Strengthening civil society worldwide
INTRAC

From the executive director

Events in places as diverse as Ukraine, Egypt, Thailand, Nigeria, and Syria show how seriously armed conflict affects societies and individual livelihoods. In addition, internal inequality is on the rise across the world, in poor, emerging, and high-income nations alike. In many societies, poverty and other forms of marginalisation present pervasive challenges. Civil society remains a key force in empowering people to address these.

By providing capacity building support, including varied forms of training, as well as exploring and stimulating debate on wider systemic issues, INTRAC’s staff and associates have worked worldwide to strengthen civil society organisations across traditional divides. Read on to learn more. Many links are embedded in the electronic version.

From the chair

Last year was a period of transition at INTRAC. Starting in August 2013, Michael Hammer took over as executive director, following an introduction to the partnerships, networks, and projects on which INTRAC’s success is built. In December we said an emotional goodbye and heartfelt thanks to Brian Pratt, who co-founded the organisation in 1991 and built it up thereafter.

As part of this changeover, INTRAC is reviewing its strategy to engage more widely with the ever-changing challenges of civil society and development issues. However, whatever choices INTRAC makes for the future, we will always maintain our commitment to just and inclusive development, supported by effective and well-managed civil society organisations.

What INTRAC stands for

INTRAC supports civil society organisations around the world, particularly in the global South, through research, training, and consultancy. We help build organisations’ capacity so that they can in turn empower people in their societies who experience poverty and various forms of social exclusion to challenge and change the inequality that affects them.

Civil society takes many forms: small grassroots groups, large international charities, informal people’s movements, faith groups, unions, social enterprises, and more.

Regardless of type, civil society organisations can be vehicles for helping disenfranchised people change their realities. They strengthen volunteerism and a spirit of solidarity, give voice to the marginalised, and provide opportunities for people from all walks of life to participate in their societies. They develop collaborative solutions to problems and hold those with power to account.

To play this role in the diverse contexts they work in, civil society organisations need to be effective, sustainable, rooted in their own societies, and seen as legitimate. That way they can also participate in a global, vibrant and interconnected global movement for social justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability.
Our work continues to focus on civil society dynamics; planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning; and trends in international NGO and donor practices. Details of our activities in these areas are on pages 4-6. However, much of our work cuts across themes and involves more than one team. In particular, the following topics merit highlighting:

**Action research and learning**
Action research is emerging as a powerful participatory and solution-focused tool for capacity building. In Central Asia we support organisations in developing analytical skills to better engage with local government. In the Middle East and North Africa we use the approach to strengthen women’s participation in public life. In March 2014, we began facilitating an action learning group on exit strategy.

**Sustainability**
INTRAC has been leading reflection on and sharing insights about the sustainability of civil society organisations. We have worked on the impact of aid withdrawal, local rooting and questions about legitimacy, and engagement with other stakeholders in the public sphere. This work is helping organisations develop the capacity to stand on their own.

**Evaluating advocacy**
In response to growing demand, INTRAC developed a new course on evaluating and improving advocacy. We produced an analytical review of emerging practice, addressing attribution, setting indicators, and organisational learning. Through consultancy, we have helped organisations analyse issues deeply, often resulting in a sharper advocacy focus.

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**Key aspects of our work in 2013-14**

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**INTRAC by the numbers**

In April 2013 – March 2014, we worked with:

- 24 staff
- 66 independent consultants or companies
- 64 organisations (includes branches) on...
- 85 projects focusing on...
- 55 countries

Our projects included:\footnote{1}{1}  
- 33 consultancies focusing on 49 countries\footnote{2}{2}  
- 42 in-house training courses in 20 countries  
- 5 contracted research projects (global focus)

We ran the following types of public courses:

- 17 open training, Oxford  
- 1 open training international, Bangkok  
- 4 blended learning, for a total of...  
- 230 participants working in 65 countries

We produced 28 publications:

- 4 praxis notes  
- 1 praxis paper  
- 3 editions of ONTRAC newsletter  
- 3 briefing papers  
- 3 guide booklets/toolkits  
- 2 workshop/conference reports/backgrounders  
- 1 monitoring and evaluation paper

- 2 other papers  
- 6 single issues, Development in Practice  
- 1 double issue, Development in Practice  
- 2 other public materials

*Development in Practice* highlights:

- Authors from 73 countries  
- Readers (downloads) from 171 countries

Our website as a resource:

- 311,721 pageviews  
- 81,441 visits by...  
- 54,934 unique visitors from...  
- 204 countries  
- 14,062 downloads of...  
- 740 documents (including translations)  
- 44 blog posts attracting...  
- 7,453 views (excludes views of main blog page)

We put on the following events:

- 1 two-day NGO Research Forum  
- 2 one-day workshops  
- 3 webinars

\footnote{1}{Numbers do not add up because some projects span categories/locations and some aren’t easy to classify.}  
\footnote{2}{24 countries actually visited}
Civil society dynamics

Key projects
Projects, research, and major consultancies focusing on trends affecting civil society, particularly at the local to national level

Women in public life
In 2013, INTRAC became a partner in a British Council project to promote women’s participation in political processes in the Middle East and North Africa. We supported women’s coalitions to carry out action research as the basis for evidence-based advocacy.

Evaluating advocacy work
We worked with Southern African organisations partnering with Christian Aid, Church of Sweden, and Norwegian Church Aid on designing systems to monitor and evaluate advocacy work, as well as on building skills in reporting on the impact of those initiatives.

Organisational capacity development
In 2013, we worked with a Sierra Leonean NGO by conducting an organisational capacity assessment and systems review, helping design better ways of working, and training staff in those methods. We also worked with Garden Africa to evaluate successes and develop priorities for strategic planning.

Organisational sustainability
We worked to help networks and organisations become more self-sustaining. We did an in-depth assessment of the International Step by Step Association (supported by Open Society Foundation) and its network of 27 early childhood development NGOs, and an evaluation of Wilde Ganzen’s Action for Children programme, which supports and builds capacity for local-level fundraising.

Improving accountability and capacity
INTRAC is a partner in the second phase of Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO), a project to strengthen the accountability and overall capacity of civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey. We particularly advise on the establishment of resource centres and their sustainability.

The environment for civil society
With the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI), the University of Portsmouth, and the University of Jyväskylä, we researched and reported on the legal frameworks and political space in which NGOs operate in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, and Uganda. A report on a further six countries was released in 2014. This work was commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Key publications
► Savage, O. with B. Pratt (2013), ‘The history of UK civil society’, Briefing Paper 38, INTRAC
► Bo Paludan, M., with R. Popplewell (2013), ‘Turning voice into action: A discussion of three action research studies conducted by the Danish Children and Youth Network and their learning outcomes’, Praxis Note 65, INTRAC
► INTRAC (2014), ‘Civil Society at a Crossroads: Most significant findings’ (Summary)

Training highlights
INTRAC ran five open training courses relating to civil society dynamics in 2013-14:
► Advocacy and policy influencing: 2 open training, 2 blended learning courses
► Gender analysis and planning: 1 course

A total of 46 people attended these courses. Participants rated their overall experience an average of 8.4 out of 10. Participants rated the extent to which their aims were fulfilled an average of 8.2.
Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Key projects

Events, research, and major consultancies focusing on planning, monitoring, evaluation, assessment, and learning

Adapting monitoring and evaluation to current trends

In November 2013, INTRAC held a one-day workshop primarily for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practitioners to debate and share their experiences. ‘Practical responses to current monitoring and evaluation debates’ was followed the next day by a closed discussion for NGO Research Programme members. A related two-hour webinar was held in December.

Climate and Development Knowledge Network monitoring and evaluation

INTRAC designed and, since 2010, has been running the M&E system for CDKN, an international alliance focusing on climate change and development. In 2013-2014, we increasingly carried out backward-looking impact reviews of an array of projects that have ended as well as providing planning support to new projects and programmes.

Girls’ education study, Zimbabwe

INTRAC, with Zimbabwe-based Target Research, conducted a baseline study for World Vision’s Girls’ Education Challenge Fund project, which aims to improve girls’ access to and success in education. The study used a randomised controlled trial design including interviews with over 2,000 girls and their parents/caregivers, as well as interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, community leaders, and parents.

Organisational support

INTRAC supports a wide range of organisations around the world to develop their M&E systems and capacity. Examples include:

► Helping ClientEarth, a group of environmental lawyers, develop an M&E system for their Climate and Forests programme

► Advice on M&E system development and theories of change for development agency Signpost International

► Working with Social Fund for Development (Yemen) to train staff and develop an M&E system and manual for local NGOs

Women, Peace and Security evaluation

We did a major external evaluation of four years of Norwegian Church Aid work on their Women, Peace and Security Programme in the Middle East. The findings and recommendations were used to improve programming with the goal of improving the security of girls and women in conflict-ridden areas and enhancing their participation.

Advocacy monitoring and evaluation

There has been a clear demand over the past year for capacity building in how to monitor and evaluate advocacy initiatives. INTRAC delivered a number of tailor-made consultancies and training courses in this area and we also launched an open training course at the end of the fiscal year.

Key publications


Training highlights

INTRAC ran 13 open training courses relating to planning and M&E in 2013-14:

► M&E (foundation): 2 courses

► Advanced M&E: 4 courses

► M&E (blended learning): 2 courses

► Impact assessment: 2 courses

► Theory of change approaches to planning and impact assessment: 3 courses

A total of 152 people attended these courses. Participants rated their overall experience an average of 8.7 out of 10. Participants rated the extent to which their aims were fulfilled an average of 8.5.
Trends in international NGO and donor practices

Research, events, and major consultancies on trends affecting donors, international NGOs (INGOs), state development agencies

Key projects – INGOs

Strengthening partnerships
We did a review of Anti-Slavery International’s approach to project planning and partnerships, identifying good practices and making recommendations to strengthen its approach to working with partners.

Trends in support to civil society
INTRAC was commissioned to put together an issue of Evaluation Insights, a series of informal working papers issued by the OECD Development Assistance Committee. ‘Support to civil society: Emerging evaluation lessons’ (Sept. 2013) provides a summary of trends in support to civil society, synthesises research, and highlights implications for policy makers and civil society partners.

Events – INGOs

► Workshop: ’Do NGOs need a languages policy?’ (January 2014) – Co-organised with the University of Reading and University of Portsmouth
► NGO Research Forum (members only): ’The emerging policy landscape: Donor policies and priorities on civil society and international development’ (May 2013)
► Workshop: ’The future of large international NGO “families” in a changing development context’ (April 2013)
► Webinar: ’Gathering and using evidence: Assessing the needs of practitioners’ (June 2013) – Co-organised with the International Rescue Committee (IRC)
► Webinar: ’NGOs, Evidence, Policy and Practice’ (May 2013) – Organised by the Development Studies Association (DSA) Study Group on NGOs in Development
► Panel at the Bond Annual Conference 2013: ’Finding closure: The challenge of ending programmes well’ (November 2013)

Key projects – INGOs

Studying the effects of state funding
INTRAC, with Bath University and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, has been working on a major Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research study to account for the results of Dutch government funding to Dutch NGOs and/or their Southern partners. INTRAC is leading on the evaluation of capacity development, including an assessment of civil society in Bangladesh.

Study on multi-donor funds
A recent evaluation of Danish support to civil society in developing countries noted a trend for donors to ‘pool’ funds at country level in support of shared development or humanitarian objectives. In light of its commitment to channel more funds directly to the South, Danida commissioned INTRAC to identify best practices regarding these funds.

Event – Donors
► NGO Research Forum (members only): ’The emerging policy landscape: Donor policies and priorities on civil society and international development’ (May 2013)

Key publications

► Walters, H. and R. Popplewell (2013), ’Overcoming the participation challenge: ICCO Cooperation’s experience of conducting action research’. Praxis Note 63, INTRAC
► James, R. (2013), ’Funder collaboration: A compelling and cautionary tale’. Praxis Note 64, INTRAC
► Hayman, R. with J. Bartlett (2013), ’Getting to grips with evidence: How NGOs can tackle changing needs in the use of evidence and research’. Praxis paper 28, INTRAC
► Pratt, B. (2014), ’40 years of NGO development: Time to rediscover a purpose?’ Briefing Paper 40, INTRAC

Training highlights

INTRAC ran four open training courses relating to aid, development, and research trends:

► Organisational development: 1 course
► Advanced partner capacity building: 2 courses
► Participatory proposal development: 1 course

A total of 32 people attended these courses. Participants rated their overall experience an average of 7.8 out of 10. Participants rated the extent to which their aims were fulfilled an average of 7.9.
Financial activities

For further details, see ‘INTRAC Trustees Report and Accounts’ 2014

Summary statement of financial activities including income and expenditure account
For the year ended 31 March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted funds (£)</th>
<th>Restricted funds (£)</th>
<th>Total 2014 (£)</th>
<th>Total 2013 (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incoming resources from generated funds</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
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<td>36,288</td>
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<td>Incoming resources from charitable activities</td>
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<td>77,416</td>
<td>2,005,059</td>
<td>1,881,116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other incoming resources</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,393</td>
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<td><strong>Total incoming resources</strong></td>
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<td>77,416</td>
<td>2,041,347</td>
<td>1,921,515</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resources expended</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Research</td>
<td>170,633</td>
<td>114,492</td>
<td>285,125</td>
<td>291,538</td>
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<td>Training</td>
<td>590,782</td>
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<td>Consultancy</td>
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<td><strong>Total charitable expenditure</strong></td>
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<td>114,492</td>
<td>2,030,898</td>
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<td>Governance costs</td>
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<td>8,251</td>
<td>5,689</td>
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<td><strong>Total resources expended</strong></td>
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<td>114,492</td>
<td>2,039,149</td>
<td>1,898,310</td>
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<td>Net incoming/outgoing resources before transfers</td>
<td>39,274</td>
<td>(37,076)</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>23,205</td>
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<td>Gross transfers between funds</td>
<td>(37,076)</td>
<td>37,076</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net income for the year/ net movement in funds</strong></td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>23,205</td>
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<td>Fund balances at 1 April 2013</td>
<td>453,286</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>453,286</td>
<td>430,081</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund balances at 31 March 2014</td>
<td>455,484</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>455,484</td>
<td>453,286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Asia Programme

INTRAC maintains a regional office in Kyrgyzstan. Highlights of our Central Asia work:

► **Analytical Skills Training Programme**: A British Embassy-funded project helping civil society organisations use action research to improve governance and prevent conflict in Fergana Valley (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

► **Analysis skills for youth**: With UNICEF, we support a network of 23 youth centres in Kyrgyzstan by helping young people analyse employment opportunities and potential problems in their communities.

► **Democracy and Human Rights Programme** (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs): Helping civil society in Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus develop organisational assessment and development tools.

► **Evaluation**: Major evaluations included the local government part of the Aga Khan Foundation’s work and the Tiri Pro-Poor Integrity Programme, both in Kyrgyzstan.

► **Organisational development**: Strategic planning and resource mobilisation training for the International Federation of Biosafety Associations; designing the training component of a European Union Volunteers for Humanitarian Aid programme.

CSSP (Ethiopia)

The Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) is a capacity development programme designed to support Ethiopia’s civil society and its contribution to national development. It is managed by a British Council-led consortium that includes INTRAC and the IDL Group. We provide technical assistance on capacity building, monitoring and evaluation and leadership development.

Development in Practice

INTRAC edits *Development in Practice*, a peer-reviewed international journal published by Taylor & Francis. It offers practical analysis and research relating to development and provides a forum for academics and practitioners to exchange ideas and experiences.

In 2013-14, there were seven issues, including a double issue: *Civil societies at crossroads: Eruptions, initiatives, and evolution in citizen activism* (Aug. 2013).
Trustees

We would like to thank the following volunteer board members who served in 2013-14:

- Geof Wood (Chair)
- Tom Travers (Treasurer)
- Salma Abbasi (To January 2014)
- Bruce Coles
- Susan Cunningham (To July 2014)
- George Gelber
- Pat Holden
- Nazneen Kanji
- Janet Momsen
- Trevor Rees
- Paul Thornton (As of July 2013)
- Sue Weaver (As of March 2014)

NGO Research Programme

The NGO Research Programme provides valuable support to our research and knowledge sharing. Thanks to the following members:

- Broederlijk Delen
- Concern Worldwide
- Cordaid
- DanChurchAid
- ICCO (Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation)
- Norwegian Church Aid
- Save the Children Denmark
- Save the Children International

Key Partners

We were honoured to work with more than 250 organisations around the world this year. In addition to NGO Research Programme members, special thanks go to the following key partners:

- Achmea Foundation
- Association for the Prevention of Torture
- Biosafety Association for Central Asia and the Caucasus
- British Council
- British Embassies and High Commissions
- CABI
- Christian Aid
- Civil Society Support Programme (Ethiopia)
- Comic Relief
- Danida
- Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Department for International Development (UK)
- Development Studies Association
- Dutch Consortium for Rehabilitation
- European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI)
- Forum Syd
- Ghadan for Consulting and Capacity Building
- Gorta
- INKA
- King Khalid Foundation
- Open Society Foundation
- Red Cross (various branches)
- Sida
- Sightsavers
- Social Fund for Development
- Taylor & Francis
- UNICEF
- West Africa Civil Society Institute
- World Vision UK

Participants at INTRAC open training international course, Bangkok, 2013