UNIDIR RESOURCES

Ghana Field Test of Security Needs Assessment Protocol

July 2007 (revised October 2010)

UNIDIR Summary Report on the Ghana Field Test of Security Needs Assessment Protocol (SNAP)

17 May–4 June 2007[1]

by Lisa Rudnick and Derek B. Miller

Note

This document is an overview of research activities and preliminary findings of the SNAP Field Test conducted in Ghana in May and June 2007. The purpose of the mission was to test various Protocol approaches and methods to team structures, data generation techniques, interpretation techniques, and other key concerns for generating local knowledge relevant to programme design. The document includes notes on the potential application of SNAP-generated findings for programme design for operational agencies.

This document was written July 2007 and should therefore be read as a representation of SNAP development at that time. Minor revisions were made in October 2010 to add footnotes of more current (i.e. post-2007) references. These added references may be helpful in directing readers to more recent material pertaining to related topics. The document remains substantively unchanged since 2007, and therefore accurately reflects thinking at that time.

Introduction

From 17 May to 4 June 2007, the SNAP team traveled to Ghana to conduct a preliminary test of data generation techniques, ideas for field-team structures, and to learn about a variety of logistical aspects of security needs assessments. The field test was undertaken in support of SNAP activities B and C (State of the Art and New Approaches), and in preparation for activity D (Draft Protocol). (See Team Workplan for details.)

This report presents a basic summary of 1) the research activities undertaken with the Field-Test; 2) the preliminary local findings the activities generated; and 3) how such findings can be applied to programme design solutions for implementing agencies operating in distinct cultural contexts.

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1 This text is presented as received from the authors.

1. Research Activities: Team, Processes, and Lessons Learned

For SNAP's field visit to Ghana, the team had planned a basic agenda that centered on two research activities. The first was to conduct interviews with UN agency staff in the capitol to learn about whether and how agencies assess community (beneficiary) security in the course of their work. This process investigated what tools (if any) are employed to assess community security, and whether any challenges or gaps exist between agency needs and what programme design tools now produce. The second was to test key data generation techniques envisioned for SNAP's Field Protocol at the community level in Ghana's Northern Region. This process also involved testing the Tiered-Team Structure (details follow).

Thanks to the considerable efforts of Professor Kwesi Yankah, the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana, a member of SNAP's Advisory Group, and Site Director for the Field-Test, a team of senior scholars and two research assistants from the University was assembled to provide background to the SNAP team, and to travel as part of the field-research team.

The Institute of African Studies hosted a full day of "orientation" at the University of Ghana. The first part of the day was dedicated to briefing the SNAP team about the conflict in Dagbon and the general history and structure of the chieftaincy (which is central to the conflict and on-going tensions). The second part of the day was dedicated to UNIDIR (Miller and Rudnick) explaining SNAP to the assembled team, discussing goals and possibilities for our time in the north, and meeting with Professor Yankah to negotiate the selection of field team members.

Those selected to work as part of the Field-Test field team were:

- Dr. Kofi Agyekum , Professor of Linguistics, specialist in Ethnography of Communication
- Dr. Osman Alhassan, Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, Professor of Geography
- Mr. Ntwesu Aniegye, M.Phil Candidate, History and African Culture
- Mr. Braimah Awaisu , M.Phil Candidate, political science
- Dr. Albert Awedoba, Deputy Director, Institute of African Studies, Professor of Linguistic Anthropology
- Dr. Kwesi Yankah, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Professor of Linguistics and specialist in folklore and ethnography of communication

Selection of team members was made (1) on the basis of criteria established by the Tiered Team Structure, and (2) with a view to composing three interview teams that could function independently in the field. Team members were chosen on the basis of language ability, expertise in the region, expertise in other relevant disciplines, and ethnographic specialization in the conceptual approach of communication and cultural research that grounds the SNAP approach (see concept note and section on Assumptive Base, Conceptual Approach, and Sources of Data for further detail and literature sources). All criteria were met due to the high level of Ghanaian support and relations with the University.

Field research was directed by Lisa Rudnick with support by Derek Miller and Professor Yankah, who played a crucial role as a facilitator and "Senior Statesman." Rudnick held

two meetings prior to departing Accra. The first meeting was held with the two advanced M.Phil candidates Awaisu and Aniegye, both of whom are from the Dagbon region, fluent in Dagbani and English, and who were chosen to serve as interpreters for the field work at the recommendation of the Site Director.

The purpose of this meeting was two-fold. First, as both Awaisu and Aniegye's training are in different disciplines from those grounding the SNAP approach, Rudnick needed to orient them to the kinds of questions guiding this sort of assessment operation, the kinds of phenomena that would be of interest, the forms of data that would serve as the basis for later analysis, and the techniques that would be used to generate such data. The meeting was also intended to provide the research assistants with an opportunity to ask any questions they might have and provide input.

Secondly, in keeping with SNAP's commitment to cooperative ethics[2] and the dialogical approach to interpretive inquiry this requires, the meeting was also treated as a preliminary open-ended interview (as per Briggs) in which Awaisu and Aniegye could develop semantic domains, make use of key terms and/or symbols relevant to local cultural analysis, and indicate and describe practices of import or relevance (See Concept Note, and Advisory Group notes, especially on strategies for data generation). This cooperative activity was indeed highly generative, serving both to orient the research assistants to this way of working and thinking, and simultaneously teaching the SNAP team about key components of the relevant local systems which made inquiry into sociocultural systems around security possible. Such components are impossible to know a priori and must be learned through tutored (e.g., purposive and informed) collaboration with community members.

Rudnick's second meeting was held was with the senior scholars (minus Professor Yankah). The primary goal was to begin to identify key community members from a Dagbani point of view, and terms and concepts relevant to SNAP's work in the north. Building upon material from the first meeting, the senior scholars began to sketch the Hymsean social units. And, as in the first meeting, it was possible to treat the scholars' conversation as a preliminary interview in which they functioned both as analysts and community members (or "informants") concerning Ghanaian cultural practices.

The terms and categories generated through these two collaborations formed the initial basis for the first round of descriptive interviews in Tamale (See Annex A).

The decision was taken for the team to depart Accra on Tuesday 22 May for Tamale.

With such a large and expert team of researchers, SNAP's activities in the north proved considerably more wide-ranging, intensive, and productive than what Miller and Rudnick had originally anticipated or planned for this limited Field-Test. It also provided good conditions in which to test ideas for the Tiered Team structure that SNAP is proposing for field teams.

In brief, the Tiered Team structure organizes researchers with different kinds of expertise into different roles at different times, in order for field assessments to retain a clear methodological and analytical focus (as specified by a SNAP approach), to ensure cultural knowledge is treated as a form of expertise, and that research is locally grounded (See Annex B for description and diagram).

In line with the Tiered-Team Structure, Professor Kwesi Yankah served as Site Director. Professor Gerry Philipsen of the University of Washington joined us in Ghana to serve as

2 Miller, Derek B. and Ron Scollon (2010), "Cooperative Ethics as a New Model for Cultural Research on Peace and Security" in *Caught in the Crossfire: Ethical and Methodological Dilemmas in Research in Violent Contexts in Africa*, Brill Publishers (forthcoming 2010).

Senior Mentor, Rudnick and Miller served as SNAP Core Staff, Professors Aweboa, and Agyekum served as Local Researchers, with Prof. Alhassan, Awaisu and Aniegye serving as both community members and Local Researchers3. In addition we coordinated with several dozen local interlocutors including the Tribal Leaders (Yanas) who sanctioned our research and created the political space for our work.

Within the structure of the Tiered Team, the group was divided into three interview teams, each of which could function independently and thereby cover three times as much "ground" as envisioned for this initial foray. The team was composed of (1) an ethnographically trained researcher (2) a senior scholar and (3) an interpreter. In some cases, two roles were filled by the same person (e.g. senior scholar and interpreter, as in Professor Alhassan's case, or senior scholar and ethnographer, as in Professor Yankah's case).

Drawing from a variety of models, such as team ethnography, cooperative inquiry, and rapid appraisal (See Lassiter; Erickon and Stull; Beebe; et. al), the general process employed by the group consisted in a tacking back and forth between group meetings and team research activities. This practice began upon arrival in Tamale, with the entire group meeting to discuss and decide team compositions, interview questions, goals and schedule for the next day.

SNAP's Project Document sets out a clear assumptive base and conceptual approach for fieldwork, identifies sources of data, and means of generating that data. The task here, on site, was to turn the generic framework into a specific set of questions that would test the framework itself as knowledge was produced about this community in Ghana. This was done on the basis of the initial interviews about cultural terms, domains, and practices gleaned from the Accra meetings at the University.

The following morning, the teams met briefly again, and then spent the day conducting interviews. That evening, the group reassembled to report findings, make adjustments accordingly (i.e. to interview guides), and plan for the following day. This process was followed each day. In this way, the day's findings were iteratively incorporated into, and served as a basis for, the activities of the following day, enabling the team to build a Dagbani cultural logic of security by applying the SNAP analytic framework to team findings as these emerged. This created a powerfully collaborative process of rapid cumulative learning about security through highly integrated practices between scholars, method experts, and local interlocutors.

In all, over the course of eight active research days (days when the team was "deployed") nine "official" (i.e. scheduled) group meetings were conducted, at least ten unofficial meetings were conducted, 23 interviews were conducted (involving upwards of 40 people), and one local team member conducted participant observation in Tamale upon the visit of the Yana (or chief). In addition, over 100 school children between the ages of 7 and 17 participated in a mapping and discussion exercise.

It proved an enormous benefit to test ideas for team structures and the design of the process that security assessments would follow (that is, how research would or could be conducted in the context of an SNA, by whom) prior to the design of the test-assessments themselves. Several key lessons were learned:

3 For discussion of the significant benefits this provides see below.

Working with *national* staff is essential.

- The only way to quickly and efficiently generate locally grounded cultural data about security is by engaging a range of participants from the communities and countries of interest through a highly structured analytic framework that is more than mere "participation." The Field-test was able to generate as much cultural information as quickly as it did in large part because the direction of inquiry was not determined by the SNAP team but rather by our local co-workers. Without them, we would have had no local basis for discovery of relevant directions for research; with them we were able to begin our efforts already within the relevant local domains of talk, action, and meaning and then use these as a guide in applying the Security Needs Assessment Protocol.[4] We found the distribution of international SNAP staff to national staff ideal in this Field-test. The bulk of the research team consisted of Ghanaian scholars, with the two SNAP team members. While the exact number of international to national staff may vary between assessments, we believe it is important for national and local staff to nevertheless make up the majority of the field team.

Working with *skilled* national staff is essential.

- We believe there are strong ethical reasons for engaging national experts and scholars, and that this is an essential form of local capacity-building and creating legitimacy for research and findings. However, ethical reasons alone do not explain the need for cooperation, nor does mere discussion with "locals" create "local knowledge" that is useful to a security needs assessment. We believe that the kind of interviewing and analysis conducted as part of the SNAP approach requires a certain level and kind of education. It is clear that it was not the Ghanaian team's native cultural knowledge *alone* that produced the findings. *Rather, their native knowledge was elicited and structured through their professional expertise in culture, communication, social geography, and history. It is this combination that made them such astute and efficient interviewers and analysts, and skilled users of the SNAP framework.*

Working with skilled national staff *alone* is not enough.

- The Ghanaian Team of senior scholars was very explicit in their exit interviews that the SNAP framework brings something of value that has not yet been achieved without it. For this skilled national team, the SNAP framework presented a way of inquiring into local cultural concerns which they had not experienced before, and which they found productive. It was their testimonies—more than UNIDIR's own interpretation—that was so vital to confirming the value of SNAP. *Indeed several team members expressed that the framework helped them to gain insights into their own cultural backgrounds.* This discussion will be enriched in 2008 through a series of background papers being written by the Ghanaian scholars for submission to UNIDIR. In addition, the interplay between national and international staff afforded the opportunity to treat national staff as informants and scholars at the same time. We believe this fosters a kind of

4 This carries notable implications for security related research that might be designed from outside the community and without communal cooperation and insight. Examples include surveys produced at headquarters and administered in the field.

analytical focus that makes good use of local direction while keeping activities on-task[5]. Another benefit to combining national and international staff is that, as "everyone is a teacher" in this process (though on different topics), mutual respect and collaboration are products of the process itself.

Logistical challenges are vast and require dedicated personnel.

- Moving a research team about the field and doing so in compliance with UN regulations and requirements is both a labor- and information-intensive job. During the Field-test, Miller filled this role in order to enable Rudnick to focus on directing and managing research, however it is neither feasible nor advisable that this role continue to be fulfilled by the Project Manager, and not possible for the director of research to allocate time for overseeing this aspect of a security needs assessment. It became apparent in the field that a staff member would need to be dedicated to managing the logistics of assessments. The Project Manager is then free to manage political relations, make strategic decisions, oversee the research process to ensure compliance with the mission parameters, and (as appropriate) serve as a contributing scholar when called upon to do so.

Scheduling research activities must be done carefully.

- Fieldwork is a very demanding form of research: field staff must not only be carefully attuned to the process of engaging with community members and generating data, but also engaging in often lengthy and intense sessions with the team. Although a great deal needs to be done in a short period of time, it is crucial to maintain a reasonable balance of field activities in order to ensure adequate time be spent on in-field analysis and interpretation, and not to over-extend the team. Over-scheduling interviews, meetings, and team meetings not only leads to exhaustion (especially for those serving as interpreters), but also interferes with the ability to schedule individual "head-time", allowing staff to think and reflect upon what they are seeing and learning. (People of course also need "down time" to recharge their batteries, attend to family matters, and otherwise know they are respected and valued contributors, not just resources.)

There are significant challenges to working with children that are not yet solved.

- Prior to departure, the SNAP team requested ethical and research guidelines from UNICEF for conducting research with children and also consulted the 1998 Ethical Guidelines from the American Anthropological Association. Neither proved sufficient for this form of research though each offered some relevant instruction. SNAP's experience in working with children in the context of two school settings (involving over 100 children) brought to the fore a number of issues concerning the status of data generated with children as well as the need for strict controls on interpretive analysis. The involvement of adults in translating questions and the "assignment" and also, in some cases, *directing* the kind of responses permitted by the children in order to put the school in a good light, lead us to consider what can be learned about children's needs, how,

5 That is, while able to make use of local direction, research remains squarely focused on local iterations of "security".

and by whom. Significant thought needs to be given to the ethical, practical, and intellectual concerns of working with children on matters of security.[6]

Two final observations are worth reviewing here, as they were known prior to the Ghana Field-test, but were also re-confirmed during it.

Pre-field work is critical.

- Solid pre-field work makes for more efficient and better-informed fieldwork. Ideas for supporting pre-field work and protecting that phase of research are being developed through the Tiered Team approach and follow-on work now being developed in West Africa and South Asia by UNIDIR**.** *This period cannot be interrupted by logical, political and organizational matters. It is the foundation for a successful field research mission.*

Post-field engagement is essential.

- Research does not end with data-generation only. A mechanism is therefore needed to retain some field researchers through the period of post-field analysis and interpretation. Very often, as with all science, the hard part begins *after* data generation is conducted. Local expertise is especially crucial during this phase of research. Therefore, a plan for continued contact (including contracts to support such work) should be established before SNAP is employed.

2. Initial Findings from Ghana's Northern Region: Descriptive and Analytic Moves

In this section the local findings of the Field-Test are discussed. It is important to note that the local findings discussed here are preliminary findings – that is, they are the result of only the initial steps of a security needs assessment as designed by SNAP. A full analytic cycle has not been performed upon the data generated, nor have the findings discussed below been fully interpreted at this stage. This is because such research activities were deliberately beyond the scope of the Field-Test in terms of funding, time, and personnel. In 2008, SNAP is scheduled to conduct two full Test-Assessments, the primary concerns of which will be to learn how to integrate research missions of this nature into UN mission parameters, and also to conduct a full research cycle. Therefore we suspect that the kinds of findings possible for the Field Assessment component of SNAP will increase in sophistication and will be able to offer more depth.

Characterizing the Local Findings

The term "security" does not exist in Dagbani. Instead, the use of the key term "protection" and an associated vocabulary of terms, translated as "peace", "disunity", and "violence" was observed.[7]

6 As children represent a key category of stakeholders with regards to security, we have begun discussion of a SNAP strategy to learning about the security needs of children. UNICEF will be engaged throughout that process among others.

7 Each term listed here in English represents a cluster of Dagbani terms that emerged in informants' speech. The cultural logic is presented here in conversational terms (as opposed to the evaluative, analytic terms we will use in the conduct of analysis and interpretation), and is meant to characterize the local "common sense" as we understand it at this early juncture.

In our interviews and conversations, this vocabulary appeared to be employed in terms of a cultural logic (that is, a system of terms, meanings, and beliefs regularly and distinctly used when people talk about security issues), of which we were able to make preliminary notes.

It is important to emphasize here that the following terms and explanations are closely or directly derived from participants' speech and translated from Dagbani into English. They are not mere summary explanations by UNIDIR. This formulation was presented back to community members for input, and confirmed as reasonable and intelligible descriptions of their own lives. As such, these terms represent the first steps towards understanding the "folk theory" of security in this community:

- There are many kinds of protection: Physical, spiritual, social, economic, health-related.
- Even if you don't think you need to protect yourself, you do, because you are always a member of a family and a community: That is, people depend on you, so you need to be well (i.e. healthy, protected) in order to support them and fulfill your obligations to them, as a family/community member. At the same time, the actions of others can have consequences for you (as a member), including negative or detrimental consequences, and so, you must always be on guard.
- Some of the main things a person must protect him or herself against are rumors ("nama fila"), lies, and "useless talk" ("yali yali" talk")8. Such actions cause disunity ("nangbang kpeni") and mistrust, and have a range of "bad effects":
  - Families and marriages are torn apart.
  - "Social occasions"[9] are attended by fewer people.
  - You cannot work with your neighbors, and suffer economic consequences.
- These kinds of actions not only create disunity and mistrust, but, in such a context, can lead to violence on a communal level (because one is always a family and community member). For example, one might be shot, beaten, or have their house burned down as a consequence of rumors, lies, and lose talk.
- In order to protect oneself against the bad effects of disunity and related violent actions, one should:
  - "Have big ears but a small mouth."
  - Be very careful about what you say.
  - Say the truth and be cautious about what others tell you.

Making the Analytical Move

Turning to SNAP's theoretical grounds for interpretive analysis, a number of important things can be learned.

8 "Yali yali talk" was translated for us as "lose talk", or "talk that has nothing, because it leads to nothing but disunity." Presently, such talk produced in relation to the chieftaincy dispute can easily become violent. The utterance "We're waiting for the chance to slaughter you again" was offered as an example of such talk by one interviewee.

9 "Social occasions" is a term used to refer to weddings, funerals, and "adorings", or naming ceremonies for babies. These are central to the fabric of social life in Ghana, allowing for the cultivation and maintenance of social networks.

- There is a cultural logic around "protection" here (a term that emerged as more relevant and significant than "security" and that rendered "security" a term that did *not* have cultural resonance among Dagbani speakers).
- This logic involves concepts, norms, rules, and values about *specific forms and practices of social action* as well as social organization. [10]
- Third, this logic is "widely accessible, highly intelligible, and commonly shared" [11] indicating it is a distinct phenomena of cultural communication.
- Fourth, while this logic is applied by communal members to matters related to the Dagbani conflict itself (as a crisis situated in a particular time and place), it also clearly transcends them.

Taken together, these preliminary findings suggest that further study along the lines developed here will indeed yield rich insight into local practices and understandings of security on which to design programmes and services.[12]

3. Potential Applications: First Thoughts on How SNAP Findings can be Put to Use

Folk theories of security, like the one encountered in the Dagbani region, allow us to elicit a set of parameters for programme design that, we contend, project planners must address if their interventions are to have local buy-in from the members of specific cultural communities. This not only attends to the kind of security problems local populations face — such as small arms or gender-based violence — but rather to the means by which the community members will be receptive to addressing them with international actors such as UN agencies.

Though only derived from a test-period that is one-quarter of the normal research period for a Security Needs Assessment and not subjected to a full cycle of analysis, what we have learned thus far about the Dagbani folk theory of security outlined above indicates a range of implications which pertain directly to project design and planning concerns:

1. The UN Framework Team on Conflict Prevention is operating Peacebuilding Centers in the Dagbani Region. These centers have been viewed as a model of success by the Team and the Government. However, findings from the Field-Test suggest that by not using local systems of "speaking with one voice" as practiced among the Dagbani, the Centers may be creating an external, alien, and parallel processes to peacebuilding that, at best, is bringing new and helpful approaches to the local population, but at worst is creating a system that only *seems* functional because traditional systems

10 Note that this logic is particular to the cultural community in question. No suggestion nor assumption is made that it is universal. It is precisely such locally distinct folk theories or cultural logics that SNAP is designed to identify and learn about.

11 D. Carbaugh: Comments on "Culture" in Communication Inquiry. In, *Communication Reports,* Volume 1, Winter 1988.See SNAP Bibliography, esp. Carbaugh and notes from AG Meeting, 2007.

12 Sufficiently understanding "protection" in its local sense requires the same in-depth interrogation suggested by the general research questions posed by SNAP. What is presented here is a characterization of key terms and their patterned use, which is (only) the first step in producing an adequately local interpretation of "security." In short, that "security" is not locally intelligible, but "protection" is raises a number of important issues and directs us to pay attention when devising activities to address "security"; but "protection" is still a complex social term bearing cultural traces, and therefore further inquiry is needed before it can be claimed that a full folk theory can be explicated.

are working independently of the Centers thereby creating a mere illusion of impact. As Miller-Braimah-Philipsen noted in the recorded smock maker's interviews, the Centers were only respected (according to the four interviewees) because "they gave unemployed people something to do" rather than built peace. More research is needed to determine whether the Centers are truly locally owned or only appear to be. This is key to measuring local impact and abiding by DAC-OECD Guidelines.

2. The data suggest that a differentiation between "security" issues and "development" issues is not relevant to the conduct of daily life from the point of view of community members. Rather, there's is a view of the world conceptualized in terms of "protection" from those aspects of physical, social, and spiritual life that could undermine social unity which appears to direct action of community members in their social conduct towards security matters. By extension, this will also inform their *evaluation* of the social conduct of others, including the international community such as the UN agencies. As such, it is necessary to design and plan security, development, or humanitarian interventions with a view to strengthening the capacity of community members to protect themselves from those distinct problems that they understand are causing disunity in the community. It now appears that *if matters of unity and disunity are not considered by project designers— as well as knowing what actions cause unity or disunity in the local folk theory—there will be no basis for knowing the effect of a project intervention.*

3. There are local forms and practices of "talk" which are highly refined and commonly valued among Dagbani community members, and upon which they place profound importance. These forms and practices of talk, and their attendant meanings, *differ from those familiar to members of other communities, such as international actors, and are not always apparent to outsiders*. If UN or other international actors fail to recognize these common systems of "talk" and the communal meanings and values they represent, they run the risk of undermining any possibility of genuine local ownership, despite what may be publicly voiced in "workshops".

   Peacebuilding activities were a specific type of project that, to its detriment (according to community members), *failed to identify and incorporate key local orientations into community-level activities in the Dagbani community*. From what we observed, peacebuilding activities in the community have thus far not made use of the Dagbani etic of "Nangbang Nyeni" — of "speaking with one voice". However, even during the brief period of the Field-test, this Dagbani term (and its relevant practice) was spontaneously and frequently employed, evoked in a variety of interviews, applied to a range of social contexts, and used by both male and female community members from a range of social positions. *Oversight of what appears to be such a central element of local conceptions of communal life is the type of error than can certainly undermine operational success in peacebuilding efforts. Meanwhile, attention to it can open culturally-grounded solutions for projects and planning.*

4. Any outreach or public awareness programme in the region should know whether their planned messages would be viewed as promoting or fostering practices and values associated with "Nangbang kpeni" by Dagbani community members or not. Whatever the intentions of the project planners in the context of the UN Development Assistance Framework, they cannot determine *a priori* whether the selected messages will be viewed as a source of "unity" or "disunity" without reference to the interpretive system employed by community members. Put differently, outreach or

public awareness programmes in the region composed without reference to this etic of "Nangbang kyeni" may court a range of missed opportunities by not making use of a core value of unity *in its local form* and risks a range of unintended consequences by not knowing the discourse into which such messages are read. These problems, however, *can* be solved using security needs assessments and their cultural research methods and the solutions then turned into assets for project design.

5. A key to Early Warning in the Dagbani region is A) a measure of rates of incidents of "Nangbang kpeni" which will show the frequency of "rumors, and loose talk" that — in the Dagbani folk logic of security — always precede incidents of communal violence. Likewise, attendance at funerals (in particular) and other social gatherings such as marriages, can serve as proxy measures for levels of fear.

These recommendations can used in two ways. First, they can form a baseline set of standards for project design in the Northern Region that are likely to remain stable and hence can be used throughout the current duration of the UNDAF and probably much longer. Second, they can form a standard for monitoring and evaluation that is using local standards of acceptability as a basis to judge project performance.

It is important to note that meetings with the central government alone *cannot* produce such standards because they are indigenous to the relevant community (in this case, defined by a cultural affinity towards shared social means of terms and ideas, rather than geographic locations).

Ghana is a richly diverse country of different language and ethnic communities that can be successfully engaged on their own terms to order to straighten *national level goals* but at the local level. Key to fulfilling national actions plans is to design the *local encounter* around carefully cooperative solutions that are grounded on local cultural systems of security. When UNIDIR returns to Ghana but visits the Akan region in the west, it will be able to make its first comparative analyses of regional folk theories around security to determine whether any "national level" standards can be advocated. On this basis of case studies and empirically testing for shared cultural understandings, increasingly higher-level guidelines will be developed by UNIDIR and partner universities in order to create national, regional and global sets of standards based on grounded, scientific findings and not mere political expedience.

ANNEX A[13]

SNAP Field-Test: Preliminary Ideas
21 May 2007 Accra

Terms:

- *Mangulibu* ("self-protection")
- *Suhula/ Suhubu* ("peace")
- *Gu = root: to protect*
- *Tagi* (to shield or to block)
- *Sagimbu* ("destruction" or "spoiling things" – potentially closest equivalent to "violence"?)

Community Members (Participants):

- Butchers
- Broadcast journalists
- Broadcast audience (oral and literate)
- Children
- Court interpreters
- Healers/spiritual leaders
- Market Women
- Smock Makers
- Witches
- Youth Leaders
- GILLBT staff

Practices and Acts (still needs refinement):

- Rituals of protection (*ref.* "levels of guns")
- Conflict resolution practices (e.g. process from family up to chief)
- Uses of proverbs
- Uses of invectives?[14]

Settings and Scenes:

- Lorry station
- Butcher shop
- Market
- Court/trial?
- Church or Mosque/sermons?
- Funerals
- Weddings

13 This Annex is a product of initial meetings between the SNAP project Researcher and the Ghana field team. It was developed and used as tool to aid in the development of relevant categories for investigation given the core research questions posed during the Field-test. The categories of the Annex reflect application of the Hymsean Framework (Dell Hymes,1972. Models of the interaction of language and social life. In Gumperz and Hymes (Eds.) *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication* 35-71. New York: Holt, Rienhart, and Winston.), with the exception of #7, "broader concepts" which is italicized to denote this.

14 Question marks indicate categories that were still under consideration when the Annex was written.

Data sources:

- Unsolicited talk
- Solicited talk
- Print media
- Broadcast media
- Other?

Techniques:

- Focus groups
- Group interviews
- Participant observation
- Cluster analysis (of media texts and others)
- Mapping exercises?

Broader concepts:

- Threats: source-response-protection
- Legitimization of violence (though this will take some adjustment if there is no local term for violence).

ANNEX B:

The Tiered-Team Approach to Field Research as used by the Security Needs Assessment Protocol (SNAP), UNIDIR

Derek B. Miller and Lisa Rudnick (April, 2007)

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is working to improve the sustainability, local acceptance, and efficacy of security-building activities through deeper knowledge of the local cultural contexts. To advance this goal, UNIDIR is engaged in a twenty-four month activity to create a systematic, rigorous and replicable means of assessing local security problems, as they are understood by community members themselves. This "Security Needs Assessment Protocol" will be used by interested UN agencies that implement security, development, and humanitarian field activities where beneficiary security is a concern. This project is funded by the Dutch and Swedish Governments, and is undertaken as both a security and development project in line with Official Development Assistance (ODA) guidelines of the DAC-OECD.

Team Systems: Cluster vs. Tiered

UN agencies commonly make use of assessment teams modeled on "clusters" of thematic experts. The Post-Conflict Needs Assessments and the Joint Assessment Missions, for example, make use of experts with particular knowledge on certain subjects and, working together, create cross-thematic profiles of national recovery needs for international actors to address in cooperation with national governments.

The Security Needs Assessment Protocol makes use of a different model called a Tiered Team. Unlike these wider systems to address multi-thematic, national-level recovery, SNAP is specifically focused *on assessing the local security problems, as they are understood by stakeholders themselves.* Creating such assessments requires using local experience and explanation as a guide to identifying the relevant social practices and domains of social life in which "security" is implicated. As such, conducting a security needs assessment is both an expert activity while also being highly cooperative with the beneficiary community.

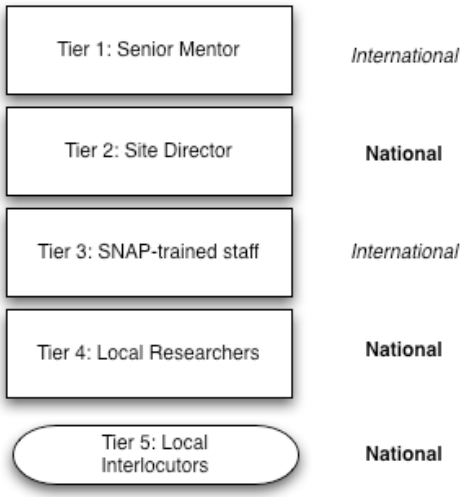

Figure 1: The Tiered-Team Approach to Security Needs Assessments

At the academic Advisory Group meeting in February 2007, it was decided that the best means of achieving this goal was to create a team comprised of five tiers. Each tier has a unique function in the process.

In tier one, a "senior mentor" assists with method and analysis. SNAP is grounded in a formal means of social research and as such will always benefit from support by a senior academic specialist versed in the Protocol and proficient in its foundational components (e.g. assumptive base, conceptual approach, units of analysis, primary and secondary sources of data, interpretive techniques, and "translation" of local findings into policy language). These people will first be drawn from SNAP's Academic Advisory Group and will grow in due course. Senior Mentors may be located off-site and will be consulted periodically.

The second tier is comprised of a national "site director" who will be a local professional – preferably with training in cultural research. The site director will assist the assessment team in its pre-fieldwork, open channels of communication with local community members, serve as a professional guide into local cultural and political systems, and will assist with logistical support. UNIDIR envisions developing a global network of site directors with expert academic training. We are currently cooperating with the University of Ghana to begin this process in Africa. Our contact is Kwesi Yankah (Ph.D. Indiana, Folklore), professor in the Department of Linguistics, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University, and member of SNAP's Academic Advisory Group.

In tier three an international team (of two or three people) will travel to the site to work in cooperation with the site director. These people will be trained to conduct research using the Security Needs Assessment Protocol. Preliminary qualifications in ethnography, communication or anthropology will be required to enter the certification programme. This training process will be further developed over the next 18 months.

Tier four is comprised of local researchers drawn from national NGOs, universities, community-based organizations and other venues. They will assist in a range of work from translation, note taking, making observations, offering interpretation of local experience, and assisting in data collection. Their backgrounds may vary. Site directors – and other UN agencies – may assist in identifying these people. They will simultaneously serve as research assistants while also learning from the team system (hence adding to national capacity).

The fifth tier is comprised of members from the beneficiary community who serve as interlocutors or "informants" who understand and value the SNAP team's work and who will be made fully aware of the findings and intent of the report.

The SNAP team believes this unique tiered-team approach will create deeper, more cooperative, and more participatory relations with beneficiary communities while increasing the quality of research findings into community-level security needs.

UNIDIR RESOURCES

About UNIDIR

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)—an autonomous institute within the United Nations—conducts research on disarmament and security. UNIDIR is based in Geneva, Switzerland, the centre for bilateral and multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations, and home of the Conference on Disarmament. The Institute explores current issues pertaining to the variety of existing and future armaments, as well as global diplomacy and local tensions and conflicts. Working with researchers, diplomats, government officials, NGOs and other institutions since 1980, UNIDIR acts as a bridge between the research community and governments. UNIDIR's activities are funded by contributions from governments and donor foundations.