration in this synthesis, the literature consistently highlights that capacity building activities require political buy-in and support at different levels in order to be successful. Getting senior politicians or security sector personnel on board can help ensure support for reforms at lower levels, as messages and support cascade down from senior staff.[162] Capacity

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[152] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Ball 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑]; Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑] Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR, historical analysis; →]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].
[153] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →].
[154] Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑]; Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].
[155] Ball 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑].
[156] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS,interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS; interviews, historical analysis; ↑].
[157] Kupatadze 2012 [S; OR, historical analysis; →].
[158] Cox and Ok Serei 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, literature review; ↑].
[159] Podder 2013: 362 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].
[160] Den Heyer 2010a: 313 [P; QEX, survey; ↑].
[161] Osse 2014: 11 [P; OBS, interviews, expert analysis; →]
[162] Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓]; den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →]; Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

building is also noted as more effective where it is not seen as donor-imposed.[163] Cox et al. argue that, in Indonesia, building good relationships between reformers and key officials within legal institutions to be reformed was critical to improvements achieved.[164] However, Banerjee et al. note that not all actors necessarily need to be bought into reforms. In India, the most effective changes introduced into police stations were those that did not require the support of station commanders. In this case, support from senior levels of the police and from officers themselves was sufficient to achieve improvements in police courteousness to the public and improved crime recording.[165]

A smaller high-quality literature also makes the point that political support for reforms is not simply achieved at the outset of programming but must be continually brokered and can change. For example, in Sri Lanka, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) initially felt it had secured the agreement of enough senior politicians and police to implement a large-scale capacity building programme. However, during the project, the ceasefire between government and rebel forces failed and many of the project goals were no longer a priority for the government or police, such as gender or human rights training.[166]

Finally, a small mixed-quality literature points to the otherwise neglected issue of how the politics of donor countries affects capacity building efforts, arguing that, where capacity building is driven by domestic donor interests, it tends to be less effective.[167] In Afghanistan, US political dynamics have driven much of the focus of capacity building – favouring, for instance, militarised police training that will enable the police to assist in fighting insurgents.[168] Such capacity building tends to be focused on the short-term political interests of donors rather than the long-term interests of recipients. It thus attracts weaker local support and raises serious 'do no harm' issues. In Haiti, Walby and Monaghan note how:

> *Aid provided by Canada and the United Nations (UN) … was based on training for and the distribution of technology to members of paramilitary groups who filled a power vacuum after the removal of Aristide and became part of the Haitian National Police […] This raises questions about the process of UN and Canada-led police reform in Haiti and the involvement of security forces in extrajudicial killings, rape, and false imprisonment of thousands of Haitians following the coup.* [169]

The danger of such short-term donor country thinking is that it overlooks the political nature of capacity building within SSR – assuming it to be purely technical – and thus misses how altering the power and capacity of the security sector creates winners and losers and augments local political dynamics.

9.3.2 CONTEXT SENSITIVITY

An overwhelmingly consistent message across the literature reviewed points to the need for capacity building interventions to be attuned to local context. As above, where 'off-the-shelf' approaches are used or donor-driven approaches take precedence over locally led ones, the outcomes are likely to be

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[163] Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Downes and Keane 2006 [P; OBS; historical analysis; →].

[164] Cox et al. 2012c [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[165] Banerjee et al. 2012a [P; EXP, surveys, interviews, large-scale randomised control trials; ↑].

[166] Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑].

[167] Giustozzi 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, policy analysis; →]; Manthri 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, political economy analysis, budget analysis; →]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑]; Walby and Monaghan 2011 [P; OBS, political economy analysis, discourse analysis, FoI requests; ↑].

[168] Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Manthri 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, political economy analysis, budget analysis; →]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑]; Sedra 2014 [S; OR, political analysis, literature review; →].

[169] Walby and Monaghan 2011: 274 [P; OBS, political economy analysis, discourse analysis, FoI requests; ↑].

more limited, particularly over the longer term.[170] In a review of Australian law and justice programming in Indonesia, Cambodia and the Solomon Islands, Cox et al. argue there is a:

> *tendency for individual programs to set objectives that are too ambitious, too generalised and not well adapted to the specific country context. Capacity building approaches, from training to technical assistance, need to be made relevant to the day to day practice of the individuals and organisations they seek to change.*[171]

A similar concern is raised by Schroeder et al. in relation to police programming in the Palestinian Territories, where international accountability standards and newly established oversight bodies within the police were 'only loosely coupled to the police's day-to-day work' and were thus largely ineffective.[172]

Interveners need to be aware of the existing level of capacity in each context they intervene. Weak local capacity to deliver is often seen as the reason for the failure of broader reforms.[173] In relation to training of police in Afghanistan, Wilder points to 'High rates of illiteracy and semi-literacy among [police] patrolmen and recruits, which makes it difficult to provide effective training and severely limits the policing tasks that can be performed' as well as 'Weak or non-existent recruiting and vetting systems resulting in little attention given to who is trained, and little follow-up to determine what happens to those who have been trained.'[174] Given that this is the problem capacity building interventions seek to tackle, the onus is on such programmes to tailor support accordingly.

Context-sensitivity demands the capacity of the capacity builders be appropriate to the task at hand. This means staff need good local knowledge and, perhaps most importantly, proficiency in local languages.[175] The literature makes it clear this is a difficult task that international actors are rarely set up to do. In Afghanistan, Wilder outlines problems in 'finding sufficient numbers of highly qualified international police mentors, with an appropriate mix of political as well as technical skills, who are willing to work in remote and often inhospitable areas of Afghanistan'.[176] Appropriate knowledge and language skills will also be required to build the kind of trust required for effective training and technical assistance.[177] Importantly, this is unlikely to happen if staff are on constant rotation, stay for short periods of time and do not speak local languages.[178]

While this is often not mentioned explicitly, it is clear from reviewing the literature that international actors need to understand that they themselves are also part of the context, all the more so in countries where they take considerable roles in providing security, such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Timor-Leste. The broader nature of international involvement in a country hugely affects potential for positive capacity building. Developing police capacity, for example, may be difficult in a context where an external organisation has control over executive policing in the country. In Timor, 'The same structural condition that allowed the mission to have an impact on the security situation in the country – executive authority – impeded the overarching goal of the rebuilding, reconstruction,

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[170] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Skinner 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[171] Cox et al. 2012a: vii [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑].

[172] Schroeder et al. 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies, desk research; ↑].

[173] Lala and Laudemiro 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, desk research; →].

[174] Wilder 2007: vii [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[175] Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓]; Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑]; Murray 2007 [P; OBS, historical analysis, institutional analysis; ↑].

[176] Wilder 2007: ix [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[177] Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →]; Labda 2011 [P; OBS; interviews, case study; ↑].

[178] Padurariu 2014 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑]; Peake and Studdard Brown 2005 [S; OR, case study, ↑]; Perito 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, conference proceedings, literature review; ↑].

and reform of the Timorese national police.'[179] It limited the availability of resources for capacity building and lessened a sense of ownership among the Timorese.

Finally, the literature indicates that capacity building approaches may fail – for example in improving the responsiveness of the security sector – if they do not acknowledge or include locally legitimate forms of security and justice provision that exist outside of the state. Non-state actors that many people rely on for security are often not engaged and reforms are thus not as relevant to people's lives.[180] In a review of Australia's law and justice programming, Cox et al. highlight that, while caution is required on this front given concerns about the human rights records of some non-state actors, this should not prevent innovative and experimental engagements with such actors, in particular to improve their responsiveness to concerns around rights and gender equality.[181] Priority should be given to locally legitimate institutional forms rather than international best practice arrangements that tend to lead to blueprint approaches to reform.

9.3.3 NATURE OF DONOR APPROACHES

A medium-sized body of literature points to the ways in which donor approaches can enable or hinder capacity building effectiveness. In particular, the literature suggests donors should: take a flexible approach that devolves decision-making, ensure long-term engagement, avoid short-term decision-making, work across sectors on specific problems and coordinate with other donors on strategy and practice.

First, SSR (and capacity building elements within it) are often more successful where donors take a flexible approach and devolve decision-making to those on the ground.[182] In Indonesia, AusAID created the Indonesia–Australia Legal Development Facility, which provided A$24 million in assistance from 2003 to 2009 with the aim of strengthening the capacity of Indonesia's government and civil society institutions, through flexible funding that allowed them to respond to emerging issues. This mechanism allowed Australia to 'punch above its weight', since it enabled it to adapt to changing circumstances, in contrast with in other rigid donor programmes.[183] In Sierra Leone, Horn et al. note that relatively informal reporting was in fact helpful and enabled a high degree of devolved decision-making, which allowed the team on the ground to respond to changing dynamics as required. However, this relied on the skills and competencies of the technical advisors and thus might not always be appropriate.[184] Where programmes do not involve local staff in decision-making, this can limit improved outcomes, as ownership is not fostered. In Timor-Leste, for instance, multiple donors supported community policing programmes involving training and technical assistance that created confusion and frustration among Timorese counterparts who were instructed in differing models of practice.[185] It was only after much of the donor support in this area subsided that the Timorese police were able to articulate their own community policing approach, drawing on a mix of international and national approaches and devolving responsibility to district commanders, and that ideas were able to be tested and interest and ownership generated.

Second, the literature consistently makes clear that successful capacity building demand long-term donor commitment, such as from DFID in Sierra Leone or the Dutch in Burundi. This is seen as a necessary but not sufficient factor in organisational capacity improvements: the literature on some countries where there have been long-term engagements, such as the UN in Timor-Leste (albeit on a

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[179] Lemay-Hébert 2009: 379 [P; OBS, interviews; →].

[180] Baker 2006a [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; →]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[181] Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑].

[182] Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑]; Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

[183] Cox et al. 2012c [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[184] Horn et al. 2006 [P; OBS, historical analysis, personal reflections; →].

[185] Wassel 2014: 27 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].

stop-start basis), is overwhelmingly negative.[186] Regardless, short-term investments, such as in South Sudan, are often deemed to be insufficient.[187] In Haiti, Mendelson-Forman notes, 'The demobilization of the Haitian Army and the creation of a new civilian police force, were important steps that could have been successful had it not been for the short time frame allowed for success.'188

A long-term approach demands that the financial sustainability of capacity building efforts is taken into account. This is a common limitation found of donor programming in the literature. Given that training, for example, is likely needed in the medium to long term, donors need to ensure governments or other actors will support it once donors withdraw.[189] Only one paper notes the importance of building up in-country expertise through in-depth scholarly training. The Southern African Defence and Security Management Network provides training and education in defence and security management, civil–military relations and peace-building as well as working towards creating a regional network of institutions to provide a range of training, technical and research support in these areas. This approach has resulted in subtler but clear gains on a range of outcomes.[190]

Third, and relatedly, the literature consistently makes clear that a focus on short-term objectives can be damaging in the longer term. For example, in Iraq and Afghanistan, Sedra highlights how a short-term train and equip focus has stimulated conflict and ignored civilian institutions – and therefore has undermined the sector's accountability to civilian authority.[191] Also in Afghanistan, Manthri highlights how short-term goals have limited incentives for donors to invest time and resources into joint or coordinated activities that show impact in the medium term.[192]

Fourth, the literature is mixed on whether sector-wide or more targeted approaches to capacity building are more effective. Broader sector-wide approaches to reform are critiqued for being unsustainable, in part because they fail to tackle the underpinning political dynamics. Yet targeted and small interventions are also argued to be problematic since they can be piecemeal and poorly coordinated.193 Sahin and Feaver, den Heyer and Wilder argue there needs to be a whole of government approach to be meaningful.194 A number of studies highlight the importance of cross-sectoral approaches to capacity building efforts. For example, in Haiti, 'A major lesson of the US efforts to train a police force de novo was the need to coordinate the link between policing, the penal system and the judicial sector reforms.'[195] Walby and Monghan explicitly argue that Canadian support for police reform without adequate linkages with prison reform exacerbated human rights problems (e.g. if you arrest people but cannot imprison them safely).[196] A small body of high-quality evidence suggests the targeted and cross-sector approaches might not be mutually exclusive. Where reforms focus on a particular problem (rather than on general capacity improvements), they are more likely to develop a relevant and potentially transformative solution.[197] These interventions would therefore be across a number of (and indeed even outside of) security and justice sector institutions but with a more targeted focus on how a particular problem can be solved. This approach would help move

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[186] Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; McDougall 2012 (P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Peake 2009 [P; OBS, interviews, participant observation; ↑]; Sahin and Feaver 2013 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑].

[187] Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Chikwanha and Hutton 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, desk research; ↓].

[188] Mendelson-Forman 2006: 14 [S; OR, historical analysis; →].

[189] Nilsson and Söderberg Kovac's (2013) analysis of Liberia and Sierra Leone, Manthri (2008), Wilder (2007) and Sedra (2008) in Afghanistan, Milton-Edwards (2014) in the West Bank

[190] Tjønneland et al. 2009 [P; OBS; ↑].

[191] Sedra 2007: 19 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑].

[192] Manthri 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, political economy analysis, budget analysis; →].

[193] Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑].

[194] Sahin and Feaver 2013 [P; OBS, historical analysis; ↑]; den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; Wilder 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

[195] Mendelson-Forman 2006: 20 [S; OR, historical analysis; →].

[196] Walby and Monaghan 2011 [P; OBS, political economy analysis, discourse analysis, FoI requests; ↑].

[197] Banerjee et al. 2012b [P; EXP; ↑]; Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑].

away from capacity building focusing broadly on improvements in institutional capacity, towards a focus on improved security and justice outcomes.[198]

Finally, the literature is clear that there needs to be coordination and agreement between different donor agencies on approaches and divisions of labour. Many problems arise because of a lack of overarching strategy among donors, with some having more interest in advancing their own political and security interests or their own models of security and justice.[199] In Timor-Leste, Wassel outlines how donors trained the police in multiple community policing approaches derived from their own national experiences, 'resulting in unclear mandates and varied behaviour'.[200] While Charley and M'Cormack argue that police reform involving officers from nine different countries in Sierra Leone enabled a focus on finding a locally appropriate model, rather than one donor model predominating, a larger literature suggests poor donor coordination creates problems of duplication, inconsistency and even competition that hinders effective SSR.[201]

9.4 WHAT THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ADDRESS

The specific factors that enable the success of capacity building activities are not readily apparent in the literature because successful instances of capacity building are rare and/or poorly documented. While much can be learned from the factors that limit capacity building approaches, this does mean there are few studies pointing to positive effects and articulating the reasons for them. The specific factors that help or hinder capacity building activities are rarely carefully analysed through programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies, a fact that limits the strength of the evidence base. The literature is consistently critical of programmes for M&E practices being used loosely and purely to show programme success.[202] On the one hand, programmes use weak output indicators to measure capacity building (like number of police trained); on the other, they measure broader social outcomes but have no convincing way of attributing these to the activities they have undertaken.[203] This creates a dilemma over whether there is a lack of impact or a lack of evidence of impact, as was the case in a four-year A\$90 million Australian programme in Papua New Guinea.[204] This challenge points to the need for much more robust M&E that is less concerned with demonstrating programme results and more concerned with building the knowledge base around what works and what does not.

9.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS QUESTION

The findings for this research question indicate there are considerable limitations to both international and national actors seeking to improve the capacity of the security sector. Engaging with and understanding the political dynamics of SSR and the contexts in which it occurs is essential. The literature suggests international organisations are rarely set up to deliver capacity building effectively, with deficits in skills, knowledge and ways of working. As is noted in the SSR literature more broadly, there appears to be a significant gap between the theory and practice of capacity building.

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[198] Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑].
[199] Sedra 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wassel 2014 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].
[200] Wassel 2014: 10 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, political economy analysis, survey; ↑].
[201] Charley and M'Cormack 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].
[202] Armytage 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; →]; Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; den Heyer 2010a [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; Hedvall and Busisiwe 2005 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilder 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].
[203] Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Hedvall and Busisiwe 2005 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilder 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].
[204] Armytage 2010: 443 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; →].

10. RESEARCH QUESTION 3) WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING INTERVENTIONS AND INCREASED STABILITY AND REDUCTIONS IN OUTBREAKS OF CONFLICT?

10.1 KEY FINDINGS

- The literature dealing with this issue suggests SSR can play an important stabilising role in the short term, although it is unclear whether this is because of capacity building or simply because of the presence of foreign troops and significant aid funds.
- However there is little evidence that SSR and capacity building contribute to longer-term security, although there is weak longitudinal analysis of its effects.
- A small number of papers point to the potentially destabilising effects of SSR that can actually exacerbate or increase the risk of conflict.

This section assesses the relationship between capacity building activities and increased stability and reductions in outbreaks of conflict. It does not consider studies where relationships between capacity building and crime reduction are discussed, since the question here is about conflict (see Section 8 for a brief discussion of the relationship between capacity building and crime reduction).

10.2 WHAT THE EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE

There is a small but moderate- to high-quality evidence base analysing the above relationship in some way. However, no papers explicitly analyse the relationship between 'capacity building' and these broader outcomes. Most of the papers that are relevant to this question focus on countries where there has been large-scale international intervention, when it could be considered that international actors could have a major hand in long-term stability, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. This is understandable, yet it also makes it difficult to disaggregate specific capacity building interventions from other dynamics in the country – and in turn what the effects of any specific activities are amid the many different drivers of change. In keeping with the rest of this review, the majority of studies cited are single country case studies. A total of 17 papers spoke closely to this research question, with 13 of those being high-quality papers.

Table 8: Relevant studies for RQ 3 by evidence quality

High	13
Moderate	4
Low	0
Total	17

10.3 WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

A large body of papers in this review doubt the ability of national actors to keep the peace in the absence of international support, which implies a failure – or at least limited success – in improving capacity.[205] But the literature stops short of providing robust evidence on how capacity building can be sustained and lead to ongoing stability and reductions in violence. Absence of evidence should not be understood as evidence of no impact. SSR (and presumably capacity building as a key part of this) is seen as essential to ongoing stability. Sedra states that, 'Whether Afghanistan will tip toward state consolidation and development or state failure and internecine conflict will depend to a great extent on the outcome of […] SSR, the process to remake the security architecture of the state.'[206] Yet few examples exist of where (at the behest of international actors) this has been successful. In fact,

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[205] This was a general theme in the literature but includes Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Labda 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, case study; ↑]; Podder 2013: 362 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Wilcke 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].
[206] Sedra 2008 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]

several authors argue that flawed international approaches to reform including capacity building elements have contributed to instability and increased violence – although of course these are not causal claims, in part because of the difficulty of making such claims.[207]

10.3.1 SHORT-TERM STABILISATION BUT NOT LONG-TERM SECURITY

Only 1 paper makes any direct claims about capacity building activities reducing conflict. Downes and Keane argue (although without explicit causal evidence) that the creation of a multi-ethnic police element (MEPE) in Serbia 'played a significant role in averting serious conflict; it alleviated ethnic and social tensions. In this sense, the MEPE was highly successful.'[208] Cox et al. in their multi-country evaluation of security and justice of AusAID imply the conflict prevention aspects of programming have been successful in some cases but note that this is very hard to demonstrate empirically.[209] They suggest this could be done better: 'Where stabilisation is the primary goal, we would expect to see the design of the assistance based on careful conflict analysis, to enable the assistance to be focused on addressing the specific drivers of conflict that pose the greatest risk to stability.'[210]

More commonly, it is argued that international intervention has stabilised a country (through direct intervention) but that further reforms have not met with much success. In Liberia, there is a widespread assumption that UN peacekeepers are critical in preventing widespread violence.[211] Similarly, in Sierra Leone, literature suggests the presence of international forces played a key role in ending the war.[212] Yet, while the presence of foreign troops may lead to stability, it is not clear capacity building of local security forces does. In the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, Goldsmith and Dinnen note that a return to violence in both contexts demonstrates failure of SSR to lead to longer-term stability.[213] Similarly, McDougall argues the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands has been relatively successful in restoring law and order but ultimately the underlying causes of violence have not been addressed, leaving the country vulnerable to instability.[214]

This suggests donors can play an important stabilising role at key moments of crisis. However, importantly for the purposes of this synthesis, it is unclear whether any specific capacity building elements are important for this. More relevant in many cases is the demonstration of financial and military support, through aid programmes and peacekeepers. As indicated under Research Question 2, long-term stability also depends on factors other than capacity buildinglike local political and security dynamics.[215] Any contribution by capacity building cannot be in place of a political solution.[216]

If capacity building attempts were to improve stability over the longer term, then as a minimum requirement the interventions would need to be sustainable. But a small number of high-quality

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[207] Ivkovic and Shelley 2005 [P; OBS, historical analysis, survey; ↑]; Manthri 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, political economy analysis, budget analysis; →]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑].

[208] Downes and Keane 2006: 183 [P; OBS, historical analysis; →].

[209] Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑].

[210] Cox et al. 2012a: 15 [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑].

[211] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑].

[212] Albrecht 2010 [P; OBS, case study, historical analysis; →]; Charley and M'Cormack 2012 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Gbla 2006 [S; OR, historical analysis; ↓].

[213] Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑].

[214] McDougall 2012 (P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑].

[215] Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Coburn 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, literature review; ↑]; Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

[216] Wilcke 2006 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

papers (five) make clear that sustainable capacity building approaches are rare. Den Heyer sought to measure capacity development in the Solomon Islands police force and concluded that:

> *There is also little evidence that police reform and capacity development efforts have resulted in sustainable outcomes [...] as the obstacles to achieving order and stability during the nation's rebuilding process are extensive and are more political and social than justice-related.*[217]

In Mexico, a quite different violent context, La Rose and Maddan argue that 'No police program or reorganization is likely to be effective when police are outgunned and often undermined by cartel money and political influence.'[218] In Afghanistan, Sedra demonstrates that, even if the national armed forces were halved in size, the state would not be able to fiscally sustain them. He concludes, 'The SSR project's lack of sustainability in Afghanistan is so stark that it is difficult to envision how the sector could survive without indefinite Western support, creating a permanent rentier state.'[219]

The literature shows DRC to be a consistent example where capacity building, as part of broader initiatives, has failed to lead to long-term stability. Labda outlines how through peace-building efforts in DRC:

> *[...] in several cases capacity building was achieved, notwithstanding the constraints, with a predominantly technical angle with a view to treating specific concerns around project activity implementation. It did not however seek to build networks for cooperation at the local level to prevent conflicts.*[220]

Furthermore, most DDR and SSR interventions in DRC are implemented as responses to emergency situations and therefore do not complement or focus on long-term development or sustainability.[221] Robinson concludes that, in relation to DRC, 'What appears more likely is an enormous imbalance between the enormous effort and resources expended, and the small, fragile, and transient gains in real security – a conclusion supported by the history of developmental effort since 1945.'[222]

10.3.2 SSR CAN INCREASE THE CHANCE OF CONFLICT

A small literature (three studies) points to the possibility that flawed SSR attempts can in fact weaken the state and increase the chances of conflict.[223] In Afghanistan, the literature suggests that SSR did not set strong incentives for institutional reforms, generated fiscal risks and generally contributed to a weakening of state capacity. This can be exacerbated if short-termist approaches are taken.[224] One high-quality study raised the question of the ethics of building the capacity of specific actors during conflict. In relation to Sri Lanka during the conflict between the state and the Tamil Tigers, Olander et al. outline the dangers of police and politicians fully supporting the operational capacity side of the support but not the elements that focus on human rights or ethnic integration.[225] They identify that donors may be tacitly supporting regimes to better repress their citizens, which undermines long-term stability. It may be that donors engage with such countries in order to open up space for more positive engagement (e.g. on human rights advocacy) but in Sri Lanka Olander et al. suggest this was not the case.

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[217] Den Heyer 2010a: 302 [P; QEX, survey; ↑].
[218] La Rose and Maddan 2009: 344 [P; OBS, historical analysis, interviews, survey; ↑].
[219] Sedra 2013: 382-383 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].
[220] Labda 2011: 121 [P; OBS, interviews, case study; ↑].
[221] Labda 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, case study; ↑].
[222] Robinson 2012: 494 [S; OR, historical analysis, news review; ↑].
[223] Manthri 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, political economy analysis, budget analysis; →]; Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑]; Sedra 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑].
[224] Manthri 2008 [P; OBS, historical analysis, political economy analysis, budget analysis; →]; Sedra 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, political economy analysis; ↑].
[225] Olander et al. 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, conflict analysis; ↑].

10.4 WHAT THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ADDRESS

The literature does not directly address this research question in any substantive way. Only a very small body of evidence discusses the potential for negative effects of capacity building on stability. Critically, the literature reviewed here offered no longitudinal assessments of impacts of capacity building and SSR in the longer term. This means it is difficult to know whether such interventions have had impacts on longer-term stability – although of course longer timeframes make attribution to past experiences of capacity building difficult. There is also a lack of knowledge on the efficacy of improving the ability of informal or non-state actors to mitigate conflict over the longer term.

10.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS QUESTION

There is a general assumption in the literature that SSR is necessary but not sufficient for increased stability in a conflict-affected setting. However, the role of capacity building within this is unclear, perhaps because it is very difficult to delineate the effects of specific capacity building activities in such complex settings. Various activities associated with capacity building, such as training and technical assistance, can be understood only in the context of broader donor activities, but also, more importantly, of the national (and possibly regional) socio-political context.

11. EVIDENCE GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To recap, the vast majority of papers in this review were not about the relationship between capacity building and specific outcomes but rather referred to these areas as part of a broader SSR analysis. Not a single study spoke directly to these research questions. A major gap in the evidence exists, therefore, in our understanding of the role capacity building has played in SSR and the outcomes it has, or has not, produced. The specific gaps noted in relation to each research question are set out below, before we indicate wider gaps.

- Accountability: The literature does not sufficiently disaggregate between vertical and horizontal accountability and their connection to any capacity building activities. Given the noted difficulties of improving accountability, there is also insufficient evidence of historical analysis of how institutions have become more accountable in the face of entrenched political interests. Such analysis could offer helpful learning to SSR programmes, accounting of course for context specificity.
- Responsiveness: Research in this area fails to disaggregate between the relative merits of different parts of major reform programmes, such as training, restructuring and technical assistance. While there are notable papers that go into detail on the content and approach of reform processes, these are rarely disaggregated in terms of forms of capacity building and effects. In particular, more evidence is needed on the effects of gender restructuring within the security sector on responsiveness to women and girls.
- Capacity to deliver: A significant literature deals with capacity to deliver and capacity building interventions in support of this, yet there is very little that explicitly considers the impacts of these forms of capacity building (with the exception of training, for which more literature is available).
- Enabling or hindering factors: The largest body of evidence is in relation to factors that hinder capacity building efforts. There are far fewer studies that point to positive capacity building experiences and articulate the reasons for their success. The specific factors that help or hinder capacity building activities are rarely carefully analysed through programme M&E strategies, a fact that limits the strength of the evidence base.
- Stability and decreased conflict: The literature does not directly address the relationship between capacity building and improved long-term stability. Many papers highlight the limitations of a technical capacity building approach to building stability. A very small body of

evidence discusses the potential for negative effects of capacity building on stability. There is also a lack of knowledge on the efficacy of improving the capacity of informal or non-state actors to mitigate conflict.

More broadly, the following important evidence gaps are noted:

11.1 CAPACITY BUILDING HAS A WEAK CONCEPTUAL BASIS IN THIS LITERATURE

Since capacity building is rarely defined or disaggregated into its component activities, this review cannot point to any robust causal relationships between capacity building activities and outcomes. Given the large donor investments in capacity building, this is a surprising gap, and more needs to be done to link SSR literature with the capacity building literature from other fields.

11.2 PAUCITY OF ROBUST MONITORING AND EVALUATION BY DONORS TO INFORM LEARNING

Much M&E appears to simply fulfil reporting functions and demonstrate uncritical results. There is a need for much more robust M&E that can inform broader learning in the sector.[226] Many high-quality papers point to the dearth of useful programme data, which tend to be focused at the output level – revealing little about whether the programme has contributed to wider outcomes or not.[227] Complicating matter, there is no consensus on what indicators would be most useful in measuring the effects of capacity building at the outcome level. This gap in our knowledge creates the dilemma over whether there is a lack of impact or a lack of evidence of impact in relation to capacity building and SSR outcomes.

This evidence gap underscores the fact that donors have not invested in regular rigorous assessments of their strategies, methodologies or project outcomes to build knowledge of whether capacity building contributes to the outcomes under examination here. To help contribute to the wider evidence base on what works, assessments need to move away from simply assessing project deliverables and results to assessing common approaches and methods that undergird much of donor assistance – such as approaches to training across programmes. This would enable less emphasis on demonstrating programme results for accountability purposes and more focus on building an evidence base of what does and does not work to guide decision-making about future programmes.

11.3 LIMITED GENUINE INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

In particular, only a very small literature breaks 'capacity building' down into types – further complicating an analysis of the relationships between different *forms* of capacity building and outcomes. Experimental and quasi-experimental methods could be helpful here but cannot be stripped of their context (see point below).

The literature on training perhaps best exemplifies the limited investigation of the relationship between activities and outcomes. The literature commonly criticises training for being ineffective and unsustainable. Yet there appears to be a severe lack of analysis that soberly outlines what we might realistically expect training to achieve in a given environment and comparing it against those benchmarks, rather than against the state of security in the country as a whole. This relates to the weakness of the standards of 'success' and 'failure' used across the literature. While training might well be incapable of producing transformations of the security sector, it is clearly possible to develop

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[226] This point is also made by Ball and Walker (2015) in their 'What Works?' study commissioned by DFID.
[227] Armytage 2010 [P; OBS, case study, literature review; →]; Bennett et al. 2010 [P; OBS, interviews, focus groups, case study, conflict analysis; ↑]; Cox et al. 2012a [P; OBS, interviews, case studies; ↑]; den Heyer 2010a: 302 [P; QEX, survey; ↑]; Hedvall and Busisiwe 2005 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →]; Wilder 2007 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; →].

knowledge around various types of training, levels of ambition and how they have mapped onto different contexts.[228]

11.4 NO LITERATURE ENGAGES WITH HOW EVIDENCE GETS TRANSLATED FROM ONE CONTEXT TO ANOTHER

Even where there is robust evidence of a form of capacity building successfully producing improvements (e.g. the Banerjee et al. study in India),[229] no studies consider how evidence from one context translates to another. It is not enough simply to transplant a successful intervention from one country to another, without considering whether the factors that enabled the intervention to work (or, indeed, not to work) in one context apply to another. This aspect of *translating* evidence, rather than simply recording it, is overlooked in the literature. There are very few comparative case studies that would allow for more generalised findings.

11.5 DESPITE COMMON REFERENCE TO THE 'POLITICAL NATURE' OF SSR, EVIDENCE GAPS PERSIST

While many studies make clear the ways in which politics can be a barrier to capacity building, 'detailed analyses of the specific settings in which the politics of police-building are revealed remain few in number'.[230] While it is commonly noted that capacity building must be context-relevant, many studies provide this only in broad brush strokes. What is needed is a more detailed account of the political dynamics of the local security sectors being reformed so capacity building activities can be better fit for purpose. This must bring to the fore the nature of power relations and the networks involved. Such a granular understanding can help make explicit the ways in which knowledge travels to and within the non-Western societies where SSR is largely happening (including through South-South learning), as well as how influence is exerted.

Equally, in the literature, the internal political and bureaucratic constraints of donors remain obscured. This is an important gap given the apparent persistence of weakly evidenced approaches by those donors. Why are lessons learnt processes not leading to changed behaviour? A more robust literature is required to answer these questions.

11.6 WE KNOW REMARKABLY LITTLE ABOUT CAPACITY BUILDING OF NON-STATE ACTORS

The importance of non-state actors is regularly acknowledged but we lack information on how these actors have engaged with capacity building efforts in conflict-affected states.[231] This may be because this review is restricted to SSR literature that tends to be overwhelmingly state-focused.

11.7 WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT HOW KNOWLEDGE TRAVELS

Fundamentally, there appears to be little evidence in this literature on how knowledge can travel to and within non-Western societies. Equally, since this literature is so donor-focused, we found little evidence of how South-South capacity building takes place.

12. CONCLUSION

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[228] A related point is made by Ball and Walker (2015) in their 'What Works?' study commissioned by DFID. They note that security and justice programmes fail to plausibly articulate how their activities will lead to the outcomes sought.

[229] Banerjee et al. 2012b [P; EXP; ↑].

[230] Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007 [P; OBS, case studies, historical analysis; ↑].

[231] Baker 2006b [P; OBS, interviews, participatory research; ↑]; Barnes Robinson and Valters 2015 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy, historical analysis; ↑]; Denney 2011 [P; OBS, interviews, political economy analysis; →]; Dinnen et al. 2006 [P; OBS, interviews; →]; Podder 2013 [P; OBS, interviews, historical analysis; ↑].

This evidence synthesis has focused on the relationship between capacity building within SSR and improvements in accountability, responsiveness, capacity to deliver security and stability, as well as the factors that enable or hinder such improvements. These questions are of fundamental importance to donors working in the fields of security and justice, as they go to the heart of much programming. This synthesis has made some initial headway, based on the literature available in the SSR database, in documenting what we know – and what we do not know – about these important issues. Given the significant donor investments in capacity building to date, it is worrying that we have found we know surprisingly little.

While the majority of the literature argues there is weak evidence to suggest any relationship between capacity building and improved security outcomes, virtually no papers explicitly unpacked this relationship in any detail (exceptions are some of the experimental studies and some aspects of the evaluations). Drawing on the 149 studies that we identified as broadly relevant to the research questions, however, the following key findings can be distilled.

Across all research questions there is an absence of evidence supporting a relationship between capacity building and the security outcomes under consideration. In part, this is connected to the fact that the vast majority of the literature does not address the question of this relationship specifically. Focusing more broadly on SSR and aspects of it, the literature argues that the outcomes under consideration here have not been achieved (however the distinction between no evidence of a relationship and a negative relationship is not generally made). Capacity building is widely viewed as dependent on donor resources and therefore unsustainable. The literature also notes it is narrowly operationalised, with a tendency to fall back on train and equip approaches and that there is insufficient recognition of the tensions between different aims of capacity building within SSR.

Capacity building to improve accountability was widely seen to be a neglected issue and a difficult area in which to achieve results given vested political interests that can block change. While the literature pointed to little evidence of improved accountability, activities documented as having been successful in specific cases involved working across the security sector, oversight institutions and communities (rather than focusing on just one target of reform). In addition, getting senior buy in and using 'best fit,' rather than 'best practice' approaches to peer learning was seen to be useful in achieving some improvements.

A larger literature dealt with the relationship between capacity building and improved responsiveness – the majority of which points to no evidence of a relationship. This was argued primarily to be due to political influences that lead the security sector to serve group or private interests and poor conditions of service that do not incentivise improved responsiveness. In terms of dominant interventions, training and force restructuring were seen to make limited contributions. Community policing was seen to be able to produce improved islands of responsiveness where there is commitment from senior police and politicians but does little to transform wider policing culture. More research is especially needed on effects of efforts to improve gender responsiveness.

There was a large body of evidence supporting a relationship between capacity building and improved operational capacity to deliver security. However, this outcome also sat in tension with other outcomes, such as improved accountability, highlighting that the various goals of capacity building in SSR do not all push in the same direction. Training was highlighted as the most common intervention but teaching methodologies are poorly thought through, meaning training is commonly inappropriate. Where training combined theoretical learning with practice and put in place ongoing support mechanisms, it tended to be more effective. Equipment support and capital works were noted as potentially effective where they responded to local needs and standards, rather than international best practice, but were rarely transformational on their own.

The relationship between capacity building and improved stability was addressed only by a small literature and not directly. The limited literature available suggested that SSR can play a stabilising role in the short-term, however it is unclear whether this is due to capacity building specifically. There is an absence of evidence pointing to any longer-term contribution of capacity building to stability but

there is simply no longitudinal analysis to verify this either way. The potentially destabilising effects of SSR were highlighted by a small literature but were not connected specifically to capacity building.

Importantly, there is not a sufficiently consistent body of evidence to apply generally in all contexts and it is critical that those seeking to develop evidence-based programming on the basis of these findings consider the applicability of transferring evidence about what does, or does not, work from one context to another. Particular attention should be paid to the findings under the second research question – related to those factors that enable or hinder improved security outcomes. These findings were among the most robustly supported in the literature and programmers should consider the extent to which they can incorporate learning from these findings into their practice. In particular, capacity building was found to be more successful where it explicitly acknowledged and engaged with the political nature of reforms, the particularities of the local context and where donors were more flexible, provided longer term support, devolved decision-making and worked on specific security and justice problems.

More broadly, however, there remains insufficient longitudinal research asking the relevant questions addressed in this review that could contribute to building an evidence base. In part, this is because of a disconnect between academic research and policy needs – suggesting policy-makers need to commission specific research to satisfactorily answer these questions. But, more importantly, it also speaks to deficiencies of existing M&E processes, which too often focus on demonstrating immediate programme outputs and outcomes to satisfy the push for results. This does not help in answering these difficult but important questions. If nothing else, this synthesis paper points to the need for specific M&E of these questions that underlie much of donor support in this area. While M&E processes may have to satisfy more limited purposes of demonstrating accountability for results, they should also be required to contribute to wider learning in the sector that gets beyond whether a given firm has delivered on its logframe – to what we know about what does and does not work in SSR.

The SSR literature also suffers from weak connections with wider thinking on capacity building. SSR processes documented in the literature appear to treat capacity building as a generic (and often default) programming approach. But capacity building activities themselves internalise certain assumptions about knowledge transfer and how this occurs that must be recognised and tailored to learning and capacity needs. More research should be commissioned to explore these concepts and issues of whose capacity needs to be built, in what ways this is most effectively done, by who, at what level, for how long, etc. This would assist in the development of more evidence-based programming that maximises the effectiveness of capacity building.

As this paper has noted, capacity deficits are often not the only – or even the primary – blockage preventing improved security. Further research and pilot programming could also usefully explore how capacity building fits within wider programming approaches that attempt to tackle issues such as lack of incentives for change, political deprioritisation, politicisation of reform targets, etc. This would help SSR practice, as well as the literature on it, to engage more explicitly with how the political settlement shapes what it is possible to achieve in a given setting.

Yet caution is also needed here. While it seems logical to call for further research and monitoring of practice to help fill knowledge gaps and inform improved programming, this is only helpful if such knowledge can lead to improved donor behaviour. Some of the literature reviewed raises the question of why lessons learnt processes to date have not led to changes in donor behaviour. Many of the factors that are highlighted here as enabling or hindering progress, for instance, are far from new and have been highlighted many times before.[232] This suggests there are also issues internal to donor organisations that need to be addressed in order for changes in practice to take place. Considering the political economy of donor organisations – including their constraints, in part because of their own domestic interests – is thus also critical if we are to move towards more evidence-based capacity building within SSR.

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[232] Perhaps most recently by work commissioned by DFID, including Ball and Walker (2015) and Goldwyn et al. (2014).

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Base search term for all sources	Extended base search term for databases with Boolean (AND/OR) search capabilities such as journal indexes	Column 1: search terms to be used in all sources	Column 2: search terms to be used in databases with Boolean (AND/OR) search capabilities such as journal indexes[233]
Security sector reform	[Security sector reform/security sector transformation/security sector development] OR [defence reform/defense reform] OR police reform OR intelligence reform OR justice reform[234]	Accountability	Accountability OR Grievance mechanisms OR ombudsman OR oversight OR national security council OR parliamentary committees OR financial management OR complaints commissions OR victim support OR dispute resolution
		Non-state actors[235]	Non state actors OR Informal OR multi-layered - OR customary OR traditional OR hybrid OR civil society OR non governmental organisations OR human rights organisations OR women's organisations OR religious organisations OR media OR non-state armed groups OR rebel groups OR warlords OR militias OR vigilantes OR criminal groups
		Community	Community OR community-based approaches OR gender-based approaches OR women's groups - community policing OR community-based policing OR empowerment OR participation OR grassroots OR community-police forums
		Capacity building	Training OR train and equip OR organisational development OR technical OR professionalism OR leadership OR ministry of defence OR ministry of internal affairs OR ministry of Justice OR ministry of finance OR model police stations OR budgets OR human resources OR databases OR [demobilization/demobilization] OR stipends OR salaries OR mentoring OR secondments OR skills OR incentives OR curricula
		Legislation	Legislation OR regulation OR statutory frameworks OR strategic frameworks OR national security policy OR planning and coordination OR taskforce OR review commission
		Evaluation	Evaluation OR monitoring OR indicators OR review OR results OR outcome OR impact

[233] Originally, a higher number of synonym search terms were included in column 2. However, those that were found to yield very few or no results in the test search have been omitted.
[234] Border reform has been omitted from the list of extended base search terms. Test searches revealed that using this term yielded a very large number of irrelevant results.
[235] The theory of change offers a spatial distinction between 'non-state actors' and 'community-based approaches'. 'Non-state actors' refers to work with organised groups of security actors, typically at national level, to create an enabling environment for SSR. 'Community' refers to initiatives that operate at grassroots level.

GSDRC contacted the below independent experts for recommendations of relevant studies when compiling the SSR database:

- Peter Albrecht, Danish Institute of International Studies/United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)
- Bruce Baker, University of Coventry
- Piet Biesheuvel, Independent Consultant
- Hans Born, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
- Freddie Carver, Stabilisation Unit
- Lisa Denney, Overseas Development Institute
- Timothy Donais, Balsillie School of International Affairs
- Heidi Hudson, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein
- Eboe Hutchful, African Security Sector Network
- Paul Jackson, University of Birmingham
- Angus Morris, Independent consultant
- Robert Muggah, Igarapé Institute
- Mark Downes, International Security Sector Advisory Team/Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
- Karen Barnes Robinson, BRIDGE
- Eric Scheye, Independent Consultant
- Mark Sedra, Centre for International Governance Innovation
- Dan Silvey, Department for International Development
- Erwin Van Veen, Clingendael

In addition, ODI contacted the below independent experts for recommendations on relevant studies specific to the research questions under review in this evidence synthesis:

- Juana de Catheu, Independent Consultant
- Ann Fitzgerald, Cranfield University
- Alice Hills, University of Durham
- Gordon Peake, Independent Consultant
- Eric Scheye, Independent Consultant

Improved accountability: Is the security sector perceived as accountable by civilian government and citizens? Key indicators include the level of politicisation; the presence and functioning of internal and external oversight mechanisms; the extent of democratic control; whether security actors behave in a manner accountable to citizens and up to expected standards of behaviour. Accountability may be either horizontal (government bodies holding other parts of government to account) or vertical (citizens holding state institutions to account).

Increased responsiveness: Is provision reflective of citizen concerns and responsive to their needs and priorities? Key indicators include whether service delivery has been informed by citizen perceptions; the extent to which provision is centred on the needs of citizens and society rather than those of the state or political elites; whether service delivery is responsive to the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups; the extent of customer orientation in service delivery; perceptions or evidence of improved service delivery.

Improved capacity to deliver among security institutions and agencies: Do state or non-state actors demonstrate improved capacity to deliver security for individuals and communities? What is the overall quality of institutions and organisations? Key indicators include levels of operational capability, performance, effectiveness, skills, professionalisation and leadership; the ability to plan; the presence of management and performance systems, including recruitment and management and human resource processes.

The inclusion of non-state actors in reform processes or negotiations: Have non-state actors been included as part of reform efforts? This includes the involvement and engagement of legal and statutory actors (including civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations) and extra-legal and armed non-state actors in national decision-making processes, agreements and the planning and implementation of reform efforts.

Enhanced community participation and voice: Have citizens and communities had opportunities to participate and voice their opinions and needs with regard to the delivery of security and justice? Key indicators include whether citizens and communities have been involved in community-based initiatives; whether initiatives have supported the engagement of marginalised and vulnerable groups; whether interactions have occurred between communities, local officials/authority/security agency representatives.

Citizens report greater confidence, trust or satisfaction: Do citizens or communities report confidence or trust, or are they satisfied with levels of service? This is normally demonstrated through perception surveys or anecdotal evidence. In addition to confidence, trust and satisfaction, another key indicator is whether citizen or communities perceive providers as legitimate.

Increased gender sensitivity and balancing: Have capacity building efforts improved the responsiveness of actors and institutions to gender-based violence? Have capacity building efforts increased the equal representation of men and women in the security sector? Key indicators include perception of how security actors respond to gender-based violence; the implementation of gender-related legislation; equal representation through recruitment policies.

Clearly defined roles and increased coordination and dialogue among organisations and agencies: Are the roles and responsibilities of different actors within the security sector clearly defined? Is there dialogue and coordination among different security organisations? Key indicators include the presence of legislation or frameworks that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of different security actors; the extent of cooperation and lack of conflict between different security actors.

Strategic frameworks developed: Have strategic frameworks been developed by national governments to set out resource allocation and inform implementation decisions? The key indicator is whether frameworks – in the form of strategies, plans, reviews or legislation – actually exist.

Measures implemented to improve compliance with human rights standards: Have measures been implemented to ensure the compliance of the security sector with international human rights standards? Key indicators include the adoption of relevant legislation, ethical codes or codes of conduct; human rights training; vetting, certification and removal procedures to ensure personnel are human rights abiding.

Actual crime rates reduced: Have crime rates reduced as a result of reforms, or after reforms have been implemented? This is demonstrated through reductions in crime in locations where reform initiatives have been implemented.

Full reference (e.g. Smith, A. (2010) *Book Title*. Place of publication: Publisher)	
Summary reference (e.g. Smith 2010 [S; SR; ↓]; Baker 2014 [P; OBS, case study; →] = Smith 2014 secondary source; systematic review; low quality; Baker 2014 primary source; observational design, case study method; moderate quality)	

Part 1: Summary		
1.1	**Abstract** (paste abstract/summary from paper or database. If no abstract, 100 words setting out key arguments)	
1.2	**Relevance of the study to this review:** **(a)** High **(b)** Medium **(c)** Low Add up to three bullets on any directly relevant information for this review	

Part 2: Research type			
2.1		**Place an 'X' against the relevant research design used for the study (select one).**	
Primary [P]		**(a) Experimental [EXP]:** Experimental design includes two features: manipulation of an independent variable and assigning subjects to intervention and control groups. Eg: randomized control trials.	
		(b) Quasi-experimental [QEX]: Only one of the two features of experimental design is used.	
		(c) Observational [OBS]: Also called non-experimental. Researcher observes a particular activity or phenomenon and may use quantitative or qualitative methods. Does not use either of the two features of experimental design.	
Secondary [S]		**(d) Systematic review [SR]:** Adopts an exhaustive, systematic approach to searching and reviewing literature on a given topic.	
		(e) Non-systematic review [OR]: Summarises and synthesises relevant literature on a given topic but does not utilise the same search methods as systematic reviews. **Note** there are non-systematic reviews that use case study methods drawing primarily on secondary sources to reflect on or answer analytical questions about a particular issue. These are not intended as reviews (as the objective is not to summarise the evidence), nor are they purely conceptual/theoretical; they contribute to the analysis or debate of a thematic issue on the basis of a strong enough empirically derived knowledge base that constitutes a contribution to the knowledge base.	

	(f) Conceptual/theoretical studies [TC]: These have, in theory, been removed from the SSR database but we may come across pieces that fall in this category.		
2.2	**Place an 'X' against all relevant research methods employed in the study.**		
	(a) Interviews		
	(b) Focus groups		
	(c) Case studies		
	(d) Political economy analysis		
	(e) Historical analysis		
	(f) Ethnography		
	(g) Survey		
	(h) Other, please specify:		

Part 3: Evidence quality		
Principles of quality	**Questions**	**Scoring**
Conceptual framing and cogency	• Does the study have a conceptual framework or clear research question? • Does the study draw conclusions based on the data/evidence it sets out? • Does the author consider the study's limitations, alternative interpretations or different arguments?	0 None 1 One 2 Two 3 Three
Methodology and transparency	• Does the study explain its research methods (and data collection methods if relevant)? • Does the study demonstrate why the chosen design and method are well suited to the research question? • For primary sources, does the study present, reference or link to data sources (interviews, surveys, databases)? • For secondary sources, is relevant literature relied on?	0 None 1 One 2 Two 3 Three
Reliability	• Is the analysis contextualised within an analysis of the wider literature (showing critical engagement with sources)? • Are the measures/standards used stable (was data collection consistently conducted to reduce variation)?[236]	0 Neither 1 One 2 Both
Validity	• Does the study demonstrate measurement validity?[237] Or, is the standard used to assess effectiveness/impact appropriate to the issue at hand and the context? • Is the study internally valid?[238] Or, are alternative causes of impact considered? • Is the study externally valid? Or, can findings be generalised to other contexts and populations?	0 None 1 One 2 Two 3 Three
Score (0-11)		**/11**
Overall grade (↑,→,↓)		

0-3 Low (↓) Major deficiencies in attention to principles of quality

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[236] Stability relates to the extent to which researchers have attempted to ensure data are collected consistently.

[237] Measurement validity relates to whether the specific indicator/standard chosen to measure a concept is well suited to measuring it.

[238] Internal validity minimises the possibility that some 'confounding' unseen variable is affecting changes in the dependent variable.

4-7 Moderate (→) Some deficiencies in attention to principles of quality

8-11 High (↑) Comprehensively addresses multiple principles of quality

Part 4: Content			
	Question (Sub-questions should be considered as prompts rather than constraints)	**X, Y/N or NA** (as relevant)	**Comment** (providing as much relevant information as possible. Cut and paste where useful)
4.1	What kind of capacity support modality is being referred to? **(a)** Technical assistance **(b)** Training **(c)** Organisational support/development **(d)** Other (specify):	_____ _____ _____ _____	
4.2	What were the features of this support? (Provide information on as many features as possible covered in the study – and any others) **(a)** How long was it for? **(b)** Who delivered it (donor and implementers – e.g. local non-governmental organisation, retired British police officer, etc.)? **(c)** What activities did it entail? **(d)** Who was it targeted at? **(e)** What problem was it aiming to address? **(f)** How was it received by recipients? **(g)** Any other important features (may include cost, design process, etc.)?		

4.3	Does the study claim improvements in any of the below output/outcome areas and on what basis?[239]
	
	(a) Improved accountability
	(b) Increased responsiveness
	
	(c) Improved capacity to deliver among security institutions and agencies
	(d) Other capabilities: specify, where possible using the below categorisations:
	
	   i) The inclusion of non-state actors in reform processes or negotiations
	   ii) Enhanced community participation and voice
	   (iii) Citizens report greater confidence, trust or satisfaction
	   (iv) Increased gender sensitivity and balancing
	   (v) Clearly defined roles and increased coordination and dialogue among organisations and agencies
	   (vi) Strategic frameworks developed
	   (vii) Measures implemented to improve compliance with human rights standards
	   (viii) Actual crime rates reduced
	   (ix) Other (specify):
	
	(e) Did not result in improved capabilities
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		____
		
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4.4	If so, does the study make explicit how the		

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[239] See output definitions following protocol as set out in the Evidence Mapping Protocol to ensure methodological consistency across the mapping and synthesis stages.

	capacity building interventions were responsible for improved capacity? That is, does it make convincing claims about plausible causality (see conceptual guidance)?	＿＿	
4.5	What factors made this support successful or limited its success (e.g. length of intervention, relationship between capacity-builders and local staff, degree of political support, etc.)?		
4.6	Does the study claim greater stability/reduced violence at subnational or national levels?	＿＿	
4.7	If so, does the study make explicit how the capacity building interventions were responsible for greater stability/reduced violence at subnational or national levels? That is, does it make convincing claims about plausible causality (see conceptual guidance)?	＿＿	
4.8	How sustainable has capacity building been or is it likely to be? Why/why not?		