

# ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN CONFLICT- AFFECTED CONTEXTS: HOPEFUL POSSIBILITIES IN PARTNERSHIP

Dr Sharon Bell  
[sharon@flexile.co.nz](mailto:sharon@flexile.co.nz)  
 [@SharonBell\\_NZ](https://twitter.com/SharonBell_NZ)

## OUTLINE

- Conflict-affected contexts & Shan State, Myanmar
- Partnership for the SDGs
- Shan Healthcare Training Programme
- Partnership effectiveness
- Constraints & contradictions
- Hopeful possibilities



## CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS

- Conflict is the biggest threat to human development (UN, 2015)
- By 2030, well over 60% of the global poor will be in 'fragile' contexts (OECD, 2016)



## SHAN STATE, MYANMAR

- Fragile & conflict-affected state
- Standard of living worse in conflict-affected areas
- Critical health workforce shortage
- Peace process stalled



## PARTNERSHIP FOR THE SDGS

- SDG17 = multi-stakeholder partnerships
- Question received wisdom that state service provision improves state legitimacy (Mcloughlin, 2015)
- ‘Do not assume that non-government provision undermines state legitimacy’ (Slater & Mallet, 2017)
- Non-state armed groups are also legitimate (Podder, 2017)
- ‘Thinking and working politically’ (Rocha Menocal, 2017)

# SHAN HEALTHCARE TRAINING PROGRAMME



## PARTNERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

- Health workforce capabilities developed
- Increased medic confidence
- Improved community health outcomes
- Highly regarded partnership





## CONSTRAINTS & CONTRADICTIONS

- Hybrid civil-military health system not ideal long term
- INGO ‘thinking and working politically’?



## CONSTRAINTS & CONTRADICTIONS

- SSA-S protects AND endangers medics
- Still engaged in conflict with Tatmadaw and other ethnic NSAGs



## GENIAL JAO





## GENERAL JAO



## HOPEFUL POSSIBILITIES: A WAY FORWARD

- We need to engage with NSAGs in conflict-affected contexts to **achieve the SDGs**
- Recognise alternative development partnerships and work with “**alternative capacities**” provided by NSAGs (Denney et al., 2017)
- ‘**Thinking and working politically**’ crucial to partnerships in Myanmar

**sharon@flexile.co.nz**

## REFERENCES

Denney, L., Mallett, R., & Benson, M. S. (2017). Service delivery and state capacity: Findings from the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium. London, UK.

OECD. (2016). *States of fragility 2016 highlights*. Paris, France.

Podder, S. (2017). Understanding the legitimacy of armed groups: A relational perspective. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 28(4–5), 686–708.

Rocha Menocal, A. (2017). Political settlements and the politics of transformation: Where do “inclusive institutions” come from? *Journal of International Development*, 29, 559–575.

Slater, R., & Mallett, R. (2017). *How to support state-building, service delivery and recovery in fragile and conflict-affected situations: Lessons from six years of SLRC research* (Synthesis briefing No. 2). London, UK.

Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice. (2015). *The case for thinking and working politically: The implications of 'doing development differently'*. London, UK.

United Nations. (2015). *The Millennium Development Goals report*. New York, NY.

