

ONTRAC

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NGOs and the Private Sector: perceptions,
pitfalls and partnerships

NGOs and the Private Sector (PS) are often perceived as being at opposite ends of the continuum of concern on issues of poverty and development. Yet an increasing number of NGOs and members of the PS are seeking to work collaboratively. There are, however, negative stereotypical perceptions which run deep on both sides and which leads to mutual suspicion and resistance to change. NGOs often see themselves as the poor relation in PS partnerships, with the majority of benefits going to companies. They also have a tendency to think of themselves as moral arbiters which can impose nervousness and restrains the way they approach the PS. In their turn, companies see NGOs as idealists and undisciplined by the reality of the market place.

NGO-PS relations are like a game of chess: while there are only a few pieces to move, there are an almost infinite variety of ways to play the game. For those NGOs already engaged with the PS, what do they hope to achieve by it? If some companies can be accused of partnering for PR reasons, are NGOs equally using partnership as a competitive tool to raise their profile amongst donors and sensitise supporters? The perceived power of boardrooms and lunches with company directors

attract some NGO staff. But where do NGOs' mission principles figure in all this? Few NGOs have a united position within their organisation regarding businesses, except those pursuing a solely antagonistic route. Indeed, there are heated debates within NGOs: directors, trustees, supporters and staff can divide into separate camps. Thus leadership is required as stakeholders either push their NGO for more corporate engagement or act like a ball-and-chain on potential partnerships.

That a company exists merely to maximise shareholders' profits is no longer a valid proposition. A company's impact on its stakeholders is an emerging benchmark of corporate performance since stakeholders are beginning to ask what companies can do for society, not what society can do for companies. Business investors are increasingly interested in the risk factors associated with reputation. An enhanced public image through association with an NGO can increase corporate brand reputation. Yet the reputation of NGOs as effective, tenacious campaigners can also cause business to fear what they might do to their image and sales. Thus the initial instincts of businesses to fight back against campaigning NGOs or rely on self-righteous outrage and media rebuttals are tending to give way to more consultation and collaboration.

NGOs rely on the trust of the public. While integrity is at the core of all organisations, public trust of NGOs is higher than companies. Trust is a fundamental driver for partnerships between NGOs and the PS, but there are serious implications for NGOs if a corporate relationship turns sour. Thus NGOs should not be endorsing companies, but engaging with them critically.

INTRAC's research project examines the changing nature of relationships between NGOs and the PS, and their impact on NGOs' constituencies. By learning the lessons of past and present engagements, the research will explore the potential for the two sectors to work together for global development in the future.

Phase One of the project has mapped the present state of affairs in NGO-PS relations. Phase Two will now examine the crucial issues raised in Phase One, by means of a number of case studies which are in the process of being selected. Case studies will focus on providing empirical evidence on the general processes of engagement between NGOs and the PS. Twenty European NGOs discussed these issues at a two day work shop in early December.

In general terms the research will focus on the question of whether NGO-PS partnerships are more effective in promoting financial viability, environmental sustainability and social equity than either adversarial NGO campaigns or fair trade and company self-regulation on their own.

This focus leads to a number of key research questions:

1. How can the relative effectiveness of market-based strategies towards a sustainable future be measured?

2. What accounts for the differential levels of engagement between environment, development and human rights NGOs and the PS? What internal organisational/psychological changes are required for, and result from, NGO-PS engagements?
3. Is transparency with, and accountability to, the constituents of both parties essential for successful NGO-PS engagements?

As well as on-going dissemination of research findings in journals and workshop papers, the project will be completed with a series of publications and a conference at end of 1999. The first INTRAC occasional paper detailing findings from this research will be available at the end of December 1998.

For now, Researchers Simon Heap and Penny Fowler want your comments on this important piece of research and suggestions of potential collaborators and Phase 2 case studies.

New Publications

Churches and Organisation Development in Africa: Dilemmas and Implications for Northern NGOs, Liz Goold, William Ogara and Rick James
OPS No. 20, (A joint publication of INTRAC and CORAT Africa), £7.95 +P+P.

Churches have a long history in promoting non-state development in many countries. The scale and nature of this involvement has been influenced by a variety of factors - a relatively recent one being the establishment of church-related development agencies in the North in the 1960s and 1970s. Many of these agencies have turned their attention to strengthening the capacity of churches to carry out development work. This paper highlights some of the distinctive organisational strengths that influence churches involved in development, and argues that these need to be understood if Northern agencies are to provide effective support. The paper draws on case studies of organisation development and support work with churches in Africa, identifying the lessons learnt from good practice.

The Learning NGO

Bruce Britton

OPS No. 17, £7.95 +P+P

The concept of the "learning organisation" has spawned a number of books within the corporate sector. The ideas underpinning this concept have generic appeal and as a result, organisational learning is the subject of increasing interest in the NGO sector. This paper sets out to examine the relevance of the "learning organisation" concept for NGOs and concludes that the ideas have significant relevance for the sector.

The paper provides NGO staff with a conceptual framework for the subject - its purpose is not simply to describe the characteristics of a learning organisation but to encourage NGOs to examine their organisations in the light of these characteristics. For this reason the paper includes a diagnostic tool (the learning NGO questionnaire) which seeks to stimulate ideas about how NGOs can learn from, adapt to and continually improve the quality of what they do - an important challenge for NGOs wishing to remain relevant as agents of social

change into the 21st century.

Direct Funding from a Southern Perspective: Strengthening Civil Society?
INTRAC
NGOMPS No. 8, £14.95 +P+P

A number of studies have looked at the direct funding of southern NGOs by official governmental agencies. However few have done so from a southern perspective. This book details the findings from research in three case study countries: Bangladesh, Kenya and Peru, with brief supplementary materials from Zimbabwe and South Africa. The research was conducted by southern researchers and the findings appraised by groups of local NGO representatives. The emphasis is on the changing relationships between governments and NGOs in the North and South. The present role of northern NGOs is examined, and their future role explored. Some critics accuse them of becoming bureaucratised and over dependent on government funding, of losing popular support in their home countries, and of being unable to deliver the development impact on which they have built their reputation on. At the same time, official agencies are seeking to develop direct relations with Southern NGOs. This trend is strengthened by an emphasis on civil society and the role of NGOs in promoting democratisation and good governance, as well as grassroots development.

FORUM ON DIVERSITY

A Forum on Diversity recently hosted by INTRAC and CIC (Change International Consultants) and partly funded by the British Council, brought together programme and human resource staff from sixteen international NGOs. The Forum enabled participants to share experiences and understandings of diversity and how their organisations were addressing diversity issues both at an organisational and programmatic level.

The day resisted defining diversity, but drew on emerging experiences as presented by: the Minority Rights Group, CHANGE, the Intermediate Technology Development Group, Oxfam and Action on Disability and Development.

Historically, the focus on diversity has emerged through multiculturalism, equal opportunity, gender and human rights debates. In many ways diversity is an evolution of these concepts, rooted in the very real discrimination of people. However, it is clear that the debate has moved on, partly because of the limitations of equal opportunity and the development of organisational experience.

In future, organisations will require a coherent policy on diversity which encompasses both programme needs and the internal functioning of the organisation. Although international NGOs may by their very nature espouse the same values which we would expect to provide the foundation of diversity policies, in reality the development of workable policies may not be so clear cut. For example, can an inclusive approach to diversity be shared by all partners in whatever context or culture? Should we expect to see a certain percentage of senior management posts go to women in southern NGOs, when senior management teams or boards of trustees of northern NGOs tell a different story? And what are the emerging diversity issues with regard to the process of decentralisation?

Many dilemmas and concerns were raised in the course of the day. Although there was a clear commitment to tackling issues of diversity, there was nevertheless a feeling that organisations were just 'tinkering at the edges', and that coherent and strategic action at sectoral levels were also needed.

Various themes emerged:

- the need for strong and nuanced social analyses to inform organisations' policies and programmes
- the importance of encouraging NGOs to move from equal opportunity to diversity in policy and practice
- the need to explore organisational power and its relationship with diversity
- the need for a framework or process which goes beyond a thematic or issue based approach, and which cuts across a range of perspectives such as minority rights, gender, human rights, disability, class, education, religion and culture.

A publication relating to the forum is forthcoming. For further details contact Martina Hunt

INTRAC People

In the last year we have appointed a number of new staff. INTRAC is delighted to welcome them onto the team. The position of INTRAC's Open Training Course Manager has been filled by Janice Giffen, and a new position of Programme Assistant on the Central Asia Programme has been taken-up by Natasha Gya.

INTRAC has appointed a Senior Research Fellow, Dr. Peter Oakley, who will now manage parts of INTRAC's research programme. Dr. Simon Heap and Penny Fowler have been appointed as the Researchers on the 'NGOs, the Private Sector and their Constituencies' research project. The research department has also had a number of Research Assistant positions which have been filled by Dr. Deborah Ajulu, who was appointed to work on the research project 'The Role of the Church in Advocacy: Case Studies from Southern and Eastern Africa'; Jillian Popkins, who worked on a number of projects including the "Direct Funding" research project; and Simon Dradri and Jonathan Taylor who have been appointed to work on the final stage of the research project on 'NGOs in the Urban Sector'.

INTRAC has also appointed Daphne Wilkinson as Administrator, and Susan Owen as Administrative Assistant. The new position of Information Manager has been filled by Varihi Scott. She will manage the library and INTRAC's day-to-day IT needs. Joan Powell, our tireless volunteer librarian continues her work with INTRAC, for which are extremely grateful. INTRAC has also hosted a number of internships in the past year. Ute Hausmann from Germany helped to organise the 1998 NGO Support Organisation conference, and Kate Gooding played a central role in organising the Urban NGOs conference, which will take place in Jordan in 1999.

We would also like to thank those who have left INTRAC in recent months, for their highly valued contributions to INTRAC's work, and we wish them all the very best in the future. These include Leo Thomas who was with INTRAC for four years and has moved to Kingston, Jamaica, to take up a position with DfID; Dani Pitts, INTRAC's first Administrator, who has now joined Business Assist Ltd., and Paul Ryder who is now in Tanzania managing a Frontier Expeditions Research Project.

Refugee Assisting NGOs: Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

It was predicted that the end of the Cold War would trigger population movements on a scale not seen

in Europe since World War II. Although the collapse of the Soviet Union and the changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Yugoslavia did not precipitate movements on the scale predicted, millions of people have, however, been displaced during the 1990s. In the former USSR alone, nine million people have been displaced since 1989.

These population flows have presented new challenges to local NGOs, many of whom have found themselves working alongside international agencies. NGOs are always the first to react: they are often involved in peace movements that are trying to prevent conflict and provide early warning of emergency situations. Later, NGOs provide vital services and other means of protection by virtue of their place in civil society.

In the past six or seven years, from the Czech Republic to Kazakhstan and from Turkmenistan to Russia, NGOs have been led by charismatic and able individuals. These people have charted their organisations through a multi-faceted and on-going transition: from centralised to market-led economies; from socialist to more democratic forms of government, and in many cases from being part of a wider federation to nationhood. Many NGOs are now working with the uncertainty surrounding the processes of enlargement of the European Union. All are struggling to cope with the modalities and trends in funding arrangements. Until recently, most of the organisations working with refugees were understandably funded by UNHCR. However, one of the consequences of this arrangement has been the relative isolation of refugee-assisting NGOs from the rest of the NGO sector. The challenge for managers of these NGOs now, is how to work to ensure their organisations are integrated into the emerging third sector in each country.

Over this period, there have been various programmes and projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of the NGOs involved. Initially, there were presumptuous claims by some Western European NGOs that they were somehow responsible for the emergence of civil society in the region. This is ironic, given that many of the NGOs had their origins in long-term processes related to independence and peace movements. Now donors seem to assume that by strengthening implementing NGOs a strong civil society, which they see as a measure of a vibrant democracy, will result.

The first wave of NGO strengthening programmes centred on training. Now there is a realisation that while organisational capacity needs to harness individual skills, training alone is not sufficient to effect organisational change. Thus agencies are now developing new and broader initiatives to consolidate earlier progress made in the sphere of organisational change and development. There has also been a realisation that those providing capacity building need to develop their own skills.

INTRAC is involved in a number of initiatives seeking to understand how civil society is developing, and how it can be strengthened in the countries of the region. In particular, the influence of western donors on this development is of concern. For more information please contact Sue Elliott; Co-Director of Training and Consultancy.

Danish NGO Impact Study

INTRAC, in association with the Centre for Development Research (CDR) Copenhagen, is currently undertaking a study in three countries - Bangladesh, Tanzania and Nicaragua - on the impact of the development interventions supported by Danish NGOs and implemented by their country partners. The study has been commissioned by DANIDA and its Terms of Reference and approach have been put together after an extensive process of consultation between DANIDA and the Danish NGOs. The overall study is divided into two :

1. A country study which is based on a selected number of Danish NGO supported development projects, to be undertaken by INTRAC.

2. An in-depth study in each country either based on a particular project or theme to be undertaken by CDR.

While the study will draw on existing project documentation or evaluation reports, its main focus will be on the people and communities whose livelihoods the projects were expected to improve; and on a process of self-assessment by Danish NGOs and their partners of their development interventions. The Bangladesh study began in October and the Tanzania and Nicaragua case studies will start in New Year. A first draft of the study's findings is expected by the end of April, 1999. The study team leader is Peter Oakley, INTRAC Senior Research Fellow.

HEARTS OR MINDS? NGOS AND PEACEBUILDING IN CONFLICT

Should NGOs working in Complex Political Emergencies (CPEs) get involved in peacebuilding, or should they stick to what they know best - the provision of relief to meet basic needs and to alleviate suffering? Recent debates on the role of NGOs in CPEs have tended to be framed in these "either-or" terms. The battle lines have been drawn between the "fundamentalist" relief workers and the "utopian peaceniks". The former are arguing that NGOs should stick to the traditional relief role, while the latter are pushing for a more expansive role which aims to tackle the root causes of conflict. Unfortunately these debates rarely go beyond critiquing sound bites or trading anecdotes. Hard evidence to support either position is difficult to find.

Our research¹ explores these questions through an empirical study of NGOs working in CPEs. Preliminary findings show that these "either-or" divisions are simplistic, often created by those who have the luxury of distance, and do not reflect the complexity of the situation faced by those living and working at the sharp end of conflict. This difference in perception is well illustrated in Afghanistan. Those negotiating with the Taliban feel that they are having to make complicated and risky decisions, while their Head Offices' or donors' "principle-centred kalashnikovs" are pointed at their backs.

Evidence from our case studies point towards a need to be cautious about the more ambitious claims of the "neo-peaceniks"².

We have found little evidence to support the claims that NGOs can be a leading edge in promoting peacebuilding processes. Although the importance of winning hearts and minds is well known to protagonists in conflicts, many NGOs appear to be using their hearts, but not their minds.

"NGOs are incredibly light in their understanding of things"

(aid worker talking about NGOs in Kabul)

The result is often an "anarchy of good intentions". Many programmes are based on the need to do good, rather than on a hard-headed analysis of the situation and the

factors causing underlying vulnerability. Few NGOs for example, appear to engage in any serious analysis of the war economy or how it functions and how their programmes could possibly feed into it or alter incentive systems. At the very least, NGOs need to gain a better grasp of the complexity of historical and social detail. Even if their role is restricted to building wells and latrines, these activities should be based on fine-grained analysis and understanding of community processes and structures.

The few success stories encountered have been of NGOs who have combined a willingness to take risks with a strong analysis of the political and economic context, and an understanding of the processes that promote or mitigate violent conflict. The blinkered nature of the current debate often discourages experimentation and the development of more in-depth analysis and better programming. An abandoning of fixed positions, and a conscious effort to develop organisational intelligence and learning, might help take the debate (and practice) forward.

1. ESCOR/DFID funded research project; "The contribution of NGOs to peacebuilding in complex political emergencies" Conducted by University of Manchester and INTRAC, and includes case studies from Afghanistan, Liberia and Sri Lanka. Principal researchers: David Hulme, Jonathan Goodhand and Philippa Atkinson.
2. A term coined by Joanna Macrae

Strengthening Urban Partnerships:
An INTRAC conference

February 1st-4th 1999, Amman, Jordan

People and policies often talk of partnerships for urban poverty alleviation. But what are the real issues and possibilities on the ground? What strengths must the various actors and partnerships develop in order to transform the economic, physical and social reality of the urban poor? Which approaches are bearing fruit, and what emerging insights are there for those concerned with poor people, NGOs and government in the city? This INTRAC conference will provide an international forum for northern NGO policy-makers, southern NGO workers, official agency staff and local authority managers to discuss the policy and practical realities of working in effective partnerships. We will also review INTRAC's research with NGOs in Dhaka, Ahmedabad, Lima, Addis Ababa and Johannesburg. For further information please contact Jonathan Taylor

EVALUATION OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRAC has been involved in organising a number of international conferences on the evaluation of social development. These meetings have become a forum for discussing and analysing issues relating

to social development evaluation as well as an opportunity for those involved to periodically share and review their experiences. The last one was held in 1996 and on the basis of requests made at the end of that conference, and subsequently, INTRAC has begun to plan for the next international meeting on this issue. Further information about the 4th International Conference, to be held at the end of 1999, will be available from INTRAC in the New Year.

OPEN TRAINING PROGRAMME

INTRAC's Open Training Programme complements its Organisational Development work with NGOs by providing a range of courses for individuals working in the development and NGO sector. Course participants are provided with opportunity to locate their own practical experience within a wider framework. Participants acquire new skills and techniques and the chance to share experiences and ideas with other course participants.

Our training is participatory and interactive using a variety of methods such as case studies, focus group discussions and task oriented activities. This is complemented by short inputs on theoretical frameworks which broaden the scope of the participants' learning, offering opportunities to analyse and critique both contemporary and emerging thinking and trends.

INTRAC's Open Training Programme consists of the following:

- Short Course Training Programme
- NGO Programme Officer Training .
- INTRAC Seminar Series

Short Course Training Programme - 1999

MANAGING A PARTICIPATIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

19th - 23th April

INVOLVING CHILDREN IN RESEARCH FOR PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

7th - 11th June

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR NON- FINANCIAL MANAGERS

14th - 16th September

WORKING IN LONG TERM CONFLICT - MANAGING THE ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGE

24th - 26th October

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

1st - 5th November

CAPACITY BUILDING AND NEW FORMS OF PARTNERSHIP

8th - 12th November

Prices:

£485 for the three day short course

£789 for the five day short course

NGO Programme Officer Training - 1999

MANAGING CONSULTANTS

16th March

MONITORING & EVALUATION
19th March

AN ORGANISATIONAL APPROACH TO WORKING WITH & STRENGTHENING PARTNERS
23rd & 24th March

ANALYSING PARTNER ACCOUNTS
30th April

Prices:

£99 for the one day workshops

£190 for the two day workshops

£400 for all four workshops

NEW INTRAC Seminar Series - 1999

INTRAC has developed a new addition to its Training Programme: a series of half day seminars designed to update the busy NGO and development worker on some of those issues which they often hear about and yet do not have the time to follow closely.

This seminar series is aimed at all those within the NGO and development world who want an overview of a particular topic, a means of keeping up-to-date with contemporary issues, and an opportunity to reflect on the implications of these issues for their own work.

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|---|------------|
| • Funding Trends in International Aid: Strategies for NGOs. | 14th April |
| • Working with Church Partners for Advocacy. | 21st April |
| • NGO - Private Sector Relations. | 28th April |
| • NGOs in an Urban Environment | 5th May |
| • Capacity Building with NGOs in Central Asia. | 12th May |
| • NGOs and Civil Society. | 20th May |
| • NGOs and Work in Conflict areas. | 26th May |

Price:

£35.00 for one

£30.00 each if attending four or more

For further details of all these courses and a booking form, please contact
Janice Giffen

Capacity Building News
No.1 December 1998

CONTENTS

- Northern NGO Approaches to Capacity Building
- International Forum on Capacity Building
- NGOs in a Global Future

'Capacity Building' is a term which has become pervasive in development terminology. Yet, to define capacity building invites a myriad of statements, definitions, theory and practice ranging from technical skills development to institutional development of civil society. The capacity building debate is dynamic

and widespread, yet it lacks clarity, holds many ambiguities, and has mixed and ultimately conflicting agendas. Capacity Building News aims to contribute to this debate providing a space to share our current thoughts, practice, and questions in relation to this field.

Those who have followed INTRAC's development over the last few years will know that our experience in capacity building is drawn from and promoted through our research, training and consultancy programmes as well as our publications. We align ourselves to a particular approach to capacity building which underpins our thinking and practice and which focuses on organisational strengthening as a means to develop and strengthen civil society. We wish to offer this experience to the wider debate, whilst recognising our approach is just one of many.

Capacity Building News will be a regular feature within ON-TRAC with articles, case studies and contributions drawing on our experience and that of others. In this issue, our first, we offer a brief update on several current initiatives with which INTRAC is involved. These are: a survey of Northern NGO approaches to capacity building; the development of the International Forum on Capacity Building; and the forthcoming Birmingham Conference - 'NGOs in a Global Future'.

SURVEY OF NORTHERN NGO APPROACHES TO CAPACITY BUILDING

This project, conducted earlier in 1998 by INTRAC for the International Forum on Capacity Building, examined Northern NGO (NNGO) experiences and approaches to Southern NGO (SNGO) capacity building. Responses to questionnaires and consultations came from 100 NGOs in North America, Europe and the Pacific.

The main findings of the survey are that:

- Capacity building is presently extremely popular with 91% of NNGOs stating that they were involved in this activity. Most (55%) say they have a formal capacity building policy or programme.
- There is a wide range of understanding amongst NNGOs of what capacity building involves. The majority of definitions varied between very general statements to more specific descriptions of one or two activities, for example:

"We define capacity building as any activities which increase our partner's abilities to carry out or assist others to carry out efforts successfully to improve the lives of the poor,"

"to provide NGO staff with training to run their programme effectively,"

"organisational strengthening (activities to improve the capacity of implementing organisations) and institutional development (activities to strengthen the position of organisations in their society)."

- The main goals of NNGOs in capacity building are to improve the quality and increase the scope and quantity of existing and future programmes. A strong emphasis is also placed on enabling more mutual learning from experience.
- Capacity building priorities emerging from the data are: Organisation Development and Renewal; Project/Programme Design; Planning and Strategic Management; Leadership Development and Staff Development. NNGOs seem to be recognising that core issues touching NGO identity and strategy are critical. In response to more open-ended questions however, traditional areas of support like Financial Management; Fund-raising and Monitoring and Evaluation were seen as key.

- Current capacity building priorities are likely to remain stable. However, the breadth of activities commonly undertaken is set to expand to include: Advocacy, Policy Research and Analysis; Gender Sensitivity; Monitoring and Evaluation and Networking with SNGOs.
- A wide variety of methods are being used in capacity building. Training is still extremely popular despite its recognised limitations, as is the provision of technical assistance. Networking amongst SNGOs is increasingly being promoted as a high priority method and there is also rising support for local intermediary organisations.
- The majority of funding for capacity building is through grants and co-financing schemes. In some countries, such as Canada, contracting is becoming more common.
- There was limited response to the question, what makes capacity building programmes effective? The respondents who did reply mentioned the importance of the programme being tailor-made; using collective reflection workshops; having the commitment of the organisation; using specialist service NGOs / training institutions and charging fees for services.
- NNGOs said that the main benefits of working with SNGOs were to increase the scale of their work, to improve the quality of their programmes and to promote more mutual learning, i.e., the reasons given for working with NGOs mirror those given for supporting capacity building.
- The main issues to arise for NNGOs regarding their relationships with SNGOs include establishing mutual trust and respect; preserving the SNGOs mission and independence; and reaching agreement on development goals and priorities.
- Effective relationships were seen to be characterised by openness, trust and respect; a long-term commitment; real dialogue; and frequent contact and communication.

This survey was conducted as part of a wider initiative by SNGOs of the NGO Working Group of the World Bank in collaboration with the NGO Unit in the World Bank and USAID. A brief description of the formation of the International Forum on Capacity Building follows.

THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON CAPACITY BUILDING

In October 1996, SNGOs of the NGO Working Group of the World Bank proposed the formation of an Inter Agency Group on Southern NGO Capacity Building, the purpose being to:

- promote reflection, sharing and learning about capacity building of SNGOs
- encourage co-ordinated responses to the capacity building needs and challenges of SNGOs.

This was supported by the preparation of a paper on SNGO capacity building by the SNGOs represented on the World Bank Group and followed up by consultations with SNGOs.

Following this, a meeting was held in May 1997 in Washington D.C., to share perspectives and attempt to agree upon purposes, structures and concrete steps towards forming this inter-agency group. The meeting further aimed to facilitate the exchange of donor and SNGO perspectives on issues and priorities for capacity-building and review innovative capacity-building programmes. A process was also agreed for the formation of an International Working Group on Capacity Building.

Between July 1997 and April 1998, widespread surveys and consultations with different stakeholders

were undertaken. These included:

- 350 SNGOs from Asia (South and South East); Africa (Horn of Africa, South, West and East); Latin America and the Caribbean
- 100 NNGOs from Europe, North America and the Pacific
- 20 bilateral and multilateral donors and foundations

The reactions and responses to the consultation process established a need for launching an international forum (IFCB) for dialogue among multi stakeholders on capacity building of SNGOs, culminating in an International Conference on Future Capacity Building of Southern NGOs held in May 1998 in Brussels.

For further information contact The Global Secretariat,
Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA);
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area,
New Delhi - 110 062,
Tel.: 91 11 6981908/6989559,
Fax: 91 11 6980183,
Email: pria@sdalt.ernet.in
or visit their new website at www.pria.org

NGOs IN A GLOBAL FUTURE

An international conference to be held at The University of Birmingham Sunday 10 January to Wednesday 13 January 1999

This conference follows on from two earlier international conferences held in IDPM, University of Manchester. This third conference will address global themes and their relevance for NGOs.

Current global trends are changing the context in which NGOs work. Whilst most NGOs have begun to adapt to this new environment, few have thought strategically about how the global processes that now shape livelihoods, welfare and (in)security might demand more radical changes in roles and relationships.

Three trends in particular demand our attention:

1. economic globalisation
2. From aid to international co-operation
3. Complex political emergencies

A number of ideas are emerging as possible strategic responses to these changes which will be explored at the conference.

INTRAC has organised a panel entitled: 'Capacity building in civil society; social capital and social entrepreneurship'. This debate promises to be very interesting. A wide variety of papers have already been confirmed with diverse international perspectives from Asia, Latin America, South East Asia, Africa and Central Asia.

For further information please contact
Linda Curry at the University of Birmingham, Telephone: 0121 414 4967, Fax: 0121 414 7164 or
email: dsa@bham.ac.uk