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# 1. HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN THE FORMULATION OF NORTHERN NGOs' APPROACHES TO COMBATING POVERTY?

By Mike Davis, Research Assistant

## *Introduction*

The formulation of Northern NGOs' approaches to combating poverty will be examined in this article. It begins with a brief overview of NGOs' understandings of what poverty is and their strategies for fighting it, before focusing on the influences and processes that shape their overall approaches to poverty issues. For the purposes of this article, these key influences have been loosely grouped together into three categories. The first of these concerns internal relationships and learning within the NGOs themselves, including the ways in which their evolution as organisations and underlying identities inform anti-poverty policies. The second category examined is external relationships, in particular NGOs' relations with International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and with official donors. The article ends with a brief discussion of aspects of the external context in which NGOs operate that are particularly instrumental in shaping approaches to combating poverty.

The research is based on a review of documents and online information produced by members of the NGO Research Programme, together with discussions by telephone and e-mail with current or former staff of the member NGOs. It also draws on secondary literature and research papers.

## *Northern NGOs' Approaches to Combating Poverty*

It is self-evident that any approach to combating poverty must proceed from an understanding of what is poverty. In spite of, or because of, the centrality of poverty to development work, the question 'what is poverty?' has generated a broad literature on definitions and understandings, to which Northern NGOs have made important contributions.<sup>1</sup> Equally, the range of operational practices adopted by NGOs and other actors on the basis of these understandings of poverty is extremely broad and constantly evolving. Whilst acknowledging this diversity, a crude sketch of common characteristics of Northern development NGO approaches to combating poverty can be attempted nonetheless.

Most of the larger Northern NGOs now work from a multi-faceted understanding of poverty going beyond a conception based purely on income or other financial indicators.<sup>2</sup> Informed by this perspective, their strategies for fighting poverty are generally situated at the empowerment oriented (as opposed to instrumentalist/service delivery) end of the spectrum, with emphasis on the importance of participation, rights and advocacy. There are exceptions to this, however, and it is worth noting that some large Northern NGOs continue to make delivery of services a primary element of their approaches to combating poverty.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, many NGOs perceive necessary limitations to the move away from 'delivery' of development, seeing the need for a

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<sup>1</sup> A useful summary of definitions of poverty is offered by Simon Maxwell, in his article *The Meaning and Measurement of Poverty*, <http://www.odi.org.uk/briefing/pov3.html>.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: Christian Aid (2000) *Towards a Christian Aid Understanding of Poverty*; Concern (2002) *Concern Worldwide Strategic Plan March 2002–March 2005*; Oxfam (2001) *Achieving Maximum Impact: Oxfam's Strategy for Overcoming Poverty*.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Caroline Harper, Save the Children UK, 15 August 2002. For references to alleviation as a basis for tackling poverty, see APSO *About APSO*. [http://www.apso.ie/website\\_graphic/about\\_apso/about-apso.html](http://www.apso.ie/website_graphic/about_apso/about-apso.html); Concern (1999) *Concern's Microfinance Policy*.

presence ‘on the ground’ as the foundation for effective advocacy and learning, for example. Many of the policies reviewed for this article have been updated recently and in some cases the articulation of a coherent approach to poverty is quite new.

Reading too much into NGOs’ public statements about their poverty approaches has obvious risks. A meaningful cross-comparison of approaches would need to be backed up with analysis of how these are implemented in practice. This is not only because of gaps between rhetoric and reality, but also because NGOs’ use of language varies considerably, with the same words being used to describe what are clearly different things. Thus, while one can differentiate between approaches labelled ‘alleviation’, and those calling themselves ‘reduction’, it is difficult to identify distinct shades of meaning among ‘elimination’, ‘eradication’, ‘the ending of’ and so on, especially when these are used interchangeably.

### ***Internal Relationships and Learning***

NGO approaches to poverty shift in response to changes in understandings of what poverty is and the most effective practical means of combating it. A key determinant in these changes is internal reflection and learning. Internal consultation and debate are processes cited by several NGOs as a major part of formulating anti-poverty policy.<sup>4</sup> The conditions in which these processes take place are shaped by the way the NGO has developed as an organisation. The physical expansion of Northern NGOs means that in formulating approaches to poverty they draw on an increasing range of perspectives and sources of knowledge. It also means that poverty policies have to be negotiated between a larger number of individuals, departments, regional divisions and sometimes partner organisations as well, all of whom are combating different manifestations of poverty in diverse contexts. This poses challenges for the formulation of approaches that are both innovative and conducive to universal implementation. A policy-maker in one Northern NGO comments that in their organisation it is important to implement innovative policy incrementally, in order to ensure that changes are not rejected out of hand.<sup>5</sup> Where new policies are ‘rolled-out’ quickly across a large NGO, this can present considerable challenges and changes at country programme level. The Save the Children decision to base its activities on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child represents one such case. The introduction of this new approach within Save the Children Norway, has prompted debate on how combating poverty translates into strengthening children’s rights.<sup>6</sup>

The larger Northern NGOs have grown not only in a physical sense, but also in terms of longevity and accumulated experience. This entails increasing distance between present realities and the context in which NGOs were founded. For many, the influence of a founding identity and ethos remains paramount and is a source of strength and identity. Commenting on a Christian Aid paper on poverty written in 2000, its editor, Clive Robinson, notes that the understanding of poverty it sets out ‘came from our Christian value system’.<sup>7</sup> Other NGOs may draw more on organisational ‘traditions’ of policy-making, such as processes or reference points established over time. Concern, for example, has always had a field-driven process of policy

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<sup>4</sup> Communication from Clive Robinson, formerly Christian Aid, 18 August 2002; interview with Caroline Harper, Save the Children UK, 15 August 2002; interview with Connell Foley, Concern, 21 August 2002; interview with Peter Sigsgaard, MS-Denmark, 9 August 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Connell Foley, Concern, 21 August 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Communication from Bjørn Lindgren, Save the Children Norway, 16 August 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Communication from Clive Robinson, formerly Christian Aid, 18 August 2002.

formation, which makes particular reference to practical experience.<sup>8</sup> In all cases, however, founding values and organisational ‘traditions’ have to be negotiated in formulating new approaches to combating poverty. The point of departure for Oxfam GB’s 1998 Strategic Review, for example, consists of a careful analysis and reappraisal of the original mandate in Oxfam’s memorandum of association.<sup>9</sup> The pressure to demonstrate innovation can lead to policy makers over-emphasising differences between new approaches to combating poverty and past policies, rather than the continuities. Meanwhile, ideologies, the body of practice and the need to show consistency, have to be balanced with the requirement to show improvement and progress.

In framing anti-poverty policies, Northern NGOs augment their internal reflection processes with research activities, the focus of which is often informed by debates among international NGOs and the input of partner organisations overseas. NGOs are devoting increasing attention to research, and many are now collaborating on research initiatives with other NGOs, or with academic institutions. For some organisations at least, this trend links to an expansion of their advocacy work, which in turn demands more emphasis on research and formulation of policy.<sup>10</sup> As well as expanding in-house research capacity and building links with research organisations, Northern NGOs are also drawing on the work of leading academics and other independent researchers and writers on poverty issues.

### ***External Relationships***

A significant set of parameters for the formation of NGOs’ approaches to poverty, are those thrown up by the policies of IFIs, particularly the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Bretton Woods institutions’ impact on the incidence of poverty globally, leaves NGOs little choice but to respond to their agenda and many are devoting considerable attention to the implications of the World Bank and IMF’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach to combating poverty.<sup>11</sup> Even in criticising aspects of this approach, Northern NGOs are nonetheless accepting the PRSPs as a framework for debate. Through the initiation of PRSPs, Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs), and other policy frameworks, Bretton Woods institutions shape the discourse on poverty, not only in terms of issues, but also timing. Both Christian Aid and Save the Children UK, for example, set about formulating or informing new policy on poverty in anticipation of the release of a new World Bank World Development Report in 2000.<sup>12</sup>

In characterising NGO-IFI relations, it would be simplistic to suggest that influence flows in one direction only. Indeed, with the substitution of PRSPs for the Structural Adjustment Programme approach, the World Bank and IMF could be argued to be meeting development NGOs and other critics half-way (Leite 2001). In the formulation of poverty policy Northern NGOs have to make judgements on how much space to put between themselves and the IFIs. On the one hand,

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Connell Foley, Concern, 21 August 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Oxfam (1998) *Setting Course for the Twenty-first Century – Oxfam Strategic Review*.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Caroline Harper, Save the Children UK, 15 August 2002; communication from Clive Robinson, formerly Christian Aid, 18 August 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Caroline Harper, Save the Children UK, 15 August 2002; interview with Connell Foley, Concern, 21 August 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Caroline Harper, Save the Children UK, 15 August 2002; communication from Clive Robinson, formerly Christian Aid, 18 August 2002.

NGOs may wish to welcome progressive elements of PRSPs, such as the commitment to civil society input and the formulation of national anti-poverty strategies.<sup>13</sup> On the other, there is the fear of being co-opted by the Bank and of losing independence. Ironically, it can be moments when the gap between the two ‘sides’ appears to be closing that make NGOs most uncomfortable.

The more varied and nuanced relationships between NGOs and official donors also constitute a key influence on NGOs’ approaches to combating poverty. Official donor influences on policy direction can be fairly subtle in terms of understanding of poverty and framing of broad strategies for tackling it.<sup>14</sup> Some donors, however, are more proactive; DFID, for example, has sought to engage in policy dialogue with NGOs, and is regarded, in some areas of policy making at least, as relatively progressive. In some cases, NGOs have close, symbiotic relationships with their national aid ministries. MS-Denmark, for example, has a constructive relationship with DANIDA that is strengthened by exchange, not only of ideas on policy, but also of personnel – many DANIDA staff members have previously spent periods working for MS.<sup>15</sup> This, combined with a Scandinavian tradition of leaving space for government funded institutions to remain critical and maintain their own identity, has contributed to trust building and reduces the risk of MS feeling co-opted. A feature of this relationship is that policies formulated and advocated by MS have, on occasion, been taken up and ‘reflected back’ in a more developed or progressive form by DANIDA towards their original architects.

However, funding relationships with major donors can also exercise a more restrictive influence on NGO approaches to poverty. The fear of appearing too ‘political’, that is radical and challenging, can constrain formulation of innovative anti-poverty policies by NGOs dependent on official funding. Ambivalence towards political issues is not new, indeed some Northern NGOs assert that they were founded on a consciously apolitical platform. However, in the context of NGOs’ current thinking on poverty, avoiding the political is increasingly difficult. As suggested above, most Northern NGOs’ current anti-poverty policies commit them to tackling the causes of poverty rather than the symptoms. While these causes are not always specified in detail, there is a general consensus among NGOs that change must be advocated at a macro-policy level, by influencing governments and international institutions rather than at the grass roots alone (Edwards 2002). As with the IFIs, Northern NGOs must address the question of how much space to maintain between their poverty policies and those of donors. Also, how to foster constructive engagement without risking compromise, or in the eyes of some, becoming part of a new imperialism.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Connell Foley, Concern, 21 August 2002.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Peter Sigsgaard, MS-Denmark, 9 August 2002.

A third area of external relations that influences Northern NGO policies on poverty is relationships between NGOs and their wider constituencies in the North; those members of the public from whom they seek donations and whose views on poverty they attempt to influence. This influence feeds through NGOs' perceptions as to which of their campaigns have, or will have, the most success in raising funds or mobilising support from the general public. The challenge for NGOs is to articulate policies that both reflect their own understandings of poverty and also meet with comprehension and empathy in the public domain. As NGOs' conceptions of poverty and their means of tackling it become more sophisticated, this balance can become harder to strike. An approach to combating poverty based around notions of philanthropic giving for the alleviation of extreme poverty is more readily understood than one centred on effecting very specific alterations to the legal framework governing international trade.<sup>16</sup> The need to put across what are perceived as easily digestible messages about combating poverty partly explains NGOs' use of simple sets of figures to explain poverty and set objectives, even when these tend toward the reductionist.

As with official donors, NGOs are aware that stands they take on political issues may have implications for relations with their public supporters. An important dimension of the current advocacy work of a number of development NGOs involves campaigning on issues relating to the international trade structure and its links to the realities of poverty in the South. This same interconnectedness between international trade and degrees of poverty or prosperity extends to Northern countries as well, however, and can pose challenges for NGOs. Reform of the European Common Agricultural Policy, for example, is of potentially huge significance for efforts to combat poverty in Southern countries, yet is opposed by many members of the public in the North on grounds of domestic agricultural interests. Awareness of likely public responses must inevitably effect NGOs' formulation of poverty policies, even if it is not a key determinant of the overall approach.

### *External Context*

Alongside these internal and external relationships, NGO approaches to combating poverty are conditioned by the broader context in which they operate and trends in the international NGO sector. The past decade has seen a move away from emphasis on implementation of development projects by Northern NGOs themselves and a simultaneous increase in attention to advocacy work in particular. This relates to some of the issues of learning and external relations outlined above, as well as other factors. The point to be made here is that contemporary approaches to combating poverty are devised in a context where many Northern NGOs have been increasing their capacity to carry out policy and advocacy work. These NGOs are better placed to generate more sophisticated understandings of poverty and strategies for combating it. Another major contextual factor to highlight is the acceleration of globalisation and increased recognition of this phenomenon. Globalisation is a source of huge uncertainties, however it raises the prospect of a widening of the gulf between rich and poor and the deepening of global inequities. Better understanding of globalisation highlights the connections between political machinations at the national and international levels and poverty at the grass roots level.

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<sup>16</sup> Presentation by Alistair Fraser, Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA), at meeting to discuss EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement, BOND, London, 5 July 2002; Edwards, M. and Hulme, D. (2000) 'Scaling up NGO impact on development: learning from experience' in Eade, D. *Development, NGOs and Civil Society*. Oxford: Oxfam, p.53.

Globalisation itself offers easier access to, and transmission of, knowledge concerning poverty (Brouwer 2002). The ways in which NGOs are now devising approaches to combating poverty are clearly influenced by these developments. The end of the Cold War, meanwhile, has seen the end of an overarching strategic and putatively moral imperative for Northern governments to hide behind when confronted with demands for reform of international institutions and political norms. While few world leaders have made serious efforts to follow up newly progressive language with vigorous action, this shift has opened spaces for NGO advocacy at 'higher' political levels. These opportunities raise aspirations and influence the ways Northern NGOs formulate approaches to fighting poverty.

Accompanying changes in the landscape in which Northern NGOs operate have been developments in expectations of NGOs, in particular the increase in calls for NGO performance measurement and accountability (Edwards 2000). Pressure for this comes from official donors and within NGOs as well as from critics outside the sector. Concerns to demonstrate accountability and performance measurement are manifest in the increasing tendency of Northern NGOs to link their approaches to fighting poverty with statistical targets, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the International Development Targets (IDTs) aimed at halving poverty by 2015. An example of collaboration between NGOs on this is the formation of Alliance 2015, a coalition of four European NGOs: Concern, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Hivos and Ibis.

For some NGOs, the focus on targets is primarily a response to criticisms of NGOs' performance and impact, notably their failure to co-ordinate and work towards the same objectives.<sup>17</sup> This lack of consistency is highlighted not only by external critics of development NGOs, but also by those NGO personnel who find it an obstacle to their work. For example, those NGOs undertaking anti-poverty initiatives based around participation and empowerment, may find their efforts undermined by the activities of other organisations working in the same locations, that are pursuing approaches based around delivery of welfare.<sup>18</sup> The thinking, for some NGOs at least, is that by collectively striving towards a set of universally recognised goals, they may address this issue of incoherence and inconsistency across the development NGO sector.

A question mark over the embrace of targets such as the IDTs relates to whether they actually complement other elements of Northern NGOs' anti-poverty strategies. As mentioned earlier, many Northern NGOs now base their approaches around a broader understanding of poverty than gauges of income and material provision alone. For example, although the IDTs are certainly more than a measure of income or financial want, they hardly begin to capture impact in terms of reducing exclusion, increasing empowerment and securing rights. If one takes the view that progress in these areas is essentially a *means* of combating the material deprivation aspects of poverty, then there may be no contradiction here. Not all Northern NGOs see rights and empowerment in such purely instrumental terms, however. Furthermore, focusing on attainment of the IDTs can divert NGOs away from tackling the full complexities of poverty, towards the attainment of objectives that may not correspond to reduction of poverty in the multi-dimensional sense that NGOs now claim to understand (Thin 2002). As with any set of pre-determined results, pursuit of IDTs or MDGs has the potential to mask important issues of

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Connell Foley, Concern, 21 August 2002.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

process, unanticipated gains, and opportunities for learning that may arise in the course of combating poverty (Kaplan 2000). Indeed, such ‘goals’ may give a veneer of greater accountability whilst not addressing the root causes of poverty and making NGOs accountable upwards, to Northern donors rather than downwards to Southern stakeholders. Either way they are affecting the approaches to poverty that Northern NGOs develop.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, a range of factors influence the formulation of NGO approaches to poverty, deriving from internal organisational dynamics, relations with external actors and the wider context in which NGOs operate. The most important at this time appear to be IFI and bi-lateral policy decisions and directives. To reach a set of clear conclusions on the relative importance of each would require much more in-depth research than has been undertaken in this exercise. Moreover, this article offers no comment on the way in which the approaches discussed are implemented, aside from acknowledging the ways in which successes and failures in practice feed back into the formulation of new policies for combating poverty. A comparison of stated approaches and practical realities, of rhetoric and reality, and the relationships between them, is certainly merited.

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## 2. SUPPORTING NGO PARTNERS AFFECTED BY AIDS IN MALAWI.

By Rick James and Dan Mullins, INTRAC Malawi

### ***The Reality***

*You are the director of a local NGO in Africa. The phone rings. It is your finance manager telling you that her husband is very sick again and she won't be able to come into work this week. What a disaster! You have a major financial report to send to the donor. This report is already overdue and the donor is withholding the next instalment until this financial report is submitted. Added to this you have not had any monitoring information for the narrative from the food security programme manager who has also been sick for some time. His recently recruited deputy is out in the field, covering for his absent manager and has not come up with any figures yet. What do you do? Your donors blithely insist on you 'mainstreaming' HIV/AIDS in your programmes, but they consistently ignore the costs of its impact being already 'mainlined' in your organisation.*

International NGOs and donors have been at the forefront of the battle against HIV/AIDS. They have successfully brought the issue to the attention of the international community and have encouraged their local partners to mainstream HIV/AIDS issues. Many have even altered their systems of funding to 'appraise HIV/AIDS compliance', making mainstreaming a condition for future support. In all DFID Project Appraisals in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, a section on HIV/AIDS is now mandatory. Many have also shifted their funding priorities towards greater financial support to HIV/AIDS programmes, albeit sometimes at the cost of traditional support sectors such as livelihood security.

This emphasis on programme mainstreaming, however, is only a partial and technical response. It sees the impact of HIV/AIDS merely in terms of programme beneficiaries, but ignores the debilitating organisational costs to the partners who are expected to implement programmes. The people who work in NGOs, from driver to director, are probably as much at risk of being infected and affected by HIV as anyone else in their societies. In fact, many NGO staff are more at risk, given the travel away from families associated with their work and their disposable income.

Working in HIV/AIDS affected areas has overwhelming organisational challenges for local partner organisations in terms of reduced time and money to do the same work. Some NGOs have had their programmes virtually grind to a halt due to illness and death of staff. As staff are affected personally, the ability of the organisation to survive, and to fulfil its mandate, is undermined. Yet these costs of working in an HIV/AIDS context are still largely hidden and are often disguised as inefficient performance. Even international NGOs like Oxfam are not immune, as several Oxfam staff have died from AIDS and many more have been affected.

The AIDS pandemic is such that development organisations in countries with high HIV prevalence can no longer carry out business as usual. Yet many donors, particularly those based in Europe and North America, are ordering partners to develop HIV/AIDS programmes with

beneficiaries, whilst simultaneously telling NGOs to cut down on overheads. This is simply unrealistic.

In order to address the organisational issues of HIV/AIDS responsibly and positively, we must first recognise what they are.

### ***The Organisational Symptoms and Costs of HIV/AIDS***

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has reached such proportions that it is now commonplace to talk about 'rates of attrition', a term previously reserved for the carnage of World Wars. For example, in Malawi it is estimated that by 2005, 40% of all teachers, nurses, doctors and military personnel will have died from AIDS (World Bank 1998). A number of NGOs in Malawi have already lost their most important staff members. An Oxfam survey revealed that in the year 2000 alone, 3 out of 16 agriculture field assistants died in one planning area alone (Oxfam 2001). The delay between contracting the virus and experiencing the symptoms means that in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa even if infection rates went down tomorrow, the problem would worsen over the next 5-10 years.

Yet even before people die, there are considerable costs to the organisation. When a staff member gets sick the organisation has to cope with many indirect costs such as:

- increasing sick leave and absenteeism;
- declining work performance;
- extra work for other staff, causing stress and reducing the quality of their own work;
- a decline in team-work as sick colleagues are isolated. One survey in Malawi revealed that around 50% of people believe that a co-worker with HIV should not be allowed to continue working. '*We stop making tea together*' according to one NGO staff member (Whiteside and Sunter 2000);
- managers spending more of their limited time dealing with HIV-related issues.

There are also increasing direct financial costs:

- overtime or contractors wages to compensate for absenteeism;
- increasing payments for medical costs for those organisations that have medical insurance; this can eventually result in the organisation having to pay higher premiums;
- potentially increased theft and fraud as staff who are HIV positive resort to illegal means to provide for their family's future.

When the employee leaves the organisation either through death, hospitalisation or voluntary resignation, there will be additional direct and indirect costs:

- death benefit, life insurance and/or pension benefits are paid, which if not initially borne by the organisation will soon be passed on through higher premiums;
- other employees will be absent to attend the funeral;
- the funeral expenses (usually borne by the employer in much of Africa);
- staff loans not being repaid;
- colleagues being demoralised through the loss of a co-worker;
- organisational costs through the loss of the learning and experience of that employee.

Many employees try to stay on as long as possible, in order to retain salary and benefits and to have the important psychological support of being active members of society. Some who know they are likely to die do everything possible to stay employed until death to ensure their families receive death benefits or assistance with funeral costs.

There will often then be a need to recruit and train a replacement, which means:

- the organisation has to pay the costs of recruitment;
- the position is vacant until the appointment is made and others have to cover gaps;
- induction and training costs are incurred;
- salary is still paid to the new employee before being up-to-speed and performance is low;
- other employees spend time on inducting and training the new staff person.

Even among staff who are not *infected* themselves, many will be *affected* through sickness and death amongst relatives, neighbours and friends. This means:

- staff take time off work to care for sick relatives;
- staff ask for more time off for funeral leave;
- weekends are spent attending funerals, not relaxing from work;
- staff are distracted and demoralised at work by worries about sick relatives;
- professional activities are disrupted due to illness and death in communities where the organisation works.

Given that the burden of caring usually falls more on women than men, there will be important gender implications, with female staff taking on additional burdens at home. This is likely to disproportionately affect women in junior or temporary positions and may lead to more discrimination against women in recruitment in the future. Women in senior roles may be able to use their greater financial resources to hire others for caring responsibilities.

These organisational costs are likely to be felt most acutely by organisations with 11-20 staff, being the size of many local NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa. A recent study of small businesses in Malawi concluded, 'It is really the firms with 11-20 employees that appear to be most vulnerable. These firms are often those that can little afford to lose workers to absenteeism or to bear the brunt of increased funeral or health costs.' (Ebony Consulting International 2001:77). Given an adult HIV prevalence of 15% to 35% or more, most NGOs of this size are very likely to have one or more staff who are HIV positive, and who may begin to fall ill at any point.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that all NGOs operating in a context of high HIV/AIDS prevalence will see their costs rise and their performance fall. Cumulatively, the range of direct financial costs, and indirect costs, can result in lower quality of work, possibly including the inability to implement certain activities and failure of the organisation to achieve its objectives. In one Oxfam Malawi workshop with over 20 participants, every person acknowledged personally knowing someone who had HIV or who had died of AIDS, and every participant was able to identify a different way in which AIDS negatively affected organisations.

In this environment, if donors respond by merely prescribing that partners develop HIV/AIDS programmes in communities, then this is tantamount to donor malpractice. This malpractice is exacerbated if donors continue to insist on further reducing overheads, thus ignoring the increasing direct and indirect costs of HIV/AIDS and possibly undermining the organisational ability to survive.

### ***The Capacity Building Needs in the HIV/AIDS context***

As well as the increased costs of working in an HIV/AIDS infected context, there will also be additional or increasing capacity building needs in a number of areas. In reality, it would probably be more accurate to describe much of the capacity building as ‘capacity-maintenance’ as that is what in reality it is. Providers of NGO capacity building services should themselves understand that HIV and AIDS are fundamental issues in their work, both for their client organisations, and for themselves. The capacity building needs are broadly divided into two: strategy and programme issues and internal workplace issues.

**Strategy and Programming:** HIV/AIDS is obviously a critical external environmental trend to which all NGOs have to adjust to in sub-Saharan Africa, and one that will clearly influence programming. NGOs that have previously confined themselves to livelihood security issues are asking, ‘If a good percentage of our beneficiaries die of AIDS, how are we really improving livelihoods security?’ Oxfam has examples of such situations where many young adults trained in an extension programme have died of ‘chronic’ or ‘long illness.’ HIV/AIDS affects all programmes and is a development issue, not simply a health issue. This means that a deep understanding of HIV and AIDS must become a central feature of all organisations’ analysis and guide development of strategy.

In what way NGOs choose to adjust to this new reality is a major strategic question, with at least three key aspects. Organisations must consider:

- how to adjust their core business to be relevant to an environment influenced by AIDS;
- whether to start HIV-specific prevention care and treatment programmes, or to seek to collaborate with specialists in those fields;
- how to minimise internal impacts in the workplace.

**Programming:** Non-HIV focused NGOs must question whether they should start HIV/AIDS education/awareness/care/orphan programmes, or whether they should mainstream existing programmes. They must question how a development NGO with no previous experience or competence in ‘health’ issues should diversify into such a field when its current programmes are already overstretched and underfunded. For HIV/AIDS focused NGOs (ASOs - AIDS Support Organisations), strategic questions of balancing efforts in ‘care’, ‘prevention’ and ‘mitigation of impact’ must also be answered.

**Targeting:** In strategy terms, HIV/AIDS also affects gender issues in a significant way. In trying to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, major gender issues of power arise between women and men in the context of families. HIV/AIDS prevention puts gender at the centre stage of strategy development and of targeting programmes. Closely related, but less frequently addressed, is the crucial issue of age. AIDS predominantly kills people aged 25-45, exactly the age range of most NGO beneficiaries. This leads to changing household composition and to shifting roles and responsibilities in the home. This therefore means that organisations need to actively challenge themselves to consider explicitly targeting people who are older and younger than their traditional beneficiaries.

**Alliances:** Strategic alliances and networking are no longer an optional extra. In the face of such an overwhelming problem, NGOs cannot afford to work in isolation. Rather than abandon their core focus, ASOs and development NGOs need to work together to mutually reinforce each others' work. Networking must lead to meaningful and practical mutual support among organisations with complementary expertise; it cannot simply entail more meetings among managers.

**Internal Workplace Issues:** In order to ensure the organisation survives and functions effectively, the managers and staff need to understand how the organisational workplace is affected. They should develop long-term processes in four key areas:

- staff awareness programmes;
- staff health policies;
- long-term human resource implications;
- financial budgeting and monitoring.

The first two responses are increasingly common; the latter two are seldom even considered. All are dynamic processes, not one-off activities.

#### *a. Staff Awareness and Education*

HIV/AIDS affects the very heart of an organisation; the organisational culture, values and relationships. HIV/AIDS has a detrimental effect on morale and motivation. Even if staff themselves are not sick, they have to cope with sick and dying relatives. When a relative dies, there is the latent grief which is often hardly spoken of, but which has a profound effect. Increased pressures on salaries further affect staff as they take on orphans from relatives into their ever-extending family.

HIV/AIDS has a destructive impact through the loss of key skills caused by sickness and death. Past capacity building input disappears and such skills may need to be regained through new capacity building programmes. In addition, as HIV/AIDS is being mainstreamed in programme work, all staff need to be aware of how HIV/AIDS affects their work with beneficiaries and how programmes can be adjusted to be more effective in this context. If they are to confront HIV/AIDS in a meaningful way they have to believe it exists, believe something can and should be done to address the pandemic and feel confident that they can help to overcome it. This makes developing staff understanding and skills in HIV/AIDS programming work a critical need and an essential aspect of an organisation's staff training programme. Staff also need to be trained in counselling for use both with beneficiaries and for colleagues within the organisation.

Staff can only be expected to address HIV/AIDS in their professional work if they understand the issues personally. Increasing numbers of organisations are establishing workplace HIV/AIDS awareness raising programmes for their staff; the experience of many is that this is a precondition for successful efforts to tackle AIDS-related problems in the workplace and in programmes. Importantly, worker education must be seen as a process, not simply as a single training session.

#### *b. Staff Health Policy*

HIV/AIDS has enormous implications in terms of needing to adjust the systems and policies of an organisation, particularly in the area of human resource management. The most obvious area that needs developing is that of having an HIV/AIDS policy. Developing such a policy enables a number of staff welfare policy issues to be addressed such as sick leave, sick pay, pension, death benefits or recruitment processes. This policy needs to be developed in a participative way in order to empower, increase knowledge and get staff acceptance of acutely sensitive areas. The financial costs of including all dependants should also be balanced. Increasingly, NGOs will have to be explicit about whether or not they will support infected staff with anti-retroviral drugs, as many businesses are beginning to do in South Africa. In addition, developing an HIV/AIDS policy will highlight the need for an occupational health and safety policy that addresses issues of first aid and guidance on hazards and protective equipment. The development of an HIV/AIDS policy will undoubtedly have implications for existing terms and conditions of employment.

Development of a staff health policy should be guided by good practice, such as the South Africa Development Community Code of Conduct on HIV/AIDS in Employment, and the International Labour Organisation Code of HIV and Employment. These guide organisations in providing staff with education to help them avoid HIV infection, give information to enable positive healthy living if they are infected and medical and social support for those who are ill. Staff health policies must also fit within the framework of national labour policy and regulation.

#### *c. Long-term Human Resource Planning*

HIV/AIDS also has massive implications for longer term human resource planning. With such a high potential rate of attrition amongst staff, organisations have to assume some people will fall ill even where there are good efforts at awareness-raising and support. Organisations need to plan strategically in what way they will staff their programmes to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS within a five to ten year plan. Initially there needs to be some job analysis that would examine critical posts and assess how at risk they are. The basic elements of succession planning should be considered in advance, not just when a staff member dies or leaves.

Human resource management strategies would need to be developed in line with this job analysis and some potential solutions may include:

- multi-recruitment – overstaffing at certain levels to ensure that even with a high loss of staff, the organisation can still deliver in key areas;
- multi-skilling (tasking) – training people to cover a number of different jobs;
- identifying non-critical roles for sick people such as managing resource centres..

*d. Leadership:*

A human resource management strategy would also have to look specifically at the implications for leadership. In many small organisations, a single individual (such as the founder-leader) provides crucial direction. A context of high HIV/AIDS puts even greater emphasis on the need to develop second-line leadership, in case the leader falls sick. Even if the leader is not sick, dealing with illness or death among relatives and friends, there is the strain that a depressed workforce has on the leader. All have to work even harder to keep staff motivated and performing. There is a need to encourage staff as they take on the burden caused by sick colleagues. They have to deal with the unavoidable demands for improved terms and conditions in the face of spiralling numbers of dependants and medical bills. This strain may be felt most strongly by the leaders, many of whom have high numbers of dependants due to their relatively high income and status.

*e. Structure:*

Working in an HIV/AIDS context may well have structural implications. As with gender in the past, an HIV/AIDS representative may need to be appointed. In Uganda, for example, HIV/AIDS has led to the creation of new positions within NGOs, such as a staff welfare counsellor. In some countries HIV/AIDS is highly politicised at a board structure level in HIV/AIDS organisations.

*f. Travel Policies:*

Other implications arise from structural decisions that may separate spouses from families or require significant travel for staff. Separation and travel have made these staff members more vulnerable to contracting HIV. A first step in reducing the vulnerability of field staff may involve some structural changes. There may also be budgetary changes to include costs of relocating families, not just individuals. The need to alter travel policies may also arise, with staff no longer encouraged to stay in the cheapest 'rest houses' or given cash allowances.

*g. Financial Planning and Management:*

As was apparent in the section on organisational costs of HIV, there are considerable financial implications. These costs must be addressed proactively to prepare for, minimise and mitigate the effects. Indirect costs are usually noticed first. Absenteeism increases, resulting in lower productivity and greater burdens on management. As staff workloads are shifted and experienced staff are less able to work consistently, overall quality and efficiency can decrease and morale suffers. Direct costs also soon become apparent, with staff benefits being requested more frequently as medical costs mount up. Temporary staff may be hired at additional cost, while sick employees are still being paid. HIV/AIDS workplace programmes can be started to minimise the likelihood of the above scenarios occurring. Although these programmes in themselves have a cost, these can be much less than the costs they help avoid. The provision of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) for staff is an increasingly feasible option in maintaining health as drug prices have decreased dramatically in the last year. Many organisations, including major commercial firms, multi-lateral donors and some international NGOs, are finding it cost effective to pay for ART for their infected staff, rather than suffer increased medical bills from sickness

and the resulting loss of productivity. If the organisation has access to medical staff with training in HIV/AIDS management, the costs of ART can go far towards offsetting health care costs and helping the organisation retain experienced staff. Also, this can have a very positive impact on staff morale easing the burden of managing ill and dying staff.

In order to anticipate and manage the financial costs, organisations need to consider some changes in their budgeting and financial monitoring. Some examples of adjustments needed are:

- Increasing amounts in specific budget lines, such as recruiting, capacity building training and salaries, for the reasons explained above.
- To split existing budget lines as some costs may be combined at the moment. For example, it is common in some organisations to have a single budget item for ‘staff costs,’ that includes salaries, housing subsidies and medical cover. This makes it impossible for managers to compare how much they are spending on health care compared to salaries.
- To create new budget lines as some organisations have no budget at all for HIV/AIDS related costs. For example, funeral tend to be subsidised by other budget lines, thus hiding the real costs of death, while taking money away from its intended use. Other new budget lines may be temporary staff, medical costs, capacity maintenance and research on HIV/AIDS.

These sorts of efforts to improve financial planning and monitoring can only happen if financial managers are fully aware of the actual and potential impacts of AIDS on the organisation. They must realise that AIDS is affecting their jobs and that as professionals they must be proactive.

### ***The Challenge to Donors***

It is clear that HIV/AIDS is a development issue and cannot be ignored by any NGO in sub-Saharan Africa, or by the donors who support them. This article has attempted to highlight the considerable financial and human resource costs of HIV/AIDS to an organisation. Donors and NGOs must accept this challenge and take an organisational approach to addressing HIV/AIDS issues with partners. At the moment they limit their support to insisting that partners mainstream HIV/AIDS into their programmes. They ignore the destructive costs that HIV/AIDS is having on their programmes. It will necessarily cost more to do the same amount of activities in an HIV/AIDS-infected context and those activities will have less impact on the beneficiaries. Yet donors are blithely demanding the reverse; more impact with less money. Unless remedial action is taken and treatment for symptoms given, NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa will follow the same trajectory as the disease; they will get sicker and less effective until they finally die, with donors standing a comfortable distance blaming them for their own irresponsible behaviour.

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### **3. THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT NGOS' CO-ORDINATION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL: IS THERE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?**

By Dirk Van Esbroeck, South Research

#### ***Background***

Since the European Union (EU) started to devise and implement development co-operation and humanitarian aid programmes and policies, European Non-Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs) have shown an increasing interest in participating in the EU's development co-operation efforts and in EU policies affecting developing countries.

The NGO Liaison Committee (CLONG) was established in 1976 with representatives of the National Platforms (NPs) of all EU states as its members. It was initially considered, not as a structure representing the European NGO movement, but as an instrument to facilitate dialogue between the EU and NGDOs concerning the newly created co-financing scheme. However, the CLONG changed drastically in the eighties. It became one of the first major organisations for NGO co-operation on a European basis; an open network representing the NGDO community to the EU. Co-financing arrangements, development education, advocacy and policy dialogue became the major foci of work. The CLONG got a strong executive secretariat and its financial support from the EU grew spectacularly, also due in part to the recognition of the many advantages of having one strong and reliable NGO mouthpiece.

The early nineties saw a need to rethink structures and roles aiming to balance between, on the one hand, the requirement to improve efficiency and effectiveness and, on the other hand, to safeguard internal democracy and transparency. Efforts to address the situation could not avoid the conclusion of the 1996 evaluation suggesting a widespread perception that the CLONG had gradually lost momentum.

The 1996 evaluation reaffirmed the position of the CLONG as connecting NDGOs and the EU. It further suggested that the CLONG did not need a major redefinition of its mandate and key objectives, but a rethink of the way in which the organisation should try to realise its objectives. It was suggested to adopt a subsidiary and complementary approach to position the organisation besides other initiatives that had surfaced meanwhile and to more clearly define its potential comparative advantages. The organisational implications of the changes proposed included ensuring a higher degree of ownership among members, a more decentralised mode of operation and the strengthening of national platforms.

The follow up of the recommendations of the evaluation was complicated by the deterioration of the relationship with the EU. The outcomes of an EU financial audit led to increased tensions and after a long and difficult negotiation process, to an agreement between CLONG and the EU, in which the former agreed to refund part of the grants received. The crisis in the relationship with the EU, who used to fund the major part of the organisation, led to a serious downsizing of the CLONG's secretariat and the scope of activities. This illustrated clearly the CLONG's vulnerability and forced the organisation to focus mainly on its bare survival and maintenance of a few of its core activities.

Other developments also prompted the decision to undertake a strategic review of European NGDO co-operation. Whereas EU-based NGOs had been seen for many years as their main interlocutors, the EC was showing increased interest in direct engagement with Southern NGOs and civil society organisations. Moreover, the enlargement of the EU is expected to influence EU policies and, hence, bring new challenges to the NGDO community. Broader issues such as increasing doubts about the effectiveness of aid, the increasing integration of aid policies among official donors and the impact of globalisation also called for an in-depth reflection. Last, but not least, was the increased importance of network: groupings of similar NGOs, some of which established offices in Brussels. These began to engage in activities that previously fell under the CLONG's mandate; such overlaps were a further reason for a comprehensive and co-ordinated effort to review NGDO co-operation at the European level.

### ***The Strategic Review Process until mid 2002***

The review process started with the establishment, by the CLONG in February 2001, of a Task Group. A consultant was contracted who undertook a survey among all stakeholders (national platforms and networks in particular) and came up with a report that was discussed during a broad consultation meeting in September 2001. On that occasion, objectives, tasks, structure and funding of the new NGDO co-operation were reflected upon for the first time. A few basic decisions were made to guide the subsequent process. It was decided that the future organisation should aim at ***co-ordinating co-operation*** among NGDOs, national platforms and networks, to be facilitated by a small, but efficient secretariat. Its structure should adopt a form of joint governance to take into account the diversity of actors and optimise synergies among national platforms and networks. Moreover, the funding of the new structure should reflect its ownership by the NGOs and, hence, become less dependent on EU and other external funding. Finally, it was decided to appoint a new Task Group that should guide the process of formulation of new statutes and a business plan for the new NGDO co-ordination, which were to be submitted to, among others, the 2002 General Assembly of the CLONG.

Under the guidance of this second Task Group a process was started that led to the presentation, in May 2002, of a Strategic and Business Plan 2002-2004 for future co-operation. This plan was the outcome of a process implemented by a small group of consultants and guided by the Task Group. It involved the drafting of several working documents that were discussed during consultation meetings with stakeholders. These meetings brought together representatives from key stakeholders and, though informal in nature, helped build up consensus among the major stakeholders on the modalities of the future co-operation. A newsletter issued by the task group endeavoured to reach a broader range of stakeholders from both within and outside the NGDO community.

The Strategic and Business Plan that constituted the final product of this process contained in its first chapters a concise analysis of the external context and of the co-operation among European NGDOs in relation to the European Union. It then presented an overall strategy for future NGDO co-operation. The specific objective of the new co-ordination of NGDO co-operation was that European NGDOs will endeavour to get their agenda increasingly implemented in the context of EU development co-operation. The achievement of this objective implies the realisation of three

mutually reinforcing results: the NGOs' success in influencing the political debate and policy formulation on development issues, the improved legitimacy of European NGOs and the increased recognition of NGOs as distinct development actors at the level of the EU. However, it was stated that future co-operation would not be able to work on all these objectives, at least not in the short term. Therefore, some priority objectives were chosen that fit within the broader objectives mentioned above. They relate to influencing the political debate and policy formulation with regard to general EU policies on development, development education and development finance.

The Strategic and Business Plan also devoted much attention to the functioning of the new structure and its legal basis. It advised the closure of the old structure and its replacement with a new association that would adopt the legal form of a non-profit organisation according to Belgian law. A simple structure was proposed with two categories of members, national platforms and networks, each having one vote in the General Assembly, with a possibility of requesting a majority of the votes in each of the constituencies for important decisions. The General Assembly is to be considered as the institution to provide strategic direction to enable and facilitate co-operation among the members. As such, it should be ready to delegate much of its power and authority to working groups with a mixed composition to become the core of the future co-operation. These working groups should, in principle, be inclusive and their mandate is to be the reporting and follow up of mechanisms defined by General Assembly or Board. On the executive level, there would be a small secretariat composed of a highly qualified manager and four or five staff members. Funding of the activities should be decentralised to an important extent, with the working groups managing their own budget. The overall budget of the co-ordination was estimated around E420,000 for the first year, of which the expenses related to core activities (67% of the budget) were expected to be covered by the members themselves. Finally, the Plan provided a scenario for the transition from the old to the new structure, to be co-ordinated by a so-called Founding Committee.

In May and June 2001, the plan was discussed at different levels: individual networks and national platforms, the Inter-network Co-ordination Group and the General Assembly of the CLONG. These discussions revealed various positions towards the proposed new structure. At the level of the networks, the Plan was, in global terms, welcomed, though several critical observations were made that underlined the need for further discussion and reflection. During the General Assembly of the CLONG the discussion on the Plan led to serious debates and revealed a broad range of opinions, a few of them even questioning the basic premises of the new co-operation as they were agreed upon during the first consultation meeting in September 2001. Finally, a resolution was adopted that reaffirmed the CLONG's positive and constructive approach towards a new European NGO co-ordination to bring together platforms and networks. It further mandated the Liaison Committee to continue discussions and negotiations with other partners to reach agreement on pending issues, to nominate representatives of the platforms as members of the founding committee and to convene an extraordinary General Assembly to take a final decision on the new co-ordination.

The outcome of the deliberations during the CLONG General Assembly implied a complication in the process toward the creation of the new structure that the Task Groups did not expect, but that was unavoidable. The Founding Committee nevertheless was able to start work immediately

and it met for the first time on 10<sup>th</sup> July. It is composed of eight members: a chairman, three members from each the national platforms and networks and one member representing the EU accession countries. It is a group of strong and motivated NGDO personalities who are expected to be capable of laying down the basis for overcoming the remaining difficulties. During its first meeting, the Founding Committee agreed on a division of tasks between the members, who will prepare a work plan for their portfolio. It also issued a mission statement that stresses the continuation of the process towards a new European NGDO co-ordination structure on the basis of the outcomes of the previous consultation process. In September the Founding Committee will meet again to discuss work plans and draft proposals. The main target remains the founding of the new structure by January 2003.

### *Some Concluding Observations and Reflections on the Future*

The efforts of the NGDO community to define a new co-operation on European level constitute, once again, an illustration of the growing institutional complexity of the NGDO scene and of its difficulties to match its principles of transparency and democracy with rapid and consistent strategic action. Some NGDO leaders closely involved in the process described above have been very much aware of this dilemma and, supported by consultants, have opted for a process approach through which the new co-operation could gradually take shape. This approach worked well until the moment of decision making at the level of the national platforms and networks and their representative bodies came closer. At that time it became clear that some members of the NGDO community could easily, without being seriously challenged, question decisions that were taken earlier in the process and even the basic premises that underlie the setting up of new co-operation.

Considering the huge efforts the task group and consultants have invested in consultation and communication, one should ask the question why and how could this happen. We think there are several explanations that are related both to the characteristics of the process undertaken, the complexity of the task and of the European NGDO community as such. However, the very same characteristics provided to a major degree the framework for the continuation of the process towards its final aims.

Looking back at the process, those responsible for it (Task Group and consultants) might have overestimated its potential impact on the NGDO community at large. The broad consultation meetings organised at several key moments and the newsletters diffused were apparently not sufficient to avoid a democratic deficit. Most probably because many of those associated closely to the process, the national platforms and network representatives participating in consultation meetings have failed, or did not feel obliged, to systematically involve their constituencies in the reflection on the future co-ordination. Moreover, other NGDO key figures did not feel inclined to be involved in the process, even though the possibilities to do so were numerous.

This brings us to another level of explanations, more related to the actual NGDO sector. Certain weaknesses that are endemic in the NGDO sector have clearly been highlighted through this process, such as the chronic overload of work and the lack of strategic priority setting and proactive action. To that should be added the complexity of the sector (more than 1,200 NGDOs

spread over the 15 EU countries!) and the sector's incapacity to deal effectively, at crucial moments, with the vaguely defined principle of 'internal democracy'. This is compounded by instances when NGOs have to deal with a complex issue such as the future NGO co-ordination in which multiple parameters have to be dealt with in a consistent way. In such a setting, carefully crafted processes can easily get bogged down by actions from a few people who want to oppose, for whatever reason, an on-going process.

Concomitantly and ironically, the process described above also illustrates the strengths of the process approach and of the NGO community in its entirety. Indeed, despite huge constraints and challenges, the Founding Committee has found the necessary talent, commitment and leadership to build further on the process and avoid disintegration, to overcome conflicts and remain focused on the desired outcomes of the task. This could probably not have been achieved without having passed through this long, delicate and tedious process. The recent experiences might indeed have illustrated the impossibility to involve all NGOs in such a complex process. However, it has probably emphasised also the need for a strong leadership to represent NGOs within Europe. So long as NGOs support and participate in the future processes of national platforms and are prepared to commit resources and time to understanding the differences between national platforms and networks and the EU representatives themselves the future EU liaison committee will be a success.

## 4. UPDATE ON OFFICIAL FUNDING TRENDS IN EUROPE

*By Michael Davis, Research Assistant and Ranty Islam, Volunteer Researcher*

### BELGIUM

**Official Assistance:** After a drop in ODA to an all-time low of 0.3% of GNI in 1999, Belgium's ODA increased to 0.36% GNI in 2000.<sup>19</sup> This followed a major reform of Belgian ODA administration in 1999, which resulted in a decision to focus on 25 priority countries, to concentrate multilateral co-operation efforts on some 20 international organisations and to take steps to improve monitoring and evaluation. Belgium has pledged to raise ODA to 0.4 or 0.41% by 2003 and to 0.7% by 2010. The Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries (BIO) was established in November 2001 to oversee the administration of aid funds, particularly in the least developed countries.

**Top 5 country recipients:** (2000) Vietnam, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Bolivia.

**Contributions to NGOs:** In 2001 almost €98 million was made available to some 130 recognised NGOs. €73 million of this was actually spent, an increase on the €66 million disbursed in 2000 and the €63 million expenditure in 1999.

**Policy Update:** Belgium's ODA policy is committed to combating poverty to achieve sustainable development. The improvement of the human rights situation and the reduction of inequalities in recipient countries are key considerations. Following the reform of ODA administration in 1999 the main criteria for the choice of the 25 'partner' countries are their level of poverty, the contribution of these countries to their own socio-economic development and their commitment to the principle of good governance. A DAC review carried out in 2001 notes that despite the reform, the lack of specificity accompanying the decision of the Belgian government to devolve the administration of aid from the national to the regional and community level could undermine the improvements achieved so far.

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<sup>19</sup> DAC member countries have been gradually introducing a revised System of National Accounts, that substitutes GNI (Gross National Income) for GNP (Gross National Product). GNI is generally higher than GNP, thus ODA as a percentage of GNI is lower than ODA as a percentage of GNP, the figure previously given in DAC reports.

## DENMARK

**Official Assistance:** From a peak of 1.06% GNI in 2000, preliminary figures for 2001 show a drop to 1.01%. In January 2002, the new conservative government undertook a review of Denmark's ODA and spending on environmental assistance. While pledging to maintain Denmark's position at the forefront of global poverty reduction, the review signalled what it called a change from the previously prevailing assumption that 'if only assistance increases everything will be good.' This change in approach was reflected by a cut in the annual aid budget of approximately US\$200 million. The budget for the coming year is currently being debated in parliament and the government claims that it does not intend to further reduce the proportion going to ODA. However, it has previously indicated its intent to bring the level of official aid down to the UN benchmark of 0.7% GNI.

**Top 5 country recipients:** In 2000, these were Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, Egypt and Vietnam. In early 2002, Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would concentrate its bilateral aid spending on six countries, consisting of the those listed above with the exception of Egypt and the addition of Ghana and Bangladesh. The government has emphasised that bilateral aid to these and other countries will be conditional on them pursuing poverty-focused development policies that are sustainable and based on good governance and respect for human rights. These conditions are being applied much more stringently than before, and have resulted in countries such as Eritrea and Malawi being dropped from Denmark's list of 'focus' countries.

**Contributions to NGOs:** In 2000, 11.2% of Danish ODA was channelled via Danish NGOs. Since the change in government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced a cut of 9.5% in the amount of ODA disbursed in this way. Reductions of approximately this level have been made to the funding of the six Danish NGOs that have framework agreements with the government, as well as others. In addition, the government has decided to abolish the NGO Liaison Committee. In conjunction with its recent pledge not to further squeeze the overall aid budget, the government has stated that it does not intend to further reduce the budget for funding channelled through NGOs.

**Policy Update:** The Danish government has expressed its desire to see ODA focused on the core objective of promoting sustainable development through poverty-oriented economic growth. Danish ODA will be targeted at investments in education, health, infrastructure and support for private sector development 'as an engine for growth'. Alongside the cuts in funding to NGOs, the new government wishes to see an expanded role in development co-operation for Danish businesses. It has also stated its intent to create 'cohesion' between ODA and Denmark's policy towards refugees. To this end, it has declared that 'countries receiving Danish assistance must live up to their international obligation to readmit their own citizens whose applications for asylum in Denmark have been rejected'. Denmark currently holds the EU presidency.

## IRELAND

**Official Assistance:** Provisional data for 2001 points to ODA expenditure amounting to 0.33% of GNI, as compared with 0.30% GNI in 2000. The government committed itself to reaching a target of 0.45% GNP by the end of its term in office in June 2002, however this allocation was reduced by €20 million to a total equivalent to 0.41% of GNP. In Johannesburg Ireland's Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, reiterated Ireland's commitment to reaching 0.7% GNI by 2007.

**Top 5 country recipients:** (2000) Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique and Zambia.

**Contributions to NGOs:** In 2000, NGOs received €37 million from official sources, €32.5 million of which came from Ireland Aid. Under the 2002 budget, €48 million in official funding was given to NGOs. The Government committee that reviewed Ireland Aid at the start of 2002 recommended further increases plus the combining of all current sources of official funding for NGOs working in development into a single fund. The Committee also proposed the creation of a development forum to facilitate dialogue between Ireland Aid and NGOs on poverty issues.

**Policy Update:** The primary objective for Ireland Aid remains the reduction of poverty. The February 2002 review of Ireland Aid proposes the adoption of a set of guiding principles including reduction of poverty, inequality and exclusion and promotion of peace, human rights and democracy. In Johannesburg, Bertie Ahern pledged that all of Ireland's ODA would remain untied. At the June EU Summit in Seville, Ireland endorsed the idea of offering additional ODA to countries committed to taking back citizens whose applications for refugee status in Ireland are rejected.

## THE NETHERLANDS

**Official Assistance:** In 2000 the Netherlands' ODA stood at 0.84% of GNI. Provisional data for 2001 suggests a slight drop to 0.82%. In Johannesburg, Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende pledged to continue to dedicate 0.7% GNP to ODA. The new government that has been in place since July will present its budget for 2003 in September.

**Top 5 country recipients:** (2000) Netherlands Antilles, Indonesia, Tanzania, Yugoslavia (including Kosovo), Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Contributions to NGOs:** In 2001, around 25% of ODA was spent on co-operation with civil society organisations. In 2002 official co-financing of NGOs, which is linked to GNP, was due to increase.

**Policy Update:** ODA is focused on the core objective of poverty reduction pursued bilaterally through co-operation with a small number of developing countries and multilaterally via international development organisations, as well as through co-operation with NGOs and other civil society organisations. In Johannesburg, the Prime Minister stated that his government would increase the proportion of ODA spent on education from 6 to 15%. The new government wishes to place a greater focus on Africa, although this is not yet reflected in any budgetary reallocation. It has also signalled its intent to place a greater emphasis on co-operation with the Dutch private sector, that could have implications for the extent to which ODA is tied in the future. There is no longer a Minister for Development for Co-operation; instead ODA is the responsibility of a Secretary of State, a more junior figure, who is not part of the cabinet.

## NORWAY

**Official Assistance:** In 2000, the level of ODA stood at 0.8% of GNI. Provisional data for 2001 points to a slight increase to 0.83% of GNI.

**Top 5 country recipients:** In 2000, these were Yugoslavia (including Kosovo), Tanzania, Mozambique, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Palestinian Administered Areas. In 2001, the five main recipients of bilateral aid (including humanitarian assistance) were Afghanistan, the Palestinian Administered Areas, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro), Tanzania and Mozambique.

**Contributions to NGOs:** In monetary terms, NGOs are the most important conduit for Norwegian bilateral assistance. In 2000, aid channeled through NGOs totaled NOK 2.4 billion – approximately 40% of Norway's pure bilateral assistance. Around 80% of these funds were disbursed via Norwegian NGOs. This contrasts with NOK 2.7 billion spending on NGOs in 2001, just under 46% of pure bilateral assistance. Roughly 83% of this sum went through Norwegian NGOs.

**Policy Update:** In March 2002 the Government produced a 'Plan of Action for Combating Poverty in the South'. The plan states that Norway's development co-operation policy should be dedicated to fighting poverty in order to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It includes a commitment that at least 40% of ODA should go to the least developed countries. In a statement to the Storting in April, the Minister of International Development also underlined the need for ODA to be focused on enhancing human rights, supporting education, health, good governance, democracy and civil society. There exists a debate as to whether NGOs should receive ODA only for activities in countries that the government has prioritised. New guidelines are being introduced from 2003, meaning NORAD funding of programmes for some NGOs at least, will be confined to these priority countries.

## SWEDEN

**Official Assistance:** In 2000, ODA as a percentage of GNI stood at 0.80; this appears to have shrunk to 0.76% in 2001, according to interim figures from the OECD.

Sweden aims to increase its ODA to 0.81% GNP in 2003 and to 1% by 2006. Swedish ODA previously reached a level of 1% in 1982 and in 1992.

**Top 5 country recipients:** In 2000 these were Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Honduras and Vietnam.

**Contributions to NGOs:** In 2001, SIDA disbursed close to SEK 1.7 billion through NGOs, with the aim of strengthening local organisations and civil society in countries receiving bilateral aid. Fourteen Swedish NGOs have long-term co-operation agreements with the government. In total, the government funds the development activities of almost 300 NGOs annually, typically covering 80% of the costs of projects with the remainder being met by the NGOs themselves.

**Policy Update:** Swedish ODA is focused on tackling poverty. The Swedish parliament has formulated six key objectives designed to help attain this goal. These are the promotion of economic growth, economic and political independence, economic and social equity, democratic development in society, long-term sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment and equality between men and women.

## UNITED KINGDOM

**Official Assistance:** UK spending on ODA in 2000 was 0.32% of GNI, a level that provisional data suggests was maintained during 2001. The UK government stated it will raise this to 0.33% GNI by 2004. In July, the Government made a further commitment to increase ODA to 0.4% GNI by 2006. In Johannesburg, British Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged to raise development aid to Africa to £1 billion by 2006 and to increase levels of assistance to all recipient countries by 50%.

**Top 5 country recipients:** According to DAC statistics on overall UK ODA, the top five recipient countries in 2000 were India, Uganda, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Zambia. UK government figures for spending in the financial year 2000-2001 show that the main recipients of DFID bilateral aid were India, Uganda, Ghana, Bangladesh and Tanzania.

**Contributions to NGOs:** In the financial year ending March 2001, DFID channelled £184 million via Northern NGOs, although it has been placing increasing emphasis on working directly with Southern civil society organisations. A recent DAC review describes DFID's approach towards NGOs as one of strategic engagement with larger organisations and increased emphasis on the advocacy role played by smaller NGOs.

**Policy Update:** Poverty reduction is the prime focus of the UK's development co-operation and ODA. Another priority is the forging of a more coherent approach across all areas of government policy that affect developing countries. The UK has taken steps to follow the 'partnership' approach to development advocated by DAC. Furthermore, it has oriented UK ODA towards achievement of the 2015 international development targets and millennium development goals. All aid has been untied since April 2001 and the government has committed to earmarking 90% of bilateral aid for low-income countries by 2005-2006. Questions surfaced over the proportion of UK ODA going to the poorest countries in August, following criticism by a UK parliamentary committee of the way Britain's contribution (over £624 million per year) to the EU's aid budget was being spent. This committee estimated that around one quarter of direct British ODA is currently going to middle-income countries.

## EUROPEAN UNION

**Official Assistance:** At the Monterrey summit in March, the EU set member countries the target of spending 0.39% GNP or more on ODA by 2006. Provisional DAC data for 2001 on all EU countries combined, suggests that spending on ODA amounted to 0.33% of collective GNI, as against 0.32% in 2000.

**Top 5 country recipients:** (2000) Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) and Morocco.

**Contributions to NGOs:** The EU's co-financing with NGOs budget line B7-6000 increased from €196 million in 2000 to €200 million in 2001. Typically, 90% of this budget line is spent on co-financing activities undertaken by NGOs and their partners in developing countries. The remaining 10% is spent on co-financing of development education activities within the EU.

**Policy Update:** The European Community's development policy is 'to reduce and, eventually, to eradicate poverty'. This year's DAC review of European Community ODA characterised the recent rises in EC ODA as 'part of broader EU external relations activities which support countries' efforts to gain accession to the EU, help maintain stability in neighbouring regions, and provide development assistance.' These priorities have recently been criticised in the UK, for example in August Clare Short accused the EU of spending too small a proportion of its ODA budget on the poorest countries. The percentage of aid going to low-income countries is estimated to have shrunk from 70% in 1990 to 39% in 2000. Some British NGOs have claimed that the EU is channelling funds towards middle-income countries on the borders of the EU in order to reduce immigration into Europe. The DAC review concluded that although substantial improvements in the EC's development policy had been made since the previous DAC review in 1998, greater efforts need to be made to ensure that community policies covering a range of areas (including agriculture and fisheries, for example) complement its development objectives.

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## 5. NEWS FROM CONFERENCES AND WORKING GROUPS

### *The International Conference On Financing For Development*

*Monterrey, Mexico, 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002*

*By Emma Harris-Curtis, Researcher*

This first United Nations-hosted conference to address key financial and development issues attracted fifty Heads of States and many leaders from civil society and intergovernmental financial, trade and economic organisations from 171 nations. The conference claimed to be the first quadripartite exchange between governments, civil society, business and institutional stakeholders on global economic issues.

From the North, Kofi Annan of the United Nations asked for an additional \$50 billion a year to meet the Millennium Declaration that commits to halving poverty in the world by 2015. This was in the context of The European Union's Barcelona summit, also in March, during which leaders agreed to an official development assistance target of 0.39% of national income by 2006 and pledged they would strive to meet Kofi Annan's target of 0.7% of income. Also, Horst Kehler of the International Monetary Fund, Michael Moore of the World Trade Organisation and James Wolfensohn of the World Bank co-chaired rounds. President George Bush of the United States said in his address that developing nations must undertake political, economic and legal reforms in order to get Western Aid. His comments incited prolonged debate and much media attention.

Key people from the South included Pakistani Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz who emphasised that aid is to do with facilitation, not dependency, that the gap between rich and poor can only be adjusted in the context of good governance and transparency in terms of development work. Mexican President, Vicente Fox, said that a new spirit of understanding had been generated by the conference. Gemma Adaba of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Trinidad and Tobago argued that although her organisation had advocated tirelessly for a concrete plan of action she felt she was leaving the conference with no more than she came with. Other diplomats from the South concurred with her statement.

The Monterrey Consensus, derived from the conference, is a joint statement of the Heads of State who attended as to how to address the challenges of financing for development. The link between financing of development and attaining internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration was recognised. The Consensus itself stipulates that its goal is to:

'Eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development as we advance to a fully inclusive and equitable global economic system.'

Hundreds of NGOs from all geographical areas said in a joint statement they did not find the Monterrey Consensus a sufficient basis for combating poverty or for advancing social, political, economic and cultural rights. They also argued that governments had talked about reforming the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation, but this was not reflected in the Consensus. As a result of this they considered themselves not part of the Monterrey Consensus.

It is to be hoped that the pledges from those involved in Monterrey will redress the years of decline in development funding and engender a new mood of hope in funding for development. Yet, in the context of the criticism of the conference, only time will bring proof of how successful the Monterrey Consensus will be.

[www.un.org/esa/ffd](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd) accessed 10/5/02

[www.imf.org/external/np/pdr/ffd/2002](http://www.imf.org/external/np/pdr/ffd/2002) accessed 10/5/02

[www.kulu.dk/financing/ffddocuments.htm](http://www.kulu.dk/financing/ffddocuments.htm) accessed 10/5/02

[www.earthtimes.org/mar/financingfordevelopmentnotmar22\\_02.htm](http://www.earthtimes.org/mar/financingfordevelopmentnotmar22_02.htm) accessed 10/5/02

***Partnerships and Inter-Organisational Learning: Issues for Research***  
***International Centre for Education in Development, University of Warwick, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002***  
*By Emma Harris-Curtis, Researcher*

This Conference, held in association with The British Association for International Comparative Education, explored some of the ways in which international learning informs partnership relations in development.

As the INTRAC NGO Research Programme has committed to Phase Two of the Partnership research it was particularly relevant for Programme members. There were a number of excellent papers including that of Tina Wallace and Jennifer Chapman, in which they considered whether Partnerships exist at all, other than in development rhetoric. Together, they are continuing their three-year study into donor-NGO relations and development practice, utilising case studies from Uganda and South Africa, for ActionAid. In the context of this research they decided it would be interesting to debate the parameters of partnership, what true partnership is and whether it exists between NGOs.

Jeanette Kuder of the University of Bristol introduced her work on sector-wide reforms in Tanzania in the context of partnerships and primary education. She presented two facets of the case study, the first being the structures and processes that generated the official policy document. The second facet was the participation of the three main stakeholder groups involved: the Tanzanian government, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors and NGOs. As Jeanette is a long-term practitioner and has lived in Tanzania whilst doing her case studies, her work was particularly alive and invigorating.

Another presentation of great relevance to the Partnerships research was that of Rosemary Preston, who initiated the Conference. In discussing her paper, 'who needs to know what in multi-organisational aid?' she introduced aspects of the nature of partnership for discussion. She included references to her qualitative analysis of transcripts of interviews and group discussions relating to twenty aid partnerships that reveal ways in which international political and economic imperatives position staff within organisations across the aid sector and regulate activities of that sector. The tensions between development and the macro-political agenda via funding mechanisms were highlighted, leading to a cross-over between this and Tina Wallace and Jennifer Chapman's paper.

*The World Summit On Sustainable Development, Johannesburg  
August 26<sup>th</sup> – September 4<sup>th</sup> 2002  
By Laura Jarvie, Information Officer*

The Johannesburg Summit presented an exciting opportunity for today's leaders to define commitments and identify targets. One Guardian writer gloomily predicted, 'In its well-intentioned desire to solve everything, Johannesburg will end up achieving nothing.'

In his speech UK Prime Minister Tony Blair emphasised that Rio did not deliver everything and neither could the Johannesburg summit. He admitted the process of debt relief was failing and that trade rules discriminate against poor countries. However, when he followed this by condemning critics of the summit insisting that real progress was being made he confused his audience. Tony Blair also spoke of Africa as being, 'a scar on the conscience of the world'<sup>20</sup>. Troubles of Zimbabwe threatened to overshadow the earth summit. In his speech, President Robert Mugabe made no apologies and many accusations, deriving much praise from some of the audience that the western media failed to highlight. Tony Blair's reaction was to claim that Mugabe is not the voice of Africa, maybe he is?

The absence of the US President George Bush earned much criticism for that nation, especially as it is still the biggest polluter in the world and insists on refusing to sign the Kyoto agreement. It was argued by some that this summit had more to do with the disagreement between Europe and the US and their approaches to poverty alleviation and sustainable development than on the eradication of the world's suffering majority. It is true that in planning the summit clashes occurred as to not what needs to be done, but how to do it. George Bush did not want to go and did not want 'headline making' decisions to be made in his absence, on the other hand the Europeans did.

Approximately 40,000 of the world's poor gathered for a march to the suburb of Sandton where the world leaders held the summit was held. They included landless groups from South Africa and elsewhere, trade unions, displaced people and slum dwellers. On arrival, Trevor Ngwane, a South African hero and former ANC activist, delivered a speech condemning world leaders for doing nothing to alleviate poverty and suffering. There was no trouble or violence; they just wanted to make a point to world leaders. Meanwhile, these leaders who were inside the conference expressed their dismay at the deteriorating state of the world's environment and the worsening condition of the poor, however, few offered any solid solutions, plans or funds.

Ten years ago at the Rio summit the UN started to track the lives of eight newborn babies born into poverty. The idea was to see how their lives progressed in the ten years between 1992 and now. All are living in poverty. Erodo, born to nomad parents in Northern Kenya has been a victim of the arms trade. Bandits have attacked his family several times, stealing cattle. Panjy's family in Tamil Nadu, India, fared less well; her father died from acute chemical poisoning days after she was born. She works is working to help support her mother and ill brother. All of the children whose lives were followed are still suffering from severe poverty. Although this is an anecdotal and emotive approach for the UN, the point is that life has not improved since 1992.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *The Guardian*, Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2002.

<sup>21</sup> *The Observer*, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2002.

So what has been achieved? Primarily two agreements; one on fishing and one on harmful chemicals. The first international agreement to ban the use and production of toxic chemicals will, hopefully, push industry to be more accountable to developing nations. It should lead to the eradication of DDT and other catastrophic chemicals, but as most western governments have already outlawed such chemicals this only shows the difference between life in the North and the South. The deal on fishing, to limit catches and restore depleted stocks by 2015 is unambitious. More is needed, including cutting subsidies by industrialised nations and is only a small part of the problem. Divisions rather than decisions came from the fourteen other issues, sanitation, trade and finance, energy, climate change and biodiversity. By the end of the summit those participating and those of us watching via the world's media were left wondering whether world leaders had made any key decisions and if governments, along with civil society and the private sector, can achieve any of the commitments in furthering sustainable development.

A question remains, brought up by an article during the conference; of the 400 tonnes of rubbish generated by the conference what will happen to the 80% of it not destined for recycling. If that does not highlight the underlying irony of the summit then what does?

## 6. REVIEWS OF PUBLICATIONS

The INTRAC-NGO Research Programme aims to monitor policy debates amongst development NGOs. Reviewing the current literature related to NGOs is an important part of this process. This section of the bulletin is designed to provide reviews of recent publications, drawing out discussion points and reflection on NGO debates.

### ***‘Development and Advocacy: a Development in Practice Reader’***

***Deborah Eade (Oxfam 2002)***

*Reviewed by Emma Harris-Curtis, Researcher*

£10.50, ISBN 0855984635.

This is a welcome addition to the thematic anthologies from ‘Development in Practice’, full of ripe, clear testimonies and discussions from a collection of knowledgeable Southern and Northern contributors. This anthology is an opportunity to delve into the disparities between what NGOs advocate, the paradoxes within them, how they behave and the reality of their operations. The audience for this text is as eclectic as Eade has always wanted ‘Development in Practice’ to be: undergraduates, NGO workers, those who have been in the field thirty years, all will find something of value in the anthology. The style is wholly accessible, encouraging those who may not know the intricacies of the issue to experiment more in their analysis of advocacy.

The style of the introduction by Diokno-Pascual is questioning, starting the collection with an evaluative and critical voice; a refreshing change to the usual dichotomy of bland ideas on the subject. What follows are articles by twelve of the most sophisticated and well-rounded of NGO observers and/or workers, it is this combination that makes the anthology powerful.

In the first article Nyamugasira starts by asking who is advocating what and for whom? If the poor are voiceless then, by definition, we are not advocating what they need, only they can do that. His article is dedicated to a discussion of how that can be overcome; the challenges, pitfalls and previous experience he is aware of. He proffers ‘interim representation’ as the path to true advocacy that will only transform into real advocacy when those for whom we are advocating are fully empowered to take on the mantle themselves and for themselves.

With the redefinition of the Jubilee 2000 campaign, the current work within the New Economics Foundation and the legacy of thousands of the world’s population over the last ten years Keet’s article is vital to the spirit of this book. Although many recognise that the debt has been paid many times over, Keet’s contribution details why more sophisticated approaches to advocacy in the context of the debt are needed and happening. This article will serve to update many NGO workers and observers in this subject that has suffered from media ‘ignorance and fatigue’ of late.

The next two articles discuss issues that are currently hotly debated in the NGO world through case studies. Rafi and Chowdhury explain the fascinating example of a rights issue by BRAC, Bangladesh. They highlight the longitudinal nature of such work that does not tally with the new donor approaches to aid. It also exemplifies the resistance and ingenuity that such work requires. In the following contribution Pushpanath suggests operational aid programmes are not the best

way to approach disaster relief work because they are expensive and dis-empowering. He argues, through the example of Oxfam's drought programme in Zambia that the people who are experiencing the disaster are the best source the local population has, the 'intruders' role and attitudes must adjust accordingly if they are to really be true advocates.

Edwards offers a binary conceptual framework for NGO advocacy, followed by a model framework for international advocacy. In the text he elaborates concerning the interconnection between superficial and fundamental reforms that NGOs endeavour to advocate, based primarily on his knowledge of SCF. Edwards highlights what he recognises as achievements and failures of the Northern NGO advocacy and the result is an interesting read.

Arguably the most important article in this anthology is that by Chapman and Fisher in which they argue cogently, and poignantly, that whilst NGOs commit more to advocacy, they do not balance this with comprehension of their effectiveness. Through their research on the promotion of breastfeeding in Ghana and the campaign against the use of child labour in the carpet industry in India they challenge some accepted wisdoms that are cherished and relatively unchallenged.

On a practical note the structure of any of the Development in Practice series is always thoughtful: the annotated contributor list, the annotated bibliography, the comprehensive index, the organisations list and the publishers list are all useful adjuncts. I would recommend anyone to use this book to enhance their understanding of advocacy issues in NGOs today.

***'Advocacy for social justice: a global action and reflection guide'***

***David Cohen, Rosa de la Vega, Gabrielle Watson (Kumarian/Oxfam 2001)***

*Reviewed by Emma Harris-Curtis, Researcher*

£29.95, ISBN 1565491319.

The Advocacy Institute and Oxfam America, partners in the Advocacy Learning Initiative (ALI), teamed up to produce this set of materials that intend to reflect a wide range of perspectives of advocacy. In the acknowledgements and contributor list there are a vast array of people who have been involved which act as testimony to the assertion that the text can speak for many in the advocacy debate. The style is that of a handbook, with Part I reflecting on advocacy itself, Part II imparting key skills in advocacy, Part III proffering case studies from different geographical regions and Part IV offering a useful resource directory. The style is also bullet-point led, being divided into comprehensible chunks full of section headings and boxes, to direct the reader who needs to get specific information.

The audience is likely to be those who are either putting advocacy into practice themselves, those reflecting on it and those who train in advocacy skills. I would urge anyone starting on this route of NGO practice to include this text in their reading list, although at £30 it is expensive for those NGOs with minimal resources.

Working from their 'core premise' that there were some effective social justice campaigns in existence that could provide case material for others in the field the two organisations came up with the following handbook:

### Part I – David Cohen

In this section Cohen reflects on the work of the Advocacy Institute (which he founded), it is a synthesis of his learning hitherto and a vehicle for him to share it with those of us with different experiences. He delineates types of advocacy, of lessons learned from social movement advocacy and of advocacy in this century and where it is going.

### Part II – Rosa de la Vega

De la Vega explains her perception of the key concept of social justice advocacy prior to embarking on issues of strategy development. The worksheets she includes show the level of commitment to those who are struggling with advocacy implementation and are very real tools for the trainer or practitioner. In the section on skill building she explains clearly her perspective on the multi-faceted aspects of organising advocacy skills appropriately. The section offers a variety of models and examples that the practitioner can adapt or adopt.

### Part III – Gabrielle Watson

The case selection was made by determining a range of political space and levels of engagement, to ensure all areas of an issue are exemplified. The cases decided upon and used in the text are The Association for the Advancement of Senegalese Women and their struggle to end violence against women, black farmers' rights and the struggle for land in the United States, bringing human rights to bear on the culture of impunity in Guatemala, revising the land law in Cambodia and campaigning against Texaco in Ecuador. This section also includes a discussion of advocacy in the campaign for debt relief against the international financial institutions and chapter on comparative lessons from social justice advocacy case studies.

### Part IV – Gabrielle Watson, Angela Orlando, Jennifer Shea and Karin Lockwood

This extensive directory was created for those who wish to increase their advocacy impact. It lists organisations by programme country that support advocacy, and in alphabetical lists; capacity building organisations, NGO networking organisations, development policy analysis and research organisations and advocacy funding organisations.

This text should be on NGO and academic library shelves because it is a weighty source of material on advocacy that has been thoroughly researched and resourced and carefully presented so that it is of practical use.

### ***'Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 Sets of Ideas and Activities'***

***Robert Chambers (Earthscan 2002)***

*Reviewed by Emma Harris-Curtis, Researcher*

£8.95, ISBN 1853838632.

Anyone who is committed to facilitating learning and development workshops will benefit from a copy of this book. Those interesting in sharing information, not lecturing, to including rather than excluding and learning rather than dictating need a copy of this book. It derives from the Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning and Action approaches to develop and is the culmination of experiences of Chambers and many of his colleagues in both the North and South. 'Participatory Workshops' is both a user-friendly guide for those of us who are new trainers or facilitators and a perfunctory reminder to those who have done too many workshops.

Rather than eulogising the ‘best ways’ to ‘run’ a workshop the text is a collection of 21 entirely practical ideas and activities that can be used singly, or together. It does not profess to offer 21 new ideas, instead it collects 21 ideas on good practice together in a new book and offers them in an accessible way. It is divided into practical sections entitled: ‘brief basics’, ‘beginning, middle and end’, ‘messaging up’, ‘groups, seating and size’, ‘analysis and learning’ and ‘behaviour and awareness’. Each section is sub-divided into subtitled and numbered sections that are easy on the eye and guide you through the author’s ideas. The sketches in the book are small, humorous and very illustrative of the message Chambers is endeavouring to project. That is by good-natured, positive and often funny interchanges we can learn more than in ‘serious application’.

The most important section is ‘messaging up’. It is one of the most honest, and much needed, collections of workshop slip-ups compiled to date. In highlighting those aspects of the workshop that are often ignored, yet are the basis of success or failure, it reminds us how to facilitate well. Insensitivity to culture or gender, not rushing, not cutting break times, grotty gear, presenting too much, pontificating; all of these can make a workshop fail. Honest workshop facilitators recognise they are guilty of some sins; but many of us are less honest about sharing them with others.

Another important section is ‘analysis and learning’. Chambers emphasises that the facilitator is learning too, not just the attendees. The list of 21 explicitly asks the reader to go and re-mould and re-create them for their own purposes in their specific contexts. The 21 ways of experiencing, analysing and learning are divided into ‘multiple realities’, ‘experiential communication and learning’, ‘cooperation and groups’ and ‘self-organising systems on the edge of chaos’. As the titles suggest Chambers is both humorous and exploratory in these approaches, letting the workshop participants change and mutate the processes as they develop. However, as with most things, to get to this level of relaxed evolution in a workshop takes many years experience and much careful planning; so perhaps this specific chapter could have emphasised this more.

‘Participatory workshops’ is a refreshing read that will hopefully alleviate some of the suffering of future workshop participants who subject themselves to the efforts of well-meaning facilitators.

### ***About informed NGO Funding and Policy Bulletin***

The aim of this bulletin is to monitor NGO funding and policy trends and to analyse the significance of the trends, in order to inform decision-making within NGOs. The bulletin is produced as part of the INTRAC-NGO Research Programme that has been running since 1995. The programme operates with the active participation of 14 European NGOs, hence the focus of the bulletin is primarily, though not exclusively, on funding and policy issues affecting European-based development NGOs.

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