Sovereignty First • July 2017

This month:

- Anne Kroeger completed her dissertation on Sovereignty First's effort to build a shared information platform for Syria. Congratulations, Anne! She is an anthropologist and looking for work. Here is her dissertation: *Dialogue as a Foundation for Development: Syrian Collective Trauma and Memory, Actor Mapping, and Perspectives on Syria.*

- Next step: In July, we will post our Round 3 Syria data, and make the platform (the INCA and actor mapping tools) much easier to use.

This year:

- Our task this year has been to substantially increase prime actor participation in rounds of interviews, and to get at least a handful of prime actors to start using the platform.

- So far, based on 18 months of research and recruitment, we have developed a working hypothesis that prime actor participants agree to be interviewed based on four criteria:

  o The convener, meaning who has committed to using the tool; often the convener is the funder. (Prime actors want to know their participation contributes to a viable project.)

  o An understanding by interview participants that they are not responsible for officially representing their organization. We are drawing out worldviews and familiar data.

  o That their organization was named as a prime actor by other prime actors.

  o A personal introduction by a trusted intermediary.

- Next step: Get people to use the platform: Build recruit and training processes, and make the tool easier to use and more attractive.

Since January 2016:

We have learned who we are and what we offer:

- "Sovereignty First's shared information platforms enable local, regional, and international organizations to negotiate better multi-party agreements."
- "The value of our platforms is that they generate a common political and social operating picture among influential actors. To form good agreements, all actors need certain essential information about a situation. If only one or two actors have this information, their short-term position in negotiations is better, but the viability of the negotiated agreement will be just as vulnerable to poor construction. To negotiate realistic goals and robust enforcement mechanisms, actors need a common political and social operating picture. Sovereignty First generates this common understanding."
- Next step: Get organizations to pay for shared information platforms.