

Newsletter

August 2020



Welcome to our August 2020 newsletter.

As we produced this latest INTRAC newsletter, in some ways it felt like not much had changed since the last one. COVID-19 continues to dominate all aspects of our lives and work; we are adapting continuously to the uncertainty that surrounds us; and the future is very unclear.

And yet, there is a lot to share and some clear threads that run through the articles and information in this newsletter. The Black Lives Matter movement has given a sharp new focus to debates on decolonizing development, shifting power, and localization. With a small grant from the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, we've been able to devote time to reflecting, writing and exchanging internally and with organizational development experts in other parts of the world on these issues.

The viewpoints from Rick James and Emmanuel Kumi, and webinars facilitated by Lucy Morris and Dan James, all address ways in which international and local organisations can weather the current storms and emerge as better actors, capable of tackling global challenges that haven't gone away. We have updates on programmes and evaluations addressing migration, climate change, media freedom, and good grant-making.

Our upcoming training courses (pages 12-13) and new publications (page 11) all offer opportunities to learn from evidence and good practice; to build better partnerships, improve accountability, and deliver hard-hitting advocacy campaigns.

Under Our People we bid a fond farewell to an old INTRAC friend, David Marsden, who passed away in July. And we introduce you to new colleagues and associates.

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Approaching the edge: how will international NGOs survive?

“We live in turbulent times”. In the civil society sector we have been repeating this truism for decades, naively ignorant of the real white-water rapids downriver. Today, there’s the roar of a perilous waterfall ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic is already having a massive financial impact on NGOs and it will get only worse next year. In the UK, it’s compounded by Brexit and the merger of DFID with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Simultaneously, Black Lives Matter trains a searing spotlight on the persistent privilege and white supremacy in the aid sector. INGOs are accelerating towards a precipice – how will they survive?

Many won’t. As many as [45% of UK NGOs are predicted to go bankrupt](#). It will be brutal. Those that do survive, I believe, will be agile and courageous enough to address three core, inter-related challenges of strategy, identity and leadership.

Refocus strategy ruthlessly on sustainable, systemic change. Almost every INGO will have to make cuts. But where? Already I see some agencies failing to support their best, most transformative initiatives, choosing instead those that may generate more income. Who decides where to focus? As Robert Chambers provocatively asked, *“whose reality counts?”* Too often INGOs ignore the perspectives of those who know most. Maybe this crisis will capsize NGOs, turn them upside-down, force them finally to listen to those they exist to serve and adapt accordingly. Instead of reducing sustainability to a paragraph in a proposal, they might even refocus on initiatives that bring genuine personal transformation and long-term systemic change.

Wrestle with flawed identity. INGOs have rarely questioned their assumptions of altruism. They have ignored any ulterior motives. They continue, as I do, to be influenced by the pervasive ‘white saviour’ complex. Our unconscious biases, the privilege afforded us by education, experience, and even money make us think we know better. After all, if we don’t know better, how can we justify our exotic travels and generous salaries?

INGOs have a future role, but only if they grapple honestly with their flawed identities and mixed motives. They can only contribute well by recognising their baggage and limitations. This takes profound humility and very different relationships.

Display trustworthy leadership. To be adaptive and agile requires a culture of trust, not bureaucratic controls. Trust is not soft, nor optional. It’s a hard-won, hard-core way of working. Only trustworthy leadership can grapple with ingrained and contentious identity issues. Leaders have to go first in the game of trust. Their behaviour is contagious. People, partnerships and programmes follow the example they set.

How will INGOs emerge on the other side of the crashing waterfall ahead? Will they go under or scramble back in, right themselves and move ahead? It is more than a matter of financial reserves. It really depends on whether they can refocus strategy and wrestle with identity, steered by trustworthy leadership.



Rough waters lie ahead for the INGO sector

Rick James is an INTRAC Principal Consultant. He is an organisational change specialist with more than 30 years’ experience working with over 100 NGOs in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. He joined INTRAC shortly after its inception, in 1992.



If INGOs consider sustainability in their planning, exit can be a good thing for local civil society

Currently, many INGOs are being forced to consider ending their relationships with partners. This is partly due to the impact of COVID-19, which has placed a major funding strain on many INGOs. In my work with civil society, sustainability is a key focus. I am particularly interested in the smallest CSOs such as community-based organisations (CBOs), which have the closest relationship to the communities they serve. Seeing local organisations like these find ways to support themselves in ensuring their sustainability is what motivates me. Because of this, I consider INGOs ending their partnerships to be a good thing - particularly over the long term.

Today, many small CSOs are dependent upon the financial support of international organisations. This produces a tendency for them to take their survival, and development, for granted. Without predictable external funding, Southern CSOs have to find new and alternative income sources such as domestic sources. These could include corporate philanthropy, volunteering, faith-based giving and government funding. My research has found that a reliance on external support has caused Southern CSOs to neglect this search. CSOs' resource mobilisation over the years in West and Eastern Africa has shown that a reliance on external support has caused Southern CSOs to neglect their search for alternative resources. In Ghana, the vast majority of organisations are reliant on external, rather than local income. This can lead them to operate as if their development is not their own responsibility, but that of external donors. This is not in their long-term interest, or that of the communities they serve.

It is clear that if INGOs break off funding relationships in an unplanned way, it damages the sustainability of their partners. Their survival is sometimes put at risk. For this reason, consideration of sustainability is critical to good exit planning. With it, Southern CSOs can become better able to mobilise resources domestically.

Domestic resource mobilisation helps to make CSOs genuinely independent. It enables them to make their own decisions, and to take responsibility for their own development. If CSOs draw resources, at least in part, from communities they serve it will help them to be more responsive to local needs. No longer will an external INGO set the agenda, only because they provide the resources. This ties in to the #shiftpower movement - CSOs should be in a position to make their own decisions. Securing their own domestic sources of income is crucial to ensure this.

At the same time, we must recognise the capacity needed to secure local sources of support. As part of exit processes, INGOs should help their partners to look at local philanthropy. Many local groups are also working on social enterprise, but do not necessarily have the skills to do this effectively. Where possible, INGOs should offer training to their partners in these areas, in order to help them adapt to the new environment. A combination of the right skills with local knowledge can help to produce more sustainable organisations. This is not just about financial resources, but also has to do with relationship building and ultimately improved collaboration.

Already, COVID-19, the related economic crisis and the prospect of funder exits is a major disruption on CSOs. Yet the potential for a positive long-term transformation is real. The current crisis is the kind of disruption that can trigger organisations to think in a different way. It is inevitable that some of them will not survive, if they become deprived of resources. But if supported to adapt, those that remain can emerge stronger and better able to achieve their mission than before.



Emmanuel Kumi is an experienced researcher and development practitioner with over 10 years working experience in the field of civil society financing and resource mobilisation. He is based at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. He contributed to the new report "[Collaborating for Effective Social Activism in Ghana](#)" published by WACSI.

Our work



Researching core grants with Laudes Foundation

Laudes ——— ——— Foundation

Laudes Foundation (formerly the C&A Foundation) has commissioned INTRAC to carry out research on the topic of core grants. These are also called "block grants", "framework agreements", "strategic funds" or "investment funds" by different donors. Each term refers to a way to provide financial support with a large degree of flexibility. Recipients can use this funding to cover organisational development and administrative costs, as well as project work.

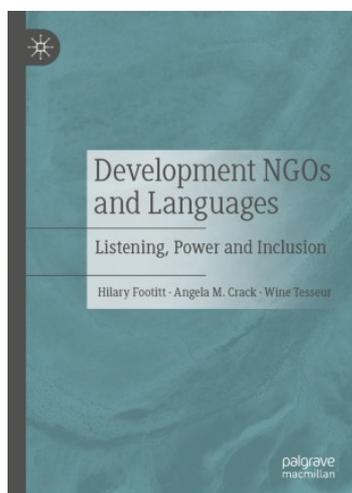
The research will address questions including:

- What types of core grants do different donors use? What are their objectives?
- What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of core grants as a funding mechanism?
- What is the best way to measure the impact of core grants?
- What circumstances are most appropriate for the giving of core grants? Which are not appropriate?

This issue has been on the agenda for some time, but is under review as donors periodically change their positions. One example is when DFID abandoned its longstanding Partnership Programme Agreements in 2016.

Core grants form an increasingly important part of Laudes Foundation's partnership approach. The research will feed into their thinking and discussion around core grants – and may be of interest to the broader sector too. Rod MacLeod is undertaking this research project, in parallel with an evaluation of a core grant to one of the Foundation's partners.

Listening Zones project book now available



From 2015 to 2018, INTRAC collaborated with the University of Reading and the University of Portsmouth on a research project titled *The [Listening Zones of NGOs: Languages and Cultural Knowledge in Development Programmes](#)*. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the research explored the role that languages and cultural understanding play in the policies and practices of development NGOs.

In August 2020, Palgrave Macmillan published *Development NGOs and Languages: Listening, Power and Inclusion*. Written by Hilary Footitt, Angela M. Crack and Wine Tesseur, the book is an output of the Listening Zones project and explores how development NGOs attempt to 'listen' to communities in linguistically diverse environments. Hardcover and eBook versions of the text [are available from the Palgrave website](#).

AMiRA programme update: sharing learning on supporting migrants

The *Action for Migrants: Route-based Assistance Programme* (AMiRA) is now in its final year. This programme, funded by DFID's Safety, Support and Solution Phase II initiative, provides support to vulnerable migrants across Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Sudan and Egypt. It began in April 2018 and will end in March 2021. INTRAC is the learning partner for AMiRA, with support provided by Anne Garbutt, Marlene Buchy and Rachel Hayman.



Volunteers, migrants, students and staff of the Niger Red Cross participate in a clean-up day on the banks of Niger River, June 2020. This activity promoted social cohesion and helped to combat pollution in the area.

COVID-19 has imposed new challenges in all the countries. The team have coped with border closures, travel restrictions, local lockdowns and personal issues, while pivoting activities to respond to new demands from migrants. AMiRA has been helping migrants, as well as other people stranded because of border closures, deportations and restrictions on movement, with accommodation, food, cash, hygiene kits, transport, health care, information and education. It has provided protection and psycho-social support for the most vulnerable people, including children and victims of trafficking.

Amidst of all this, we've nevertheless managed to come together in new ways to share knowledge and learning. Since January 2020, country teams have produced briefs on learning questions in their contexts. These span topics such as negotiating with transport providers to reach migrants with information about services on offer, improving trust between communities and migrants through social and environmental activities, and how to deal with the death of migrants. A monthly newsletter is also used to share information on programme activities.

Our regular six-monthly regional learning event was set for June in Dakar, Senegal. Because we were unable to meet in person, but did not want to lose momentum on our learning agenda, we used an online

approach. Between the end of May and early July we organised four webinars. Interestingly, this method allowed us to unite a wider range of people from AMiRA and the RCRC Movement than would normally attend the face-to-face event. We explored the following questions:

- What have we learned about **vulnerability** and how to reach the most vulnerable migrants?
- What have we learned about how to improve **social cohesion** between hosts and migrant populations?
- Is the role of **volunteers** something that makes the RCRC approach – and therefore AMiRA – unique? If so, what are the strengths and weaknesses of volunteers relative to other actors in supporting migrants?
- What have we learned about the inclusion of **Psycho-Social Support** activities in migration programmes?

We circulated a thematic learning note in English and French before each webinar. We facilitated the webinars in these languages, and employed participatory techniques, such as breakout discussion groups and use of online whiteboards, to stimulate discussion. Key questions included: *Knowing what we know now, what would we do better or differently next time (in terms of strategic planning)?* and *What one piece of advice would you share with the wider RCRC Movement?*

Some core lessons emerged from this process. These relate to building trust among migrants and a whole range of stakeholders; being as flexible as possible to respond to the changing circumstances; and developing a robust understanding of how context affects migrants at different points in their journey. Over the final months of the programme, we'll be consolidating the learning to strengthen the work that National Societies of the RCRC Movement do with migrants into the future, and to share the lessons more widely.

Assessing the mobilisation of public and private sector resources for Nationally Determined Contributions for the Paris Agreement on climate change

Between December 2019 and August 2020, INTRAC conducted a review of [Implementing Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\) and Low Emission Development Strategies through Mobilising Public and Private Investments](#) (MI programme). This project is led by [SouthSouthNorth](#) (SSN), based in South Africa. SSN supports national and regional responses to climate change through policy and knowledge interventions, partnerships and collaboration. NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement on climate change and central to the achievement of its long term goals. The targets and actions in NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to climate change impacts. International and domestic private investment will be essential for developing countries to deliver on NDCs and much of the ambition contained in sub-Saharan African NDCs is conditional on countries receiving financial, capacity and/or technological support. Between 2017 and 2020, the MI programme's three partners have been piloting approaches for mobilising finance in the energy sector, particularly renewable energy, in Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Peru, Philippines and Vietnam. Financing would support new and improved technologies and business opportunities that have the potential to contribute to reduced emissions and to combat climate change.



Renewable energy financing is a particular focus of the MI programme

The review examined a key question: to what extent and why has the MI programme achieved its desired outcomes and impact, and what lessons are emerging about design choices for future programmes on engaging private sector actors in NDC implementation? To help address this question, we examined the mobilisation of private sector resources, and the programme's efforts to create and enhance an enabling environment for private sector investments in the seven countries. The review is a qualitative inquiry with primary data collected through interviews conducted with a range of programme stakeholders in field visits to two countries. For the other five countries, INTRAC conducted interviews remotely. Stakeholders interviewed included government ministries and departments, national and international companies, development organisations, non-governmental organisations, and development and commercial banks. Due to COVID-19, one field visit was cancelled, and a few of the planned remote interviews were not possible, particularly those with government officials. However, the cancelled field visit was replaced with more remote interviews. Where there was limited government perspective, this was acknowledged and efforts made to ensure that the country narratives benefitted from a range of stakeholder perspectives.

Using the data, we have constructed narratives for each country, three of which are in-depth. The narratives addressed the key questions above, and also identified what worked well, what contributed to changes seen, prospects for sustained results and possible next steps the project partners might take. INTRAC has aimed to provide further insight into and validation of reported outcomes and outputs. At a programmatic level, we compared the various approaches taken by programme partners, to try to establish which have contributed the most to creating an enabling environment for private investments. We have also documented what we understand about the justifications for private sector investment or the investment cases developed in the programme, what choices are needed when setting up a programme at country level and the required relationships with private and public sector actors. With a possible next phase of the programme in the pipeline, the results of this review provide useful learning to act upon in future implementation.

The evaluation was conducted by consultants Juliane Nier, and Russell Cook together with Nandita Jain, INTRAC's M&E Principal Consultant.

Implementation update on Media for All: Supporting Greater Media Independence in the Western Balkans

INTRAC is the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) partner for *Media for All: Supporting Greater Media Independence in the Western Balkans*. This is a regional project, funded by the UK Government, which supports independent local and national media outlets across the region. The aim is to assist the outlets in becoming more audience-oriented and financially sustainable. It does this by improving business development, strengthening relationships between citizens and the media, and creating a platform for citizen reporting. By enabling the media to provide the public with more diverse content, the project will encourage open, informed and active discussion amongst target audiences across six countries - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The project has a strong gender focus.

The project is delivered by a consortium led by the [British Council](#) in partnership with the [Balkan Investigative Reporting Network \(BIRN\)](#), [Thomson Foundation](#) and INTRAC.

The start of the implementation phase in April 2020 coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which required the project to design and gain approval for an additional 3-month short term emergency capacity support package for 18 media outlets across the region.

The consortium is currently reviewing applications and finalizing the selection of all of the media outlets that will participate in the project over the next 18 months. For its part, INTRAC is working with the other partners to design and pilot MEL processes, tools and templates ahead of the project baseline in November 2020. MEL approaches being developed include a capacity self-assessment tool for media outlets, that will also help partners plan appropriate capacity development support. There is also an audience size and perception survey, content analysis and the set-up of a Tracer Study. All approaches need to be gender- and conflict-sensitive, and be adaptable to varied country contexts.

Throughout implementation, there will be regular opportunities for consortium partners to reflect, learn and adapt the project, including through quarterly 'team self-review' (TSR) processes. The first TSR facilitated by INTRAC in June 2020 captured lessons that are feeding into the development of a research and learning strategy, as well as ideas for how the project can best respond to changes in the media landscape in the region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

INTRAC's team includes staff members Alison Napier (team lead) and Rachel Hayman, plus members of our network Elanor Jackson, Nigel Simister, and Richard Allen, who is based in the region.

Capacity strengthening under COVID-19

With funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, INTRAC has hosted a series of meetings on capacity strengthening during COVID-19 and the pandemic's impact on civil society with a diverse group of organisational development experts from Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, North America and the UK.

Despite contextual differences, the group is identifying common issues, such as potential security risks and the exclusion of vulnerable groups due to the shift to remote working and online methodologies, and the need for support in organizational resilience and responsible partnerships in response to funding reductions. The group agreed that global trends related to COVID-19 are deeply concerning, and are accelerating and exacerbating existing tensions. [In a new blog on the INTRAC website](#), our partners Dr Alfredo Cuarón and Mariana Díaz Ávila from SACBÉ in Mexico remind us that COVID-19 is just one challenge that CSOs are facing. They detail the political pressures and violence against activists faced by Mexican CSOs—a situation mirrored in other parts of the world.

In its latest meeting, the group reflected on the concepts, language and purpose of capacity strengthening in light of global trends. This thinking will be shared in new public resources over the coming weeks.



In Memory of Dr. David Marsden

By **Brian Pratt and Anne Garbutt**

It is with great sadness that we heard that David Marsden had passed away on 24 July 2020. David was an early supporter of INTRAC and was one of the few academics in the 1980s who saw the need for academia to engage with the issues and challenges being faced by development NGOs. He worked closely with another INTRAC founding member, Dr Peter Oakley, with whom he shared interests in issues such as participatory and community-based development.¹ Brian met them regularly (when he was representing Oxfam) at international conferences invariably organised by the big multi-lateral and governmental agencies. At these events we kept feeling that they failed to address the problems and experiences experienced by NGOs; so in 1989 we organised a conference together with supporters from a range of European NGOs on evaluating social development and invited representatives from across the global south. The proceedings were published by Oxfam² and the event made us realise that we didn't need to have the resources of a World Bank or Dutch government to convene people from NGOs to tackle the issues affecting us. This gave us the confidence to start a process which was to lead to the founding of INTRAC a few years later in 1991.



David Marsden

At that time, David worked at Swansea University in the Centre for Development Studies. His previous background had been as an anthropologist at Durham University and in Iran. In the early days of INTRAC one of our first offers was around evaluation, and David led on many of our early training courses in M&E which in those days were held in different venues across Europe. The success of our first conference on evaluation also resulted in a series of other M&E conferences sponsored by INTRAC and David edited the book from the first of these.³ Sadly for INTRAC, David left Swansea to join the World Bank as Social Development Adviser in India, later transferring to Washington DC, but he remained a supporter of INTRAC at a distance. In 2001, David's long-term collaborator Peter Oakley - and then Research Director of INTRAC - died suddenly, leaving a big gap. David found a scheme in the World Bank which allowed him to be seconded to INTRAC as acting Research Director for a year, at a time when we had several large ongoing research projects and institutional evaluations. The largest of these projects was the civil society strengthening programme in Central Asia and one of David's first jobs was to visit Central Asia with Anne where they found that a major area that needed strengthening was the analytical skills of NGOs in the post-Perestroika era. Together they developed an Analytical Skills Training Programme (ASTP), the first of which David delivered in Kyrgyzstan. This programme was the first of its kind and is still recognised across the region as an important legacy of INTRAC's work in Central Asia.

David had to return to his post at the World Bank after his year with INTRAC, but continued his interest and support of INTRAC's work as an Associate and friend of the organisation. We will greatly miss his experience and expertise.

¹ They were both editors of the *Community Development Journal*.

² *Evaluating Social Development Projects*, David Marsden and Peter Oakley, Oxfam, 1990.

³ *Measuring the Process: Guidelines for Evaluating Social Development*, P. Oakley, D. Marsden & B. Pratt, Oxford, INTRAC, 1994.



Richard Ponsford - Senior Consultant Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Richard joined INTRAC in July 2020. He is a senior consultant in monitoring, evaluation and learning with a passion for empowerment, partnership, data driven adaptation and capacity building. He has 12 years' experience of working on development programmes across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. This experience includes seven spent at international NGOs and networks, including Christian Aid and Family for Every Child, and four years as a consultant, firstly at Keystone Accountability and most recently for IMC Worldwide.

Richard has extensive experience in designing, managing and strengthening MEL systems for civil society organisations working on a wide variety of thematic areas, notably livelihoods, child protection, education, health, climate resilience and women's rights. He also has a strong track record in conducting evaluations, using both quantitative and qualitative tools, and providing training to build the MEL capacity of staff and organisations. His experience of donors includes DFID, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Irish Aid, EC, Comic Relief and Foundations. Richard holds a BA Economics and Politics from The University of Leeds, and a MA International Development: Development Management from the University of Manchester. He lives in Kampala, Uganda and has spent time living and working in Bangladesh and Ghana.



Kulnara Djamankulova

Kulnara is an independent consultant and experienced programme manager, based in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. She has worked for 20 years in designing and delivering a wide range of programmes, working with a variety of actors in the civil society sector in Central Asia including INTRAC, GIZ, and the UNDP. Kulnara managed UNDP projects in Kazakhstan and the INTRAC Central Asia regional training programme portfolio for 10 years, and has strong organizational and communication skills.

Kulnara is taking on the role of Regional Coordinator for Central Asia for a new initiative between INTRAC, CDA Collaborative Learning and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), about which we will share more information in due course. As

Regional Coordinator for Central Asia, Kulnara will be responsible for programme management at the regional level, and for liaising with regional partners in Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan, as well as with local consultants and other regional stakeholders.

Richard Allen

Richard Allen is an international development consultant with three decades' experience of institutional strengthening of government and civil society organisations. He has extensive evaluation experience in post-conflict and transition contexts, including evaluation of institution building and governance reform. Richard is resident in Serbia, where he has lived and worked for 18 years, and has also worked extensively in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, as well as west and southern Africa. He is currently working for INTRAC on the Media for All project, supporting the design and implementation of the MEL components.

Events

Remote monitoring in the context of COVID-19

The pandemic has demanded major changes to the delivery of humanitarian and development programmes. In turn, these changes have placed new demands on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) work. On 11 August, INTRAC and Community World Service Asia ran a joint webinar on the topic of remote monitoring in the context of COVID-19. The event provided a platform for discussion on best practices for monitoring projects remotely. Over 200 practitioners from 120 organisations took part - 78% of them based in Asia.

INTRAC Principal Consultant **Dan James** moderated the session. Joining him were speakers from the U.S. State Department Democracy and Human Rights Bureau, MERCY Malaysia, ICCO Regional Office Southeast Asia & Pacific, Church World Service and FinChurch Aid.

“This webinar was a great way to share experiences of adapting monitoring to the pandemic and reaching communities through creative combinations of people, networks and technology. Experiences ranged from decentralising monitoring to volunteers, setting up mini-call centres, and connecting with community-based actors to access those cut off from normal programme monitoring processes by COVID-19 restrictions. It was fantastic to see resources, expertise and people being combined creatively by civil society actors to find ways of meeting needs during this time.” **Dan James**



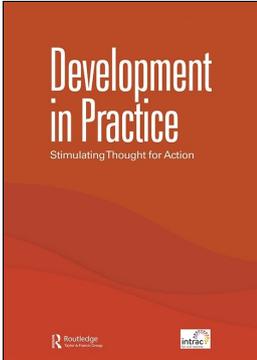
Community World Service Asia have produced an extensive [summary of the webinar discussions](#) which is available on their website; the recording of the webinar is [also available to view now](#).

Bond online events facilitated by Lucy Morris

On 30 June, **Lucy Morris** (Principal Consultant Organisational Development at INTRAC) chaired a session for the Bond partnership approaches group. The main theme was balancing accountability and trust in partnerships. A speaker from Oxford University’s Clinical Research Network presented the [Good Financial Grant Practice Standard](#). Additionally, speakers from World Vision UK, World Vision Zimbabwe and the Emthonjeni Women’s Forum Partnership in Zimbabwe shared reflections from their experience of partnership. A recording of the session is [available to members of the Bond partnership approaches group](#).

On 16 July, Lucy also chaired a panel discussion during a Bond webinar on challenges of cross-sector partnership. Run together with the Partnership Initiative, the event united speakers from across the sector. They shared their observations and experience of civil society partnerships. The event drew on a report, "[Trends in cross-sector partnering for INGOs](#)", published in June. Key themes for the discussions included localisation and partnering, rapid partnering for sustainable partnerships, and the effect of partnering on civic space.

“What was clear from our conversations”, says Lucy of the latter webinar, “was how INGOS are being challenged to grapple with difficult and powerful tensions like never before. Positive examples exist, and in order to genuinely shift more power and decision-making to those most affected by disasters and inequality, it is time for all organisations to take a look in the mirror, and to consider their role, their core values, how they partner, and with who.” [A recording of this webinar is now available to all](#).



Development in Practice 30.4

Issue 30.4 of Development in Practice [has been published](#), with articles on a wide range of development topics from across the world. Two articles around gender issues in development are open access, available to freely read and download:

- [‘From complexity to simplicity – how chasing success stories affects gendered NGO practices’](#)
- [‘Making room for manoeuvre: addressing gender norms to strengthen the enabling environment for agricultural innovation’](#)



Praxis Series Paper No. 11: Revitalising a Social Movement Through a Global Theory of Change

The latest paper in INTRAC’s Praxis Series focuses on the Mothers’ Union (MU), an international Christian charity. Written by Rick James, the paper focuses on MU’s global and participatory theory of change process called Mothers’ Union Listening, Observing and Acting (MULOA). The paper explores how this process shows that it is possible to “listen at scale”, and achieve major positive organisational change by taking a genuinely participative approach. [The paper is available to download now.](#)

M&E Universe expands to include new papers on advocacy



In July, INTRAC launched a new set of [M&E Universe papers](#) focusing on the M&E of advocacy. Nigel Simister and Jenny Ross wrote the documents, which address the specific challenges of monitoring and evaluating advocacy work. An introduction to the papers is [available on the INTRAC website](#).

Also added recently is an introductory paper for the “M&E of Development Approaches” section of the M&E Universe. The advocacy papers form a part of this area, which INTRAC will develop further during 2020.

New blog post by Rick James: “Living our values in the distress of exit”



[In a new blog](#), Rick James argues that "exit will be a core strategy of international NGOs for years to come". Reasons for this for NGOs in the UK include the pandemic, Brexit, and the impending DfID merger. The piece identifies six principles for a responsible and sustainable exit. These include open communication, capacity strengthening, and giving partners time to adjust.

Further blogs on this topic are forthcoming; INTRAC can provide [support and advice on exit](#).

INTRAC training

After a short summer break, our training courses will be back from September onwards. We are currently accepting applications for three online courses, as well as one face-to-face course in November.

Online Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Online, 15 September—23 October 2020

Course fee: £695

The most popular of our online courses to date, having run multiple times a year since 2017. Designed for anyone needing some formal MEL training - from newbies to more experienced staff who had to learn-by-doing - this course covers all the key elements, from jargon-busting to choosing indicators, collecting and analysing data, as well as reporting and learning.

Online Advocacy Strategy and Influencing Skills - *NEW!*

Online, 21 September—13 November 2020

Course fee: £695

A brand new online course that focused on contents and insights from the face-to-face course of the same name. The course will cover the skills needed to influence powerful stakeholders and policy processes in a range of contexts, as well as give participants the tools to develop and monitor effective advocacy strategies. Participants do not need to work in an advocacy/policy role, but those who do will be encouraged to build on their existing experience.

Online Consultants for Change (C4C)

Online, 12 October—4 December 2020

Course fee: £825

This online course builds on INTRAC's [C4C programme](#), and is an innovative professional development training course for those starting out in international development consultancy work, or for more experienced consultants. The course follows the "Mountain of Change" model developed by [Dr Rick James](#), and aims to deepen participants' understanding of the processes of consultancy, good practices, as well as the qualities of a good consultant.

Advanced Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Face to face, Oxford, 7—11 September 2020

Course fee: £1,395 non-residential

£1,795 residential

Our most popular face-to-face course, it has been specifically designed for experienced practitioners (all applicants will have to demonstrate prior M&E experience to be accepted on the course). The course builds on and enhances participants' skills and understanding of M&E, and works through some of the complex challenges in doing M&E work.

“Ownership is critical”: a Q&A with Colleen Koki, participant in INTRAC’s Online Partner Capacity Strengthening Course

In June and July of 2020, INTRAC ran a brand-new online course on partner capacity strengthening. Taught by Lucy Morris and Catherine Squire, the course aimed to leave participants better equipped to tackle the challenges of capacity strengthening and organisational development work with local partners.

One of the very first civil society professionals to undertake the course was Colleen Koki. Based in Nairobi, Kenya, Colleen works for Plan International as a Sponsorship Manager. She kindly took the time to answer some questions from INTRAC about her role, the course, and the lessons she will take from it into her work.



How would you describe your role?

My role is mainly providing strategic direction in the sponsorship department - mainly through partnership building with various stakeholders (including communities, partners, and National Offices). I also provide technical advice to support project design and implementation. I also support field offices in partnership management especially for 17 CBOs that are engaged to deliver on a sponsorship programme.

Before attending the course, what were you expecting? What did you hope to learn?

My expectation was to acquire more skills and knowledge on capacity building of partners. The skills I have been applying in partnerships is not acquired through trainings, but mostly through experiences in working with CBOs/ on job training/mentorship and coaching. More specifically, I was expecting this course to give me knowledge/ skills in developing assessment tools as well as the best process of conducting capacity assessment. This is because Plan Kenya was planning to carry out capacity assessments of 17 local partners engaged through the sponsorship programme from July- September 2020.

What were the most important things you learned on the course?

The course reinforced to me the idea that ownership is critical. The leadership and staff in an organisation should see the need for change, and they must be part of the whole process. Everyone should be included at all levels of capacity strengthening. Organisations are made up of human beings and so we must take time to understand the culture of organizations. This can only be done if we make time to learn and work with partners. We must be able to see beyond the surface level. We must invest properly in capacity building - that means not only resources, but also time and relationship-building. Finally, there are many capacity strengthening methods. It’s not always about training - the right methods have to be chosen based on the circumstances.

If you could share just one learning from the course that others could benefit from, what would it be?

Characteristics of a capacity building provider/facilitator. As defined by Walter Wright “it all starts with character – who we are – because who we are shapes everything we do and everyone we touch”. It’s critical for capacity strengthening facilitators to bring the right attitudes as this is major determinant of successful capacity strengthening. Sometimes, success or failure in developing others can be as a result of right or wrong character!



Oxbridge Court, Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1865 201851

Fax: +44 (0)1865 201852

info@intrac.org

www.intrac.org



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Registered in England; Registered Charity No. 1016676