


From Expertise to International Standard: Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk

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From expertise to international standard: Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk

The process behind the recognition of the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk

Publisher

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About the project “Archives and Dealing with the Past”

The project “Archives and Dealing with the Past” is a mandate by the FDFA, which swisspeace implements in close coordination with the Swiss Federal Archives. The goal of the project is to make a significant contribution to preserving, securing and making accessible archives and records of past human right violations. The project also aims at providing support to governments, international organizations and NGOs working to protect and manage archives documenting human rights violations. It is conceived as a hub and offers a platform of contact between actors in need of support and experts working in this field. For more information: <http://archivesproject.swisspeace.ch/>

The Essential Series

Through its “Essentials” series, swisspeace offers expert advice and guidance for practitioners on various topics of civilian peacebuilding. This issue draws on lessons from a carefully designed process that originated in expert exchanges on the issue of archives and Dealing with the Past processes and led to the international endorsement of guiding principles.

Cover picture

International Expert Working Meeting «Safe Havens for Archives at Risk» in Bern, October 2016

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Introduction

This Essential gives an account of how the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk were elaborated and draws conclusions on what can be learned from this process. It traces the steps of all the efforts that culminated in the international endorsement of best practices. The process was designed and led openly but with a general vision from the outset – to focus on the most pressing needs when it comes to protecting archives at risk. It was adapted flexibly at every stage, responding to the needs, the learnings, and the capacity of all participants. This Essential seeks to provide insights and recommendations that might be of use when designing and shaping similar policy processes.

The elaboration of the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk, described in detail in the second part of this Essential, began with an exchange on the role of archives and Dealing with the Past processes. Archives can be instrumental in such processes, for instance, because they document a history of systematic human rights abuses in a particular context. When such archives are exposed to various risks, for example during times of political turmoil or political transitions, they can be threatened. The only option for their long-time protection might be the creation of a safe haven. An ad-hoc international Working Group of experts assessed various aspects of consideration when implementing safe haven solutions professionally and established a set of principles that help guide such efforts. With the endorsement of the so-called Guiding Principles by the International Council on Archives (ICA), the work that had started at expert level was formalized into an international set of best practices.

The authors analyze the process as a showcase of how technical expertise, political analysis and diplomatic know-how can be harnessed in a mutually beneficial, well-structured way. The Guiding Principles on

Introduction

Safe Havens for Archives at Risk are not only a useful guide for institutions directly facing challenges, but also represent an equally important tool for diplomatic efforts in supporting Dealing with the Past processes.

1. Why do archives matter for Dealing with the Past processes and why do they need protection?

1 Learn more on the website of the Archives & Dealing with the Past Project: www.archives.swisspeace.ch (25 September 2020).

2 Reed Brody, *Victims bring a Dictator to Justice: The Case of Hissène Habré, Bread for the World*, June 2017.

Dealing with the Past processes aim at addressing legacies of violence and paving the way for reconciliation in societies that have suffered severe violations of human rights or international humanitarian law.¹ Archives can play a crucial role in these efforts as the following example illustrates.

In the trial against Hissène Habré, former President of Chad, a collection of documents created by the Documentation and Security Directory (DDS) of Chad, was used as evidence. The documents had been discovered and preserved by human rights organizations and made available to the courts. They provided extensive details on his control over DDS operations.² In 2016, the Extraordinary African Chambers convicted Habré on count of various crimes, including crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Archives like these can be at risk of destruction or alteration for a number of reasons, including conscious and unconscious acts, neglect, or storage in inappropriate conditions. In addition, archives can be threatened in times of political turmoil and transitions, and by natural disasters, often due to the effects of climate change, such as the rise in seawater levels.

Sometimes, only the relocation of archival materials, either physically and/or digitally, to a safe haven within the same state or outside the national borders can guarantee their preservation. However, transferring archives physically, or even just digitizing and storing a copy abroad, is no trivial matter. Questions of ownership, access, return, protection, legal ramifications and many others need to be considered. Institutions that decide to relocate their archives are often also under time pressure. Others that are willing to host the materials face different challenges and have various motivations. The asymmetrical relationship between so-called “sending” and “hosting institutions” requires careful attention. The Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk provide guidance on these challenges.

2. Tracing the process on Safe Havens for Archives at Risk

2.1 The catalyst: Two requests

In 2008, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Swiss Federal Archives (SFA) – upon request – offered a Safe Haven to the Historical Archive of the National Police of Guatemala for the digital security copy of their archive. In 2005, millions of documents were found by coincidence in a building at the Guatemala City compound of the National Civil Police. Those documents dating from 1882 to 1997 turned out to be the historic archive of Guatemala’s former National Police, which was disbanded after the end of the internal armed conflict (1960-1996). Until today, these records play a central role in Guatemala’s attempts to deal with its past, and have been used as evidence in investigations regarding human rights violations and by families of the disappeared in the search for their loved ones.

In 2014, the FDFA received a second request through an independent archivist looking for a solution to secure an archive located in the Pacific Region: the records of the Nuclear Claims Tribunal of the Marshall Islands. The Tribunal had been created in 1988 to decide upon all claims related to the nuclear weapons tests of the 1940s and 1950s. This archive also contains unique scientific information about the impact of nuclear testing on nature and human beings. As the archive was threatened by insufficient storage conditions and the rise of the seawater levels, the Swiss Government agreed to support the digitization process of the records and to host a security copy within the SFA.

These activities exemplify the importance of archives for Dealing with the Past processes to the FDFA Taskforce Dealing with the Past and Prevention of Atrocities.³ As a result, the FDFA, in cooperation with the SFA, in 2012 mandated swisspeace with the development of activities on this topic with the aim to make a significant contribution to preserving, securing and making accessible archives and records of past human right violations.⁴

3 The body tasked with coordinating the Dealing with the Past strategy within the FDFA.

4 Read more about the Archives & Dealing with the Past Project: <https://www.archives.swisspeace.ch> (29 September 2020).

- 5 Find more information about the international conference “Securing Archives at Risk”, 1-2 October 2019, Bern, Switzerland. <https://www.safehavensforarchives.org/resources-2/conference-on-securing-archives-at-risk/> (21 June 2021).

Conference Report: archivesproject.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/archivesproject/Report_conference_securing_archives_at_risk.pdf.

Conference Program: https://www.swisspeace.ch/assets/activities/downloads/Annex1_Conference2015_finalprogram.pdf.

From the outset the FDFA, the SFA and swisspeace as implementing partner were driven by the goal to conduct policy work in an area, which would have a significant impact on improving the preservation and the use of archives in Dealing with the Past processes. Due to rapid technological improvements over the past years and decades, data could be digitally stored much more easily for less and less money. New practices evolved in the field of safe havens for archives at risk around these developments, making it evident that the field was underregulated. Thanks to their individual and combined experience in the subject matter, the FDFA, the SFA and swisspeace were well placed to make a significant contribution to this policy field.

Through consultations and exchanges with representatives of governments, international organizations and NGOs related to the protection of archives, the FDFA and swisspeace gained a clearer understanding of how many archives documenting human rights violations worldwide were actually at risk. In consultation with the Chair of the “Section on Human Rights and Archives” of the ICA, Dr. Trudy Huskamp Peterson, the FDFA and swisspeace decided to initiate a broader reflection process on the topic. In October 2015, they invited an interested audience to an international public conference on the topic of “Securing archives at risk” in Bern.⁵

2.2 The exploration: From a public conference

During the one-day public conference, “Securing archives at risk” was discussed broadly. More than a hundred participants learned about and explored the complexity, good practices and the potential ways forward on the issue. A conference report summarized the recommendations that emerged as a result of the debates. These were subsequently discussed among selected experts in a closed half-day meeting.

Following the recommendations of the conference report, the FDFA, the SFA and swisspeace decided to pursue the topic further. On the one hand, they sought to stimulate discussion at the national level around the question “Switzerland as Safe Haven for Archives at Risk?”.⁶ On the other hand, they pushed the topic of safe havens for archives at risk to a next level internationally. While the format of a public conference enabled the three partners to set the scene and to draw a generic picture of the issue, it was no longer the right approach to deepen the conversation. A closed international expert meeting seemed to be a more suitable format to move beyond general recommendations and to come up with concrete next steps that would tangibly improve the international practice on safe haven for archives at risk.

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- 6 Read more about the national track on safe havens, more specifically about the round table “Switzerland as Safe Haven for Archives at Risk” that took place on 2 June 2016 in Bern, Switzerland. <https://www.safehavensforarchives.org/resources-2/expert-roundtable-switzerland-as-safe-haven-for-archives-at-risk/> (21 June 2021)

2.3 The elaboration: To an international expert working meeting

In the early stages of preparing the expert meeting, a senior FDFA official emphasized the importance of the process design: “The process will be more important than the result.” This statement put the challenge in a nutshell: the way the process was designed would determine whether the outcome would be endorsed by the Swiss partners only or by many others at the international level. It prompted a process design cognizant of this awareness from start to finish, guided by the principles of inclusion, transparent communication and an attitude of appreciation and optimism.

7 The term “sending institution” refers to a governmental or non-governmental organization/institution or a person that has found or is looking for a safe haven for archives/records. The term “hosting institution” refers to a governmental or non-governmental organization/institution interested in or already offering a Safe Haven solution for archives/records at risk.

The *inclusion* of all relevant stakeholders in the issues would be key to form a broad base in ownership. *Transparent communication* would be essential to building trust as a fundament for smooth collaboration among all members of the group. Finally, in circumstances where collaboration is predominately voluntary and additional to members’ regular work load, the *coordinators’ attitude* of appreciation for the work put in and an optimistic mindset with regard to the outcome, could make all the difference.

The process was guided by the principles of inclusion, transparency and an attitude of appreciation and optimism.

Given the overall intention and the above principles for the process design, the first important choice concerned the careful selection of the invited participants. This meant to invite representatives of sending as well as hosting institutions⁷, both governmental and non-governmental, as these are the main actors in safe haven cooperation. The second group of invitees was defined as “leading institutions and experts” on archival matters. The FDFA, the SFA and swisspeace invited individuals with specific capacities on the topic, including technical expertise, funding, network and time. With the FDFA, a funding institution was involved. Working without official mandate on a topic with international reach, it was crucial to also bring on broad representatives of international organizations, who could potentially take over a leading role on the topic at a later stage. In this case, the ICA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were invited. With the help of our partners and our own network, the UNESCO was approached and agreed to participate in the planned international expert meeting in October 2016.

The first important choice concerned the careful selection of the invited participants.

The agenda was designed such that every one of the 30 participants was assigned a role as speaker, respondent or moderator⁸, so that every participant was included in the agenda and had an active role to play during the one and a half days.

In view of ensuring a concrete output and a follow-up at the end of the meeting, swisspeace prepared a draft outcome paper in the evening of the first day. It included the proposition to create an International Working Group that could carry the initiative forward. Participants were invited to join the Working Group tasked to follow-up on the recommendations made during the meeting and draft documents according to priorities set forth in the paper. Such participation was voluntary and not remunerated. In order to ensure the representation of all stakeholder groups, the Working Group was to be composed of at least one representative per category: 1) sending institution (governmental and non-governmental); 2) hosting institution (international, governmental and non-governmental); 3) leading institutions (ICA and UNESCO); and 4) others with key expertise (funding, contacts/network, technical, etc.). swisspeace assured the coordination of the Working Group⁹ (see Box 1).

8 Find more information about the international expert working meeting “Safe Havens for Archives at Risk”, 6-7 October 2016, Bern, Switzerland. <https://www.safehavensforarchives.org/resources-2/international-expert-working-meeting-safe-haven-for-archives-at-risk/> (21 June 2021).
Program: https://www.swisspeace.ch/assets/activities/downloads/Program_expert_meeting_safe_haven_for_archives_at_risk_final.pdf.

Outcome paper: https://www.swisspeace.ch/assets/activities/downloads/Save_havens_for_archives_Final_outcome_paper_2016.pdf.

9 See the composition of the international Working Group, as of January 2018. https://www.swisspeace.ch/assets/activities/downloads/Working_group_web.pdf (09 July 2019).

Box 1: Members of the Working Group “Safe Havens for Archives at Risk”

- Sending institutions: Historical Archive of the National Police of Guatemala, National Center of Historical Memory of Colombia, UMAM Documentation and Research
 - Hosting institutions: FDFA, International Institute for Social History, National Archives of Finland, SFA University of Texas at Austin
 - Leading institutions: ICA, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNESCO
 - Others with key expertise: Trudy Huskamp Peterson, David Sutton, Tim Gollins, National Records of Scotland
 - Coordination: swisspeace
-

swisspeace co-facilitated the meeting with an independent expert.

2.4 The refinement: An ad-hoc international Working Group

Following the international expert working meeting, the newly established Working Group finalized the outcome paper. In January 2017, three months after the meeting, a Dutch member of the Group convened a one-day in-person meeting in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This was particularly welcome, as it broadened the international footprint of the process, since it was not the intention to center it in Switzerland. The FDFA and swisspeace wanted to ensure that it was not only a “Swiss initiative” but also carried by actors outside of Switzerland. This was particularly relevant because the envisioned outputs of the international Working Group aimed for international recognition.

The goal of the meeting was to refine the tasks of the Working Group and to develop a work plan, defining who would do what by when in order to implement the recommendations of the outcome paper of the international expert working meeting.

It was important to swisspeace to avoid having the sole lead in steering the process as well as building ownership among participants.

During spring and summer 2017, over a period of six months, several members drafted different types of content, which were to either be part of the “core document” or put into an annex: a typology of archives at risk, criteria for trustworthy safe havens, standards/guiding principles for safe havens for archives at risk and a generic agreement for safe haven solutions. As agreed during the meeting in Amsterdam, swisspeace then compiled all contents in the first draft of the “core document” in late summer 2017. During a conference call in September 2017, swisspeace presented a first draft to the Working Group. This was the moment to discuss, on the one hand, pertinent questions regarding the content of the final document, such as: What is the precise nature and the title of the document? Who will be the audience? What is the aim of the document? On the other hand, the Group discussed questions regarding the process, such as: How should the draft principles be finalized? How can a document produced by a self-appointed expert group turn into a formally recognized product enjoying legitimacy and international reach?

Several important decisions were taken during the conference call. First, the Group agreed on the title of the document. It would be called “Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk”. Second, the Group realized that in order to increase the chances of having the document being endorsed in the future, it would be prudent to keep the core principles in one document, and to develop

10 This document is now called “A Commentary to the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk” (12 July 2021).

more extensive guidelines on the implementation of the principles in a separate document, which would not be subject to endorsement¹⁰. Third, an editorial group, consisting of six individuals was formed and was tasked to finalize the draft principles. Again, the rationale was to increase ownership, enhance quality by including more brains and to avoid having only one or two persons finalize the document. Fourth, the Group decided that the document should be endorsed by international bodies, e.g. ICA, UNESCO or the UN Human Rights Council. The group members concluded that endorsement would ideally be sought gradually, aiming first at an endorsement by an international body with the specific technical expertise on the topic matter (in the present case the ICA) before bringing it into an international institution with a broader mandate (in the present case the UNESCO). The members tasked a small group to develop an endorsement strategy and outreach plan.

2.5 The formalization: The endorsement by an international organization

Between October 2017 and January 2018, the editorial team met several times to finalize the Guiding Principles. In this period, two decisions were made: First, the Group decided to aim for consultations within the ICA in the first half of 2018. This meant a final version needed to be completed by late March 2018. Luckily, the ICA representative who was part of the Working Group was in a position to closely advise on the consultation processes within the ICA. Second, a member brought up the question of organizing a public consultation of the draft Principles. That was an idea the group had not thought of. As an ad-hoc self-appointed Working Group, its members and swisspeace as their coordinator strove to be inclusive, in the hopes of improving the quality of the document, of strengthening its legitimacy by broadening the number of contributors and of spreading the word about the existence of these draft Guiding Principles. Finally, the FDFA and swisspeace were convinced that giving the

public and specific stakeholders the opportunity to comment could lead to an increase in ownership in the final document. Hence, the decision was taken to indeed organize a public consultation and to use the channels of all members as well as swisspeace (mailing lists, newsletters, websites)¹¹ to invite feedback on the draft Guiding Principles.¹²

swisspeace received more than forty commentaries by individuals and institutions from around the world. In March 2018, swisspeace intensively worked with the ed-

11 In the scope of the FDFA mandate, swisspeace runs a mailing list on Archives and Dealing with the Past for interested individuals/institutions. Find more information on the website: <https://www.safehavensforarchives.org/resources-2/the-dealing-with-the-past-listserv/> (21 June 2021).

12 Find more information about the public consultation on the website: <https://www.>

Why organize a public consultation? As an ad-hoc self-appointed Working Group, its members strove to be inclusive, in the hopes of improving the quality of the document, of strengthening its legitimacy by broadening the number of contributors and of spreading the word about the existence of the draft Guiding Principles.

iting team to revise the Guiding Principles and to integrate the feedback. By early April 2018, the Guiding Principles were delivered to the ICA in time for the start of several consultation rounds. During the ICA consultations, swisspeace was in close contact with the ICA program manager in charge. Upon recommendation of the ICA representative within the Working Group, this program manager already joined the conference call in September 2017 and had since then been part of the discussions in an advisory capacity.

[safehavensforarchives.org/resources-2/draft-guiding-principles-for-safe-havens-for-archives-at-risk/](https://www.safehavensforarchives.org/resources-2/draft-guiding-principles-for-safe-havens-for-archives-at-risk/) (21 June 2021).

The person in charge of the consultation within ICA has been part of our discussions early on, advising on the related ICA consultation's processes.

13 As of November 2020, the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk have been endorsed by the Executive Board of the ICA, the Association for Latin American Archivists, the ICA Section on Human Rights and Archives, the ICA Section on Archives of Literature and Art as well as the ICA Section on University and Research Institution Archives.

14 See the Commentary on the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk. https://www.safehavensforarchives.org/assets/Uploads/Safe-Havens-for-Archives-at-Risk/2020_G1.PDF (12 July 2021).

15 Learn more about the Safe Havens for Archives at Risk initiative and its Advisory Committee. <https://www.safehavensforarchives.org/> (21 June 2021)

After the final round of consultations, swisspeace prepared a final version of the Guiding Principles in August 2018, which was shared with the ICA Executive Board. Within ICA, it was decided to take an online vote with the options (yes or no) on the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk, therewith avoiding further discussions on the document. Eventually in October 2018 the Executive Board of the ICA unanimously endorsed the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk¹³. With this endorsement, the ICA considered the document as one of theirs and agreed to put it on the ICA website as a reference document. The influential Latin American Archives Association (ALA) followed with its endorsement, representing countries where the need for safe havens has been apparent. Both endorsements marked the success of a process that started three years earlier.

2.6 The continuation: The Commentary to the Guiding Principles

The Working Group did not stop working after these important endorsements. The earlier decision to have the core principles in one document and the explanatory set in another meant that the time had come to develop the Commentary to the Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk as well as a generic agreement



between sending and hosting institutions.¹⁴ Following an in-person meeting in late September 2019, the Working Group decided to transform into an “Advisory Committee” as it had carried out most of the tasks defined in the outcome paper of the October 2016 meeting, which were at the basis for its initial creation. In its new role, the Advisory Committee will promote and advocate for the Guiding Principles, advise sending institutions, and search for additional hosting institutions under the coordination of swisspeace, among other responsibilities.¹⁵

Graphic: Developments over time (Time axis displaying the different events)

3. Conclusions

Reflecting on the four-year process, we, the authors, synthesized the following main challenges and identified lessons learned as well as success factors.

3.1 Challenges

- **Equal participation from a distance:** Ensuring equal participation of members outside of Europe in the process was all but easy, mainly because of the remoteness of their location. Flying individuals in from outside of Europe for a one-day meeting was against our ecological reasoning. Having members join the meeting by video conference call was our alternative. This approach had its limits. Due to low connectivity, remote participants were only able to join with audio. This made equal participation in discussions challenging for both the remote participants and the moderator(s).
- **Limitations of conference calls:** The main way of interaction with the international Working Group throughout the four years was via email and conference calls. Everyone who has experience with conference calls knows about their limitations: difficulties related to technology (not functioning microphones, videos, etc.), no socializing time during coffee breaks, no informal chats, no face-to-face exchange, etc.). We mitigated the challenge by ensuring that all members of the Working Group met physically at the start of the process. Furthermore, it was fortunate that a few already knew each other.
- **Losing members:** Three members dropped out along the way of the process. Our member at UNESCO retired and was not replaced. We tried to keep a team colleague in the loop but given that this initiative did not fall in their portfolio, we did not manage to re-engage UNESCO to play a role in our Working Group. Two members of the Global South quit their jobs, mainly because their

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institutions turned highly unstable and were subject to political controversies. Both were not replaced either.

- **Keeping a thematic focus:** While the origin of the process, as mandated by the FDFA and also grounded in swisspeace's specific expertise, has always been on the specific relevance of archives for Dealing with the Past processes, there was a natural tendency amongst the archival experts to look at the issue of safe havens for archives at risk from a more general perspective. To remain meaningful to all actors involved, the process had to respond to these various interests, without losing the overall focus on the original mandate.
- **Possible politicization:** The issue of protecting archives at risk is inherently political and often sensitive. Therefore, there were concerns that introducing the Guiding Principles in the ICA could meet opposition by certain actors, thus blocking the process. While the endorsement by ICA's Executive Board went smoothly, this challenge remains an issue to consider in all future initiatives to further internationalize the Guiding Principles (for instance within UNESCO).
- **More donors needed for the continuation:** The FDFA mandated swisspeace to coordinate the process leading to the endorsement of the Guiding Principles and funded it throughout. The process also led to the transformation of the Working Group into an Advisory Committee and to support swisspeace in its role as Central Information Point for the Safe Haven program. Until today, it is unclear how the services around the Central Information Point can be financed in the long run. To ensure long-term sustainability of the program, more donors may be needed to finance the activities.

3.2 Lessons learned

- **Narrowing down and scaling up:** Our process of a gradual narrowing down starting with a public conference, continuing with a closed international expert working meeting, and the establishment of a Working Group with an editing committee proved to be successful to develop a concrete product. Once the product was created, we scaled it up again with the public consultation of the draft document, its endorsement by the ICA and the continued outreach on the Guiding Principles.
- **A careful and inclusive process design** ensured that the product of an ad-hoc self-appointed group reached broad credibility and today carries the potential of being recognized as an international norm, thanks to the endorsement of the ICA and other institutions.
- **A process takes time.** Our experience shows that a process of collectively developing something simply takes time. The entire process took three years. Of course, the FDFA, the SFA and swisspeace could have partnered up and drafted the Guiding Principles themselves. However, this document would not have the quality or the legitimacy it has without the inclusion of all the important stakeholders. Above all, reaching endorsement at the international level would have been unlikely. Including more actors in the process increases complexity and the need for good coordination. At the same time, this example shows that it can be worth the time and the resources.
- **Getting to know each other and building trust:** We are convinced that in order to form the basis for a group of people to successfully work on a common endeavor, a physical meeting of more than one day is needed, ideally at the beginning of the process. Enough informal social time, e.g. a joint dinner should be planned for the people to mingle outside

the official working time in order to have sufficient time to interact informally and get to know each other.

- **The importance of the meeting location and venue** is not be underestimated. Depending on the meeting purpose, the location should be easily reachable but outside a busy area without options for distraction. The venue should make people feel at ease and should be filled with daylight. Enough space should be available for everyone (as a guidance: 4 square meters per person for a meeting that takes longer than half a day).
- **Agenda design and facilitation are key:** The agenda should be designed around reaching the goals of the meeting. With the agenda, one sets the ground for who gets included and excluded, who is given time to speak, and who is not. The same goes for facilitation. It matters whether the organizer facilitates the entire meeting and herewith holds control over the process, or shares facilitation with a second person, who enjoys trust by the group.

3.3 Success factors

- **Open-led process:** swisspeace and the FDFA led the process openly, with a general vision but without a predetermined agenda or outcome. The process developed gradually, always with a political lens, and in the context of developing policies serving the concept of Dealing with the Past.
- **Committed participation:** Because the process responded to a concrete gap in policymaking, it succeeded to mobilize a high degree of commitment and participation by experts.
- **Inclusion of all stakeholders at the very beginning:** All stakeholders were included from the

very beginning of the process. We made sure we included individuals and institutions concerned about or affected by the topic, those who held important information and/or expert knowledge, those with the resources in terms of funding, network and time, and last but not least, those with the decision-making power, also in terms of those who are legitimate actors working on the issue of Safe Havens for Archives at Risk at the international level.

- **A combination of technical expertise and a full range of diplomatic instruments**, including the relevant network and experience in multilateral work contributed to the fact that we were able to develop a quality document and have it endorsed by leading institutions on that matter at the international level.

About the authors

Rahel von Arx was a Senior Program Officer for the Dealing with the Past Program at swisspeace until March 2020. She led the process on Safe Havens for Archives at Risk within swisspeace since 2015 and the FDFA mandate “Archives and Dealing with the Past” since 2019. Holding a BA in Sociology and an MA in International Affairs, Rahel von Arx has worked for the FDFA and the Danish Refugee Council in West Africa in the past.

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About the publishing organizations

Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) – In the framework of its peace policy and human rights activities, the FDFA is active in the field of dealing with the past and prevention of atrocities. Through these activities, it aims to prevent atrocities and to facilitate social reconciliation after serious violations of human rights or infringements of international humanitarian law. It supports bilateral and multilateral activities.

Building on these activities, the FDFA promotes and leads conceptual reflections and policy development in the field of dealing with the past and prevention of atrocities. The particular issue of archives and dealing with the past features among them.

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As a practice and research institute, we have high expectations of ourselves. Not only in the field of research but also regarding practice. Our three boards help us to achieve this expectations by providing checks and balances as well as valuable inputs.