CIVIL SOCIETY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS CASE BOOK

Assembled by Susan Taylor-Meehan, Jacqueline Wood, and Réal Lavergne for the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, extracting from cases submitted to the Advisory Group and other sources.

Please consult the Advisory Group’s extranet site (http://web.acdi-cida.gc.ca/es) for the most recent version of this document at any time and for the case studies used to compile this document.
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<td>Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness</td>
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<td>Antiretroviral</td>
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<td>Building Community Capacity Project (Guyana)</td>
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<td>BIS</td>
<td>Budget Information Service (South Africa)</td>
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<td>CASE</td>
<td>The Community Agency for Social Enquiry (South Africa)</td>
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<td>CBU</td>
<td>Children’s Budget Unit (of IDASA – see below)</td>
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<td>CCIC</td>
<td>Canadian Council for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>CECI</td>
<td><em>Centre d’étude et de coopération internationale</em> (Canada)</td>
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<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td><em>Conseil National de Concertation et Coopération des Ruraux</em> (Senegal)</td>
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<td>Communauté rurale councils (Senegal)</td>
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<td>Coastal Rural Support Program (Mozambique)</td>
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<td>Civil society organization</td>
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<td>Danish Agency for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>Donor Consortium (Bangladesh)</td>
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<td>DECIM</td>
<td>Donor Exchange, Coordination and Information Mechanism</td>
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<td>DLO</td>
<td>Donor Liaison Office (Bangladesh)</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<td>UN Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
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<td><em>Fédération des collectifs d’ONG du Mali</em></td>
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<td>FPE</td>
<td>Foundation for the Philippine Environment</td>
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<td>GO-NGO</td>
<td>Government-non-governmental-organization</td>
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<td>Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
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<td>Gender-responsive budgeting</td>
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<td>Gender Thematic Group (Kenya)</td>
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<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Highly Indebted Poor Countries</td>
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<td>High Level Forum (on Aid Effectiveness)</td>
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<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<td>IDASA</td>
<td>Institute for Democracy in South Africa</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>International development partner</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>IPED</td>
<td>IBON Partnership in Education for Development (Philippines)</td>
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<td>IPL</td>
<td>Impact Planning and Learning System Design</td>
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<td>IPPF</td>
<td>International Planned Parenthood Federation</td>
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<td>JAST</td>
<td>Joint Assistance Strategy (Tanzania)</td>
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<td>LOASP</td>
<td><em>Loi d’Orientation Agro-Sylvo Pastorale</em> (Senegal)</td>
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<td>M &amp; E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>Natural Resource Management Program (Philippines)</td>
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<td>Official development assistance</td>
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<td>Overseas Development Institute (UK)</td>
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<td>PARPA</td>
<td>Mozambique’s action plan for the reduction of absolute poverty</td>
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<td>Program-based approach</td>
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<td>Government of Mozambique’s strategy for the agricultural sector</td>
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<td>PRS</td>
<td>Poverty reduction strategy</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty reduction strategy paper</td>
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<td>PVO</td>
<td>Private voluntary organization</td>
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<td>RDC</td>
<td><em>République Démocratique Congolaïse</em></td>
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<td>Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa</td>
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<td>Sida</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
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<td>SWAp</td>
<td>Sector-wide approach</td>
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<td>SWG</td>
<td>Sector working group</td>
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<td>TGNP</td>
<td>Tanzania Gender Networking Program</td>
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<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>VANI</td>
<td>Voluntary Action Network of India</td>
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<td>VO</td>
<td>Voluntary organization</td>
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<td>WUSC</td>
<td>World University Service Canada (Canada)</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This document is one of three documents being made available at the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS). The core document is the AG-CS’ Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations, which is based on analytical work undertaken by the AG-CS and inputs received through an extensive multi-stakeholder consultation process. The findings and recommendations laid out in the Synthesis have emerged as the key points of consensus among AG-CS members.

The second document, Experience and practice: An exploration of good practice for development stakeholders, demonstrates the practical implications of the recommendations made in the Synthesis. The third document, titled Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness Case Book, explores individual experiences in greater depth. These two are not AG-CS consensus documents in the same sense as the Synthesis, though their preparation has been supported by the AG-CS membership.

Throughout the consultation process, the AG-CS invited stakeholders to submit case studies of good practice relating to civil society and aid effectiveness. These case studies have been integral contributions to this Case Book. They form the basis for the case summaries presented herein and their URLs are included for readers wishing to consult them. In some instances, write-ups were based on other sources.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to include all of the cases submitted. The choice of cases for inclusion in the Case Book is not intended as a judgment on one organization’s experience over another’s. Case selection has in part been informed by the apparent relevance of cases to the AG-CS recommendations in the Synthesis, and by a search for balance in the types of cases to be included. Time pressures have not allowed for peer review of this compilation.

The AG-CS assumes that stakeholders share an interest in enabling CSOs to reach their full effectiveness potential and a sense of responsibility for implementing good practice towards this goal. The AG-CS’ ambition is for each stakeholder group to engage in further dialogue, to implement the good practices suggested here individually and jointly, and to monitor the development results over time, so that good practices can be further documented, refined and shared by the stakeholder community.

The case studies are organized roughly in the order of the AG-CS recommendations to which they correspond most closely in the AG-CS’ Synthesis paper. Many of the cases speak to multiple recommendations however, and readers may find that their location in the Exploration of Experience and Good Practice paper differs from that in the Case Book, depending on what aspects of the case are highlighted in the Experience and Good Practice paper.

1 All AG-CS documents including the AG-CS’ mandate, analytical papers and consultation reports are available on its extranet site at http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cs. The site is hosted by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on behalf of the AG-CS, and is accessible to all by registration.
RECOGNITION AND VOICE

1... Grassroots Development in Western Kasai

Description of the Initiative

Butoke is a grassroots development organization founded in 2004 to address problems of hunger and malnutrition in the Western Kasai province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It emerged from the initiative of two medical doctors, one foreign-born, the other from the region, who is also an agronomist. Together, they worked to fill an institutional void in an area in which the economy, the government and even the social fibre of society itself had been devastated by years of war and bad governance.

Their objective was to focus on malnutrition, which had reached epidemic proportions in Western Kasai, by helping the most vulnerable people to establish or re-establish themselves in agriculture, with an emphasis on crops of high nutritional value, particularly soybeans, beans, and peanuts. Money was scarce. Butoke started its work based on personal savings along with contributions from friends and associates overseas.

Butoke’s strategy from the start was to combine a humanitarian approach designed to address immediate needs with a longer-term development approach, by providing food for work and managing a nutrition centre while providing seeds and basic tools and introducing village associations to new low-cost agricultural techniques such as row planting and proper spacing. Beneficiaries tend to be primarily widows and others whose nutritional status was the most precarious, but all associations contain a mix of members to allow for division of labour. The approach has been successful in reaching large numbers of people at low cost, using a formula that could be replicated to scale as resources became available.

Butoke is a legally constituted NGO whose founding charter was signed by a representative assembly of church leaders, chiefs, and community leaders respected for their integrity. A board of directors was created in 2007 to strengthen the organization’s institutional base.

Butoke grew quickly, based on its success in delivering programs to the poor and in fundraising. Drawing on contacts abroad, Butoke drew in voluntary contributions from all over the world in support of both its humanitarian and development objectives. It was able to expand its development activities to scale in 2005 thanks to project funding provided through a Canadian NGO (Africa Inland Mission - AIM) that was eligible for CIDA’s Voluntary Sector Fund. Important amounts of funding were subsequently secured from UNICEF and FAO, who were looking for an effective partner for project delivery in Western Kasai. This was following by a new project with CIDA and Help the Aged Canada approved in early 2008.

Results

Butoke’s programs have reached a large population. Starting work in 2004 with 20 village associations on 19 ha, it was reaching a population of 19,000 small farmers by 2007 – with their families, a population of about 120,000 people – whose nutritional levels are thus being improved, albeit marginally, through access to more abundant, more nutritious crops. In 2006,
Butoke was supporting the school fees of 665 orphans (up from 278 in 2004), treating approximately 6,500 cases per year in nutrition and primary health centre, and rehabilitating approximately 200 severely malnourished children per year. It was also providing counselling on responsible sexuality for approximately 5,000 people per year.

The example of service and respect for human rights and dignity that are demonstrated in Butoke’s work provides hope and inspiration for the population, who can see in this a different way of doing things. The most important results of Butoke’s work may be at the cultural level – breaking down the barriers to gender equality and changing attitudes towards the handicapped and downtrodden in a society that tends to blame orphans, widows and the handicapped for their own misfortune as bewitched people to be isolated, shunned and often dispossessed.

**Description of Good Practice**

Butoke has succeeded in generating development results with significant impacts on the lives of the poorest members of society in one of the poorest corners of the world. Its success is not necessarily replicable in all ways – depending as it does on the work of a highly experienced and dedicated team and strong support from partners in other countries. However, the factors explaining Butoke’s success include the application of principles that resonate with those of the Paris Declaration and the findings and recommendations of the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness.

*Ownership, leadership and alignment*

Butoke is a locally-based NGO with a strong domestic institutional base and legitimacy. Its priorities are determined strategically, in the pursuit of Butoke’s role as an agent of change and development, combining efforts to meet the immediate needs of the population with long-term development goals of a far-reaching nature. Given institutional weaknesses in Western Kasai, the founders of Butoke preferred to create a new NGO over working with existing ones, so “alignment” in this case has meant creating new, but locally-defined, institutional structures and building up these structures over time to ensure their sustainability and accountability.

*A culture of results and accountability*

A culture of results and of results monitoring is an integral part of Butoke’s approach, and Butoke monitors a number of measurable indicators of results, such as the number of hectares under seed, the number of children whose school fees are supported, and the rate of success in rehabilitating severely malnourished children. However, Butoke’s approach also includes considerable attention to qualitative results whose rigorous monitoring may or may not be possible. However, this does not prevent Butoke from identifying results having to do with improved understanding or changing attitudes to human rights and gender equality, and reduced emphasis on witchcraft-based explanations for social problems.

Butoke’s culture of accountability is primarily moral in character. Butoke is a values-based institution that holds itself accountable for results, and whose staff hold each other accountable for results. Butoke’s donors and NGO partners are not actively present on the ground, but they do play a challenge function, encouraging Butoke to monitor results, and encouraging Butoke to avoid dissipating its energy fighting short-term emergencies at the expense of long-term results.
Managing in a difficult environment

The institutional and socio-economic environment is extremely challenging. However, Butoke was successful in obtaining political support from the governor of the province, and included a number of local chiefs among its founders. The success of Butoke’s work since then has helped to protect it from interference. Military groups in the area – whose members also suffer from hunger – have been included among those that Butoke assists with seeds and basic tools, and this has helped to gain support from this quarter. In the spring of 2006, Butoke was awarded 6.5 ha. of land and supporting infrastructure by the National Commission for the Demobilization of Combatants to use as a nursery and thus expand its range of activities. Good work, combined with pragmatism, diplomacy and tact, seems to have created its own enabling environment.

Managing the donors

Butoke has tried hard to avoid dependency on donors that would force it to survive based on project funding and would prevent it from engaging in long-term strategic programming. Access to independent funding has helped to fill some gaps, most notably for humanitarian purposes, while the project funding secured from CIDA has been very broad in nature and respectful of Butoke’s programmatic priorities. Funding from UNICEF and FAO has been much more rigid and demanding to manage for Butoke, partly due to the lack of any intermediation between Butoke and the donor. In the case of CIDA funding, Canadian NGOs provide a buffer between CIDA and Butoke, allowing Canadian NGOs to act as intermediaries, to ensure a certain level of flexibility for Butoke.

Partnership

North-South collaboration is clearly an important part of Butoke’s success. This has included the role of NGOs from the North in supporting Butoke financially, but also a constant exchange of ideas, and some contributions in kind. Although Butoke’s current project support from CIDA is channelled through a single Canadian partner NGO (now Help the Aged Canada), the project includes contributions from a consortium of Canadian NGOs involved in supporting Butoke’s institutional development. While this approach has required some innovation on the part of these NGOs to work together in this way, the approach has succeeded in shielding Butoke from the demands and particularities of any individual NGO, whose mandate might not have sufficed to support the whole of the Butoke program.

To summarize, Butoke illustrates the best of what a small NGO has to offer. Locally-based, Butoke is well adapted to local conditions and capable of delivering services in a cost-effective way. The institutional culture is values-based, and results-oriented, ensuring that funds provided from the outside are well used for intended purposes. And yet, Butoke maintains a strong attachment to the outside world, which enables it to engage strategically in development and change in a way that draws on experience elsewhere, while tapping into the resources that Northern-based partners can provide.

Extracted from the case study “Butoke: Grassroots Development with a Heart” drafted in consultation with Butoke’s founders, Dr. Cécile de Sweemer and Jean Lumbala, cecileds@yahoo.com and lumbulajean@yahoo.com

2... Multi-stakeholder Consultations on Development Cooperation and Human Rights in Colombia

Description of the Initiative

Since 2003 Colombia has been working in an innovative experience known as the London-Cartagena-Bogota Process, named after three international conferences on development cooperation.

• The first one was in London (July 2003), in which a group of 24 donors, called the Group of 24, agreed to guide their aid programs according to Colombian national priorities; the government, in turn, took note of recommendations made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and committed itself to following up on those recommendations.
• The Cartagena conference was held in February 2005, and covered the International Cooperation Strategy for 2003-2006.
• The Bogota conference was in November 2007, and covered the International Cooperation Strategy for 2007-2010.

While this was initially a government-donor process, preparations for the Cartagena conference led to extensive CSO participation and recognition of the importance of the participation of CSOs as fundamental actors for the aid and development agenda, with full voice and representation in the different process scenarios.

CSO engagement was launched when several CSOs that were involved in the elaboration process of the Development Cooperation Strategy organized a meeting in which the international community and the government participated as observers. They produced a document called “Cartagena consensus”, which registered a number of “bottom-line” CSO positions and demands. It was from that point that CSOs were recognized as key actors in the process.

The government led the creation, in 2004, of the Follow-up Commission, which has representation from different actors: the national government, CSOs that belong to the Cartagena Consensus, international NGOs, members of the G 24, and the Coordinator of the United Nations for Colombia as the secretariat. The main objective of the commission has been to follow up on the aid and human rights agendas as well as to foster dialogue on different national issues. To reach this objective, the members of the commission agree each year on a work agenda with different activities.

The London meeting also gave rise to the “Post London” process whose aim was for government, CSOs and the G24 to work together, in six different working tables, to define the strategic directions of development cooperation in Colombia according to the thematic issues identified for the strategy. Forty-five meetings involving the participation of 393 national and regional institutions and 290 CSOs were held in this regard.

The III International Conference in 2007 was jointly prepared by all parties - government, the G24 and CSOs as part of a negotiated process. This resulted in the Bogota Declaration, which highlighted the achievements of the aid coordination process and celebrated Colombia’s
adhesion to the principles of the Paris Declaration.

During 2008, the process has been following up different public policies of special interest to the actors such as peace building, support for victims of civil strife, and achievement of the MDGs, among others. The process continues to emphasize human rights, where the principles of open and sincere dialogue are always respected.

Results

This process has been important in fostering constructive multi-stakeholder dialogue among the three stakeholder groups. Every year since 2003, without interruption, stakeholders have worked on an agenda based on a multi-stakeholder discussion of the mentioned issues. This has allowed advances to be made on the consolidation of an open dialogue and debate between government and CSOs on the human rights issue, based on a broader vision of the real situation.

The main result has been the two International Cooperation Strategies for 2003-2006 and 2007-2010. For the latter, one could say that there was 90% consensus on the content of the strategy. The 2007-2010 Strategy is structured around three priority areas: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the fight against the world drug problem and protection of the environment, and reconciliation and governance. The strategy relies on the government’s objective of strengthening donor support for national priorities related to the achievement of the MDGs and emphasizes the importance of joint responsibility in the fight against the world drug problem and the promotion of national reconciliation and governance. The process for developing the strategy guaranteed ownership from the different actors.

Even if the strategy is the most tangible result, it is important to underscore the work done on the subject of human rights and the discussions centered around four issues considered essential in the Colombian reality:

- implementation of recommendations by the UN Commissioner for Human Rights;
- the multi-stakeholder process of consensual elaboration of the National Action Plan for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law;
- increased access to justice and the fight against impunity; and
- attention to communities in risk.

The impact on development of the above-mentioned results is hard to measure. However, it is clear that all the actors involved in the process have benefited from it. CSOs can count on a process in which they are recognized as actors in their own right in the aid coordination process and as development agents with both rights and duties. The government has a space for dialogue with CSOs and the donor community where different concerns are raised and where the government has had the opportunity to clarify its policies. Finally, the donor community has been able to familiarize itself with the dynamic between the government and CSOs and to verify that their aid is devoted to achievement of national priorities.

This process has provided a great deal of legitimacy for the country’s aid agenda. The process has led to increased understanding of the views and interests of each of the involved actors, especially CSOs, and has helped the different actors to have good quality information for a more realistic vision of Colombia’s social, economic and political reality.
Description of Good Practice

This case speaks for itself as an innovative experience that could be replicated in different countries and adapted in context-specific ways.

Space for CS participation in policy dialogue

Worth noting has been the establishment of an open and sincere multi-stakeholder dialogue in Colombia between the government, CSOs and the donors in which the participation of CSOs as actors with an independent voice and the ability to influence public policy decisions in the country has been explicitly recognized, over and beyond the more conservative role of CSOs as observers.

Indeed, the participation of CSOs has been not only recognized but essential to the success of the process, since CSOs contributed valuable inputs to the dialogue. The opportunity of CSOs to discuss the issues amongst themselves, in separate CSO spaces, was an important part of this. For this reason, it is important to mention a number of CSO-led events, such as the meetings before the conferences in Cartagena and Bogota, where CSOs were able to share with the international community their perspectives regarding aid, human rights, and other issues they consider important for Colombia. This exercise allowed the different actors to identify consensus and discord and to work towards progress on those issues where disagreement existed.

There is much to do yet. However, by maintaining communication channels open between the different actors, and by continuously proving their willingness to work together, this process will allow the country as a whole to have comprehensive and coherent development strategies that respond to the interests of all actors.

Extracted from the case study “Proceso Londres – Cartagena – Bogotá ” submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Enrique Maruri Londoño, Director of International Cooperation – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, enrique.maruri@cancilleria.gov.co and Sandra Alzate, Director of International Cooperation – Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation, salzate@accionesocial.gov.co

3... Platform for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Mali

Description of the Initiative

The United Nations committee responsible for monitoring the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) has indicated that it will accept reports submitted by civil society. These are commonly known as “alternative reports” or “parallel reports.” Since 1997, civil societies in many Latin American and Asian countries have adopted this approach. These alternative reports are a way for civil societies to be heard by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and to publicize the status of economic, social, and cultural rights in a given country.

There is no universally accepted definition of poverty. However, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights adopts a multidimensional concept that reflects the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights (E/C.12/2001/10):

... poverty may be defined as a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

In Mali, the Platform for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Platform), commonly known as the Plate-forme DESC du Mali, was organized in 2005 to support civil society in strengthening the rule of law and democracy by producing alternative reports on economic, social, and cultural rights in Mali. The Platform seeks to pressure public authorities in Mali to address people’s rights and honour their commitment to report to the international community on the implementation status of the ICESCR, which Mali ratified in 1976. This approach thus uses the leverage that the international community can provide to pressure the government, consistent with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper that Mali has adopted. This process is currently under way, and represents a first in West Africa.

The Platform has brought together six apex organizations and 36 member civil-society organizations (CSOs), covering all of Mali, to develop this report, which focuses mainly on health, education, food security, access to land, labour, and social protection. This process is based on consultation and partnership with as many stakeholders as possible, including stakeholders from government, local communities, and development partners, and a number of thematic research groups. This extends to citizens who are concerned about public policies on development, who are seen not merely as “targets” of these policies down the line, but also as driving forces of reform around a widely shared and deeply felt issue.

The Platform enjoys a high level of legitimacy in the eyes of Mali’s public authorities, because the leaders of the Platform have worked on the issue of human rights for many years in other CSOs. The Platform’s legitimacy is strengthened by the partnership relationships that it has established with CSOs abroad (Terre des Hommes-France and Réseau IMPACT), with support from France, to support the process and carry it forward to the United Nations.

The Platform’s approach is part of an endogenous process that values the role of public opinion and promotes public debate. To raise public awareness in Mali, the Platform has capitalized on
the capacities of its member CSOs, which have reached out in the Bambara language in villages and marketplaces, and have produced clips for radio and television.

Results

The Platform submitted its first alternative report to the United Nations committee responsible for monitoring the ICESCR in Geneva in 2007. Once it has received the formal report from the Government of Mali, the committee will provide its observations and recommendations. These can be used to advocate for public policies that ensure greater respect for human rights and to promote legislative or sectoral reforms with a favourable impact on the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable.

A number of rights are enshrined in Mali’s constitution, and legislative progress has been made in their regard. However, the Platform maintains that these rights are too often violated. We cite three examples from the Platform’s report: the right to housing, the right to health, and freedom of association.

The right to housing has been the focus of many measures, such as the creation of the Malian Housing Authority, creation of the Housing Bank, amendment of the land tenure system. Despite these measures, the right to housing is still ineffective for the vast majority of the people of Mali, who remain at the mercy of land and financial speculation by mayors, wealthy buyers, and the Housing Bank itself. Thus, for example, in the East Sabalibougou sector of Bamako’s Commune V, 300 families were evicted in flagrant violation of legal decisions, despite the fact that this sector was included in the rehabilitation plan of Order 220, dated April 14, 1987. In light of this, the Platform recommends that Mali establish a national housing policy with clearly defined sources of funding and clear roles and responsibilities. The Platform also recommends wide dissemination of information on housing, on access to land, and on compliance with sectoral urban planning.

With regard to the right to health and to social and health protection, the Government increased the share of the budget allocated for health from 2004 to 2006, but decreased this share in 2007. Mali’s health status does not provide any explanation for this decrease. Among other things, the Platform recommends the establishment of a universally accessible health care system, and full and universal implementation of Mali’s national social protection plan.

Finally, there have been serious violations of freedom of association. Some employers have refused to create union committees for their businesses; union representatives have been dismissed for performing their union duties; and activists and union leaders have been dismissed for taking strike action. In light of this, the Platform advocates efforts to strengthen labour organizations in the country.

The approach adopted by the Platform has led to the establishment of a nation-wide watchdog mechanism for citizens to monitor the status of economic rights in the country. The work of producing an alternative report that reflects the viewpoints of various civil society groups has made it possible to decompartmentalize various groups and encouraged cooperation on themes that are ordinarily handled separately by different types of CSOs (unions, health insurers, development NGOs, neighbourhood associations, and human rights advocacy organizations). It has also encouraged constructive dialogue with the Government of Mali, and engagement with
decentralized government entities and donors.

Description of Good Practice

Voice: international law supports CSOs’ advocacy work

The Platform’s activities are unique because they promote a human rights approach to poverty reduction and development, based on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948, and the United Nations *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* of 1966, more specifically. This initiative illustrates how international law can be used to support advocacy work for human rights in ways that are fully consistent with the principle of country ownership in the Paris Declaration.

Recourse to international law makes it possible to engage in constructive dialogue with the government, while respecting the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved. Developing an alternative report on economic, social, and cultural rights has helped Mali to take stock of its public policies from a human rights perspective. The report has thus become a tool for constructive dialogue with government on matters of public policy. It has also supported the efforts of government officials to develop the government’s formal report on economic, social, and cultural rights, and to implement government measures to reduce poverty and inequality, based on a human rights perspective, rather than one of public charity.

Enabling environment and CSO partnerships

This initiative illustrates the benefits of networking. Networking was necessary at all levels to assemble a community of local partners and qualified human resources needed to cover the various dimensions of the problem right across the country, to mobilize information, to identify contacts in different ministries, and so on. The Platform’s networked approach and the inclusive approach adopted by the Platform more generally illustrate how civil society can make its voice heard, and the conditions required for this to produce results.

Apart from networking within Mali, international networking also contributed to the success of the approach, providing a way to reinforce the legitimacy of the Platform in the eyes of the Malian Government. This legitimacy is an asset, in turn, to ensure that ideas are recognized and taken into consideration in the effective implementation of public policies to reduce poverty and inequality.

Extracted from the case study “Platform for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Mali” submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Patricia Huyghebaert, Manager, Executive Secretariat, Réseau IMPACT c/o GRET – Campus du Jardin Tropical, huyghebaert@gret.org

4... Mali’s National Consultations on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness

Description of the Initiative

This case is being put forward as an example of a relatively successful multi-stakeholder dialogue on aid effectiveness. These consultations were more extensive in Mali than in most other countries, and helped to launch more long-lasting processes of consultation and cooperation among the stakeholders.

The process was launched by the field offices of two donors, Canada and France, in response to encouragement from the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness. It began in June 2007, with the organization of two high level preparatory meetings. These served to establish a consortium of Malian civil society organizations (CSOs) consisting of eight CSO umbrella organizations and networks to lead and organize the consultations. Both national CSOs and Northern-based CSOs were included. The *Fédération des collectifs d’ONG du Mali* (FECONG) was selected as the secretariat for the consortium.

A proposal was prepared and submitted to the donor community for support. A particularity of this proposal was that it involved not a single national-level consultation, but a country-wide consultative process involving nine separate consultations at the regional and district levels prior to the organization of a national consultation. Budgeted at $77,965 US, this proposal received the support of several donors, including Canada, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, and the Aga Khan Foundation.

The regional and district consultations themselves took place between Sept. 1, 2007 and Sept. 19, 2007. Each workshop brought together some 50 participants from various sections of civil society in the region. Their analyses of the implementation of the Paris Declaration led to a set of recommendations for discussion at the national workshop. The national consultation took place on Sept. 26-27, and was divided in two parts – a CSO-only part on the first day, and a multi-stakeholder consultation on the second, involving nearly 100 participants.

No initiative in Mali had ever before mobilized all civil society actors, particularly umbrella organizations. For the first time, all of these organizations were involved from the beginning of the process onwards. Regional NGO coordinating entities were tasked with organizing regional workshops, and the national council with organizing a workshop for the district of Bamako. There was thus a high level of participation of CSOs and sharing of responsibilities.

A total of 650 people representing 292 separate CSO, government and donor organizations participated in the various consultations. This included representation from 218 Malian CSOs, 15 Northern-based CSOs, 15 government offices, and 25 donor offices. Six separate government ministries participated in the national tripartite dialogue, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Participation was thus widespread and truly multi-stakeholder, involving participation from different levels (district to national) as well as across stakeholder groups.

Preparatory materials were prepared, based on inputs produced by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, as well as locally-produced inputs. In preparation for the national consultation, CSOs produced a consolidated report of regional consultations for the donors and the government. In turn, the government and the donors each prepared a presentation on what
had been done and what was planned for each in terms of implementing the Paris Declaration, in order to help civil society to identify possible avenues of participation.

Among the recommendations retained by the national consultation were the following:

That the Malian government:

- work closely with CSOs in defining development policies and strategies;
- establish a permanent dialogue with CSOs on the management official development assistance;
- reinforce existing aid coordination mechanisms, ensuring a role for CSOs; and
- support capacity building for CSOs.

That CSOs:

- pursue the above recommendations with the government;
- implement mechanisms and partnership arrangements to facilitate permanent dialogue among CSOs themselves, and with the government and donors; and
- participate in the monitoring of national budget processes;
- work to further develop their own capacities.

And that donors:

- support ongoing tripartite dialogue among CSOs government and donors;
- foster CSO capacity building, including management training and institutional support; and
- beyond providing budget support for government, continue to fund project and programs adapted to the local context.

Results

The consultations were an opportunity to explain the Paris Declaration and its principles in simpler terms to grassroots CSOs in Mali’s eight regions, as well as to familiarize the regions with the concept of aid effectiveness. In Mali, CSOs tended to equate the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness with the trend towards increased use of budgetary support, so it was important to develop a broader understanding.

The consultative process also provided an opportunity for CSOs to increase their coordination and to raise the government’s awareness of the vibrancy and diversity of Mali’s civil society. The organizing committee will transform itself into a national umbrella organization for all CSOs in Mali in order to improve representation of civil society in the country.

The CSO participants at the national synthesis workshop tasked the National Consultations Organizing Committee with follow-up. This Committee organized three follow-up meetings between CSOs and donors and invited the government to send a representative to attend all future CSO/donor meetings, with their approval. During these meetings, the participants committed to improving communications and dialogue and to building CSO capacity in several key areas, including research and advocacy.

For donors, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Paris Declaration involved, among other things, the reorganization of its thematic groups. This included the establishment of a 14-
The Consultations also created the momentum for greater tripartite dialogue among all partners. Although no new permanent mechanism was established for government-CSO dialogue beyond the annual consultations, there is an increased representation of CSOs, and more comprehensive inclusion of their concerns, in regular fora such as donor roundtables and PRSP reviews. A draft code of ethics for dialogue has been developed which sets out a permanent mechanism that includes annual meetings on global challenges, similar to the national consultations, for all CSOs and donors, and two to three meetings per year on specific issues identified by the thematic groups. In addition, a tripartite commission has been struck to design and fund a capacity development program for CSOs.

Description of Good Practice

As an example of good practice in organizing this type of consultation, this case illustrates several points.

The catalytic role played by the Advisory Group and the role that donors can play

Although CSOs took the lead in the consultations, as is appropriate, the international consultative process initiated by the Advisory Group helped to generate the necessary momentum, and provided a ready source of guidance and reference materials. The fact that the process was seen as a multi-stakeholder process from the start, in which donors played a catalytic role was also helpful, as it helped to ensure widespread support and buy-in from a broad community of participants, including donors, CSOs and government representation.

Coordination of donor support to CSOs for timeliness

This project was also a good example of coordinated donor support to a civil society initiative. Coordinated, effective and efficient support of donors made national consultations possible in record time. Beyond the question of funding, there was also a high degree of mobilization of donors in the tripartite dialogue, with the participation of some 15 donors. This has set the precedent for donors to work together for lasting, coordinated and effective support of CSOs in Mali.

CSO collaboration to achieve mobilization of the entire community

As we have seen, this project saw CSOs joining efforts in a consortium of umbrella organizations and networks. This was fundamental to the success of the project in mobilizing representation from the whole of the CSO community in Mali, ensuring both the legitimacy of the process and a wide range of perspectives. As we also saw, this process has helped CSOs to develop new mechanisms for working together into the future.

Critical mass and continuity

Although national consultations in other countries have varied considerably in size and scope, the ones in Mali were among the most ambitious. As a result, they seem to have achieved a critical mass required in order to make a significant difference in stakeholders’ understanding of the role of CSOs in aid effectiveness. This critical mass was crucial to achieving the results
described earlier, significantly affecting the ability of CSOs to collaborate with each other and the way that various stakeholders relate to each other in an enduring way.

**Enabling environment: strong government participation**

Let us mention, finally, the favorable environment that exists in Mali for dialogue between government and CSOs, as illustrated by the high level of government participation in the consultations.

Based on reports published on the Advisory Group’s extranet site and consultations with the organizers. See in particular:

ENRICHING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PARIS PRINCIPLES

5... Women’s Organizations, Gender Equality and Kenya’s Poverty Reduction Strategy

Description of the Initiative

As part of the process to develop its poverty reduction strategy, the government Kenya took a number of steps to increase participation by groups previously excluded, such as women. It established a multi-stakeholder body with representatives from government, civil society and donors to serve as a technical working group. This eventually became the PRSP Secretariat, which also included the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) Committee of the Ministry of Finance and Planning. The Secretariat designed a three-tiered structure for national consultations to ensure that the voice of the poor was heard and taken into consideration in the national planning process.

The Gender Thematic Group (GTG) was the first thematic group set up at national level to support the consultation process. The aim of the GTG was to ensure that gender concerns were clearly and adequately addressed in the PRSP/MTEF process through women's effective participation at all levels, including in Sector Working Groups (SWGs) at the national level.

The GTG mobilized women to participate in district-level consultations where they put forward concerns and measures that should be taken to improve their status. In some districts, women participated in focus group discussions to outline their concerns, which were then documented in district reports.

At the community level, participatory poverty assessments (PPAs) were carried out in 10 districts from January to March 2001 to give the poor an opportunity to air their views regarding poverty. One of the guidelines given to the researchers was to ensure equal participation of women and men. The PPA reports captured the voices of poor women and included a section on gender. The PPAs brought out women's experiences of poverty, particularly lack of access to and control of land, and the resources and benefits accruing from land.

Results

Through the participatory and inclusive approach of the process, democratic ownership was strengthened and the centrality of gender equality in the aid effectiveness agenda became apparent. The government realized the need for partnership with actors outside the government, in particular women’s organizations, in mainstreaming gender into development policy and macro-economic planning. This has led to the retention of the GTG.

The PRSP process gave the poor an opportunity to share their experiences on poverty. Furthermore, it offered women’s organizations an opportunity to work closely with the government for the first time on development policy and macro-economic issues. In respect to the consultations, for the first time in Kenya, gender issues were identified as crosscutting. It was also the first time that the government ensured gender balance in all consultative structures, and
at least 30 per cent of persons who participated in the consultation process and structures at all levels were women. In some instances, women constituted more than 30 per cent of the participants at district level. Through the PPAs, the gender dimensions of poverty were captured clearly due to the deliberate decision taken to ensure women's participation.

Women’s organizations worked as a catalyst for the inclusion of gender equality into the PRS process in Kenya, which gave the process a chance to become more effective. While this process gave a voice to the poor – particularly women – it can be argued that its main benefit was the lessons learned.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Recognition and voice: government creates spaces for dialogue*

This initiative demonstrates good practice in the integration of gender issues into the PRSP process in Kenya.

The participatory nature of this initiative allowed women’s organizations to work with government. The government, as a result of this initiative, ensured gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in all consultative structures, thus ensuring that women’s organizations at the national level were given due recognition as development actors in their own right. The requirement of women's representation to be at least 30 per cent and the use of local languages helped to capture women's concerns. This is attributed to the role of leading CSOs, in particular women’s organizations, that facilitated the consultations in partnership with the district development officers.

However, despite the positive experiences described above, there were also critical concerns about the overall process and the quality of inputs into the process from a gender perspective. For example, initially there was a suggestion to second a gender expert to the PRSP/MTEF Secretariat, as was done for civil society and the private sector, but this was not implemented. It would have offered the Secretariat the necessary capacity to mainstream gender issues in both process and content more comprehensively as well as ensure effective linkage with the GTG. Another issue concerned the GTG, which was formed after the launch of the consultations, giving it a very short time to plan and prepare inputs into critical processes such as SSWGs, thematic groups and district consultations that were either starting or ongoing.

*Strengthening the enabling environment: tips for mainstreaming gender*

Good practice could be improved and could benefit from some level of international consensus on how to integrate gender equality issues, gender experts, women and women’s groups from the very beginning into PPSP processes and other development processes. An assessment of the initiative produced the following recommendations to improve the mainstreaming of gender in development policy and macro-economic planning:

- Ensure the adoption and implementation of a national gender and development policy to provide the legal framework for the integration of gender perspectives in all development activities undertaken by the government, including economic planning.
- Involve women in all development planning processes from the conceptualization stage to ensure that they understand the process and get adequate time to organize themselves in terms of the human and financial resources required.
• Institutionalize gender-sensitive participatory planning and monitoring mechanisms, such as community, district and national stakeholders’ fora, participatory sector working groups, sector hearings and thematic groups within the national development planning framework.

• When managing for development results, monitoring and evaluation systems must be gender-sensitive. Also, the acquisition and improvement of sex-disaggregated data must become predictable, regular and consistent to support planning, negotiation, monitoring, and evaluation of development and aid policies. To improve the gender equality component in the current monitoring system of the Paris Declaration, the use of baselines as well as input and output performance indicators of gender impacts in budgetary reporting must be promoted; in addition, gender targets, inputs and outputs in national budgets and ODA must be specified.

**Good donorship: the importance of capacity development**

The role of donors and governments in strengthening the capacity and technical skills of CSOs and governments is critical to the success of the PRS process. In particular, women’s organizations, national women’s machineries, gender advocates and women parliamentarians need to be supported in a regular and predictable way so that they can meaningfully engage in development policy dialogue to increase local and democratic ownership. Capacity development of all stakeholders is much-needed and has to be resourced. It must be part of the initial stages of an initiative.

Develop capacities of women's organizations in monitoring and evaluation of the budget, including expenditure tracking, from a gender perspective, to assess the impact of the strategies implemented on women and men as a basis for further advocacy around the budget. In particular, in view of the new aid modalities such as general budget support, it is imperative to integrate gender equality aspects, as gender equality and the empowerment of women are not automatically part of strategies, planning and policies.

Develop capacities of government officials, particularly in the PRSP/MTEF Secretariat, to mainstream gender in macro-economic planning, implementation and monitoring and research its impact on GDP and poverty reduction. This should be done through cooperation with women's and research organizations.

Extracted from the case study “Integrating Gender in the PRS process in Kenya”, submitted to the AG-CS in 2008 by Nora Matovu, Executive Director, African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), director@femnet.or.ke

6... Public Consultations on Senegal’s 2004 Agro-sylvo-pastoral Act (LOASP)

Description of the Initiative

In June 2004, Senegal passed an Agro-sylvo-pastoral Act (the Loi d’orientation agro-sylvo-pastorale du Sénégal, or LOASP). This Act provides a coherent framework for the development of Senegal’s agricultural and rural development sector over the next 20 years. A unique feature of this Act is that it was the result of broad-based consultations and dialogue between the government and stakeholders engaged in agriculture and rural development.

A draft version of this bill was introduced in March 2003, but features dealing with land tenure generated strong reactions, prompting the government to withdraw this part of the bill and to initiate a comprehensive consultation process on what should go into a revised bill. The National Council for Rural Cooperation (CNCR), a Senegalese farmers’ organization, launched a large-scale consultative process over a four-month period, involving 3,000 of its members across the country. This consultation process was designed to enable each stakeholder group to organize itself locally first, before moving up to other levels from the local to the national. This was an iterative process involving well-organized and structured stakeholders. This process resulted in an alternative legislative model, many elements of which were incorporated into the LOASP.

Although implementation of the LOASP has been delayed, the consultation process that led to the passage of this act illustrates the value of civil society’s role and participation in policy development. The LOASP review committee took note not only of the CNCR’s comments and opinions, but also those of other CSOs – the Association nationale des conseils ruraux [National Association of Rural Councils], Enda, and the Alumni Association of the École nationale supérieure d’agriculture [Senegalese Graduate School of Agriculture] in Thiès.

Results

From the draft version of the bill to the LOASP

A comparison of the original version of the bill and the final Act illustrates how much had changed as a result of the consultative process (Chaboussou and Ruello, 2006). Changes included the following:

- While the land tenure component was initially an integral part of the bill, this aspect was finally taken out to become the subject of a separate consultation and reform process that is clearly announced in the LOASP. This land tenure bill would define the land rights of individuals, farm operations and communities. A national land law reform commission was established in September 2005.
- Also distinctive in the LOASP is its general orientation in matters having to do with competitiveness and productivity, which can now be seen to favour food security over competition with agricultural production from other countries – although the promotion of exports and import substitution remain priorities under the LOASP.
- By systematizing consultations on agro-sylvo-pastoral development policies and programs between government and rural stakeholders, including local authorities and CSOs, the
LOASP signals a gradual reduction of the government’s monopoly on the design of agro-sylvo-pastoral development policy.

- The LOASP is no longer biased in favour of industrial and commercial operations the way the original bill was. The only distinction between industrial operations and family operations in LOASP has to do with the treatment of employees.
- The LOASP recognizes all rural economic activities, no longer limiting itself to agricultural activities. It does so in the following ways:
  - recognizing animal husbandry and pastoralism as legitimate elements of sound land management;
  - exploring measures for promoting social equity in rural areas and protection from natural disasters and risks for agriculturalists; and
  - seeking to protect agricultural investments by adopting a farm insurance policy and building a seed bank.
- The LOASP defines the rights and functions of farmers’ organizations.
- The LOASP emphasizes the need for intervention to correct market imperfections through subsidies and protective action.

The consultations allowed real progress in refining the LOASP. However, the long-term significance of the Act will only be evident when and if it is actually implemented.

Other results

The broad-based consultation that led to the development of the LOASP represents a break with earlier public policy definition processes in which donors played a key role. Consultations became institutionalized with the creation of a High Level Advisory Council on Agro-sylvo-pastoral Matters, the establishment of regional committees, and plans to organize an annual agricultural conference to help monitor and implement the LOASP.

With the LOASP comes recognition of the development roles of farmers, farmers’ organizations and CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies in the sector. The consultations made it possible to sensitize the rural population to the issues while raising public awareness more generally, around the bill and the LOASP.

The consultation process also helped to consolidate the CNCR’s legitimacy and bargaining power as the voice of farmers in dialogue with the government on agricultural development issues. This outcome is not devoid of interest if we consider the conditions required for CSO voices to be effective in policy dialogue and decision-making processes. Representing over 3.5 million producers throughout Senegal, the CNCR is recognized as the “farmers’ voice,” by virtue of its involvement for more than ten years in rural development and its proven technical expertise.

As for the Government of Senegal, it can take pride in an Act that stands for genuine ownership, produced in consultation with a large cross-section of rural civil society, not just donors and heads of umbrella organizations and networks.

This kind of participative public policy development sets a precedent in West Africa, and Mali and Burkina Faso have now also elected to develop their farm policies through consultation.
Description of Good Practice

Conditions for an effective CSO voice: a strong communications strategy can change government priorities

A first observation that can be drawn from the case is that CSOs can strengthen their legitimacy not only by increasing their base of representation, but also through information, communications, and awareness-raising to rally public opinion. In the national consultation that it initiated in Senegal, the CNCR worked in close cooperation with the media (television, radio and newspapers) to disseminate its message on the issues. Information was circulated in several national languages, allowing everyone to form an opinion and to “own” the process.

The CNCR’s communications campaign was aimed at the whole of Senegal’s population, both rural and urban. Simultaneously with the publication of the *Farmers’ Manifesto*, CSOs mobilized a crowd of 30,000 in Dakar’s Léopold Sédar Senghor Stadium. This demonstration was broadcast by local media and international television stations, including TV5, and was preceded by a poster campaign encouraging the population to tune in. By opening up rural dialogue to all citizens, the CNCR asserted the importance of engaging in a national debate. By making the LOASP the top story of the day, it forced the Government of Senegal to make agricultural policy development a priority.

This led the government to acknowledge the value of a more consultative approach to policy development, instead of a top-down or merely horizontal process involving the heads of umbrella organizations and donors. This means allowing the process to run its course in a way that allows various levels of actors to play a role while allowing the participatory process to have a real impact on the substance and results of public policies.

Support to CSOs in their efforts to organize themselves in umbrella organizations, working groups, and networks is key

CSOs need to be well organized and structured if consultations are to be efficiently managed as illustrated by the LOASP consultation process. This means securing input from all concerned groups at various levels, from ministry to district. CSOs derive their legitimacy largely from the organized, structured forum they represent. The support and legitimacy that the CNCR derives from rural communities is what gives it legitimacy with the government, and the consultative process within the farmers’ movement is itself a tool for dialogue with the government.

The selection of key representatives for the various parties also played a part. In Senegal’s LOASP process, civil society and the government each chose a mediator. This approach paved the way for dialogue by bringing together two gifted personalities who shared the same vision of agriculture. Having worked together previously, these two individuals found common ground for effective communication.

Outside support needed for follow-up

This initiative attracted only modest financial support from donors (France, Switzerland, and the World Bank), but international organizations can also provide technical and financial support for this type of process. After the consultations had run their course, and at the request of the President of Senegal, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reviewed the bill and sent an expert from its legal office, who suggested an improved format, a more logical sequence, and a
more legal tone in the bill’s various sections.

However, donors and government alike have failed to follow up on this issue. The current lack of follow-up in implementing the Act may partly be explained by a lack of funding. The Government of Senegal has made no provision in the national budget to fund implementation of the LOASP, nor has it mobilized development partners to fund implementation of the Act.

In principle, the alignment principle of the Paris Declaration suggests that donors should align their efforts to support implementation of the LOASP. In practice, donors have different visions of how best to support agricultural policy in Senegal, with negative consequences for policy coherence in the country when it comes to reducing poverty and inequality.

Summary

In conclusion, this case study reveals the responsibilities of CSOs themselves in establishing their legitimacy and building up their public policy expertise, by consulting with their members. It also reminds governments of their responsibility to allow enough time for meaningful consultations to take place, while paying serious attention to the results. As for donors, their responsibility is to align with national priorities and to ensure coherence in the support they provide.

Extracted from the case study “Processus national de définition et d’application d’une politique publique sectorielle : le cas de la Loi d’Orientation Agro-Sylvo-Pastorale du Sénégal” submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Chantal Duray-Soundron, IMPACT Executive Secretariat, duraysoundron@gret.org

**7... CSOs and Education in Mozambique: Issues of Alignment and Complementarity**

**Description of the Initiative**

The Promotion of a Literate Environment in Mozambique (PLEM) project aims to support the improvement of the quality of education in the Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces of Mozambique, and to contribute this experience to the education system country-wide. Its specific objective is to increase the reading and writing skills among primary school students through the strengthening of institutional capacity. PLEM’s strategy encompasses the provision of reading and learning materials in Portuguese and local languages; creation of school libraries and resource centres; skills development for primary teachers and adult literacy agents on improved teaching methods and bilingual teaching; and training of education officers on planning, in-service training and monitoring of teaching/learning.

CODE and its local partner Associação Progresso (Progresso) plan and implement PLEM, in close co-operation with the Mozambican Ministry of Education and Culture at the national and provincial levels. PLEM is in alignment with the Government of Mozambique’s first and second Education Sector Strategic Plans (ESSP). However, because the government’s capacity and structure does not allow the flexibility required to experiment with new education approaches, PLEM is funded through a bilateral agreement between CODE and CIDA. This allowed Progresso to start the implementation of the bilingual education experience in primary education in Cabo Delgado and Niassa, following the Ministry’s decision to include bilingual education into the national curriculum.

Progresso and CODE support the implementation of government strategies by working with communities and government to design and implement interventions that build on the identified needs and the institutional priorities and capacities of government. They do so in a way that is adapted to local needs and realities, drawing from their experience, knowledge base and skills in the education sector and in the region.

**Results**

Progresso and CODE have been working to increase the quality of education in the two northern provinces of Mozambique for over 15 years. Their experience has influenced the work of a broad network of southern CSOs focused on literacy and has assisted in the development of government policy, curriculum and processes in Mozambique, including the implementation of the ESSP. In fact, the relationships cultivated through CODE and Progresso’s networks allow for the sharing of lessons in Mozambique and throughout the world, building alliances around quality education.

By implementing PLEM in close collaboration with the education system, CODE and Progresso are supporting the enhancement of planning, implementing and monitoring capacity within the education system at the provincial and national levels.

Among PLEM’s achievements are:

- 508,600 students (Grades 1-7) from 1,815 schools have increased access to appropriate
reading materials (179 titles in Portuguese, support for local publication; promotion of positive gender roles);

• improved skills of teachers and education officers through in-service training (almost all of the 9,000 primary teachers increased their teaching skills and nearly 1,000 coordinators, provincial and district officers, and trainers of teachers increased their skills in pedagogical supervision); and

• support to the implementation of the bilingual curriculum in 5 local languages: (33 primary schools of 143 classes from grade one to six; more than 7,000 students and their teachers; publication of 59 textbooks in five local languages and more than 100 titles of children’s reading materials).

The project reaches the entire primary education system in Cabo Delgado and Niassa, including 1,400 schools and their libraries, over 9,000 primary teachers, more than 500,000 children, nearly 1,000 coordinators, provincial and district officers, and trainers of teachers.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Application of a broad ownership concept*

The Mozambican Ministry of Education and Culture acknowledges that its strategic plan cannot be implemented without the support from CSOs’ capacity and experience. This openness has been a key factor for success, along with Progresso’s large membership base, with representation in Maputo and the provinces, and the numerous long-term supporters in the rural communities reached. Progresso designed its initiatives based on the specifics of each province, and experimented with innovations that build on the different socio-cultural characteristics of each group, enabling it to address important issues such as educational attainment, gender and HIV.

The approach to building human and institutional capacity within PLEM rests upon a complex and extended web of institutional relationships: Progresso at national and provincial levels, CODE and other CSOs, donor agencies, the MEC at national, provincial and district levels, its associated agencies, the academic community, and key community-level actors. All partners are critical to the day-by-day operation of the program and own the results and share in its combined achievements. This commitment to accountability at community, provincial, national and international levels is another key success factor.

*Harmonization and alignment*

PLEM initiatives are developed within the capacity available in the education system, while strengthening the system’s capacity. PLEM is planned in close coordination with the annual provincial education plans, while ensuring enough autonomy for innovation and inclusion of specific needs of the provincial context reached by the initiative. The implementation respects the pace allowed within the education system as opposed to creating an artificial environment in order to accelerate unsustainable results. In this way, Progresso deepens its trust relationship with the education system, facilitating the adoption and adaptation of its experiences by MEC in the implementation of its country-wide program.
Good donorship and appropriate NCSO/SCSO partnerships

CIDA’s bilateral project is a funding modality that allows CODE and Progresso to experiment and innovate with education initiatives that support the Mozambican ESSP. This modality complements CIDA’s PBA support for the education sector in Mozambique and builds on CIDA’s previous support through its Canadian Partnership funding mechanism. The ability to be flexible, innovate and pilot new ideas and approaches allows CODE and Progresso to maximize the use of resources available and develop more cost-effective appropriate alternatives that could be adopted by the government.

CODE’s responsibility for the management of the contract in Canada allows Progresso to continue focusing their efforts towards reporting and planning with the Mozambican partners. CODE’s long-term commitment to education and support of Progresso’s education initiative, and ability to secure funds through CIDA’s different funding mechanisms, has allowed the consistency required to develop solid experiences and the relationships that move these experiences in Mozambique. In addition, CODE’s understanding of the Mozambican education context, especially the rural one, allows CODE to actively participate in consultations for the design of CIDA’s programs.

Lessons learned

- Civil society is able to pilot innovative approaches and experiences that need to have attention to details, while the capacity within the government system is geared to implement systematic approaches;
- CSOs can increase and build government capacity;
- CSOs can provide the voice of the people when a truly effective consultative process is established. Trust must be established between the people and the CSOs and government;
- CSOs can build trust by working with government in the planning, implementation and monitoring of initiatives, respecting government responsibility and maintaining efficient continuous communication with government;
- When established, the confidence of governments in CSOs must not be taken for granted; it must be constantly nurtured and earned;
- Donors can establish effective partnerships with CSOs to support government plans and programs. These partnerships can potentially decrease the risks represented by channeling all the funds directly through the government; and
- Relationships, formal and informal, provide the foundation for effective programs and policies.

Extracted from the case study “Lessons of a CSO Project and the SWAP in Education in Mozambique: Case Study on Issues in alignment with government sector strategies for CSOs”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Elisabeth Sequeira from Associação Progresso, Heloísa Modesto and Sean Maddox, Director of Development, CODE at smaddox@codecan.org.
Description of the Initiative

The Government of Mozambique’s action plan for the reduction of absolute poverty, known by its Portuguese acronym, PARPA, aims to reduce poverty from 54% in 2003 to 45% in 2009 by focusing on human capital, governance and economic development with food security and rural development as cross-cutting themes. The government’s strategy includes the promotion of both civil society and the private sector in the implementation of PARPA.

This plan provides a framework for donors and the Government of Mozambique to improve aid effectiveness through greater coherence, harmonization and alignment with national systems. Most donors support PARPA through pooled funding; however, some also support decentralized CSO initiatives that contribute to poverty reduction. This includes the Aga Khan Foundation’s Coastal Rural Support Program (CRSP), an initiative requested by the Government of Mozambique.

Since its beginning in 2001, CRSP has worked in partnership with local communities and the government of Mozambique, aligning its efforts with the overall and sector-specific objectives of PARPA and with the needs and realities of local communities. Within each sector, CRSP’s approach is carefully designed to complement and where possible strengthen efforts of the Government of Mozambique. It supports agricultural production and food security, income generation, improving quality of and access to education, strengthening health systems and extending coverage, and strengthening civil society and local governance.

Results

The CRSP takes a long-term, multi-sectoral approach to address the multiple dimensions and causes of acute rural poverty converging at household and community level in the region. Overall, CRSP contributes to the PARPA and the program-based approach (PBA) by building government capacity particularly at provincial and district levels, supporting government’s efforts in enhancing service delivery, developing the capacity of grass roots civil society structures and linking them to local government, and supporting program and policy reforms.

For example:

- Integration with district government’s plan: In accordance with the national water policy, CRSP works with communities to form committees, build their capacity and submit requests for water points to local authorities. At the same time, CRSP harmonizes its construction plans with district development plans, and community requests are assessed against these plans. Construction of 136 of the planned 292 water points is now under way in the project area and local communities are being trained in maintenance and in management of community contributions.

- Decentralization: CRSP builds the capacity of local government to conduct participatory rural appraisals to create village profiles. At the same time, CRSP helps village development organizations to set goals and objectives and create village development plans that feed into
broader district and provincial plans.

- Complementing the provincial chicken vaccination program: CRSP cooperates with provincial and district governments, sharing costs and responsibilities, to control the Newcastle virus among poultry. The government provided the vaccines, trainers and monitoring and CRSP covered training costs and was responsible for the identification of vaccinators and the mobilization of communities.

- Innovation and policy dialogue: The program has fostered an array of innovative models such as community-managed early childhood development to improving farming practices and preventing animal attacks. The Aga Khan Foundation distils lessons from CRSP and disseminates them to key stakeholders, to inform policy and positively influence practices of government, other civil society actors, and donors.

The combination of CRSP’s efforts has achieved remarkable results. Support to agriculture extension services, market development, health interventions and literacy training has contributed to a rise in incomes from $30,000 in 2005 to $640,000 in 2006 in the program area. As a result of income from surplus cash crops, 76% of the target households are now involved in a variety of income-generating activities and 26% of families consume three meals a day compared to 16% in 2005. Primary school enrolment has increased from 13% in 2003 to 67% in 2006, of which 45% were girls. In total, CRSP works with more than 400 community groups in its program area.

Description of Good Practice

The CRSP experience shows that civil society-led interventions can be designed to complement country-specific PBA objectives without compromising the principles of aid harmonization and efficiency that underpin program-based approaches. That experience also demonstrates that such initiatives, if designed within the context of national priorities while being linked to local-level realities within the context of a long-term commitment, can in fact enrich the aid-effectiveness agenda by enhancing the impact of aid.

Good donorship: more comprehensive funding models

Comprehensive and balanced funding models can support such initiatives. CIDA, for example, provided start-up funding to CRSP through its Canadian Partnership Program.

During the 2002 consultative process to develop CIDA’s bilateral country development framework for Mozambique (focusing particularly on PROAGRI, the government’s strategy for the agricultural sector), CIDA visited CRSP to observe and investigate its approach, and to explore the extent to which the program aligned with national strategies and long-term plans for sustainability. Not only were CRSP’s primary objectives indeed aligned with the government’s national plan on agriculture, but the program was poised to make an immediate impact on food security in the Cabo Delgado region – exhibiting a strong fit with CIDA’s sector-wide approach in Mozambique. The Governor of Cabo Delgado, the Director of Agriculture, and the national Minister of Foreign Affairs all wrote letters endorsing the program.

Ultimately CIDA, already a supporter of PARPA through pooled funding, entered into an agreement with the Aga Khan Foundation Canada for a six-year, $10M project to support CRSP, joining its other donors, Portuguese Cooperation, the Bernard van Leer Foundation and MOZAL.
Community Development Trust. Other donors including the European Union and the Government of Norway joined later.

*Harmonization and alignment: harnessing the strengths of all sectors*

Not all civil society-led efforts can – or should – be integrated with government PBAs. In summary, to create an effective, complementary civil society-led intervention within a PBA context, initiatives must:

- reflect the wider context of national needs and priorities;
- strategically complement and strengthen – not duplicate or replace – government efforts;
- foster local ownership in the development process on the part of local communities and/or national/sub-national governments;
- possess a robust strategy and programmatic agenda;
- be implemented in the field by partner(s) with indigenous roots and demonstrated capacity;
- address systemic issues, innovate, add value, show results and/or scale up; and
- leverage donor resources (human, technical and financial).

Perhaps the most important lesson to be derived from the CRSP model lies in the responsiveness and creativity it inserts into the framework of the program-based approach, allowing it to harness the best assets of government and civil society initiative to enhance the effectiveness and deepen the impact of aid. This case demonstrates the need for a broader interpretation of PBA principles and mechanisms if the MDGs are to be reached. In sum, the opportunity costs of excluding non-state actors from constructive and systematic engagement in national development programs are huge, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Extracted from Complementing Program-based approaches through civil society-led projects: The experience of the Coastal rural Support Program (Mozambique) submitted as a case study in 2008 to the AG-CS by Abid A. Mallick, Co-Director (Programs), Aga Khan Foundation Canada, abid@akfc.ca

9... **Keystone’s Approach to Impact Planning and Learning through Constituency Voice**

**Description of the Initiative**

Keystone is a CSO that works with a wide range of funders, other CSOs and social enterprises to design new practical ways of planning, measuring, learning and communicating social change to foster accountability and learning among all constituents (funders, CSOs, and their primary constituents – the ultimate beneficiaries of development investments), and enhance sustainable developmental impacts.

Keystone helps organizations and grant makers to design and build learning and evaluation systems that help them to monitor, learn from and publicly communicate their short-term results, manage key relationships, and understand their contributions to long-term impacts and systemic change. This involves two major techniques:

- **Impact Planning and Learning (IPL) System Design**, which includes developing a shared theory of change and impact indicators, mechanisms for gathering and learning from evidence of success, and public reporting of their learning and strategic reassessment; and

- **Comparative Constituency Feedback**, which involves anonymous surveys that capture the perceptions of an organization’s work by its constituents. This enables them to compare the quality of their relationships and their performance over time and against other similar organizations.

**IPL in South Africa**

In 2007-2008 Keystone facilitated the development of an IPL system for a foundation promoting income-generating enterprises in rural communities in Southern Africa. The first step was to develop a clear and detailed picture of what success would look like in their context. They included such outcomes as access to markets, inputs, public services, appropriate financial services, knowledge and skills. For each of the outcomes, the organization developed a more detailed ‘pathway to success’ that consisted of all the things that they thought were necessary preconditions for achieving them.

The result was a detailed set of short- and intermediate-term outcomes which allowed them to plan activities and measure their growing contribution towards ultimate success. They also mapped their activity ecosystem - identifying who (people or institutions) they thought could influence these outcomes positively or negatively. From this ecosystem map they could plan strategies to influence some of these actors and form collaborations.

As they implement the strategies, they have planned practical ways to recognize and document evidence of success or failure. In addition, they are discovering ways of getting qualitative feedback from their constituents. Their methods include change journals, in which staff record informal feedback, structured events such as focus groups, and larger-scale techniques such as surveys.

**Comparative Constituency Feedback in East Africa**

Keystone is working with locally based grant makers in East Africa to empower grantees to talk
openly to their funders and give grant makers new insight into the experience and perceptions of their grantees. This, it is hoped, will generate learning, improve relationships, and foster more effective grant-making and developmental practice in the region. The grant makers include leading international foundations like the Ford and Aga Khan Foundations, leading corporate foundations like KCB and Safaricom Foundations, local private foundations like the Rattansi Trust as well as new community grant makers such as the Kenya Community Development Foundation, the Social Action Trust Fund and Foundation for Civil Society.

The central element of the project is a comparative grantee feedback survey, which is administered simultaneously to the grantees of a group of grant-makers. This enables each grant maker to compare what grantees say about its performance with what grantees are saying about other grant makers in the group as well as what all grantees are saying across the region. It will gather feedback on the impact of foundation policy and practice on grantees and on the field of grant-making in general as well as specific dimensions of grant-maker performance such as the quality of communications, non-financial support, responsiveness and extra-financial support.

If this pilot is successful in bringing the voices of grantees into decision making, then the next step is to develop similar feedback survey methods for grantees to hear and respond to the anonymous feedback from their primary constituents.

**Results**

*Impact Planning and Learning System Design*

In the case of the IPL system design for income-generating enterprises in rural areas, having a comprehensive theory of change in place enabled the foundation to work out the ways in which they could (alone and with others) contribute most effectively to achieve the specific impacts. They also had a set of outcome indicators that they could use to measure their progress in bringing this impact about. The more their theory of change and strategies came to be understood and shared by the other constituents of the interventions, the easier it became to work together in a systematic way to achieve impacts that matter to all – especially those most affected.

In addition, the funders were able to see how they could structure their grants to better help them achieve their objectives.

*Comparative Constituency Feedback*

This project is still in its early stages. However, a number of benefits are foreseen:

- new insight about the impact of organizations on their constituents that feeds into the organizations’ assessments of their work and helps them learn and refine their approaches and strategies. Furthermore, the process enables organizations to renew their relationships with constituents on the basis of new, important and independent data;
- a powerful message to the wider sector of development cooperation about the importance of understanding how constituents are experiencing organizations in the field;
- increased legitimacy of the participating foundations as a result of their visible efforts to be accountable to their constituents; and
- increased voice for constituents. The process enables grant makers to respond to the feedback and engage in mutual learning dialogue with constituents. Such conversations are
potentially transformative and are certainly empowering. They create new opportunities for constituents to engage with organizations and increase their stake in their work.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Local and democratic ownership leads to results*

The implementation of impact planning and learning systems in combination with comparative constituency feedback surveys broadens local and democratic ownership by creating a real system of ‘unbounded governance’ where those most affected can meaningfully influence planning and measurement. Basing indicators of success on a shared theory of change enables a more meaningful approach to results that is sensitive to complex change processes and the need for gender-disaggregated outcome data. The mechanisms for gathering and documenting evidence of success promote iterative learning and adaptation, while empowering the ultimate beneficiaries of development programs. The mutual accountability among all constituents emphasizes a rebalancing of accountability for results in favour of beneficiaries, and the reinforcement of accountability systems in the country for all development actors (donors, government and CSOs).

**Accountability to beneficiaries, stakeholders, governments and donors**

All Keystone interventions require and enable CSOs to exercise transparency and primary accountability to their constituencies and stakeholders, while accounting to donors and governments for the use of public funds. Keystone promotes effective grant-making by enriching the information basis upon which social investment decisions are made with the addition of the
voices of constituents. In addition, it shows the way towards more effective reporting frameworks that exceed the current ‘upwards’ accountability requirements and become a tool for learning and for public and ‘downward’ accountability. Keystone interventions also foster the creation of communities of practice among organizations working in similar issues affecting human development with the goal to disseminate good practices, enhance peer learning and support and build more effective partnerships for development.

The interventions presented here offer the opportunity to create a system for learning and improvement to be replicated across the whole aid system. It is possible to imagine an international system where feedback loops are generated from the primary constituent level, through to international NGOs and networks, and all the way up to those who hold the resources.

Extracted from the case study, “Impact Planning and Learning through Constituency Voice: Keystone Accountability’s method links funders, implementers and primary constituents”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Natalia Kirytopoulou, Keystone natalia@keystoneaccountability.org

10... Holding the Government Accountable: The Ghana HIPC Watch Initiative

Description of the Initiative

In 2001, the Government of Ghana challenged CSOs to serve as watchdogs for the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). However, there was no operational framework, guidelines or resources given to CSOs to engage with the GPRS processes. It became the responsibility of interested CSOs to develop an engagement framework that could enable them to meaningfully influence the government in the implementation of poverty reduction programs.

One of the civil society responses, led by SEND, was the Ghana HIPC Watch. The goal of HIPC Watch is to maximize the impact of GPRS on the poor. Ghana HIPC Watch uses participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) to promote good governance, accountability and equity in the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy through:

- **Economic literacy and training**, which focuses on mobilizing civil society groups and district assemblies, and building awareness on the core principles of the GPRS which are partnership, participation, good governance and equity;

- **Monitoring and evaluation projects**, implemented by local government with HIPC funds. At the end of each district-level sensitization workshop, a multi-stakeholder district HIPC monitoring committee is elected, representing farmers, women, youth, persons living with disabilities and local government. Members are trained to monitor three types of indicators to assess GPRS performance in reducing poverty: accountability (budget monitoring, expenditure tracking at all levels, monitoring compliance to rules and regulations governing public sector funds), good governance (participation of project beneficiaries, coordination between stakeholders, including communities) and equity (whether allocations are sensitive to and guided by GPRS provisions for equality). The monitoring is conducted quarterly; and

- **Advocacy**. The findings and policy recommendations generated by the monitoring and evaluation activities are used by the lobby teams to influence parliament, ministries, donors and international NGOs. The lobby teams are organized based on priority interest groups: women, persons living with disabilities and Northern Ghana. Lobbying activities include media reports and appearances, publications and face-to-face meetings.

By 2004, HIPC Watch was a recognized civil society voice in the GPRS process championing accountability and transparency in the implementation of the GPRS.

Results

For the first time, CSO-government collaboration has been institutionalized at district and regional levels. At the district level, the District HIPC Monitoring Committee has representatives of the government and there are guidelines for the committee to engage with the district assembly. The monitoring committees have weekly interactions with individual assembly members, the staff of decentralized departments and the district executive committee. These meetings are used to collect information, validate monitoring data and to give feedback.

At the regional level, there are regional interface meetings which bring together all decentralized
departments and HIPC Watch monitoring team representatives. These meetings are used by both the regional coordinating council and the regional monitoring team members to exchange information on poverty reduction projects implemented by the district assembly.

Civil society has become more confident in asserting itself and in representing the poor. Networking among civil society activists at district and regional levels has enabled them to have greater influence on decision making in how projects are planned and implemented in their communities. The organizational capacities of a wide range of civil society actors have improved and they are transferring their policy advocacy skills to community leaders and local development activists.

PM&E has democratized the implementation of the GPRS by helping previously excluded groups to become active participants in holding government to account. As principal monitors, members of groups such as persons with disabilities, women, youth and small-scale farmers have become aware of their rights and special interests. They have held government officials accountable for addressing and meeting their special needs by representing their views and expectations and suggesting alternative ways to strengthen poverty reduction within the GPRS.

Performance monitoring of the GPRS has been made effective by the use of PM&E. The economic literacy activities have popularized the need for financial and political accountability at district, national and regional levels. The monitoring process mobilizes district-level CSOs to hold their district assemblies and decentralized ministries to account for project implementation. The findings and recommendations are used by government at all levels to improve on good governance practices in the implementation of poverty reduction projects. Lobbying events have created platforms shared by parliament, civil society and government to deliberate on issues of accountability in pro-poor programs.

Both supply and demand of health, education, water and sanitation have increased in response to the lobbying activities: community infrastructure, such as schools, health centers, water delivery points and toilets has increased; initiatives such as the capitation grant and the School Feeding Program support free compulsory basic education; the National Health Insurance scheme provides low premium insurance for all Ghanaians and the fee-free health exemption policy serves pregnant women and under- five children; $50 million is supporting small-scale microenterprise among the poor; and a new social cash transfer scheme has been set up targeting the poorest of the poor who have no income or labour capacity. Poverty levels have dropped from over 40% in the 2000 to less than 25% in 2007.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Ownership influences priorities*

New development priorities and perspectives have transformed the ownership of the GPRS. These include the rights of citizens to good governance as enshrined in Ghana’s constitution. By demanding accountability, equity and transparency, CSOs who participated in HIPC Watch exerted their ownership of programs and used it to influence and re-shape policy processes.

Civil society has developed a network of partnerships at local, regional and national levels that enables it to monitor and evaluate the GPRS. This process has generated information and insights on a quarterly basis that are used by donors and government. For example, it published
the first comprehensive performance assessment of HIPC-funded projects in 2003, and in 2007, followed up with an impact assessment. Some donors are now advocating for the use of the HIPC model to promote domestic accountability initiatives, initially focusing on the national School Feeding Program.

*Harmonization strengthens local development*

Civil society has been able to catalyze and strengthen government, civil society and donor coordination. Through the monitoring processes at district and regional levels, government and civil society actors from different sectors use the various platforms of HIPC Watch to engage each other and develop strategies to influence other actors, including donors. HIPC Watch has not only contributed to improved government coordination; it has also provided support and resource opportunities for its civil society partners at the district level. The collective nature of HIPC Watch has allowed civil society initiatives to be more attractive for donor opportunities. This in turn has enabled both government institutions and CSOs to better influence their donor partners to fund local development programs.

*Monitoring reports strengthen mutual accountability*

The monitoring activities have sought to highlight weak accountability mechanisms in the management of the GPRS and lobbying activities have focused national debate on the need for GPRS implementation to mainstream good governance practices. Furthermore, the monitoring reports bring to the attention of stakeholders, including government and donors, issues of mismanagement, abuse of power and diversion of poverty reduction funds by government officials. These reports have compelled government to become more accountable to domestic stakeholders, including parliament.

For example, following the publication of *Where Did HIPC Funds Go?*, the Ministry of Finance held a national press conference to provide detailed information on why government had used HIPC funds to finance energy sector projects. The PM&E findings and recommendations are used by parliamentarians and local and international anti-corruption campaign groups to demand good governance practices in the use of development resources by public office holders. The impact of the PM&E on accountability is widespread. For example, nearly all the 42 participating districts have taken punitive measures against non-performing contractors.

*CSO partnerships create enabling environments elsewhere*

The Ghana HIPC Watch model has been adopted by the Network Movement for Justice and Development in Sierra Leone to monitor health and education programs in the three poorest districts in Sierra Leone. SEND is coaching a network called CODDE in Burkina Faso to replicate the HIPC Watch model in the implementation of the Burkina Faso poverty reduction strategy. SEND Liberia has developed a program to use the HIPC Watch model to monitor rural infrastructure development in Liberia. The National Development Planning Commission is consulting with SEND and its partners on how to involve civil society in GPRS III.

Extracted from the case study “Ghana HIPC Watch: Holding the Government Accountable to Poverty Reduction Strategies” submitted to the AG-CS in 2008 by Siapha Kamara, Chief Executive Officer, Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa, siapha@yahoo.com

11... Budgets for the Poor: IDASA’s Budget Information Service in South Africa

Description of the Initiative

A major CSO in South Africa, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), works to strengthen the creation of a democratic culture and democratic institutions in that country. Its Budget Information Service (BIS) advocates for sustainable democracy, poverty alleviation, equity and human rights through its research and capacity building activities for legislatures, CSOs and government officials on the generation and use of resources, focusing on government budgets. Taking as its slogan budgets for the poor, BIS analyzes budgets and spending specifically in social service delivery, particularly health, education and social development, and pays particular attention to specific groups—women, children, people with disabilities, and those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

BIS analyzes and monitors data and trends on spending throughout the budget cycle as well as the administrative practices and procedures that guide implementation of budgets. It also links constitutional and policy commitments to public spending. It produces articles, budget briefs, newsletters, occasional papers, and detailed research reports which are used by government officials, parliamentarians and CSOs. It also provides training workshops with a full range of stakeholders, meets with relevant government officials and networks extensively to form strategic alliances.

BIS has played an active role in defining the concept of civil society budget work in developing countries, and has contributed substantial methodological and conceptual innovations to the field. BIS has served as an inspiration to many other groups, and has helped develop their potential by lending support, advice and technical capacities—through the Africa Budget Project as well as through its Women’s Budget Initiative, a joint initiative with CASE (the Community Agency for Social Enquiry), Children’s Budget, and efforts targeting specific issues, like HIV/AIDS.

Results

Research and analysis, combined with networking and advocacy, has enabled BIS to not only educate the public and its stakeholders, but also to influence public policy and spending at the national and provincial levels. For example, research done by its Children’s Budget Unit (CBU) sparked a major advocacy campaign to increase benefits within South Africa’s Child Support Grant program. This program provided a monthly grant of R100 to children under seven years of age, and targeted the poorest 30 percent of children.

CBU undertook several evaluations of the program and was able to illustrate that a lack of administrative capacity on the part of local governments hindered access to the program, with particularly discriminatory effects in rural and underdeveloped communities. Their studies also

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2 IDASA’s Budget Information Service turned into its Economic Governance Program, which covers budgets and broader economic policy making issues, such as trade, aid and IFIs.
illustrated that the money allocated to the program was not growing in real terms, and that the increases in government revenue had not been prioritized to this essential program within the eradication of poverty and inequality efforts in South Africa.

CBU recommended that the age limit of children accessing the social security program be raised to fourteen years. Other recommendations urged the government to improve data on the Child Support Grant, maintain the real value of the budget allocated to social security programs, and allocate resources to improving the distribution of the grant in remote areas.

CBU conducted provincial training workshops among civil society groups, activists, provincial legislatures, and human rights commissions and distributed the study results widely in electronic and printed format. They also actively pursued opportunities to discuss the findings with government officials, stressing that the purpose of the research was not to discredit the government, but rather to help improve policy formulation, budget planning, child advocacy and lobbying, and the delivery of services for children.

As a result of the information that CBU produced and provided to partners, compelling arguments were fed into the debate. It became clear that being able to illustrate financial feasibility was one of the strongest points the advocates brought to the table, giving budget information an important place in policy dialogue. The Alliance for Children’s Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS), one of the leading organizations in this struggle, mobilized its stakeholders to deliver a petition to the Minister of Social Development, requesting the extension of the grant to age 18.

ACCESS’ mobilizing power and CBU’s solid information were important ingredients in the success of the campaign, to which several groups committed in a full-fledged way. The results of their efforts were integrated into the 2003/04 budget: total resources were increased in real terms, and the age until which a child could benefit from the Child Support Grant was extended to 14.

Since then, ACCESS and CBU consider themselves to be permanent strategic allies, whose collaboration is not limited to issue-specific efforts. For CBU, nesting their research in broader social movements, which strengthen any possible argument through the power of mobilization, is an element that cannot be disregarded. Their networking and advocacy partners play a crucial role in the way in which CBU understands its research activities. For ACCESS, a relationship based on similar premises of respect and acknowledgment has been consolidated. CBU is constantly involved in training its member organizations at the provincial level, and takes part at most of ACCESS’ activities and workshops.

Description of Good Practice

BIS’s “quiet diplomacy” approach has had remarkable success in raising awareness and influencing policymakers. Among the major characteristics of this approach are:

- taking a non-confrontational attitude and a continuing disposition to discussion, collaboration and “exchange of thoughts” with government officials;
- using evidence-based dialogue – accurate, in-depth research of relevant issues;
- building and sustaining channels of communication with decision makers;
- presenting shortcomings and problems hand in hand with possible solutions and alternatives;
• mediating with other groups in order to get the right information into the debate; and
• being open to contribute to discussing, implementing or overseeing possible modifications, in a collaborative way.

Among the important lessons BIS has learned are:

• **Staffing:** it is necessary to have the right mix of skills, including technical/research, the ability to link knowledge with action, advocacy, training and executive/leadership, all underscored by a strong values base.
• **Accuracy:** throughout the years, BIS’ reputation as a reliable and solid source of information and analysis has given weight to their arguments.
• **Sustained and systematic efforts:** it is important to engage at any point in the budget cycle, from program design to tabling of the budget by the government, implementation and impact.
• **Leadership and institutional consolidation:** leadership is crucial. The capacity of maintaining unity, collaboration, a shared perspective on policy goals and advocacy objectives is crucial. It requires committed and capable leaders, and a team that is involved in a shared perspective of what the organization should be.
• **The link between research and advocacy:** the best way to make budget analysis useful is by linking it to wide-ranging advocacy activities. Investing as much time in planning what to do with research as in developing it is one of the most important lessons that IDASA/BIS have learned. Broad coalitions, that have amassed lobbying power and the capacity to bring the government to the table—and the people to the streets—are crucial ingredients to make research findings useful to the widest public possible. Working with them requires consistent efforts, building up trust and confidence, and sharing common goals.

12... *Just Budgets: Gender-responsive Budgeting in Africa*

**Description of the Initiative**

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) analyzes the implications of public spending and revenue-raising for women relative to men and can assist in advocating for changes or shifts in public expenditure to match gender policy commitments. GRB can play an important role in enabling women and other poor citizens to exercise their human rights and to increase government accountability on delivery of public services. It can also help ensure that development assistance, increasingly flowing into partner countries as general budget support (GBS), becomes more responsive to gender inequalities in society.

One World Action has partnered with four leading CSOs in Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda to research and analyze gender budget initiatives in these countries in a study known as *Just Budgets*. The project is part of One World Action’s Partnership Programme Agreement with the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The study aims to explore how GRB could be used as a tool to measure aid effectiveness from a gender perspective. This case study features the experience of Tanzania in implementing the GRB approach.

Tanzania is among the few countries in Africa that have attempted to introduce gender budgeting through selected sectors (including education, health, agriculture, water and community development) and districts. Since 1997, the government and gender organizations (Tanzania Gender Networking Program/TGNP and FemAct) have been collaborating in the implementation of this approach. TGNP has been a key resource and specialist for planners and budget officers, helping develop relevant tools for gender-aware policy reviews, policy formulation and planning, and generation of sex-disaggregated/gender-relevant data. It has also played an important role in training and coaching budget officers to include effective gender analysis in the budgeting process.

Key achievements for gender budget work in Tanzania include:

- the mainstreaming of gender components in the national budgeting system since 1999/2000 through the use of the national budget guidelines. These guidelines provide instructions to government accounting officers to adopt gender approaches in their plans and budgets;
- the adoption of gender budgeting by six key selected sectors beginning in 2000/2003. These efforts, though yet to change budget allocations significantly for gender equality, have resulted in creating awareness among planners and budget officers of the importance of gender as a variable in developing budgets;
- the opening up of further working relationships between gender organizations and economists and planners in government to enhance gender considerations in national macro planning processes. This includes the Social Accounting Matrix and the Time-Use Survey, which involved the generation of gender-related data and information for use in such processes.
Results

Just Budgets has completed the research phase and is now holding workshops to share and discuss the results with a broad range of stakeholders, including selected governments, donors, NGOs and NGO networks within the four countries. The research will be used to start a dialogue at the national level on mainstreaming gender more effectively in new aid modalities.

Preliminary research findings indicate that budget processes and related aid modalities are becoming more participatory and inclusive; however, partners argue that, in general, CSOs in the four countries are not engaging with their own governments or development partners in the new aid modality discourse.

New aid modalities express a commitment to gender which is also entrenched in the Millennium Development Goal Framework. While these provide important entry points for effective gender analysis and mainstreaming, they are not followed through in design, implementation and performance monitoring. For example, the TGNP argues that donors have considerable influence on government budgetary policy and practice. However, there are limited opportunities in the budget cycle for women’s or other CSOs to engage more proactively in the budget process, be informed about donor or IFI intervention, assistance and influence or advocate for particular outcomes.

Just Budgets research in Tanzania and Uganda identified the following stumbling blocks:

- Gender is regarded as a cross-cutting issue to be mainstreamed but remains invisible in sector investment plans and budgets as it is not the core business of these sectors.
- SWAps intended to deliver sector programs from the centre can sometimes be counterproductive to gender mainstreaming, which requires cross-sectoral measures.
- Bureaucratic resistance to CSO work, coupled with under-financing of gender equality, undermines gender advocacy.
- Application of the Paris Declaration is focused on process rather than content. There is much emphasis on setting procedures for enhanced aid effectiveness which have led to limited development effectiveness.
- Targets and indicators focus on efficiency and process rather than on whether aid has assisted in meeting national development objectives.
- The continued marginalization of gender equality issues has led to limited resources being allocated for implementation. As a result, capacity for addressing gender issues among the national machinery, government sectors and agencies, including development partners, is limited.

Description of Good Practice

The Just Budgets project has identified key components of a framework to ensure that gender analysis is systematically integrated into budget planning processes. The framework identifies a series of key questions/ actions that development partners and CSOs should consider.

Development partners should ask the following questions:

- Are the poverty reduction strategies and national poverty plans gender sensitive? Has allocation for specific gender projects and programs been made? Does the budget show
increased allocation for gender-sensitive sectors?

• Has a sectoral gender analysis been undertaken?
• Is gender monitoring a part of the periodic review process of such instruments as the PRSP and Joint Assistance Strategy?
• Is the national women’s machinery adequately funded to carry out its mandate?
• Have women’s organizations been consulted in decisions on budget allocations?
• How are national and global commitments reflected in government’s priorities?

**CSOs should undertake the following actions:**

• Provide input to budget guidelines; engage with budget committees; collect disaggregated data; identify key entry points in the aid budgetary process (power mapping);
• Prepare proposals based on budget guidelines; channel information and data to budget officers; build skill and capacity of budget officers;
• Identify points of entry in various fora such as gender coordination groups; monitor and keep track of global, regional and national aid flows;
• Produce shadow reports assessing performance based on budget monitoring; advocate strategies for effective utilization of aid; and
• Produce qualitative studies that show impact; advocate for gender-sensitive impact assessment; advocate for better use of existing gender-disaggregated data.

Budget design and implementation could either **reinforce** or **reduce** gender inequalities. Gender budgets are about promoting accountability between the poorest citizens and their governments. Just Budgets aims to support CSOs, Southern governments and donors to track donor and government commitment to gender equality, thus promoting accountability to the poorest citizens.

Extracted from the case study “Just Budgets: Increasing Accountability and Aid Effectiveness through Gender Budget Analysis”, submitted to the AG-CS in 2008 by Zohra Khan, Gender Policy Coordinator, One World Action (zkhan@oneworldaction.org)

Description of the Initiative

ONG por la Transparencia (“Transparency and Accountability of NGOs”) is an initiative that fosters transparency and accountability among Colombian NGOs in six different regions by developing minimum standards of information to be shared with the general public. The organizations provide this information first as individual CSOs on their web pages and then as part of a collective exercise which is based upon common formats collectively built. They describe who they are, what they do, how they do it, what resources they use, who the beneficiaries of their actions are and what they are achieving.

This initiative is also supported by the development of common periodic public accountability exercises both at a regional and national level. It is based on agreements between CSOs that are operating in a common geographic territory. A Network Coordination Team monitors the quality of the information displayed on web pages, sends periodical reports to the CSOs, and provides support in order to ensure that they can cope with the requirements. The Network Coordination Team also manages the general web page of the network to promote information dissemination and open debates.

For the common public accountability exercises, the data is processed and analyzed by the Network Coordination Team. The team produces a first report draft which is discussed with the participating CSOs and validated through focus groups with external experts and others, including researchers, journalists and politicians. With these additional inputs a Final Year Report with major findings, conclusions and recommendations is produced and presented at a public event, with the participation of representatives from the public, private and social sectors.

A set of basic principles have been agreed upon by CSOs that take part in this initiative:
- the ethical requirement to first maintain internal organizational coherency with specific standards in order to be able to demand similar standards from other CSOs and public sector institutions;
- the rights of donors and resource beneficiaries to be better informed about what and how resources are used; and
- the inherent advantage of being exposed to the general public regarding the quality of service delivery, amongst others.

The main aim of this initiative is to contribute to and reinforce a more transparent and accountable style of management and institutionalize communication within CSOs, while enhancing the public’s trust and the credibility of the work and performance of CSOs. This initiative clearly helps CSOs to develop their capacity to engage in a more constructive, participatory and trustworthy policy dialogue.
Results

Internally, participating CSOs have improved their own information systems and several have been able to match their results with neighbouring organizations. Some have been able to identify areas needing improvement and are dealing with them through a self-regulatory approach. Sensitive issues such as board members working as paid staff, CSOs that clearly are doing consultancy work and not producing public goods, or organizations using questionable fundraising techniques are now being brought to the table to be addressed and debated within the network.

Others have strengthened the presentation of their results. In fact, about 250 CSOs that have carried out their public transparency and accountability exercises are presenting information related to their role as advocates and change agents contributing to the deepening of human development and democracy.

In many cases, information that once was the privilege of a few individuals is now being distributed on a broader scale. As a result, CSOs are benefiting from increased visibility. Some regional communications media have portrayed the work of CSOs and consequently these organizations have been exposed to a critical analysis by other sectors and the general public.

The initiative did uncover a number of challenges, including the ongoing problem of the concentration of CSOs in large cities with the resulting neglect of rural sectors and small municipalities. The transparency and accountability exercises in Colombia have shown that the CSOs still have a long way to go in terms of presenting and supporting the impact of their work and their concrete contributions to the improvement of human rights or human development. Corrective measures have been taken but problems persist in terms of precision and timeliness of the data with respect to geographic, gender and age characteristics. Further, the communication instruments, particularly websites, continue to be weak.

Description of Good Practice

At the present time, CSOs are under enormous pressure and a good portion of them are barely surviving due to financial uncertainty and the tendency to fund mainly short-term projects. In these circumstances, it is virtually impossible to have strong organizations and the sustainability and impact of projects are in jeopardy. Further, weak institutions are vulnerable to clientelism and corruption. There is still a lot of work to be done in order to strengthen civil society as a whole and to help them to understand and accept the responsibility of being transparent and accountable as an integral part of institutional life.

Accountability: openness builds trust and provides an incentive for improvement

The transparency and accountability exercises have been very effective in highlighting lessons learned and continuing challenges faced by CSOs in Colombia. This information has provided the incentive to continue improving CSO effectiveness as well as building democracy in the country.

An important lesson learned is that it is easier for CSOs to submit to public scrutiny as part of a collective initiative like a federation or association. Nevertheless, in a country where the discovery of hidden ties between individuals and institutions with illegal groups has become a
common occurrence, the fact that there is a group of CSOs that voluntarily subject themselves to public scrutiny has had a positive impact on public perceptions and confidence.

This initiative has demonstrated that CSOs have mobilized a significant amount of resources for development. They must show clear proof that the source of their resources is legitimate, that the resources are managed efficiently and effectively, and that they serve the purpose specified. It also highlights the role of CSOs as influencers of public policy and the need for their integration into policy debates at all levels.

There are still population groups who are excluded or denied their basic human rights, which blocks their access to development benefits. This presents a real challenge to CSOs, but donors and governments are equally responsible for creating an inclusive and participatory environment that enables CSOs to perform their tasks. CSOs have traditionally kept a distance from governments and have not engaged in policy debates. An important lesson learned from the initiative is to understand that if CSOs are to stop being marginal in society, they must also tackle the public agenda and they must be transparent and accountable for it.

*Good donorship: the need for capacity development*

The CSOs involved in these exercises are reliable organizations with highly qualified staff which are going through a progressive process of institutional strengthening at all levels. There are inherent weaknesses to these CSOs and the challenge for them is to find concrete solutions. There is a role to play by donors and developing country governments in strengthening the capacities and resources of CSOs so that they can exercise mutual accountability.

Extracted from the case study “ONG por la Transparencia – Transparency and Accountability of NGOs - Colombia”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Ms. Rosa Inés Ospina-Rubledo, ONG por la Transparencia - Transparency and Accountability of NGOs NETWORK (NGOxT) – Colombia  riospina@gmail.com

14... Accountability to Beneficiaries in CARE Peru’s 2007 Earthquake Response

Description of the Initiative

This case study describes CARE Peru’s experience of putting accountability towards disaster-affected people into practice following the earthquake of August 15, 2007. CARE’s response to the earthquake included the provision of water, food, medicine, emergency supplies, equipment for the implementation and organization of temporary shelter, provision of tents and reinforced plastics, blankets and tools. The emergency response reached 4,000 families.

CARE recruited a monitoring, evaluation (M&E) and standards advisor supported by a team of two field-based officers within the first two months of the operation. The advisor’s role was to coordinate the overall monitoring and evaluation of the program (made up of over 20 different donor-funded projects) and to develop an accountability system based on Sphere and other accountability benchmarks.

A first task was establishing a team of key staff from across CARE’s programming, IT and communications departments to design a complaints mechanism. Once the mechanism was developed, a complaints officer was recruited in Lima to operate the free telephone line and maintain the complaints database. The team developed an accountability framework which set out principles and standards, the purpose (to help strengthen the consistent quality of CARE’s response) and the desired outcomes (to contribute to the well-being, empowerment and protection of the rights of women, men and children affected by the earthquake).

The framework also described four key linked components that had been identified for CARE to strengthen:

- public information to the affected populations, including being clear, consistent and open in daily communications;
- mechanisms for participation of affected people in CARE’s decision making;
- mechanisms for systematic feedback from affected communities, and to adapt the response according to the feedback received; and
- application of Sphere standards in the response.

All these aspects helped to ensure that the response was based on genuine needs as expressed by the affected populations. The framework helped the team build up accountability mechanisms within their day-to-day work, using simple tools that could be improved over time.

Results

*Information sharing*: information about CARE, its projects, and its accountability commitments and systems (such as opportunities for participation, feedback and channels for complaint) was provided. Based on assessment of community needs, direct communication by CARE staff (through individual and public meetings and workshops) and national and local radio were prioritized and a flyer was printed. The team also identified key central locations (municipalities, schools and health centres) where large and visible posters could be located on information
boards. The complaints mechanism was inaugurated with the municipalities and banners were hung in key locations. Flyers were distributed and posted.

The free telephone line also presented an important opportunity to provide information as well as deal with complaints.

*Participation:* Community members were deeply involved in investigation and resolution of complaints. Monitoring visits included individual interviews and focus groups discussions with different groups within communities. Women in the highland areas were very welcoming of these opportunities to discuss their opinions. Stakeholder feedback was a critical element of external evaluations commissioned by CARE.

*Applying accountability benchmarks:* Qualitative monitoring and listening to communities was a key task of the two field officers. The focus group discussion tool, developed from Sphere Standards and Key Indicators, and from the Good Enough Guide and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, solicited people’s views on various aspects of CARE’s response: satisfaction with distributed items, impact or changes in their lives, problems encountered and any suggestions. It also monitored people’s access to information, the complaints mechanism and opportunities for participation. Sphere also helped create a checklist of specific questions related to the different technical sectors of CARE’s work (for example, issues of privacy and security in relation to the temporary shelter).

*Complaints and suggestions mechanism:* After a design and testing phase, the system was launched in the third month of the response, and 100 complaints were received and responded to within the first month. One of the most important outcomes was that CARE was able to respond to real-time feedback and resolve a number of complaints.

Channels of complaint included the free telephone line, CARE’s web page, CARE’s office in Lima, and face-to-face meetings in the communities themselves. Between October and February there were approximately 300 registered complaints or suggestions. There were very few calls from the highland areas, and in this region it was critical that the complaints mechanism was supported by focus group sessions and individual interviews by the field-based monitoring staff.

Key steps in processing a complaint include receiving the complaint or suggestion, investigating the complaint, presentation of recommendations for action, action, and communication and transparency on actions taken. The complaints officer registers the complaints, the M&E and standards advisor reviews them, and a complaints committee provides oversight. The M&E officers help project teams investigate complaints.

The establishment of such systems and processes has strengthened the relationships of trust between communities and CARE staff; fostered CARE’s reflection and learning; and opened up dialogue between different stakeholders on what accountability means. CARE’s earthquake response was also strengthened, and many lessons were generated. CARE now continues to apply and adapt the accountability framework to the reconstruction phase of the earthquake response, as well to incorporate it into other interventions of CARE’s development program and long-term disaster risk reduction work. Further development of the framework includes capacity building, monitoring for continuous improvement, working in partnership, and integration into the wider quality management strategies and systems of CARE. These efforts will also generate
lessons that will contribute to the further institutionalization of accountability in CARE Peru.

**Description of Good Practice**

Although this is a recent initiative, a number of important lessons have been learned.

*Commitment to accountability from management and staff is essential*

Organizational commitment to accountability is essential. Before the earthquake hit, CARE Peru had already identified accountability as an organizational priority, creating a strong enabling environment. Having dedicated accountability personnel at the field level proved to be invaluable. These staff members were given the mandate to promote listening to beneficiaries and to support project staff in the investigation of complaints. The qualitative information they collected through focus group discussions and interviews enabled the advisor to advocate on behalf of beneficiary views at a very pressured time.

Early efforts must be made to embed accountability into project response by defining the accountability roles and responsibilities of staff, including accountability in the project objectives and log frame, and making a specific effort to explain the rationale for accountability to staff.

Ultimately, staff members have to believe in accountability to make it work. Practicing accountability requires an organizational culture – and support from the leadership – that is conducive to learning, corrective action and continuous improvement. Under pressure to meet deadlines and account to donors, it can be easier to ignore beneficiary feedback. Further, in some cases, staff can feel threatened by complaints mechanisms or see them as undermining their ability to work with communities. In Peru, these problems were overcome through learning by doing, reassurance that a complaint received did not mean that staff would lose their jobs, and a gradual acceptance that the complaints mechanism actually improved the quality of CARE’s work.

*Good donorship: more comprehensive funding models*

Donors can support organizations to become responsive organizations. By explaining accountability better to donors, and incorporating the costs into budgets, it is possible to use communications and monitoring and evaluation budget lines, for example, to fully resource the accountability roles in an emergency response. Budget flexibility is needed in order to respond fully to some of the suggestions raised by beneficiaries. If CSOs can demonstrate how they will monitor their compliance with accountability benchmarks, donors will support these activities. For example, DFID has incorporated into its humanitarian funding guidelines a section on ‘accountability to beneficiaries’. This section gives the organization an entry point for explaining accountability within its response to donors, and justifying the costs that are incorporated.

It may still be necessary to negotiate/debate with donors the ratio between how much of a humanitarian response budget is invested in emergency inputs (such as relief items or water and sanitation inputs), compared with how much is invested in the process by which the intervention is developed and implemented. However, this commitment by a donor is a springboard for discussion, and the opportunity should not be missed. This in turn puts the spotlight back on CSOs involved in humanitarian response. CSOs need to build up their understanding of how to put their accountability commitments into practice in the various challenging emergency
contexts within with they work.

*Local and democratic ownership: ensuring participation*

CSOs need to find ways to base their responses on a better understanding of vulnerability to better target them by conducting a Good Enough profiling of the community and analysis of vulnerability; discussing targeting criteria with the community, having established what the organization considers non-negotiable; disseminating widely the agreed criteria; and providing an opportunity for beneficiaries/potential beneficiaries to challenge distribution lists. Emergency preparedness planning is a key vehicle for identifying minimum criteria for participation and vulnerability.

A satisfactory complaints mechanism can be set up quite rapidly without full participation. Full participation of excluded actors and with consideration of existing systems, while ideal, can take a great deal of time. Setting up a system for the first time in an emergency requires a balance between inclusiveness and more directive action to ‘make it happen’.

Although important, accountability is not just about having a complaints mechanism. Complaints mechanisms play a critical role; however, this does not mean that the organization puts less emphasis on ongoing efforts to involve women, men, girls and boys from day one of the response. Finding ways to strengthen information provision and two-way feedback, the participation of vulnerable groups in decision making, and responsiveness to feedback and people’s views are all crucial too. What is important is to have a complaints mechanism in addition to what is ‘normal’ good practice, understanding that in pressurized emergency contexts mistakes can be made, the situation can change rapidly on the ground, and that in some instances it may be necessary to strike a balance in working with community organizations that may not necessarily be truly representative of the poor or marginalized, or of those whom they claim to represent.

Extracted from the case study “Making accountability to disaster affected people a reality: Learning about accountability in CARE Peru’s emergency response”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Clare Smith, Humanitarian Accountability Advisor, CARE International-UK. csmith@careinternational.org

CSO EFFECTIVENESS

15... The CIVICUS Civil Society Index

Description of the Initiative
Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in good governance and grass-roots development around the world. To enhance and strengthen civil society’s ownership in identifying and developing strategies for its own development, the international civil society network CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation developed the Civil Society Index (CSI) initiative, a participatory assessment tool implemented by and for civil society at the country level. The CSI seeks to provide a contextual assessment of the state of civil society in a given country and provide cross-country comparability in its findings. As an action-research tool, the CSI also seeks to provide data that can be easily translated into policy recommendations and action by civil society stakeholders.

The country implementation of the CSI is carried out by a prominent CSO or research institute known as the national coordinating organization for the project. It forms a National Index Team with two other partners to help carry out the main tasks of the project. They are encouraged to adapt and modify the CIVICUS toolkit to better reflect their local context with the help of the National Advisory Group. The National Advisory Group is composed of 12 to 15 members, representing a broad range of stakeholders from civil society, government, the media, academia, donors and the private sector in the participating country.

The CSI initiative uses a mix of research (quantitative and qualitative) and consultative methods, including primary and secondary data review, regional stakeholder consultations, population surveys, media review, and desk studies. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the state of civil society, the CSI uses 74 indicators that are eventually grouped into four key dimensions: structure, environment, values and impact. The higher the scores, the more robust, free and vibrant the civil society. The findings are validated through a national multi-stakeholder workshop, then published in a country report and widely disseminated to a broad range of stakeholders. The CSI findings and recommendations form the basis for collective action by relevant stakeholders to strengthen civil society and enhance the work of CSOs in their country.

Results
CSI has been implemented in over 50 countries with 48 country reports already published. These reports provide donors, CSOs, governments and other relevant stakeholders with a comprehensive picture of the civil society landscape in these participating countries. Donors such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are using the CSI country reports as guiding documents to assess the civil society situation of donor recipient countries. Meanwhile, over 75 applications have been submitted for the second phase of country implementation, which will use a more user-friendly, compact and comprehensive toolkit.

Among the relevant and direct results achieved by the CSI initiative are:

- a toolkit (over 500 pages of in-depth research, questionnaires and data analysis tools) and
other research resources on how to implement the CSI at the country level;
• two volumes of the global survey of the state of civil society and numerous articles and papers on the results of the CSI findings;
• a free online, searchable database of all the results of the CSI country reports;
• strengthened linkages and networks between civil society and governments, donors, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders;
• over 250 consultative meetings conducted in 53 countries, involving over 7,000 civil society stakeholders;
• over 100 practitioners and researchers directly trained by CIVICUS staff on the CSI methodology and over 250 practitioners and researchers trained on action-oriented research by partner organizations;
• strengthened research capacity of CSOs to carry out participatory/action-oriented research projects;
• increased knowledge on the state of civil society and its strengths and weaknesses, in the countries that have completed or are in the process of completing the CSI; and
• contributions to the methodology of action-oriented research and civil society studies. For example, the CSI project and findings have been presented in a number of conferences and workshops, including the International Society for Third Sector Research. The CSI initiative has also been written about in a number of publications such as the Journal of Civil Society, Development Practice, and Non-profit Management and Leadership.

The CSI has provided the impetus among CSOs and stakeholders to strengthen civil society and enhance CSO effectiveness. Some signs of impact include:

• Bulgaria – a CSI partner organization and other legal non-profit organizations lobbied government to implement a 1% tax law to secure greater financial sustainability for CSOs.
• Fiji - the CSI initiative contributed to the establishment of the Social Leadership Training Institute by bringing civil society stakeholders together to find solutions to address the leadership gap in Fijian civil society.
• Ghana – the knowledge and the sense of ownership amongst civil society stakeholders generated by the CSI project helped establish the Resource Centre, which contributes toward civil society capacity development in Ghana.
• Macedonia - the government adopted the Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector in January 2007 based on the CSI findings and diligent work of the CSOs involved in the CSI project.
• Uganda – through the CSI consultative process, civil society stakeholders in Uganda mobilized and collectively developed proposals to change government policy on legitimacy, transparency, and accountability.
• Ukraine – the CSI strengthened relations between civil society and the government and media in regards to the CSI report. It also facilitated the development and adoption of the Concept of Government and Civil Society Cooperation in the Ukraine.
• Vietnam - the CSI contributed to the promotion of civil society in Vietnam through the dissemination of the country report at major workshops and seminars (e.g. UNESCO International Forum of Civil Society and UNDP-VUSTA Seminar on “CSOs and Aid Effectiveness, Hanoi 10/07”).
Description of Good Practice

Local and democratic ownership strengthens capacity development

The CSI initiative, as a participatory needs assessment tool, gives CSOs ownership of the CSI process and outcomes through its in-depth research and broad spectrum consultations. This in turn gives CSOs and other relevant stakeholders the legitimacy and momentum to identify and develop strategies to address the key challenges and/or enhance major strengths in civil society. The comprehensive data gathered on the state of civil society in countries around the world also allows for cross-country comparison, which can facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

Enabling environment through increased stakeholder awareness

The data also increases the knowledge base of stakeholders, enabling them to make informed decisions on social change practice, policy development, and resource and funding allocation based on an inclusive and comprehensive picture of the civil society landscape at country level.

Stakeholders can support implementation of these good practices. Participating CSOs can follow up on recommendations and gaps identified in the country reports; governments can participate in project activities and act on the recommendations of the reports as well as strengthen civil society-government relations through policy development and implementation; and donors can provide funding for both the initiative and post-initiative follow-ups and use the CSI tool as an assessment guide.

Extracted from the case study “CIVICUS Civil Society Index”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by: Sue Le-Ba, Research Fellow, Civil Society Index (CSI) Program, CIVICUS sue.le-ba@civicus.org

16. **Croatia’s National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development**

**Description of the Initiative**

The *National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development* (adopted by Croatian Government in July, 2006) delineates the policy framework for the development of the civil society sector in the Republic of Croatia. The output of a broad consensus among civil society and government representatives on the strategic priorities for the period 2006-2011, this strategy represents a common platform for creating an adequate legislative, administrative and social environment for the development of civil society, for enhancing the sustainability of an independent and vibrant civil society, and for serving as a basis for better cooperation among donors.

The objective of the strategy is to create conditions for community development in which citizens and CSOs, in synergy with other sectors of society, actively, equally and responsibly, on the basis of the principles of sustainable development and acting for the public benefit, participate in the building of a society of well-being and equal opportunities for all. The strategy is strongly values-based, noting that the foundation for relations between the state and civil society is respect for civil society autonomy. It also supports pluralism and freedom of action and speech for civil society. Further, the strategy acknowledges the role of civil society as active participants in public policy making and implementation as well as in helping to guarantee the values enshrined in the constitution, including freedom, democracy, equality, peace, social justice, respect for human rights, conservation of nature, rule of law and private property.

The strategic priorities set by the national strategy include:

- strengthening capacities and participation of CSOs in the development and monitoring of public policies – more precisely, enhancing the policy research and advocacy capacities of CSOs at national and EU level;
- improving mechanisms and standards for better multi-stakeholder consultation in policy processes in line with EU standards of good governance;
- drafting and adopting the Code of Good Practice on Consultation (minimum standards); and
- proposing the establishment of the Economic and Social Forum.

Planned improvements to the current legal framework include adopting a new law on foundations, encouraging institutional, fiscal and social incentives for individual philanthropy and corporate investments in social development partnerships, and introducing public benefit status, by revisiting tax benefits regulations. Strengthening the capacities of CSOs comprises efforts to include CSOs as service providers in the implementation of reforms in the areas of social welfare, health and education, and of defining standards, priorities and criteria for signing high-quality social contracts with CSOs for the provision of public services. At the international level, Croatia will encourage more active contribution of civil society to the EU accession process and to strengthening regional cooperation and stability, by encouraging exchange of knowledge and experience between civil society in Croatia and the EU, by supporting CSO programs and projects of regional (i.e. cross-border) cooperation, and by strengthening of
cooperation with CSOs in the implementation of Croatian development assistance to third countries.

Results

The Government of Croatia adopted an Operational Implementation Plan for the strategy in January, 2007. This plan laid down the measures, competent authorities, and timeframes for implementation of the strategy. In accordance with the plan, the Government of Croatia, through its Office for Cooperation with NGOs (OCN), has taken a number of significant steps in the following areas:

• **Regulating the status of CSOs:** through a Proposal for Settlement of Fundamental Questions Regarding the Regulation of the Status of Croatian Public Benefit Organizations. All members of the interested public – institutions, organizations and individuals – were invited to send their proposals, remarks and suggestions on the document, which were posted on the OCN’s website. Through the efforts of the OCN, the Council for Civil Society Development and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, Croatia has emerged as a regional leader in the area of civil society legal framework issues.

• **Standards for allocation of funds:** The Code of Good Practice, Standards and Benchmarks for the Allocation of Funding for Programmes and Projects of NGOs (adopted by the Croatian Government in February 2007) regulates the basic standards and principles of practice in allocating grants from state budgets. Donors act according to the provisions of this code, so that available resources are used efficiently and state budgets are used rationally and transparently.

• **Multi-stakeholder consultations:** The Civil Society Donors Roundtable, entitled “Perspectives of Supporting Civil Society Development in Croatia” on February 12, 2008, began a dialogue with CSOs from the region on Croatia’s endeavours, both in terms of financial support and information sharing and capacity building. This built on the valuable efforts undertaken within the framework of the DECIM (Donor Exchange, Coordination and Information Mechanism), which actively supports the development of civil society in the region, by working with CSOs and/or public sector entities that have an impact on civic space.

• **Public consultations:** are now under way on the Draft of the Code of Good Practice on Consultation with Interested Public in designing and implementing new legislative and regulatory acts. As above, members of the public were invited to comment and all input was published on the OCN website.

Description of Good Practice

**Recognition based on multi-stakeholder consensus**

The *National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development* builds upon a multi-stakeholder consensus (CSOs, the government and donors) on values, including democracy, cooperation, solidarity, social justice, and transparency. It also includes respect for differences among organizations and continuous education and aimed at creating efficient mechanisms that will further the relations between the government and the civil sector.
Harmonization and alignment

The strategy widens the traditional focus of the donor-central government relationship to the multi-actor approach, integrating the concepts of coordination and harmonization. It promotes a collaborative, comprehensive and inclusive approach in programming and provides financial support to the civil sector in Croatia. The strategy establishes a mechanism of accountability for beneficiaries of public funds to ensure that the highest standards of openness, transparency and access to information are being applied.

Civil society participates in creating the enabling environment

The reporting to the government on the implementation of the national strategy is being carried out by the OCN on an annual basis. The overall efforts made by all stakeholders in creating the enabling environment for civil society development, actively include the CSOs themselves in designing new regulatory and legislative acts and greatly rely on their active and permanent contribution. This helps to ensure that financial support to civil society is being used transparently and effectively and is being strategically planned and coordinated and that the voice of CSOs is being recognized and appreciated as sine qua non within the multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

Extracted from the case study “Croatian National Strategy for Creating and Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Mr. Igor Vidačak, Ph. D., Head, Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Government of the Republic of Croatia, igor.vidacak@uzuvrh.hr

India’s National Policy on the Voluntary Sector

Description of the Initiative

At the All-India Conference on the Role of the Voluntary Sector in National Development in 2002, participants demanded a National Policy on the Voluntary Sector, noting that voluntary organizations (VOs) / CSOs (CSOs) provide innovative and alternative cost-effective models for development and often reach the most vulnerable sections of society. The Government of India Planning Commission’s Joint Machinery for GO-NGO Collaboration agreed and took the decision to draft a policy on the voluntary sector in 2003.

The draft policy, prepared by the Voluntary Action Cell of the Planning Commission, was discussed with various stakeholders in a number of meetings. At a meeting of 40 experts on the voluntary sector convened in 2005 to examine the revised draft policy, participants decided to constitute four expert groups to further improve the contents of the policy. After incorporating suggestions of the expert groups, the draft policy was again discussed in a number of meetings with representatives of civil society. Views of the state governments and concerned ministries were also sought. Finally, the Union Cabinet approved the National Policy on the Voluntary Sector in 2007 (http://www.planningcommission.gov.in/data/ngo/npvol07.pdf).

To create an enabling environment for the voluntary sector, the policy emphasizes that all laws, rules and regulations relating to voluntary organizations (VOs) should safeguard their autonomy, while simultaneously ensuring their accountability. The policy suggests consideration of suitable tax rebates to VOs and also prescribes tightening of administrative procedures to ensure that these incentives are not misused by paper charities. The policy, inter alia, also provides for periodic review of procedures for bilateral aid and for simplifying provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 in consultation with representatives from civil society.

Results

The policy has provided much-needed legitimacy and voice to the voluntary sector, while ensuring autonomy and independence of VOs / CSOs, thus benefiting them the most. All the chief ministers of states and union territories of India were asked to prepare a similar policy for inclusive development of their respective jurisdictions. Chief secretaries of the state governments and secretaries of the central departments and ministries dealing with the voluntary sector were also asked to take appropriate steps on the recommendations of the national policy.

The Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI) organized state consultations of CSOs to disseminate the message of the policy and to mobilize civil society efforts to advocate for a similar policy with their state governments. As a result of these efforts, some states have already prepared policy drafts for engaging CSOs as their development partners.

The United Nations Volunteers at the UNDP Delhi office initiated a process in December 2007 to help in the implementation of the national policy by setting up an informal group of CSOs and other stakeholders to share progress periodically. One of the members of the group is getting the policy converted to Braille and to audio format. Another participant has picked up some points from the policy for action and is coming up with a partnership model involving CSOs, corporate...
and government, in addition to supporting the CSO accreditation process.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Local and democratic ownership created by a participatory approach*

A broadly agreed policy framework for the diverse and vibrant voluntary/civil society sector of India became possible by adopting a participatory approach. There is growing realization that involvement of CSOs is important in formulating as well as in implementing the policy. Further, any such broad policy framework should also have deliverables and time-bound targets, and a participatory and inclusive process for monitoring its implementation.

Policy frameworks for the civil society sector should have provisions for capacity building of CSOs, so that they may move to the center stage in dialogues on issues like aid architecture with Northern CSOs or donors. Without adequate research back-up, CSO arguments on issues like aid effectiveness, incoherence between donor country aid and non-aid policies (e.g. trade) or reform of legislative frameworks can be ineffective. It is a challenge to get adequate resources for capacity building of CSOs from governments or donors for their advocacy work.

*Harmonization and alignment*

CSOs have a responsibility to make the policy work by collaborating closely with the government machinery, and taking into account donor and government interest in implementing the Paris Declaration. CSOs can consider the ways in which principles of alignment, harmonization and management of development results might apply to their own work. In addition, before seeking accountability from donors (multilateral, bilateral, NCSOs, federal or state governments), CSOs have to set their own houses in order by adopting appropriate measures with regard to accountability, transparency and governance issues.

*Enabling environment*

A supportive and effective enabling environment is critical to the effectiveness of CSOs. This environment goes beyond NGO policies alone to include, for example, regulations related to aid flows. India’s Foreign Contribution Regulation Act is currently undergoing amendment to address the government’s concern that funds are being used by some CSOs for purposes other than their stated objectives. From the perspective of CSOs, the current legislation contains problems related to registration criteria and procedures and reporting requirements. From time to time, CSOs have mobilized campaigns to review the Act and dialogue is ongoing.

An international consensus around CSO policy frameworks in developing as well as developed countries would help in the implementation of the policy in India as well as other countries. Similarly, international consensus also needs to be built for providing aid to only those CSOs which are working for the betterment of the poor, disadvantaged or marginalized, irrespective of any religious, ethnic, class, caste or sectarian considerations.

Extracted from the case study “India’s National Policy on the Voluntary Sector”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Dr. Lalit Kumar, Deputy Adviser (Voluntary Action), Planning Commission and Special Officer to Union Minister of State for Planning, Government of India, lalit-pc@nic.in or lalit.plancom@gmail.com. With contributions from a presentation to the AG-CS International Forum (2008) by Anil Singh, SANSAD.

18... Sida’s Policy on Civil Society

Description of the Initiative

Sweden’s current Policy for Global Development, approved in 2003, was developed in a participatory manner with broad civil society input. The policy dedicates a chapter to dialogue with civil society. In 2004, a policy was drafted to specify the grounds for, the objective of and the modalities for the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)’s cooperation with civil society, and to clarify Sida’s view of civil society. This policy was then updated and formally adopted in May 2007. The aim of the policy is to serve as a guide for everyone at Sida working with support to, and cooperation with, civil society. The ambition is to provide a consistent, coordinated and over-arching regulatory framework for different forms of Sida support to civil society, regardless of the source envelope or operational area.

The objective of Sida’s development cooperation program as a whole is to contribute to an environment supportive of poor people’s own efforts to improve their quality of life. The development cooperation policy takes two perspectives:

- a rights perspective, which gives prominence to poor women and men, girls and boys as individuals and as rights holders; and
- poor people’s perspective, which emphasizes that it is the perspectives, needs, interests and circumstances of poor people that govern the work of development cooperation.

The objective of Sida’s civil society policy is to promote the development of a vibrant and democratic civil society that improves the possibilities for poor people to improve their living conditions.

Within this context, Sida’s civil society policy views civil society as both formal and informal in organization, dynamic, diverse, multi-faceted, and an expression of society’s values, customs, needs and interests. It thus also sees civil society as reflective of the competing interests, values and conflicts within society, and containing both democratic and undemocratic, legal and illegal groups. Underlying the policy is an appreciation of the diversity within civil society as it reflects different perspectives, ideologies and interests. This pluralism of organizations offers constructive energy for change, development and poverty reduction.

Results

The elaboration and implementation of Sida’s policy on civil society and its acknowledgement of civil society’s important roles in development represent significant achievements in terms of donor perceptions of civil society. The policy outlines civil society’s contributions to:

- empowering poor people and developing social capital;
- promoting democracy by offering an arena for public participation, sharing knowledge about democracy and contributing to accountability;
- promoting peace and security, particularly peaceful conflict resolution and reconstruction;

3 It is anticipated that Sida’s civil society policy will undergo revision in 2008.
• developing a global arena through international networking and cross-border cooperation with other CSOs.

The policy notes that civil society plays an important role both in achieving concrete results in poverty reduction, and in increasing aid efficiency – as an independent advocate and watchdog, and as an implementer of national poverty reduction strategies. It further states that harmonization among donors about the objectives and modalities for strengthening a pluralist civil society is of strategic importance in achieving demonstrable development results. This, it notes, is an important starting point for enriching aid effectiveness principles in donors’ approach to civil society support. At the same time, CSOs have a responsibility for strengthening local ownership, increasing coordination among themselves, and improving coordination with governments.

The policy outlines different forms of Sida support to CSOs:

• directly through contributions: to the CSO as an implementing agency; to strengthen CSO capacity; and to organizations and networks to strengthen civil society as a whole as an arena for citizen engagement; and
• indirectly by fostering a positive enabling environment, including promoting opportunities in developing countries for CSOs to influence the design and implementation of poverty reduction measures.

Across the board, Sida’s support aims to strengthen civil society, without undermining legitimate state and democratic institutions.

In determining eligibility for funding, Sida assesses the CSO in terms of its structure, values, impact and environment. Sida looks for the relevance, feasibility and sustainability of the CSO’s operations as well as the capacity and determination to achieve change shown by the organization and its partners. A risk assessment is also made of the organizational, legal and financial status of the CSO.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Recognition of the roles and voice of civil society guides support programs*

Sida’s civil society policy constitutes good practice in that it formally recognizes the roles and voice of civil society in development and in aid. It offers clarity of purpose for Sida’s support to and engagement with CSOs, which is to strengthen a vibrant, pluralist civil society.

This point of departure enables Sida to support civil society in a variety of different ways. In total, around 27% of Sida’s budget is channeled to and through CSOs. In addition to direct support to civil society, Sida established a Civil Society Center for Swedish CSOs and their partners in the South and East, that provides training and other resources focused on the role of civil society in development issues. Sida also manages a database of their support to Swedish NGOs through which members of the public can obtain information about these organizations’ initiatives (www.sida.se/ngodatabase).

*Good donorship: comprehensive funding models ensure complementarity*

Sida has framework agreements involving co-financing with 14 Swedish NGOs (anticipated to
increase to 16 in 2009). Six of these organizations administer grants to smaller organizations as well as implement their own programs, while the other eight implement their own programs. The philosophy behind Sida’s support to its domestic NGOs is that they are well placed to support CSOs in the South based on common values that they are deemed to share.

In addition to framework agreements, Sida provides 100% direct funding to Swedish, international, national or local CSOs via other envelopes, either through Swedish or international organizations, or directly to local organizations, through its thematic or regional desks at Sida headquarters, including through the Division for Humanitarian Assistance, and from the Swedish embassies in cooperation countries. Most of these contributions are approved within the framework of country and regional cooperation strategies and are therefore subject to greater control by Sida, recognizing that civil society’s varied roles may call for complementarity and synergies with government and donor programs rather than a narrow approach to alignment.

Alignment in the field: the program in Kenya

Sida’s civil society programming in Kenya provides a snapshot. Their country program overview points to Kenya’s dynamic civil society as one of the country’s assets, which is deemed to have “boosted democracy over the past decade” with voluntary organizations having “worked miracles with only meager resources” (2008c). The Swedish embassy in Kenya has programs of support to local NGOs that work with human rights, including gender equality, and the rights of women, children and the disabled (Gunnarrson 2006). The programs are joint initiatives with other donors and are implemented through intermediaries which include Swedish NGOs and UN organizations.

One example of this approach is the National Civic Education Program which provides civic education geared to enhancing human rights and good governance. Forty-two CSOs grouped around four consortia are implementing the program. Eight donors provide funding through a basket mechanism, and participate in a committee which determines funding allocations.

In addition a variety of Swedish CSOs from large-frame organizations to small solidarity organizations carry out their own development programs in Kenya where their primary objective is to strengthen relevant Kenyan effort and counterparts.

19... DFID’s Partnership Programme Arrangements and Other Civil Society Envelopes

Description of the Initiative

The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) supports CSOs through country offices and HQ-managed funds, including the Civil Society Challenge Fund, the Development Awareness Fund, and Partnership Programme Arrangements (PPAs). PPAs were established in 2000 to provide unrestricted funding to CSOs with which DFID has a significant working relationship, a common ethos and vision, and a strong match in priority areas. PPAs typically run for six years. Currently, DFID has 26 PPAs running with UK and non-UK organizations. The budget is around £100 million per annum.

Long-term unrestricted funding is very welcome to the PPA partners, in part because it allows them to do much of the vital research and capacity development, including iterative learning and adaptation, not provided for by short-term, project-specific funding. It also allows them to focus on developmental impacts instead of constantly chasing funds. According to the UK Office of the Third Sector, longer-term funding has a synergistic effect – as long as pre-funding checks are put in place to ensure the organization is sound and has a good track record.

But PPAs are more than just funding arrangements and proving impact on the ground. They are true partnerships with DFID which allow a better policy dialogue and exchange of ideas and sharing of information.

Entry to the PPA scheme is based on a range of criteria, including:

- sufficient consistency between CSO and DFID priorities;
- high standards of corporate governance;
- extensive reach in poor countries and/or in the UK for building public support for development; and
- significant engagement in DFID policy formulation.

Corporate governance checks are also carried out before funding to ensure the organization is corporately sound.

DFID and the 26 PPA organizations have recently agreed on strong individual performance frameworks, consisting of strategic objectives and SMART indicators, against which each PPA partner will be held accountable. This allows DFID to gauge the impact of the PPA funding scheme. Currently in draft is a logframe which maps the PPA partner objectives against key DFID priorities and provides at-a-glance information on all countries and themes covered by the PPA funding mechanism. This overarching logframe will be useful for many areas of DFID and, equally importantly, will allow all PPA partners to be more aware of possible linking and synergies. By the end of 2008, DFID will have a matrix of engagement with PPA partners which will set out the key linkages with DFID and clarify mutual accountability arrangements.

At the institutional level, accountability is seen as a two-way function. The PPA gives the partner the flexibility to enter into projects/programs with their in-country beneficiaries which have
built-in accountability mechanisms. These are based on the PPA partner internal mechanisms, and also provide accountability to DFID through the strategic objectives and SMART indicators.

**Results**

The PPA is not a project-funding mechanism. PPA funding can underpin many of the activities of the organization, including strengthening its own capacity. It also provides many opportunities to the organizations to increase developmental impacts on the ground, do research, take calculated risks and fund small community-based organizations to develop their own capacity and voice. In the words of a cross-section of PPA partners:

- At field level, the PPA has supported some stand-alone projects but is more generally used to build extra dimensions onto existing work and ongoing processes, for example, a deeper learning and reflection process around a large project, or analysis to inform strategic plans and organisational change processes (CARE International UK).
- Through the PPA we have been able to ... take risks to support innovative, emerging organisations, for example: Urban Poor Women’s Organisations in Bangladesh and some of the Democratic Urban Governance partners in the Philippines and Institute for Blind Women in Nicaragua (One World Action).
- The flexible nature has allowed International Service to move from an individual Development Worker focused approach to a programmatic approach which in turn has allowed us to focus on capacity building of CSOs and government institutions leading to a more holistic approach to development (International Services).
- The PPA has greatly facilitated ODI’s ability to work with CSOs, specifically on how CSOs can use research-based evidence more effectively (Overseas Development Institute).
- ADD’s organisational review process would have been difficult to fund without flexible funding. This important organizational learning would have been seriously delayed without it (Action on Disability and Development).
- The PPA has provided flexible funds for work … to pilot innovative approaches, technologies and knowledge, examples range from biodiesel to podcasting for small-scale producers (Practical Action).
- World Vision's PPA with DFID is enabling the organisation to accelerate its contribution to the MDGs by ensuring that marginalised people, such as those living with HIV or disabilities, are included in poverty reduction efforts (World Vision).
- (DFID’s vital contribution) … allows geographical and programmatic expansion, supports partners to benefit from major development opportunities, supports our core work, policy activities and functions such as research and evaluation, communications, knowledge management, governance, and strategic planning (International HIV/AIDS Alliance).

**Description of Good Practice**

The above quotes prove the benefit and worth of the funding mechanism across the organization as well as on the ground, to research, knowledge sharing, innovative practices and calculated risks. Ultimately, this type of funding allows a more holistic approach to poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs. The benefits of true partnerships cannot be understated; policy dialogue, information exchange and sharing and working in partnership are all key to the success
of the PPA.

*Good donorship: an innovative funding mechanism*

The PPA provides flexible funding to a range of organizations, giving them the ability to provide funding and resources when and where required. PPAs are analogous to general budget support but are designed for civil society rather than government partners. Unrestricted funding is provided based on a range of strategic objectives and SMART indicators (agreed with DFID) against which the organizations are held accountable, just as GBS is provided to governments based on strategic objectives agreed upon in a Poverty Reduction Strategy.

*Accountability measures*

The current partnership arrangements, established following reforms to the program in 2007, feature the following elements: strategic indicators, indicators, means of verification and assumptions and risks.

Annual self-assessments by the partner organization, against the agreed set of strategic objectives and indicators, are required to demonstrate impact, accountability and value for money. Evidence of good corporate governance is also required annually. The partner is also required each year to detail measures put in place to publicly acknowledge DFID as a supporter and partner. End-of-arrangement evaluation processes are discussed and agreed. The cost of all evaluations and reports required are met from the contribution itself.

*Potential for harmonization*

Other donor organizations have funding mechanisms similar to the PPA and many also fund the same CSOs. Their experience and lessons learned with their civil society partners could provide the groundwork to explore multi-donor PPA-type arrangements which could reduce reporting requirements on CSOs, be more synergistic and provide yet more space for CSO-led poverty reduction activities.

Extracted from the case study “DFID’s Partnership Programme Arrangements”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Margaret Robinson, DFID Civil Society Policy Advisor, m-robinson@dfid.gov.uk

20... Good Donorship Guidelines for Civil Society Support in Tanzania

Description of the Initiative

Tanzania is a forerunner in implementing aid effectiveness principles. As a result, approximately 40% of the nation’s budget is received as aid in the form of general budget support (GBS). A number of large-scale sector-wide approaches (SWAs) are in place in the social sectors and in strengthening supply-side accountability (e.g. Public Sector Reform, Legal Sector Reform, Local Government Reform, Public Financial Management, and Business Environment Strengthening in Tanzania). A Joint Assistance Strategy (JAST) has been developed which joins all donors under one strategy and provides an opportunity to fully act on the principles of aid effectiveness. The JAST includes substantive references to the need to strengthen domestic accountability and the important role of civil society in development.

Reality on the ground is complex, however, and there are a number of challenges emerging from the new aid architecture despite the best intentions of its designers and implementers. In terms of the government-civil society relationship, consultations are seen as very process-heavy, with a lack of capacity to make the dialogue productive, both within government and among CSOs. On the whole, government-CSO relations have been characterized by mistrust. Dialogue has tended to remain at the national level only, shutting out smaller, rural CSOs.

At the same time, the level of donor investment in government has been high, with government in turn becoming more accountable to donors than to civil society. Donor support to civil society in the meantime has been seen to wane relative to investments in government, and what funding is available has been seen as short-sighted, unpredictable and unfocused, with a lack of transparency and information on strategies and funding modes.

In 2006, a number of CSOs requested a set of guidelines to help coordinate and make more transparent donors’ support to CSOs engaging in advocacy and policy work. Under the leadership of the Netherlands, a steering committee of development partners and CSOs and a reference group of CSOs were set up to develop guidelines for donor support to CSOs. They examined current donor strategies (what they support, strengths and weaknesses) and CSO experiences and challenges in the context of Tanzania’s changing aid environment. Consultations with a broader stratum of CSOs was also included.

The guidelines were endorsed by the Development Partners Group (DPG) in June 2007. Building on the principles of the Paris Declaration, their aim was to improve donor coordination, transparency and strategic focus, and ultimately to strengthen the demand side of accountability, thus making a greater, more sustainable impact on development in Tanzania.

Results

Given the newness of this initiative, the key result to date lies in the elaboration and endorsement of the guidelines, and the establishment of a public database of support to civil society (http://www.civilsocietysupport.net/).

The guidelines provide a set of twelve principles for good donorship, criteria for core funding, and actions for coordination among donors. In sum, the twelve principles call for:
• adopting a new mindset in which aid effectiveness principles are enriched and applied to donors’ civil society funding;
• encouraging diversity and transparency of funding strategies;
• mainstreaming civil society support into agencies’ and sector programs;
• prioritizing strategic partnerships for direct funding;
• engaging in longer term commitments (five years);
• moving towards core funding (directly or through intermediaries);
• strategic planning, budgeting and joint reporting as the main documents steering CSO-donor funding relations;
• encouraging innovation, results orientation and learning;
• taking care of the relationship; and
• making HQ-managed support (e.g. through INGOs) more visible.

Criteria for core funding address a number of organizational and operational aspects against which CSOs are assessed, both to determine their eligibility and as a basis for capacity development. Criteria include:

• non-profit status, constitution and statutes, and no single political party affiliation;
• legitimacy demonstrated by accountable structures, connection to constituency/beneficiaries, evidence base grounded in research or lessons learned from constituency;
• institutional capacity;
• transparent internal governance demonstrated by application of statutes, internal checks and balances, one comprehensive budget, and adequate financial management systems;
• long-term strategic plan and budget, and results reporting; and
• engagement in at least two of four areas of operation to enhance domestic accountability: advocacy to elected authorities, monitoring the states’ fulfilment of obligations, empowering citizens to claim rights and building awareness, and/or public awareness.

The guidance for coordination among donors suggests a spectrum of options, including:

• information sharing through a database (see below) and increased communications;
• focusing efforts strategically with a division of labour, creating complementarity in donors’ support to civil society as well as to government; and
• joint or basket funding to reduce administration and overhead costs for donors and CSOs, with donor harmonization of procedures for organizational assessment, reporting, etc.

Transparency and donor coordination is supported with the database on support to civil society that includes information on organizations supported, the funding involved, strategies that have been used, and the conditions and systems for appraisal of proposals used by each donor. Donors are also encouraged to discuss support to civil society regularly in the DPG and sub-groups. Further, they are urged to contribute to civil society within the same areas they are supporting under the JAST to increase focus. Civil society issues are being integrated into the TORs of the DPG and sub-groups.

The donors have expressed their commitment to the guidelines and are implementing them. The Accountable Governance Cluster of donors acts as a watchdog group and the Swiss Development Cooperation agency is the lead agency and coordinator for implementation. CIDA
has funded the development of the database under their guidance, which is now being managed by the Secretariat of the DPG, located in the UNDP country offices. Efforts are being made to map out donors’ HQ-managed civil society support, including support to INGO programs, for integration in the database. Donors are also exploring with the Government of Tanzania how it can support CSOs. Finally, donors are considering whether to develop a similar framework for CSOs working mainly in service delivery.

**Description of Good Practice**

**Local and democratic ownership: CSOs should set the pace**

By definition, these guidelines recognize the roles and voice of CSOs in development, particularly in policy dialogue. As a set of guidelines, however, their main contribution is in enriching the Paris Declaration principles by adapting these to CSOs’ roles and realities. CSOs are to decide their own priorities; they are responsible for developing their own programs and methods with which donors align. They do not interfere in operations and decision-making; the focus of the donor-CSO relationship is on results achieved rather than monitoring of activities and outputs. Harmonization of requirements among donors means that CSOs are able to report to donors, their constituencies and the public with one annual report. At the same time, CSOs need to formulate their vision, objectives and strategies in a long-term strategic plan, to demonstrate sound governance and accountability to their constituents.

Based on a Powerpoint presentation by Jean Touchette, First Secretary (Cooperation), High Commission of Canada, Tanzania (jean.touchette@international.gc.ca) and Ingelstam, A. and C. Karlstedt (2007) Guidelines for Support to Civil Society.

21... Funding Arrangements for CSO Participation in Honduras’ PRSP

Description of the Initiative

The Agencias de Cooperación (ACI) PRSP Fund is a multi-donor initiative dedicated to strengthening the participation of civil society in pro-poor policy making, using the mechanism of the national poverty reduction strategy (PRSP). The program is co-managed by international development CSOs and members of Honduran civil society. It responds to the low level of civil society engagement with the national poverty reduction strategy. Until recently, CSOs have not been much involved in policy processes due to limited CSO capacity, and to a historical reluctance on the part of government to engage in dialogue with civil society. The fund provides additional finance to enable Honduran CSOs to include political participation and advocacy activities in their operations. By aiming to give citizens access to poverty reduction resources, and enabling them to monitor the use of those resources, the ACI – PRSP strategy aims to improve governance, reduce corruption, and enable a transformation in the delivery of pro-poor policies and services.

A key priority for the fund is the engagement of the poorest people and marginalized groups who have been excluded until now because of their lack of capacity, geographic isolation or vulnerability. These include women, children, young people, ethnic groups and the disabled. Given that over 70% of the poor live in rural areas, there is a strong rural focus. The building of links is encouraged among civil society groups to develop alliances and share experiences, and between civil society and government at all levels—local, municipal, regional and national. The fund integrates the cross-cutting issues of HIV/AIDS, gender and the environment.

The four program objectives for the fund are:

- capacity building for CSOs to carry out social audit processes on government and donor social spending, participatory monitoring of the PRSP, and budget tracking at municipal and national level, with a gender focus;
- access to information about the PRSP, especially for traditionally excluded groups;
- mechanisms for dialogue and alliance building between CSOs and local and national government institutions and with donors to enhance local ownership of the PRSP; and
- excluded groups assume positions in advocacy processes relating to the PRSP.

The fund has 13 donors of which 4 are bilateral aid agencies (CIDA, Irish Aid, DANIDA, DFID); 1 multilateral – European Union; and 8 international NGOs. In a three-year period, the fund has raised $4.5 million to support Honduran CSOs.

Results

Associative life in Honduras is extensive, with diverse roots and interests that often have to compete fiercely for funding. As of May 2008, the ACI Fund had organized 14 separate calls for proposals, resulting in the reception of 600 proposals, of which a total of 155 projects were approved. Projects are approved on the basis of technical capacity, the strategic nature of the intervention, and coherence with the fund’s objectives.

Facilitating community access to resources is an important element of the work of the fund’s
partners, particularly in the wake of the decentralization of the proceeds of HIPC debt relief under the poverty reduction strategy. Forty projects financed by the fund concentrate on civil society social audits of public policies of both the Honduran government and the donor community:

- Through social audit, communities have taken control of municipal resources. Poor or corrupt implementation (for example, in schools and health clinics) has been identified and reversed so that services are now answerable to the community in many places.
- An audit on access to anti-retroviral therapy was carried out by organizations representing persons living with HIV and resulted in agreements signed with the Minister of Health to extend services to rural communities.
- National policies have been influenced by several organizations: groups working on a public housing policy for low income families have contributed to a new national policy; six women’s groups have contributed to public policies around gender-based violence and support for women under the new National Health Plan; and two organizations working with migrants’ groups have been major contributors to a new national policy on the protection of migrants’ rights.

The fund has a web space for sharing best practice and for discussing developments in the national and local contexts. Communication with the wider public around the PRSP has been achieved by publishing monthly supplements in national newspapers and by supporting radio programs through three local NGOs – Comunica, Radio Progreso and Cevifa.

**Description of Good Practice**

**Local ownership: power sharing in fund management**

By extending the principles of the Paris Declaration to civil society contexts, the ACI Fund has aimed to find new models of civil society funding, and of co-operation between Northern and Southern CSOs that is conducive to local ownership. The ACI strategy consists of an operational structure that explicitly and actively commits to a power sharing arrangement between international NGOs and representatives of Honduran civil society in the joint management of the fund. The fund is an evolving model of good practice, with a vision of the eventual withdrawal of ACI to allow for self-management by civil society. Thus, the procedures surrounding the fund are designed in themselves to promote alliance building, solidarity and strengthened capacity within Honduran civil society.

**Harmonization and alignment: built into a single funding mechanism**

The ACI Fund’s approach demonstrates the benefits of multi-donor funds for civil society as an instrument for increasing the efficiency and impact of international cooperation, highlighting the following:

- harmonization and alignment based on a common strategy;
- unified procedures for implementation and accountability;
- monitoring oriented towards impact and learning;
- strategic dialogue with multiple actors; and
- co-management and empowerment of civil society.
There has been a simplification of donors’ procedures for accessing finance, accepting proposals and submitting harmonized reports. The channelling of multiple donors’ funds through the ACI Fund’s single system has been the most important element in practice. Harmonization and alignment are consolidated and the time saved from not having to respond to multiple donor needs has been invested in project partners and in generating relevant quality information for donors. Although there has been considerable political will on the part of donor agencies to support this multi-donor approach, there are still some donors whose headquarters demand individualized information and the use of agency-specific planning and accountability tools. The ACI Fund is committed to working with donors to extend an enriched understanding of the principles and practice of harmonization and alignment to CSO-led initiatives.

*Good donorship: a mechanism to support capacity development*

The success of the ACI Fund in attracting resources has signalled that donors are disposed to giving resources for civil society if there are suitable mechanisms in place. A major advantage of the approach is the access it gives bilateral donors to grassroots civil society in Honduras. Many bilateral actors do not have the resources to support individual CSOs directly; their administrative procedures were designed for large-scale projects with government partnerships in mind. The fund provides a reliable mechanism for donors to contribute to civil society development without having to administer and monitor a large quantity of small projects.

The official donors to the ACI Fund engage with the government in political dialogue, through the officials and representatives of DFID, CIDA and DANIDA within the G-16. The involvement of these donors in the initiative has given an opportunity for the ACI Fund to use these relationships, not only as a means of promoting this model of financing and co-management, but also to promote an engagement on themes that reflect the interests of civil society.

The fund has aimed to ensure that timely resources are available to support and broaden the participation of Honduran civil society in the definition of sustainable policies for eradicating poverty and reducing high levels of inequality. It combines financial and technical support to CSOs to carry out work in information, participation and political advocacy around poverty reduction. Experience is showing that excluded groups are interested and committed to engaging in poverty reduction processes, and that investing in their capacity is important to strengthen not only the quality of their proposals and projects but also their ability to engage with state actors.

The independence and autonomy of civil society, in relation to political parties and the government, have been crucial for the success of social audits. Strengthening the capacity for social audit is not an end in itself but rather a mechanism for achieving citizen participation, democracy, transparency and a culture of accountability and holding government to account.

Extracted from the case study “ACI-PRSP Multi Donor Fund for Strengthening Participation of Honduran Civil Society in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Sally O’Neill, Regional Director for Latin America, TROCAIRE Ireland, Soneill@trocairehn.ie

Managing the Donors: BRAC’s Use of a Program-based Approach

Description of the Initiative

BRAC, founded in 1972, is the largest and most experienced NGO in Bangladesh with over 110,000 employees. It reaches millions of the poor and ultra-poor with an integrated set of development interventions which includes micro-finance services, primary health care and non-formal primary education. CIDA has contributed over $50 million to these programs, in partnership with other donors, and BRAC has always been a significant element in CIDA’s Bangladesh program.

Funding for the Non-Formal Primary Education Project and Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction – Targeting the Ultra Poor program is channeled through donor consortia into a pooled fund managed by BRAC. All donors are following the same approach - separate agreements with the implementing agency (in CIDA’s case, a Contribution Agreement with BRAC), but pooling the funds and using the mechanism of the Donor Consortium/Donor Liaison Office to handle project management.

The Donor Liaison Office acts as the secretariat for the two consortia and allows all the donors to "speak with one voice" to BRAC about monitoring, progress reporting, evaluation, or issues of concern. The role of the Donor Liaison Office is to facilitate information flow amongst donors and between donors and BRAC; to manage and coordinate technical assistance, evaluations and review missions; to keep track of donors’ fund releases; and to provide support to consortium meetings and follow up decisions taken at these meetings.

The consortium approach, combined with the Donor Liaison Office, enables donors to extend their reach and impact, improve their cost/benefit ratio and leverage their aid dollars without undermining their procedures for performance and financial accountability. It works because there is an effective liaison mechanism that is acceptable to, and supported by, all the donors as well as by the recipient organization.

Results

This method demonstrates all of the advantages of a program-based approach, particularly in the areas of harmonization and alignment, including:

- approval procedures: a single project proposal was submitted to all donors as the basis for individual donor approval of the projects;
- timing of contributions: donors have tried (informally) to coordinate for smooth fund flow; this is managed by BRAC through requesting payments from individual donors sequentially throughout the year;
- procurement: this is undertaken by BRAC using its own procedures;
- disbursement triggers: one key ‘expansion’ trigger was jointly agreed by all donors and was appraised by a jointly funded mission, although donors must each individually accept that the trigger has been met;
- reporting: there is a common semi-annual report, and common quarterly financial reports;
- monitoring: there are common (jointly funded) review missions for monitoring purposes;
and
• harmonization: donors meet regularly to come to joint positions on project management and related issues.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Harmonization and alignment*

The Donor Liaison Office undertakes the following activities:

• plans and organizes the preparation of the scheduled bi-annual BRAC/Donor Consortium (DC) meetings as well as any other ad hoc meetings of consortium representatives and BRAC as required;
• provides secretarial support for such meetings;
• monitors follow-up of actions taken as a result of decisions by the DC and BRAC;
• informs BRAC and DC representatives of any amendments to mutual agreements, timetables, and programs between BRAC and the donors;
• maintains familiarity with developments within BRAC through regular meetings with BRAC’s executive management;
• assists BRAC with the preparation of key documents, especially progress reports and annual and five-year work plans;
• prepares terms of reference for monitoring, review and evaluation missions;
• maintains close liaison with members of the DC regarding selection of consultants and issuing of contracts;
• maintains a roster of suitable consultants on which to draw for periodic and ad hoc specialist missions. Mobilizes such missions as the need arises;
• provides logistical and back-up services to consultants;
• tracks the implementation of recommendations made by consultancy missions;
• coordinates and monitors fund disbursements in accordance with arrangements between donors and BRAC. Reports on all changes in BRAC’s financial requirements and donors’ disbursement plans;
• undertakes periodic field visits in order to assess project implementation, with particular focus on agreed recommendations deriving from consultancy missions; and
• maintains a resource library containing previous reports prepared for the BRAC Donor Consortium and related reports and documents compiled from other sources.

**Accountability**

This is an innovative program entailing some risks in terms of cost/benefits and expected outcomes. Working with other donors mitigates the risks by strengthening the voice of donors with the recipient organization over issues such as reporting, planning, and management.

BRAC is a very self-directed organization, and donors need to work in concert if they are to maintain full oversight over performance issues. Lines of communication among donors and BRAC and the Donor Liaison Office need to be kept transparent to avoid overlapping or inconsistent messages.

For donors, the level of effort for project management should be reduced because of the
consortium approach -- if the burden of coordinating with other donors is less onerous than the burden of dealing directly with the recipient organization. For CIDA, the approach does not completely eliminate direct donor-recipient management tasks in both the desk and the post. The post bears most of the effort for coordinating with other donors.

Prepared with working documents from BRAC, Donor Liaison Office, and the Canadian International Development Agency.


23...  Foundation for the Philippines Environment

Description of the Initiative

In the late 1980s, the Philippines experienced a marked increase in inflow of Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds that provided opportunities to develop grant mechanisms managed by Philippine NGOs. The Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), founded in 1992, was one of these pioneer development aid grant mechanisms.

The FPE began its evolution in 1988, at a pledging session of the Multilateral Aid Initiative for the Philippine Assistance Program in Tokyo. The US government proposed a funding initiative which later became the Natural Resource Management Program (NRMP). In 1990, the US government signed into law the Foreign Assistance Act, under which the NRMP emerged as a focus of USAID. In the same year, the Philippine Government and USAID signed a Memorandum of Agreement formalizing a new bilateral assistance of US$125 million under the NRMP.

Of this amount, US$25 million was allocated to support the biodiversity conservation and natural resource management activities of NGOs and to create an endowed, non-profit, private organization through the “debt-for-nature” swap mechanism. USAID assistance was used to buy back two debts in 1992 and 1993 that accrued US$21.08 to FPE’s endowment. The debt buyers were World Wildlife Federation (WWF) and USAID. This fund was augmented with a donation of US$200,000 by the Bank of Tokyo to WWF, held in trust for FPE.

Results

The FPE is considered the largest grant-making institution outside of the government for environmental and sustainable development in the country. Its mission is to be a catalyst for biodiversity and sustainable development of communities in environmentally critical areas which have high biodiversity and endemic but highly threatened plants and animals. It is currently focused in 18 priority sites: eight in Luzon, five in the Visayas and five in Mindanao. In addition to supporting activities in biological conservation and sustainable development, the FPE also supports research, capacity development, advocacy and environmental defense initiatives.

In the Philippines, 334 Philippine NGOs and people’s organizations (POs) and 24 academic institutions were involved in the series of nationwide consultations leading up to establishment of the FPE. In the US, Filipino delegates from large environmental coalitions and networks of civil society as well as the government, together with US-based NGOs, lobbied at the US Congress for development assistance for the environment.

A partnership of four clusters of stakeholders established the FPE:

- Philippine NGOs and POs and their coalitions,
- Philippine Government through the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Finance;
- US NGOs, through the WWF and the US-based Philippine Development Forum; and
- US Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).


The process of creating an endowment for the FPE took three years from 1991 to 1994. While negotiations were going on, WWF and the Philippine Business for Social Progress acted as the trustees over an Interim Fund of US$500,000 to start FPE’s operations. The selection of WWF and the Business School as fund trustees was the result of a compromise between the US Congress and Philippine NGOs – the former preferred WWF, a US NGO, while the latter wanted a Philippine NGO.

FPE’s endowment was converted into local currency (PhP 570 million) and deposited in the Central Bank in a special series of Central Bank notes earning an annual interest of 12%. A Memorandum of Agreement signed in March, 1995 by the US and Philippine governments and USAID defined how the endowment was to be used. Accordingly, FPE would use 80% of the interest income earned by the endowment to fund its projects and 20% to cover administrative expenses. From 1992 to 1994, the endowment earned about PhP 2 million per year. It posted income losses from 1994 to 1996 but regained income of about PhP 2.6 million from 1996 to 1997.

The rising demands for grant support vis-à-vis uncertainty and low return from the Central Bank notes prompted the Board of Trustees to consider other investment options. Upon the approval of the USAID, which imposed stricter guidelines for fund placements, the FPE withdrew its endowment from the Central Bank and turned over its management to three local fund managers and one offshore bank. The investment plan reportedly improved the yield of FPE. FPE also made efforts to augment its funds by getting more donors to co-finance projects.

FPE’s grant portfolios range from less than PhP 150,000 to a maximum amount of PhP 2 million. Project duration ranges from less than a year to more than two years per grant. It also has a standardized project monitoring and evaluation system, monitoring forms and other reporting requirements for both the FPE staff and grantees or partner organizations.

**Description of Good Practice**

*Local and democratic ownership*

The FPE’s governance structure is conducive to local ownership. FPE is broadly represented by civil society groups and government. The board of trustees is the sole policy-making body. It sets policies, direction and overall guidelines, monitors fund performance and utilization, and approves grant program plans and projects for funding. It is composed of eleven members - six regional representatives (two each for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao), four elected “at large” who are regarded as “luminaries” with national reputation, and a representative of WWF. A government representative from the Department of Finance or Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas also sits on the board in an ex-officio capacity. Trustees serve in their individual capacity for a term of four years with no eligibility for re-election until a year following one’s end of tenure. The terms of office are staggered, and half of the trustees mark their end of term every two years.

The Regional Advisory Council is a mechanism that ensures national representation and link with the regions. It nominates the members of the board and advises the board on policy-making, program development and governance. There are three Regional Advisory Councils - composed of 60 NGO representatives that represent the three major island groups of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The Regional Advisory Council members serve a term of two years and are
nominated by the Regional Consultative Councils - informal bodies that are convened as the need arises.

*Good donorship*

Combining grant-making with capacity development helps advance sustainability. The FPE initiates, assists and funds biological conservation and sustainable development activities. In addition to financial resources, the FPE also provides technical resources to strengthen the capacities of NGOs, POs and local communities in pursuing biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Supporting a spectrum of activities recognizes and reinforces the spectrum of civil society’s roles. The FPE supports grant recipients to implement biodiversity and conservation projects on the ground while also supporting advocacy initiatives such as coalition building and facilitating linkages among local, national and international CSOs; information, education and communication; and direct advocacy and media advocacy. The FPE also seeks to generate information needed to support actions for environmental protection.

Extracted from the case study, “Foundation for the Philippine Environment”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by IBON International, IBON Philippines, jdongail@ibon.org

24... CSO Capacity Development in Guyana

Description of the Initiative

Many NGOs in Guyana are still in their start-up or emergent phases. These organizations require intensive capacity building and hands-on experience to move them to a fully mature stage. Their potential impact on poverty is high, because they are able to work so effectively at the community level. This case study seeks to demonstrate how CHF’s approach and experience in capacity development enhances the effectiveness of rural and remote communities, to ensure that aid reaches those that are most in need. It shows that such aid brings about sustained change and resilience in the livelihoods of its intended beneficiaries.

The Building Community Capacity Project (BCCP) Phase II implemented during 2003-2008 in Guyana was aimed at enhancing the capacity of Guyanese NGOs to play a collaborative and complementary role to the Government of Guyana in the implementation of the Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy. BCCP Phase II also sought to increase collaboration between CSOs, the Government of Guyana and the private sector for poverty reduction programming.

In 2003, CIDA provided $5 million to CHF for the implementation of the BCCP Phase II. This project targeted the strengthening of the voluntary sector in the rural and hinterland areas to play a more important role and to lead civil society’s participation in the development and delivery of programs within Guyana’s health, education and other sectors. At the heart of the project was the transformation of newly formed organizations into effective and credible development actors.

CHF’s model was to build capacity by partnering with community-based organizations and supporting them to design, implement and monitor projects in collaboration with their communities. CHF uses five main categories of support: technical assistance that will improve organizational governance and performance in the delivery of poverty alleviation activities; limited material and equipment support for program delivery on key poverty issues; assistance to establish linkages with other organizations with common cause and related experiences; support for sub-projects that will provide practical experience for the organization, test the capacity level of organizations, allow for government-NGO collaboration and address a key poverty issue; and regular liaison, coaching and monitoring support from the CHF Team to achieve change in capacity and performance.

Results

Twenty-one CSOs benefited from this initiative and are now preferred partners for other donors interested in funding community poverty reduction programs with reputable, transparent CSOs. Among some key development results are:

- **Empowerment of the poor** – previously, the opinions of residents of rural communities were not integrated into development planning in any significant way; projects were often driven by a small group of influential people with access to resources; 21 CSOs now have a voice in discussions involving donors, government and other stakeholders to identify, plan and deliver aid programs in their communities.

- **Improved governance and policies** – more than 200 board and staff members of CSOs are now capable of undertaking democratic decision-making, board management, volunteer
management, financial management, participatory rural appraisals and strategic planning, enhancing transparency and accountability to all stakeholders.

- **Stronger and more sustainable civil society** – by strengthening 21 rural and hinterland-based CSOs, the overall strength of civil society was enhanced. Enhanced participation by previously marginalized and important civil society actors like rural CSOs and more frequent dialogue that is based on partnership between different CSO actors improved the sustainability and effectiveness of civil society.

- **Poverty reduction** – approximately 18,500 rice farmers secured increased income from higher yields as a result of access to higher quality seeds; 78 primarily female-headed households (consisting of approximately 1,668 persons) received 701 sheep to establish their own herds and returned an equal number of lambs to benefit others; and 250 households, severely affected by flooding in 2005 and in every year since, received support to diversify and grow crops between flood periods.

In addition, by building capacity in rural and hinterland CSOs, new thinking and awareness is created that fosters new attitudes toward development work. This enables key stakeholders to advance programs beyond immediate needs to more long-term strategic considerations using innovative approaches at the community level and through networks of community, regional and national organizations. It also enables these organizations to move from a self-centered, competitive and combative view to a wider societal concern where collaboration, complementarity and networking inform the vision, goals and operational mandates of organizations. Achieving progress in the foregoing prepares each stakeholder or partnership to implement programs with common developmental objectives.

**Description of Good Practice**

Weak capacity among CSOs, especially new organizations, constrains poor communities from organizing to take advantage of donor and local government resources, and of development opportunities more generally. Conversely, a strengthened civil society can not only provide invaluable service delivery at the grassroots level, but with appropriate networking, advocacy skills and a forum for dialogue, it can also give voice to the poor and marginalized to better inform government and donor policies and programs. In CHF’s experience, CSOs in Guyana have demonstrated different degrees of effectiveness. The ones that are most effective demonstrate the following characteristics:

- they seek guidance from their beneficiaries and members to determine program priorities;
- they involve and empower members and beneficiaries in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their programs;
- they establish partnerships and collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure sustainability, secure access to resources and remove bottlenecks;
- their decision making and communication is transparent;
- they focus on setting and achieving results;
- they believe in and are guided by the principle of equality;
- they report in a timely and accurate manner based on their obligations;
- they practice good financial accountability and management; and
- they are strategic in all their pursuits.
Good donorship

CHF provided grant funding from CIDA’s contribution for various initiatives at the community level through a sub-project fund mechanism. The use of this mechanism provides a very good context to support capacity building. Organizations are required in a sub-project process to consult with their beneficiaries, prepare a project proposal and establish mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and reporting. They are required to establish partnerships with different stakeholders, to meet and make decisions and to communicate those decisions to different actors. These along with other key activities offer very good opportunities for them to learn while doing and for capable, trusted coaches to help them through these learning processes in a practical and hands-on manner.

Local and democratic ownership

Capacity building is an organic process that requires flexibility and a responsiveness based on the realities of the local environment. There should be consensus among all key stakeholders in a capacity building project (especially among donors and recipients) about the need for flexibility and timely responses whenever difficulties are foreseen or encountered. This consensus should strategically influence the degree of freedom that the manager/practitioner on the ground has to respond to hurdles. The issues of empowerment, responsibility and accountability of each stakeholder should be made clear from the inception. It is not enough to confront these issues during project implementation; they are best addressed during its planning stage.

Participatory approaches should be used to determine what type of capacity building assistance is required by recipients. This approach must be based on the recognition that these recipients understand their capacity gaps, the pace at which they want to grow, their absorptive capacities and their organization’s vulnerabilities.

Generalized approaches should be avoided, as they are not as effective as tailor-made approaches in building capacity. A high percentage of the funding for capacity building should be allocated for hiring full-time staff in order to win trust, gain sound insights and develop a good understanding of the organizational dynamics over the long term.

For nascent CSOs whose members have a low level of formal education, sophisticated systems will not be appropriate. Systems must be simple but grounded in the principles of good governance. The best way to build the capacity of these organizations is through practical sessions in which they are coached by a professional. This professional must be able to empathize with members, gain their trust and establish strong lasting relationships with them.

It is easier for poverty reduction projects to identify and reach the more needy beneficiaries when they are implemented by transparent and credible CSOs on the ground rather than by outsiders or elites who may lack legitimacy among the poor. Ordinary people exhibit a great deal of social entrepreneurship, resulting in sustainable, often low-cost projects when an approach of empowerment along with guidance in project implementation is pursued.

25... Volunteer Services and Capacity Development: The Uniterra Program

Description of the initiative

Uniterra is a development and public engagement program with operations in 13 African, Asian, and Latin American countries and a public engagement program for Canada. It is centred on volunteering and international partnership. It is being implemented by two Canadian NGOs: Centre d’étude et de coopération internationale (CECI) and World University Service Canada (WUSC).

Its goals are twofold: to build the capacities of local development actors in targeted sectors (agriculture and rural development, private sector development, health and HIV/AIDS, basic education, and youth citizenship); and to mobilize the contributions of individual Canadians for development. The program draws on the principles of aid effectiveness, which it has adapted from a civil society perspective.

The current Uniterra program is funded by CIDA and the two Canadian partners, and runs from July 2004 to March 2009. It mobilizes more than 400 Canadian and Southern volunteers each year on long- and short-term assignments to directly support over 120 local partners, who are key actors in the targeted sectors in their countries, and are working to strengthen the capacities of more than 800 grassroots organizations offering services to the public.

The program has developed an innovative volunteering arrangement in Canada known as “Leave for Change,” which is directed at the private or institutional sectors. The employer becomes a program partner and bears some of the costs of its employee’s assignment. The program also makes available a small sectoral fund to support partner initiatives and activities. Activities in Canada include informing the public through a network of partners and volunteers, and providing opportunities for tangible engagement in international solidarity work.

Uniterra’s model of development cooperation rests on the principle that Southern CSOs are best placed to offer services to populations and communities or to advocate on behalf of excluded or vulnerable groups, but that these CSOs need to build their capacities in certain areas and require access to resources in order to carry out their activities.

Uniterra’s activities are focused both geographically and by sector to allow for a more comprehensive approach to development. Key actors or stakeholders (domestic CSOs working in a sector, relevant government departments, and donors) undertake an analysis of the issues from a civil society perspective, with support from Uniterra.

Local program partners (usually 5-10 CSO organizations in a sector) develop five-year sector action plans and establish sectoral program management committees that set annual goals and allocate resources. These committees identify capacity development needs that a volunteer partnership program could help to address and identify priority activities. They also monitor progress on results with the support of Uniterra field staff and volunteers. The committees also act as fora for dialogue and coordinated action between CSOs in a given sector. Committee members are supported in their analysis of relevant policies and programs, and their capacity to engage in policy dialogue is strengthened. In many cases, relevant national authorities also
participate in the work of these committees.

Results

Results of the program to September 30, 2007 include the following:

- In total, more than 120,000 persons, 56% of them women, have developed better skills and aptitudes due to direct support or the work of Uniterra volunteers. The beneficiaries are paid employees, members, or volunteers of organizations offering services to the public. For example, in a partnership with Botswana’s Department of Vocational Education and Training, some 700 teachers received HIV-AIDS training. The teachers were provided with curriculum materials for use in the classroom that enabled them to reach thousands of young people in the country.

- More than 800 organizations have strengthened their capacities to offer services to the public through human resource skills development and capacity development to mobilize resources and implement effective strategies in their respective sectors. In Senegal, the 250 members of the literacy coalition known as Coalition Nationale des Opérateurs en Alphabétisation (CNOAS) worked on improved coordination of their internal structure and enhanced dialogue with the literacy branch of the Ministry of Education. The result has been a genuine collaboration between the Ministry and civil society towards the implementation of the national literacy strategy.

- More than 80 CSOs are actively involved in policy dialogue in their respective sectors. Thanks to the program, several organizations have been able to network and to take concerted action at the national, regional, and international levels, thus reinforcing their influence. In Nepal, the Feminist Dalit Organization, FEDO, plays a central role in an initiative to enact laws preventing discrimination on the grounds of gender and caste. With Uniterra’s help, FEDO has formed ties with other women’s organizations around the world, thus strengthening its influence within the national dialogue.

- More than 290,000 people, 60% of them women, have better access to services, means of production, or markets. For example, over 5,000 women from four West African countries have acquired greater proficiency in the production and marketing of shea butter products. The quality of their products has improved, and they have boosted their market share and income. These women have created cooperative businesses as a way of organizing their production and marketing efforts and of acquiring the services they need. Over the last 15 years, dozens of volunteers have supported these women’s groups.

- In Bolivia, hundreds of women have seen their risk of dying in childbirth drop substantially since they have gained access to a midwife who uses both traditional and modern techniques and works at the hospital. This service was developed as part of a partnership between the communities, the municipality, and health care providers, with support from program volunteers. This innovative model is now being replicated throughout the Andean Altiplano.

Description of good practice

Local ownership, alignment, and coordinated programming

As we have seen, Uniterra’s activities are based on coordinated actions and locally-defined priorities, developed taking a relatively comprehensive sector perspective. While respecting the
principle of local ownership, this approach ensures that interventions are mutually supportive and have more potential for impact at the sector level, compared to isolated volunteer-sending activities. It has also promoted improved collaboration and coordination with the government.

In Senegal’s education sector the sectoral committee chose to focus on the strengthening of informal education, including literacy training. Several umbrella bodies sitting on the sectoral committee represent hundreds of Senegalese literacy organizations. These organizations previously had difficulty wielding any influence over Senegalese authorities. To help overcome this constraint, the literacy branch of the Ministry of Education was invited to become a Uniterra partner. This laid the groundwork for constructive dialogue between CSOs and the literacy branch of the government. Today, joint projects are being planned, and CSOs are engaged in constructive dialogue with the Ministry.

In Guatemala, Uniterra supports craft organizations to market their products. Uniterra also supports AGEXPORT, an association composed mainly of business people promoting exports, which has chosen to set up a unit for the promotion of fair trade products, thereby supporting small-scale artisans. Following a request by the artisans and with the support of AGEXPORT, the Guatemalan government has set up a Fair Trade Commission to develop policies and provide support for programs in this sector. The Commission is now a Uniterra partner and actors at all levels work together to provide the country with winning strategies for fair trade and give voice to the South in debates concerning fair trade.

**Results and accountability**

One of the major challenges confronted by international volunteer programmes is to demonstrate that they contribute to development results. Uniterra has addressed this challenge by setting up a performance measurement and reporting system based on quantitative and qualitative development indicators such as those seen above under Results. The adoption of a sector-focused approach facilitates the measurement of development results through the identification of higher level development goals.

Since the purpose of the program is to build capacity, indicators serve to determine which types of capacities are developed (management, governance, marketing, advocacy, mobilization, etc.) and how many organizations benefit. Uniterra also supports its local partners’ implementation of systems to measure the results of their own activities for the populations they serve.

The implementation of performance measurement systems places demands on all the partners of a program but it is essential to evaluating the contribution of CSOs to development efforts. Moreover, such a system serves to demonstrate that the concerted action of Northern and Southern volunteers, in the context of a structured development program in line with the country’s priorities, can make a significant contribution.

**Donorship issues**

One of the keys to the success of Uniterra is the quality of its relationship with CIDA. The contribution agreement between the two Canadian organizations and CIDA was drafted in the spirit of partnership in a common cause that recognizes the contributions of the parties (*inter alia*, the monetary value of Canadian volunteers’ donations of work-time). The five-year term of the agreement is crucial to the success of such a program. The program was designed by two
Canadian organizations in conjunction with their Southern partners and is in keeping with CIDA’s priorities, yet allows for the flexibility necessary to create a value-added program run by and for civil society.

Uniterra’s contribution to capacity building for the local organizations is, however, limited by the low levels of financial support granted to CSOs in the program countries. The local organizations are thus ill-equipped to adequately deliver services to the public or to advocate on its behalf. All the organizations complain of a lack of funding through national programs, thus putting the effectiveness of Uniterra’s efforts in doubt. This suggests that capacity building programs such as Uniterra be implemented in environments where the enhancement of CSO capacities goes hand in hand with resource availability to support the work of CSOs more generally. Southern and Northern CSOs can mobilize resources to support their activities and programs through their own channels, but it is incumbent upon local governments and donors to ensure that adequate funding for civil society is available through program funds.

**Partnerships**

CECI and WUSC have considerably improved the quality of their relationships with the 120 partner organizations they now work with, who now play a pivotal role in program management decisions. In addition, Uniterra favours the establishment of relations of knowledge-sharing, and reciprocity between Southern and Canadian organizations as well as among Southern organizations. Thus, for example, a partnership was established between literacy stakeholders in Senegal and Niger and two Canadian actors, the Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec and the Fédération canadienne pour l’alphabétisation en français. These organizations, which represent grassroots organizations offering literacy services, have exchanged techniques and training methods and shared strategies on how to induce their respective governments to step up their financial support. Examples such as this that demonstrate how volunteerism and international partnership help to build social capital are increasingly numerous.

Extracted from the case study “Uniterra Programme” submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Centre d’étude et de coopération internationale (CECI) and World University Service Canada (WUSC) through Sylvain Matte, Uniterra Programme Director. Contact Philippe Fragnier, Team Leader, Programming and Partnership Uniterra, philippef@ceci.ca

Description of the Initiative

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), a global network of autonomous member associations, is one of the first international non-governmental organizations to implement a process of accreditation. The accreditation system helps to ensure that IPPF’s mission, vision and values are shared by all associations, and that agreed principles, policies and standards are respected and implemented consistently across the Federation, regardless of the national context in which they are working.

IPPF’s accreditation tool is used to assess and review the work of all its member associations. It embraces their diversity while ensuring that they uphold essential international standards and observe best practice. Importantly, this guarantee of excellence is consistent across the globe.

The accreditation process involves an assessment of the association on 65 standards, clustered into four main areas:

- constitution – governance and accountability;
- governance – advocacy, resource mobilization, stewardship, strategic planning, policy setting, recruitment and appraisal of the chief executive;
- programs and services – advocacy, strategic planning, quality of care, and monitoring and evaluation; and
- management – managing the programs and services and ensuring transparent financial systems are in place.

In national contexts which offer little or no regulation of civil society, it can sometimes be difficult for donor and national governments to judge objectively whether a civil society partner is credible, accountable and transparent. Accreditation offers a guarantee to external partners that the association adheres to internationally recognized transparent governance, management, financial and monitoring systems, making them partners who come with a guarantee that they adhere to the same principles as those highlighted in the Paris Declaration, from a civil society perspective.

Results

By the end of 2007, the first five-year cycle of accreditation reviews was completed in IPPF, and during this period 137 associations went through the accreditation process. Among the key results are:

- Policy influence: the associations are equipped to interact with and influence the rapidly changing aid environment and subscribe to the principles of and contribute to the operationalization of the Paris Declaration. Although the accreditation process is standardized across the Federation, there is room to accommodate the diversity of associations and the diverse roles they play in civil society, and still ensure a consistent seal of quality.
• **Representativity**: for civil society to be credible and representative of the community, it must be non-discriminatory. IPPF’s accreditation ensures that all associations’ boards include youth representatives and at least 50 per cent of board members are women. All partners know that IPPF associations come with this guarantee of being representative of the people whose rights they promote and protect.

• **Delivery of high quality services**: historically, IPPF member associations have seen their primary role as contraceptive service providers. Accreditation has demonstrated the importance of an association having functioning and transparent management and governance structures to ensure a ‘healthy’ institution that is in a position to deliver a broad range of high-quality sexual and reproductive health and rights services.

• **Continuous learning/improvement**: the accreditation process has enabled IPPF to identify areas where an association may need additional technical support. It has empowered the associations to contribute to diagnosing their own problems and implementing a solution. This provides assurances to donors and governments that the association plays an important and appropriate role in its own development process.

With five years of experience, IPPF has emerged as a leader within civil society for accountability through accreditation, receiving visits and requests for information from Transparency International, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance and the Emergency Capacity Building Consortium of NGOs Project.

**Description of Good Practice**

**Local and democratic ownership**

The comparative advantage of IPPF member associations is that they are national autonomous organizations. They have ownership over their strategic direction and organizational philosophy, so are well placed to be regarded as valuable partners in the development process. Accreditation certifies this and also indicates that member associations adhere to a set of essential standards that ensure the quality of their services, management and governance. This guarantee of excellence indicates to external partners a credible, transparent, effective and accountable partner in the development process.

**Harmonization and alignment**

Donors have made a commitment to align their systems for financial management, accounting and auditing, with country systems and procedures. This commitment to the principle of alignment is strengthened by working with CSOs who recognize its value and align their own management and financial systems. Receiving accreditation status from IPPF certifies this and makes IPPF and its member associations credible recipients for funds. Eighty-five per cent of surveyed associations say accreditation has enabled them to better mobilize resources from donors.

To increase effectiveness, the activities of donors and civil society can be better harmonized and coordinated to achieve transparent and collectively collaborative development initiatives. IPPF is engaging with these principles by collaborating with donors on consolidated reporting of its activities through its Annual Consultative Meeting with Donors (January) and Annual Donors’ Report (June). Accreditation has helped to streamline the system for gathering information for
the meeting as all associations have the same harmonized financial and monitoring and evaluation systems for reporting on 30 global indicators of performance. The harmonization of these internationally-agreed standards of reporting and accountability adds credibility and weight to the information shared with donors.

The framework for member associations to link into global agreements such as the MDGs is through IPPF’s five strategic priorities: adolescents, HIV/AIDS, access, abortion and advocacy. Accreditation teams assess the strategic direction of associations in terms of these program priorities and demonstrates to external stakeholders their capacity to engage with international development goals and objectives.

Finally, accreditation has enabled associations to harmonize their strategic priorities, ensuring that every accredited member of the Federation is working towards the same vision and mission. For issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, which can be seen as sensitive in some societies, it is important for the associations to be able to claim membership of IPPF. This is because a unified international champion promoting a cause can be more effective than a series of individual national organizations.

Lessons learned

- Assessing the quality of reproductive health services offered by IPPF associations puts them at the frontline of the development process. It ensures that they are well-placed to implement development innovations and report on and be accountable for delivering results. As effective service providers, they should also be equipped to represent the sexual and reproductive health and rights needs of their clients and the country’s citizens. This representation should feed directly into the national policy and budget formulation process.
- One of the most important roles of civil society is to address sensitive issues that governments are often unable or unwilling to address. Very often, for civil society to engage with and support these issues externally, they must first have internal debate and gain consensus. A visiting accreditation team allows associations the structure and entry points to begin these debates. For example, for a member association to engage in national advocacy for workplace HIV policies, the association is in a much stronger position if they have experience of implementing such a policy themselves. The accreditation system contains checks and balances to ensure that the associations have these policies in place, and provides sample polices to help them open up debate internally and implement the policy.

Extracted from the case study “IPPF Accreditation and aid effectiveness”, submitted in 2008 to the AG-CS by Matthew Lindley, Head of Resource Mobilization, IPPF Mlindley@ippf.org and Daniel Genberg, Head of Accreditation, IPPF Dgenberg@ippf.org