

viewpoint

## Rhetoric and Reality in Aid Effectiveness

The High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Paris in 2005 set in motion a number of processes focusing on good aid delivery, both among official aid agencies and civil society organisations. Since we dealt with the Paris Declaration in ONTRAC 33 in 2006 (available at [www.intrac.org/pages/previous\\_ontracs.html](http://www.intrac.org/pages/previous_ontracs.html)) a lot has changed, and with the next High-Level Forum coming up in Accra in September, there is much to discuss about civil society's role in aid effectiveness.

At the present time, the more that is written about the Paris Declaration (PD), the more we are in danger of confusing and not clarifying what the real issues and agendas are. There is a clear tendency for people to bring into the PD and aid effectiveness debates questions which are at best secondary and at worst misleading. We should keep in mind these key points:

1) It is still possible to take the **PD at face value as an agreement between donors** to see if they can improve the efficiency of the administration of aid. If harmonising procedures reduces transaction costs for both donors and recipient governments then this is something most people can sign up to.

2) Who is deciding **whether a government's aid policy is a genuine reflection of a democratically generated and supported set of policies**, or merely the reflection of an autocratic group of politicians or state employees?

3) There appears to be some **'hidden agendas'** around issues such as international procurement, an excessive role for the World Bank to be arbiter of whether a recipient country has stuck by

the PD or not, and so on. Given the highly technical nature of many of the indicators, which read like a World Bank manual, this is perhaps not a surprise. It can imply major changes for a recipient country – **changes which are not made explicit.**

4) The PD is still regarded as a **theory and policy for development instead of a set of relatively modest improvements in public administration.** We have debates framed as though the PD is the new development solution. This is misleading. It is clear that we could achieve all of the objectives of the PD which could improve the efficiency of aid, but that this would not necessarily improve the impact of international cooperation at all.

5) Civil society organisations have to reaffirm the positive contribution they make in their own right. Civil society including NGOs is **neither merely an adjunct of the state nor of the development industry.** Given the key element of pluralism and independence in civil society **we should neither expect nor promote alignment of policies either between civil society and NGO groups or automatically with state authorities.** This means that we need to reaffirm and celebrate what we do and what we have achieved, and not just be defensively on the back foot. We need to highlight positive solutions to the myriad of social, political, and economic constraints on poor people.

This is a summary of a thinkpiece available at: [www.intrac.org/pages/thinkpieces.html](http://www.intrac.org/pages/thinkpieces.html)

Brian Pratt, Executive Director,  
INTRAC  
Email: [bpratt@intrac.org](mailto:bpratt@intrac.org)

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### In this issue:

Aid effectiveness and the Paris Declaration is one of the fastest-moving policy processes in development circles – but what should civil society organisations know about it? What is going on at the moment and how can we influence the proceedings for the third High-Level Forum in Accra in September? In ONTRAC 38, Brian Pratt and Katie Wright-Revollo remind us of the most contentious aid effectiveness issues for civil society; Joanne McGarry and Sarah Mulley describe the key aid effectiveness groups, events and processes; AFRODAD summarise their recent research on the effects of the Paris Declaration on CSOs in nine African countries; François Lenfant finds that underlying power issues are still unresolved in civil society development effectiveness forums; and Toomas Mast and Tomas Brundin provide an official donor agency perspective on safeguarding civil society diversity within aid effectiveness.

# The Road to Accra: Implementing the Paris Declaration beyond Paris

*What are the likely impacts of implementing the aid effectiveness agenda across diverse country contexts? Civil society may welcome the kinds of principles stipulated at Paris, since NGOs have been calling for greater donor accountability for some time (for example, through improving monitoring and evaluation systems to improve the impact of programmes in terms of poverty and wellbeing). Yet, in its current form the aid effectiveness agenda does not pay enough attention to contextualisation, and risks being seen by Southern constituents as an imposition from outside (as was often the case for PRSPs), risking disillusionment with the whole process.*

There are also fears that applying the Paris Declaration (PD), which is premised on a strong results-based agenda, may encourage a risk-avoidance strategy as NGOs focus on relatively easily measurable service provision outputs (e.g. numbers of schools) and move away from addressing underlying political issues of human rights and good governance, where results are harder to measure or demonstrate. A strong focus on managing for results can also increase competition amongst NGOs, with time taken up with 'branding' issues, as seen for example with agencies' flag-flying during the tsunami efforts in 2004. Increased attention to 'proving results' as set out in the PD (as opposed to 'improving' development programmes) is likely to encourage NGOs to divert resources and management effort away from core development activities. Thus, not only might the implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda be problematic, but it appears that lessons about achieving broader and more meaningful consultation with those working at the grassroots level are repeatedly being missed.

## CSO effectiveness – pluralism under threat?

Recently debates have shifted beyond governments to discussion of alignment and harmonisation of NGOs themselves. In many ways this seems like a peculiar turn given that the strength of the third sector lies in its pluralism and autonomy

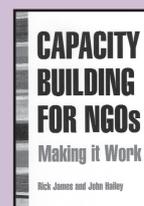
rather than in homogeneity and conformity with others. Given the multitude of interests that NGOs represent, and their diversity – often seen as their comparative advantage – how far would alignment of policies between diverse civil society actors truly be in the interests of civil society? We have already seen how large NGOs are scaling up and branding themselves, becoming larger and more homogenous structures. Might there be a risk that the pluralist nature of civil society will be undermined not only through CSOs' governments endorsing this agenda but further, being themselves encouraged to replicate it?

NGOs have been engaging with these debates through a series of official 'consultations', where the focus of discussions has turned on CSOs' own practice more than providing a space for CSOs to exert influence on their governments' own endorsements of the PD. The most widespread and well-attended meetings for CSOs, namely those of the Advisory Group on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness, have put pressure on CSOs to formulate a 'civil society effectiveness' framework to complement that of the aid effectiveness signatories. This gesture distracts attention from the official process and may run counter to civil society heterogeneity and diversity.

A theme running throughout this issue is that there is a risk that a top-down application of the aid effectiveness agenda is missing the point about alignment. True alignment would be based on resonance between those at the grassroots rather than imposed in a top-down manner from outside. Genuine consultation would build on existing resonances between CSOs. To what extent are these consultations to be viewed as credible attempts to encourage CSOs to feed into the aid effectiveness agenda? Or are they merely a distraction and a smokescreen, diverting attention from critiques of the aid effectiveness agenda bubbling up from below?

Katie Wright-Revolledo,  
Senior Researcher, INTRAC  
Email: [kwright-revolledo@intrac.org](mailto:kwright-revolledo@intrac.org)

## INTRAC publications



### New book

INTRAC published **Capacity Building for NGOs: Making it Work**, by Rick James and John Hailey, in November 2007.

This is essential reading for anyone interested in capacity building with NGOs and other civil society organisations.

*Capacity Building for NGOs* analyses some of the cultural and contextual constraints that undermine our ability to implement appropriate and effective capacity building interventions. It concludes that effective capacity building can have a real and tangible impact. This book is about what works in practice and how best to ensure that investment in capacity building is timely, appropriate and successful.

Alan Fowler's assessment:

*"Ignorance is no longer an excuse. This comprehensive review leads to a forthright analysis of why what is known to work is inadequately applied. Closure to many old debates is accompanied by concrete proposals to overcome the structural hindrances that deny people who are poor the quality of capacity development they have a right to expect."*

*Capacity Building for NGOs* is available to buy for £12.95 at:  
[www.intrac.org/pages/publications.html](http://www.intrac.org/pages/publications.html)

### New briefing papers

We have produced six new policy briefing papers on different aspects of our current research interests. These are:

- Civil Society Perspectives on the Paris Declaration and Aid
- Diverse State-Society Relations: Implications of Implementing the Paris Declaration
- The War on Terror and the Onslaught on Development
- Developments in the Regulation of NGOs via Government Counter-Terrorism Measures and Policies
- HIV/AIDS Policy: How to Readdress the Balance Between Global Provision and Local Civil Society?
- International NGOs and indigenous social movements

Copies of the papers are available to download at: [www.intrac.org/pages/policy\\_briefing\\_papers.html](http://www.intrac.org/pages/policy_briefing_papers.html)

# The Paris Declaration Processes Explained

In March 2005, leaders of the major multilateral development banks, international and bilateral organisations, donors and recipient country representatives gathered in Paris for the second High-Level Forum on Harmonization.

This group was committed to take action to **improve the management and effectiveness of aid**. To this effect, the Paris Declaration was signed by nearly 100 signatories; partner governments, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, regional development banks and international agencies. This marked an agreement by all signatories for the first time to **measure their success at making aid more effective**, and for donors and developing countries to monitor each others' progress.

## What does this mean?

Some of the wealthiest and poorest countries from across the world have signed up to **fifty commitments** to do aid better. For example, by 2010, 85 per cent of aid going to developing countries should show up in developing country budgets. This will make it transparent that the aid is aligned to poverty reduction priorities.

Signatories have agreed to follow the **five principles** of the Paris Declaration:

### 1. Ownership

Donors respect recipient country policies and help them to exercise effective leadership over those policies.

### 2. Alignment

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures (donor-recipient coordination).

### 3. Harmonisation

Donors aim to harmonise practice between themselves (donor-donor coordination) to be less burdensome for partner countries.

### 4. Managing for Results

Both donors and partner countries manage resources and improve decisionmaking for results.



*A Catholic Relief Services partner stands amidst bags of maize before food distribution in the Touloum refugee camp in eastern Chad.*

© 2004 David Snyder/CRS, Courtesy of Photoshare

## 5. Mutual Accountability

Donors and developing countries hold each other mutually accountable for development results.

### How will these commitments be measured?

In May 2003, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) created the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices (WP-EFF) to promote, support, and monitor progress on the Paris Declaration. The group is made up of 23 bilateral donors, 14 developing countries and officials from the World Bank, IMF, United Nations agencies and Regional Development Banks.

Three rounds of monitoring will take place in 2006, 2008 and 2010. Partner countries and donors decided at the Paris forum to monitor progress against 12 indicators. A survey in 2006 of 34 developing countries and 55 donors set the baseline for eight of the indicators against which future progress will be measured.

The second round of monitoring takes place in Accra, Ghana on 4-8 September 2008. This High-Level Forum will consist of a series of round tables/seminars, a 'marketplace' (like a trade fair for information sharing and networking), and the High Level Meeting. There is scope for civil society organisations

(CSOs) to attend the round tables, at least one of which will deal specifically with civil society.

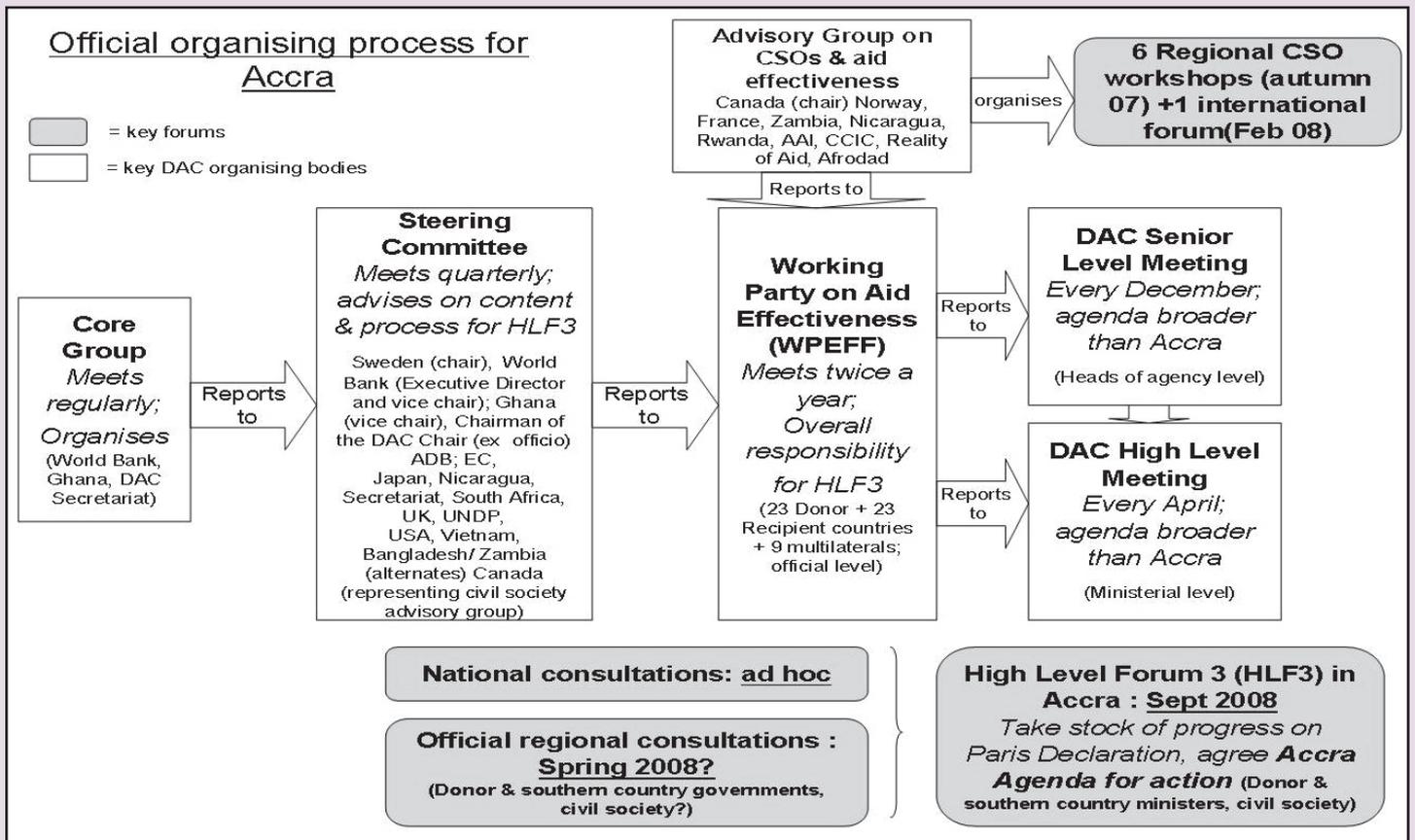
### What happens next?

An OECD Steering Committee has been set up to produce an agenda for Accra. A High-Level Forum Secretariat, consisting of mainly OECD and WB members, are producing the **concept notes** and **outcome document** for the forum. The outcome document, 'Accra agenda for action', is what will be signed by participants in Accra.

The diagram on page 4 shows the official processes and institutions involved. Note that it does not show the main civil society channels – the International Civil Society Steering Group and Accra Parallel Process, more of which below.

### What are the main civil society engagement spaces for Accra?

A multi-stakeholder **Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness** has been set up consisting of 12 members, including donor and civil society representatives from North and South. This is a CIDA-led initiative trying to develop a civil society stream of work leading up to Accra and to bring civil society into the Paris aid effectiveness framework.



From a presentation by Sarah Mulley, UK Aid Network

The Advisory Group – contrary to what some donors may think or wish to convey – is not the consultative group for civil society on all issues that civil society may want to raise about aid effectiveness and the Paris Declaration. The group’s agenda is very much focused on the **role of civil society in aid effectiveness**, what civil society contributes differently from official institutions and also how we can be more effective ourselves. François Lenfant’s article in this issue of ONTRAC discusses some of the power and partnership questions he saw at the November 2007 Advisory Group meeting in Nairobi.

As well as this group, a more autonomous **International Civil Society Steering Group** was set up at the World Social Forum. Here, a number of CSOs came together to try to better coordinate CSO activities related to the Accra High-Level Forum. It was agreed that these organisations would form a Facilitating Group that would initially exchange CSO input and planning in terms of processes, including those involving the DAC/Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

and CSO organising for a parallel forum. They have drafted a CSO manifesto on aid, will coordinate a parallel process in Accra for civil society, and will also coordinate research on aid effectiveness in advance of Accra and engage with the Steering Committee to propose CSO proposals for the agenda.

**Upcoming CSO events in 2008:**

- The Advisory Group’s International Forum: 4-6 February, Ottawa.
- Eurodad research on AE in various countries will be published in March. Contact – Lucy Hayes, Eurodad
- CSO engagement in Regional Conferences organised by WP-EFF on the overall High-Level Forum agenda: March-June. Contact – Liz Steele, ActionAid
- European Aid Watch will be publishing a briefing on European Aid in April and a full report in June. Contact – Sarah Mulley, UKAN
- The International CSO Steering Group for Accra will be meeting next in Ottawa. Contact – Tony Tujan, IBON/Reality of Aid.

- The parallel civil society conference in Accra will be held immediately before the High Level Forum, on 1-3 September.

Also visit [www.betteraid.org](http://www.betteraid.org) for more civil society perspectives and activities.

Within these many processes, meetings and pieces of research and monitoring, the challenge remains for CSOs to find the most productive ways to interact – or disengage.

Joanne McGarry,  
 Aid & Accountability Policy & Advocacy  
 Officer, Trócaire, with input from  
 Linda Lönnqvist, INTRAC  
 and Sarah Mulley, UKAN  
 Email: [JMcGarry@trocaire.ie](mailto:JMcGarry@trocaire.ie)

## Poverty and Aid Ineffectiveness in Africa

*Aid to sub-Saharan Africa has not contributed enough to reducing poverty or creating sustainable conditions for economic development. Aid, in some cases, has even contributed to lower growth by encouraging corruption, weakening internal government mechanisms for aid management, and promoting debt service at the expense of the provision of social services. Other problems linked to the ineffectiveness of aid are donors' disbursement frameworks and procedural requirements of aid when dealing with developing countries.*

Discounting the oil-exporting and post-conflict countries, the countries receiving the highest aid flows in sub-Saharan Africa are also the most indebted. Of the world's forty-two Highly Indebted Poor Countries, thirty-four are African. Make no mistake; aid dependency and poverty are highly correlated, with no consensus as to the direction of causality.

Indebtedness has been a major obstacle to Africa's efforts towards economic growth and social development. The resources directed to debt service are done at the cost of investments in human capital and infrastructure, which has had the ripple effect of disuading private investment. The dependency on development finance for the general functioning of sub-Saharan African governments emphasises the need to analyse the *effectiveness* of the aid, with a specific enquiry into why it has not accomplished what was intended, the eradication of poverty.

### Evidence of progress beyond the Paris Declaration

In this light, there have been a number of world gatherings on aid and development priorities. The Millennium Development Summit, in 2000, committed to making certain development goals (MDGs) a reality for everyone. MDG number 8 is to develop a global partnership for development which deals specifically with aid. The Conference on Financing for Development, resulting in the Monterrey Consensus, highlighted the need for a substantial increase in official development assistance policies and practices. It stated that greater efforts are necessary in both donor and recipient countries to improve the effectiveness of aid. The Rome High-

Level Forum, in 2003, which resulted in the Rome Declaration on Harmonisation, sought to ensure that donor assistance is aligned to recipient countries' development priorities. Finally, the Paris High-Level Forum in 2005 identified that the quality of aid is a function of both donor and recipient country policies and practices. The Paris Declaration goes beyond previous agreements by expanding on the key principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability, with the purpose of improving aid delivery in a way that best supports achieving the MDGs by 2015.

It is against these international commitments that AFRODAD initiated a study to gather the evidence on the post-Paris Declaration aid environment to evaluate the progress made against the principles and targets developed in the Paris Declaration. The study was commissioned in Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal, and Cameroon.

Recipient countries committed to harmonising their internal processes and integrating the various agencies involved in planning, budget development, and financial management, which is essential to reducing the transaction costs associated with aid delivery. It also streamlines the aid architecture, reducing both the costs associated with the process of consultation and the gaps between government ministries and civic groups. From a civil society organisation (CSO) perspective, it reduces the costs incurred by CSOs of seeking spaces in both budget processes and planning processes, assuming the move towards streamlining is effective.

### CSO participation needs aid advocacy skills

Generally, it is observed that the role and participation of CSOs in both planning and budgetary processes needs to be institutionalised. It was noted that in some cases CSO participation was mostly as a result of ad hoc meetings, rather than being identified as a core stakeholder group through which consultations must occur. CSOs must look for the space to integrate their interests within national

frameworks, rather than government extending the necessary invitations to collect opinions and perspectives. As well as the planning stages, another entry point for CSOs is at the monitoring and evaluation stage of development programmes.



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The new expertise required for CSOs to engage their governments in this way has hampered the broader participation of CSOs. Civil society organisations tend not to have research and advocacy programmes around aid issues as their core activity. Rather, they are strong on their respective thematic areas like trade, education and health. They are recognising the need to develop the capacity to interact with the relevant public institutions regarding national planning and public financial management. Northern CSOs can assist in this regard.

The Paris Declaration fails to adequately address the relationship between Northern and Southern CSOs. Some experiences find Northern CSOs as 'retailers' of aid. Others impose their own programmes on Southern CSOs for implementation. As Southern CSOs negotiate for space within the general budget, there is a need for Northern CSOs to maintain their watchdog functions and balance the weight of bilateral donor interests.

AFRODAD's country case studies on aid management and donor harmonisation can be accessed at: [www.afrodad.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=101](http://www.afrodad.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=101)

or:  
[http://betteraid.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=54&Itemid=26](http://betteraid.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=54&Itemid=26)

African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD).  
Email Nancy Dubosse, Programme Director Research and Policy Analysis, at [nancy@afrodad.co.zw](mailto:nancy@afrodad.co.zw)

# Practicing what we preach: autonomy and integrity in civil society effectiveness

*In order to create an alternative to the government-led vision of aid effectiveness, civil society has to design its own effectiveness agenda based on principles and good practices.*

The North–South civil society dialogue organised by the Advisory Group on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness, held in Nairobi in November 2007, aimed to agree on possible good practices, and to develop a shared understanding of issues in CSO partnerships and guiding principles that can be promoted for improved effectiveness. Unfortunately the conference debates focused more on the principles than the good practices. I will illustrate this by touching upon the issues of voice and space, and partnership.

The voice and the space of civil society seem to be recurrent themes within aid effectiveness debates. Which space and which voice are we talking about? What voice was being heard in Nairobi? Unfortunately, the voice of West Africa did not gain much resonance since only one of the 17 Southern partners came from West Africa. How can civil society diversity be properly captured in international fora? How can its ‘plural voice’ be amplified and taken to another level? A very strong voice from the South, activist Wahu Kaara from Kenya Debt Relief Network (KENDREN), eloquently illustrated the ‘voice’ issue by stating that Kenyan government officials only invite international NGOs (INGOs) into debates concerning civil society.

Why don’t these INGOs gratefully accept the invitation, but pass it on to Kenyan CSOs instead of holding on to the limited NGO space themselves? Can the Southern voice be expressed by Northern actors without being hijacked? As a reaction, Northern NGOs agreed to step back, avoid crowding out the debates, and share the space with their Southern colleagues, to allow for their voice to be heard. When we talk about the space and the voice of civil society, we should not forget that the endangered space and voice is in the South, rather than in the North.

## North–South Relationships: beyond values to implementation

Is this space/voice sharing issue indicative of North–South civil society relationships? When one follows the debates concerning North–South civil society partnerships as effective channels of development aid (and not as government-to-government aid delivery principles, as embodied in the Paris Declaration), discussions are often limited to (re)defining the principles and values guiding our relationships. Nevertheless, it may be wise to go beyond this ‘values enshrining’ exercise (that rarely goes beyond the ‘usual’ values of respect, solidarity, trust, common vision, accountability, equality etc) and focus on what the implementation of these values means for our organisations. In other words, what are the ingredients that make such partnerships effective, what are the enablers and the obstacles to the concrete adoption of such principles?

**Transparency needs trust through long-term relationships, continuity in personnel, adequate human resource policy, improving the ability to learn.**

During the meeting, enablers (build trust through engaging in long term relationships, ensure continuity in personnel, adequate human resource policy, improve ability to learn) as well as obstacles (competition for funds, fear of losing control, pressure from governments) were identified for the effective implementation of transparency as guiding principle.

Unfortunately, too little time was allocated to elaborate on this crucial issue. Interestingly, Southern civil society actors provided their Northern counterparts with a fairly new sub principle linked to transparency – the traceability of funds. Southern CSOs are keen to obtain clear information on the origin as well as the destination of funds coming from the North.

**I would like to go to a conference where debates go beyond the rhetoric of; ‘Civil society is so special, civil society needs space, civil society’s voice needs to be heard’.**

## Money and legitimacy

The question of direct funding (Northern governments funding civil society in the South) was unfortunately avoided. Southern and Northern participants were quite reluctant to address this critical issue. Most arguments against direct funding (the majority brought forward by Northern colleagues) were that ‘our’ southern partners would become instrumentalised. Is there enough empirical evidence pointing in that direction? Aren’t we, Northern civil society actors, also somewhat guilty of instrumentalising our partners, one way or another? The discussion about direct funding often turns emotional because it raises the issue of the role and added value of Northern NGOs. When talking about North–South relationships, are Northern NGOs really concerned about the instrumentalisation of ‘their’ southern counterparts, or are they merely concerned that without funding partners their legitimacy will be questioned?

Finally, what I didn’t hear during this dialogue was a degree of critical self-reflection from civil society in general, and particularly Northern CSOs. Are we as good as we think we are? I would like to go to a conference where debates go beyond the rhetoric of; “Civil society is so special, civil society needs space, civil society’s voice needs to be heard.”

It would be wiser to focus on what makes civil society so special, show concrete cases illustrating the importance of CSOs as actors of development in their own right, and insist on civil society’s distinctive narrative of change. This is precisely where the strength of civil society lies. In my view, this is the most effective way to challenge the existing mainstream aid agendas.

François Lenfant, Policy Officer, Cordaid  
Email: Francois.Lenfant2@cordaid.nl

# Harmonisation for pluralism

*This article is about the ongoing debate on CSO pluralism within the new development architecture.*

The purpose of Swedish support to civil society is to contribute to the strengthening of a vibrant and democratic civil society. Pluralism – the diversity of organisations – is a fundamental pillar for this. There should never be such a thing as **one** civil society. We need to appreciate the diversity coming from the different perspectives that organisations with different ideologies and interests have. Tensions between different interests within civil society are generally a reflection of the society in which it exists, and could give necessary constructive energy for change, development and poverty reduction.

## Harmonisation for pluralism

If one wants to support and strengthen civil society organisations from a pluralistic perspective, how does this fit with the **Paris Declaration**, which has **harmonisation** as one of its principles? With **alignment** as another important concept it is easy to get the impression that donor agencies and states would like to see a blueprint behaviour among civil society organisations (CSOs) where “one size fits all”. But by still using the concept of harmonisation and applying it to CSOs one could argue for **harmonisation for pluralism** without falling into the trap of total atomisation.

## Different roles – different answers

Civil society plays an important role, both in achieving concrete results in poverty reduction and for increased aid efficiency. As the implementation of the Paris Declaration proceeds, governments in partner countries are taking on greater and more specific responsibility for development cooperation. Partner countries’ own poverty reduction strategies are put in focus, and the capacity to implement these plans is therefore crucial. This focus on national strategies in turn means that civil society is playing an increasingly important role as both an independent advocate and watchdog, and as an implementer. Different roles give different answers.

## Objectives and modalities

Harmonisation among donors about the **objectives** and **modalities** for strengthening a pluralistic civil society is of strategic importance in order to achieve demonstrable development results. We need to increase the coherence among different actors and development modalities without giving up the importance of pluralism. CSOs within development cooperation have great responsibility for strengthening local ownership, increasing coordination, and improving coordination with government and public authorities.

## Increased Southern ownership

Many CSOs in the North have initiated an intense reflection about how to harmonise their procedures in relation to CSOs in the South and at the same time strengthen the local sense of ownership. This is exactly the same challenge official donor agencies face; to allow Southern partners to focus on getting the job done rather than satisfying various donor requirements. Core funding would be one important feature that could also very much contribute to mutual transparency, accountability and domestic ownership.

**How can official agencies allow Southern partners to focus on getting the job done rather than satisfying various donor requirements?**

This would be a kind of a civil society version of the budget support that is increasingly being used in overseas development assistance (ODA).

But is pluralism really on the agenda today? Large as well as small CSOs might lose the battle in this respect. Southern CSOs are far too dependent on both public funding from large international donor agencies and/or local governments. There is also a tendency for international organisations to compete with local CSOs for funding through their recently opened national offices.

Therefore both private and official donors have a responsibility to promote pluralism within the ongoing harmonisation. Pluralism links to issues such as independence, legitimacy and

representativeness. These are important when it comes to the task of advocacy and giving a voice to people living in poverty. You dare not bite the hand that is feeding you. Hence, there is a risk that CSOs become an extension of the public sector when it comes to service delivery. What happens then to pluralism? Will it be possible for CSOs to claim that they have legitimacy and are accountable to a local constituency?

**Both private and official donors have a responsibility to promote pluralism within the ongoing harmonisation.**

## Civil society in the centre

Official donors have, as mentioned above, a responsibility. We need to push for long-term effective aid, despite domestic demands on short-term visibility that threatens ownership in the South. With increased budget and sector budget support there is an increased need for a strong and independent civil society in different ways. This civil society can fulfil different roles, as subcontractors and implementers, but maybe more importantly as independent advocates, monitoring Northern and Southern governmental behaviour and as an arena, a meeting place for different actors. Civil society can also provide a reality check of the implementation of poverty reduction strategies, donor policies, etc. These different roles have different implications regarding alignment.

But one thing is sure, civil society – that has been marginalised through the Paris Declaration – is again putting itself at the centre of the development debate. This is shown not least through all the preparatory work going on for the upcoming High-Level Forum in Accra in 2008. Only through a common approach amongst civil society actors and donors is it possible to promote increased harmonisation, but without losing the value of a pluralistic civil society.

Tomas Brundin, Civil Society Advisor,  
Sida, NGO Division

Toomas Mast, Programme Officer,  
Sida, Civil Society Center

**Gender Analysis and Planning**

16-18 January 2008

Duration: 3 days

Location: London (Non-residential)

Theme: Organisational Capacity Building

Price: £450

Development planners and NGOs are increasingly committed to incorporating a gender perspective into their work – but how do you apply it in practice? The course looks at using analytical tools and strategies to prioritise gender in both short and long-term agendas.

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This course looks at the relationships between NGOs as part of strategic development processes. Learn about the context where these relationships occur and consider the issues, power balances and expectations to improve organisational effectiveness. The course is for

practitioners who want to build on their existing skills to take their coalitions and networks to the next level.

**Organisational Development**

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Duration: 5 days

Location: Oxford (Residential)

Theme: Organisational Capacity Building

Price: £999

Developing the capacity of your civil society organisation and of partner organisations is a current priority for senior CSO managers and practitioners. This course is designed for those with some experience of organisational capacity building who wish to explore organisational development as a planned learning process that improves organisational performance and self-awareness. The course will enable you to design and facilitate organisational change processes.

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Duration: 5 days

Location: Oxford (Residential)

Theme: Strengthening Civil Society and Organisational Capacity Building

Price: £999

This course gives you a thorough understanding of how to influence the policy making process in your own context. You will learn skills to help you formulate and plan effective advocacy strategies. Improve your ability to lobby decision makers, and gain confidence in relating to the media – give new life to your campaigning!

**Impact Assessment**

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Duration: 3 days

Location: London (Non-residential)

Theme: Participatory Development and Organisational Capacity Building

Price: £450

With increased pressures on delivery and accountability, there has never been a greater

need for civil society and other development organisations to assess the long-term impact of their work. You will explore the current debate about impact assessment, review current practice and methodologies, and learn to assess the effectiveness of your work.

**Managing People**

9-11 April 2008

Duration: 3 days

Location: London (Non-residential)

Theme: Organisational Capacity Building

Price: £450

Get an insight into your management style, behaviours and competencies and how these affect how you manage teams. This course will help you understand how people interact and how they can be motivated. You will also gain skills for leading teams, working across cultures, and establishing good systems for monitoring and developing your staff.

**Train the Trainers**

23-25 April 2008

Duration: 3 days

Location: London (Non-residential)

Theme: Participatory Development

Price: £475

This course equips you with the skills, tools, and creative techniques to design and deliver a training event in a way that makes learning enjoyable and effective. You will have the opportunity to learn, practice and to improve your presentational and facilitation skills.

**Impact Assessment**

7-9 May 2008

Duration: 3 days

Location: London (Non-residential)

Theme: Participatory Development and Organisational Capacity Building

Price: £475

See Impact Assessment 26-28 March 2008 for details.

**Editor:** Linda Lönnqvist, Researcher.

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