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Editorial

Global Crossroads

THE ROLE AND PERSPECTIVES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Paradigm shifts in development cooperation in "North" and "South" as well as global factors that hinder the achievements of development goals, produce a variety of crossroads where development actors have to decide which way to follow in order to reach the final aim: Eradication of the causes and effects of poverty. These crossroads are even more challenging for civil society



organisations (CSOs) engaged in development cooperation all over the world as they are facing increasing pressure to demonstrate their accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness and to define their role.

In spite of decades of development cooperation, no real achievements in the eradication of poverty and its causes have been reached. In 2010, 1.4 billion people are still living in extreme poverty and the Millennium Development Goals, which intend to (only) half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, will not even be reached without a quantum jump in development cooperation. Donors commit to increased means, to harmonisation and coordination, to aid effectiveness but there are no consequences for those who do not live up to their commitments.

The increasing budget support from donor countries and institutions towards Southern governments limits the role of CSOs to a simple watch-dog function instead of being a development actor and shaping development objectives. More and more donors tend to avoid cooperation with northern CSOs and directly contract southern CSOs, suddenly transforming partners in development into competitors for the same funds.

New donors such as China, Brasil, Russia, India and South Africa appear on the "development market" and new forms of South-South cooperation are developing. What are the new

cooperation patterns and how do they influence the role of CSOs?

What answers can CSOs give to the negative effects of the different global crises? The financial crisis, the food crisis and the energy crisis mainly affect poor people. The answers of different actors vary from "sustainable growth" as the only recipe for reaching development

to the call for a new definition of development under the premises of the limits of growth and re-distribution of global wealth.

CSOs all over the world have been engaged in the CSO development effectiveness process. In September 2010, civil society representatives endorsed eight Development Effectiveness Principles to express the values and qualities required for CSOs to strengthen their position as equal development actors. Seeking to find a balance between the diversity and context of civil society on one hand, and the shared solidarity with the poor and marginalised on the other, the principles are a statement of values that should inform about the functions and actions of CSOs. Nevertheless, CSOs' capacity to live up to the Istanbul Principles are undoubtedly limited and affected by the actions of other development actors. It is important to recognise that legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political and cultural conditions for an enabling environment are required to ensure the effective engagement of CSOs.

TRIALOG decided to contribute to and support this self-reflection and self-definition process of CSOs on a global level. Following the 2008 conference on Paradigm Review, TRIALOG is organising a second conference focusing on the Role and Perspectives of Civil Society Organisations in Development Cooperation in November 2010 in Nicaragua.

Christine Bedoya
TRIALOG Director

CSO Perspectives on Development Cooperation

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a key role in the representation of a wide range of voices in the policy debate surrounding disbursement, utilisation and monitoring of aid. They contribute to inclusive development and often support governments in the actual delivery of services. Most importantly, **CSOs hold the mirror to governments by monitoring whether their policies are effective and equitable, and shape public opinion to ensure accountability for faulty prioritisation and failure to deliver.** Nevertheless, civil society groups worldwide are facing an increasing backlash as law and practice are being altered to prevent them from being formed, carrying out their legitimate activities and accessing resources. Daily reports attest that organisations seeking to bring accountability and transparency in public life are being intimidated and impeded in their mandates through intrusive raids, bureaucratic red tape, bans and arbitrary closures.

Even governments which once took pride in their support for democratic freedoms are putting forward measures to curb dissenting civil society voices. South Africa is planning to introduce a law to prevent communication of information in the “national interest” broadly interpreted as “all matters relating to the advancement of public good”, the protection of trade secrets of state organs including “profits, losses or expenditures of any person” and the “pursuit of justice, democracy, economic growth, free trade, a stable monetary system and sound international relations”. The Canadian government, traditional supporter of civil society, has withdrawn funding for a number of Canadian CSOs contributing to issues such as aid, trade, debt, poverty reduction and environmental justice.

Both the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action enjoin donor and recipient countries to observe a set of development cooperation principles, and put an emphasis on partnership with and the participation of civil society in strategies to ensure effective disbursement of aid. **The Accra Agenda in particular clearly states that countries will deepen engagement with CSOs and provide an enabling environment that maximises their contributions.** This flies in the face of actual practice. The key principles remain captive to subjective interpretations and non-compliance, mainly because there

is no disincentive for governments that fail to follow through on their commitments.

Take for instance **national ownership**, the need to engage in open and inclusive dialogue on development policies through broad consultative processes. Civil society insists on democratic ownership, meaning that it should not just be government officials steering policies. Nevertheless, **CSOs are finding themselves increasingly marginalised in the face of state power.** In 2009, CIVICUS tracked grave threats to civil society in over 75 countries. The Ethiopian charities law prevents organisations working on human and democratic rights from getting more than 10% of their funding from abroad. This squeeze on international funding has resulted in the closure of many advocacy NGOs.

Another principle is **alignment** i.e donor countries align their plans and development cooperation programmes to recipient countries’ national strategies. While this sounds good in principle, the deficit in democracy within many recipient nations means that aid money now has a lesser chance of reaching those at the margins of officially dictated policies. Freedom House, in its January 2010 survey of global political rights and freedoms, strongly pointed out that this was the fourth consecutive year in which global freedom suffered a decline, the longest consecutive period in the last 40 years. Zambia introduced the NGO law in July 2009, that empowers the government-dominated NGO Board to issue policy guidelines to harmonise the activities of NGOs with the national development plan, which not only curbs their independence but also co-opts them into assisting in the fulfilment of the political priorities.

An important principle is that of aid **predictability** to enable recipient countries to effectively plan and manage their development programmes. The global financial crisis has led many donor countries to drastically reduce their aid commitments. Austria and Italy slashed their aid in 2009 by roughly 31% each. Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Greece reduced their aid by



Every Human Has Rights Campaign, managed by CIVICUS

Source: CIVICUS

over 10%. This means sharply reduced funding for CSOs, impeding their capacity to advance human rights and good governance. Only five EU countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) group of rich donor countries are meeting the Official Development Assistance target of 0.7% of annual national income set by the United Nations back in 1970.

Lastly, countries agreed to **untie** aid from overly prescriptive conditions. While this is imperative, it is equally important that respect for civil society and democratic freedoms is strongly factored into the development cooperation discourse. **Effective and meaningful development cooperation cannot be achieved without active civil society involvement and strong accountability mechanisms.** CSOs suggest a legally binding international convention on development effectiveness, guaranteeing an enabling environment for CSOs whose role is critical in ensuring that policies are shaped in a transparent, just and fair manner that is respectful of human rights.

Mandeep Tiwana
Policy Manager, CIVICUS

CIVICUS

CIVICUS is an international alliance composed of a variety of local, national, regional and international organisations including trade unions, philanthropic foundations, businesses and social responsibility programmes dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. CIVICUS currently has more than 450 members in 110 countries.

Website: www.civicus.org

The CSOs in the World

BUILDING CERTAINTIES AMONG RESTRICTIONS AND CHALLENGES

What is Development Effectiveness? Civil society organisations (CSOs) see it as the positive impact that actions, made by donors, governments or communities, can have to structurally improve the lives of poor or marginalised people.

In 2008, the 3rd High Forum Level on Aid Effectiveness, led to the need to clarify the role of CSOs as actors of development and the creation of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. The CSOs represented in this Forum defined their own effectiveness framework in order to influence the policies and practices of donors and governments, and to reflect their own identity, ethics, visions and mandates. Furthermore, CSOs specified their work and operations in the field, the way they relate to one another and how they account to their stakeholders and target groups.

REACHING AN AGREEMENT: THE PRINCIPLES OF ISTANBUL

The consensus on the principles of CSO effectiveness is one of the major achievements of the General Assembly of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, which took place from September 28th – 30th 2010 in Istanbul, with the participation of representatives from organisations worldwide. They shared ideas about rights- and participation-based development brought forward in 77 national consultations to clarify the political implications of being an actor of development.

The agreement on the Principles of Istanbul show that these are far from accidental, but pragmatic visions of development endorsed by CSOs. Moreover, these principles give an orientation for relation-building with other public actors. The preamble of the Declaration expresses the plurality that CSOs strive to achieve: **“Civil society organisations are a vibrant and essential feature in the democratic life**

of countries across the globe. CSOs collaborate with the full diversity of people and promote their rights. The essential characteristics of CSOs as distinct development actors – that they are voluntary, diverse, non-partisan, autonomous, non-violent, working and collaborating for change – are the foundation for the Istanbul principles for CSO development effectiveness. (...)”

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR CSOs IN DEVELOPMENT

On this note, the Assembly pointed out four aspects that demand the attention of donors, governments and CSOs. Firstly, that CSOs should hold decision-makers accountable for their development policies. Secondly, without strong institutions and stable finances, civil society has limited opportunities to protect itself in adversity. Thirdly, in order to strengthen civil society, it is necessary to invest systematically in critical, independent, accountable and strong organisations that can make distinct contributions to development in every region of the world. Finally, at the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busán, South Korea, 2011) it will be important to remember that the connection between CSO effectiveness and development aid requires a qualitative step in the political strategy frame of the Open Forum, to broaden its impact.

The CSOs' negotiation strength lies in demonstrating the results achieved during the global reflection process on development effectiveness. **It can also be useful to show the results that could have been achieved, with better communication with governments and donors, and participation in a more resolute political dialogue.** Part of the challenge is to understand how financial decision-making works.



Susana Eróstegui at the Global Assembly of the Open Forum

THE WAY FORWARD

Therefore, **it is necessary to keep the public debate on CSO effectiveness open in every national context**, measuring and evaluating the results of the national consults and the Global Assembly, generating information, promoting and defending rights, considering potential conflicts of interests between CSOs, states and donors, pointing out how to better mobilise the support of donors or how Northern CSOs can support Southern CSOs. Furthermore, to improve the participation of civil society in the decision-making of donors and governments requires an analysis of the aid effectiveness agenda, to enforce accountability and to access decision spaces, where priorities are set and development strategies are defined.

Finally, the key question is: **Can CSOs contribute in an effective way to development, if donors and governments don't ensure favourable conditions for their actions?**

Susana Eróstegui
Open Forum Global Facilitation
Group Co-chair

Translation from Spanish
Elisa Romero and Jess Blijkers, TRIALOG

The Istanbul Principles

CSOs are effective as development actors when they...

1. respect and promote human rights and social justice
2. embody gender equality and equity while promoting woman and girl's rights
3. focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation
4. promote environmental sustainability
5. practice transparency and accountability
6. pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity
7. create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning
8. commit to realising positive sustainable change (outcomes and impact)

The Open Forum

The Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness is a global, cross-sectoral initiative conceived of and led by a diverse coalition of CSOs from around the world to identify the elements that are essential to the effectiveness of CSOs in the sector of development.

Website: www.cso-effectiveness.org

The Structured Dialogue Process

The “**Quadrilogue/Structured Dialogue process**” was formally launched in March 2010 in Brussels. It will be concluded in spring 2011. The Structured Dialogue is an initiative by the European Commission (EC) to discuss the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) & Local Authorities (LAs) in EC development cooperation. This should lead to a redefinition of the strategy of engagement with Civil Society Organisations, including ultimately future funding patterns.

The Structured Dialogue is a multi-stakeholders’ process made up of three institutional actors (European Commission, EU governments and European Parliament) and representatives of CSO platforms and Local Authorities. This setting raises several challenges such as the management of the process, CSOs positioning and coordination and involvement of Southern CSOs. This “Quadrilogue” is taking place within the broader framework of the reform of aid architecture and ongoing discussions about development effectiveness, including efforts to clarify the added value and appropriate role of CSOs.

DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES

CONCORD is a key stakeholder in this process. It has set up a dedicated “Quadrilogue task force”, and is playing a leading role in shaping the debate. For CONCORD, the Structured Dialogue must be based upon “**policy before funding, but funding that follows and delivers policy**”. The dialogue should seek to ensure that funding mechanisms must indeed be coherent with the EC policies as well as with the global development objectives, while recognising the diversity and nature of CSOs.

Dialogue between EU institutions and CSO platforms is articulated around **three working groups (WG): WG 1 on the role and added value of CSOs; WG 2 on complementarity with the Accra Agenda for Action; and WG 3 on EU aid delivery mechanisms**. The working groups discuss the different issues related to the main themes and make conclusions and recommendations. Even if the discussions in the two first working groups have been often broad and general and focused rather on concepts, links have been established and acknowledged, between the recognition of CSOs in their diversity, specificity and needs and the adequate support to be provided, paving therefore the way for discussions on EU aid delivery mechanisms.



Consulting people

Source: HORIZONT3000

Role of European CSOs

For CONCORD, the role of European CSOs is to **advocate for just and sustainable global development and policies**, to:

- Support CSOs in others regions,
- Support the implementation of programmes by mutual sharing of knowledge, experiences and lessons learned,
- Build awareness of citizen’s rights,
- Empower and foster the participation for all citizens to act for worldwide eradication of poverty.

Source: CONCORD Structured Dialogue Principles Paper, June 2010

RESULTS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SO FAR

During WG1 discussions, the variety and added value of CSOs’ roles and their contribution to development was clearly recognised by all stakeholders. CSOs were seen in their diversity, specificity and needs. It was also acknowledged that EU funding mechanisms and modalities for CSOs should be better adapted to provide adequate support to different types of CSOs.

“**Democratic ownership**” has also been recognised as a key concept and therefore also the role of CSOs in promoting it. Questions have been addressed to the Commission regarding its aspirations in this field.

Participants acknowledged that there is a need to strengthen the policy framework

for CSOs’ engagement in all countries. This framework could be based on best practices of dialogue in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement and the European Development Fund (for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries States).

We are also managing to overcome the “North/South divide”: even if everything is far from being perfect and the relations are still unbalanced, all participants and platforms are moving towards a concept of “**global civil society**”, recognising differences and diversity, and working on the basis of a partnership that goes beyond the funding.

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE

WG 1 and 2 will be wrapped up in October. The first session of WG 3 took place on 14 October 2010. The dialogue will continue until spring 2011, when a conference during the Hungarian EU Presidency will be organised to prepare the main conclusions of the process. We can expect some challenging discussions within WG 3, particularly given the current context of pressure on official development budgets and the “zero growth” policy of the EC’s human and financial resources. However, we do hope that the Structured Dialogue will deliver meaningful changes for CSOs to keep having a voice in the development process and empowering people and organisations in the fight against poverty and social injustice.

*Ester Asin Martinez
CARE International
Chair of the CONCORD
“Quadrilogue task force”*

Nicaragua Solidarity

Nicaragua has experienced a history with solidarity movements from both Eastern and Western European Countries. We asked the ecumenical network INKOTA, established in 1971 in Eastern Germany, and Elmer Zelaya, working in Nicaragua for the Austrian-Nicaraguan Partnerships, to reflect on the solidarity work.

GDR SOLIDARITY WITH NICARAGUA: SHORT REVIEW ON STATE AND INDEPENDENT SUPPORT

After the success of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979, a strong support movement arose in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The solidarity was mainly officially managed and organised, but there were also some independent solidarity church groups.

The official behaviour of the GDR demonstrated a major ambivalence in its understanding of solidarity: individual citizens were expected to share the solidarity, but only according to official guidelines. Personal relations between people were observed with suspicion and not tolerated. This led to strong tensions with independent church solidarity groups, who were specifically looking for this direct and personal contact. Nevertheless a dozen of these groups were active in the GDR, supporting little projects in Nicaragua "across closed borders".

The influence of the solidarity on the Nicaraguan population can still be partly felt, especially for the people who studied in the GDR. Some of them describe this time as "the best of their lives" or indeed the GDR as

their "second home". For many Nicaraguans, the RADA (RDA/GDR) was the country that sent numerous planes with goods to Managua, took injured FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) fighters to Berlin, built the "Carlos Marx" Hospital, established the "Er-



INKOTA project: Tomatoes for sale

nesto Thälmann" training centre for artisans or printed school books.

The former "Carlos Marx" Hospital, built by the GDR, was renamed German-Nicaraguan Hospital (HAN) after reunification and handed over to the Nicaraguans. This hospital helps describe how development initiatives originated from the GDR carried on their work after the reunification of Germany. Former doctors, nurses and technical staff developed an initiative group called *el hospital*, later renamed "Friends of the HAN", that succeeded in establishing an Intensive Care Unit in 2009.

Originated in 1971 as ecumenical working group of the GDR evangelical church associations, the INKOTA network cooperates today with a wide range of partner organisations, primarily in projects concerning women's empowerment and food security.

Willi Volks

Central America Desk Officer at INKOTA

Member of the Initiative "Hope Nicaragua", Leipzig, in the 1980s

www.inkota.de

Translation from German
Jess Blijkers, TRIALOG

25 years of cooperation

Interview with Dr. Elmer Zelaya Blandon

National Coordinator Fundación CHICA, Nicaragua

What history does Nicaragua have of civil society solidarity and international support over the past decades?

After 1979, when the Sandinist Revolution put an end to the Somoza dictatorship, a broad program of social and economic reforms was initiated which led to a significant reduction in illiteracy and infant mortality rates. Subsequently, from 1983 to 1990, Nicaragua suffered a period of war, which resulted in great economic and social instability. Volunteers from countries all over the world came to support Nicaragua and the new programs. After peace agreements and the election of a conservative coalition government in 1990, many groups gradually declined their col-

laboration with Nicaragua, probably due to lack of political motivation.

What is the role of an intermediary like CHICA between Austrian solidarity groups and local organisations in Nicaragua?

The Austrian-Nicaraguan solidarity movement (more than 30 city- and organisation partnerships) created a national office to coordinate efforts to support the country in areas like health, education, technical training, employment, scholarships, water and economy. Currently and for more than 25 years, Fundación CHICA and a corresponding Austrian NGO CHICA Austria, coordinate, monitor, and support national networks of organisations linked to the other respective country. Their aim is to create models that could eventually be replicated as national policies in Nicaragua, and to reach the

Millennium Development Goals locally in partner cities and municipalities.

What future partnership and development cooperation do you see between Central and Eastern Europe countries and Nicaragua?

During the Sandinist Revolution thousands of Nicaraguan students graduated in Central and Eastern Europe thanks to government-funded scholarships. Contacting these professionals could be a valuable action to explore areas of mutual collaboration. Many of them still speak their graduation language and are still longing for those countries and cultures. CHICA office could provide possibilities to organise a steering group and start discussions. Students from those countries could use our research infrastructure for academic field work and learn Spanish as students from Sweden, Austria, Germany and the USA currently do. Collaboration in research with Nicaraguan Universities and/or joining our established solidarity network and projects could be of great value to Nicaragua.

Interview Ulrike Bey, TRIALOG

Fundación CHICA

www.chica.org.ni



New Voices in Development Effectiveness

THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY PROJECT

The Presidency Project of the Hungarian Association of NGOs in Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND) aims to strengthen the policies and practices of development cooperation in Hungary, thereby contributing to more effective development cooperation in the European Union.

Through its project "New Voices in Development Effectiveness", HAND sets out to promote and improve the practices of development cooperation, still a new phenomenon in Hungary. It will provide a platform to share the unique perspective and added value of civil society organisations (CSOs) working in development in Hungary and to reflect on their experiences in the transition of the country: from one-party state to democratic governance, from planned economy to market economy and from recipient of aid to donor. HAND and its member organisations will contribute to policy coherence and the current European debates on development effectiveness, from external policies (e.g. Eastern Partnership) to the Structured Dialogue, the expected Millennium Development Goals (MDG) acceleration framework, as well as CSO development effectiveness and official aid effectiveness.

The Hungarian platform program will first of all insist on aid and CSO development in line with the Spanish and the Belgian outcomes on development effectiveness. As for the second thematic area, HAND will reflect on transition experiences of New Member States and finally, within the larger MDG framework, it will work on EU-Africa relations and the cooperation with Least Developed Countries, also a European priority, and will be connected to the Belgian platform's programmes on Africa.

In 2011, two New Member States' presidencies are following one another: Hungary's and Poland's. Although Poland is still in the process of determining priorities both on governmental and civil society levels, Neighbourhood Policy questions will most probably be another strong focus during these presidencies.

Barbara Erős

*Strategic Programme Officer of DemNet,
Board member of HAND NGDO Platform
www.hand.org.hu*

HAND

HAND's thematic areas in line with the common Spanish-Belgian-Hungarian presidency platform priorities:

- I. **More and better aid: overcoming challenges in new donor countries:** Improving aid effectiveness and CSO development effectiveness in Hungary and new European Union member states.
- II. **Transition experiences: development through innovation and participation:** Sharing transition experiences with countries of the Eastern Partnership and channelling these experiences from the Central and Eastern Europe region into the Structured Dialogue and other European processes.
- III. **Help where it's most needed:** Raising awareness on the importance of the Millennium Development Goals, contributing to their acceleration process, and supporting the elaboration of a Least Developed Countries strategy for Hungary in line with the EU and international policy frameworks.



Polish National Platform getting ready for the 2011 presidency

As Poland is preparing for its first presidency of the European Union's Council in the second half of 2011, organisations gathered in Zagranica Group, the Polish NGDO platform, have finished the consultation process regarding their common topics and priorities for that period.

Democracy and development will be the main topic, on which we are going to focus during the presidency, with the twofold objective of firstly stimulating the debate on interrelations between the two in the context of Polish and European development cooperation and of secondly improving the democratic participation of civil society in shaping policies related to development.

Among other priority topics, we will continue the work on CSO development

effectiveness, a topic of utter importance partly due to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea, to take place during Polish presidency. A focus will also be given to the role of CSOs in the discussion of the new EU financial framework 2014-2020. Two of the more particular priorities will be mobility/visa facilitations for partner countries in the Eastern EU neighborhood and promoting cross-sector dialogue on global education, a process that has been successfully developing in Poland for the last year.

All of the above will be taking place in the context of our horizontal priorities, being Policy Coherence for Development, networking and exchanging experience between EU 12 and EU 15, and gender equality.

While Poland is an emerging donor and its Official Development Assistance (ODA) system has still a long way to go to become effective and user-friendly, Polish NGDOs hope that the presidency will put more focus on development education / awareness raising within the country, and enable a more active Polish participation in the EU development cooperation community.

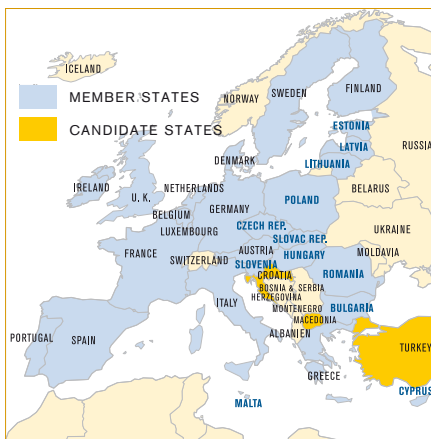
*Wojciech Tworkowski
Executive Director of the Polish
NGDO Platform Zagranica
www.zagranica.org.pl*



What Makes EU Member States “New”?

In 2009, two third of participants to CONCORD activities represented national platforms. Among these, nearly one-third came from the 12 national NGO Platforms of New Member States. Several of these individuals are playing a leadership role in key CONCORD processes. The EU presidency projects of the Slovenian and the Czech NGOs were excellent. NGO communities in several “old” Member States are less articulated and influential than some of their “new” homologues. These indicators suggest that many NGOs from EU-12 are well on their way to being completely integrated in the European development cooperation community.

But below this surface there are still many structural needs. Development cooperation remains an area with modest public support and interest. The shift from “recipient country” to “donor country” may be done on paper and in budgets, but public opinion, perception and awareness evolve slowly. EU-15 and European civil



society will need to continue engaging and investing in EU-12’s development actors, on the official and the non-governmental side. “Old” Europe also needs to recognise the special expertise that “new” Europe can bring, particularly the experiences of transition and democratisation. Part of the support for development actors in new member states has been phased out too early and without an exit

strategy, leaving a sector struggling for sustainability with even less means. At the same time, an increasing number of actors from EU-12 have become emancipated partners of organisations in EU-15, not requesting or requiring further support.

CONCORD sees in the strength of (all) national NGDO platforms a sine qua non for influencing EU policies and politics, and an essential brick for building global civil society. CONCORD must – and will – step up its own contribution to strengthening all national NGDO communities and their respective platforms. Capacity development must become an approach and a culture throughout the sector with elements offered to the whole constituency and tailor-made aspects responding to individual needs. EU-12 countries are still “new”, but not that new anymore.

*Andreas Vogt
CONCORD Membership and
Networking Manager
www.concordeurope.org*

TRIALOG

A project to strengthen civil society and to raise awareness of development issues in the enlarged EU.

Objective

To contribute to the mobilisation of more public support in New EU Member States (NMS), Accession and Candidate Countries (AC/CC) for actions against poverty and for equal relations between developing and developed countries through civil society organisations (CSOs) as multipliers.

Activities

Policy Dialogue: strengthening capacities for participation in debates at the national and European level, coordinat-



TRIALOG Training for Multipliers

ing the CONCORD Working Group on Enlargement, Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood (EPAN)

Advocacy: supporting NMS to join campaigns and advocacy actions, supporting active participation in CONCORD working groups, making the voice of NMS / AC heard

Capacity Building: training on development topics and CSO working tools, regular Central Training events, supporting the creation and strengthening of development CSO platforms

East-West-South Trialogue: providing opportunities for mutual learning and supporting the search for suitable project partners including events such as the Partnership Fair

Coordination and Networking: liaising with key actors, planning, monitoring and evaluating, actively involving the Management Team and Advisory Group

Information Platform: TRIIALOG Information Service (TIS), an online NGO database, publications and the TRIIALOG website

Target group

NGDOs and their co-ordination bodies in NMS and AC

Structure

A project in association with CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development. Financed by: the European Commission (69.04%), the Austrian Development Cooperation (17,54.0%), consortium partners and private European sources (10,62%), and others (2,8%). Head Office in Vienna, Liaison Office in Brussels. TRIIALOG started in March 2000, the project is now in its fourth phase (2009 – Sept. 2012).

Lead Agency

HORIZONT3000 (Austria)

Consortium partners

AGEH (Germany)
Civil Society Development Foundation (Romania)
CONCORD
Ekumenická akademie Praha (Czech Republic)
eRko (Slovakia)
European Perspectives (Greece)
Kopin (Malta)
Licht für die Welt (Austria)
Lietuvos Kolpingo draugija (Lithuania)
Polska Akcja Humanitarna (Poland)
Terre des hommes Foundation “Lausanne” (Hungary)

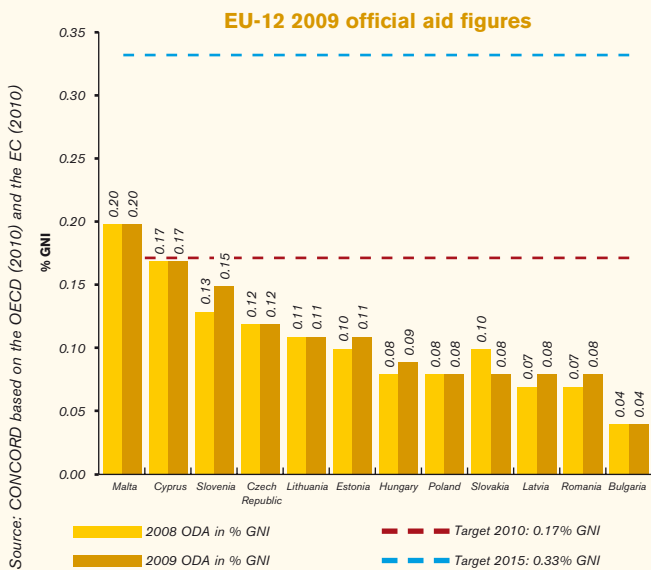
Visit the TRIIALOG website:

www.trialog.or.at

Sign up for our electronic newsletter TIS.
Join our NGO database.

Getting Back on Track...which Track was it?

SITUATION OF NMS AND ODA, EVALUATION OF AidWATCH



2010 appears to be also for civil society in the New Member States a year under the auspices of getting back on track from the various crises happening in the EU and the world. Yet, this track for many New Member States was not clear even before the crises when many of the priorities were still to be defined, delivery strategies and mechanisms still to be formulated and funding sources were rather scarce. Even in this challenging context in 2010 the NGDO platforms in the New Member States position themselves closer to the EU realities, with more information, awareness

and willingness to engage in EU policy making (10 already became CONCORD members, there is a stronger engagement in EU Presidency Projects, more interest and engagement in AidWatch as key policy processes at the EU level). Yet, the needed resources to make these efforts sustainable fail to appear.

According to a recent survey, among the 12 New Member States Platforms, the coordination work is a big task shared by few and with very limited resources. Stronger platforms have up to 3 full staff members, while others operate on a volunteer basis. As permanent government

funding is scarce (but skillfully accessed by some platforms through projects), Platforms need to appeal to projects, thus doubling the needed coordination work with project work around development cooperation and development education / awareness raising. Still almost all yearly Platform budgets remain lower than 100.000 EUR. With this in mind, the tasks ahead need to be very carefully selected and this often means lower participation in European key fora such as the Working Group Financing for Development and Relief (FDR) or the Policy Forum of CONCORD, lower coordination and long-term planning capacity and thus a less-than-optimal level of work and engagement in development cooperation.

In this context the existing initiatives are to be appreciated. Awareness raising was for a long time a priority for Platforms and their members. Without a scientific claim to causality, it is to be noted that the most recent Eurobarometer survey highlights the fact that if in 2007 the NMS attached lower levels of importance to development cooperation, this divide was already fading away in spring 2009 and is now nearly non-

existent: the overall support is at 90% in EU15 and 89% in NMS12. Also in terms of capacity building, national platforms orient themselves more in the direction of quality criteria for development cooperation and contract management, showing indeed a process of maturing institutions. Last but certainly not least, the strong role of NGOs as watchdogs, is shown in the Aid Watch report. The recommendation to governments in NMS: **EU-12 must reaffirm their commitment to giving at least 0.33% of GNI as ODA by 2015.**

The picture of where the track is going, might still be rather foggy, but civil society in the New Member States, through the few committed NGOs and development cooperation workers has proven its commitment and dedication to doing good meaningful work, and this effort per se needs to be recognised and appreciated.

Andra Tanase
Capacity Building Officer,
TRIALOG

Useful Weblinks:

AidWatch Report 2010
www.concordeurope.org

TRIALOG

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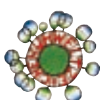
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