



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands

# *Synthesis report of the evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development*

## **Facilitating resourcefulness**

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# *IOB Evaluation*

## **Facilitating resourcefulness**

*Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development*



## Preface

From its earliest days in 2008, this evaluation has reflected the metaphor at the heart of Nikos Kazantzakis's poem, which tells of the butterfly's power and ingenuity to break out of its cocoon and to appear in all its beauty. The poem subtly warns outsiders to be patient and to observe and think deeply about processes of growth and maturation. Not to do so could risk turning well-intended assistance into disaster.

Many of the conclusions of this evaluation and the lessons we can learn from it mirror the poem's theme. In the long run, sustainable capacity will not grow on the basis of the mere transfer of Northern resources, especially if those providing support fail to take into account the specific environment in which Southern organizations operate. Nor will capacity grow if donor support fails to become secondary to Southern organizations mobilizing and applying local resources themselves. Hence the need for the Ministry and Dutch non-governmental development partners to further professionalize their approach to capacity development and their support role. International experience tells us that this is a tough problem. The strength of the Netherlands is that the Ministry has taken a number of steps already that have led to a policy environment that in principle is favourable for capacity development and that the Dutch NGOs have gained experience with new and innovative ways of providing assistance.

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It may not be easy to realize an agenda for more effective capacity development support, and it is unlikely that the Ministry and the Dutch NGOs can do that individually. Success may require a substantial effort on the part of the Dutch development sector in collaboration with its Southern associates and international experts. In light of this, this evaluation's contribution, with its strong focus on learning, may be seen as the beginning of the search for more effective support for capacity development.

The evaluation faced three challenges: to establish a framework for the production of solid evaluation results; to maintain a Southern perspective during the course of the evaluation; and to maintain quality across the seven discrete individual evaluations, covering 26 case studies. This evaluation has chosen to take up these three methodological issues simultaneously because they are considered to be the three legs of a tripod, of which none could be missed. The analytical framework adopted is the result of extensive empirical research on organizations in developing countries. That gave the evaluators some degree of confidence that the framework could accommodate the heterogeneity of developing countries, including the diversity of organizations found there. To maintain a Southern perspective, and acknowledge the complexity of the environment in which the Southern organizations operate, it was considered crucial to calibrate and transpose the capacity development indicators to fit each individual local context. This helped to maintain a systems perspective. For quality assurance, external referents were invited for each of the seven single evaluations as well as for the overall synthesis study. The Ministry's Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) maintained intensive communication with the team leaders and the Dutch NGOs participating in the evaluation. This evaluation report is but a small part of a much larger body of work. Since 2008, many

people – possibly more than 200 – have contributed directly to the production of the case studies, the reports of the individual evaluations and this synthesis report. On behalf of Piet de Lange, the IOB evaluator responsible for this evaluation and the IOB core team members, Rafaëla Feddes, Eric Kamphuis and Hans Slot, I would like to wholeheartedly thank all those individuals for their contributions. Space as well as principles of fairness do not allow me to mention here any particular parties; instead I would refer the reader to Annex 3 for a list of all those involved in the research.

This evaluation is the result of collaboration between IOB and six Dutch NGOs and the Ghana Ministry of Health. IOB took particular responsibility for the general terms of reference and for this synthesis report. The fact that all parties involved have been so committed makes me realize that the rich content of this synthesis report is the result of an intensive interaction and communication between all partners involved, and could not have been assembled if IOB had worked alone. The evaluation process has provoked many discussions and much learning. Indeed some evaluation findings were put to use even before the final reports became available. From that perspective this evaluation is proving to have been a worthwhile investment.

The final responsibility for this evaluation report lies with IOB.

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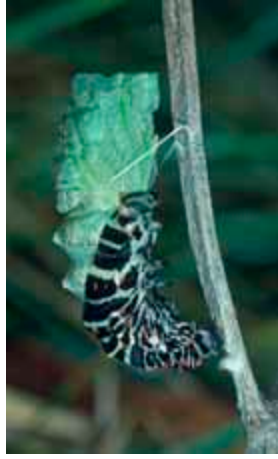
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### Poem

'I remember one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree, just as the butterfly was making a hole in its case and preparing to come out. I waited a while, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it and breathed on it to warm it. I warmed it as quickly as I could and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened, the butterfly started slowly crawling out and I shall never forget my horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help it with my breath. In vain. It needed to be hatched out patiently and the unfolding of the wings should be a gradual process in the sun. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled, before its time. It struggled desperately and, a few seconds later, died in the palm of my hand.'

Nikos Kazantzakis  
*Zorba the Greek*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From Allan Kaplan's *The developing of capacity*. Community Development Resource Association, 1999.



## Acronyms

5CC	Five core capabilities
AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
CADEP	Capacity Assessment and Development Programme
CAL	Coalition of African Lesbians
CAS	complex adaptive system
CC	core capability
CD	capacity development
CDC	civic driven change
CFO	co-financing organization
CMDID	Centre Malien pour le Dialogue Inter-Partis et la Démocratie
CMD-K	Centre for Multiparty Democracy Kenya
CSO	civil society organization
DEC	Department for Effectiveness and Coherence
DDP	dutch development partner
DGIS	Directorate-General for International Cooperation (Netherlands)
DHMT	District Health Management Team
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EA	environmental assessment
EIA	environmental impact assessment
ELA	Ethiopian Learning Alliance
FEKRITAMA	Madagascar Farmers' Confederation
FXI	Freedom of Expression Institute, South Africa
GRG	general reference group
HIV/Aids	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
KDDS	Karamoja Diocesan Development Services
LDC	least developed country
LWT	learning-working trajectory
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MFS	Co-financing Programme, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands
MICOA	Ministry of Coordination of Environmental Affairs, Mozambique
MKC-RDA	Meserete Kristos Church Relief and Development Association
MM	Mensen met een Missie
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MVIWATA	Network of Farmers' Groups in Tanzania
NCEA	Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
NIZA	Nederlands Instituut voor Zuidelijk Afrika
NGO	non-governmental organization

## Main findings and lessons learned

NGDO	non-governmental development organization
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PADEK	Partnership for Development in Kampuchea
PME	planning, monitoring and evaluation
PST	Programme Support Team
RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy
SCOPE	Sustainable Community Outreach Programmes for Empowerment
SCYMI	Sudan Christian Youth Ministries International
SGACA	Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis
SOCSIS	Strengthening of Civil Society Organizations Involving Systems
SPICAD	Support Programme for Institutional & Capacity Development
SWAp	sector-wide approach
SYDIP	Syndicat de Défense des Intérêts Paysans
VC	value chain
YONECO	YouthNet and Counselling

# Main findings and lessons learned

## Background

The purpose of this evaluation is to respond to the demand of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch NGOs and their partners in developing countries for knowledge and insight that may contribute to capacity development policy. Its primary focus is therefore on learning, and cases were selected on the basis of criteria that stressed this focus. The intention was not to present a representative sample of the entire range of programmes supported by Dutch development partners (DDPs). Therefore, this evaluation draws no conclusions about the overall effectiveness of the DDPs' programmes, but presents pertinent findings and draws lessons which may be used to improve the effectiveness of future interventions in support of capacity development processes.

This report presents the synthesis of the findings of seven single evaluations conducted under the umbrella of a general terms of reference document (see Annex 2). The seven single evaluations cover 26 case studies. IOB took responsibility for three of these evaluations. The four other evaluations were conducted under responsibility of the organization concerned.

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The analysis of all 26 case studies and also of this synthesis was done on the basis of the following main evaluation questions:

- 1 What changes have taken place in the capacity of Southern organizations?
- 2 What effects have changes in the capacity of these organizations had on the realization of their development objectives (outputs and outcome)?
- 3 How effective have DDP interventions been in terms of strengthening the capacity of Southern partners?
- 4 What factors explain the level of effectiveness of DDP interventions? What lessons can be learned?

Southern organizations take up a central position in the figure below that has served as key reference during the entire evaluation process since its inception. This evaluation looks at Southern organizations as open systems with permeable boundaries that operate in, and adapt to, complex situations. They are embedded in wider systems that transcend geographical levels (local, national and global) and are thus influenced by, and respond to, a range of contextual factors at the international, national and local levels. This approach offers an opportunity to take an endogenous view of capacity (the way organizations take on responsibility for this themselves) rather than merely looking at what outsiders can do to promote it.

Organizations in this report include single organizations (ministries, private sector organizations, NGOs) and collaborative associations (value chains, networks, etc.). This report refers to all of these as Southern organizations.

The evaluation also takes the position that an organization's capacity is not an end in itself but is rather a means by which an organization may achieve its objectives in bringing about social change. The issue then is: capacity for what? The answer to this question is embedded in the organization's objectives and the way these are specified in its outcome statements and corresponding outcome indicators.

This analytical framework draws a distinction between capacity defined as a social value and the core capabilities which, by themselves, do not necessarily contribute to social change.

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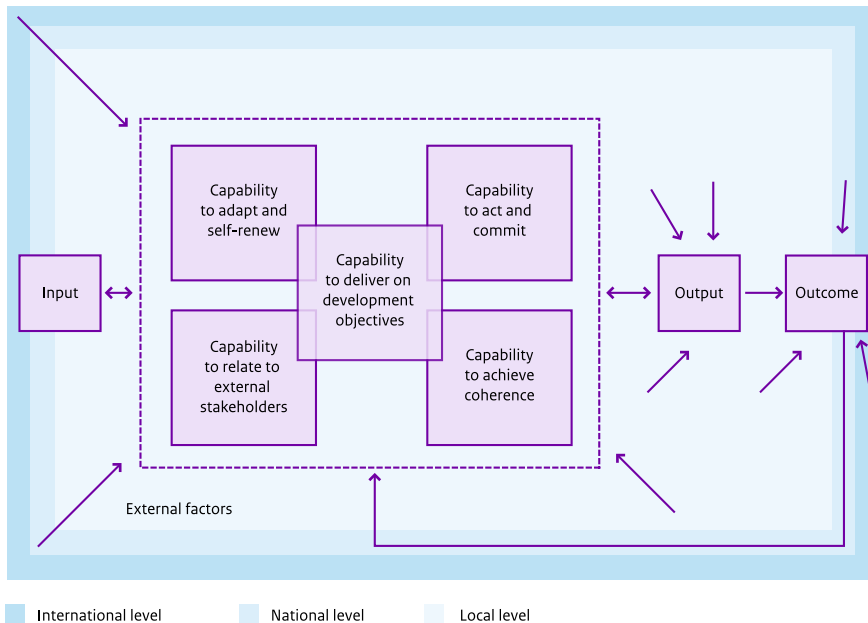


Figure 1: The analytical framework: Southern organizations as open systems

Finally, the evaluation works on the assumption that every organization and collaborative association needs basic capabilities if it is to achieve its development goals. In order to establish changes at the level of these basic capabilities, the evaluation is based on the five core capabilities (5CCs) as identified in the 2008 ECDPM study on capacity, change and performance<sup>2</sup>:

- The capability to act and commit
- The capability to deliver on development objectives
- The capability to adapt and self-renew
- The capability to relate to external stakeholders
- The capability to achieve coherence

<sup>2</sup> Baser, H. and Morgan, P. (2008) Capacity, Change and Performance: Study Report. Maastricht: ECDPM.

Those five core capabilities are closely related and overlap each other, and together contribute to an organization's capacity to achieve its objectives in bringing about social change. In the diagram, the arrow from 'Output' pointing back to the organization stops therefore at the system boundary and is not directly connected to the core capability to deliver on development objectives.

The results chain has been defined from the perspective of the Southern organizations. Thus, the outputs are the Southern organization's outputs and their outcomes, defined as changes in the Southern society to which they contribute. Because of this, the definitions of the results chain will be different from the definitions defined by the DDPs – who usually define their outputs at the level of the inputs of the Southern organization (see Annex 5).

## Main findings

### *1 Most of the Southern organizations strengthened all or some of their core capabilities.*

Of the 26 cases evaluated, 20 Southern organizations strengthened their capacity with at least one of their five core capabilities. Out of these, 11 became strengthened in terms of three or more of the core capabilities.

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Most commonly, Southern organizations strengthened their capability to act and commit (15 instances) and their capability to relate to external stakeholders (15 instances). Positive changes in the other capabilities – the capability to deliver on development objectives, the capability to adapt and self-renew and the capability to achieve coherence – were less frequent.

Across the 26 cases, there was often a parallel development between the core capabilities, the capability to act and commit and the capability to deliver on development objectives. No other clear patterns of parallel development were detected. Improvement in some core capabilities seems to have been related to the development phase of the organization; for example, organizations in their start-up phase give priority to their capability to deliver on development objectives. In this respect, no significant differences were observed between single organizations and collaborative associations.

The core capability to deliver on development objectives was often held to depend on the level and type of donor funding being received by the organization. In cases where donor funding was uncertain, there were no positive changes in this core capability.

Hardly any Southern organization emphasized the importance of gender aspects in developing their capacity.

### *2 The extent to which positive changes in the core capabilities helped Southern organizations achieve their goals remained largely unclear. This is chiefly because Southern organizations gather too little reliable data about their outcomes.*



For 15 of the organizations participating in the evaluation, a relationship was established between positive changes in their core capabilities and positive changes in their outputs. For those organizations, it is plausible that positive changes in their core capabilities had an effect on their outputs.

A possible relationship between changes across the five core capabilities, outputs and outcome statement was only established for four of the Southern organizations. For those cases it may be concluded that changes in the core capabilities were relevant from the perspective of the Southern organization's outcome intentions. Because of an absence of reliable outcome data, no case could demonstrate a relationship between changes in the core capabilities and their realized outcomes.

*3 Donor funding was relevant to all Southern organizations, both public and non-governmental. For Southern non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donor funding was a vital lifeline. They are aware that their ability to deal with dependence on external funding is of great importance.*

Southern organizations generally receive financial support from several donors in addition to their DDP. The evaluation showed that their dependency on this funding often emerged as an important factor. This was reflected in the extent to which they oriented themselves toward meeting donor requirements. Donor policies stressing short-term results and based on simple cause-and-effect logic, combined with excessive administrative requirements, tended to worsen this situation. The combination of this strong dependence on donors, along with the absence of outcome data (including data on the development of civil society), is a point for serious concern insofar as it indicates that Southern organizations lack downward responsiveness to their communities and the poor people they claim to serve.

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The DDPs showed a relatively wide variety of capacity development approaches, but the provision of (core) funding to Southern organizations appears to be of great importance. Their funding covers in some cases a substantial part (from 60% to 90%) of the Southern organizations' annual budgets. Within that general context of donor support, Southern organizations expressed appreciation for support from the DDPs. That assistance is regarded as positive to the extent that it reflects a long-term relationship and shows flexibility. The funding relationship was usually trustful and respectful. Southern organizations appreciated critical questioning. In many instances Dutch support is ranked above that of other donors, which is often more project-based and does not allow for capacity development.

Although Southern organizations said that they greatly valued DDP support, the issue of ownership may be a point that needs further discussion. Some Southern organizations expressed growing concerns that DDPs focus increasingly on administrative and reporting requirements and are less focussed on strategic matters. This may affect the flexibility of support, which is becoming more controlled by the DDP – and negatively affecting Southern organizations' capacity.

Some case studies reported that DDP funding lowers the incentive to mobilize local resources. In the three public sector studies carried out in Ghana's health districts, funding constraints were a major factor inhibiting the achievement of development objectives. These constraints were mitigated to some extent by strong and motivating leadership that worked closely with communities. Funding constraints were also mitigated by networking at national level to help drum up additional resources.

At the outset of each case study, each Southern organization identified indicators that expressed what they considered essential to developing their capacity. A remarkable finding is the importance Southern organizations attach to their ability to handle donors. At the same time this is not surprising in light of their dependency on donor funding.

*4 Dutch support for capacity development contributed to positive changes in core capabilities of the Southern organizations. However, contextual factors and circumstances specific to the internal operation of the organization were frequently more responsible for changes in capacity than was the provision of Dutch support.*

Of the 20 Southern organizations that strengthened their capacity for 13 cases, there was a positive relationship between DDP support and changes in core capabilities. Amongst those 13 cases, there are four cases where changes in core capabilities resulted in outputs that had become more relevant for achieving the Southern organizations' objectives. For these cases we can conclude that DDP support helped to make outputs more relevant for realizing the Southern organizations' outcome statements. Because none of the 26 Southern organizations had sufficient outcome data to track changes over time at that level, we can draw no conclusion about the effectiveness of DDP support at that level.

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Influences on the capacity of Southern organizations emerge both from the unpredictable context in which they operate and from circumstances within the organizations. Capacity development may thus be seen as a continuous natural process that organizations must undergo in order to stay relevant in rapidly and continually changing circumstances.

Several case studies showed clearly that Southern organizations were influenced, either positively or negatively, by the environment and context in which they operated. A striking example of this was the environmental assessment system in Georgia. It experienced a setback when the policy environment suddenly became much less supportive after the Rose revolution in 2004. In the case of the oilseed value chain in northern Uganda, investors reappeared after peace was established. However, Southern organizations' political positioning is often not clearly indicated. Some organizations evaluated tended to see economic and political factors as realities that cannot be easily influenced; few seemed to realize that political factors can sometimes be addressed in order to realize change.

The internal circumstances that sometimes acted as an impediment to development in Southern organizations included the lack of a clear idea about what they wanted to achieve, and how. There was also often an unrealistic assessment of what achieving their objectives would demand of their organizations. Planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) systems, if they existed, failed to produce reliable data about outcome. Such organizations have an

insufficient basis from which to assess progress towards their goals or to learn systematically from these experiences. It is therefore unlikely that they will be able to develop in ways that position and equip them to be effective. In case of collaborative associations that have often no common PME system this is even more challenging. In many of the cases, leadership turned out to be decisive for creating a culture where organizations can move systematically towards well-articulated goals, learning and growing from their experiences along the way.

*5 Dutch official government policy for development cooperation can be beneficial to supporting the capacity development of Southern organizations. Yet its potential has thus far been only partially realized, chiefly as a result of low performance by the Ministry to develop its own capacity by operationalizing and mainstreaming this policy. This has resulted in a lack of concerted attention to and effective management of support to capacity development processes on the ground.*

Dutch official policy on development cooperation is, in principle, beneficial to supporting capacity development. A number of moves during the 1990s helped to set the stage for providing the type of support needed for effective capacity development. These included:

- the delegation of responsibilities to the embassies in 1996;
  - the shift to the sector-wide approach (SWAp) in the same year, accompanied by a preference for sector and general budget support; and
  - the ending of the provision of classic technical assistance in 1999.
- A serious weakness was a lack of sufficient follow-up to make Dutch aid for capacity development widespread and uniform.

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There are a number of issues that must be emphasized as being relevant in the policy priorities of the civilateral aid programme (aid provided by NGOs). These issues include capacity development's endogenous character, its Southern ownership and the equality of the relationship between the DDPs and their Southern partners. Documented experience and analysis indicate that these priorities are crucial for success.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs MFS I and II co-financing programmes, for which strengthening civil society is a key strategy, and which cover 20% of the total budget, also indicate that the foundation of Dutch official policy is solid. Incentives connected to rules and procedures such as those associated with the MFS II grant scheme, however, limit the possibility that these priorities will be applied.

*6 The analytical framework developed for this evaluation is in principle a sound methodology, but for it to become suitable for broader application, Southern organizations, their development partners (donors) and other actors need to improve it and customize it to their own needs.*

The case studies illustrate clearly that the development of core capabilities and the ways in which they permeate into outputs and outcomes is a dynamic process that is influenced by many factors, both internal and external to the organization. Furthermore, it may take considerable time for changes made at one level to filter through to the next level. Mono-causal relationships, on which many donors base their PME systems, are therefore of

little relevance. It is necessary to develop and apply PME systems that can incorporate complex dynamics. For any evaluation of capacity development, it is essential that Southern organizations systematically document changes in their capacity, outputs and outcomes – something that was not witnessed to any great degree in the cases studied.

The evaluation found that the analytical framework could accommodate and produce meaningful information across very diverse conditions. When reporting was sufficiently detailed, it could also be used to describe the processes and causes involved in capacity change. The analytical framework's value as a means of meaningful comparison increased with the homogeneity of the cases. It provided a basis to illustrate outcomes, to underpin assessments and to facilitate discussion.

To be broadly useful in situations less subject to control than in this evaluation, the analytical framework needs a less abstract and general depiction of the five core capabilities. A possible tailoring of the capabilities in relation to the organization using them would help to make their functions and significance clearer. The analytical framework would also be more beneficial if it could incorporate more suitable and robust research methods for the identification of what Southern organizations consider essential parts of their capacity. Softer elements of capacity such as gender culture, interpersonal relations, power and personalities require more emphasis.

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To maintain a Southern perspective, it was considered crucial to customize the indicators to reflect the context of the individual Southern organizations as was confirmed in the 26 case studies. To maintain perspective while doing this, methods need to focus more clearly on the relationship between the organization's objectives, the contextual factors that often intervene and the capacity that is required. This would probably yield more relevant indicators. Research methods may need to be selected and adapted for that purpose.

There is a serious risk of unprofessional use of the analytical framework by those with insufficient understanding of its theoretical underpinnings, or those who want to use it as a conventional 'tick box' device to reinforce the accountability of the recipient to the donor.

## Lessons learned

From the case studies, trends and patterns emerged that may hold lessons about how DDPs can make capacity development policy and support more effective.

The following issues stand out:

- 1 There is a need to organize and provide Dutch aid in ways that allow Southern organizations to follow endogenous capacity development paths, to be more downward responsive and become learning organizations.
- 2 Time and effort are needed to make Dutch expertise – that is potentially highly relevant – available in such a way that the Southern organizations apply it effectively. It is important to recognize that this is a path full of risks, and often beyond the control of the DDP.
- 3 It is important to conduct evaluations that assess the real potential of innovative approaches for supporting capacity development. And it is necessary to make clear exactly what would be required from outside agencies to support these processes professionally. DDP support for innovation is potentially strong and offers promising approaches to capacity development at institutional level. This is borne out in the success of the cases where support was given to collaborative associations such as the value chains, environmental impact assessment systems and multi-party systems.
- 4 It is necessary to shift support for capacity development in such a way that it helps Southern organizations to learn from their practice – particularly in terms of encouragement to probe the assumptions on which their strategies are based (second-order learning). It may require an in-depth investment by all Dutch development organizations to develop the expertise that is required to support these processes.



1

# Introduction to the evaluation



## 1.1 Evaluation design

Capacity development is an essential part of international cooperation and is one of the most critical issues for both donors and partner countries. This is why the Paris Declaration, and its further elaboration, the Accra Agenda for Action, raised the profile of capacity development as a fundamental ingredient of development.<sup>3</sup> Approximately a quarter of all donor aid (more than US\$15 billion a year) is spent on technical cooperation, the bulk of which is ostensibly aimed at capacity development.<sup>4</sup> The World Bank directs about one quarter of its investment lending in Africa exclusively to capacity building activities.<sup>5</sup>

Despite this widespread belief in its value, the international community has never succeeded in clearly defining what capacity development is or how it is best supported. This is the most likely reason why there is serious under-investment in evaluating donor support for capacity development.

This evaluation starts from the position that developing countries need appropriate and adequate capacities in order to choose and follow their own development paths – in other words, for people, organizations and society as a whole to acquire the ability to manage their affairs successfully.<sup>6</sup> From this perspective, capacity is not simply a means to realize immediate results in, for example, health, education, agriculture or the environment. Rather, it refers to effective systems, institutions and organizations that are crucial to a country's capability to select and create its own future. This outlook on capacity requires checks and balances to be in place to protect the public interest, ensure that law is upheld, arrange for public goods and services to be delivered, etc. But such an outlook also means that the poor, and particularly women and women's organizations, are able to defend their rights by influencing political processes, participating in decision making, accessing basic services and creating opportunities to earn a fair income.

Consequently, capacity is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be approached from different perspectives. In this respect, organizations of the poor, be they formal or informal, are to be valued because of their potential reliability and their ability to resolve conflicts or play other useful roles in responsive ways. But people who are poor often sense that organizations dedicated to 'development' do not live up to their expectations.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, these organizations present themselves as important and viable 'organs of civil society'. They claim to be players whose role it is to facilitate social transformation, redress

<sup>3</sup> Accra Agenda for Action. 4 September 2008, Accra, Ghana.

<sup>4</sup> OECD-DAC (2006) *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice. (Part of the DAC Guidelines and Reference Series.)*

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Support for Public Sector Capacity Building in Sub-Saharan Africa: An OED Evaluation. (2004) (Approach Paper.)

<sup>6</sup> OECD-DAC (2006) *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working towards Good Practice. (Part of the DAC Guidelines and Reference Series.)*

<sup>7</sup> Narayan, D. et al. (2000) *Voices of the poor, crying out for change.* Oxford University Press for the World Bank.



injustice, promote the position of the marginalized, alleviate poverty and achieve parity with respect to the dynamics of power.<sup>8</sup>

For their part, donors may look on Southern partners as instrumental to achieving their objectives. From this donor perspective, capacity primarily refers to Southern 'absorption capacity', that is, the ability to use Northern support (which often comes in the form of money) effectively, and to account for its use.

### 1.1.1 Purpose, objectives and evaluation questions

The purpose of this evaluation was to respond to the aspirations of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch NGOs and their partners in developing countries to provide knowledge and insight into ways in which a contribution could be made to capacity development policy. Its primary focus is therefore on learning, and cases were selected on the basis of criteria that stressed this focus. The aim was not to present a representative sample of the entire range of programmes supported by Dutch development partners (DDPs). Therefore, this evaluation draws no conclusions about the overall effectiveness of the DDPs' programmes.

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The case studies were drawn from the public, private and civic sectors with a strong emphasis on Southern non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) in the civic sector that are in receipt of Dutch support. Hence special emphasis is paid in Chapter 2 to the development of both NGDOs and civil society. The six governmental organizations that participated in the evaluation comprise three environmental impact assessment (EIA) systems in which government ministries in Georgia, Guatemala and Mozambique played central roles, and three district health systems (DHS) in Ghana.

The main questions to be answered are:

- 1 What changes have taken place in the capacity of Southern organizations?
- 2 What effects have changes in the capacity of these organizations had on the realization of their development objectives (output and outcome)?
- 3 How effective have the interventions of Dutch development partners (DDPs) been in terms of strengthening the capacity of Southern partners?<sup>9</sup>
- 4 What factors explain the level of effectiveness of DDP interventions? What lessons can be learned?

These broad questions were further elaborated with detailed questions in the general terms of reference of this evaluation (see Annex 2).

<sup>8</sup> Kaplan, A. (1999) *The developing of capacity*. Cape Town, South Africa: Community Development Resource Association (CDRA).

<sup>9</sup> Effectiveness: The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking their relative importance into account. (OECD-DAC, 2006:36).

## 1.1.2 Organization of the evaluation

The evaluation was conducted under the auspices of the Policy and Operations Evaluation department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IOB (see Annex 1). It consists of seven single evaluations conducted under the umbrella of a general terms of reference document (see Annex 2). The seven single evaluations cover between them 26 case studies, 10 quick scans carried out in the field, five desk studies and a number of policy reconstructions.<sup>10</sup>

IOB took responsibility for three of the evaluations: the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA), the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), and PSO. IOB's responsibility for these particular evaluations is the outcome of consultations between IOB, a number of departments of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and representatives of the three organizations concerned.

Agriterra, the Ghana Ministry of Health (Ghana-MoH), Partos Quality House (programme evaluation MFS organizations Cordaid, Hivos, ICCO and Oxfam Novib), and SNV took responsibility for conducting their own evaluations.

Each of the seven evaluations was directed by its own team leader, national researchers and a reference group (which included at least two external referents). Annex 3 presents a complete overview of the organization of each single evaluation. The four organizations responsible for their own evaluations made commitments that their evaluations would be organized as processes external to and independent of them, and would include a system that would ensure the good quality of the evaluation process and its reports.

For the production of the synthesis report, a general reference group was established consisting of external referents, the seven team leaders, representatives of participating departments and Dutch NGOs who advised the IOB director. They commented on the quality and relevance of the general terms of reference, the evaluation methodology, the quality of the case studies and the synthesis report. The external referents were Professor Arie de Ruijter, Professor Alan Fowler, Dr Dominique Hounkonnou and Dr Pieter Boele van Hensbroek; and Dr Paul Engel (ECDPM) served as special advisor to IOB. The reference group was chaired by the director of IOB. External referents took on special tasks regarding the four learning trajectories identified at the reference group meeting held on September 15 and 16, 2009. The final assessment of the synthesis report by the external referents is included in Annex 8.

<sup>10</sup> The ECM case was not included in the synthesis report of the Partos evaluation.

## 1.2 Evaluation implementation

### 1.2.1 Conducting the evaluation

For each of the seven evaluations, the team leaders produced an inception report. These were discussed in depth at the first meeting of the general reference group in September 2009. Each inception report was amended to ensure that critical aspects such as power, gender issues and methodological issues (such as the calibration and transposition of indicators and the triangulation and collection of quantitative data) were adequately incorporated.<sup>11</sup>

Fieldwork started with two pilot case studies in April and May 2009 to test the methodological approach. Reports from these case studies were discussed at the general reference group meeting in September 2009. Fieldwork started in earnest in September 2009, and most of the case study reports were finished by April 2010. The studies were conducted in collaboration between the team leaders and national consultants. The final draft reports of all seven evaluations were completed by mid-2010.

All case reports were studied and discussed at the second general reference group meeting in September 2010.<sup>12</sup> At that meeting, it was concluded that the methodology that had been applied was sufficiently robust, and the quality of most case studies was judged to be acceptable. They contained interesting findings that could be combined to produce a synthesis report integrating the reports of all seven evaluations.

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### 1.2.2 Limitations of the evaluation

The evaluations covered the period between 2000 and 2008. A number of case studies concerned support activities that started after 2005 and included support provided in 2009. Geographically, there was a strong focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

This synthesis report was based on the findings of the 26 case studies. Given that the quality of these case studies varied and that not all case studies produced solid findings on all aspects, IOB made selective use of the information available to it. The main findings of this report were grounded in information that met the evaluation's quality criteria.

### 1.2.3 Learning facilitated by IOB

The evaluation was set up as a learning exercise. It aimed to help unravel the question of what kind of support is effective for capacity development and to help explain the effectiveness of support. All stakeholders in the general reference group (GRG) agreed on the central

<sup>11</sup> Report of the first meeting of the external reference group, September 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Report of the second meeting of the external reference group, September 2010.

evaluation questions and approach, and presented no other specific questions. In cooperation with the DDPs and team leaders, cases were selected for, among other things, their potential as sources of learning.

The main direct target groups for learning were representatives of the (1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2) Dutch Development Partners and (3) Southern partners. Indirectly related to, but actively participating in the learning process were the following: external professionals in the GRG and the other reference groups; people consulted in the Netherlands and in the countries where the studies took place; team leaders and local researchers responsible for conducting the evaluation; the larger group of evaluators/practitioners who participated in forums where IOB held presentations; and IOB itself.

The IOB created different instruments and events to facilitate learning among the target groups over a range of matters that emerged during the evaluation. At an exploratory meeting in May 2008, the first basic concepts of capacity development and how to measure it were discussed with a random selection of representatives of the Ministry, DDPs, and the academic and private sectors. Commitment to an evaluation was born. Synmind, a web-based tool, was employed in order to facilitate moderated worldwide exchanges between Southern professionals. This allowed them to share their views on the relevance of the indicators of the five core capabilities of capacity development and the elements that determined these indicators. Key themes of effective support for capacity development were identified and discussed with the DDPs regarding the seven individual evaluation reports.

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Putting the terms of reference into operation required some guidance and ongoing explanations from IOB during the evaluation process. To clarify for the team leaders how the terms of reference should operate, meetings were organized and specific memoranda were written and shared on issues such as 'the third evaluation question' and 'the definition of collaborative associations versus single organizations'.

Inception reports were discussed in the reference groups, thereby providing insight into the details of how the evaluation would be carried out. At the request of the GRG members, learning trajectories were initiated and discussed in the GRG. These determined to a large degree the main criteria for the decision to go ahead with the formulation of synthesis reports. One learning trajectory dealt with the robustness of the material collected (the 5CC framework and diversity). A second was a demonstration that the research conformed to the principles of evidence-based evaluation. A third learning trajectory, on each evaluation as a learning process, aimed to identify (new) opportunities to enrich the learning process. Reference group meetings provided opportunities to clarify the methodology, the concepts of capacity and the content/quality of the case being studied. Minutes of meetings were shared with participating stakeholders. An online workspace was set up and facilitated by IOB for sharing reports, minutes and other documents with GRG members. Lastly, IOB invested time in bilateral meetings with DDPs, team leaders and external professionals involved in the reference groups in order to promote a learning process.

In general there are three levels where the so-called ‘learning-relevant deliverables’ may have contributed to learning:

- Case study reports focused on the learning that took place among Southern stakeholders. The typical case study process consisted of a start-up workshop (where Southern stakeholders dealt with the calibration of indicators of capacity development) and a wrap-up workshop to present the results to the Southern stakeholders;
- The Agriterre, NCEA, NIMD, PSO, SNV, and Partos evaluation reports focused on the learning that took place among DDP staff. Reference group meetings were organized to discuss the content and quality of the case studies and the individual evaluation reports;
- The IOB synthesis report focused on learning that took place among certain staff of the Ministry as well as among representatives of Dutch society who were involved in capacity development and civil-society strengthening in the South. GRG meetings were the occasions when the design and contents of the draft synthesis reports were discussed.

Publishing the synthesis report on the IOB website and disseminating it in general should contribute to active communication of its main findings and the lessons that were learned from it on effective support for capacity development. The seven individual evaluation reports and this final synthesis report should be considered the beginning rather than the end of a learning process. Follow-up is needed to advance the discussion of effective support for capacity development.

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## 1.3 Outline of the report

This report is written in such a way that chapters can be read one by one and readers do not need to read earlier chapters. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 start with a reader’s guide.

Chapter 2 describes the setting or backdrop against which the findings of the evaluation can be interpreted. It allows for putting the findings of this evaluation in a wider perspective and makes clear that the Dutch experience is not a unique one. This chapter is thus not to be understood as providing a theoretical background or an evaluation framework for assessing the case studies since that would have resulted in a theory based evaluation which is against the intention of this evaluation. Chapters 3 and 4 follow the structure of the main evaluation questions and can be read and understood without necessarily reading Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents the findings regarding changes in capacity, outputs and outcomes, and Chapter 4 presents the findings regarding the effectiveness of Dutch support. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the methodological experiences of this evaluation. Chapter 6 concludes this report with an epilogue that presents lessons that were learned during the course of the evaluation.



A close-up photograph of a caterpillar on a green leaf. The caterpillar has a black and white striped body with small orange spots. A thin white line is drawn from the caterpillar's head towards the right edge of the frame. The background is a blurred green.

2

The setting: capacity development and donor support

## Reader's guide

Most thinking about development cooperation assumes that societies can be engineered through planned interventions. Even today, at a time when revived interest in political economy analysis has begun to probe behind façades and question the feasibility of inducing social change through external intervention, development cooperation's *raison d'être* still depends largely on upholding the central paradigm that societies can be engineered from outside.

Chapter 2 describes the setting or backdrop against which the findings of the case studies can be interpreted. This evaluation is after all only a frame in a film that has run for decades and could run for many more years to come.

Section 2.1 gives an overview of theories that are relevant to the background of this evaluation. It includes a shift in thinking away from the transfer of resources and towards facilitating resourcefulness. This section also explores how important 'systems thinking' is to capacity development.

Section 2.2 presents an overview of the trends in the development of capacity and of the effectiveness of donor support in the three domains that are important to this evaluation: the public sector (2.2.1), the NGOs (2.2.2) and civil society (2.2.3). These sections deal with the issue of the extent to which there is evidence that the capacity of these organizations has developed, and the question of the extent to which that happened as a result of donor support.

Section 2.3 gives an overview of trends in the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs policy on capacity development since 2000. Though closely related, support provided for capacity development through the bilateral channel differs considerably from that provided through the non-governmental channel; so these are discussed separately in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 respectively.

Section 2.4 presents the conclusions of Chapter 2.



## 2.1 Some theoretical reflections on capacity and its development

### Early experiences

Westerners have influenced capacities in developing countries ever since administrators, technicians and missionaries began travelling there. Their interventions affected the design and running of government administrations, plantations, mission health centres and schools. That began at a time when basic infrastructure was often absent and local civil servants, technicians, nurses and teachers were usually not available. Compared with today's conditions in, for example, Vietnam, Kenya or Bolivia, the overall situation has changed tremendously in 60 years. Today in Africa, African religious groups and the African diasporas have a prominent role in civil society. Their financing is often far more substantial than official aid amounts. These facts help to explain how support for capacity development has evolved and needs to be looked at today.

From the outset of international cooperation in the 1950s, it has been generally assumed that lack of knowledge and technology formed obstacles that prevented developing countries from using their available resources effectively and efficiently. This assumption was part of a development paradigm based on the beliefs that economic development in non-Western countries was destined to follow an industrialization path similar to that of Western countries. Donors responded by designing projects to transfer Western technology, know-how and skills in the form of infrastructural and turnkey projects. Alongside financial support, technical assistance was made available in the form of advisors, and personnel were seconded to fill vacancies and train counterparts on the job. Results of such financial and technical assistance support could be seen in, for example, well-run universities and planning departments. But there were also white elephant projects, such as airport hangars and industrial plants that were never put to use and other projects that never became self-sustaining.

Those early experiences indicated that capacity development required much more than the transfer of know-how and skills. Other elements such as human relationships and power structures emerged as being just as important for personal, organizational and institutional change. Failures made it clear that development was more complex than industrialization or economic expansion, and required more than the mere transfer of Western technology.

The book *Small Is Beautiful* by the British economist E. F. Schumacher, published in 1973, called for local solutions; it coincided with the growth of ecological concerns and the birth of environmentalism. Its perspective emphasized small-scale solutions built on what was available locally: material, financial resources and indigenous abilities to manage and maintain the technology. This approach pursued solutions that were specific to contexts. That required a good understanding of the environment, the people and of whatever else was already available to be built upon. For many years, this line of thinking remained in the margins of mainstream development cooperation, yet it resonated with other alternatives such as participatory action research and alternative approaches to health, education and agriculture. Taken together, these alternatives have come to influence mainstream development cooperation. From this

perspective, capacity development is seen as an organic, informal and indigenous process that can slowly alter the ways in which members of a group, organization or society cooperate and work together. As a consequence of this approach, elements such as power, motivation, commitment and the ability to relate to others became key issues alongside traditional concerns about organizations' abilities to deliver services such as infrastructure and human and financial resources.

### Capacity development as an endogenous process

In 1999, the South African organizational consultant Allan Kaplan published a seminal paper, 'The Developing of Capacity'. This has proven to be a source of inspiration and information for many professionals.<sup>13</sup> He contrasts two alternative perspectives on development and further suggests a new paradigm for capacity building practice.

From the first perspective, development follows a linear, predictable pathway; it is engineered and delivered mainly from outside. Looked at from this perspective, capacity is the ability to deliver specified products, often according to others' specifications. Capacity development takes place chiefly through the **delivery of resources** such as funding, equipment and technical know-how.

Kaplan counterpoises that perspective with a second, in which development is seen as an innate, natural process following complex, shifting and often unpredictable pathways that defy central steering and control. From this perspective, development is the continual pursuit of resourcefulness, that is, of powers to gain sovereign focus and direction, to respond with flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances, and to act decisively and with effect. Development therefore cannot be 'delivered', but it may be facilitated. From this perspective, development practitioners are seen as intervening in processes that exist already and that need to be treated with respect. A fundamental challenge for them is to understand the context in which they are intervening.

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Kaplan's paradigm defines capacity development as the facilitation of resourcefulness. For an organization to gain capacity, and to be effective, six elements should be present and coherent. They follow a sequence or hierarchy of importance.

- The first and 'prerequisite' element is a conceptual framework that reflects an organization's understanding of the world.
- The second is an organizational 'attitude' which incorporates the confidence to act in a way that the organization believes can have an impact, and accepts responsibility for the social and physical conditions it encounters in the world.
- Third, and flowing from that clarity of understanding and a sense of confidence and responsibility, are an organization's **vision and strategy**. These express its sense of purpose and will.
- Fourth, there should be defined and differentiated **organizational structures and procedures** that reflect and support the vision and strategy.

<sup>13</sup> SNV (2010) *Capacity Development in Practice*. Ubels, J., Acquaye-Baddoo, N.-A. and Fowler, A. (eds). London and Washington, DC: Earthscan.

- Fifth, relevant **individual skills, abilities and competencies** should be developed in accordance with the first four elements.
- Sixth and last, an organization needs sufficient and appropriate **material resources**.

In this capacity development paradigm, intangible qualities logically come before tangible ones. Resources and their transfer assume a different importance. These starting points pose fundamental challenges to the ways in which donors and support organizations approach their work. They must learn to 'read' contexts and processes, and to ask the right questions at the right moment. Support organizations and donors therefore need a deeper understanding of development processes and their complexities, as well as a more profound appreciation of the theories of capacity, and how it can be developed.

**Box 1** *Amartya Sen's view on capacity*

The economist Amartya Sen has sought to move development thinking beyond notions of capacities as instrumental attributes and to draw attention to the wider notion of capabilities. With this approach, the capacities of people or organizations gain significance and traction only insofar as they reflect motivating values and aspirations and the freedom that allows them to be realized concretely. This capabilities approach contends that unless enabling socio-political opportunities for the equitable and uncoerced exercise of choice are factored into development initiatives, conventional capacity building efforts will achieve little and capabilities will not flourish.

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### Systems thinking

Since early 2000, thinking about capacity development and its associated theories of change have been influenced by 'systems thinking'.<sup>14</sup> This concept was embraced because conventional support for capacity development was challenged as being too narrow and technocratic, and failing to fully recognize that poverty and development had to be seen as part of much wider and complex processes. These wider processes involve, among other things, international circumstances, the scarcity of resources, security and power.

From a systems perspective, organizations and collaborative associations are seen as social systems in their own right. But at the same time, they are also elements in a number of other systems. Under the influence of manifold factors, organizations develop and adapt themselves to complex situations and ever-changing circumstances. Consequently, their development is to a large degree unpredictable and involves both formal and informal processes. Organizations are grounded in the history, culture and politics of a country and may involve such things as ethnic groups, traditional healers, feudal relations and the inner circles of party politics.

<sup>14</sup> Senge, P. M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline, The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.

Some of the case studies in this evaluation are clear examples of what systems thinking involves. Good examples are the value chains (SNV), the political party system (NIMD) and the environmental assessments (NCEA).

A systems approach is characterized by three key elements; interrelationships, perspectives and boundaries.<sup>15</sup> Mapping interrelationships is the oldest practice and explains how people and processes are connected. It concerns the ways in which interrelationships affect behaviour over a period of time; the non-linear relationship of 'cause and effect', the sensitivity of interrelationships to context (explaining why similar interventions in different areas have varying results); and issues of simplicity or complexity of interrelationships. The second element of systems thinking, perspectives, explains how people see and interpret situations and power relations. Because they give a window into motivation, they help to explain and predict unanticipated behaviour. Further, perspectives help to explain the different ways in which situations can be understood. They also illuminate the ways in which different types of understanding affect people's judgement about the success of an endeavour and the ways in which systems may behave when things go wrong. The third element of a systems approach is the drawing of system boundaries. This determines what is considered relevant or irrelevant, who is 'in' or 'out' and, thus who benefits and who is at a disadvantage. Boundaries shed light on who decides what – and thus they shed light on power.

A variation on systems thinking is the complex adaptive systems (CAS) approach. Particular features of CAS thinking are that it focuses on processes more than on structures or outcomes as a way of managing; systems are seen as functioning on the basis of interrelationships between people, groups, structures and ideas; and emergence is a key concept in terms of the way human systems change. According to the CAS approach, systems evolve on the basis of countless interactions between huge numbers of elements. Human systems – indeed, all complex systems – have an in-built tendency towards self-organization. It is this process that drives the emergence of order, direction and capacity from within a system itself.<sup>16</sup> The CAS approach thus challenges traditional logframe (logical framework) thinking that is based on predictability and on assumptions that results arise from one cause only.

<sup>15</sup> Williams, B. (2009) Thinking systematically. Capacity.org 37.

<sup>16</sup> Baser, H. and Morgan, P. (2008) Capacity, Change and Performance: Study Report. Maastricht: ECDPM.

**Box 2** *Facilitating value chains: value for whom?*

The value chain (VC) perspective entails more than physical flows of products and materials. It emphasizes the institutional setup of economic transactions and social relationships. It looks into interdependencies, and it suggests concerted action and interrelationships. A VC is thus a system with economic objectives; however, all of the actors in the system have their own (economical) drivers to contribute. The system cannot function without proper remuneration that compensates the actors for their efforts. Social, cultural and political dynamics also influence the interrelations between the actors.

There are different views about which factors improve VC performance. The promoters of free market economics do emphasize measures other than those advocating the central steering of economic processes. Whichever view about VC improvement is embraced, the suggestion that every VC actor equally benefits from improving total VC outputs is misleading. Certain levels need more strengthening than others for a more equal distribution of power and benefits.

The question of who benefits most from VC outputs still remains to be answered. Facilitating the emergence of multi-stakeholder platforms in itself is no guarantee for alleviating the poverty of the most vulnerable VC actors (i.e. small suppliers). Such platforms will be significant only once they give these actors the space to pursue economic progress sustainably.

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### **Donor's policies**

Policy notes and background papers of other donors also express many of the insights presented in the above paragraphs. Some standpoints have found their way into policy, as is the case with the European Commission's EuropeAid, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD–DAC), Danish International Development Assistance (Danida) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Nevertheless there is as yet little evidence that these policy intentions have had a significant impact on the ways in which donors conduct their business.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> One group is represented by consultant Nils Boesen and Ole Therkildsen of the Danish Institute for International Studies who have – at the request of the Danish Evaluation Department – developed an analytical framework and a methodology to evaluate capacity development. Their work has culminated in the 'results-oriented approach to capacity change' (ROACH), which is now applied not only by Danish Development Cooperation but also by the European Commission in Brussels. ROACH focuses on the output constraints within organizations and on their context, which must be analyzed and understood in order for governments and donors to identify feasible capacity development initiatives. Another expert group that has done a great deal of work on capacity development is the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). In 2004, ECDPM began a study on capacity, change and performance. The study was initiated at the request of OECD/DAC GOVNET.

## UNDP

Three UNDP specialists summarized most of the new thinking as follows: ‘If technical cooperation is to work for capacity development, only institutional innovations – new models – most appropriate to today’s social and economic environment will overcome the well-known constraints.’<sup>18</sup> They conclude that capacity development and institutional innovations will have to be built on new assumptions about the nature of development, effective development cooperation, the aid relationship, capacity development and knowledge. These assumptions need to be changed in order to build a new paradigm. The key elements of this paradigm are listed in Table 1. In this paradigm, capacity development is one of today’s central development challenges, as much of the rest of social and economic progress will depend on it. It is an imperative for economic survival in today’s knowledge-based market environment. But if the purpose of human development is to allow human capabilities to grow, then capacity development is not merely a stepping stone to higher levels of human development; it is an end in itself. This demands of individuals, institutions and whole societies a continuous process of learning and relearning – from each other and from the surrounding world. If all the stakeholders are to make fundamental progress, they will need to experiment with new approaches and seize the fresh opportunities offered by the network age. Jointly, through this new paradigm, they will need to design institutional innovations to support capacity development.

Table 1. New paradigm for capacity development		
	Former paradigm	New paradigm
Nature of development	Improvements in economic and social conditions	Social transformation including building of the ‘right capacities’
Conditions for effective development cooperation	Good policies that can originate externally	Good policies that have to be home-grown
Asymmetric donor-recipient relationships	Should be countered generally through a spirit of partnership and mutual respect	Should be specifically addressed as a problem by taking countervailing measures
Capacity development	Human resource development, combined with stronger institutions	Three cross-linked layers of capacity; individual, institutional and societal
Acquisition of knowledge	Knowledge can be transferred	Knowledge has to be acquired
Most important forms of knowledge	Knowledge developed in the North for export to the South	Local knowledge combined with knowledge acquired from other countries – in the South or the North

Source: *Capacity Development: New Solutions to Old Problems*. Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Carlos Lopes and Khalid Malik (eds) Earthscan/UNDP, 2002, p. 20

<sup>18</sup> Fukuda-Parr, S., Lopes, C. and Malik, K. (2002) Institutional Innovations for Capacity Development, in *Capacity for Development. New Solutions to Old Problems*. New York: UNDP, p. 19.

**Box 3** *Single-, double- and triple-loop learning*

An important line of thought on capacity development concerns the learning processes that take place at three different levels, or ‘loops’. Single-loop learning takes place when thinking and action are modified in accordance with the differences between expected outcomes and obtained outcomes. It assumes that problems and their remedies are close to each other. Organizations pursuing single-loop learning make small changes to improve existing practices, procedures or rules. They do things better without necessarily challenging their underlying beliefs and assumptions.

Double-loop learning takes place when assumptions or policies behind initial expectations are questioned and modified. Organizations ask themselves, ‘Are we doing the right things?’, and in so doing, they gain insights into why a solution works or does not work. This shift requires an understanding of context or of points of view. In this way, organizations learn how to learn.

Triple-loop learning involves principles. Here the challenges are to understand how problems and solutions are related. For development organizations, triple-loop learning challenges their theory of change.

In view of the realization that development is both complicated and complex, the application of double- and even triple-loop learning becomes imperative in order to respond adequately in rapidly changing contexts, to make learning an integral activity and ultimately to achieve desired results.

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## 2.2 The development of capacity

### 2.2.1 Capacity development in the public sector

Institutional environments in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) pose challenges for capacity development. States, public sectors and formal political life are relatively young. Current structures are often unrelated to indigenous forms of social organization. Overall, government budgets have not kept pace with population growth and have declined in real terms.

During the first post-colonial decades, most LDCs could not develop their productive sectors, including their export-oriented agricultural sectors. Most relied instead on external grants, loans and resource extraction, which rarely link with other sectors. In Africa, obstacles to indigenous production were especially marked. This was in contrast to much of Asia, where agrarian development had official priority and protection, backed by well-devel-

oped local universities and research groups, enabling the rapid adaptation of green revolution technologies to local conditions.<sup>19</sup>

There are only a few publications on capacity development in the public sector which have been produced by Africans. Two African management specialists, Gene Ogiogio and Grace Ongile, argue that while efforts were being made to formulate and implement public policies and programmes aimed at stimulating growth and development, ‘the requisite human and institutional capacity to support such endeavours is grossly inadequate. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to have a severe shortage of the capacity necessary for sustained growth and development.’ They further argue that the shortage of capacity in ‘virtually every sector and in every country’ has been worsened by the deterioration of tertiary educational institutions since the 1990s, and is not limited to the public sector but extends also to the private sector and civil society, because it is being compounded by brain-drain.<sup>20</sup>

Another African observer, Dele Olowu, insists that the ‘capacity to utilize available institutional resources in tackling social problems must be acquired and calls for new rule systems for managing the whole spectrum of the public policy processes – formulation, implementation and evaluation.’ Stressing the importance of building up five key institutions – parliaments, judicial organs, higher education, civil service institutions and local governments – he notes the overall progress detectable in the sub-Saharan Africa countries that have pursued these lines.<sup>21</sup>

### Experiences with donor support for capacity development

Initially, capacity development initiatives were focused at the micro level, specifically in the development of the competences of individuals. That changed in the 1970s, when the emphasis shifted to organizational development. The significance of organizational development grew further when the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s revealed to donors that lowering the capabilities of public institutions created serious obstacles to poverty alleviation. In an effort to help reduce extreme poverty, substantial assistance was then provided to make public sector organizations perform more efficiently and effectively. The UNDP report *Rethinking Technical Cooperation*, co-financed by the Netherlands, studied the reasons why assistance to public sector organizations in developing countries was often so problematic.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Kapur, D. and Crowley, M. (2008) *Beyond the ABCs: Higher Education and Developing Countries*. Working Paper no. 139, Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. Cited in Kremer, M., van Lieshout, P., and Went, R. (2010) *Less Pretension, More Ambition: Development Policy in Times of Globalization*. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), Amsterdam University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Ogiogio, G. and Ongile, G. (2002) *The ACBF-PACT Model As a Best Practice Model for Capacity Building*, in Olowu, D. and Sako, S. (eds) *Better Governance and Public Policy: Capacity Building for Democratic Renewal in Africa*. Bloomfield, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, p. 85.

<sup>21</sup> Olowu, D. (2002), Introduction. *Governance and Policy Management Capacity in Africa*, in Olowu, D. and Sako, S. (eds) *op cit.*, p. 6. Among the external dimensions, it has been argued that an essential ingredient for these countries to act effectively is the ‘policy space’ they have available to take action. Today, this space is relatively constricted by international financial institutions, the WTO and bilateral trade agreements in comparison with the situation several decades ago.

<sup>22</sup> Berg, E. J. (1993) *Rethinking Technical Cooperation - Reforms for Capacity Building in Africa*. Regional Bureau for Africa, Development Alternatives Inc. New York: UNDP.



The report identified four fundamental problems: 1) long-term secondments took precedence over other forms of technical assistance; 2) technical assistance was strongly supply driven; 3) incentives and good working conditions were lacking within the public sector, resulting in poor motivation and high turnover of personnel; and 4) expatriates were commonly appointed to fulfil vacancies.

Most writings about capacity development in the public sector and donor support for it that were produced after 2000 are found either in evaluation reports produced by donors or in policy documents and guidance papers of sub-units of the UNDP, OECD-DAC, the European Commission and some bilateral donors. Almost all of these documents focus narrowly on the presumed relationship between technical assistance and capacity development. Technical assistance is usually taken as the point of departure for analysis and policy formulation.

A study of these documents reveals a list of chronic weaknesses regarding donor support for capacity development in the public sector, which are summarized below under four headings: context, ownership, relationships and quality of support, and monitoring and evaluation.<sup>23, 24,</sup>

<sup>25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34</sup>

## Context

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These reports conclude consistently that donor support for capacity development is not sufficiently based on assessments of (institutional) context. Support programmes tend to take a technical approach with little regard for local knowledge and practice or for socio-political and organizational factors that affect capacity. They usually lack sound thinking about results chains – that is, the likely progression from an assessment of needs and the choice of activities to outcomes and impacts. In other words, strategically important questions are often overlooked: How will activities have an impact and thereby contribute to a development goal? How will the programme engage local partners and stakeholders to

<sup>23</sup> Danida (2005) Capacity Development Outcome Evaluation, Field-testing of the Methodology. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark (Danida). File No. 104.A.1.e.2.

<sup>24</sup> Boesen, N. And Therkildsen, O. (2005) A Results-oriented Approach to Capacity Change. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark (Danida).

<sup>25</sup> European Commission (2005) Institutional Assessment and Capacity Development: Why, What and How? European Commission, Tools and Methods Series. Reference Document No 1.

<sup>26</sup> Boesen, N. (2005) Looking forward: a results-oriented mode. Development Outreach, World Bank Institute.

<sup>27</sup> World Bank (2008) Synthesis Study on Best Practices and Innovative Approaches to Capacity Development in Low-Income African Countries. World Bank, Final Report June 2008.

<sup>28</sup> European Union (2009) Toolkit for Capacity Development. Final draft, March 2009.

<sup>29</sup> OECD-DAC (2006) The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice. (Part of the DAC Guidelines and Reference Series.)

<sup>30</sup> OECD-DAC (2008) The Bonn workshop consensus.

<sup>31</sup> UNDP (1998) Capacity Assessment And Development in a Systems and Strategic Management Context. Technical Advisory Paper No. 3, Management Development and Governance Division Bureau for Development Policy.

<sup>32</sup> Fukuda-Parr, S. Lopes, C. and Malik, K. (eds) (2002) Capacity for Development. New Solutions to Old Problems. New York: UNDP.

<sup>33</sup> UNDP (2006) Practice Notes on Capacity Development and Capacity Assessment. July 2006.

<sup>34</sup> UNDP (2007) Capacity Assessment Methodology User's Guide. Capacity Development Group. Bureau for Development Policy.

drive the change processes needed to improve capacity? Are local stakeholders committed to allocating resources (time, energy, and enthusiasm) to a development goal? Moreover, support programmes commonly underestimate preconditions in the institutional environment, for example, the extent and quality of governance reforms needed for building and retaining public sector capacity.

**Box 4** *Civil society development in official donor policy*

Around the turn of the millennium, donors made civil society participation in the formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), a formal condition for enhanced debt relief for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries. Many in the NGO community and beyond reacted enthusiastically to what was perceived as a major breakthrough in thinking at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Governments never warmed to the idea, and donors discovered the shallow nature of the participation that was achieved.

The way civil society participation is included in the new aid approach contains three weaknesses. First, the expectations of civil society are far too optimistic. Second, donors' assumptions about power, the state and the leverage ability of civil society do not match reality. Third, government ownership of conditionalities was too easily assumed. To conclude, while dropping the condition that civil society should be recognized as a political factor and invited to the negotiating table, donors should make sure that a competent, pro-poor section of civil society gets the chance to flourish.

Donors become involved in some sort of institutional and political engineering when they try to create a policy space for civil society that would not be there without their intervention. That can work, but it tends to work only when the time is ripe, and when there is sufficient support for such a move inside the country. They must support things for which there is an internal dynamic.

Inspired by: Molenaers, N. and Robrecht, R. (2009) The trouble with participation: Assessing the new aid paradigm, in Kremer, M., van Lieshout, P. and Went, R. (eds) *Doing Good or Doing Better: Development Policies in a Globalizing World*. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), Amsterdam University Press.

## Ownership

Donor support for capacity development continues to be supply driven. Donors tend to exercise too much control over their support and recipients have often not taken ownership of technical assistance or training activities, the coordination of donor assistance, or the monitoring and evaluation of capacity building activities. While donor-recipient harmonization and alignment have now begun to improve the basis for national ownership, important constraints remain. This situation is illustrated in the principal recommendation of a review of World Bank capacity building efforts by the Bank's Operations Evaluation Department. This main recommendation reads, 'that the Bank should put capacity building at the centre of its relations with its African clients and ensure that its capacity building support is country-owned, results-oriented, and evidence-based'.<sup>35</sup>

Recipient countries find that many capacity development programmes do not match the needs of the countries they are being implemented in. Technical advisors' roles often diverge from their essential purpose of building capacity. There is a perception that technical assistants absorb a substantial proportion of programme and project budgets.

## Relationships and quality of support

A recent synthesis study for the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) on 'best practices' and innovative approaches to capacity development found an extensive literature, but little that was relevant to the key development challenge: poverty reduction in low-income African countries. While there is little systematic knowledge of poverty-relevant or poverty-driven demand for capacity development, there is even less about sustainable community-relevant capacity development. The report states that, 'We thus do not know as much as is sometimes claimed, and we seem to understand even less.'<sup>36</sup>

There are far fewer documented experiences about support for capacity development than about support for other sectors or themes. The 2008 World Bank evaluation notes that the Bank has not established a body of knowledge to guide its capacity development work as it has for other important issues. Among the main shortcomings is a lack of clarity about roles and expected results. These cause strains in the relationships between the capacity seeker and capacity developer and undermine the effectiveness of support. According to the European Commission's 2007 report, technical assistance personnel frequently lack the skills and professional profiles necessary for effective engagement in demanding change processes. Promising alternative forms of support for capacity development, such as the use of public sector expertise through twinning arrangements and South-to-South cooperation, have been neglected.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> World Bank (2005) OED Review of Bank Support for Capacity Building in Africa: Management Response. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>36</sup> Disch, A. et al. (2008) Synthesis Study on Best Practices and Innovative Approaches to Capacity Development in Low-Income African Countries. Final Report, Evaluation Department Oslo: Norad.

<sup>37</sup> European Commission (2007) Institutional Assessment and Capacity Development: Why, What and How? Tools and Methods Series, Reference Document No. 1, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

## Effectiveness

All the reports have little or nothing to say about whether capacity development support has been effective, and if so, how. Reasons for this appear to be that 1) the support provided is too small and scattered for its effects to be traced, 2) capacity development is not captured by regular monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and 3) the evaluations had no sound methodologies available to gauge changes in capacities. An evaluation for the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) concludes that lack of progress in civil service reform is the most significant factor in explaining the limited impact of capacity development efforts.<sup>38</sup>

A World Bank document mentions that donors have usually given too little attention to the institutional requirements for sustaining capacity gains.<sup>39</sup>

## Monitoring and evaluation

Support programmes regularly fail to establish results frameworks and to monitor and evaluate support to capacity development accordingly. The resulting lack of evidence poses potentially far-reaching consequences: the persistence of inappropriate interventions, the lack of accountability to stakeholders, the difficulties of comparing types of capacity development support and identifying best practices, the persistence of weaknesses in programme design and the deployment of capacity resources, the difficulties of maintaining a genuine partnership with a mutual understanding of the change process and an inadequate realization of learning potential.

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## OECD–DAC and the Paris Declaration

For many years, the DAC has considered capacity development to be a key priority. Since issuing the paper *Working Towards Good Practice*, in 2006, the DAC has sought to help the donor community to identify and apply capacity development practice that is consistent with this guidance. In 2008, the DAC began raising the profile of capacity development further. It worked with both donors and partner countries and led to the formation of the 'Bonn Consensus'. The Bonn Consensus later became part of the *Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)*, which aims to accelerate and deepen the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.<sup>40</sup>

Ministers of developing and donor countries responsible for promoting development and leaders of multilateral and bilateral development institutions endorsed the idea that stronger capacities are necessary for developing countries. These senior authorities recognized that without robust capacity being clearly visible in strong institutions, systems and local expertise, developing countries would not be able to fully own and manage their development processes. They reiterated that capacity development is the responsibility of developing countries. They held that donors should play supportive roles, and that technical cooperation was only one of several ways of developing capacity. They endorsed

<sup>38</sup> Oxford Policy Management (2006) *Developing Capacity? An Evaluation of DFID-Funded Technical Co-Operation for Economic Management in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Synthesis Report EV667, London: Department for International Development (DFID).

<sup>39</sup> World Bank (2005), *Capacity Building in Africa*. An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support. Washington, DC: World Bank Operations Evaluation Department.

<sup>40</sup> *Accra Agenda for Action*, 4 September 2008, Accra, Ghana.

the view that to strengthen capacity development:

- A Developing countries need to systematically identify areas where there is a need to strengthen the capacity to perform and deliver services at all levels – national, sub-national, sectoral, and thematic - and to design strategies to address them. Donors need to strengthen their own capacity and skills to be more responsive to developing countries' needs.
- B Donor support for capacity development needs to be demand-driven and designed to support country ownership. To this end, developing countries and donors should (i) jointly select and manage technical cooperation, and (ii) promote the provision of technical cooperation by local and regional resources, including through South-to-South cooperation.
- C Developing countries and donors need to work together at all levels to promote operational changes that make capacity development support more effective.

Despite these resolutions, little evidence of progress being made on these ambitions emerged from an OECD–DAC consultation that took place in preparation for the Fourth High Level Forum, which is to be held in Busan, Korea, in December 2011.<sup>41</sup>

Among the key issues raised at this consultation were the following observations:

- There is a fundamental gap between theory and practice in the way donors address capacity development.
- Both donors and partner countries need to take partner country ownership seriously – which is not the case today – as a prerequisite for supporting sustainable development and the development of resilient and competent institutions.
- Capacity strategies must be integrated into sector policies, plans and programmes from the beginning and must reflect due consideration to the wider environment in which the sector operates, including the structural factors shaping the performance, legitimacy and effectiveness of actors, as well as the capacity of and incentives in the core country systems.
- More can be done in relation to ensuring that technical cooperation – including the use of technical assistance and training – supports genuine capacity development.

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Participants in this consultation agreed that the consensus on capacity development and on how to support it contrasts with the incentives that drive actual implementation of development assistance. Donors face multiple systemic constraints in making ownership of capacity development processes operational and supporting incremental development change processes. These constraints include: the tendency to pursue linear planning, which curbs flexibility and restricts the ability to adapt to country context; the constant pressure to show tangible short-term results; and imperatives to disburse funds in timely and predictable ways, in pursuit of often ambitious targets.

It was suggested in the OECD–DAC consultation that, to achieve greater clarity in aid negotiations, the 'tug of war' on ownership should be acknowledged more openly. Ownership implies that partner country stakeholders should commit critical resources such as funds, staff time, leadership attention, etc. In order to allow partners to take the lead here, donors should show flexibility in their requirements and processes. Furthermore,

<sup>41</sup> OECD–DAC (2010) *Capacity Development in Aid Business Processes: Getting it Right!* OECD–DAC Consultation Paris, 29–30 November.

participants emphasized the need to have a broad and inclusive notion of the term 'ownership'. They advocated the inclusion, not only of central government in capacity development processes, but also of decentralized public sector bodies, civil society and private sector actors. Donor decentralization was mentioned as important for fostering the ability to engage in dialogue in support of partner-driven processes.

### 2.2.2 The development of NGDOs<sup>42</sup>

There is no universal definition or uncontested description of non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the term covers a plethora of organizations whose common denominator is that they are non-governmental. In this report, a distinction is made between non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) and NGOs. The term NGDO refers to organizations that act as intermediaries between resource providers and people whose situations justify the provision of resources. Originating at first in North Atlantic countries, NGDOs today also originate in the South. In this report, the term refers to both Northern and Southern NGDOs. Here, the term NGO is used to refer to local non-governmental organizations who are not primarily involved in the aid business, though they may receive some foreign aid. They include member organizations such as trade unions farmers' associations, consumer organizations, producers' organizations, think tanks and religious organizations.

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The donor community 'discovered' NGDOs in the 1970s. They saw the NGDOs' values and community-oriented practices as being positively different from those of increasingly troubled, sometimes military-led, post-colonial regimes. NGDOs appeared to have a comparative advantage in their emphasis on people, participation and partnership in development work. Certain NGDOs appealed to donors because of their unconventional perspectives, theories of change and motivation of international solidarity – manifested for example in regard to Latin America and southern Africa.

According to Alan Fowler, the 1980s saw the advent of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and the introduction of donor policies reflecting pro-private sector ideas that were hostile to big government, as articulated in the administrations of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. In light of those ideas, non-state organizations such as the NGDOs became acceptable and even useful. The NGDOs satisfied the pro-business ideological agenda in that their financial turnover served as proxy for performance; they were able to channel more money to the poor. This was reinforced by the official aid system's pro-NGDO policies and increase of resources. The result was a proliferation of NGDOs in aid-intensive places that was out of proportion to the local resource base. Aid dependency arose in tandem with 'partnerships'. Donors' perspectives and their administrative requirements increasingly dictated how foreign aid was accessed, thus perpetuating asymmetries of power between donors and NGDOs. On occasion, NGDOs served the implicit geo-political agenda of aid allocation to promote Western interests. By the end of the 1980s the NGDOs

<sup>42</sup> See Alan Fowler's summary, 'Development NGOs' in Edwards, M. (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, to be published in 2011.

were well established but could provide little evidence of the success of their alternative approach. Their performance had in any case not led to government discomfort with their roles in the foreign aid system.

The 1990s saw the emergence of the rights-based approach and donors began to demand administrative systems that would account for how the support they provided had been used.

### The rights-based approach

'The rights-based approach' has been challenging and risk-strewn. With the implosion of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, and a more overt aid agenda around good governance and democratization, donors began to talk about NGOs differently and to re-cast the roles they preferred NGOs to play. Throughout the 1990s, official donors allocated significant funds for promoting and consolidating civil society (to be discussed below). Locating the NGOs in civil society meant that the parameters for judging their capacity and performance shifted towards politics. Western governments propagated liberal perspectives about civil society, pre-empting NGOs' articulation of what it might mean to be part of civil society, however that term is understood. This is characteristic of a generally self-disempowering, reactive stance among NGOs, many of which have been unable to define and address new situations proactively. That stance makes possible their subordination to other civic actors, such as social movements and networks that are driven 'from below', by members and citizens at large.

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### Administrative demands

To gain donor funding, NGO managers have to strategize and spell out their intentions clearly in plans with measurable results that sometimes must be anticipated five years in advance. However, it is often impossible to provide the quantity and quality of detail that donors require. It would be more realistic to accept that planning cannot do justice to all uncertainties over such a long period, that not all intended results will be achieved and that unexpected and perhaps unwanted things will also occur. In the words of the organizational consultants Chris Mowles, Ralph Stacey and Doug Griffin, who advocate the use of complexity theory, 'We would aim for, in Bourdieu's words: "a highly unlikely combination of definite ambition, which leads one to take a broad view, and the great modesty indispensable in burying oneself in the fullest detail of the object", if we take the object to be what happens as a consequence of our actions and our experience of it. This would suggest action, and continuous reflection on action to be at the heart of what it means to make sense of one's interventions with others. It would be a basis for understanding the intensely political nature of social interaction. What this suggests is a process of emergent planning where the plan itself and the assumptions behind it are subject to the same kind of reflexive examination as the work. The expected and unexpected consequences of working would both be valid data for consideration and review, rather than the latter being considered an aberration and a deviation from the plan. Managers and staff would understand planning as a process of developing a deeper understanding of the game which is being played and the political constraints and opportunities that this game offers.'<sup>43</sup> In summary, Fowler concludes that the 1990s saw the beginning of four changes. First, weak results gave rise to

<sup>43</sup> Mowles, C. et al. (2008) What contribution can insights from the complexity sciences make to the theory and practice of development management? *Journal of International Development* 20, p. 816.

increasing scepticism about NGOs' comparative advantage. Second, Southern NGOs' frustrations about their Northern partners began to surface because they were seen as being unwilling or unable to act as authentic partners; indeed, some of their Northern partners and international NGOs began moving to the South, thus crowding out local NGOs. Third, some Northern partners and international NGOs began shifting their focus to national and international policy advocacy. Policy success created uneasiness in Southern governments, who in turn demanded greater local accountability from the NGOs. Fourth, emphasis on NGO development underwent a displacement of identity and self-understanding. Helping to drive this has been the emergence of the rights-based approach and the accountability demands of donors, in combination with NGO dependency on donor support. The first decade of the new millennium saw more thought going into good governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Pursuit of the MDGs led to civilateral aid (aid provided by NGOs) that was focused on concrete, plannable public services. While initially less than one-tenth of overall aid flowed through western NGOs and the private sector, today NGOs and private foundations are believed to channel around one-third of total aid flows, official and private. This development has reinforced the 'NGO-ization' of developing countries.<sup>44</sup>

### The impact of NGOs

To what extent and in what ways are NGOs effective? Many thousands of evaluations, meta-evaluations and seminar papers have addressed that question, especially since the 1990s. Answering it has been difficult, for reasons such as the lack of NGO monitoring, the neglect of independent informants and the bias of interested parties all along the aid chain who are concerned not to let 'bad news' put funding flows in jeopardy. A single, all-encompassing judgement about NGO effectiveness is impossible, however, given differences in settings and purposes, and in available information and knowledge. An NGO programme centred on civil engineering can be assessed more readily than one centred on civic animation; larger, older NGOs usually keep better records than newer ones, and so forth. The availability and reliability of information tends to diminish the further one travels along the stylized pathway inputs → activities → outputs → outcomes → impacts.

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However, current knowledge of NGO performance – a vast and varied field – points to two main findings, stated here in a highly abbreviated form.

First, fulfilment of immediate objectives (activities completed, outputs of activities generated) takes place in most evaluated projects and programmes most of the time. It is not unusual for cross-project evaluations to show the achievement of immediate objectives in 80% to 90% of cases.

<sup>44</sup> See International Development Association of the World Bank (2007) *Aid Architecture: An Overview of the Main Trends in Official Development Assistance Flows*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, cited in Kremer, M., van Lieshout, P., and Went, R. (2010) *Less Pretension, More Ambition: Development Policy in Times of Globalization*. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press; and Riddell, R. (2009) 'Does Foreign Aid Work?', in Kremer, M., van Lieshout, P. and Went, R. (eds.) *Doing Good or Doing Better: Development Policies in a Globalising World*. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) Investigation, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.



Second, NGDO contributions to outcomes and impacts in the lives of beneficiaries have been demonstrated much less frequently. Unambiguous results can rarely be shown because, among other things, data are thin or uneven. Complexity makes the attribution of outcomes to a given NGDO highly problematic; real impacts may be detectable only years after a programme has ended. On the basis of many evaluations of NGDO performance, a leading specialist in this field, Roger Riddell, concludes that ‘in a very large number of cases, the studies either point to the difficulty in drawing firm conclusions, or suggest (often on the basis of minimal hard evidence) that the overall impact appears to have been small.’<sup>45</sup> Also open to question – although anecdotal evidence is regularly deployed to support both sides of any argument – are claims that NGDOs reach ‘the poorest of the poor’, that they generate innovation, that they produce cost-effective models that can be replicated elsewhere and that their results are sustainable.

### Assessment of the capacity development of NGDOs

As NGDOs multiplied and grew in the 1980s, the need to improve their organizational and institutional performance became apparent. Initiatives for ‘NGO management’ multiplied, feeding a wide and diverse field of capacity development that comprised diagnostic, training and coaching efforts, handbooks, consultancies and even a new kind of service body, the support organization. The supply of such services elicited further demand. Funding earmarked for capacity development grew further – though in precisely what measure is hard to determine.

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A number of factors have been driving the growth of capacity development efforts: 1) growth in NGDO numbers, scale and purposes, with the attendant diversification of skills, structures and systems; 2) recipient NGDOs’ aspirations for autonomy and reduced dependence on donors; and 3) most decisively, imperatives at work in NGDOs and end-user NGOs to provide donors with information, chiefly about how they manage resources and how they perform.

How relevant and effective have capacity development efforts been thus far? While donors and Northern NGOs have clearly pressed for capacity building in Southern organizations, the demand from Southern organizations has not been as clear or unambiguous. Illustrating this are the results of a major survey held in 2010 of about a thousand Southern NGOs in regard to their ‘partnerships’ with Northern agencies. Representatives of Southern NGOs made it clear to researchers that their ambitions were to make their organizations independent and influential, and to avoid being mere sub-contractors to donors. The survey revealed that most organizations attached a rather low priority to capacity development assistance from their Northern NGDO partners. Rather, Southern NGOs wanted help to access other sources of support and to develop joint South–North strategies. Such findings raised questions about the relevance of Northern NGOs’ priorities in respect to the capacity development of their Southern partners.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Riddell, R. (2007) *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>46</sup> *Keystone NGO Partner Survey 2010, Public Report*. London: Keystone, January 2011, p. 5.

In terms of the results of capacity development efforts over the past couple of decades, it is clear that a very great number of NGOs have acquired the skills and systems necessary to satisfy donors and those on whom donors rely (such as auditors). The strong and continuing flow of donor resources to NGOs (despite intensifying probes, audits and public criticisms), indicates the widespread presence of somewhat 'donor-oriented' capacities.<sup>47</sup>

Other than these, conclusive evidence of the routine success of capacity development efforts is not available. Such evidence is missing because basic concepts of capacity have not been codified or agreed, and baselines and yardsticks are not used. Capacity development 'is a "low-specificity" activity with few inbuilt mechanisms to identify and "publicize" poor performance'. Gauging outcomes of capacity development and attributing them to specific interventions are quite problematic.<sup>48</sup>

### 2.2.3 The development of civil society

Transcending the calls to strengthen NGOs and NGOs are efforts that pursue much wider results – the strengthening of civil society as a whole. Strengthening NGOs has often been associated with the strengthening of civil society. As such, the term 'civil society' and issues associated with it merit some attention here.

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'Civil society' gained currency through the political upheavals in Eastern Europe that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and in South Africa in the years preceding the end of apartheid. It is currently widely used to refer to constellations of actors in associations that exist outside state bodies. Some of its constituent members promote socio-political agendas – by representing interests, advocating policies or 'watching' powerful institutions – while others provide social, spiritual or recreational services. Given the claims made by and for it, civil society is conventionally seen in normative terms as a 'Good Thing'. As such, it is often portrayed as something with agency, that is, a collective entity with powers to pursue a shared agenda for improving the world.<sup>49</sup> Donors have clearly

<sup>47</sup> However, research in Britain, Uganda, South Africa and the Philippines suggests that the ability to satisfy donors using information that has been manipulated is quite well developed in recipient NGOs and in their NGO partners. The validity of routine reporting about performance may therefore be open to question. See Wallace, T. Bornstein, L. and Chapman, J. (2007) *The Aid Chain: Coercion and Commitment in Development NGOs*. Bourton-on-Dunsmore: Practical Action Publishing; and Hilhorst, D. (2000) *Records and Reputations. Everyday Politics of a Philippine Development NGO*. Dissertation, Wageningen University.

<sup>48</sup> Moore, M. (1995) *Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method. A Review of Literature and Ideas*. SIDA Evaluation Report. Stockholm: SIDA.

<sup>49</sup> Those attributes are at odds with a more realistic conception of civil society as a political space, or arena, where people come together to reproduce, promote or contest the character of social, cultural, economic or political rules that concern them. That concept allows civil society to be approached as a place of conflict among various socio-political camps – emancipatory, national chauvinist, inward-looking, etc. – that compete with one another. This concept of civil society as an arena or political space may be increasingly accepted as valid in theory, but in practice it is rarely followed with any rigour. A discussion of these matters, including the normative attributes claimed for civil society, appears in: Howell, J. and Pearce, J. (2001) *Civil Society and Development - A Critical Exploration*. London: Lynne Rienner.

played decisive roles in the multiplication of non-state organizations. Some analysts have described this undertaking as ‘manufacturing civil society from the outside’.<sup>50</sup>

While many continue to use terms such as ‘NGO community’ interchangeably with the term ‘civil society’, today’s scholarly and policy discourse usually embraces a broader set of organizations than NGOs.<sup>51</sup> Hence those who map and study civil society cast their nets widely in associational life, their attention extending from neighbourhood and youth organizations to labour unions and from churches to sports clubs. Yet being anchored in Western political thought, the concept does not necessarily travel well to non-Western settings, even if some states and economies in those settings were effectively created under Western tutelage. Norms of voluntarism, individualism and horizontal solidarity characteristic of Western associational life may be weak or confined only to urban sophisticates. These facts of incongruence lead some observers to question the relevance of the concept in much of sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere.

### What contributes to a strong civil society?

The interplay of socio-economic change, especially the development of social strata and self-conscious social classes, are commonly seen as major drivers of civil society, at least in Western history. Development cooperation, by contrast, has gravitated toward intentional efforts to strengthen and, if need be, create, a civil society that corresponds to its own norms and imperatives. To those ends, cooperation has followed two kinds of strategies. One, the expansion or reinforcement of an enabling environment of policies, laws and regulations; and two, the improvement of organizations’ internal skills and systems and their capabilities to relate to other civil society bodies, political classes, the media and the public at large.

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Claims of the overall success or failure of these measures to build or strengthen civil society have not been easy to substantiate. Only a limited number of case studies exist and these are today’s chief sources of reliable knowledge. These case studies have supported some general judgements. The governance specialist Sue Unsworth, citing other well-regarded observers, concludes that, ‘... civil society assistance has achieved gains at the micro level, though it may have done little to encourage genuine pluralism or to support broader democratization objectives.’<sup>52</sup> Summarizing research from Latin America and elsewhere showing that outside assistance promoted centralization, elitism and poor downward accountability in civil society, two other researchers, Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, conclude, ‘The institutional strengthening and capacity-building programmes of even the most progressive private aid agencies,

<sup>50</sup> From the title of the fifth chapter of Howell and Pearce (2001).

<sup>51</sup> This is thanks largely to pioneering studies such as Biekart, K. (1999) *The Politics of Civil Society Building. European Private Aid Agencies and Democratic Transitions in Central America*. Utrecht: International Books; Van Rooy, A. (ed.) (1998) *Civil Society and the Aid Industry*. London: Earthscan; and Howell, J. and Pearce, J. (2001) *Civil Society and Development - A Critical Exploration*. London: Lynne Rienner.

<sup>52</sup> Unsworth, S. (2005) *Focusing Aid on Good Governance: Can Foreign Aid Instruments Be Used to Enhance ‘Good Governance’ in Recipient Countries? Global Economic Governance Programme, Working Paper 18*, Department of Politics, Oxford University, UK. See also Carothers T. and Ottaway M. (eds) (2000) *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a publication Unsworth also cites.

therefore, often contributed to the reverse of the intended outcomes.<sup>53</sup>

In light of such provisional conclusions, it has been a matter of concern, underscored by Roger Riddell, that, 'given the amounts of official aid that have been channelled to NGOs under the general-purpose umbrella of strengthening civil society ... there is very little evidence of official donors trying to search for answers' to the question of what they have contributed to a stronger civil society.<sup>54</sup>

One response to this situation was research commissioned in 2001 by CIVICUS, an international alliance of members and partners advocating citizen participation. In a key conclusion, this study found an absence of 'any empirical support for the argument that the aid system can play any direct role in building a vibrant civil society'.<sup>55</sup>

However, the impact of the aid system on civil society may be indirect, by way of the state and the public sector. Of the factors associated with stronger civil societies, the performance of democratic political institutions showed the strongest causal relationship with civil society development. While causal relationships may run in both directions, the CIVICUS researchers concluded that the stronger driver is from political and economic systems to civil society, not vice versa. Such findings are consistent with political scientists' conclusions that anti-poverty activism by citizens, their voice, loyalty and 'refusal to exit', are more likely to be sustained where popularly preferred services and infrastructure are based on credibility, stability and formal entitlement – all characteristic of responsive public sectors and rarely, if ever, found in non-state actors, such as NGOs.<sup>56</sup>

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Collective action cannot gain traction where citizens lack incentives to mobilize. Such a situation is typical where citizens face small-scale, temporary, continually changing NGO programmes. Indeed such insubstantial arrangements have the potential to discourage citizen activism. The outcome for civil society is thus disempowerment.

To sum up, while political society and civil society commonly reinforce (or constrain) one another, the decisive preconditions for robust civil societies and public action usually arise from robust states and public sectors.

<sup>53</sup> Howell, J. and Pearce, J. (2001) *Civil Society and Development - A Critical Exploration*. London: Lynne Rienner, p. 159.

<sup>54</sup> Riddell, R. (2007) *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>55</sup> Bailer, S. et al. (2008) *What Makes Civil Society Strong? Testing Bottom-up and Top-down Theories of a Vibrant Civil Society*, in Heinrich, V. F. and Fioramonti, L. (eds) *CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society, Volume 2*, Bloomington Connecticut: Kumarian Press, p. 248. (That finding is largely consistent with research referred to in the previous note.)

<sup>56</sup> Moore, M. and Putzel, J. (1999) *Politics and Poverty: A Background Paper for the World Development Report 2000/1*. Sussex: IDS; Moore, M. (2001) *Empowerment at last?* *Journal of International Development* 13; and Joshi, A. and Moore, M. (2002) *Enabling Environments and Effective Anti-Poverty Programmes*, in Else Øyen (ed.) *Best Practices in Poverty Reduction. An Analytical Framework*. London: CROP International Studies in Poverty Research and Zed Books.

**Box 5** Room for participation undone by restrictive bills

In Uganda, the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration Amendment Bill, passed by Parliament in April 2006 requires all NGOs to get a new licence from the newly established NGO Board. The new licence then has to be renewed after a year, renewed for a second time after two years, and renewed yet again after five years. After that period, the NGO Board will monitor NGOs and be able to revoke the licence of any NGO that fails to conform to its objectives, or with a constitution that is judged to be 'in contravention of the law'. What worries the NGO community is the composition of the NGO Board. It won't be judges deciding whether NGOs are operating within the law, but a group of political appointees from government ministries and two representatives of the Internal and External Security Organizations. NGOs themselves are not represented on the NGO Board at all.<sup>57</sup>

The Ethiopian government introduced a new draft NGO law in May 2008. Stakeholders had been requesting a new law that would modernize the 1960 Civil Code and Associations Regulations which govern the activities of NGOs in Ethiopia. The demand put forward by NGOs and other groups was to have comprehensive legislation that would facilitate the effective implementation of the right to associate (recognized by the 1994 Constitution) and the various international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Ethiopia. There have been a number of forums for consultation between NGOs and the government on the draft, but these have not brought about changes to the very critical provisions that can seriously impair the activities of independent NGOs in Ethiopia – particularly those engaged in promoting human rights, democracy, good governance, conflict resolution and peace-building.<sup>58</sup> In January 2009 the Ethiopian parliament adopted a new civil society organization (CSO) law that claims to address perceived inadequacies in the existing legal regime, promote financial transparency and accountability, and provide 'proper' administration and regulation for civil society. However, human rights organizations state that the law goes far beyond what should be necessary to legalize NGO standards, it could criminalize the human rights activities of both foreign and domestic NGOs.<sup>59</sup>

Non-governmental organizations in Tanzania have reiterated their calls for the 2002 NGO Act to be amended, saying that it is restrictive and allows for too much govern-

<sup>57</sup> See Coalition on Non-Governmental Organisations (Amendment) Bill (2006) *A Vibrant and Strong NGO Sector is Necessary for the Country: Do Not Legislate It Away*. Press Statement, 12 April 2006; and Freedom House (2008) *Country Report Uganda*. Available online at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22andcountry=7511andyear=2008> and Freedom House (2008) *Country Report Zambia* Available online at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22andcountry=7522andyear=2008>

<sup>58</sup> Human Rights Watch (2008) *Ethiopia: Repressive Draft Legislation On ngos Will Limit Freedom of Expression*. Washington, DC: Press Release 4 July 2008.

mental control. Legal and human rights organizations followed suit, saying that while the 2001 NGO Policy reflected the government's recognition of NGOs as partners, the 2002 Act does not create a favourable environment within which these organizations can work. The NGO act is criticized for having serious flaws, including compulsory registration backed by criminal sanctions, lack of appeal to the courts, alignment of NGO activities with government plans, prohibition of national networks and coalitions of NGOs, and inconsistencies with other legislation.<sup>60</sup>

Source: Molenaers, N. and Renard, R. (2009) *The trouble with participation: Assessing the new aid paradigm*, in Kremer, M., van Lieshout, P. and Went, R. (eds) *Doing Good or Doing Better. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) Investigation*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press

### Does a stronger civil society make any difference?

From South Africa under apartheid to Brazil under the generals, many episodes underscore the historical fact that citizens' movements can play decisive roles in political change. In addition, certain branches of civil society can influence the very structure of market-based societies. The strength of trade unions, for example, is the single most powerful factor in promoting income equality – the broader and deeper union membership is, the more equal the distribution of income.<sup>61</sup> Much comparative research suggests that civic-driven political pressure, more than market forces and technologies, has positioned and propelled societies into virtuous, probably mutually reinforcing, circles of shrinking inequality and rising growth.<sup>62</sup>

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Are civil society's constituent members always and everywhere agents of change? Far from it. A substantial body of research suggests that NGOs are more likely to reinforce the political status quo than to contest or change it.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Amnesty International (2009).

<sup>60</sup> Southern Africa Documentation and Cooperation Centre (2003) *NGOs Repeat Call for NGO Act to Be Reviewed*. Press Statement 28 August 2003. Available at <http://www.sadocc.at/news/2003-2q4.shtml>.

<sup>61</sup> Rueda, D. and Pontusson, J. (2000) Wage inequality and varieties of capitalism. *World Politics* 52: 350-383.

<sup>62</sup> Robinson, J. A. (2010) *The Political Economy of Redistributive Policies*. Discussion Paper, Bureau for Development Policy, Poverty Group. New York: UNDP.

<sup>63</sup> A review of Anglo-Saxon academic literature points clearly in this direction. (See Claire Mercer's 2002 article, 'NGOs, civil society and democratization: a critical review of the literature' in *Progress in Development Studies* 2:5.) But it also emerges in case studies, one of the most dramatic being that of Rwanda up to and including the upheaval of 1994, as analyzed in 'And Where Was Civil Society?' in Uvin, P. (1998) *Aiding Violence: the Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press. Other examples are: Dorman, S.R. (2005) *Studying Democratization in Africa: A Case Study of Human Rights NGOs in Zimbabwe*, in *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: African NGOs, Donors, and the State*. Kelsall T. and Igoe, J. (eds) Carolina Academic Press, pp. 33-59; and Fowler, A. (1993) *Non-governmental Organisations and the Promotion of Democracy in Kenya*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Sussex, UK.

While not everywhere a part of an ‘anti-politics machine’, they can have de-politicizing effects. In some settings where NGOs have eclipsed opposition parties and crowded out normal political processes, there have been charges of ‘too much civil society, too little politics’.<sup>64</sup>

The CIVICUS study considered civil society impact in three realms: public norms and civil rights promotion; public policy; and socio-economic development. Regarding the public promotion of major liberal democratic values and norms, self-assessments pointed to ‘relatively little activity’ on those fronts. Among the public at large, religious organizations, trade unions and NGOs enjoy more public trust than political parties, yet in their efforts to promote liberal democratic values, those civil society organizations ‘have not yet convinced the majority of the population in their respective countries’.<sup>65</sup>

Regarding public policy, the study concludes that, ‘the influence of civil society on public policy remains low, with the exception of Western Europe ... This reinforces what we know from other sources, but the extent of the inability to influence policy is surprising to us. There is much work to do!’<sup>66</sup> Regarding socio-economic influence, views of ‘civil society stakeholders’ varied widely. There was however agreement with the claim that civil society organizations exercise some influence over social service delivery in ‘consolidated democracies’ and in circumstances where civil society organizations work in close coordination with public institutions, as in Western Europe.<sup>67</sup>

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Based on a meta-case study analysis of a non-randomized sample of 100 research studies of citizen engagement in 20 countries, Gaventa and Barrett draw somewhat more positive conclusions about the role of civil society.<sup>68</sup> They found that citizen participation produces positive effects across a number of areas.

- The construction of citizenship, with examples of the growth of citizen knowledge, awareness and greater sense of empowerment and agency.
- The strengthening of practices and efficacy of participation, through more effective action, the transfer of skills across issues and arenas, and the thickening of alliances and networks. The authors, however, also report cases in which participation was seen as merely a tokenistic, manipulated and meaningless waste of time, or captured from above by politicians, parties, NGOs or elites seeking it for their own ends.

<sup>64</sup> Langohr, V. (2004), *Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics*. Egypt and Liberalizing Arab Regimes, in *Comparative Politics* 36(2). (See also research described in the annual reports of the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.)

<sup>65</sup> Kopecky, P. and Mudde, C. (2008) Civil or Uncivil? Civil Society’s Role in Promoting Values, Norms and Rights, in Heinrich, V. F. and Fioramonti, L. (eds) *CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society*. Volume 2, Bloomington Connecticut: Kumarian Press, pp. 301-317.

<sup>66</sup> Blagescu, M. and Court, J. (2008) Civil Society’s Impact on Public Policy, in Heinrich, V. F. and Fioramonti, L. (eds) *CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society*. Volume 2, Bloomington Connecticut: Kumarian Press, pp. 341-358.

<sup>67</sup> Fioramonti, L., Fowler, A. and Heinrich, V. F. (2008) The Challenge of Socioeconomic and Democratic Development: Marrying Civil Society’s Social and Political Roles?, in Heinrich, V. F. and Fioramonti, L. (eds) *CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society*. Volume 2, Bloomington Connecticut: Kumarian Press, pp. 359-376.

<sup>68</sup> Gaventa, J. and Barrett, G. (2010) *So What Difference Does it Make? Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement*. IDS Working Paper 347.

- The strengthening of responsive and accountable states with clear examples where citizen engagement can change national policy towards pro-poor purposes, including improvement at micro levels in health, education, livelihoods and nutrition. The cases highlight three ways in which citizen mobilization has contributed to the realization of rights: through the strengthened claim for and implementation in practice of existing legal rights; through extension or creation of new rights and sometimes through the strengthening of more impartial local justice processes. Weak results are often not attributable to a lack of citizen action but to a lack of response from the state. In many cases, authorities used reprisals (including violence) in response to citizens who were voicing objections. The authors conclude that emancipatory social movements and local associations can contribute in important ways to democratic and developmental outcomes and can help to create more accountable and responsive states. The use of formal channels of participatory governance spaces tends to be more effective in promoting participatory practices, but somewhat less effective in promoting accountable and responsive states.

In its report, *Less Pretention More Ambition*, the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) makes similar observations. In considering the future roles of Western NGOs, it identifies three crucial developments: the emergence of Southern NGOs and the move of some international NGOs to the South; obligations to present results, monitor and evaluate, thereby making NGOs more bureaucratic rather than more professional; and hybrid mandates to achieve development results in the South and to maintain public support in the North, particularly in markets for charitable donations.

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The report discusses claims about Southern NGOs as exponents of civil society and about their capacity to contribute to the strengthening of it. The report is critical on both counts; it concludes that donor financing of Southern NGOs can even lead to an artificial civil society.

The report identifies three possible roles for Southern NGOs: service provider, watchdog and supporter of social processes. The report points out that NGOs as service providers can be provisionally effective where the state is fragile, yet if they persist in performing that role, they can undermine the tasks and responsibilities of governments. NGOs can serve effectively as watchdogs only if there is a reasonably functioning state. Their support to community development should reflect not the wishes of the donor community but of the local community. The authors are surprised by how little systematic knowledge is available about how donor support to civil society can contribute to development. They note that there is hardly any exchange of knowledge between development organizations. The report therefore calls for development of a 'policy theory' on social development.



## 2.3 Trends in Dutch support for capacity development

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides support for capacity development via bilateral, multilateral and civilateral channels. Support for capacity development in bilateral and multilateral programmes takes place as a transversal theme within the broader context of development policies and budget support or contributions to international institutions such as the UNDP and the World Bank. For support provided via civilateral programmes, capacity development and the strengthening of civil society are intermediate objectives for reducing poverty. Receiving support for such purposes are a large number of Dutch organizations such as the co-financing organizations (Cordaid, Hivos, ICCO and Oxfam Novib), SNV, PSO, the Dutch Employers organization PUM, the Dutch trade unions FNV and CNV, and many others.

In 1999, the then Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation crafted her own position in the domain of capacity development by announcing a drastic change in the technical assistance (TA) policy. This was in response to widespread criticism of traditional approaches to TA.<sup>69</sup> Since then, Dutch technical assistance policy has been considered as ‘... an instrument of development cooperation that aims to strengthen societies’ capacity to generate, transform, absorb and use knowledge and skills at different levels.’<sup>70, 71</sup> TA was to be a demand-driven, tailor-made practice, based more on local expertise and knowledge networks; it would have to be integrated into a broader package of aid modalities.<sup>72</sup>

The Minister thus used a narrower concept of capacity, leaving aside the element of commitment and relational aspects, which are crucial from the perspective of the poor. The Minister’s perspective also clearly differed from those who take a more holistic approach, one including the importance of an organization’s understanding of the world, its organizational ‘attitude’ and an acceptance of responsibility for the social and physical conditions ‘out there’. The Minister’s 2000 policy change had major implications and posed new challenges to the implementing departments at the Ministry (DGIS) and Dutch NGOs. These involved institutional as well as some conceptual aspects. Old, well-established practices had to be given up and new practices, with all their uncertainties, had to be taken up.

Capacity development is still essential to Dutch development cooperation. However, a consultation organized by IOB in May 2008 in preparation for this evaluation made clear that the Ministry and many of the Dutch NGOs involved in capacity development cannot unequivocally define what capacity means and how capacity development works. The situation in the Netherlands is similar to that elsewhere in the donor community. No policy document exists that outlines a vision of the capacity issue or a manual for making strategic decisions or

<sup>69</sup> UNDP (1993) *Rethinking Technical Cooperation – Reforms for Capacity Building in Africa*. Regional Bureau for Africa, Development Alternatives Inc., Berg, E. J. (Coordinator), New York: UNDP.

<sup>70</sup> Beleidskader technische assistentie Eindrapport Taakgroep TA (Policy framework technical assistance final report TA Task Group). Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2nd version, 4 October 2000.

<sup>71</sup> Brief aan de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (Letter to the Dutch House of Representatives), 30 August 2000.

<sup>72</sup> Criticism was based on a 1999 IBO report and a 1993 UNDP report.

funding approval. For their daily routine, policy officers of both the Ministry and Dutch NGOs rely on general notions about capacity appearing in thematic policy notes, and on their own experience. In summary, the development community has limited expertise on topics that actually form the core business of development cooperation.

While preparing for this evaluation, Ministry officials noted that whereas capacity development could be seen as a core business of Dutch development cooperation, this core business remained ill-defined. While there is some merit in this observation, it is more important to examine why this has been the case, and what the function and value of a more defined and clear policy would have been.<sup>73</sup>

### 2.3.1 Capacity development in Dutch bilateral development cooperation

Although the Dutch bilateral development policies over the years have reflected capacity development and ownership, the Ministry had, up to 2007, not published a single policy document to guide decision making and operations on capacity development.<sup>74</sup>

The Ministry had, however, produced a large number of policy documents, guidelines, results reports and policy instruments referring to capacity problems and support strategies. The same attention to the importance of 'capacity' can also be found in various sector-specific policy notes.

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It can be argued that the first basis for more attention to capacity development in Dutch bilateral policies on development cooperation was created in 1995, when three internal policy papers were written about institutional development. While the Minister was initially not inspired by these, a number of ideas formulated in these papers made their way into the 1995 policy note, *Hulp in Uitvoering (Aid in Progress)*. This note contained some of the first elements of what would later be referred to as the 'micro-macro approach'. It stressed the idea that 'doing a lot of different things in different places amounts to doing nothing at all'. The alternative approach was launched in 1998 with the introduction of the sector-wide approach (SWAp), which stressed the importance of a programmatic approach at sector level that would connect actors from public, private and civil society with interventions at different levels, from micro to macro. The SWAp also included the effects of other Dutch and European Union policies on developing countries. In its intentions, it largely reflected systems thinking (as described in section 2.1). In its implementation, it has focused mostly on the public sector and far less on the private sector and civil society actors. Another problem is that the complex realities of developing countries are very hard to capture in the ways the Ministry reports results. Those reporting systems assume far more causal relations and take only limited account of the complexities of developing countries.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> One could make the same comments about the ownership concept, while at the same time few would contest that it has contributed to important change in development policy.

<sup>74</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008) *Guidance on Capacity Development: 'All Models Are Wrong, But Some Are Helpful'*.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Department for Effectiveness and Coherence (DEC) policy officer.

A key change within the Ministry's policies in relation to capacity development was the abolition in 1999 of long-term TA as one of its central aid modalities. International feedback to this fundamental decision suggested that it had been an important step towards more sustainable and effective forms of development cooperation. Yet the decision also had an unintended effect on the Ministry itself: the pool from which it recruited staff gradually contained less and less field expertise. Moreover, a reduction in the number of thematic experts meant that the average Ministry official became more generalist and versatile in orientation and background, but also less grounded in the realities of developing countries.<sup>76</sup>

It can be argued that for the Ministry to show capability in supporting capacity development, policy perseverance is more important than policy innovation. A number of cases, such as the Sector Track Record, the Track Record and the Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis (SGACA), were conceived and designed years before they were eventually put to use. Similarly, policy notes produced throughout the period under evaluation do reflect central ideas associated with capacity development.

These policy notes indicate that whereas the Ministry does not have a single 'capacity development policy guidance document', key aspects associated with it have permeated all of them in the past. However, how these overall policy directions have been operationalized and translated into new practices also have to be assessed. As was argued in the Bossuyt 2001 paper, 'there is a growing gap between the language of the new development agenda and the control-oriented style of operation displayed by donor agencies.'<sup>77</sup> Precisely because the fundamental changes envisaged are hard to disagree with, the challenge of making them a reality is significant.<sup>78</sup> Yet divergences seemed only to increase. At the time that the Dutch government, including its embassies, began to accept the new thinking, the Ministry's activities became more and more driven by results-based management following the adoption of the UN Millennium Declaration and its emphasis on service delivery.

Policy documents down through the decades testify to the difficulties of determining what is actually meant by the terms 'capacity' and 'capacity development'. A paradoxical picture thus emerges. Most of the above-mentioned documents are clear in arguing that tackling capacity issues is crucial for the effectiveness and sustainability of development cooperation. At the same time, they are insufficiently clear about what 'capacity' actually means in operational terms, or about how its development can be ascertained. Similarly, many internal and public reports on the results of the Dutch bilateral development cooperation refer frequently to inadequate or absent 'capacity' on the part of the Southern partner as the reason why results have not been achieved.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> This trend is documented in greater detail in the 2008 IOB Africa evaluation.

<sup>77</sup> Bossuyt, J. (2001) *Mainstreaming Institutional Development: Why It Is Important and How It Can Be Done*. Paper commissioned by DGIS. Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

<sup>78</sup> Bossuyt identified five fundamental changes, e.g. the limited impact of donor support and the need to start from local conditions and capacities.

<sup>79</sup> In that sense, it does not appear so different from other vaguely defined terms such as governance and ownership.

Despite having recognized capacity development as a core business, Ministry officials considered it 'theoretical' and difficult to grasp. Intellectual leadership about the concept has rotated between different departments in recent years. During the 1990s, much work was done to advance key capacity development principles and thinking in the Ministry's policies and operations. Yet because of shifting leadership or 'dossier migration' on the issue, progress towards a guiding policy document on capacity development was difficult. Moreover, the erosion of thematic expertise in the Ministry made it harder to give meaning to the concept from a down-to-earth sector perspective.<sup>80</sup>

Adding to the complexity of the policy discussion was an ongoing 'conceptual struggle' in the Ministry between notions of good governance and of institutional development.<sup>81</sup> Good governance was seen as a 'normative' approach stressing participation, effectiveness, transparency and respect for rights. Institutional development, by contrast, pursued 'technical' advances from an economic perspective, in which emphasis fell on public finance management and public sector reform as a stimulus for good governance. Past Ministers also differed in their appreciation of the two approaches and in decisions about which to prioritize. Even during their terms of office, their positions shifted from an institutional development point of view to a more normative approach.

The location of the dossier within the Department for Effectiveness and Coherence (DEC) allowed capacity development to become associated with consolidated thinking on improving aid effectiveness. This increased its influence over the shape and nature of development cooperation from 2002 (the year of the UN Monterrey conference on Financing for Development) onwards. Longstanding efforts by different officials in DEC to advance the formulation of general policy guidance, however, stalled with the realization that capacity development, like institutional development, was relevant to a number of related though not always intimately connected ideas, and did not represent a full 'unity of thought'. The concept was considered so all-encompassing that it could not be expected to guide specific actions. In line with this realization, DEC eventually produced a more informal guidance document in which different visions and ideas associated with capacity development were brought together in a collection of 'brainwaves'. This was shared with the embassies.

Whereas technical approaches have tended to dominate, and have consequently led to targeting Dutch aid primarily on formal institutions in the South, more recent policy discussions have emphasized the need to look behind the façade and to engage in more political development cooperation.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> It was noted that earlier on there was a more established practice of technical assistants with hands-on experience of capacity development who were integrated into thematic departments later.

<sup>81</sup> These differences in views had already manifested themselves at the time that DSI/AI was created by removing the institutional analysis function from DMV.

<sup>82</sup> One can question though whether in practice such a shift to more political development cooperation has occurred, given that it is frequently posited that the MDGs have had a strong influence on development cooperation that is more oriented towards service delivery. What can be argued though is that current policy discussion would favour such a fundamental re-orientation in the future.

This is linked to international policy discussions, such as in Accra in September 2008, where a need to ‘broaden’ and ‘deepen’ the dialogue on development was emphasized. In the Ministry, this has led to further exploration of the policy dialogue instrument (especially in the context of budget support) and to support for ‘domestic accountability’. While the use of so-called new aid modalities – notably sector and general budget support – is expected to have a positive influence on the development of the capacity of key actors in developing countries, accountability is seen as an enabling condition for capacity development – and hence as something that can be targeted through specific interventions.

One conclusion from this section in relation to the bilateral policies and operations of the Netherlands is that the aforementioned gap between the new development language and the persistent control-oriented style of operation is still far from being bridged. This is shown, for instance, in the situation facing the Ministry’s SGACA framework of analysis, which calls for ‘modesty’ and a ‘get-real attitude’ as to what can be achieved through external intervention. However, Ministry-supported programmes face the high expectations set by the Ministry’s own policies and objectives and by the wider world of development cooperation. Hence they show a much greater degree of faith in social engineering than the SGACA approach would admit. Just as with the MDGs, which started as means but have increasingly become seen as ends in themselves, development cooperation itself might start to be seen as a goal in itself during times of increased political scrutiny, rather than as a means to assist countries in their own ongoing development processes.

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### 2.3.2 Development in Dutch civilateral development cooperation

In 2001, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced a policy memorandum ‘Civil society en armoede bestrijding’ (Civil Society and Poverty Reduction). This has been pivotal for Dutch policy on capacity development in civilateral development cooperation during the past decade. Its point of departure is that development of civil society is essential to counter poor people’s lack of self-reliance and to enhance their ability to stand up for their rights and hold their governments accountable.<sup>83</sup> The policy memorandum sees the chief role of Southern NGOs as fostering empowerment in society rather than delivering services (with the exception of fragile states, where service delivery by non-governmental bodies is often the only realistic option). The policy memorandum argues that from this empowerment perspective, non-governmental implementation of government programmes would undermine the strength of civil society.<sup>84</sup> At present, the Ministry and Dutch NGOs take the view that both service delivery and empowerment are tasks to be taken up by Southern organizations.

<sup>83</sup> Lammers, P. (2001) *Notitie civil society en structurele armoedebestrijding* (Report on Civil Society and Structural Poverty Reduction). Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Hague.

<sup>84</sup> Lammers, P. (2001) *Notitie civil society en structurele armoedebestrijding* (Report on Civil Society and Structural Poverty Reduction). Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Hague; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) *Policy Document on Social Organizations: Cooperation: Tailor-made Added Value*.

The Ministry acknowledges that support coming through the civilateral channel to a strong civil society contributes to sustainable poverty reduction. Dutch NGOs can best provide this support in a customized way, taking ownership and context sensitivity seriously.<sup>85</sup> However, a 2009 Ministry policy document ‘Maatschappelijke Organisaties: Samenwerken, Maatwerk, Meerwaarde’ modifies that standpoint. In this document the Ministry expresses its interest in increasing funding via the Dutch embassies directly to local civil society organizations (CSOs)/NGOs in line with international trends.<sup>86</sup> Motivating these changes derives from the fact that over time, Southern organizations have become stronger, obliging Dutch NGOs to reconsider their support to meet the demands of their partners.

The 2001 policy memorandum relays some interesting messages that are still topical for this evaluation.

- Civil society development is an endogenous and autonomous process.
- Where Dutch and Southern organizations relate on the basis of a common background (farmers’ organization-to-farmers’ organization, labour union-to-labour union), they are potentially equal partners. Core financing is the modality.
- Bilateral cooperation is supportive in creating an enabling environment for civil society development.
- Learning is essential for developing effective support strategies.

### Civil society development as an endogenous process

Strengthening the capacities of their Southern partners is a key element of Dutch NGOs’ strategies. They often see it as a means to reach overall development objectives or as something that needs to be enhanced for its own sake – but without elaborating on how that is to happen. Some Dutch NGOs take a strong position and do not differentiate between capacity development and their overall development policy. They argue that to set capacity development apart would reduce it to a mere technical subject, thus diluting the emphasis on politics and power.<sup>87</sup>

Reconstruction of the policies of the six participating Dutch NGOs indicates that most of them have no clear theory of change regarding capacity. In the absence of any theory of change to underpin their objectives and programmes, there is no clarity as to how Dutch NGOs expect their support for capacity development to ultimately promote the achievement of their overall development objectives – namely civil society empowerment, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and sustainable development. Since most of their Southern partners also lack theories of change, this situation is even more worrying.

A theory of change in terms of capacity development is also lacking in the application proposals for MFS II funding to the Ministry for the period 2011–2015. The proposals are also unclear about their Southern partners’ outcome statements and PME systems. This is not to

<sup>85</sup> Lammers, P. (2001) *Notitie civil society en structurele armoedebestrijding (Report on Civil Society and Structural Poverty Reduction)*. Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Hague.

<sup>86</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) *Policy Document on Social Organizations: Cooperation: Tailor-made Added Value*, p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> Partos (2010) *Synthesis report*.

say that an outcome statement for each partner would have been desirable in the Dutch NGOs' proposals, as there are simply too many partners. Nevertheless, no Dutch NGO made any comment about their partners having an outcome statement (or a joint outcome statement in the case of collaborative associations), or about how the Dutch NGOs' interventions would contribute to these outcome statements. This calls into question the extent to which the proposals are designed to be supportive of endogenous capacity development.<sup>88</sup>

Each Dutch NGO follows its own strategy for supporting capacity development. Reconstruction of the six participating Dutch NGOs' policies reveals that explicit strategies for capacity development are often present. Today, however, Dutch NGOs claim to base their overarching strategies (such as strengthening civil society) on principles of single-, double- and triple-loop learning.<sup>89</sup> Since 1999, Dutch NGO strategies have gradually left traditional technical assistance behind. Since about 2007, their policies have shown innovation, with shifts toward new approaches derived from the policy insights of international think tanks, PSO's learning-working trajectories (LWTs) and from their own research.

Some Dutch NGOs have made their assumptions about capacity development more explicit by referring to approaches that are linked to systems perspectives, in which capacity develops from within through non-linear processes. The Dutch NGOs acknowledge some basic realities: context matters, power is central and complexity looms large. Yet these advanced ideas are now coming under pressure in the proposals for the MFS II co-financing programme. These present many vague concepts about the objects and modes of support that the Dutch NGOs will provide, such as value chains, facilitation and the sustainable transformation of people. A question left unanswered in the proposals is, capacity development for what?

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### Support strategies

The Ministry's 2001 memorandum on civil society states that the aid system has often equated civil society with NGOs, thereby missing the nuances of traditional and informal structures, or neglecting them as players in decision making.<sup>90</sup> Where there is a surplus of donor interventions, the autonomy and endogenous nature of civil society development are also at stake.

In 2001, the Ministry expressed its preference for providing core funding rather than project funding for Southern organizations in order to guard their autonomy. It was felt that excessive project funding created a gap between NGOs and their communities, fostering the dislocation of NGOs and the distrust of the local communities. The preference for core funding applies to Southern organizations supported by Dutch NGOs as well as to Dutch NGOs who receive funds from the Dutch government. Yet the Ministry also stated that the

<sup>88</sup> Some proposals indicate the date/amount in consultation meetings with Southern partners in order to formulate the proposal for MFS II (2010).

<sup>89</sup> Proposals MFS II (2010).

<sup>90</sup> The policy note (2001) states that civil society includes a wide range of traditional and modern groups and organizations, activists, political parties, unions and NGOs, etc.

relationship between Dutch NGOs and Southern organizations was unequal because it was dominated by the issue of funding. Less than a decade later a new policy memorandum states that the financial relationship between North and South has become less important.<sup>91</sup> Financial resources are not sufficient on their own to forge a meaningful partnership. Know-how and strategic added value are more fundamental. Nonetheless, taking the MFS II grant scheme into account, the Ministry still contributes large amounts of funding to alliances of Dutch NGOs for programmes that spend at least 500,000 EUR annually.<sup>92, 93</sup> The proposals submitted are not always clear about the extent to which Southern partner funds will be made available as project, programme or core funding.

The 2001 and 2009 policy memoranda also state that there should be a change in the relationship between Dutch NGOs and their Southern partners. Because Southern partners have become more professional over time and better able to assume control of activities that strengthen civil society, the Dutch NGO should become more of a facilitator and a broker of knowledge and relations.<sup>94</sup> Adopting this perspective, emerging networks where people collaborate on an equal basis become more relevant.<sup>95</sup> Because organizations are changing and becoming stronger, the role of the Dutch NGOs needs to change too. The Ministry is seeking to increase direct funding from embassies to local CSOs/NGOs in line with international developments.<sup>96</sup>

A scan by IOB of the MFS II proposals showed that most Dutch NGO alliances support a large number of Southern organizations in strengthening civil society in many countries (some alliances are active in 20 countries). They refer to their target group as a whole, in plural terms (CSOs, partners, etc.) instead of focusing on particular organizations. Some proposals classified Southern organizations into certain categories, but often without further information about common goals, strategies or organizational professionalism. This makes it difficult to get a clear picture of each Southern organization that is being supported. When choosing and analyzing their target groups (one of the Ministry's prerequisites), Dutch NGOs took into account the institutional and other contexts in which target groups' problems are to be understood. They commonly used a SWOT analysis (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) method to study civil society as a whole for each country in which they are active, but they did not use that method when analyzing particular organizations. Possibly, this is the case because the Dutch NGOs wrote their proposals on the basis of their long standing relations with their Southern partners that are characterized

<sup>91</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) Policy Document on Social Organizations: Cooperation: Tailor-made Added Value.

<sup>92</sup> The Ministry sets as a criterion for obtaining funding that at least 25% of the annual income grants of the Dutch NGO (alliance) should be provided by sources other than the Ministry.

<sup>93</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010) Application Form: Co-financing System II 2011-2015 Phase 2. The Hague.

<sup>94</sup> Lammers, P. (2001) Notitie civil society en structurele armoedebestrijding (Report on Civil Society and Structural Poverty Reduction). Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Hague; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) Policy Document on Social Organizations: Cooperation: Tailor-made Added Value.

<sup>95</sup> Policy documents do not demystify the concept of facilitation or networks.

<sup>96</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) Policy Document on Social Organizations: Cooperation: Tailor-made Added Value.



by trust and flexibility. It is not clear whether Southern organizations actually submitted requests for support to each specific Dutch NGO or alliance of Dutch NGOs. The proposals say little about the selection of partner organizations, other than that they were chosen because they are rooted in their communities. In the proposals, it is generally difficult to get a clear picture of the types of organization that are being supported, and it is even harder to get a true read of their ability to contribute to the development of civil society.

### Bilateral and multilateral cooperation

The 2001 policy memorandum states that civil society needs operating space in order to play a role in sustainable poverty reduction. It refers to such things as access to information, proper communication tools and independent settlements of disputes. It calls upon bilateral and multilateral donors to urge local governments to create enabling environments for civil society, or at least to allow them to operate, as part of an overall approach to good governance. In countries with poor governance or where bilateral relations with the government are weak, civil society needs to build its own operating space. In such situations, a civil-society-to-civil-society approach is often the only way forward.

### Learning

The 2001 policy memorandum concludes that in the Netherlands, there is not a great deal of knowledge about Southern civil society.<sup>97</sup> What is missing are effective methods of gathering experience and knowledge of civil society organizations in ways that can help to shape Dutch policy. Calling on knowledge centres in the South to provide contextual information is therefore apposite.<sup>98</sup> Over time, the Ministry has stressed that monitoring and evaluation is pertinent for an organization to account for its work and to become a learning organization. According to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), there should be a balance between upward and downward accountability. In other words, Southern organizations need to be accountable to their members, partners and target groups as well as to their donors. It is important to ensure that their support connects to local problems and includes the participation of the poor.<sup>99</sup> This principle of mutual accountability also applies to Dutch NGOs, who need to be accountable to their Southern partners and to the Ministry.

The case reports and single evaluation reports reveal inadequacies in feedback mechanisms that would stimulate upward and downward information flows about results achieved through all levels (beneficiary, Southern CSO, Dutch NGO and Ministry). Monitoring and evaluation systems that are weak – or which are absent altogether – largely account for this lack of data.

The 2009 policy memorandum stresses that if policy influence or civil society strengthening are to be measured, realistic objectives and indicators are needed in the strategies of the

<sup>97</sup> Lammers, P. (2001) *Notitie civil society en structurele armoedebestrijding (Report on Civil Society and Structural Poverty Reduction)*. Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Hague.

<sup>98</sup> The Ministry does not highlight the lack of an adequate PME system that generates a bottom-up information flow.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

Dutch NGOs, their partners in the South and their networks.<sup>100</sup> These elements, however, should not limit an organization's flexibility to adapt to the dynamic context. This means confronting practices and attitudes of accountability that encourage risk avoidance in situations where innovative approaches to risk taking are required.

Despite these concerns, the Ministry created the MFS II co-financing programme, a rather technocratic process employing a large set of criteria and insisting on administrative and reporting obligations. This push has led to results areas and output being formulated in terms that are quantifiable. However, the intended outcome has not been quantified. As a consequence, the focus of the results of Dutch NGO interventions remains at the level of the Southern organization's outputs. It is assumed that there is a positive link between intervention and outcome.

Most proposals predict, usually by means of a timeline, when a certain output will be achieved. The budget has been allocated according to the intervention strategies, such as civil society building, but not according to capacity development per se. A development programme should include a baseline, mid-term reviews, monitoring and a final evaluation conducted by an external party on the basis of the OECD-DAC and IOB criteria. Lessons learned need to be shared between alliance partners as well as with Southern partners. Exit strategies are not always clearly described in proposals. Some proposals hold that sustainability is a matter of being able to attract donor funding, or of the target group's capacity to react to external shocks. The proposals do not give information about feedback mechanisms between Southern partners and their communities – they state only that the partners are rooted in the community.

## 2.4 Summary

### General

- Capacity development comprises a substantial share, about 25%, of financial support from international donors. Today capacity development is considered imperative for achieving the MDGs.
- Knowledge about and discussions on the effectiveness of support for capacity development have begun to advance, with potentially far-reaching implications. Yet despite these advances – alongside a recognition of the need to factor in complexity when looking at organizations operating in a fast-changing world – donor practices have remained largely unchanged. Relative to alternative approaches emerging in other sectors, policy development for capacity development has stagnated. Can the donors look beyond the concept of capacity development support as the transfer of resources, to a new paradigm in which facilitating the resourcefulness of Southern organizations is pivotal? Can donors see Southern organizations as open systems operating in complex, unpredictable environments – with all that that implies for donor support?

<sup>100</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) Policy Document on Social Organizations: Cooperation: Tailor-made Added Value.

- Given inadequate concepts and frameworks for monitoring, the effectiveness of donor support for capacity development is not routinely demonstrable.

## Effectiveness of international donor support

### *Capacity development in the public sector*

- Weaknesses constrain the efficient and effective operation of capacity development in the public sector. Sometimes this happens in ways that call into question the legitimacy of the public sector, particularly from the point of view of the poor majority.
- Donor support for capacity development in the public sector is often designed on the basis of 'what is missing', rather than from a 'what is present' perspective. Capacity then is most visible when it is NOT there, rather than when it is. Inadequate emphasis on context and what was learned from previous experience may contribute to this. A preoccupation with the supply of classic technical assistance from outside is still dominant in many donor strategies, and this too poses serious risks for relevance and local ownership of the support provided.

### *Development of NGOs*

- The purposes and capabilities of Southern organizations acting as intermediaries between donors and the poor (the NGOs), have been strongly conditioned by their relationships with donors – especially in terms of their financial dependence. As a result, NGOs risk losing their anchor in their own societies. Most NGOs manage to fulfil immediate, specific objectives, but evidence that most of them routinely meet longer-term, hard-to-quantify social, economic and political objectives is sparse and inconclusive. Efforts to build NGO capacity have yet to be studied systematically. But evidence that is forthcoming shows a growing capacity to satisfy donor requirements such as reporting. However, on wider working terrains over the longer term, evidence points to outcomes that are often weak and sometimes even lead to capacity erosion.

### *Development of civil society*

- Regarding the broad and diverse terrain of civil society, views diverge about its definition and how and for what purposes donors want to see it strengthened. Outcomes of deliberate efforts to strengthen it show weak and uneven (sometimes perverse) results. But evidence and analysis nonetheless suggest that active citizenship and meaningful participation can lead to a more responsive public sector. We should bear in mind though that mutual reinforcement is usually at work here too because enabling the environments of public systems and authorities is a deciding factor in whether civil society will flourish.

### *Dutch policy on capacity development*

- Dutch policy on development cooperation is, in principle, advantageous to capacity development. Measures taken in the late 1990s favoured support for capacity development: responsibility was delegated to the embassies; the shift to the SWAP was accompanied by a preference for sector support and general budget support; classic technical assistance ended; and the MFS I and MFS II programmes were introduced. Under these co-financing programmes, which accounted for some 20% of the overall development aid

budget, the strengthening of civil society emerged as a key strategy for poverty reduction. All of these measures indicated a solid policy foundation. Dutch policy compares very favourably with that of many other donors, who follow a far more traditional strategy. A serious weakness is that the importance of capacity development as a transversal topic that runs across all other sectors and themes, was not given sufficient follow-up.

- Dutch support for capacity development in bilateral programmes is often an integral part of overall policy support such as budget support and the SWAp. Reports do not systematically verify what capacity results have been achieved because the focus of reporting has moved to outputs and outcomes. DGIS efforts may thus be failing to enhance capacities in the fullest possible way. Efforts to shift the focus may therefore have to be continued.
- Certain issues are emphasized in the policy priorities of the civilateral programme. These include capacity development's endogenous character, its Southern ownership and the equal relationship between Dutch NGOs and their Southern partners. Documented experience and analysis indicates that these priorities are essential to success. However, incentives connected to rules and procedures, such as those associated with the MFS II co-financing scheme, limit the chances of these priorities being applied.

A close-up photograph of a green caterpillar on a brown branch. The caterpillar is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right. A thin white line extends from the caterpillar's body towards the text on the right. The background is a blurred green, suggesting foliage.

3

Changes in capacity, outputs and outcomes

## Reader's guide

This chapter presents findings of changes that have taken place in capacity, and the influence that those changes have had on Southern organizations' output and outcome. It provides answers to the first and second evaluation questions:

- 1 What changes have taken place in the capacity of Southern organizations?
- 2 What effects have changes in the capacity of these organizations had on the realization of their development objectives (outputs and outcome)?

Question 1 relates to changes in the five core capabilities. Question 2 asks to what extent changes in the core capabilities have helped Southern organizations to achieve their objectives.

Section 3.1 presents an overview of the evaluation's case studies and synthesizes the main characteristics of the capacity development systems, alleged outcome and contextual features manifested in the cases.

Section 3.2 presents the results of the identification of indicators procedure for each Southern organization, which was carried out at the start of each case study.

Section 3.3 presents the findings of changes detected in the core capabilities, outputs and outcome and examines the relationship between the changes at those three levels.

Section 3.4 discusses the influence of context, the positioning of Southern organizations in their context and the influence that external factors had on changes in the core capabilities.

Section 3.5 summarizes findings of this chapter.

## 3.1 Introduction to the cases

### 3.1.1 Overview of the cases

The evaluation comprised 26 Southern organization case studies. Twenty-three of these involved one of the 13 Dutch Development Partners (DDP) that provided support to the Southern organizations. The remaining three case studies were conducted in Ghana, where the Netherlands Embassy provides sectoral budget support. Most of the cases were on organizations situated in 11 sub-Saharan African countries: The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. The remaining cases were drawn from Latin America (Guatemala), South East Asia (Cambodia) and Eastern Europe (Georgia). Ethiopia and Kenya, each with three cases, received the greatest attention; Ghana featured in an entire individual evaluation that covered multiple districts.

The vast majority of these countries fall into the UN's Least Developed Country (LDC) category. Only CADEP and SCOPE in Southern Sudan would be considered to have 'fragile state' status – although the term 'fragile' could also be used for the oilseed value chains in the Karamoja region of Uganda, where the central government does not have a monopoly of force.

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Cases were chosen on the basis of the selection criteria in the general terms of reference and on criteria suggested by the DDPs. The criteria were, in the first place, related to the learning character of the evaluation, but practical considerations were also taken into account. The responsibility for the selection lay with the various DDPs or IOB, depending on who was responsible for each particular evaluation.

The chief criteria for selecting cases were:

- a distinct focus on sub-Sahara African countries;
- a mature working relationship between the DDP and a Southern organization that had lasted for at least five years;
- the availability of relevant research data (documentation, baseline data) and the logistical feasibility of the case study;
- a variety of capacity development interventions pertinent to the DDP linked to the case;
- capacity development initiatives that illustrated the typical approach of the DDP;
- a clear potential for contributing to further policy development on capacity development;
- priority was given to cases that had not been researched in depth previously; and
- fragile states and humanitarian aid did not receive a high priority.

Table 2 gives a country- and DDP-specific overview of the 26 Southern organizations (single organizations and collaborative associations) that were studied. PSO support was channelled through its respective Dutch member organizations; the names of these member organizations are noted here under the names of their respective Southern partners. For each case study, a report was drawn up (Annex 6).

Table 2. Overview of case studies		
DDP	Country	Name of supported organization of programming system
<b>Agriterra</b>		
	DRC	Syndicat de Défense des Intérêts Paysans – SYDIP
	Madagascar	Madagascar Farmers’ Confederation – FEKRITAMA
	Tanzania	Network of Farmers’ Groups in Tanzania - MVIWATA
<b>NIMD</b>		
	Guatemala	NIMD Field Office Guatemala
	Mali	Centre Malien pour le Dialogue Inter-Partis et la Démocratie – CMDID
	Kenya	Centre for Multiparty Democracy – CMD-K
<b>NCEA</b>		
	Georgia	Environmental Assessment System Georgia
	Guatemala	Environmental Assessment System Guatemala
	Mozambique	Environmental Assessment System Mozambique
<b>PSO</b>		
Tearfund	Ethiopia	Meserete Kristos Church Relief and Development Association (MKC-RDA)
Mensen met een Missie	Kenya	St Martin Catholic Social Apostolate
NIZA	South Africa	Freedom of Expression Institute – FXI
ICCO	Southern Sudan	Capacity assessment and development programme – CADEP/ Sudan Christian Youth Ministries International – SCYMI
Woord en Daad	Uganda	Karamoja Diocesan Development Services (KDDS)
<b>Partos</b>		
Oxfam-Novib	Cambodia	Partnership for Development in Kampuchea - PADEK
ICCO	Cambodia	Programme Support Team – PST
ICCO <sup>101</sup>	Ethiopia	Ethiopian Learning Alliance
Oxfam Novib	Kenya/ Somalia	Strengthening Of Civil Society Organization Involving Systems – SOCSIS
HIVOS	Malawi	Youthnet and Counselling – YONECO
HIVOS	African continent	Coalition of African Lesbians – CAL
<b>SNV</b>		
	Ethiopia	Honey Value Chain
	Kenya	Livestock Value Chain
	Uganda	Oilseed value Chain
<b>Ghana</b>		
Development Partners (RNE Accra)	Ghana	Ministry of Health, District Health System Birim North Ministry of Health, District Health System Kwahu South Ministry of Health, District Health System Atiwa

<sup>101</sup> The Ethiopian Learning Alliance (ELA) received support from a consortium of Dutch development organizations. The case was proposed by ICCO.



### 3.1.2 Characteristics

The Southern organizations that comprise the 26 case studies represent a wide variety of characteristics. The discussion of the case studies in the following sections aims to feature these main characteristics as a background to the presentation of the changes in the core capabilities, outputs and outcomes.

#### Scope, complexity and cohesiveness of Southern organizations

Across the 26 cases, the units of analysis differed considerably in terms of scope (national/regional), complexity (one actor, few actors or networks of actors) and cohesiveness (loose informal relationships or legally established structures). The Southern organizations varied from a loose four-person network in Cambodia, a well-established organization for community development in Kenya or a value chain for honey production in Ethiopia with thousands of people involved and tight economic links.

The five PSO member organizations and the four DDPs in the Partos cluster mainly focused on the functioning and operations of single Southern organizations, whereas SNV, NCEA and NIMD focused their interventions on a variety of stakeholders. Sometimes, the same DDPs focused on a wide variety of interventions and stakeholders. The NIMD, for example, worked in Mali mainly with political parties; but in Guatemala it worked with civil society organizations. And in Mozambique the NCEA worked with the Ministry of Coordination of Environmental Affairs, with an association of environmental professionals and with environmental NGOs; but in Guatemala it worked only with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. In Ethiopia SNV worked with national-level value chains on honey and in Uganda on oilseed; but in Kenya it worked with a regional value chain on livestock.

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All in all, the cases reviewed show an enormous range of Southern organizations in terms of scale, numbers, types of constituencies, degrees of connectivity and types of inter-dependency.

#### Types of Southern organizations

The types of DDP support studied concerned either single organizations in a setting with other stakeholders, or a wider set of interrelating actors. These interrelations encompassed a range of different collaborative associations, defined as 'groups of organizations that come together for a common goal'.

Table 3 gives an overview of the Southern organizations that emerged in the case studies. It distinguishes single organizations from collaborative associations, and notes the main actors and geographical scope.

The table indicates the wide differences in aims between the organizations studied. These ranged from service delivery for specific target groups, to advocating newly established political systems and institutions, to linking economic actors in efforts to improve income.

Table 3 also shows that the geographical scope in the majority of cases was national, with just a few cases being restricted to a district or smaller area. All the single organizations,

except PST, were formally registered in their respective countries. In some of the other case studies (notably on programming in environmental impact assessment, in value chains and in multi-party democracy) the collaborative associations were not formalized.

Detailed analysis of the collaborative associations indicated that seven were mainly engaged in dialogue and knowledge sharing with the general public and private and civil sectors, and three were aligned with organizations in the public and private sectors.

Cases that involved various stakeholders (EIA systems, the health system in Ghana, NIMD multi-party systems and the value chains) concerned a large number of individuals and actors, while other cases focused on specialized groups, such as rural membership organizations and NGOs.

The three EIA systems and the three Health District Systems in Ghana concerned six cases in which governmental organizations were pivotal. Three cases concerned farmers' organizations. The four value chain cases concerned governmental organizations, private sector organizations and NGOs who collaborated in an association. Thirteen cases concerned NGOs.

DDP	Single Organizations	Collaborative associations	Regional	National
Agriterra	Rural membership organizations for advocacy, empowerment and service delivery Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania		x	x
NCEA		Ministries of environment, civil society, the corporate sector, professionals for development and environmental impact systems Georgia, Guatemala, Mozambique		x
NIMD		Political systems (national platforms for political parties, political parties, parliamentary groups) Guatemala, Kenya, Mali		x
Partos	NGOs for advocacy, empowerment and service delivery Malawi, Cambodia, Somalia, Africa-wide	Learning alliance of DDPs for the development of value chains	x	x

PSO	NGOs for advocacy and service delivery Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda		x	
SNV		Value chains: honey, livestock, oilseed for serving interests of value chain members Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda	x	x
MoH Ghana		District health systems Atiwa, Birim North, Kwahu South	x	

### Principle outcomes (types of outcome statements)

The 26 case reports present a huge array of outcome statements, such as the following:

- ‘A solid institutional structure that represents the peasants in North Kivu and Oriental Province in land issue matters ...’
- ‘To facilitate civil society development and societal change through civic driven change and strategic stakeholder cooperation ...’
- ‘An organization that has been developed over a period of ten years with both external and local support and which is run by well trained and qualified personnel ...’
- ‘EIA improvement strategy aims to review the existing legal framework and existing regulations with regard to responsibility, compensation and reimbursement in the case of environmental degradation ...’
- ‘A competitive and sustainable oilseed sub-sector favourable to all stakeholders in the value chain ...’
- ‘Political party members engaging in dialogue on democracy issues; political parties with strong institutional and organizational capacities ...’
- ‘(...) promoting health, preventing diseases, treating the sick and rehabilitating the disabled ...’

Outcome statements should be defined in terms of measurable indicators and a time frame that make it possible to track progress over time. The outcome statements of the Southern organizations formulated in the case studies do not meet this definition because they were not defined as social change or were not put into operation in such a way that would allow the tracking of whether social change was being achieved over time.

The majority of the outcome statements made by Southern organizations supported through PSO, SNV and Agriterro, and some of those supported through the Partos DDP cluster, dealt with increased socio-economic development. These referred to the realization of better basic living conditions (food security, sustainable livelihoods, education and health services), better positioning in markets, favourable conditions for agricultural production, better access to credit or to land ownership. The outcome statements made by other Southern organizations that were supported via the Partos DDP cluster concerned civil rights actions and advocacy.

Outcome statements made by the Southern organizations supported by NIMD were put in terms of political system improvements in multi-party democracy. Outcome statements from the NCEA-supported environmental assessment systems were mainly derived from the national environmental laws; in two cases no explicit outcome statement was made, and in the third case the outcome statement corresponded to the results projected at the outset.

### Theory of change and capacity development policy

The Southern organizations described in the 26 cases were assessed according to whether a clear intervention logic (based on a theory of change) was present. They were also assessed according to whether or not they had a policy on capacity development, and if they had, how good its quality was.

An articulated theory of change appeared to be lacking in most cases – apart from CAL and PST in Cambodia. Rather, most organizations provided statements of action/activity based mainly on common values and goals. Most focused on promoting either socio-economic or socio-political development. While some linked these two processes, all had one primary focus.

In all 26 cases, the importance of capacity development in Southern organizations was clearly underlined, but explicit policies and strategies on capacity development were not always present. The following quotes from case study reports illustrate the importance and objectives of capacity development:

- ‘As regards the current capacity building strategy of the Ministry, it can be defined as not yet well shaped and planned ...’
- *‘Organisation Paysanne œuvrant pour une solidarité structurée afin de ... une transformation des paysans en ... professionnels de l’agriculture ...’<sup>102</sup>*
- ‘Capacity to understand and appreciate the core roles in the country’s political process ... Capacity to organize and mobilize popular ideologies and agendas ...’
- ‘Next to the Strategic Intervention Plan the Value Chain does not have an articulated capacity development plan ...’
- ‘With regard to capacity development our understanding of Patriarchy is crucial, because it provides a framework ... within which to express the totality of oppressive and exploitative relations ...’
- ‘... a primary need for the Freedom of Expression Institute is continual capacity development – helping people to understand their constitutional rights to freedom of expression ...’
- ‘These (views on capacity development) encompassed the availability and efficient use of human, financial and infrastructural resources to meet health service targets ...’

In most of the cases, there were no concrete plans of action for capacity development. About half of the case reports indicate that capacity development policy was implicit in the planned actions for service delivery or advocacy, while the other reports fail to describe what they did, or intended to do, in terms of capacity development. In the Ghana health sector,

<sup>102</sup> ‘Farmers’ organizations are established to promote structural solidarity ... And to develop farmers into farmers that are well capable of coping with the challenges of modern farming.’

on the contrary, well-articulated broad views on capacity development were given, as is shown in the last quote above.

### Context

Contextual factors play their own role in the development process. They can either enable or inhibit capacity development processes – often at the same time. It is for example possible that new markets open up opportunities, but legal provisions make it difficult to grasp them. Analyzing the complex influence of factors in the political, economical, social and cultural context is not easy, especially in gauging how these might stimulate or inhibit capacity development. Such analyses require an understanding of the dynamic context within which Southern organizations operate, but also an identification of the major factors influencing the process of capacity development within these organizations.

All case reports contained some descriptions about the contexts in which the Southern organizations operated. However, half the case studies were weak in terms of relating contextual factors to the ways in which the capacity of the Southern organizations had changed. Reports often provided only static descriptions of the main features of the legal and institutional environment. They did not provide clear descriptions of how changes in these features influenced the capacity of the Southern organizations. In most cases, Southern organizations were operating under conditions that were not described as detrimental. Yet it is not clear that studies paid sufficient attention to the environment, or that their assessments took enough account of the ways Southern organizations positioned themselves in their environments. The case reports, however, seldom referred to enabling environments. It is plausible to assume that the case reports understated contextual factors that inhibited capacity development.

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To a lesser extent, this also applied to studies on the Ghana health sector. This sector is integral to the apparatus governing the entire country. The District Health System functions within a general legal and policy framework, in which health districts seek to optimize their own operations. The case studies focused on this effort to achieve optimal functioning, whereas national health policies and related rules and regulations were indicated insofar as they were clearly affecting the functioning of districts. In this respect, in the Ghana cases, the scarcity of financial resources was frequently mentioned as a relevant context factor.

In a few cases, major political changes carried profound consequences for the Southern organizations. For example, in the case of NCEA's support for environmental impact assessments in Georgia, the Rose Revolution of 2004 introduced a major turnaround in the country's approach to private sector investments. As a result, Georgian authorities took environmental regulations as factors that were inhibiting economic growth.

In the case study on Agriterra's support for the membership organization, FEKRITAMA, the report mentions the frequency of political crises in Madagascar. One of the most serious of these, in 2009, affected the country's farmers in general and FEKRITAMA in particular. The case study on NIMD's support for the development of multi-party democracy in Kenya gives an account of the current state of the political parties and the lack of national cohesion due

to huge ethnic conflicts in 2007. The case study on Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK) gives an account of recent developments in Cambodia's civil society, and PADEK's position with respect to efforts by the government and opposition parties to restrict the scope of national NGOs.

## 3.2 Southern organizations' views of capacity

### Core capabilities as seen by the Southern organizations

For the application of the basic concepts of capacity, measurable indicators had to be formulated in ways that were relevant to the local context/reality – and where the core capabilities were to be used as the analytical frame. (See section 3.3.1 for an introduction to the basic concepts.) Before data collection began, local calibration of these indicators was essential in each case. The five core capability (5CC) indicators that were applied in the cases showed a realistic level of communality, which made it possible to look for capability changes and to observe trends.

The following sub-sections describe the main features of each core capability based on the common indicators that emerged during the calibration process.

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#### CC 1: Capability to act and commit

All seven individual synthesis reports underlined this core capability as being related to the presence of structures that can function efficiently with available resources. This means that the organization can plan, take decisions and can act in a concerted way. Reports also highlighted the importance of executive structures that had a legal basis for making binding commitments. The fulfilment of these commitments requires a clear ability to mobilize finances and human resources. Finally, the reports saw the presence of committed and stable leadership indispensable for the Southern organizations to work properly.

#### CC 2: Capability to deliver on development objectives

This core capability focused primarily on the availability of the current and future financial resource base. It received greater emphasis than the availability of human resources. Reports frequently referred to Southern organizations' dependence on external funding and its resulting vulnerability to risks of the withdrawal of such funding. Reports often mentioned the limited extent to which Southern organizations could generate their own financial resources through membership contributions or payments for services or products. This applies to the Southern organizations supported by NCEA. In the case of the environment ministries, funding depended on political decisions and on governmental budgets. In addition, reports frequently mentioned access to (external) knowledge sources as being important for an improved delivery.

#### CC 3: Capability to relate to external stakeholders

All studies underlined how important it was for Southern organizations to build and maintain networks with external actors. These actors include governmental structures, private sector parties, civil society organizations (CSOs) and end beneficiaries. In the cases

of organizations focused on service delivery for client groups and relationships with beneficiary groups (most of the organizations supported through PSO), government structures and civil society were seen as relevant. For the Southern organizations supported by NCEA, SNV, NIMD and Agriterra, emphasis fell more on the private sector, government structures and sometimes civil society. For activities supported by the Partos DDP cluster, a mixed picture emerged because highly diverse organizations were studied. Analyses of the Southern organizations supported by SNV and NIMD stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs). Relationships with international organizations, especially with regard to the acquisition of funding, were valued by almost all.

#### **CC 4: Capability to adapt and self-renew**

Reports referred to this capability as being highly influenced by internal factors in terms of openness to learning and the active pursuit of internal (organizational) learning – such as by setting time aside for internal discussions on the organization’s strategy and how it performed. Reports referred to external factors as well. These concerned the ability to analyze current political trends and to understand the consequences for Southern organizations. Whatever the size or complexity of the Southern organization, this understanding was seen as an important condition for its survival. However, understanding political trends was seldom formulated in terms of power relations and the strategies to address them.

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#### **CC 5: Capability to achieve coherence**

All seven individual synthesis reports stressed the importance of a clear vision and mandate as indicative of this core capability. Basic elements of this include a set of organizational principles, posed in operational terms in human resources management (HRM) guidelines. A logical complement was a planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) system geared to monitoring fulfilment of the operational principles. Reports further stressed the importance of leadership; at issue was whether the style of management fit the Southern organization and was applied consistently.

Table 4 summarizes the indicators that emerged from the case studies as common factors. The indicators in this table are, to a large extent, similar to the set of indicators that was formulated in preparation for this evaluation (Annex 2 in the general terms of reference). They are fewer in number and some indicators were linked to another core capability. A remarkable difference is the importance that Southern organizations attach to their capability to deal with their dependency on donor funding.

Table 4. Common indicators for Southern organizations	
Core capability	Indicators
To act and commit	Can plan, take decisions and act in concerted way. Has a legal basis for engaging in binding commitments. Can properly mobilize financial and human resources within the organization. Has committed and stable leadership.
To deliver on development objectives	Can guarantee current and future financial and human resources base. Can handle dependence on external funding to guarantee delivery. Can generate own financial resources (members, services/products, or subsidies). Can access (external) knowledge sources.
To relate to external stakeholders	Can build and maintain networks with outside actors for realization of its objectives. Can build and maintain relationships within its own setup/structures. Can build and maintain relationships with international organizations for the acquisition of funding.
To adapt and self-renew	Is open to learning. Is pursuing internal learning on performance and strategy. Can analyze political trends and understand consequences.
To achieve coherence	Has a clear vision and mandate. Works with set of organizational principles, operational/HRM guidelines/manuals. Handles PME system for its operations. Can consistently apply a style of management that fits the organization.

## 3.3 Changes in capacity, outputs and outcomes

### 3.3.1 Overview of changes in capacity, outputs and outcomes

Southern organizations occupy a central position in Figure 1. This evaluation looks at them as open systems with permeable boundaries that operate in, and adapt to, complex situations.<sup>103</sup> They are embedded in wider systems that transcend geographical levels (local, national and global) and are thus influenced by, and respond to, a range of contextual factors at the international, national and local levels. This approach offers an opportunity to take an endogenous view of capacity (the way organization take responsibility for themselves), rather than merely looking at what outsiders can do to promote it.

<sup>103</sup> IOB (2009) Evaluation of Collaborative Associations.



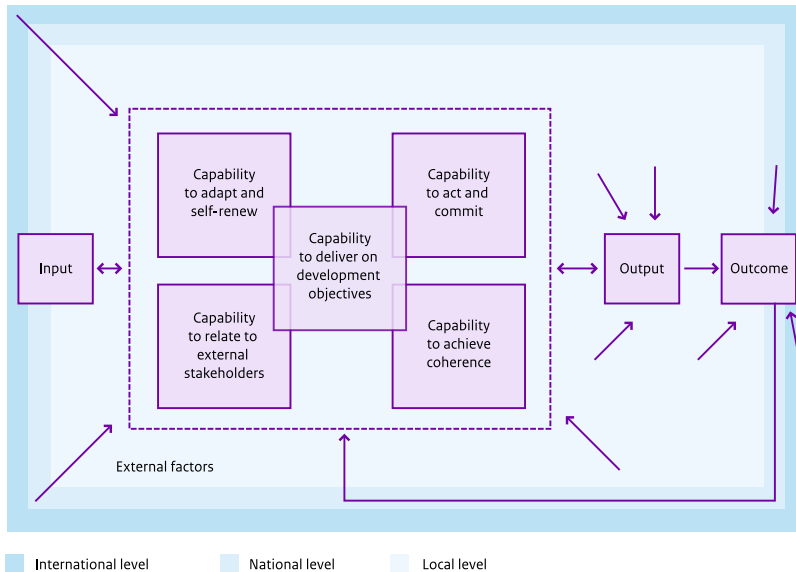


Figure 2: The analytical framework: Southern organizations as open systems

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This evaluation takes the position that an organization’s capacity is not an end in itself but a means for an organization to achieve its objectives – that is, to contribute to change in society. The question then is, capacity for what? The answer to this question is embedded in the organization’s objectives and the way in which these are specified in its outcome statements and corresponding outcome indicators.

Finally, the evaluation works on the assumption that every organization and collaborative association needs basic capabilities in order to achieve its development goals. To establish changes at the level of these basic capabilities, the evaluation is based on the five core capabilities as identified by Baser and Morgan:

- the capability to act and commit;
- the capability to deliver on development objectives;
- the capability to adapt and self-renew;
- the capability to relate to external stakeholders; and
- the capability to achieve coherence.<sup>104</sup>

The evaluation thus makes a distinction between the capability to deliver on development objectives – such as the number of doctors and nurses available in hospitals – and outputs such as the numbers of patients treated.

Table 5 provides an overview of changes in the core capabilities, outputs and outcomes. It also provides an overview of possible relationships between changes in capacity, outputs and the (reconstructed) outcome statement of the Southern organizations.

<sup>104</sup> Baser, H. and Morgan, P. (2008) *Capacity, Change and Performance: Study Report*. Maastricht, ECDPM.

The table is based on an IOB assessment of key information on these parameters found in the summary case descriptions extracted from reports on the 26 case studies (see Annex 6). Each case was assessed on its own merits, based on indicators that were generated during the calibration exercise with which each case study began. The cases are thus not assessed on one uniform set of indicators that would suggest a comparison across the cases. Therefore, the potential criticism that the analytical, 5CC framework cannot cope with diversity does not apply.<sup>105</sup>

The cases are listed from top to bottom, with cases at the top of the table showing the most significant changes across all five core capabilities. Cases towards the bottom of the table show that little change took place, or that the level of change was unknown. But it is important not to read the table as a 'league table' of Southern organizations; each of them has its own history and specificities that explain its placing in the list. Neither should the changes in the core capabilities be read as evidence of the quality or quantity of Dutch support – other factors may have been of equal or greater importance.

The case study reports had limitations that had to be taken into account in this table:

- In none of the cases was information about the development of the organization systematically documented or retrievable. Many indicators needed to be assessed on the basis of second-hand sources or self-assessment exercises. In such situations triangulation of information was critical to ascertain the reliability of the data. IOB concludes from the case study reports and feedback notes of the team leaders that this was done to varying degrees across the case studies. Ultimately, changes in the five core capabilities could be established most of the time but were often based on the perceptions of the Southern organization's staff.
- Most available output data were qualitative. Indications of the quality of the delivered outputs was not given in a concrete way in the reports. For example, output was expressed in terms of an extension of a health care system, but to a much lesser extent in terms of improved quality of this system.
- Many Southern organizations had no clearly described outcome statement and usually had no data available beyond anecdotal evidence about outcome achievement.
- External factors strongly influenced Southern organizations' capacity, outputs and outcomes. This made it impossible to establish causality between changes at different levels of the results chain. In addition, outputs and outcomes induced by changes in capacity were subject to time lags. Some of the case studies described changes in outputs over such short periods (the start of donor support had been very recent in some cases, for example) that outcome changes could simply not be expected. Consequently, the conclusion that changes in the core capabilities had a positive effect on outputs can be considered plausible at best. The presentation of the changes in the five core capabilities is limited to three broad categories – positive change, no change and negative change. This is because a more precise presentation in, say, five categories would have resulted in 'questionable judgements'. In cases where data were unsatisfactory or absent the term 'unknown' is applied.

<sup>105</sup> The validation of the 5CC Framework (2010) was carried out by Professor Alan Fowler, Dr. Paul Engel, Drs. Niels Keijzer, Drs. Eunike Spierings.

Table 5. Changes in the 5CCs, outputs and outcomes per case									
Southern organization	Changes in CCs/Outputs/Outcomes								
	CC1	CC2	CC3	CC4	CC5	Output	OS	Relations	OC
St Martin, Kenya							+	COO	
SOCSIS, Somalia							+	COO	
Honey value chain, Ethiopia								CO	
Oilseed value chain, Uganda								CO	
CMD-K, Kenya								CO	
MVIWATA, Tanzania								O	
District Health System, Birim North								CO	
CMDID, Mali								CO	
KDDS, Uganda								CO	
District Health System, Kwahu South								CO	
Livestock value chain, Kenya								O	
FEKRITAMA, Madagascar							+	COO	
EIA system, Mozambique							+	COO	
CAL, Pan Africa								O	
EIA system, Guatemala								CO	
CADEP, SCOPE/SCYMI, Southern Sudan								CO	
ELA, Ethiopia								CO	
NIMD programme, Guatemala								O	
YONECO, Malawi								CO	
PADEK, Cambodia								O	
SYDIP, DRC								O	
District Health System, Atiwa								O	
PST, Cambodia								O	
FXI, South Africa								O	
MKC-RDA, Ethiopia								O	
EIA system, Georgia								O	

C1	Capability to act and commit
C2	Capability to deliver development objectives
C3	Capability to relate
C4	Capability to adapt and self renew
C1	Capability to achieve coherence
OP	Outputs realized
OS	+ : Outcome statement reconstructed
Relations	coo: Relationship between changes in the 5CCs, changes in outputs and in line with outcome statement co : Relationship between changes in the 5CCs, changes in outputs and in line with outcome statement o : No clear relationship between changes in the 5CCs and outputs or outcome statement
OC	Outcomes realized

Positive change	No change	Negative change	Unknown
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### 3.3.1 Changes in the core capabilities

Table 5 tells us that out of 26 cases:

- 20 Southern organizations gained strengths in one or more of the five core capabilities;
- out of these 20 cases, 11 Southern organizations strengthened their capacity with respect to three or more of their core capabilities;
- three Southern organization's core capabilities remained the same; and<sup>106</sup>
- three Southern organizations (FXI, MKC–RDA and EIA Georgia) weakened considerably across the five core capabilities. These instances were related to factors either internal or external to the organization.

<sup>106</sup> Including the Programme Support Team (PST), which had three core capabilities for which no data was available.

Table 6 gives a summary of totals of changes per core capability.

Table 6. Totals of changes per core capability					
Change type	Act and commit	Deliver	Relate	Adapt and self-renew	Achieve coherence
Positive	15	10	15	8	8
No change	5	13	8	10	11
Negative	3	1	1	4	2
Unknown	3	2	2	4	7

- 15 Southern organizations improved their core capability to act and commit.
- 15 Southern organizations improved their core capability to relate to external stakeholders.
- 12 Southern organizations improved both their core capability to act and commit and their capability to relate to external stakeholders.
- Ten Southern organizations improved their core capability to deliver on development objectives.
- Eight Southern organizations improved their core capability to adapt and self-renew.
- Eight Southern organizations improved their core capability to achieve coherence.

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In terms of their capacity development, the issue of gender was focused on by only a few Southern organizations; most of the case studies paid no attention to this question.

Of the 15 positive changes in the capability to act and commit, 12 appear to relate with 12 positive changes in the capability to relate to external stakeholders. Positive changes in these core capabilities occurred both in collaborative associations and in single organizations equally. Legally binding commitments and guaranteed actions appeared to match networking with external actors based on relationships of trust. Collaborative associations showed this to a greater degree than did single organizations.

Progress in the core capability, to deliver on development objectives, could be identified less consistently. In ten cases there had been progress, whereas in 13 cases no distinct progress was observed. It is important to note that the core capability to deliver was often held to depend on donor funding. In cases where donor funding was uncertain, there were no positive changes in this core capability. This was especially true of Southern organizations supported by Agriterra and NCEA. In the three studies carried out on the health districts in Ghana’s health sector, funding constraints emerged as major factors inhibiting the achievement of development objectives. Strong and motivated leadership working closely with communities and networking at national level reduced this inhibiting factor.

Positive changes in the core capability *to deliver on development objectives* could also be seen in the Southern organizations supported by NIMD and SNV. These organizations provided technical assistance (including brokering for financial assistance) as their most important type of support. NIMD supports three country programmes. Those are entirely geared towards actors in the Southern organizations involved in the promotion and development of multi-party democracy. SNV's representatives were also prominently present in supporting value chain development in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

Changes in the core capability *to adapt and self-renew* do not show a clear pattern. Positive changes in this capability were detectable in Southern organizations only to a modest degree. In eight cases positive changes were reported. In ten cases no change was identified. In four cases a negative change was observed. And in four cases no assessment of change was given at all. It is hard to explain this fractured picture. Were the Southern organizations struggling to deal with internal challenges, or with the requirements posed by their environments? Perhaps they were failing to stimulate internal learning, or did not have clear time horizons defined. In the eight cases where positive changes were detected, the leadership put clear emphasis on internal learning and awareness of external market developments.

Positive changes in the capability *to achieve coherence* were detected in eight cases. Of the 11 cases where no change was observed, eight showed no change in the core capability *to deliver on development objectives*. Similarly, in four of the eight cases where there were positive changes in the capability *to achieve coherence*, there were also positive changes in the capability *to deliver on development objectives*. The relationship between these two core capabilities looks logical and they are highly complementary to each other. When considering the core capability *to achieve coherence*, reports often mention the existence of internal organizational guidelines on mandates, operations and human resources management. Linked to the core capability *to deliver on development objectives* were the availability of external funding and the presence of adequate infrastructures. In observations about the core capability *to achieve coherence*, no notable differences were found between single organizations and collaborative associations.

We can see from the information in the reports that the availability of sustained external funding (and thus the ability to attract funds), both depends on and influences the core capability *to deliver on development objectives*. It may be asked whether the tenuous relationship between funding and the core capability *to maintain coherence* means that all Southern organizations suffer equally from uncertainty of external funding. This might be the case in the long run; but in the short term, quality and style of management appear to be more important. This was shown in the cases of St Martin, Kenya, the three rural membership organizations, and the three health districts in Ghana.

A negative change in the capability to adapt and self-renew was detected in four cases. In three of these, a negative change had also taken place in core capability to act and commit. Specific factors contributed to this likely development. The environmental impact assessment (EIA) system in Georgia suffered greatly from the deterioration in institutional and legal frameworks as a result of the Rose Revolution in 2003. This made the EIA system less

able to act and commit according to its mandate. It was also less able to *adapt and self-renew* on account of simultaneous external pressure to loosen EIA requirements. In the other two cases, single Southern organizations had to cope with acute leadership problems, which weakened their ability to act and commit, causing a climate within the organization that was not favourable for internal learning.

In the pattern of relationships between certain core capabilities, no remarkable differences were observed between single organizations and collaborative associations.

### 3.3.2 Changes in outputs

The types of output differed according to the Southern organization involved. As an introduction to a detailed analysis of changes in outputs, Figure 3 categorizes the outputs that appear in all the case studies.

The cases are positioned in accordance with the areas in which the Southern organizations are active. For example, environmental assessment systems are active at institutional level (the ministry of environment, environmental regulations), and the social sector (public participation at community level, associations of environmental assessment technical experts).

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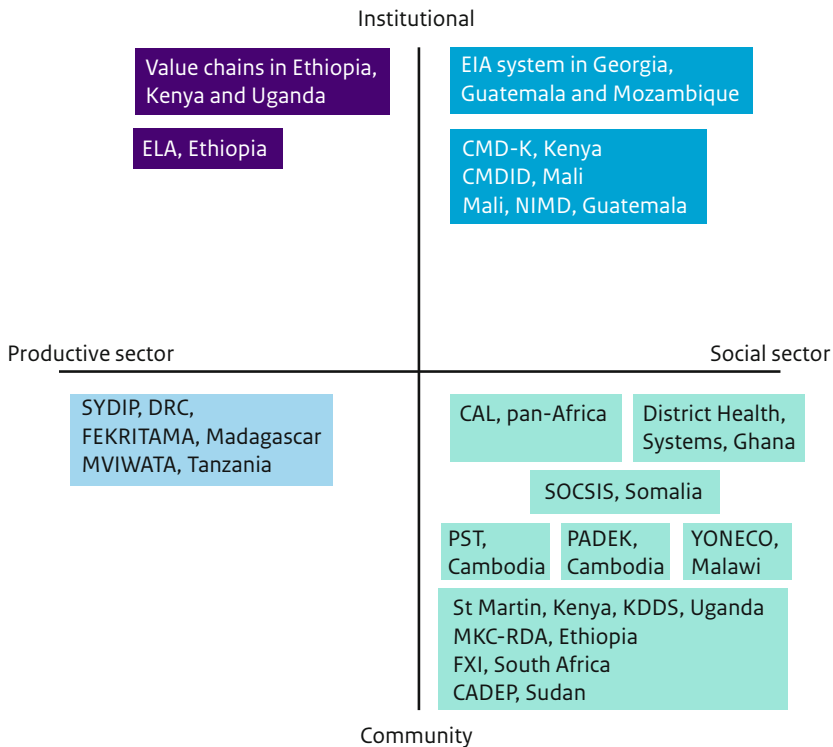


Figure 3. Types of output

The value chains on honey in Ethiopia, on oilseed in Uganda and on livestock in Kenya, along with the value chain for small farmers supported by the Ethiopian Learning Alliance (ELA), are collaborative associations that aim to enhance economic productivity. The aim is the creation of favourable conditions at institutional level by supporting the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms. Rural membership organizations aim at advocacy and the empowerment of farmers and are concentrated on farming communities active in production. The centres for multiparty democracy supported by NIMD, which are considered as Southern organizations, are concentrated on activities at institutional level that enhance multi-party democracy by, for example, creating platforms to bring political parties together for political dialogue.

All single organizations studied in the cases (CAL, SOCSIS, PST, PADEK, YONECO, St Martin, KDDS, MKC-RDA, FXI and CADEP) work in the social sector (HIV/Aids, community mobilization, education, and advocacy); these organizations try to ease constraints and give support at community level for civic empowerment.

According to Table 5:

- 15 Southern organizations improved their outputs, in most cases reflecting quantitatively greater output.
- Output remained the same in three Southern organizations.
- Output deteriorated in one Southern organization.
- In seven instances, no changes in outputs could be established.

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All 15 Southern organizations that improved their outputs showed a positive change in their core capabilities as well. For nine of them, it was shown that this relationship clearly existed – St Martin, Kenya; SOCSIS, Somalia; the honey value chain in Ethiopia and the oilseed value chain in Uganda; CMD-K, Kenya; the District Health Services in Birim North and Kwahu South, Ghana; CMDID, Mali; and KDDS, Uganda. This relationship between improved outputs and changes in core capabilities seemed to exist in a further six cases too, but the evidence for it was not as clear because they had positive changes in fewer than three core capabilities.

### 3.3.3 Changes in outcomes

The case studies showed that most of the Southern organizations did formulate statements of vision, mission, objectives and results areas. Such internal practices may be considered a type of outcome. Yet the notion of outcome appeared to be poorly recognized in Southern organizations. We see this because the case study reports show that few, if any, of the organizations distinguished between outputs and outcome or formulated their outcomes in such a way that progress could be tracked over time. Sometimes both concepts were used synonymously, and at other times the concepts were (partially) overlapping. Apart from this definition issue, Southern organizations usually had no PME systems for tracing the realization of objectives or the fulfilment of results. None of the case study reports put changes in outcomes in quantitative, time-bound terms. Nor did any report provide specific



qualitative accounts of outcome changes. That some reports linked outcomes with changes in the five core capabilities does not alter this conclusion.

The 'Outcomes realized' (OC) column in Table 5 indicates that none of the case study reports provided sufficient information to make an assessment about realized outcomes or changes in quantitative terms and within clear timeframes. Thus all cells are coloured grey.

### 3.3.4 Links between changes in core capabilities and outcome statements

The 15 Southern organizations that had a positive change in their outputs also experienced positive changes in their core capabilities. This allowed a possible link to be established. For four of these 15 organizations (St Martin, Kenya; SOCSIS, Somalia/Kenya; FEKRITAMA, Madagascar; and the EIA system, Mozambique) it was possible to relate these outputs with their outcome statements. Therefore, for these organizations a relationship could be established between changes across the five core capabilities and outputs and outcome statements. Those cases are marked with 'coo' (capabilities–outputs–outcome). For these cases it may be concluded that changes in core capabilities were relevant from the perspective of the Southern organization's outcome statement. For the 11 other cases, it was not possible to establish this on the basis of the case study reports and these cases are marked with 'co' (capabilities, output).

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## 3.4 Relevance of contextual factors

This section provides a more detailed analysis of the five aspects of contextual influences on capacity development:

- Operating space
- Politics and power
- Formal institutional factors and cultural values
- Supply and demand
- Perceived legitimacy<sup>107</sup>

### Operating space

The space within which actors in Southern organizations can make decisions, experiment and establish an identity depends very much on the economic, social, political and cultural factors of the environment. Creating and maintaining such a space requires a complex and delicate balance. The case reports described various factors in the environments of the Southern organizations. However, the case studies described changes that took place here mainly in general terms, while connections with the internal dynamics of Southern organizations did not become more transparent.

<sup>107</sup> The five perspectives are introduced in the IOB general terms of reference.

The case reports described the character of the five core capabilities and the changes that took place within them. These descriptions concerned the context within which Southern organizations were operating, but were predominantly described from an internal point of view: the main focus lay on the Southern organizations' abilities to gain these capabilities, develop networks and understand their environments. The reports revealed little about whether and how Southern organizations' environments allowed space for manoeuvring and about ways in which such space could be used and expanded. On the other hand, the reports never characterized the contexts as enabling environments, by stimulating or facilitating the performance of Southern organizations.

Southern organizations tend to see economic and political factors as realities that they are largely unable to influence. Moreover, they pay little attention to social and cultural factors. This was evident in the reports on Agriterro, NCEA and the Ghana health sector. It was also true of the PSO-supported organizations that were focused on service delivery.

Bucking this trend, the advocacy-oriented Southern organizations (principally supported by NIMD, PSO and the Partos DDP cluster), perceived political realities as susceptible to change. Yet their reports gave little attention to the economic, social and cultural aspects of the operating space.

### Politics and power

Changes in the core capabilities of a Southern organization are always influenced by politics and other patterns of power. Both politics and power also determine the extent to which a Southern organization can control the development of its core capabilities, and thus its performance. In the case study reports, as well as in the seven individual synthesis reports, changes in core capabilities can be clearly attributed in only a few cases to changes in politics and power relations.

An example of this is how the profound change in Georgia's political setting (the Rose Revolution of November 2003) caused a paradigm shift in economic thinking and related instruments which resulted in a complete modification of the environmental legislation as well as the simplification and abolition of the environmental assessment (EA) system. This shift has weakened the position of Georgia's Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources, causing a loss of control in its functioning. This process degraded the core capabilities of Georgia's EA system. In Guatemala the situation was also difficult. However, the country's government supported the EA system, especially since 2004, despite moves by existing interests to exploit natural resources illegally or at the cost of local communities.

Other examples of the influence of politics and power relations include NIMD's support for multi-party democracy in Mali and Guatemala. Mali had adopted a multi-party democracy in the new constitution of 1992. The process of building democracy in Mali was meant to be a gradual process to which different political parties remained committed. The current president, Amadou Toumani Touré, was elected president in 2002. He is not a member of any political party and his government has members from all of the political parties in the

country. This blurred the distinction between the majority and the opposition and reduced it to a mere question of symbols of expression. The control political parties could exercise was therefore heavily affected by the political environment.

The situation in Guatemala couldn't have been more different. Here 'authoritarianism marks all exercise of power ... the caudillo-style leader tends to restrict capacity building opportunities to party members he selects from his own circle ...'. These practices constrained other political parties seeking to respect transparency and democratic values.

PSO's support (through ICCO) for the Capacity Assessment and Development Programme (CADEP) operates in the very volatile political environment of Southern Sudan. That region has had semi-autonomous status since 2005, when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed. This situation persisted until January 2011, when a referendum was held on the separation of Southern Sudan from Northern Sudan. The pro-independence outcome of the referendum may change the whole operating environment of CADEP and also its control over the situation.

In the SNV synthesis report, the current operating environment was not seen as problematic. The value chains were able to exercise sufficient control over their actions. In the Agriterra report, the importance of political and power factors was addressed, but these factors were seen as difficult to grasp. The PSO and Partos reports give little attention to politics, power and control as factors that influence capacity development.

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The Ghana synthesis report mentioned the new impetus behind national health policies in the 1990s after the country's economic decline in the 1970s and 1980s. A series of health reforms have been implemented since then. These aim at increasing access to health services through improved community-based primary health services, a national health insurance system and a shift from a curative to a preventative approach. In spite of austere budgets, these reforms were important for the performance of the District Health System.

### **Formal institutional factors and cultural values**

Formal institutional factors refer to legal and regulatory frameworks with related enforcement structures. Cultural values concern those objects, conditions and characteristics that society considers important. They all constitute the 'rules of the game' in a society.

'The rules of the game' in which an EA system operates were elaborately described in the case reports about NCEA's support to the EA systems in Mozambique, Georgia and Guatemala. They referred to laws, procedures and judgements that should guide environmental impact assessments. The case reports also offered elaborate descriptions of the formal institutions (ministries, professional institutions, NGOs) involved.

In the case of the Ghana health sector, the synthesis report sketched clearly the policy reforms that resulted in new health system elements and related rules and regulations. The framework in which the district health services operated and what these services could expect from central government were quite apparent. The report put a good deal of

emphasis on ‘the interaction between the individuals (the health workers), their institution (history, memory, resources, leadership), their community/society (e.g. health needs, demands, power) and broader Ghanaian society (e.g. attitudes to works, accountability, ethic)’. In other words, contextual factors were seen as conditioning and enabling at the same time.

The SNV studies emphasized the different institutional factors and actors (ministries, chambers of commerce, knowledge institutions, etc.) relevant to the value chain operations. However, the legal frameworks received much less attention. The Agriterra reports on FEKRITAMA and SYDIP listed pertinent issues, such as the fragmentation of land, limited access to modern means of production, weak communication systems, bad infrastructure, limited access to financial resources, weak commercial circuits, limited access to education and health services, and their relationship with the organizations in question.

The report on CMDID, Mali supported by NIMD described the role formal institutions and legal frameworks in direct relation to the capacity development processes of the CMDID and the political parties. The reports on the NIMD Guatemala Office and CMD Kenya did that to a lesser extent.

In the PSO and Partos studies, the picture was mixed. For example, the case study on St Martin (supported by PSO member organization, Mensen met een Missie), makes an inventory of regional state organizations, community organizations, international organizations and civil society (churches, disabled association, AIDS coordination networks, etc.) and describes the influence of institutions on capacity. The Partos case studies described the role of formal institutions in the development of Southern organizations in ways that were sometimes informative and sometimes superficial, but always in a static way.

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Most of the studies indicated the relationships between specific institutions, frameworks and values on the one hand, and the distinct capacity changes they were generating on the other, in varying degrees of detail. The studies of the Ghana health sector and of SNV’s support for value chains were the most explicit in this respect.

Cultural values that affect capacity development got little attention anywhere. The case studies did not reveal strong cultural elements in the relationships between actors that could have been considered relevant to capacity development. The case studies of PSO’s faith-based organizations noted the importance of common religious values for these organizations, but offered no further reference to cultural factors. Here too there are factors that are difficult to see and understand.

### **Demand and supply**

Most of the case studies offer rich descriptions of the networks of stakeholders with which the Southern organizations are dealing. Less clear are the relative interests of the beneficiaries of these networks and why they are important. Reports on collaborative associations differ in the clarity of their definitions of beneficiaries, that is, those that exercise the main demand on the organization’s services or products. By contrast, for the single organizations

oriented to service delivery, the case studies indicate tangible beneficiary groups, namely communities, farmers, women or children. When advocacy is done in support of this service delivery the definition of beneficiary groups remains clear; when it regards advocacy per se, these groups are less visible.

Where more complex interventions were at stake, such as in the development of EA systems, of national political platforms and political parties, or of value chains, the clarity regarding how the beneficiary was defined was much more problematic. Should the environment ministries be considered beneficiaries of improvements to EA systems? Is a beneficiary a company whose investment plans have to be screened from an environmental point of view? Or should the inhabitants living near such investment projects be considered beneficiaries?

Similarly it may be asked whether political parties or voters are the main beneficiaries of a multi-party system. Finally, the beneficiary definition in value chains is just as complex. It rests on which specific and competing stakeholder interests in a value chain have to be addressed. Enterprises operating in the value chain seek improved profitability, while consumers (i.e. beneficiaries) who are purchasing the value chain's end product (honey, oilseed) want to get good quality for the lowest price.

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The supply side of support must thus focus on the demands of a wide range of beneficiaries. Only Southern organizations that develop the capability to understand these demands in their environments and then connect with their beneficiaries can strengthen their performance and legitimacy. The NCEA, NIMD and SNV case studies described a multi-stakeholder orientation, but they failed to highlight how the demands were articulated in their various environments, and how these organizations tried to match those demands.

In the enlargement of the Ghana health sector since the 1990s, community involvement in developing the community-based primary healthcare approach was an important element. As a result, the sector was better placed to articulate and steer demand. Health service delivery improved as the communities were given distinct responsibilities in the implementation of these services.

### Perceived legitimacy

The legitimacy of all supported organizations was indicated and described in legal terms. Nearly all single organizations and collaborative associations were registered in line with national legal requirements. But whether all of these Southern organizations were considered legitimate is less apparent. Accountability, as the very basis of legitimacy, is complex. Different stakeholders (government, local beneficiaries and the donor community) have different views about what should be considered as basic requirements. Legitimacy commonly depends on the importance stakeholders attach to their activities, and the extent to which they were able to mobilize adequate resources for this purpose.

The case studies on support for single organizations barely referred to client satisfaction. Reliable data on this were largely lacking. Support organizations (such as PSO) gave no

focused attention to this issue because capacity development stood at the centre of the analysis. Other reports expressed appreciation for the contributions Southern organizations were giving to enhancing social value (service delivery, strengthening EA systems, political parties, and rural membership organizations, and facilitating value chains), but only in general terms. There is no systematic analysis of client satisfaction in ways that specify stakeholders' appraisals and the capabilities that Southern organizations should mobilize for this purpose.

The case reports of the organizations supported by PSO, the Partos DDP cluster, NIMD and Agriterra considered dependence on donor funding to be an important external factor. An important part of the support from these DDPs was the provision of funding. This often led the supported Southern organizations to consider donors as clients. Whether the donor community was also considered as having legitimacy depended on the way in which each donor handled the issue of local ownership. The link between ownership and client satisfaction was barely elaborated on in the case reports.

The studies of the Ghana health sector made a distinction between 'political legitimacy' and 'social legitimacy', referring respectively to political accountability of health service delivery and to the social acceptance of the quality of health services. The report concluded that no ambiguity existed between these two types of legitimacy, which implied that there were no major contradictions between the district health services and their environment.

### Summary of contextual factors

Some case studies illustrated clearly that capacity development was influenced in a fundamental way by the operating space of the Southern organizations. However, the political positioning of the Southern organizations was often not clearly indicated. Most of the reports made no systematic analysis of the specific influence of political and power factors. They may have mentioned these factors, but failed to take them up in the analysis. Therefore, it remains to be analyzed just how decisive contextual factors are for the capacity development of a Southern organization, and whether these factors outweigh the support provided by the Dutch development Partners.

How the cultural values that play a prominent role in the context of any organization affect its capacity development receive little emphasis in the reports. These aspects are important, but at the same time are hard to pin down. To what extent could they have been investigated following the approach used for this evaluation? Might a different evaluation approach or different human resources be required?

Donor dependency often emerged as an important factor, even to the extent that Southern organizations put a great deal of time and effort into meeting donor requirements. This may come at the cost of improving the organizations' demand orientation and legitimacy to the detriment of their target groups and their image as locally anchored organizations.

Organizations often see economic and political factors as fixed realities that are beyond their sphere of influence. Yet we saw that political factors were sometimes addressed in

order to realize change. In general, Southern organizations' perceptions of social and cultural values received little attention. Unresolved is the question of the extent to which political environments allow Southern organizations to act as they do. But the opposing question is also valid: to what extent are they enabled to follow their course?

## 3.5 Summary

### Core capability framework

On the basis of the calibration of local indicators and their transposition to the 5CCs, the evaluators identified a set of common indicators. To a large extent these 'new' indicators were similar to the 'original' indicators mentioned in the evaluation's general terms of reference, but sometimes they were more specific. A remarkable contrast to the original set of indicators is the importance Southern organizations attached to their ability to handle donors. At the same time, this was not surprising considering their dependency on donor funding.

### Changes in core capabilities

Twenty out of the 26 Southern organizations strengthened their capacity with at least one of the five core capabilities. Out of these 20 cases, 11 strengthened three or more core capabilities.

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Most frequently, Southern organizations strengthened their capability to act and commit (15 instances) and to relate to external stakeholders (15 instances). Positive changes in the other capabilities (to deliver on development objectives, to adapt and self-renew and to achieve coherence) were less frequent, accounting for ten, eight and eight cases respectively. Across the 26 cases, there was often a parallel development between the core capabilities to act and commit and to deliver on development objectives. No other clear patterns of parallel development were detected among core capabilities. The development of some core capabilities seems to have been related to the development phases of the organizations. A start-up organization, for example, generally gives priority to its capability to deliver on development objectives. In this respect, no significant differences were observed between single organizations and collaborative associations.

It is important to note that the core capability to deliver on development objectives was often held to depend on donor funding. In cases where donor funding was an uncertain factor, there were no positive changes in the capability to deliver on development objectives. In the three studies carried out on the districts in Ghana's health sector, funding constraints were considered to be a major factor inhibiting the achievement of development objectives. It was shown that strong and motivating leadership that worked closely with communities and networked at national level reduced this inhibiting factor.

### Sustainability of changes in core capabilities

The sustainability of developed core capabilities is often uncertain. Organizations' failure to sustain capabilities is caused by several key factors: the unpredictable context in which they operate; their inherent weaknesses; and donors' policies and administrative requirements. Capacity development may have to be seen as a continuous process by which organizations

struggle to stay relevant in rapidly and continually changing circumstances, both external and internal.

- *Contextual.* Southern organizations are fundamentally influenced by their operating space. However, their political positioning is often not clearly indicated. Organizations often see economic and political factors as fixed realities incapable of being influenced; yet political factors can sometimes be addressed in order to realize change. In most case studies, no systematic analysis of the specific influence of political and power factors was made. They may have mentioned these factors, but failed to take them up in the analysis. It remains thus to be seen how decisive contextual factors are for Southern organizations and whether these factors outweigh the support provided by their donors, including the Dutch development partners.
- *Internal.* A typical Southern organization in this evaluation lacks an outcome statement, a theory of change, a policy on capacity development and a planning monitoring and evaluation (PME) system that produces reliable data on outcome realization. These organizations therefore have an insufficient basis on which to assess whether they are achieving their development objectives and to learn systematically from their experiences. Consequently, they cannot develop their organization in such a way that it would be better positioned and equipped to be effective. Leadership has been shown to be decisive in creating such a culture and practice.

### Links between changes in core capabilities and outcome statements

All of the 15 Southern organizations that improved their outputs showed a positive change in their core capabilities as well. For nine Southern organizations, this link could be seen to exist clearly. For five other cases, this link also existed, but the evidence was not as clear because they had positive changes in fewer than three core capabilities.

In none of the cases was it possible to ascertain what changes had taken place in outcomes because none of the Southern organizations had records on outcome achievement. Therefore, the extent to which Southern organizations contributed successfully to civil society development, improved income of poor people, etc. remains unclear. Similarly, there is no clarity as to whether or not positive changes in the Southern organizations' core capabilities helped them to achieve their development objectives.

All 15 organizations that improved their outputs also experienced positive changes in their core capabilities. It is plausible that in these cases changes in core capabilities contributed to an improvement in outputs.

For four Southern organizations, it was possible to establish a relationship between changes across the five core capabilities and changes in outputs in ways that made them more relevant in terms of their outcome statements. For those cases, it may be concluded that changes in the core capabilities were relevant from the perspective of the Southern organization's outcome statement.



### **Planning, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development**

The case studies illustrate clearly that the development of core capabilities, and how that permeates outputs and outcomes, is a dynamic process that is influenced by many internal and external factors. However, it may take considerable time for that to take place. Mono-causal relationships, on which many PME systems are founded, do not match complex realities. PME systems that can incorporate those dynamics need to be applied.

Both DDPs and the Southern organizations they support should be clear about what contextual factors influence output and outcome changes. This is because output changes logically relate to the outcomes the Southern organization aims to achieve. The case studies provide some insights into these factors, but questions still remain.



4

Evidence of effective Dutch support



## Reader's guide

This chapter presents findings on the effectiveness of the DDP support.

It provides answers to the third and fourth evaluation questions:

- 3 How effective have the interventions of Dutch development partners (DDPs) been in terms of strengthening the capacity of Southern partners?
- 4 What factors explain the level of effectiveness of DDP interventions? What lessons can be learned?

Section 4.1 presents an overview of the types of support provided by the DDPs and shifts in trends.

Section 4.2 presents findings on the effectiveness of Dutch support and discusses the quality of DDP support as an explanation of their effectiveness.

Section 4.3 summarizes the findings of this chapter.

Readers have to keep in mind that the results chain has been defined from the perspective of the Southern organization. Thus, outputs are the Southern organizations' outputs and their outcomes are defined as changes in the society to which they contribute. These definitions may thus differ from results chains defined from the perspective of the DDPs, who usually define their outputs at the level of inputs of the Southern organization (Annex 5).

## 4.1 Types of DDP support provided

### 4.1.1 Categorization of DDP support

On the basis of the 26 case studies, IOB identified three categories of intervention as a starting point for analyzing the effectiveness of DDP support. These are:

- Financial support
- Technical assistance, expert role
- Technical assistance, facilitating role

According to these categories, an overview of the types of intervention implemented by the DDPs in the period 2000–2010 is presented in Annex 7.

### 4.1.2 Long-term commitment of the DDPs

In accordance with the criteria of case selection, most cases showed DDPs supporting their partners for extensive periods of time. More than half the cases showed DDP involvement lasting longer than five years. Some DDPs engaged themselves in multi-annual efforts. SNV Uganda worked with three-year strategic cycles. Hivos funded three projects for the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) between 2003 and 2007. NIMD funded CMD–Kenya for six years with core funding to cover the organization’s administrative expenses and programme activities. NCEA worked on strengthening the EIA system in Guatemala for over a decade. The length of involvement was mostly related to a relationship of trust between the DDP and its Southern partner. The Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) provided on average US\$14,8 million a year to the Ghana health sector.

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### 4.1.3 Financial support

Financial support involves general budget support and sector budget support. It also involves core funding, programme/project support, material equipment, etc. Regular dialogue between the DDPs and their Southern partners about the Southern organization’s needs and its performance is assumed as inherent to the provision of financial support.

Five DDPs<sup>108</sup> provided financial support: The Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), Agriterria, NIMD, the Partos DDP cluster (Oxfam Novib, ICCO, Cordaid and Hivos) and PSO. Financial support covered long-term core costs, project and programme activities, office materials, and other recurrent costs and special projects. PSO differs from the other DDPs in the way it finances Southern organizations. PSO channels funds to its Dutch member organizations, which are, in turn expected to improve the quality of the Southern organizations’ capacity. In other words, the

<sup>108</sup> The Royal Netherlands Embassy can be considered as one of the DDPs, except when referring to the entire donor community in Ghana, when the term ‘donors’ is used.

PSO results chain includes an additional link.<sup>109</sup> PSO aims to enhance the capacity of its Dutch member organizations by means of learning-working trajectories (LWTs).<sup>110</sup>

For recipient organizations, Dutch financial support was, in most cases, substantial. In some cases core funding covered most of the Southern organization's overall budget. For example, Oxfam Novib covered 65% of PADEK's budget; NIMD provided 86% of CMD-K's budget for the entire period under review; Agriterra's funding to SYDIP in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from 2007 to 2009 covered almost 60% of its budget (81% in 2002 and 57% in 2005), while its funding to FEKRITAMA in Madagascar accounted for almost all (90%) of that organization's budget.

The Ghana health sector cases involved mostly bilateral and multilateral donors.<sup>111</sup> Donor resources were channelled through three different mechanisms: a) multi-donor budget support; b) direct earmarked funding; or, c) a common health basket. The Dutch government contributed 23% of the SWAp through earmarked funds for the Ghana National Drugs Programme, as well as some other health-related programmes, such as bilateral health research and an integrated community-based distribution programme.

NCEA and SNV did not provide financial support. However the technical assistance provided by NCEA and SNV cannot be seen independently of financial support. For example, in Mozambique in 2005, when preparations for the (memorandum of understanding) MoU between the Ministry of Coordination of Environmental Affairs (MICOA) and NCEA were about to be finalized, the Netherlands Embassy decided to stop its support to the environmental programme in favour of other sectors because of donor harmonization. This meant that the environmental impact assessment (EIA) section of MICOA no longer had the necessary funds to implement its part of the programme. As a result, programme preparation was halted.<sup>112</sup> In Central America, NCEA worked on strengthening the EIA system in Guatemala for over a decade. This was not through direct funding, but in cooperation with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which channelled support from donors for a project to strengthen EIAs in the region. In two projects for strengthening EIAs in Guatemala, NCEA acted as an advisory body.

SNV support for value chains could be quantified in man-days. One of SNV's capacity development strategies was to help its partners to attract funds. The combination of support for capacity development and financial support was considered to be essential for the performance of the value chain. The value chain needed financial resources in order to scale up production and to expand into other markets.

<sup>109</sup> However, in the case of KDDS in Uganda, PSO also gave direct funding to a Southern organization.

<sup>110</sup> A learning-working trajectory (LWT) is an agreement between PSO and its member organizations in which the member organization explicitly formulates what capacity building means to them and sets out the challenges they face in the field of capacity development. These LWTs help member organizations to identify their challenges in the practice of capacity development in the South and define what they should learn within the period of the agreement.

<sup>111</sup> USAID, the EU, DFID, Danida, JICA, UNICEF, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, GTZ, WHO and RNE.

<sup>112</sup> NCEA (2010) Case Report Mozambique.

A donor may provide funding to a Southern organization, and private investors may provide grants. For example, a bank might be interested in investing because it sees the risk of failure as lower when a donor is closely involved in the programme. This appears to have been the case in the value chains, where private investors may have considered SNV as a watchdog that was monitoring the quality of the performance of the value chain. Given the examples of NCEA and SNV, one can conclude that technical assistance and financial support are closely interlinked.

#### 4.1.4 Technical assistance, expert role

Expert services reflect the provider organization's institutional expertise and history – which is often accumulated over a long period of time. In this category of provider organizations are the NCEA, with its many years of experience; Agriterro, which embodies the rich expertise of the Dutch farmers' organizations; and the NIMD, which reflects Dutch political parties' experience of multi-party democracy. Fulfilling this role also involves coaching and advisory services, stimulating interaction and reaching consensus on controversial matters and technical issues.

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NCEA assumes this role in controversial projects because of its technical expertise. In 2000 for example, NCEA was called upon to contribute to the case of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline in Georgia – the highly complex and disputed project to build an oil and gas pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey. NCEA's direct involvement was not in the first instance about capacity development, as it was to provide technical and process support on a neutral and independent basis. The policy dialogues that NCEA had with government and the oil company, BP, built trust and confidence on which further support could be formulated and implemented.

Some of NIMD's training courses sought to make political parties more efficient. With NIMD technical support, political parties in Mali in 2006 adopted a code of conduct for holding elections. NIMD creates platforms for political dialogue between members of political parties, and exchanges knowledge with members of political parties and NIMD staff to enhance multi-party democracy.

NCEA offered expertise on environmental assessments and thus provided technical advice on the quality of EIA reports, guidelines and rules and regulations. It also offered advice on the training of staff in environment ministries and consultants on conducting environmental assessments. It also acted as a technical expert in policy and political dialogues related to complex investment projects.

All DDPs that provided financial support also provided technical assistance. This consisted of activities such as training, coaching and technical advisory work. Some examples were:

- Although Hivos does not, as a rule, do so, it provided technical assistance to YONECO in Malawi on strategic planning processes, results-based management, governance training for the board and an HIV/Aids workplace policy.

- In the PSO case of St Martin in Kenya, the DDP provided long-term technical assistance to improve management systems and organizational structures and to develop manuals and training modules for staff and volunteers on financial management and leadership.
- In the PSO case of CADEP in Sudan, ICCO provided technical assistance in schools that focused on life skills training for staff, teachers and students.
- In the PSO case of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) in South Africa, NIZA provided services for training journalists and other media organization staff to strengthen their ability to lobby for freedom of expression.

Until classic technical assistance became an important policy issue in Ghana at the end of the 1990s, the strategy of donors was to provide long-term support by placing donor representatives in the Ministry of Health and other relevant departments to oversee and evaluate technical assistance initiatives that were often funded by the donors themselves. Since that time, the strategy has evolved towards short-term assistance. Here the focus is in the districts and sub-districts, where the approach depends on the donor. Some donors provide capacity development support to organizations or to the Ministry of Health. Others, such as USAID, support technical assistance directly to the districts. Yet other donors provide sector budget support, with the assumption that this will support technical assistance through the national system. Thus the donors' support for technical assistance is broad. It includes individuals (through one-off training programmes), organizations, networks of organizations and a combination of these.

### 4.1.5 Technical assistance, facilitation role

Facilitation entails a broad range of support activities and is often associated with a shift in policy from exogenous to endogenous development processes. DDPs in this category provided services in linking and relationship building and services that attempt to influence decision making and policy making by talking to the actors concerned.

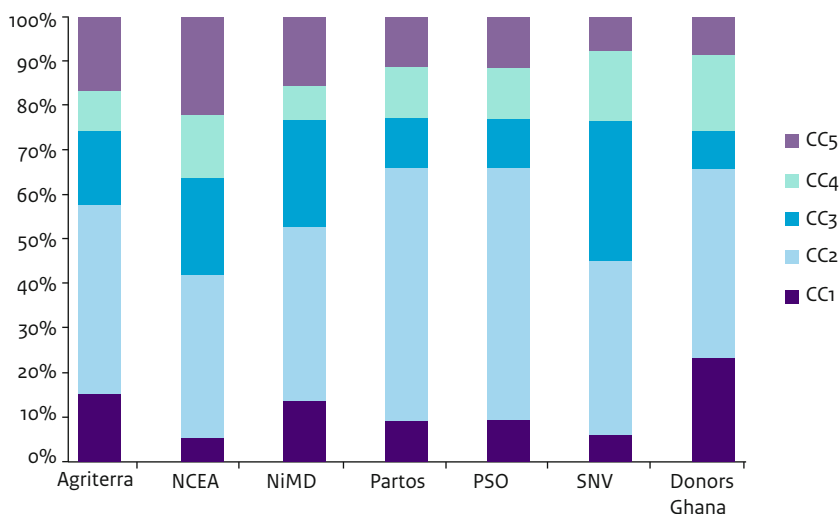
SNV's work is an example of a DDP moving in this direction. SNV holds that the combination of funding and support for capacity development is essential for the performance of the value chain. SNV itself does not provide direct financial support, but brings stakeholders in the value chain together with donors or investors who might be interested in providing financial support. SNV's role is to facilitate the emergence and strengthening of multi-stakeholder platforms. The input of local capacity builders and local advisors are mobilized by SNV in the facilitation of multi-stakeholder platforms.



### 4.1.6 DPP capacity development support in relation to the 5CCs

This section provides a reconstruction of how support that was provided prior to the introduction of the five core capabilities (5CCs) linked to certain core capabilities. Figure 4 reflects this reconstruction and indicates roughly which core capability received most emphasis, taking into account the range of DDP support for capacity development.<sup>113</sup>

The figure presents all DDPs and development partners in Ghana (one in each bar) and shows the relative concentration of their support on the core capabilities of the Southern organizations they are supporting.



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C1	Capability to act and commit
C2	Capability to deliver on development objectives
C3	Capability to relate to external stakeholders
C4	Capability to adapt and self-renew
C5	Capability to achieve coherence

Figure 4. Reconstruction of DDP support

The figure shows that the six DDPs, as well as the donor community in Ghana, focus on all five core capabilities. However each donor tends to allocate its support in different proportions. Most support goes towards the capability *to deliver on development objectives* (CC2).

<sup>113</sup> The figure is not based on absolute data, but on the evaluator’s interpretations of the case reports. Therefore this figure should not be interpreted too rigidly.

This support concerns both regular funding and specific support for capacity development, and is made available primarily for the Southern organization to finance its core business. It is important to keep this in mind while reading the next sections. The accumulation of both forms of assistance is at stake when assessing the effectiveness of donor support for capacity development. It is thus likely that judgements by Southern organizations on the effectiveness of support for capacity development are influenced by their appreciation of the regular funding on which their organization depends.

Besides the focus on the capability *to deliver on development objectives*, SNV, NIMD and NCEA also devoted substantial attention to the capability to relate to *external stakeholders* (CC3). For example, SNV plays an important role in bringing actors together in the value chain. NIMD creates platforms to bringing political parties together for political dialogues. NCEA tries to improve the process of EIAs and strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) in which participation of the community is important and negotiations between actors in the environmental assessment system are inevitable.

In comparison with the six DDPs, Ghana Health Sector donors gave more emphasis to the *capability to act and commit* (CC1). Here they referred to leadership and a clear vision, strategy and policy on transparency. This focus is related to donor desires to enhance good governance, transparency and accountability in order to prevent the misuse of the large sums of general budget support and sector budget support. Policy dialogue, training and developing instruments are examples of contributions made by donors to counter corruption.

### 4.1.7 Shifts in the trend of DDP support

In 2000, the Dutch Minister for Development cooperation announced a far-reaching change in technical assistance policy as a result of growing criticism of the traditional approach to technical assistance. The changed policy framework stated that technical assistance could be used to enhance institutional and capacity development in the South, but that donors should not neglect local expertise and knowledge networks. Technical assistance can still be applied as part of a broader package of aid modalities. It must be demand-driven and tailor-made. This policy change affected organizations such as SNV and PSO, whose core business was secondment and technical assistance.

Dutch NGOs tend to move away from traditional technical assistance and towards facilitation. They also show a tendency away from single organizations towards collaborative associations. What facilitation entails is not always clearly described. Hence a broad range of support activities takes place under this heading, with the exception of long-term secondment of staff. The 2000 policy shift also entailed a shift in the emphasis of support from exogenous to endogenous development processes in line with the debate on sustainability of results, ownership and demand-driven approaches by donors. The two shifts can be compared and charted in Figure 5.

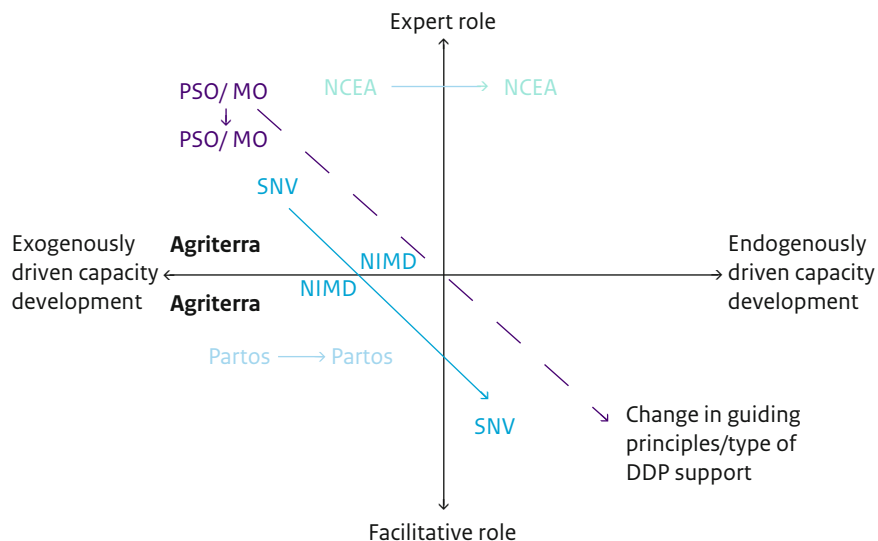


Figure 5. Shifts in policy thinking

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The figure’s vertical axis indicates the role of the DDP (facilitator or expert) while its horizontal axis indicates the degree to which capacity development is exogenously or endogenously driven.

Endogenous capacity development refers to processes steered from within Southern organizations. These processes may have been triggered by contextual local or international actors. This implies that an organization itself determines its identity, its position in society and its ways of realizing its business. Yet capacity development is strongly subject to outside influences. Actors and influential factors can include, for example, domestic politics or donors who impose their guiding principles and conditions. In such cases, the Southern organization cannot take control of its own development.

The vertical axis poses the roles of the DDPs across a spectrum of possibilities. The expert role refers to the technical expertise of the DDP that is shared with or transmitted to the recipient by means of training, advisory work or coaching. The facilitative role of the DDP implies a less prominent and less direct involvement in the local development processes. A facilitative role is more one of smoothing the process. By means of linking actors and bringing them together, facilitation may lead to dialogue, collaboration or other forms of working relationship between actors that will ultimately lead to development.

Figure 5 gives a rough indication of the shift in policy thinking of the six DDPs for the period under review (2000–2008). The grey dotted arrow shows the theoretical movement of donor support, shifting from funding and technical assistance towards the facilitation of multi-actor processes. Each DDP was given a spot in the figure and is mentioned twice. The arrow between the two indicates a shift in emphasis by the DDP.

The cases from Ghana have not been included in the figure because the exact role of the Dutch donor was not completely clear in the report. However a general trend in the overall donor community is apparent. In Ghana, there is a growing move towards active recruitment of local expertise to carry out technical assistance work. The new culture of hiring local consultants was initiated by the RNE in the period 2004–2006, and can be assumed to be in line with stimulating endogenously driven capacity development.

### What do we see?

NCEA has a high profile as an expert organization, though it is now moving to a position where the provision of its services fits better into an endogenous development process. NCEA's guiding principles of support differ from the other DDPs. NCEA acts on the requests of Southern organizations for technical support by sending technical advisors on short missions. NCEA does not give financial support; it is valued for its specific technical expertise. Over time, the role and services of NCEA have changed considerably in response to the increasing demand for support to strengthen the capacity of environmental assessment systems. From being a technical advisor that was closely linked to its mandate in the Netherlands, NCEA has become an advisor, coach and trainer on the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental assessment systems in developing countries. By broadening its initial focus on services for environment ministries, NCEA now supports other stakeholders in enhancing the capacity of environmental assessment systems.

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NIMD and Agriterra do not have a trend arrow in Figure 5. This is because they have taken on expert and facilitative roles simultaneously over the years. Agriterra's core funding of rural membership associations comprising small- and medium-sized local farmers' organizations is an example of exogenously driven capacity development. Agriterra meets more than half of the budget of its Southern partners. However, Agriterra also plays facilitating roles, as can be seen in its promotion of links between networks and local service providers, and its support for farmer peer learning.

SNV has made a dramatic shift from an expert role to a facilitation role. SNV used to set up programmes through its local offices with funding and technical assistance. It now works to support value chains in which its role is to facilitate and connect different kind of actors without direct funding (multi-stakeholder processes). However, in reality the SNV organization is still widely represented on the ground through its field operations. These are prominently present in 32 countries with 850 professionals.<sup>114</sup> Agriterra, NIMD, members of PSO and some Partos DDPs also have a permanent presence in developing countries through their local offices, consultants, experts, technical assistants, and so forth. The same holds for some donors in Ghana who have deployed their own staff to support the Ministry of Health and other organizations.

The practice of the PSO member organizations is moving slightly towards a more facilitating role, supporting mainly exogenous development processes. PSO does not provide as much

<sup>114</sup> See <http://www.snvworld.org/en/aboutus/Pages/organisation.aspx>

technical assistance as it used to in the past when Dutch-sourced technical assistance was the norm. The fact that PSO has moved from funding the placements of expatriate personnel toward enabling its member organizations to provide capacity development services for their Southern partners, appears to have contributed to this shift.

Next to their funding role the Partos DDP cluster maintain a facilitating role and are moving towards making this support available for more endogenous capacity development processes. Some Southern organizations began as external programmes completely funded and guided by the DDPs or other external donors, such as Oxfam Novib with PADEK in Cambodia or SOCSIS in Kenya. Over time, these Southern organizations are said to have been transformed into more locally driven organizations. For example, PST in Cambodia was initiated by ICCO and comprised the current four PST members from the beginning. With these four people, ICCO took a development approach based on community-driven change or local ownership and strategic stakeholder cooperation. PST adopted the concept of Civic Driven Change (CDC) as its approach. In essence, the engagement took place on a voluntary basis. ICCO aims to encourage and facilitate cross-sector links between popular social movements. The report states that PST has space for a process of experimenting, piloting and learning that takes place in the margins of civil society taking its own time and course. Nonetheless, outside the PST programme, the four members hold leadership positions in their own organizations, for which most of them receive some sort of support from ICCO.

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## 4.2 Effectiveness of DDP support

### 4.2.1 Overview of findings

#### Introduction

This section discusses the effectiveness of DDP support as it relates to Southern organizations' core capabilities. It elaborates on Table 5 and is grounded on the summary case description in Annex 6.

Effectiveness is understood here as the extent to which DDP support has contributed to positive changes in the core capabilities and capacity of Southern organizations. This section presents, case study by case study, the DDP support provided and external and internal factors that were reported to have influenced the development of the core capabilities, or to have interacted with the DDP support. The cases show that the relationship between DDP support and changes in the five core capabilities is sometimes a complex one. This section offers a reconstruction of that relationship. During the period under review, in no case was DDP support explicitly directed to any of the five core capabilities.

Next to the changes in the five core capabilities, we will discuss changes in the relevance that outputs have for the achievement of outcomes. This is as far as this evaluation can go in establishing the extent to which changes in the core capabilities influenced outputs and

outcome. In the absence of reliable outcome data, no conclusion can be drawn about the extent to which DDP support helped Southern organizations to achieve their objectives.

We emphasize that a distinction needs to be made between effectiveness and the professionalism of the DDP support provided. A high level of professionalism is not a guarantee for effectiveness of support and vice versa, since there are many other factors that influence end results. We reiterate further that this evaluation draws no conclusions on the overall effectiveness of the programmes of the DDPs.

On the basis of a prudent interpretation of all the information available, we found that in ten cases, DDP support matched positive changes in at least three core capabilities. These were St Martin, Kenya; SOCSIS, Somalia/Kenya; the honey value chain, Ethiopia; the oilseed value chain, Uganda; CMD-K, Kenya; MVIWATA, Tanzania; the Birim North District Health System, Ghana; CMDID, Mali; the Kwahu South District Health System, Ghana; and the livestock value chain, Kenya. In the case of the district health systems, Dutch sectoral budget support was part of the Ghana national health budget and was made available to the districts. In the case of the PSO-supported KDDS, it was not possible to establish a relationship because it was most likely that factors other than DDP support contributed to the positive changes in the core capabilities.

In three other cases (FEKRITAMA, Madagascar; the environmental assessment system, Mozambique; and CAL, right across Africa) DDP support matched with positive changes in at least two core capabilities. A minimum of two has been chosen because the five core capabilities are closely related and it is unlikely that the strengthening of only one core capability will be sustainable unless it is supported by the development of other core capabilities. Effectiveness of DDP support cannot be assured for 12 other cases. Some case studies did not provide the required information (PADEK and PST). In other cases either external or internal factors constrained the contribution of DDP support. This support was not sufficient to influence the core capabilities in the cases of FXI in South Africa, MKC-RDA in Ethiopia and EIA in Georgia.

To sum up, 13 cases show a positive relationship between the DDP support that was provided and changes in core capabilities. Of those 13 cases, there are four cases where changes in core capabilities resulted in outputs that had become more relevant for achieving the Southern organizations' objectives (St Martin, Kenya; SOCSIS, Somalia/Kenya; FEKRITAMA, Madagascar; and the EIA system, Mozambique). For these cases we can conclude that DDP support helped to make outputs more relevant for realizing the Southern organizations' outcome statements. For the other 21 cases this is not clear.

## 4.2.2 Quality of DDP support as an explanation for its effectiveness

In this section we present observations found in the case study reports and final evaluation reports of the seven individual evaluations.

### Effectiveness of financial support

Generally speaking, donor funding was highly relevant to all Southern organizations, the public sector and NGOs. For most Southern NGO partners, donor funding was a vital lifeline. Donor policies, however, were not always in line with those of the Southern organization. The administrative requirements that donors attach to their funding often stretched the capacities of Southern organizations.

Within that general context of donor support, the Southern organizations appreciated the DDPs financial support, which in a number of cases formed a substantial share (60-90%) of their budget. Dutch financial support stands out because it is flexible, long term and substantial. The funding relationship was usually trustful and respectful. Southern organizations appreciated critical questions being asked. However, many DDPs found it difficult to address sensitive issues such as leadership, role definitions and responsibilities. PSO's earmarked funding for capacity development was valued by the partners in the South, because financial support for capacity development was said to be difficult to find. As well as flexibility of support, the DDPs must also meet professional standards regarding their support. DDP disbursements usually took place without any delay. According to the Southern organizations, such practice compared very well with that of other donors, many of whom provide support based on projects with predefined results according to the donor's policy priorities.

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Although Southern organizations expressed their appreciation for DDP support, the issue of ownership emerged as a point that needed further discussion. Some partners expressed growing concerns that, rather than acting as a strategic support partner, DDPs were adopting rigid positions. They were said to focus increasingly on administrative and reporting requirements and to show less interest in strategic matters. This may affect the flexibility of support, which is becoming more controlled by DDPs, thus negatively affecting the sense of ownership of the Southern partner. In that sense, DDP support echoes some of the concerns expressed in Chapter 2. Here it is important to note that:

- DDPs provide a substantial share of Southern organizations' budgets. In combination with the absence of exit strategies, this may result in unintended dependency on donor funding.
- The combination of the absence of clear outcome data and strong donor dependency is a point of serious concern. It may indicate a lack of downward responsiveness in Southern organizations vis-à-vis their communities and the people they intend to serve.
- There are risks of unintentional and unwanted influence on the part of DDPs over Southern organizations – in particular when Southern organizations are not clear about how they want to achieve their development objectives or have no clear capacity

development plan. The view taken by DDPs – that it is possible to follow a trajectory from exogenous to endogenous capacity development – may require careful consideration, especially in regard to what donors must do to traverse that trajectory successfully.

- Case studies suggest that donor funding lowers the incentive to mobilize local resources.
- Case studies indicate that Southern organizations' positioning and assessment of contexts is influenced by their donor relationships. (See section 3.4)

### Effectiveness of expert technical assistance support

Reports highlight not only funding as a mode of support, but also elaborate on the advisory roles that DDPs might possibly play. The case studies illustrate that since 2000, technical assistance has diversified greatly. We have seen long- and short-term secondments and short missions, support by local capacity builders, etc. DDPs took on roles ranging from hands-on expert to partner and from reflective observer to counsellor.

A clear distinction needs to be made between the two types of expertise made available, even though these were sometimes provided together – sectoral or thematic expertise such as that provided in agricultural or environmental matters, and expertise regarding organizational development. The cases of Agriterra, NCEA and NIMD show the value of making sectoral expertise available.

The NCEA is an independent expert body that provides advisory services for the improvement of environmental assessments – a field of work that demands a certain level of technical expertise. The staff of NCEA provides advice, training and other forms of assistance when the Southern organization does not have the necessary expertise. Especially in highly controversial projects, NCEA's expertise has an added value, where NCEA can sometimes assume the role of mediator. In general, the effectiveness of NCEA support concerned improved regulatory environmental assessment frameworks (including guidelines and standards), improved operational conditions for environmental assessments, staff training and data management. NCEA is highly valued for its well-qualified technical staff, its approach of sending technical experts on short, ad hoc missions at the request of Southern organizations, its neutral and independent position, and its commitment to long-term involvement.

Similar expressions were made by the partners of Agriterra for the support it provided – even though it is Agriterra's funding role that is dominant. What accounted for most of Agriterra's effectiveness was its 'farmer-to-farmer' approach, in which the expert and the beneficiary 'speak the same language' and in which the ownership of the programme was respected.

The expert role of NIMD was a little less clear when its director was not directly involved. The idea of a professional relationship between the Dutch political parties and Southern political parties has, for understandable reasons, not matured as it has in the cases of NCEA and Agriterra.

The PSO evaluation suggests what is required if Dutch NGOs wish to be effective supporters of organizational development of Southern organizations, while also providing financial support for the implementation of their programmes. The evaluation relays two broad



messages. First, that the improvements in the capabilities of the Southern organizations did little to enhance their success in terms of realizing their objectives and outcomes. The evaluation concluded that more fundamental capacity changes were required to make that happen. Dutch NGO support helped to improve PSO's partner organizations' implementation strategies by providing financial and/or technical assistance, contributed to the establishment and advancement of new civil society organizations (CSOs) and supporting weaker organizations, mainly through the development of their systems and procedures. This resulted in improved services to beneficiaries.

However, Dutch NGO support did not significantly enhance Southern partners' capabilities to relate to external stakeholders or to adapt and self-renew. No evidence was found of a strengthening of any partner organization's position within civil society – precisely because the capability to relate to external stakeholders had never been the focus of support. Input was limited to linking CSOs to partners involved in the programmes of other PSO member organizations.

The second broad message delivered by the PSO report is that capacity development support was provided on the basis of immediate needs. As a result, a large number of capacity development projects and programmes were based on perceived needs or on recognizable gaps in an organization's capacity – but not on the basis of an organizational capacity development plan. Capacity development programmes were further hindered because they lacked effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, because they were too ambitious, because they were not fully owned by the partner organizations and because they lacked sound strategies for managing risk. Also largely missing were environments that were favourable for the stimulation of learning – especially learning more about the assumptions on which the intervention strategies were based.

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Effectiveness of DDP support for the capacity development of collaborative associations  
The term 'collaborative association' was introduced in this evaluation to bring some order to the multitude of terms that were used when support for capacity development was provided to more than one organization – partnerships, networks, multi-actor processes, etc.

Organizations have different reasons for joining a collaborative association. Most realize that operating within an association is likely to be more effective than acting on their own. Some choose to participate in a loose network, whereas others take responsibility for the design and implementation of a joint programme.

There are many possible parameters and combinations of parameters that could be used to typify collaborative associations. For the purposes of this evaluation, we have chosen to categorize associations based on the extent to which they embody the conditions governing the emergence of the outputs that lead to outcomes and development objectives.<sup>115</sup> Accordingly, major parameters for such a categorization are 'diversity and commitment' and 'integration' (Figure 6).

<sup>115</sup> IOB (2009) Evaluation of collaborative associations.

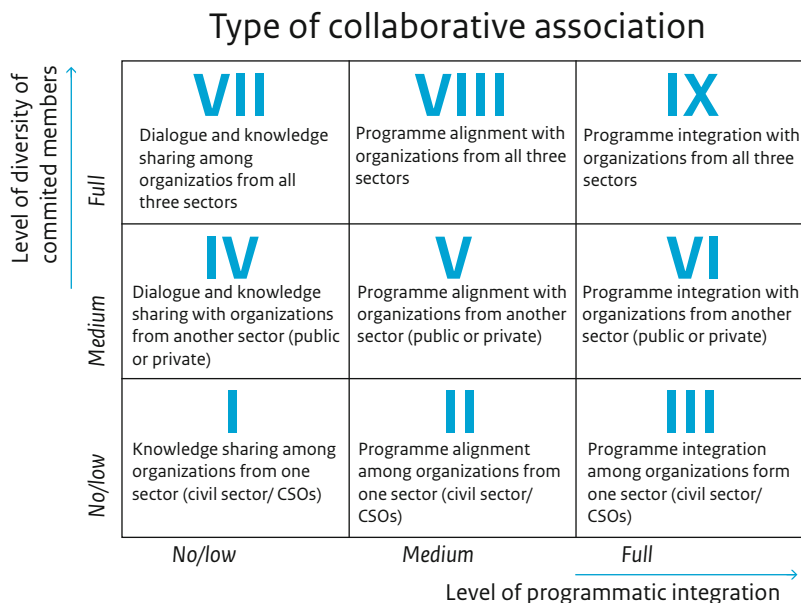


Figure 6. Types of collaborative association

The horizontal axis indicates the level of integration of the collaborative association and the vertical axis shows their degree of diversity. The diagram suggests that moving from left to right along the horizontal axis beyond knowledge sharing leads to a deeper integration of development activities. Moving from the bottom to the top along the vertical axis implies trading off control and autonomy for the beneficial synergy of integrated activities. Movement from the bottom-left corner to the top-right corner (I to IX) indicates a more effective cooperation of members from the civil, public and private sectors.

In Cell I, members from one sector (the civil sector) share knowledge and exchange contacts and data, but continue to direct their activities independently. In Cell V, members from two sectors align their activities with the activities undertaken by others. In Cell IX, activities are designed and undertaken jointly. Collaborative associations in Cells III, VI and IX are very similar to individual organizations – in particular the associations that have existed for a longer period of time and developed their own institutional capacity.

Strengthening collaborative associations implies capacity development at institutional level. This is beyond the level of individual organizations.

Support for collaborative associations is a new area. Case studies concerning such support in this evaluation are; three value chains, three EIA systems, three multi-party systems and the Ethiopian Learning Alliance (ELA). All ten cases fit with the idea that present-day problems are often too difficult to be solved by one party.

A closer look at these ten cases shows that they are very different. The EIA systems are referred to as an instrumental association of a wide range of stakeholders that are legally bound to comply with environmental assessment rules and regulations. However, in practice, each of these stakeholders has its own objectives, resulting in a system that is characterized by strong and contradictory power relations. SNV supported the three value chains after they identified the economic opportunities and development perspective for poor producers. The value chains evolved as multi-stakeholder platforms and are open to interested parties that can contribute to the value chain as producers, processors, consumers, technical advisors or investors. The value chains have no common goal at the start, and agreement about that may emerge over time as happened in the honey value chain in Ethiopia. Three multi-party systems supported by NIMD had a sort of natural habitat because political parties operate in the same environment and have common concerns. The cases differ from each other with Guatemala showing more structured collaboration among the parties. The Ethiopian Learning Alliance (ELA) involved a larger number of value chains; it operates along lines similar to those of the value chains supported by SNV. It differs, however, in that the ELA has the explicit objective that the producers are to achieve control over the value chain.

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There are serious implications for the type of capacity development support provided for collaborative associations, specifically in terms of PME. First, there is no agreed set of indicators to track progress in the development of collaborative associations. Changes in outputs or outcomes may be as much the result of an individual organization as of the overall association. Second, the effects of DDP support are difficult to track as many other factors and actors that change over time may contribute to the development of the association. Changes in the capacity of the individual organizations within the association are a case in point. Third, as long as collaborative associations have no common goal, it is difficult to address the question, capacity for what?

A second set of issues concerns the competencies needed to provide support to collaborative associations.

The ten cases that were members of collaborative associations reflect an interesting variety of strategies and types of support provided to them by the DDPs.

- The NCEA is an expert organization that provides advice about regulatory frameworks. It also conducts assessments and mediates when stakeholder disagreement leads to deadlock. It provides its support through short missions, and remains flexible as it seeks opportunities to make its services available. NCEA does not provide funding.
- SNV has had a long-term presence in the countries where it provides support. It employs local staff and has moved towards a role of facilitator or 'honest broker'.
- NIMD was established less than ten years ago and has local offices in the countries it provides support for. These offices are a hybrid partnership in the sense that they are sometimes affiliated to NIMD (as in Guatemala), and sometimes officially founded and registered by the political parties (as in Kenya). All three offices depend almost entirely on NIMD funding. Non-financial support is provided by the NIMD staff based in The Hague. The Dutch political parties play a minor role.

- The ELA started as a collaboration of a number of Dutch organizations that decided that combining efforts in supporting the agricultural sector would be more effective and efficient. They had a representative/expert posted in Ethiopia. ELA itself does not provide funding, but ICCO and Cordaid provide direct funding to participating Ethiopian organizations.

A number of issues emerge from the case studies:

- The distinction between Northern and Southern organizations blurs when DDPs establish a local presence. This makes it difficult to grasp whether, in such cases, a Dutch NGO is a provider of external resources or a full participant in a collaborative association. This also relates to earlier discussions about endogenous and exogenous development processes.
- Where the DDP combines the roles of 'expert' and 'funder', the funding tends to dominate in the relationship. This applies across the board, not just in the case of collaborative associations.
- Combining expert and facilitator roles is precarious. It may even prove to be something that is not easily embodied in one person, or even within one organization. (See Minu Hemmati's recent article on the broad range of competences it takes to be a facilitator of multi-stakeholder processes.)<sup>116</sup>

### Effectiveness of donor partner support for capacity development in public-sector organizations

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The case studies on the three EIA systems and the three District Health Systems (DHS) in Ghana give some interesting insights into what capacity development in governmental organizations involves and what it drives.

In both the EIA and DHS cases, capacity development was closely associated with resource allocation. Government organizations usually operate with limited resources, but are under an obligation to provide services. In the case of Ghana, government service delivery became a campaign topic in the presidential elections. It is not practical for departments and smaller government units to develop their own capacity development plans. The three EIA cases showed how difficult it is to retain competent staff and maintain levels of competence and expertise.

The Ghana evaluation explored why some districts were performing much better than others. The following are among the more interesting findings:

**Leadership:** Some district directors of health services (DDHSs) were described as 'transformational'. They were action-oriented and used inspiring and motivating approaches. Their leadership style involved using consultative and participatory processes to achieve results. This motivated staff, reduced staff attrition and generated exogenous support for their district. In contrast, other leaders were considered weak and non-responsive, which adversely affected the performance of their districts. Leadership in the best-performing districts promoted bottom-up communication and used participatory methods to solve

<sup>116</sup> Hemmati, M. (2010) What it takes. Capacity.Org 41.

problems and ensure work got done. Teamwork emerged as a strong attribute arising from leadership style. It is clear from the evidence that staff members noticed when leadership was sloppy and inadequate, and could clearly attribute under-performance to the standard of leadership provided.

**Political and social legitimacy:** Political legitimacy was defined in terms of an organization's relationship with and proximity to government and party-political power. The District Health Management Team (DHMT) was perceived as serving a social role and was therefore described as 'socially legitimate'. The differences between the districts lay in how they leveraged social and political legitimacy to support their work. In the under-performing district, the leaders regarded the political system with awe, whereas in the best-performing districts, engaging with political structures was seen as an opportunity to mobilize additional resources.

**Resource mobilization:** The ability to engage stakeholders also emerged as a critical dimension of capacity, particularly when mobilizing resources and bringing about infrastructural development. There was evidence to suggest that the way in which the DHMTs related to their external stakeholders determined their success and their ability to acquire additional resources. The best-performing districts employed social networking and lobbying, while the under-performing district did not. These were described by respondents as either 'alliances', when they related to public sector institutions, or 'collaborations', when they referred to other partners or communities.

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**Adapt and self-renew:** An analysis of the capability to adapt and self-renew highlighted differences between the districts. In the better-performing districts, the expansion of Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds and the use of internal resources to recruit staff suggested a certain level of self-renewal and adaptability. There was evidence of internal reflection, clear articulation of needs and the implementation of expansion strategies. There was a culture of reflecting on and addressing mistakes that occurred within the DHS. There was also evidence of planning, monitoring and evaluation, but it was unclear whether systematic learning was built into PME because most DHMT respondents discussed learning in terms of individuals learning on-the-job. There was no evidence of adapting and self-renewing in the under-performing district.

**Community participation:** Evidence showed that the best-performing districts involved communities in their health interventions. They saw no barriers in status or position. They were able to map out the comparative benefits offered by different types of stakeholders, and explore how these could be used to their advantage. This meant that more communities took part in the health programmes and activities organized by their DHMTs. This active community participation was minimal in the under-performing district.

In the Ghana DHS reports, healthcare personnel from all sectors and at all levels were interviewed. It is not possible to tell from their statements whether the effectiveness of the interventions linked in any way to specific changes in the five core capabilities. But the focus by the donor community on capacity development (human resources, technical

assistance to the capacity of the Ministry of Health and to the districts/sub-districts) appeared to have contributed to the effectiveness of reforms to Ghana's health sector. Support was organized according to SWAp principles which was translated and implemented around the Health Plan of Work. The un-earmarked funds in the common health basket allowed the government to increase its budget to decentralised levels from 23% in 1996 to 41% in 2008 and to increase access to health services at district level. It also allowed government to prevent a situation where implementing units had to compete for donor funding for their operations. The Ghana cases also showed that providing un-earmarked financial support does not automatically result in capacity development. Indeed, the main recommendation of the Ghana evaluation is that the Ministry should begin developing policies in the area of capacity development.

### 4.3 Summary

It is evident from the case studies that the DDPs follow a broad range of approaches to capacity development. The provision of core funding to Southern organizations was very important, especially in the cases of Agriterra, NIMD, PSO and the Partos DDP cluster – for whom this is their core business. This does not apply to SNV and NCEA, which provide only advisory services.

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In principle, DDPs are moving towards endogenously driven capacity development. However, one may question whether this move is actually taking place in practice. Most DDPs have a strong presence in Southern countries through their local offices. They deploy national experts to Southern organizations and they influence the vision and approach of the development programme. If endogenous development is seen as local development that is strongly influenced by its often complex context and triggered by contextual factors, one may question whether the approach to providing support follows the guiding principles of endogenous development.

The evaluation found 13 cases where there was a positive link between DDP support and changes in core capabilities. Out of those 13 cases, there were four cases in which changes in core capabilities resulted in outputs that had become more pertinent to achieving the Southern organizations' objectives. For these four cases, we can conclude that DDP support for capacity development had an effect at output level. For the other 22 cases, this is not as clear. Because none of the 26 Southern organizations had sufficient outcome data to track changes over time at that level, we can draw no conclusion about the effectiveness of DDP support at that level.

Trends and patterns emerged from the case studies that may contain lessons for making DDP support more effective.

- 1 *The paradox of donor funding.* Funding is very important to Southern organizations, yet it creates new dependencies and may result in a disincentive to mobilize resources locally or to respond to members and beneficiaries.

- 2 *The potential of Dutch expertise.* This expertise is highly valuable, yet much time is needed for the Southern organizations to acquire it in such a way that they can apply it themselves. This is a path full of risks beyond the control of the DDP.
- 3 *The potential of DDP support for innovation.* The support of collaborative associations such as the value chains, environmental impact assessment systems and multi-party systems seems to be a promising approach to capacity development at institutional level. But the case studies indicate risks. There is a clear need for evaluations that will determine its real potential and make clear what is required from outside agencies (such as the DDPs) in the area of professional support.
- 4 Increasingly professional standards of technical assistance are geared to further the organizational development of the Southern organizations. The policy shift towards helping Southern organizations to learn from their experience, particularly in terms of questioning the assumptions on which their strategies are based (second-order learning), requires professional competences that may not be easily available from Dutch DDPs.





5

# Methodological experiences



In terms of its planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME), capacity development is, to a large degree, unexplored territory. Definitions are not clear. Organizations commonly have no clear expression about how their interventions contribute to the realization of their objectives, nor have they a set of agreed indicators of capacity development.

Because capacity development results are intangible or ‘soft’, it is difficult to plan, monitor and evaluate them. This general observation comes into sharper focus when we look at organizations from a systems perspective. That means looking at organizations as social systems that are also parts of a number of other systems that adapt themselves to complex situations and ever-changing circumstances.

Some of the implications for this evaluation were described in the general terms of reference; the evaluation had to be innovative in its design and methodology. Major challenges were:

- to apply a framework that would make the assessment of changes in capacity possible across a diversity of cases and contextual situations;
- to identify indicators that would express, case by case, what Southern organizations regard as critical aspects of their capacity;
- to transpose these indicators to the general framework; and
- to identify in the results chain any changes in Southern organizations’ outputs and outcomes that could be attributed to changes in capacity.

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Earlier experiences summarized in Chapter 2 explained that none of this would be an easy task. There were two main reasons for this. First, earlier studies did not provide conclusive evidence of the routine success of capacity development efforts. This is certainly the case where basic concepts of capacity have not been codified or agreed, and where baselines and yardsticks were not available. Capacity development ‘is a “low-specificity” activity with few inbuilt mechanisms to identify and “publicize” poor performance’.<sup>117</sup> Second, gauging the outcomes of capacity building and attributing them to specific interventions is quite problematic.

This overall evaluation faced three challenges:

- 1 to establish an evaluation framework that would help to produce solid results;
- 2 to maintain a Southern perspective during the course of the evaluation – this is why including an analysis of location-specific circumstances, external and internal factors and changes in outputs and outcomes forms a substantial part of the evaluation; and
- 3 to maintain quality across the seven individual evaluations that covered 26 case studies conducted under the joint responsibility of IOB and other organizations (Agriterra, MoH-Ghana, Partos and SNV).

At the start of the evaluation, no tested methodology was available for ‘measuring’ how capacity related to the conceptual framework. Moreover, the application of any off-the-shelf methodology would have posed difficulties. The five core capability (5CC) framework adopted

<sup>117</sup> Moore, M. (1995) *Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method. A Review of Literature and Ideas*. SIDA Evaluation Report, Stockholm: SIDA, p. 53.

is the result of extensive empirical research into organizations in developing countries. It gave the evaluators a degree of confidence that the framework could accommodate the diversities of developing countries, including the diversity of organizations found there.

To maintain a Southern perspective, local calibration and transposition of the indicators for assessing capacity was considered critical. The alternative – one set of indicators to be used as a yardstick for all cases – would have been wholly contrary to the vision of capacity development that underpins this evaluation and would have undermined its related methodological approach.

One evaluation would not have done justice to the range of different support activities the DDPs provide in diverse contexts. Therefore, it was decided to follow a programmatic approach whereby a number of Dutch NGOs and departments of the Ministry were asked to participate in a comprehensive evaluation. Consequently, a series of seven separate and discrete evaluations has been conducted by Dutch NGOs and IOB.

## 5.1 The analytical framework and maintaining a Southern perspective

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In response to the advice of external consultants during the first meeting of the general reference group, IOB decided to commission a study to validate the 5CC framework.<sup>118</sup> In particular, IOB requested a substantiated and reasoned judgment about:

- the robustness of the 5CC framework as a lens through which information could be provided about capacity and its development;
- the suitability of particular cases for inclusion in a synthesis report;
- findings on areas of particular sensitivity to specific variables as well as any general strengths and weakness of the framework; and
- observations on the practicality of the 5CC framework in respect to field methods.<sup>119</sup>

The main findings of the study are that:

- 1 The 5CC framework can accommodate and produce meaningful information across very diverse conditions. The methods applied appear to be the most important factors in determining the extent to which the production of meaningful information is possible. The quality of transposition of organization-specific indicators to the 5CC framework strongly determines any bias.
- 2 The 5CC framework can do the following: when reporting is sufficiently detailed, the framework describes the processes and causes of changes in capacity; if the right research methods are used, the framework can accommodate the level of detail required to reflect local understanding; provide a clear indication of changes in each core capability in relation to changes in outcome.

<sup>118</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the general reference group (GRG), 15-16 September 2010.

<sup>119</sup> The validation of the 5CC framework was carried out in August 2010 by Professor Alan Fowler, Dr. Paul Engel, Drs. Niels Keijzer and Drs. Eunike Spiering.

- 3 The study concluded that the value of the 5CC framework as a meaningful comparative platform increases with the homogeneity of the cases. It provides a basis from which to illustrate outcomes, underpin assessments and aid discussion. The cases in the individual evaluations indicated that any positive bias encountered will most probably be determined by users of the framework and the (power) relationships and incentives at play. The methods themselves cannot be separated from the quality of relationships between DDPs and local actors.

On the basis of these findings, IOB concluded that as a core element of methodology, the 5CC framework provides sufficient grounds for reliable research findings. The IOB concluded also that selective use was to be made of the case study material, given the varying robustness of empirical data attained.

Methodological feedback from the team leaders of the seven individual evaluations suggests that the empirical methods need to be reviewed. The main observations are that:

- The 5CCs need to be described in less academic and abstract terms in order to explain their functions and significance. Possibly, each core capability can be supported by indicators that are distinct to that core capability and uncontested by stakeholders from both the North and the South.
- ‘Soft’ elements of capacity, such as culture, interpersonal relations, power and personality require more attention.
- The issue of gender needs to be emphasized more because many people did not realize that gender issues, as understood by Southern organizations, was to have been included in the 5CC framework.
- There is a serious risk of unprofessional use of the 5CC framework by those with insufficient understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the framework, or those who want to use it as a tool of traditional accountability between donor and beneficiary.
- Identifying organization-specific indicators to assess the development of capacity was difficult. Only a few Southern organizations could express their capacity development policy. Consequently, it was challenging for them to express what they considered to be essential components of their organization’s capacity. Focusing on the link between an organization’s objectives, external intervening factors and the capacity they need may result in more relevant indicators. Methods may need to be selected and adapted for that purpose.

Further observations detected routinely during the evaluation process are that the 5CC framework:

- resonates with present thinking about capacity development (systems thinking);
- integrates capacity development in the results framework and links it with outputs and outcome;
- is not normative;
- does not focus on gaps in the way that organizational capacity assessments do, but on the potential to achieve outcome;
- has the potential to level the ‘power field’. Prudence is required to avoid falling into the pitfall of applying the framework normatively on the basis of donors criteria; and
- cannot be reliably used as a checklist.

A particular strength of the framework that was cited several times was that it creates a common language and gives a universal understanding of a difficult, abstract topic. As a result of this evaluation, hundreds of participants expressed themselves – despite the barriers of language, culture, etc. – in a common language. For this reason, the 5CC framework can be considered as an interface that makes it possible to aggregate a wide range of capacity development results without interfering in the autonomy of Southern organizations.

#### Box 6 Application of the 5CC framework for a good discussion

At the invitation of the Free University Amsterdam, Centre for International Cooperation (VU-CIS), the organizer of the IOB workshop introduced the 5CC framework as a possible approach to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of university collaboration programmes. A particular inter-university project formed the basis of a case study used to trial the 5CC framework approach in this context.

The case concerned an actual project between the VU and a university in Tanzania that had ended some years earlier. The Tanzanian university, one of the country's post-secondary school training institutions, was involved in the promotion of business in a number of ways including through human resources development, applied research and the provision of consultancy services to business practitioners.

The overall objective of the project was to build the business skills of Tanzania's entrepreneurs so that they would meet the human resource requirements of the business sector. The specific objective was to develop the capacity to offer business education and to conduct business-related research at the university. The project was expected to deliver a revised master of business administration (MBA) curriculum, three MSc programmes, business blueprints and research projects. It also aimed to promote higher levels of qualification to staff by offering MSc and PhD programmes, and to ensure that an adequate infrastructure was put in place at the faculty of Commerce.

This inter-university project was regarded as successful. In Nantes, the VU-CIS coordinator finished his outline of the case by asking whether (and to what extent) real capacity had been developed, just because the project had delivered all outputs.

After an introduction to the 5CC framework, the 20 (mostly European) participants at the EIAE conference were asked to make a new analysis of the capacity problem, to formulate desired results, specify what external support would be required and to make suggestions for monitoring and evaluation. Within less than two hours, the participants produced a project that differed considerably from the original.

The ability of the business department at the Tanzanian university to relate in business circles was identified as very weak. This weakness was seen as an obstacle to the

department's capability to act and commit and its capability to deliver on development objectives. It was proposed that the Commerce faculty should first develop contacts with local business. It could then make an inventory of their expectations, involve business representatives in curriculum development and market the faculty in business circles. It was felt that improved links with local business would fuel the capability to act and commit, which is characterized by structured decision making, planning and the ability to mobilize and use resources. Leadership was considered essential for the successful accomplishment of the tasks ahead.

Implicitly, the participants at the conference drew new system boundaries. These included the university and the business sector as well as the business department. They came up with a set of indicators that would monitor and evaluate progress across the five core capabilities and oversee the performance of the faculty and its effectiveness. Monitoring, self-evaluation and external evaluation were proposed to serve both the learning and the accountability function.

*European Association for International Education (EAIE) Congress, Nantes, France, September 2010*

A lesson that can be learned from the application of the 5CC framework is that when it is being used in a broad context with users who are less familiar with the framework and its theoretical underpinnings, a less abstract version would be beneficial. The 'new' description of the five core capabilities in Chapter 3 on the basis of the findings in the 26 cases studies could be a starting point for this.

### Defining the system

The 26 case studies represented a wide range of systems, from small single organizations to national systems such as the honey value chain in Ethiopia. The organization receiving Dutch support forms the centre of the system. From there, a motivated decision was made to broaden the circle. For pragmatic reasons, dictated by the resources available for this evaluation, the system's scope was restricted so that the main actors could be included, as in the case of Ghana's District Health System. The team leaders did not report methodological constraints in this respect. A general observation of the IOB core team was that external factors were described but that their impact on the organization often remained unclear.

The SNV value chain studies illustrate the problem of attribution. When a system has many actors, it becomes difficult to identify which actor has caused which result. A further lesson from the SNV cases is that the positioning of organizations in collaborative associations remained implicit. What is their view on the world, what are the implications for their role in society and the relationships they maintain?

## 5.2 Quality

During the design of the evaluation, the demand-driven approach led to the idea of combining seven individual and discrete evaluations covering different themes. In the opinion of IOB, the importance of the evaluation justified the taking of certain risks. However, IOB recognized that the innovative character of the evaluation required that it had to be carefully managed in order to ensure consistency and quality. Maintaining a balance between the need for high-quality, context-relevant individual studies and the need to impose a degree of uniformity in analysis required careful management.

To ensure a common interpretation of the evaluation framework and consistency in reporting, evaluators had to be trained and guided in the use of the evaluation framework. IOB encouraged collaboration and information exchange between the various evaluation teams.

The quality of the case study reports was greatly influenced by the quantity and quality of information available from Southern organizations about changes in capacity, outputs and outcomes. This varied considerably across the cases. In none of the cases was information about the development of the organization systematically documented or retrievable. The team leader of the PSO evaluation reported that consequently, the measurement of many indicators had to be based on second-hand sources or on self-assessment exercises. In such situations, triangulation of the data was critical in order to ascertain the reliability of the data. IOB surmises from the case study reports and feedback notes of the team leaders that this had been done to varying degrees across the case studies.

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In about only half the cases was it possible to detect outcomes. None of the cases could provide systematically documented data about outcomes. The researchers could make hardly any reference to evaluation reports that might have given relevant information in this respect. The very limited scope of this evaluation to conduct research at this level through 'most significant change' stories gave at best some anecdotal information. (See Chapter 3.)

For the overall synthesis report, IOB had to select reliable data in order to lay a solid foundation for the main findings of the synthesis report.

## 5.3 Summary

The 5CC framework, which was developed for the purpose of this evaluation, is in principle a sound methodology, but it requires improvements to make it suitable for broader application.

For broader application in situations that allow for less control than in this evaluation, the 5CC framework needs to be developed using a more robust methodology, and the five core capabilities need to be described in less academic and abstract terms. The 'soft' elements of capacity such as gender, culture, interpersonal relations, power and personality require more attention.

More relevant indicators might be realized with more focused research methods which examine the relationship between the organization's objectives and external intervening factors, and the capacity it needs. Research methods may need to be selected and adapted for that purpose.

There is a serious risk of unprofessional use of the 5CC framework by those who have an insufficient understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the framework or those who want to use it as a 'tick-box' in a traditional accountability function between donor and receiver.



6

Lessons learned from the evaluation



In September 2010, representatives of the DDPs joined in a workshop to discuss the preliminary lessons that had begun to emerge from the seven individual evaluations.<sup>120</sup> That workshop generated a large number of statements that were subsequently prioritized and clustered.

For IOB, that material underscores three broad lessons about support for capacity development that can be learned from this evaluation:

- Decisive for a Southern organization's capacity is the context – often a highly complex context – in which it operates. Relative to context, donor support is of secondary importance.
- Capacity development can be self-sustained only if it is anchored in endogenous processes. Those processes gain traction when a Southern organization defines its identity, its position in society, its contribution to social change and ways it has of realizing its business and its capacity development. However, this does not imply that endogenous processes exclude external support. DDP support to endogenous capacity development depends on a relationship of trust and mutuality between the Southern organization and its DDP. In good development practice, these two aspects stand out. The quality of DDP support for capacity development is highly uneven, and often low. It needs to be re-thought. This will be a tough challenge given the dominance of funding in the relationship and the dependence of Southern organizations on that funding. What is needed is a shift from approaches based on a 'supply of resources' to an approach based on 'facilitating resourcefulness'. Such a shift, if taken, would have profound implications for the ways in which DDPs and the Ministry go about their work. It would set new criteria of professionalism in DDP support.
- Present planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) practices are inadequate and insufficiently supportive of capacity development. Moreover, administrative demands accompanying PME tend to undermine existing capacity. If PME is to become supportive of capacity development, it must be re-thought and redesigned to reinforce the learning practices of the Southern organizations and the DDPs.

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Table 7 shows the three broad lessons that can be learned and outlines some priority areas that need to be addressed for each of the lessons.

<sup>120</sup> Distilling Lessons from the Reports. Report Concept Mapping Workshop, Concordia, The Hague, September 1 2010.

<b>Table 7. Lessons from the evaluation</b>	
<b>Context and complexity</b>	
For capacity development support to be effective, its designers should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carefully address power issues</li> <li>• Consider context and adapt the approach to capacity development accordingly</li> <li>• Consider the changing needs of beneficiaries and adapt outputs if needed</li> <li>• Consider the wider system in which an organization is operating, and seek complementarity with other actors</li> <li>• Make use of locally available resources and support in the first instance</li> </ul>	
<b>Endogeneity, DDP support, trust and mutuality</b>	
For capacity development support to be effective, Southern partners should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that inspiring leadership is in place</li> <li>• Express a request for capacity development support on the basis of their plans</li> <li>• Use flexible strategies to obtain desired outcomes</li> <li>• Accept only support that is of sufficiently high professional standard</li> <li>• Make clear in their capacity development plans how capacity development will contribute to better outcomes</li> <li>• Request only support that fits their priority needs</li> </ul>	
For capacity development support to be effective, the DDP should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide only support that is of a sufficiently high professional standard</li> <li>• Provide technical or sector expertise that is carefully balanced with process management and relational skills</li> <li>• Pursue ambitions in line with its own capacity</li> <li>• Embed its capacity development policies within its overall policies</li> </ul>	
For capacity development support to be effective, it is important that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is mutual trust between the DDPs and Southern organizations</li> <li>• There is a peer-to-peer dimension to the relationship</li> <li>• Congruence exists between financial, human and process support</li> </ul>	
<b>The planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) of support for capacity development</b>	
For capacity development support to be effective, the Southern partner should have:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporated its practical experiences into its policies and vice versa</li> <li>• Established learning practices</li> <li>• Organized systems to document the achievement of its outputs and outcome</li> <li>• A PME system that includes intermediate or process results</li> <li>• A PME system that links accountability with learning</li> </ul>	
For capacity development support to be effective, the DDP should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have established learning practices</li> </ul>	
For capacity development support to be effective, it is important that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is interactive learning between DDPs and Southern organizations</li> </ul>	

This list may have certain biases. Arguably, it puts less emphasis on DDPs, given the over-representation of DDPs, and the absence of Southern representatives, in the workshops. But it clearly highlights issues that emerged from the case study reports. Some of these issues reflected efforts to innovate and move forward, but most of these statements emerged as responses to deficiencies identified in the course of the evaluation. It is fair to assume that participants made these statements out of concern for issues that had been 'discovered' in the evaluation process.

Statements regarding Southern organizations should not be read as conditions that have to be met before support for capacity development can be provided. Rather they should be read as pointers to issues that should be taken into account as Southern organizations devise plans for capacity development and negotiate with donors about those plans.

The lessons learned from the evaluation set new levels of ambition for the effectiveness of Dutch support for capacity development. They reflect the theoretical insights presented in Chapter 2, including the shift from the 'transfer of resources' to 'facilitating resourcefulness', as proposed by Kaplan. They also reflect the implications of systems thinking and the importance of the 'learning organization' as an organizing principle for capacity development.

### Regarding the three 'lesson clusters', certain sensitivities arise:

- Issues of context and complexity are not well articulated by Southern organizations. That is not to say that none of them address it; they must do so in order to survive. However, there are discrepancies between this reality and what is communicated between Southern organizations and their DDPs. Awareness of this discrepancy is emerging in some DDPs, but experience of reaching clearer, more reality-based perceptions of contexts is still limited. This leaves the design and implementation of programmes vulnerable to wishful thinking. A contributory factor here is that 'systems thinking' is, in most cases, still in its infancy.
- The relationship between Southern organizations and DDPs is strongly shaped by the transfer of resources – of which money is by far the most important. In such a context, trust and mutuality have to be carefully interpreted. Respect for endogenous development is not easily pursued where an organization's future depends on donor funding. Measures can be taken to contain this dilemma, but they are unlikely to resolve it completely.
- DDPs often use the term facilitation to describe how they operate. Yet this may be misleading because DDPs are sometimes highly interventionist and their funding is crucial to the future of their Southern partners, and commonly dominates the relationships. This leads to the paradox that the capacity development of the Southern 'partner' is undermined by the donor's overall funding policy. Where DDPs have no exit strategy and offer no incentives for mobilizing local resources, this paradox intensifies and becomes a chronic condition.

- Donor support for capacity development has become a sophisticated field. In many cases, problems of organizational development can be solved with the help of locally available expertise, as long as the Southern organization can pay for it. ‘New’ issues emerging in this field revolve around systems thinking and a wish on the part of Southern organizations to become learning organizations. The expertise required to respond to these ambitions will usually not be available from organizations whose vocation is not in organizational development.
- When Southern organizations learn, they do so rarely on the basis of a formal PME system. Those systems are reserved for reporting to their donors. It is not clear to what extent Southern organizations systematically collect data about outcomes in ways that would allow for learning. Hardly any of the Southern organizations in the case studies had outcome data available. Unless their donors initiate them, Southern organizations generally carry out no evaluations of their work. In the absence of a culture of learning, an important driver of endogenous capacity development is missing. In this respect, donor investment in PME systems for their beneficiaries remains inconsequential. Indeed, the impact of PME systems has been negative insofar as donor demands for information (produced, in theory, by a well-functioning PME system) prevent Southern organizations from pursuing their own priorities. This omission has serious implications for the relationship between Southern organizations and their DDPs. It is difficult to imagine a situation in which mutual learning can take place, but where important information on outcomes is not available.

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The above list suggests that there is a considerable gap between theory and practice. However, in the case of DDP support, there is no pertinent reason to ask what holds donors captive, the question Rick James posed earlier referring to NGDO’s (donors) who know what needs to be changed but do not do it.<sup>121</sup> This evaluation suggests that innovation has been taking place since 1999. Learning from experience – a main reason for this evaluation – shows that both the Ministry and the Dutch DDPs recognize the need to improve policy and its implementation.

It may not be easy to realize an agenda for more effective capacity development support. Certainly DDPs cannot make progress individually, as the principles of systems thinking would suggest. This evaluation itself exemplifies the amount of effort needed from all parties to document experience, systematize it and make new knowledge available to a wider audience. And that is even before attempting to put this knowledge into practice. Success may require an effort by many in the Dutch development sector pursuing capacity development together with Southern partners and international experts. In that context, this evaluation’s contribution is not to be seen as an end but as the beginning of a search for more effective support for capacity development – as Dominique Hounkonnou, external consultant to this evaluation expressed so eloquently: this evaluation exercise is not the end but the beginning.

<sup>121</sup> James, R. *Vices and Virtues in Capacity Development by International NGOs*. IDS Bulletin 41:3, May 2010.



# Annexes



## Annex 1 About IOB

### Objectives

The objective of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) is to increase insight into the implementation and effects of Dutch foreign policy. IOB meets the need for independent evaluation of policy and operations in all policy fields falling under the Homogenous Budget for International Cooperation (HGIS). IOB also advises on the planning and implementation of the evaluations for which policy departments and embassies are responsible. Its evaluations enable the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation to account to parliament for their policy decisions and the allocation of resources. And what is learned from these evaluations helps government to steer Dutch foreign policy into the future.

Efforts are made to incorporate the findings of evaluations into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy cycle. Evaluation reports are used to provide targeted feedback, with a view to improving both policy intentions and implementation. Insight into the effects of implemented policy allows policy makers to devise measures that are more keenly focused, and therefore more effective.

### Approach and methodology

IOB has a staff of experienced evaluators, and it administers its own budget. When carrying out evaluations, it calls on the assistance of external experts with specialized knowledge of the topic under investigation. To monitor its own quality, it sets up a reference group for each evaluation, which includes not only external experts but also interested parties from within the Ministry.

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### Programme

IOB's evaluation programme is part of the Programme Evaluations annex to the explanatory memorandum of the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### An organization in development

Since IOB's establishment in 1977, major shifts have taken place in its approach as well as in its areas of focus and responsibility. In its early years, IOB's activities took the form of individual project evaluations for the Minister for Development Cooperation. During the mid-1980s, evaluations became more comprehensive, taking in sectors, themes and countries. Moreover, IOB's reports were submitted to parliament, which brought them into the public domain.

Dutch foreign policy was renewed in 1996 and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs underwent a reorganization. As a result, IOB's mandate was extended to the Dutch government's entire foreign policy. In recent years, it has extended its partnerships with similar departments in other countries, usually through joint evaluations.

Finally, IOB also aims to expand its methodological repertoire. This includes greater emphasis on statistical methods of impact evaluation. As of 2007, IOB undertakes policy reviews as a type of evaluation.



## Annex 2 Summary: general Terms of Reference

### Introduction

The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IOB) carries out independent evaluations on policy and operations in all fields falling under the Netherlands' International Cooperation. IOB launched an evaluation of Dutch support for capacity development that will result in a synthesis report based on a series of evaluations of the support for capacity development provided by seven organisations in 17 countries. The seven organisations are the Ministry of Health (Ghana) and six Dutch NGOs – Agriterra, the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment (NCEIA), the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), Partos, PSO and SNV. Although these organisations work in different fields, they are all directly involved in promoting and supporting capacity development.

### Purpose

The evaluation is intended to respond to the need for knowledge and insights that will contribute to the future policies of the ministry, Dutch NGOs and their partners in developing countries on capacity development.

The evaluation initiative looks at how and under what circumstances capacity has developed and attempts to identify the factors that have influenced the effectiveness of the support provided by the Netherlands government and NGOs.

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### Open systems approach

Recognising that capacity is elusive and often transient, the evaluation will not use a predefined concept of capacity, and will regard organisations and networks as open systems with permeable boundaries. This approach, summarised in the diagram, will allow the evaluators to focus on how capacity has developed from within, rather than to look only at what outsiders have done to support and promote it.

### Southern perspective

The adoption of the open systems approach has significant methodological implications. In particular, the framework and the indicators used in each evaluation must be contextualised and related to the perspectives of both the Dutch and Southern partners with regard to capacity development. Thus the indicators and operational criteria will be determined in cooperation with local stakeholders (bottom up approach). Southern partners are fully involved in the evaluation process from the outset, whether as members of reference groups, as resource persons, or in conducting the fieldwork for each of the seven evaluations. In summary, the evaluation underlines the importance of the Southern partners' views of and experiences with CD.

### Analytical framework of the evaluation

In the analytical framework shown in the diagram, the broad concept of capacity is divided into five core capabilities that every organisation/ system possesses.<sup>122</sup> Each capability cannot by itself create capacity. All five core capabilities are strongly interrelated, and

<sup>122</sup> Paul Engel, Niels Keijzer, and Tony Land, *A balanced approach to monitoring and evaluation capacity and performance, A proposal for a framework*, ECDPM Discussion Paper No 58E, December 2007. [www.ecdpm.org/dp58e](http://www.ecdpm.org/dp58e)

provide the basis for assessing a situation at a particular moment, after which the capacity of the system can be monitored and tracked over time in order to assess how it has developed.

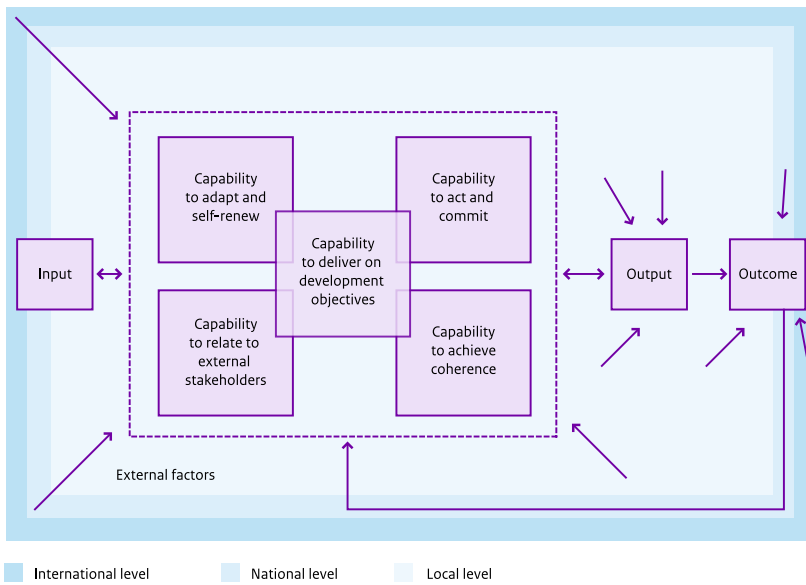


Figure 1. Analytical framework for capacity development. (Adapted from de Lange, Capacity.org 37, 2009).

The extended general terms of reference is available from IOB on request.

## The core capabilities and their components

Core capability	Components	Sub components
<b>1 Capability to relate.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political and social legitimacy.</li> <li>• Integer leadership and staff (upright, incorruptible or undiscussed).</li> <li>• Operational credibility /reliability.</li> <li>• Participation in coalitions.</li> <li>• Adequate alliances with external stakeholders.</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	
<b>2 Capability to commit and act.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of a work plan, decision taking and acting on these decisions collectively.</li> <li>• Effective resource mobilisation (human, institutional and financial).</li> <li>• Effective monitoring of the work plan.</li> <li>• Inspiring /action oriented leadership.</li> <li>• Acceptance of leadership's integrity by staff.</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	
<b>3 Capability to deliver on development objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial resources.</li> <li>• Facilities, equipment and premises.</li> <li>• Human resources.</li> <li>• Access to knowledge resources.</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	
<b>4 Capability to adapt and self-renew.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of shifting contexts and relevant trends (external factors).</li> <li>• Confidence to change: leaving room for diversity, flexibility and creativity.</li> <li>• Use of opportunities and incentives, acknowledgment of mistakes that have been made and stimulation of the discipline to learn.</li> <li>• Systematically planned and evaluated learning, including in management.</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	
<b>5 Capability to maintain coherence.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear mandate, vision and strategy, which is known by staff and used by its management to guide its decision-making process.</li> <li>• A well-defined set of operating principles.</li> <li>• Leadership is committed to achieving coherence, balancing stability and change.</li> <li>• Coherence between ambition, vision, strategy and operations.</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	

### Organisation of the evaluation

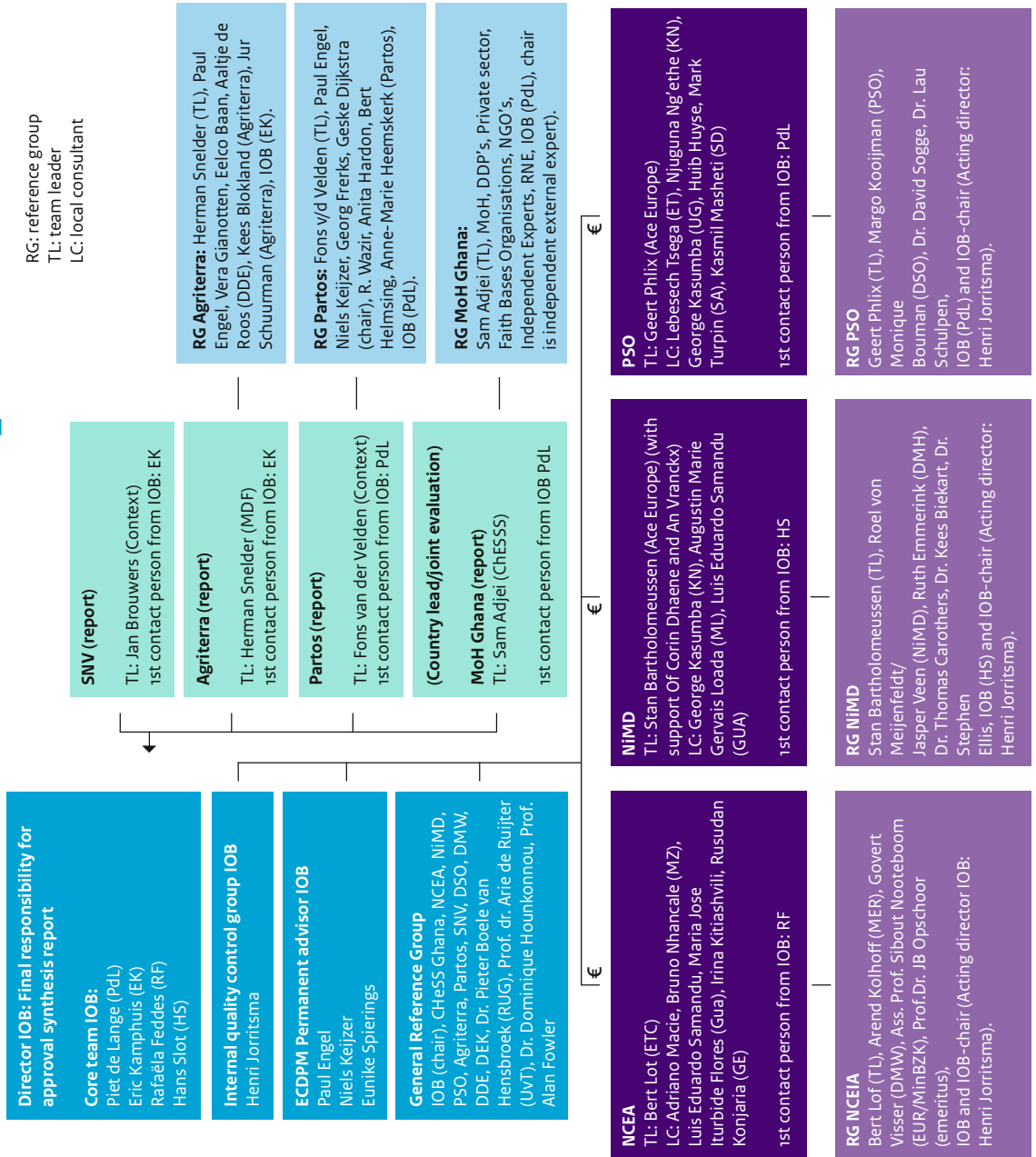
IOB initiated the evaluation of the Dutch support to CD and facilitates this evaluation initiative in cooperation with a wider network of partners:

- Seven organisations participating in the evaluation initiative (Ministry of Health Ghana and six Dutch NGOs, i.e. Agriterria; NCEIA; NiMD; Partos; PSO; SNV)
- External advisors (ECDPM; University of Utrecht; University of Tilburg; University of Rotterdam; Southern advisors)
- Facilitating organisations (methodology development, communication)
- Consultants based in the North
- Consultants based in the South

The respective missions of the seven participating organisations differ considerably from each other, however having one thing in common: their explicit orientation on supporting CD. For each of these evaluations a reference group and an evaluation team (team leader and experts) have been established consisting of Northern and Southern members, who all have a strong background in CD theories and practices.

The final synthesis report of the Dutch support to CD will present the analysis of the key findings and lessons learnt of all seven evaluations and together with the individual evaluation reports it aims to make an important contribution to furthering the international debate on capacity development (expected December 2010). A full version of the ToR can be found at [www.minbuza.nl/iob](http://www.minbuza.nl/iob).

# Annex 3 Organogram



## Annex 4 Overview of reports

### IOB

Lange, P. de and Feddes, R. (2008) General Terms of Reference ‘Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development’: Evidence-based case studies on how to support organisational development effectively.

Lange, P. de (2009) Evaluation of collaborative associations.

Lange, P. de (2009) Joint-evaluation initiative: Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development. Explanatory note on issues raised in the team leaders’ meeting of 1 April 2009.

Fowler, A., Engel, P., Keijzer, N. and Spiering E. (2010) Reference Note – Validation of the 5CC Framework.

### Agriterra

#### *Inception report*

Snelder, H. (2009) General Terms of Reference ‘Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development’: Evidence-based case studies – Inception report Agriterra. Wageningen: MDF.

Snelder, H. (2009) Addendum to Agriterra inception report. Wageningen: MDF.

#### *Case study reports*

Nzalamingi, C. and Snelder, H. (2010) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: Evidence-based case studies – Rapport sur SYDIP, République démocratique de Congo.

Randriamahonina, V., Hofs, P. and Snelder, H. (2010) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: Evidence-based case studies – Rapport sur FEKRITAMA, Madagascar.

Lewinsky, T. (2010) Images of Capacity Development, Mviwata Tanzania.

#### *Final report*

Snelder, H. (2010) Evaluation of Agriterra’s support to capacity development based on evidence from case studies in: MVIWATA, Tanzania; SYDIP, Democratic Republic of the Congo; FEKRITAMA, Madagascar. Wageningen: MDF.

### NCEA

#### *Inception report*

Lof, B. (2009) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: Evidence-based case studies. Draft inception report study, Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment.

#### *Case study reports*

Iturbide, M.J. and Samandú, L. (2010) Evaluation of the support given by the Dutch cooperation to capacity development – Case studies based on evidence. The support of NCEA to the strengthening of the Environmental Impact Assessment System in Guatemala.

Kitiashvili, I. and Konjaria, R. (2010) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: NCEA Georgia case study.

Lof, B. (2010) NCEA support to Burundi EA system (2005–2010): A short overview.

Lof, B. (2010) NCEA support to Ghana EA system (1998–2008): A short desk study.

Macia, A., Nhancale, B. and Lof, B. (2010) Evaluation of NCEA support to capacity building of the environmental assessment system in Mozambique: Evidence-based case study.

#### *Final report*

IOB report 335 (2011) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: The case of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA).

All reports are available from NCEA or IOB on request.

### **Ghana Ministry of Health**

#### *Inception report*

Adjei, S., Graft Aikins, A. de, Toonen, J. and Nazzar, A. (2009) Evaluation of capacity development at district level of the health sector in Ghana: Evidence-based case study. Inception Report. Accra: CheSS.

CHeSS (2009) Addendum to Ghana inception report. Accra: CHeSS.

#### *Case study reports*

Graft Aikins, A. de (2010) Evaluation of capacity development at district level in the Ghana health sector: Evidence-based case study, a qualitative analysis report on Birim North District. Accra: CheSS.

#### *Final report*

Adjei, S. et al. (2010) Evaluation of capacity development at district level of the health sector in Ghana (2006–2009): Evidence-based case study. Accra: CheSS.

All reports are available from the Ghana Ministry of Health or CHeSS on request.

### **NIMD**

#### *Inception report*

Bartholomeeussen, S., Molen, N. and Dhaene, C. (2009) Evaluation of Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) support for capacity development, inception report. NIMD.

Bartholomeeussen, S. (2009) Addendum to NIMD inception report.

*Case study reports*

Loada, A. and Bartholomeeussen, S. (2009) Evidence-based case study of NIMD's country programme in Mali and of the WARPP.

Samandu, L. and Vrankckx, A. (2009) Evidence-based case study of NIMD's country programme in Guatemala.

Kasumba, G. and Bartholomeeussen, S. (2010) Evidence-based case study: support to the centre for multiparty democracy (CMD-K) and political parties in Kenya.

Dhaene, C. and Vranckx, A. (2010) NIMD (2006–2009) institutional evaluation.

*Final report*

IOB report 331 (2010) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: The case of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD).

All reports are available from NIMD or IOB on request.

**Partos**

*Inception report*

Velden, F. van der (2009) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: Evidence-based case studies: Programme evaluation of Partos capacity development. Utrecht: Context, international cooperation.

Velden, F. van der (2009). Addendum to Partos inception report. Utrecht: Context, international cooperation.

*Case study reports*

Chigudu, H. (2010) Capacity Development Evaluation Process. Case study Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL). Harare: Hope Africa.

Malunga, C. (2010) Youths, women and children: Case study YouthNet and Counselling. Blantyre, Malawi: CADECO.

Malunga, C. (2010a) Home-Based Care Programme: Case study ECM – Catholic Health Commission. Blantyre, Malawi: CADECO. (Draft)

Olila, T. (2010) Case Study Strengthening of Civil Society Organization Involving Systems. Nairobi, Kenya: Strategic Connections.

Schreven, A. (2010) Capacities for Community Development: Case Study of the Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK). Thimphu, Bhutan: Euthpal.

Schreven, A. (2010a) Letting the frogs out of the well: Exploring community-driven change in Cambodia: Case study of the Programme Support Team (PST). Thimphu, Bhutan: Euthpal.



Tsega, L. (2010) Capacity Development on Value Chains: Case Study, Ethiopia Learning Alliance. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Horn Consult.

*Final report*

Velden, F. van der, and Fernando, U. (2010) Final report, capacities for development: Synthesis report, joint evaluation Partos capacity development. Utrecht: Context, international cooperation.

All reports are available from Partos on request.

**PSO**

*Inception report*

Phlix, G. and Kasumba, G. (2009) Inception report on the evaluation of Dutch support for capacity development: Evidence-based case studies.

Phlix, G. (2010) Addendum to PSO inception report on the evaluation of Dutch support for capacity development. Evidence-based case studies.

*Case study reports*

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Kasumba, G. and Dhaene C. (2010) Evaluation report mission Uganda. Analyzing support from Woord en Daad to the capacity development of KDDS.

Masheti, K. and Phlix, G. (2010) Evaluation report mission South Sudan. Analyzing the CADEP programme implemented by ICCO in Southern Sudan.

N'Ngethe and Phlix, G. (2009) Evaluation report mission Kenya. Analyzing support from Mensen met een Missie to the capacity development of St Martin SCA.

Turpin, M. and Huyse, H. (2010) Evaluation report mission South Africa. Analyzing the support of NIZA to the capacity development of the Freedom of Expression Institute.

Tsega, L. and Phlix, G. (2010) Evaluation report mission Ethiopia. Analyzing support from Tearfund to the capacity development of MKC–RDA.

*Final report*

IOB no. 332 (2010) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: The PSO case. Synthesis report on the evaluation of the PSO programme 2007–2010.

All reports are available from PSO or IOB on request.

**SNV**

*Inception report*

Brouwers, J. et al. (2009) Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: Evidence-based case studies. Programme evaluation SNV inception report. Utrecht: Context, international cooperation.

Brouwers, J. et al. (2009) Addendum to SNV inception report. Utrecht: Context, international cooperation.

*Case study reports*

Debela, S. (2010) Evaluation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs support to capacity development. An evidence-based case study: SNV support to capacity development for the Ethiopia honey value chain.

Makumire, T. and Taylor, J. (2010) Evaluation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs support to capacity development. An evidence-based case study: SNV support to capacity development for the livestock value chain in Kenya.

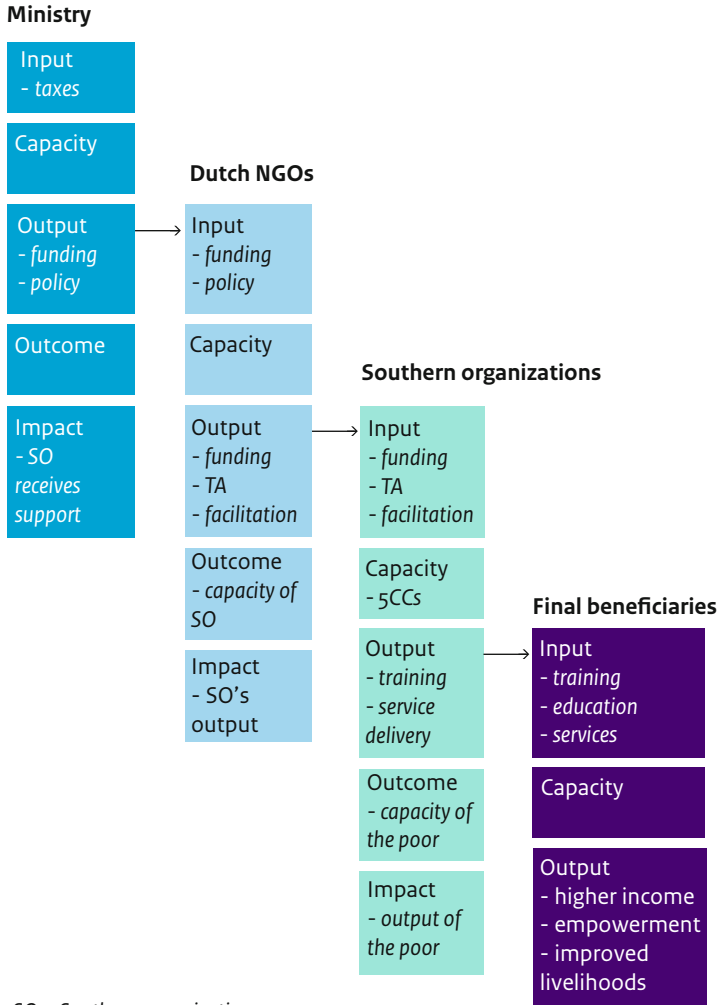
Nakimbugwe, D. (2010) Evaluation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs support to capacity development. An evidence-based case study: SNV support to capacity development for the Uganda oil seed sub-sector.

*Final report*

Brouwers, J. et al. (2010) Report evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development: Evidence-based case studies. Synthesis report case study SNV. Utrecht: Context, international cooperation.

All reports are available from SNV on request.

## Annex 5 Results chain



SO = Southern organization  
 TA = technical assistance  
 5CCs = five core capabilities

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# 1 Agriterra

## 1.1 Rural membership organization FEKRITAMA, Madagascar

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the rural membership organisation FEKRITAMA since 2000 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner (DDP), Agriterra, during this process. It focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in FEKRITAMA's capacity? (2) What effects did FEKRITAMA's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Agriterra in strengthening the FEKRITAMA's capacity? (4) What factors explain Agriterra's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case report defines neither the 5CCs nor their indicators. No local calibration of the indicators took place. In the Agriterra synthesis report, the evaluators devised a retrospective calibration based on data over the period 2000-2009 and presented short descriptions of the 5CCs. In both the synthesis and case reports, indications of changes in capabilities were not always clear. FEKRITAMA was the unit of analysis.

- CC1: FEKRITAMA has consistently strengthened itself, having put in place strategic and financial planning with realistic goals, established structures/rules (organizational structures and job descriptions) and a stable and accepted management that has been operating for more than 10 years.
- CC2: FEKRITAMA struggles with its income base. It is still dependent on donor funding. It has an adequate infrastructure and extensive human resource base and has access to a wide variety of knowledge institutions.
- CC3: FEKRITAMA interacts with a large range of different actors/networks (NGOs, private/governmental sectors and international organizations). FEKRITAMA has an extensive membership base (about 46,000 persons in 2009 and 2,015 associations); it is a trusted partner for its members and donors.
- CC4: FEKRITAMA changed its focus to increasing farmer production and the marketing of products through value chains; it cautiously guides its members on new governmental policy on agriculture. It shows improved integration of women and youngsters into its activities.
- CC5: The scope of FEKRITAMA's activities is consistent with its vision/mission. It maintains transparency in its application of internal rules; leadership is stable (CC5).

### *Changes in outputs*

The Agriterra synthesis report lists various outputs (seed production, sales of agricultural inputs, provision technical/market information, farmer training, facilitation), but provides no quantitative data. The case report provides little data on the expansion of FEKRITAMA's networks or the development of investment plans for the rice, groundnuts, and corn production systems.

### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report and the Agriterra synthesis report do not have an outcome statement, but refer to a list of results (i.e. control over value chains, access to financial means, farmers'

interests served, enabling environment facilitated). No time frame for the realization of these results is given. However, IOB could reconstruct a reasonably solid outcome statement on the basis of the various pieces of information available in the case study report.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report and the Agriterra synthesis report indicate that changes in capabilities took place partially in tandem with changes in outputs; this parallel is reflected in the reconstructed outcome statement.

#### *External factors*

The case report describes a range of relevant external factors with respect to farmers' vulnerabilities: land fragmentation, limited access to finances/modern means of production, weak communication structures, weak commercial circuits, limited access to public services and poor awareness of the importance of biodiversity. It describes land ownership, stakeholders' networks in the agricultural sector, national agricultural policy and the regional food crisis. It also mentions a growth in telecommunications, an infrastructural overhaul, anti-corruption policies and the negative impact of the 2009 political crisis.

#### *Effectiveness*

Agriterra supported FEKRITAMA in effectively defining its strategy and financial management. Agriterra's failure to provide funding certainty funding in 2010 reduced FEKRITAMA's earlier effectiveness. Agriterra's profiling procedure is causing FEKRITAMA to struggle, and the consequences for the organization are as yet unclear. The farmer-to-farmer approach and respect for ownership contributed to Agriterra's effectiveness.

## **1.2 Rural membership organization MVIWATA, Tanzania**

### *Introduction*

The case study analysed the process of capacity development since 2004 of the rural membership organization MVIWATA in Tanzania and the role of its DDP, Agriterra, during this process. It focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in MVIWATA's capacity? (2) What effects did MVIWATA's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Agriterra in strengthening MVIWATA's capacity? (4) What factors explain Agriterra's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case report describes each of the capabilities with indicators. No local calibration of the indicators took place. In the Agriterra synthesis report the evaluators devised a retrospective calibration based on data from the period 2004-2009. MVIWATA was the unit of analysis.

- CC1:** Leadership remained concentrated on one person, while the organization's outreach expanded. The staff developed itself, but is at risk of becoming overstretched.
- CC2:** MVIWATA became more stable in its performance. The consequences of dependency on donor funding became clear when Agriterra terminated its funding in 2010. MVIWATA has increased its access to knowledge resources.
- CC3:** MVIWATA is seen as a reliable broker in local networks. Its connection to national

and international networks has expanded considerably. However its membership base does not provide sufficient additional income. Membership contributions varied during the period 2003-2008.

- CC4: MVIWATA showed flexibility in its legal environment: it modified its legal registration status and adjusted its constitution by shifting to mid-level networking instead of working at the local level. It actively analyzed Tanzania's decentralization in 2005 and adapted to it.
- CC5: MVIWATA has formulated a set of operating principles, seeks balance between stability and change, but is at risk of overstretching its resources now that Agriterra's funding has stopped.

#### *Changes in outputs*

The case report defined outputs in terms of institutional strengthening, facilitation, training, information dissemination and advocacy/lobbying/awareness raising campaigns, but did not measure output in these respects.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The report provides the following outcome statement: 'MVIWATA seeks to support the capacity development of small-scale farmers through networking, resulting in their participation in and representation of their own interests at different levels for securing their own social and economic development.' The outcome statement was not put in operational terms and lacked a time frame.

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#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

No connection between changes in capabilities and outputs could be detected, because output changes were not clear. Likewise, there was no detectable parallel between capability changes and outcomes.

#### *External factors*

The case report treats external factors briefly, making only a few references to external socio-economical and political trends, such as political decentralization in 2005. MVIWATA trained its members in the government's Public Expenditure Tracking System, and its constituencies publicly discussed and critically analyzed the national 'Agriculture First' policy. Dependency on external funding appears to be a decisive factor.

#### *Effectiveness*

The report notes MVIWATA's lack of management information needed to judge Agriterra's effectiveness. Agriterra's funding contributed to the implementation of the organization's 2004-2008 Strategic Plan. Its support positively influenced CC2 (to deliver on development objectives) and CC3 (to relate). The farmer-to-farmer approach and respect for ownership contributed to Agriterra's effectiveness. However, Agriterra's sudden termination of funding provoked an acute crisis in the organization.

### 1.3 Rural membership organization SYDIP, Democratic Republic of the Congo

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the rural membership organization Syndicat de Défense des Intérêts Paysans (SYDIP) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since 2000 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner, Agriterra, during this process. It focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in SYDIP's capacity? (2) What effects did SYDIP's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Agriterra in strengthening SYDIP's capacity? (4) What factors explain Agriterra's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case report defines neither the 5CCs nor their indicators. No local calibration of the indicators has taken place. In the Agriterra synthesis report, the evaluators devised a retrospective calibration based on data over the period 2000-2009 and presented short descriptions of the 5CCs. Indication of changes in capabilities were not always clear, but it appears that not all 5CCs underwent major changes. SYDIP was the unit of analysis.

- CC1:** SYDIP has become a solid, legal organization since 1993 with well-established structures/ rules (organizational structures and job descriptions) and a stable and accepted management. In formal terms, members' representation is fairly well arranged. SYDIP prepares strategic plans, and makes annual plans on that basis. It adequately manages commitments with members and donors. Monitoring is well integrated into the organization.
- CC2:** SYDIP seeks to diversify its income as a matter of priority, but continues to remain dependent on external funding. Staff stays on the job and continues performing. SYDIP has access to knowledge sources, but does not use these optimally.
- CC3:** SYDIP is strongly embedded, socially and politically, in small-farmer communities. It operates in a participatory way, although that approach is made difficult by the distances between the central office and the field offices. Its reporting to its constituencies and donors remains poor. SYDIP maintains networks with (inter)national agricultural and research organizations.
- CC4:** SYDIP's board and management focus on observing and understanding changes in politics, legal provisions, politicians and officials. SYDIP shows awareness of the precarious security situation and its consequences for small farmers. It is devoting more attention to women and youth in its strategies and policies, and focuses on local committees.
- CC5:** There is transparency in the application of rules and regulations. SYDIP's staff are aware of their organization's mandate to defend the rights of small farmers, strengthen their self-esteem and achieve socio-economic development.

#### *Changes in outputs*

The Agriterra synthesis report lists the effects of changes on capabilities, but does not speak of outputs. Those outputs may be found in judicial support, leadership training, technical/ agricultural advice, the sale of agricultural inputs, the provision of technical/market information, the facilitation of value chains, the provision of market information and member training sessions on gender and HIV/Aids. No quantitative data are provided.



### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report contains a simple outcome statement: 'A professional farmer in a labour-intensive, unified and just world.' The Agriterra synthesis report does not have an outcome statement, but refers to a list of results in qualitative terms with no time frame (feeling of pride/belonging to the 'SYDIP family'; members well represented; increased knowledge on land rights; economic/commercial awareness of farmers; women/youth better represented; increased access to seeds; and increased production).

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case study reveals no major changes in capabilities; nor were major changes detected in connection with outputs. Parallels with outcomes could not be assumed, as there was no evidence in the reports.

### *External factors*

The case report indicates problematic external factors (insecurity, bad governance, no attention for agriculture, weak physical infrastructures, insecure land ownership, weak commercial/financial infrastructures), but does not specify these for Northern Kivu, where SYDIP has its headquarters.

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### *Effectiveness*

Agriterra's core funding has been essential for SYDIP, but its strategic and organizational support have been effective as well. The farmer-to-farmer approach and respect for ownership contributed to Agriterra's effectiveness.

## 2 NCEA

### 2.1 Environmental Assessment System, Georgia

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of Georgia's Environmental Assessment System (EA system) since 2000 and the role of its D DP, the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessment (NCEA), during this process. It focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the EA system's capacity? (2) What effects did the EA system's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was NCEA in strengthening the EA system's capacity? (4) What factors explain NCEA's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study described the core capabilities (CCs) of the system supported by the NCEA in a transparent way. The evaluators formulated criteria to judge the capability for a process of local calibration. Changes in core capabilities were often not well indicated, but were evidently strongly and negatively influenced by the Rose Revolution in 2003. The unit of analysis was the EA system (Ministry of Environment – MEPNR, Ministry of Economic Development – MoED, environmental NGOs, consultants, proponents).

- CC1: During the period under review, the means available to the EA system became limited, as did the number of mandatory activities. Raising public awareness and participation of those affected by new investments were left to the investors. In 2006, the time frame for investment decisions was shortened.
- CC2: The MEPNR lacks a human resource strategy, but since the Rose Revolution salaries increased without clear bonus criteria. MEPNR's funds are not stable, but no sharp decrease occurred. Access to knowledge exists but is badly used; professional expertise is hired on a project-by-project basis.
- CC3: After 2004, EA's diminished importance became clear, due to the central position of MoED (which adopted a one-window approach). Confidence in collaboration with civil society (NGOs) was lost. Consultants involved in EA are often not independent of investors.
- CC4: The legal and organizational framework for EA were not well adapted to the situation after 2004, when the focus was predominantly on simplifying procedures and creating anti-corruption measures. EA therefore received less attention. MEPRN saw a constant turnover of key personnel.
- CC5: After 2004, the legal / organizational MEPNR frameworks began to erode. Decentralization was poorly executed, with had negative consequences for decision making in the EA system. As the MEPNR lacked motivation and the private sector lacked leadership, there was no sense of urgency for EA.

#### *Changes in outputs*

Outputs of the EA system were defined in terms of the number of environmental permits issued. Following economic liberalization of 2004, the quality of EA reports decreased, though none of them were rejected. In cases where investment funding was provided by an international development bank, higher EA standards were applied. The BTC pipeline case is an example.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report provides neither an outcome statement of the EA system, nor a time frame. No National Environmental Plan with clear goals and strategies was present. The case report provides an EA definition of outcome as put up by stakeholders: 'improving environmental protection through governmental regulation of EA processes combined with supporting investments / development.'

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report indicates that negative changes in capabilities and outputs occurred, due mainly to external factors; parallels with outcomes could not be detected, as the outcome definition was not clear.

#### *External factors*

The case report provides a comprehensive description of the EA system since 2000 and a brief description of the EA stakeholders. It identifies the 2003 Rose Revolution as the major external factor influencing the EA system. The number of environmental NGOs grew to about 2,000. Georgia takes part in various international agreements, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy.

### Effectiveness

In the period 2000-2004, NCEA's advisory services in the BTC pipeline were effective, resulting in mitigation and compensation measures. NCEA was involved in the capacity development of MEPNR, but the case report did not specify the nature of the support. NCEA built good relations with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, which opened opportunities for new support to the EA system.

## 2.2 Environmental Assessment System, Guatemala

### Introduction

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of Guatemala's Environmental Assessment System (EA system) since 2002 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner, the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessment (NCEA), during this process. It focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the EA system's capacity? (2) What effects did the EA system's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was NCEA in strengthening the EA system's capacity? (4) What factors explain NCEA's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### Changes in core capabilities (CCs)

The case report describes CCs of the EA system with judgement criteria, indicators and sources of verification. Indicators were calibrated in local meetings with various stakeholders. Based on these indicators, CC changes since 2002 (the year MARN, the Ministry of Environment, was established) were assessed. The indication of changes was clear but not quantified. The unit of analysis was the EA system (MARN, proponents, civil society, consultants).

- CC1: Change in this capability was reflected in the creation of the Regulation for Environmental Assessment, Control and Follow-up (RESCA) in 2003 with clear procedures vital for EA. Monitoring of the work process is in development. MARN developed its organization in the period 2003-2007. Staff was committed to the mission of MARN, to improved job stability and to capacity development.
- CC2: During the period 2002-2007, MARN budget did not grow. Its head office had the proper infrastructure in place, but MARN's ICT division did not function well. Its delegations were not well equipped. Available human resources were strengthened in its delegations. The education level of staff increased and became more EA focused; staff induction requires improvement. IUCN supported the development of sectoral environmental guidelines at MARN. Not many NGOs were geared to EA in civil society; EA consultants were not considered to be independent from private sector interests.
- CC3: MARN is the central legitimate part of the EA system, but outside perceptions of MARN were not positive. There were difficulties ensuring the timely delivery of EA and proper follow-up. There were no permanent forums for dialogue with the private sector and civil society. MARN established alliances with external stakeholders and made inter-institutional arrangements. Better promotion of EA in Central American Region is needed. The quality of public participation in EA is low.
- CC4: The capacity of the EA system to change is seen as limited. The means to update

MARN and enable it to respond to changes in the political environment have lagged behind. An environmental management monitoring system still remains to be built. There is no training policy.

**CC5:** Since 2003 there has been some progress in building coherence in the EA system. MARN has a clear mandate, vision, strategy and consistent reference framework. Progress has been made in decentralization since 2009. But there are overlapping mandates among different directorates in the EA system.

#### *Changes in outputs*

Outputs of the EA system were defined in terms of the number of environmental tools issued. The volume of tools increased over the period 1998-2009. There was also control and follow-up regarding mitigation and contingency plans.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report provides no explicit outcome statement. However, an outcome statement embedded in the MARN mission was: 'achievement of a situation in which persons enjoy natural goods and services, clean energy is available and natural rights are ensured by eco-efficiency and energetic independence.' No time frame for changes was given.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities took place in tandem with changes in outputs; such parallels with outcomes cannot be assumed.

#### *External factors*

The case study provides a description of the EA system (laws, procedures, stakeholders, public sector, proposing sector, civil society) since 1986. Reports indicate that an endogenous development EA system faces external constraints, namely powerful ministries that oversee mining and agriculture, and strong private interests. International impetus for EA has come from the Central American Commission for the Environment (CCAD). Guatemala's democracy is weak and vulnerable, marred by corruption and environmental crimes.

#### *Effectiveness*

Cooperation between NCEA and IUCN was fruitful and led to an EA framework in 2003 and its reform in 2007. Support has come mainly through training and advice. This came with donor support from Sweden, Denmark and USA. The regional approach by NCEA/IUCN in promoting EA in Guatemala has been helpful.

## **2.3 Environmental Assessment System, Mozambique**

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzes the process of capacity development of Mozambique's Environmental Assessment System (EA system) since 1998 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner, the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessment (NCEA), during this process. It focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the EA system's capacity? (2) What effects did the EA system's capacity changes have on its

outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was NCEA in strengthening the EA system's capacity? (4) What factors explain NCEA's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case report describes CCs of the Environmental Assessment (EA) system with judgement criteria and indicators. These were specified in a local calibration process. On this basis, CC changes over the period 1998-2009 were assessed. However, an indication of changes was not always clear. The unit of analysis was the EA system (Ministry of Environment – MICOA – proponents, consultants, NGOs, local communities).

- CC1: Gradual improvement of EA processes took place at MICOA. The conformity of decision making to EA procedures was only partial (25% of EAs follow procedures). Work processes were not monitored; the environmental audit plan was carried out only partially. EA management was volatile and the position of staff was uncertain. The EA capabilities of MICOA staff were weak.
- CC2: The funding available to MICOA was too limited to ensure adequate functioning of the organization. MICOA's provincial offices cannot handle big projects. Its human resources suffer from low salaries and sporadic training, which causes high staff turnover. Since 2004, the organization's access to knowledge sources has worsened. The mobilization of external expertise depends on donor financing. National environmental NGOs are more vocal, but also depend on donor funding.
- CC3: MICOA's legitimacy grew within the EA system. However, the Mozambican Association for Environmental Impact Assessment (AMAIA) was not acknowledged by MICOA. Outside the EA system, legitimacy is weak at national political levels and at the level of development partners. The independence of some MICOA staff and environmental consultants was questioned. Nevertheless MICOA's operational credibility improved; alliances were made with external partners such as ministries and universities. EA transparency increased, due to the involvement of public consultations and NGOs.
- CC4: MICOA could not keep up with the rising demand for environmental licences. A number of regulations were fine-tuned, but they have yet to be applied. Decentralization in the EA system proved to be an appropriate adjustment. International environmental treaties have not yet been translated into national regulations.
- CC5: Enforcing regulations and procedures is still problematic. The EA system has acknowledged a link between economic development and environmental care. Inter-ministerial coordination is still weak.

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#### *Changes in outputs*

Outputs of the EA system are defined in terms of the number of environmental permits issued. The number of licensed projects has increased since 2007-2008. The quality of EA reports varies despite their having a standard format and structure. Deficient data sampling created inconsistencies in EA reports.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report provides a rather well-defined outcome statement of the EA system in a series of results: investing in an environmentally sound manner, environmental practices in

economic activities, public participation to sway opinion, the environmental implications of investments, development mitigation plans, compensation plan for population negatively affected by investments. No time frame for outcome realization was indicated.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities occurred in tandem with changes in outputs. Such parallels with the outcome statement can also be assumed.

#### *External factors*

The case report provides an elaborate description of the EA system since 1994. It describes MICOA's development environmental strategies and the EA system (laws, procedures, National Environmental Fund), but also stakeholders in the EA system (government, proposing sector, consultants/AMAIA). The case report describes economic development since 2006 and the need for the EA system. The development of the EA system slowed down in 2004 due to constitutional changes and a new government.

#### *Effectiveness*

NCEA has been effective in revising the EA regulatory framework (2002-2003). The quality of projects in which NCEA intervened in the period 2002-2006 was above average. NCEA effectively guided EA processes together with national professionals; in 2008 NCEA facilitated of emergence AMAIA.

## 3 Ministry of Health, Ghana

### 3.1 Atiwa District Health Management Team

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development (CD) of the Atiwa District Health Management Team (Atiwa South DHMT) in Ghana and the role of the various Development Partners (DPs) during this process over the period 2006-2009. DPs included international organizations (the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund), international bilateral partners (Danida, JICA, CIDA, USAID, GTZ, DFID, the Royal Netherlands Embassy), UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO, FAO, UNAIDS, UNHCR), and other international organizations (the Red Cross, Rotary, World Vision International). The study focused on the questions: (1) What changes took place in the Atiwa DHMT's capacity? (2) What effects did the Atiwa DHMT's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective were the DPs in strengthening the Atiwa DHMT's capacity? (4) What factors explain the DPs' effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The Atiwa DHMT is central to the operation of the District Health System (DHS). The DHMT runs health services through district hospital and health centres in sub-districts. Atiwa District is one of eight districts in the eastern region, five of which have been labelled as 'best performing' and three as 'worst performing'. Atiwa District is considered to be among the

‘worst performing’ districts. The report specifies the nature of CCs through interviews with 13 respondents representing DHMT’s stakeholders, namely: (a) three DHMT members, (b) five hospital/health centre/community health workers, (c) a seller of medical supplies, (d) members of a district assembly, (e) regional/national partners, and (f) members of two communities (civic, religious, political groups). Indicators for CCs were translated into the local context by DPs and key informants, and by drawing on CD reports by the DP community. In Atiwa, CD concerned mainly technical assistance provided by health NGOs, the district assembly, sector departments, regional/national partners and international organizations; in only two cases did CD stem from training by NGOs/international organizations. CC indicators were used for pointing to CC changes; however, these were not articulated.

- CC1:** The DHMT and hospitals operate according to plans and act through collective decision making. They show a clear ability to articulate work processes and guide work implementation/reporting. The DHS considered itself deprived, lacking buildings, a means of transport and equipment. This negatively influenced the working culture, which was blamed on the lack of funds.
- CC2:** Human resources in the district have been unstable. The career progression of young health workers has been limited; a lack of accommodation was also mentioned. Leadership is considered weak and off-standish; there is low motivation. However, a current change of leadership is offering new perspectives.
- CC3:** Atiwa relies on nationally/regionally appointed health workers. Passive leadership led to the poor mobilization of resources. The DHMT, however, is operational and credible. For its stakeholders, the DHMT’s services are socially legitimate.
- CC4:** There is a need to use opportunities/financial incentives to motivate and reward hard work. The evaluators offer no views on the DHMT’s ability to learn from mistakes and thereby to stimulate learning.
- CC5:** The Atiwa DHS has a well-defined set of operating principles. Leadership is committed to achieving coherence, balancing stability and change; however, it specifies no processes. Procedures may inhibit innovation.

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### *Changes in outputs*

The case report provides neither definitions of output, nor indications of quantitative output. It puts all its emphasis on capacity development and not what capacity development generated in terms of the DHMT and the DHS’ outputs. The report assesses the quality of realized outputs with reference to the Performance League Table for Districts that was elaborated yearly since 2007 in Eastern Ghana.

### *Changes in outcomes*

No clear outcome definition is given; outputs indicated appear to resemble outcomes.

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The report does not identify a relation between CC changes and changes in outputs. Parallels between outcome changes can therefore not be assumed, as there is no evidence for this in the report.

### *External factors*

The report describes no specific socio-economic or political factors. It does, however, note that the DHS framework within the Ministry of Health, Ghanaian Health System, is a leading factor for DMHT.

### *Effectiveness*

The Atiwa DHMT lacks motivational and supporting leadership; it relies excessively on national and regional health authorities. There is no evidence of self-renewal; its orientation is towards the adoption of delivery protocols at a national level.

## **3.2 Birim North District Health Management Team**

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development (CD) of the Birim North District Health Management Team (Birim North DHMT) in Ghana and the role of the various Development Partners (DPs) in this process over the period 2006-2009. DPs include international organizations (the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund), international bilateral partners (Danida, JICA, CIDA, USAID, GTZ, DFID, the Royal Netherlands Embassy), UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO, FAO, UNAIDS, UNHCR) and other international organizations (the Red Cross, Rotary, World Vision International). The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the Birim North DHMT's capacity? (2) What effects did the Birim North DHMT's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective were the DPs in strengthening the Birim North DHMT's capacity? (4) What factors explain DPs' effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

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### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The Birim North DHMT is key to the operations of the District Health System (DHS). The DHMT runs health services through district health centres in sub-districts. Birim North is one of eight districts in the eastern region, five of which have been labelled as 'best performing' and three as 'worst performing'. Birim North is considered to be among the 'best performing' districts. The CCs were researched through interviews with 13 respondents representing DMHT's stakeholders: (a) five DHMT workers, (b) a health centre/community health worker, (c) two sellers of medical supplies, (d) members of the district assembly, (e) a regional/national partner, and (f) members of three communities (civic, religious, political groups). Indicators for CCs were translated into a local context by DPs, key informants, and by drawing on CD reports by the DP community. In Birim North, CD concerned mainly technical assistance provided by health NGOs, district assembly, sector departments, regional/national partners and international organizations; in a few cases it concerned training by NGOs/international organizations. CC indicators were used to identify CC changes; however, these changes are not described.

**CC1:** District health workers were better able to manage resources and to coordinate their activities. The quality of district planning improved, making it possible to use human and financial resources more effectively. DMHT was able to work closely with the district assembly and NGOs to address limitations.



- CC2: The district lacked particular resources (listed in the report). Leadership was supportive and action-oriented; the director of the DHS was a good transformational leader. There was a free flow information between various layers at the DHS.
- CC3: Relating to external stakeholders was seen as helpful for the DHMT's ability to function well. DMHT has to gain political legitimacy (i.e. government/political party power), but also social legitimacy (i.e. communities).
- CC4: Birim North attempts to understand key trends. Changes described include: the introduction of an exemption scheme, the abolition of user fees and the introduction of health insurance in the form of a prepayment system. However, learning is not built into the M&E system.
- CC5: The district managed to retain a balance between a changing environment and needs to maintain consistency in programme delivery without confusing clients/beneficiaries of health services. Leadership was an important factor for ensuring that minimum standards were met.

#### *Changes in outputs*

The case report provides a general definition of output, but no quantitative output indications. The report's main emphasis is on capacity development and not what this generated in terms of the DHMT and the DHS' outputs. The report assesses the quality of realized outputs with reference to the Performance League Table for Districts elaborated yearly since 2007 in Eastern Ghana.

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#### *Changes in outcomes*

No clear outcome definition is given; outputs indicated appear to resemble outcomes.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The report observes a parallel between changes in capabilities and changes in outputs. Parallels between outcome changes could, however, not be assumed; there is no evidence for this in the report.

#### *External factors*

The report identifies no specific socio-economic or political factors. It does, however, note that the DHS framework within the Ministry of Health, Ghanaian Health System, is important for DMHT to function properly.

#### *Effectiveness*

The leadership is pro-active/supportive and fosters trust between health workers, their institutions, their communities and the broader Ghanaian society, which are essential for the DHS' effectiveness.

### 3.3 Kwahu South District Health Management Team

#### Introduction

The case study analyzes the process of capacity development (CD) of the Kwahu South District Health Management Team (Kwahu South DHMT) in Ghana and the role of the various Development Partners (DPs) during this process over the period 2006-2009. DPs include international organizations (the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund), international bilateral partners (Danida, JICA, CIDA, USAID, GTZ, DFID, the Royal Netherlands Embassy), UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO, FAO, UNAIDS, UNHCR) and other international organizations (the Red Cross, Rotary, World Vision International). The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the Kwahu South DHMT's capacity? (2) What effects did the Kwahu South DHMT's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective were the DPs in strengthening the Kwahu South DHMT's capacity? (4) What factors explain DPs' effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### Changes in core capabilities (CCs)

The Kwahu South DHMT is key to the operations of the District Health System (DHS). The DHMT runs health services through district hospital and health centres in sub-districts. Kwahu South is one of eight districts in the eastern region, five of which are labelled as 'best performing' and three as 'worst performing'. Kwahu South is considered to be among the 'best performing' districts. The CCs were researched through interviews with 15 respondents representing DMHT's stakeholders: (a) four DHMT members, (b) five hospital/health centres/community health workers, (c) two sellers of medical supplies, (d) members of the district assembly, (e) a regional/national partner and (f) members of two communities (civic, religious, political groups). Indicators for CCs were translated into a local context by DPs and key informants, and by drawing on CD reports by the DP community. In Kwahu South, CD concerned mainly technical assistance provided by health NGOs, the district assembly, sector departments, regional/national partners and international organizations; in only two cases did CD involve training by NGOs/international organizations. CC indicators were used for identifying changes in capabilities; however, these were not articulated.

- CC1: The DHMT and hospitals had plans, took decisions, acted on these decisions and monitored their plans collectively. The DHMT addresses health indicators actively. There was a free flow information from bottom to top.
- CC2: The district lacks an ideal set of resources; there are needs to set priorities. It has made an inventory of needs for infrastructure, human/knowledge resources inventoried. Staff cannot cope with their workloads; there are insufficient numbers of diploma nurses and volunteers. Leadership is efficient and supportive, which is essential for motivation to deliver; there is a culture of maximising minimal resources.
- CC3: The DHMT/hospital management leveraged resources from external stakeholders. There was knowledge about and mapping of preferred areas of partners in this search for appropriate support. Lines of DHMT communication and its relations with NGOs and chemical sellers need to be improved, although the DHMT has social legitimacy.

- CC4:** A culture of reflection and of addressing mistakes exists within the DHS. The DHMT initiated changes by engaging communities in churches and by creative use of funding for vertical programmes for integrated health training.
- CC5:** The DHS operates under a clear mandate, vision, and strategy. Leadership is committed to objectives of Ghana's health system, but due to lack of resources there is no consistency between ambition, vision, strategy and operations

#### *Changes in outputs*

The case report provides a definition of outputs, but no quantitative output indications. The entire emphasis was on capacity development and not what this generated in terms of the DHMT and the DHS' outputs. The report assesses the quality of realized outputs with reference to Performance League Table for Districts elaborated yearly since 2007 in Eastern Ghana.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

No clear outcome definition is given; outputs indicated appear to resemble outcomes.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The report identified a parallel between changes in capabilities and changes in outputs. However, a parallel between outcome changes could not be assumed, as there is no evidence for this in the report.

#### *External factors*

The case report does not describe specific socio-economic or political factors. It does, however, note that the DHS framework within the Ministry of Health, Ghanaian Health System, is important for the DMHT to function properly.

#### *Effectiveness*

Trust and motivation in interactions between health workers, their institution, their communities and the broader Ghanaian society are essential for the DHS to be effective. In that respect, supportive leadership and network building are key.

## 4 NIMD

### 4.1 NIMD Guatemala Office, Guatemala

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the NIMD's programming system in Guatemala since 2002 (i.e. the NIMD Guatemala Office, el Instituto holandés), plus five institutional clusters (political parties, parliament, the Forum of Political Parties, or Foro Permanente de Partidos Politicos [FPPP], local civil society organizations, such as CAC, Centros de Ciudadana and CES, the Consejo Económico Social) and the role played by their Dutch Development Partner, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the system's capacity (2) What effects did the system's capacity

changes have on its outputs/outcomes? (3) How effective was NIMD in strengthening its Guatemalan system's capacity? (4) What factors explain NIMD's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The evaluators identified capabilities together with stakeholders of the system. They calibrated the CCs per institutional cluster and drew up indicators of CCs from the inception report in light of with informants' descriptions of situations. The report specifies CC changes in general, not specifically per institutional cluster. The CC changes generally cover the period 2002-2009; the periods differ for each institutional cluster; the case report primarily devotes attention to the FPPP and political parties. Five institutional clusters were the unit of analysis.

- CC1: the institutional strengthening of political parties made modest progress. At the level of institutions, strategic competencies were developed; parties are weak, but more aware of the need to link up with their constituencies. A new Ley Orgánica makes institutional progress in parliament more sustainable. Parliamentary commissions lack resources; parliament has a negative image. CACs offer opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, lobbying and social audits.
- CC2: Political parties lack fund-raising capacities and strategic legislative agendas; parliament's political/administrative systems is confused. Implementation of shared agendas at the municipal level has been impeded by hostilities.
- CC3: The principal socio-economic groups and parties do not trust each other, nor are they in touch. Politicians have poor professional ethics and no shared vision on national problems. FPPP working groups take the initiative to train party officers, youngsters and female party militants; FPPP is also involved in preparing laws, sometimes in cooperation with parliamentarians and civil society.
- CC4: There is not much evidence that this capability was strongly developed in the institutional clusters. Political parties are aware of their political environments. Their existence is uncertain, however, as much depends on power shifts related to electoral opportunities.
- CC5: The institutional clusters show little evidence of being able to maintain consistency. FPPP acknowledged the importance of consistency most clearly.

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#### *Changes in outputs*

The case report did not provide a definition of output, nor did it specify outputs of different institutional clusters. It focused mostly on the five institutional clusters through el Instituto holandés.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report provides an outcome statement for el Instituto holandés in terms of broad objectives: to improve the quality of the legislative process and to ensure that there is support in formulating and achieving the country's development goals and addressing pertinent problems. In its vision statements, the NIMD seeks to support political party systems, to strengthen political parties at national and local levels, and to boost female, young and indigenous participation and leadership in political parties. It provides no time frame for the realization of these outcome and strategic intentions.

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The study observed no parallels between changes in the 5CCs and outputs, due to the absence of output definition/activities by el Instituto holandés. No parallels should be assumed in a fragmented outcome definition.

### *External factors*

Developments since 1986 have been important for the transition to a democratic system from 1996 onwards. However, caudillo-style politics counteract democratic processes. Cooperation has been stimulated among institutions promoting economic development, multiparty democracy and academic learning.

### *Effectiveness*

The effectiveness of NIMD support to NIMD Guatemala (el Instituto holandés) is not clearly described. The institute is well established through NIMD core funding, but remains weak in monitoring. It is well informed about the political scene, has brought parties together and has enhanced transparency. Training programmes strengthened the position of women in parties. It is less clear how effective NIMD is for the five institutional clusters.

## **4.2 CMD-K, Kenya**

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### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-K) and political parties (the system) in Kenya since 2004 and the role played by their Dutch Development Partner, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the system's capacity? (2) What effects did the system's capacity changes have on its outputs/outcomes? (3) How effective was NIMD in strengthening the capacity of its Kenyan system? (4) What factors explain NIMD's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

Indicators to describe and assess CC changes were refined in meetings with CMD-K staff, CMD-K's steering committee (members from CMD-K member political parties) and representatives from civil society. CC changes in CMD-K and political parties were reported as result of scores in self-assessments for each CC. Changes were clearly described and measured over the period 2004-2009. The unit of analysis was the CMD-K and 16 political parties.

- CC1:** CMD-K was able to function better during the last six years. The organization has adequate facilities. Stable funding comes mainly from the NIMD. Membership of the CMD-K grew; strategic plans improved; leadership proved inspiring; internal rules and regulations became well established. In political parties, however, the capability to act/commit remained very weak. Most of their annual plans remained unfulfilled. The ability of political parties to mobilize funds is still weak.
- CC2:** CMD-K improved its operational structures and resources (personnel, equipment, funding). It remained largely dependent on funding from the NIMD. In political parties, operational structures remain weak. For some of them, focused funding by

NIMD meant a boost, but such funding is no longer possible because of the 2007 Political Parties Act (PPA).

- CC3: CMD-K gained legitimacy and reliability due to the integrity of leadership and other staff. Relations with governance sector improved, especially after the post-election violence of 2007. Political parties appreciated CMD-K's work establishing dialogues; civil society considered CMD-K a neutral force in advocating transparency. Donors saw CMD-K as an intermediary for political parties. Political parties all have a legal basis and conform to regulations, as defined in the 2007 PPA. Credibility and community acceptance of some parties improved. Most have strong leadership.
- CC4: CMD-K is open to internal learning. New committees were installed in 2007. This gave rise to internal tensions, confronting the organization with new challenges. Political parties need to closely monitor political developments. Most of them are structurally too weak to grasp opportunities in their external environments.
- CC5: CMD-K's mandate, vision and strategies were always clear, as was its legal framework. Political parties improved in these areas as well, but more slowly and in more fragmented ways. The 2007 PPA contributed to a streamlining of political parties.

#### *Changes in outputs*

CMD-K outputs varied, the most important being: facilitation of interparty dialogues, campaigns for peace and reconciliation, training/study programmes for political parties, formulation in 2006 of a code of conduct for political parties and direct NIMD support to political parties. Outputs were not put in quantitative terms. Outputs with respect to political parties: 14 new parties established with clear organization and leadership.

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#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report did not provide a single outcome definition, but rather a list of results to be obtained by CMD-K (strong organization, platform for multi-party dialogue, reconciliation after post-election violence of 2007) and by political parties (strong organizations with internal democratic structure / clear representation, contribution to good governance/ gender balance). No time frame was set for these results.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The report observed a clear parallel between changes in 5CCs and outputs. Due to the multifaceted outcome definition, parallels with CC changes in outcomes could not be detected.

#### *External factors*

International organizations (Transparency International, Friedrich Ebert, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, UNDP) were important. The 2007 post-election violence had an impact. And the establishment of the PPA in 2007 has had major consequences for political parties' room to manoeuvre (e.g. re-registration). External factors mostly concerned external funding and technical support.

### Effectiveness

NIMD was instrumental in strengthening the system (CMD-K and parties). Institutional funding was essential for CMD-K and the political parties. NIMD contributed to their legitimacy.

## 4.3 CMDID, Mali

### Introduction

The case study analyzes the process of capacity development of the Mali Centre for Inter-party Dialogue and Democracy (CMDID), political parties/parliamentary groups (the system) since 2008 and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the system's capacity? (2) What effects did the system's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was NIMD in strengthening the capacity of its Malian system? (4) What factors explain NIMD's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### Changes in core capabilities (CCs)

Indicators of CC changes were validated with local partners of the CMDID, political parties, state agencies and parliamentary groups. CC changes concerned the period 2008-2009 (since creation of the CMDID). Changes were not always articulated. Units of analysis were the CMDID, political parties and parliamentary groups.

- CC1: CMDID established project criteria for political parties and parliamentary groups. Their commitment increased, and their planning and communication were better integrated into their operations, thanks to the acquisition of ICT equipment. They did too much electioneering. NIMD's funding of the CMDID was essential.
- CC2: CMDID became a respected platform for partners advocating the development of multiparty democracy; it was particularly strong in organizing political debates. Political parties suffer from marginal interest in public dialogue, but the organization of some of these parties and working conditions for parliamentarians improved.
- CC3: CMDID became stronger at building relationships. CMDID is a hybrid organization: it serves as a platform but it also acts as an agent, taking responsibility for communication between government and political parties. In some cases better relations between political parties were established, while in other cases not. It depended on their political positioning (alignment with mainstream or with opposition).
- CC4: This CC improved at CMDID; CMDID was better able to meet demands from political parties and the public authorities. It was difficult for political parties to measure this capability. The survival of political parties may sometimes point to the presence of this capability, but in general no real change in capability could be detected.
- CC5: CMDID's partners have improved their strategic planning with NIMD's support. For political parties, however, this CC remains weak.

### Changes in outputs

The case report makes note of NIMD's outputs for 2007-2009, but not CMDID's outputs. These outputs concern organizational strengthening activities for CMDID since its creation,

such as strategic planning support, training workshops on consensus elections, charters for political parties, strengthening relations between parties and civil society. NIMD's outputs have enabled CMDID to promote democratic debate and to improve Malian women's participation in the political process. CMDID's outputs were not defined in clear and quantitative terms, except for data on women's representation in subsequent elections.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report does not provide a clear outcome definition. Rather, outcomes are linked mainly to CMDID's overall objective: to promote democracy in Mali by strengthening the capacities of the political parties. The political parties are considered to be CMDID's intermediaries for achieving the overall objective. No time frame for outcome realization was established.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs - outcomes*

Parallels between changes in the 5 CCs and outputs were observed. However, due to unclear outcome definition, parallels between CC changes and outcomes could not be detected

#### *External factors*

The consensual style of President Amadou Toumani Touré significantly influenced CMDID's programme. Political parties were encouraged to establish and cultivate relations between each other. Access to state media was a decisive factor in elections. A crisis of confidence between political parties and civil society organizations inhibited the realization of CMDID's objectives, such as the improved credibility of political parties, the reduction of electoral corruption or higher election turnout.

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#### *Effectiveness*

In general NIMD's support helped to change the capabilities of the system, chiefly those of the CMDID. NIMD was effective in its direct support to political parties. The extent to which NIMD may be effective either through CMDID, or on its own, is now a question.

## 5 PSO

### 5.1 CADEP, Sudan

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzes the capacity development process of the Capacity Assessment and Development Programme (CADEP) in Sudan since 2005 and the role played by ICCO as Dutch Development Partner (supported by PSO) in the process. CADEP works with two grass-roots organizations, namely: the Sustainable Community Outreach Programmes for Empowerment (SCOPE, established in 1999) and the Sudan Christian Youth Ministries International (SCYMI, established in 2006). The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in SCOPE and SCYMI's capacity? (2) What effects did SCOPE and SCYMI's capacity changes have on their outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was ICCO in strengthening SCOPE and SCYMI's capacity? (4) What factors explain ICCO's effectiveness?



What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study on CADEP describes SCOPE and SCYMI's core capabilities and their changes with indicators calibrated in local workshops/interviews with CADEP's staff and management. It is not clear what other stakeholders were involved. Data were collected over the period 2008-2009. The unit of analysis is CADEP/SCOPE/SCYMI.

- CC1:** SCOPE and SCYMI formulated their first strategic plans in 2008. Both organizations have the character of a pioneer. CADEP has partnered with SCOPE, which provided access to funding, since 2006. Since then SCOPE has been able to mobilize human resources. SCYMI is still very young, operating since 2008 within CADEP. The formulation of its three-year strategy has been important for its initial growth.
- CC2:** SCOPE developed an infrastructure (office building and equipment) and a stable staff of 29. Its access to knowledge improved, while its mobilization of funds still needs improvement. In 2009 its funding base expanded to four donors (ICCO, UNDP, UNIFEM and HEKS, a Swiss agency for inter-church development). SCYMI employs a small staff of three, plus seven volunteers, trained by CADEP. Its physical infrastructure is weak, but its access to knowledge has improved.
- CC3:** After partnering with CADEP, both SCOPE and SCYMI were able to expand their networks; relations with (inter)national organizations were established (humanitarian aid organizations like ZOA, AAH and SUHA). SCOPE joined a coalition for recovery and rehabilitation. SCOPE's capability to relate improved when Southern Sudan evolved from an emergency to a post-conflict phase. SCYMI is more exposed to communities and donors (e.g. the German Development Service, DED). It has contact with more stakeholders, though specific organizations are not mentioned.
- CC4:** SCOPE's capability to adapt is weak, but it shows a willingness to improve in quality in changing times. It is gradually developing a better monitoring system, though it needs further improvement. Staff has acknowledged weaknesses. SCOPE took advantage of coaching by CADEP. SCYMI implemented projects on a pilot basis for learning, but no proper monitoring was done. SCYMI utilizes training opportunities well; the organization shows a willingness to learn.
- CC5:** SCOPE balanced interventions linked to emergency and development well and developed skills for a consistent community approach, but its small-enterprise strategy was not appropriate. Leadership was not strong enough to maintain coherence. SCYMI was not able to practice a programmatic approach. It established a human resources manual and job descriptions.

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### *Changes in outputs*

The case report lists SCOPE and SCYMI's concrete outputs. SCOPE training outputs concern technical skills, communication, HIV/Aids awareness and financial management (more than 130 trainees per year). SCYMI training/campaigns concern life skills, road safety, grand march for street children (more than 1,000 children reached per year).

### *Changes in outcomes*

The report presents SCOPE and SCYMI's organizational objectives (peace building, economic empowerment, good governance, skills development), but provides no outcome data, as outcome monitoring was lacking.

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities occurred in tandem with changes in outputs; however, such parallels with outcomes could not be established as no clear outcomes could be identified.

### *External factors*

The report describes the semi-autonomous status of Southern Sudan since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Despite a volatile situation, civil society organizations (CSOs) have been established. International organizations provide relief aid and peace-building support. Dependence on donors is an influential factor for SCOPE/SCYMI. There has been some economic growth and competition with neighbouring markets, constrained by low local purchasing power.

### *Effectiveness*

Several factors influence CADEP's effectiveness, including weak leadership, low absorption capacity, the high needs of CSOs, the lack of a clear definition of ICCO's role and political uncertainties. No specific information was provided about the effectiveness of SCOPE or SCYMI.

## **5.2 FXI, South Africa**

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzes the process of capacity development of the development organization Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) in South Africa since 2000 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner, NIZA (through PSO), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in FXI's capacity? (2) What effects did FXI's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was NIZA in strengthening FXI's capacity? (4) What factors explain NIZA's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study on FXI (established in 1993) describes the changes in core capabilities over three phases (1994-2000: 'Start-up and Progressive Activism'; 2000-2005: 'High productivity and Focus on Social Justice'; 2006-2010: 'Turbulence, Crisis and Survival'). Indicators for CCs were calibrated in an FXI staff workshop. Self-assessment for each core capability was done using these indicators. FXI was the unit of analysis.

**CC1:** FXI had from the outset clear objectives and plans, which resulted in their current five-year strategic plan. A drop in external core funding during the second and third phases had a negative impact on this capability. FXI has a sound culture of planning and strategizing, but it has been over-reliant on a single director.

- CC2: A decline of financial resources seriously constrained delivery, as internal capacity weakened. The focus on key cases to establish precedents in promoting freedom of expression were considered positive, and probably strengthened FXI's reputation.
- CC3: FXI retains strong networks of supporting individuals/organizations. The establishment of FXI Network has been important. FXI staff maintain good contact with communities, the media, legal circles and NGOs. There is a continuing culture of engagement with a broad range of stakeholders (politicians, media, communities, grass-roots organizations social movements). Furthermore, the organization emphasizes tangible results.
- CC4: The board's hands-off approach in its third phase, and over-reliance on a single director, contributed to the emergence of a crisis. However, what ultimately made organizational changes impossible was a major decline in funding. The organization lacked resilience to overcome this. FXI has good insight into developments in the networks in which it operates.
- CC5: Throughout the three phases, FXI retained a strong capability to maintain coherence. However, its current strategic plan appears over-ambitious; insufficient focus poses potential risks.

#### *Changes in outputs*

| 170 | The case report does not specify outputs. It states that FXI produces a high level of outputs even in difficult times, although that high output level was not maintained in FXI's Access to Information programme. The case report does not indicate the relative importance of this programme (i.e. related to the Media Support Programme); it lists no further concrete outputs.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report describes outcome areas, but provides no quantitative specifications and no time frame. Outcomes are indicated by its main aims: (1) fight for and defend freedom of expression, (2) oppose censorship, (3) fight for the right to equal access of information/knowledge and (4) promote access to media and free press.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report states that changes in capabilities did not link up with changes in outputs. Such parallels with outcome changes may not be assumed either; the report offers no evidence on this issue.

#### *External factors*

The key factor for FXI was changing donor priorities and thus declining funding. A further burden for FXI has been continuing threats to media freedom. The report notes the ANC's growing intolerance toward alternative voices.

#### *Effectiveness*

The case report states that the evaluators could not find much evidence of NIZA's effectiveness for FXI's capacity building. It mentions as a useful example the external capacity building in 2006, which focused on community organizations. There was no mention in

FXI's reporting of capacity building and organizational development support by NIZA in the period 2006-2008.

### 5.3 KDDS, Uganda

#### *Introduction*

The case study analysed the process of capacity development of the development organization Karamoja Diocese Development Services (KDDS) in Uganda since 2006 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner, Woord en Daad (through PSO), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in KDDS' capacity? (2) What effects did KDDS' capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Woord en Daad in strengthening KDDS' capacity? (4) What factors explain Woord en Daad's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study of KDDS describes systematically the core capabilities and their changes in accordance with indicators that were locally calibrated. A self-assessment was done for each core capability using these indicators.

- CC1:** KDDS' legal framework has been stable and consistent. Leadership and management structures are functional, but they are fluid at the Zonal Development Committees (ZDCs) level. Zonal decentralization in 1999 was an essential change, but there was a lack of clarity between organizational layers; the organization's reporting structure inhibits transparency. ZDCs were found to have integrity; their monitoring function was not clear. KDDS' budgeting framework KDDS was weak. In 2008 KDDS became an independent organization; its first strategic plan outlined a vision and objectives. In the study, KDDS was the unit of analysis.
- CC2:** KDDS' governance and operational structures were sufficient for implementation of its programme. KDDS succeeds well in attracting external funding from various donors; however, delayed disbursement of funds has been problematic. Staffing levels are not sufficient and the performance of volunteers at community level shows limitations. Important changes arose from the acquisition of infrastructure (office and transport equipment), the employment of skilled personnel and the development of a strategic plan.
- CC3:** KDDS started decentralizing in 2000. It relates well to various actors, especially after 2008 when it established itself as independent NGO (no longer dependent on the diocese). Partnerships have developed with (inter)national organizations with similar interests, and collaboration has taken place between ZDCs and local governments. KDDS' high staff turnover has had negative effects.
- CC4:** The development of a strategic plan in 2008 provided a strong basis for the capability to self-renew. The importance of frequent organizational reviews and quarterly management and annual staff meetings is apparent. A positive spirit exists that encourages organizational flexibility. However, KDDS' board is not receptive to technical advice.
- CC5:** KDDS' legal status became clearer in 2008, when it was registered as an NGO. Since then it has emphasized efficiency and effectiveness. The report states that KDDS will be able to maintain consistency in that respect. Its key strategic areas are well defined: primary health care and HIV/Aids, environmental sanitation/hygiene, livelihood and food

security, literacy and peace building. It emphasizes the importance of sustained donor support in order to realize its strategies. Its vision and mission are well maintained; operational manuals support that.

#### *Changes in outputs*

The report lists key outputs for four programme zones: training, home visits, information sessions about HIV prevention, awareness-raising activities, seed subsidies for farmers. Enhanced institutional capacity contributed to outputs, but the case report does not further specify changed capabilities or their relation to changed outputs.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

Intended outcomes were defined in eight areas, namely: fewer health-related problems, high HIV/Aids awareness, strong community support institutions, improved sanitation & hygiene, sufficient food supply/reduction, nutrition-related diseases, sound KDDS organization with an effective monitoring & evaluation system, adequate technical capacity of KDDS management/staff, board and ZDCs; however, the nature of realization outcomes is diverse.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs - outcomes*

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities occurred in tandem with changes in outputs; such parallels could not be assumed for outcomes.

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#### *External factors*

External funding was essential for KDDS to function well; learning/knowledge development was boosted by external support. Other NGOs influenced KDDS capacity. Community mobilization and political will were influential and problematic. The security situation was a major handicap for implementation.

#### *Effectiveness*

KDDS staff saw interventions by Woord en Daad (funding, exchange visits, peer-to-peer assessments) as insufficient to bring about the needed capacity improvements. Woord en Daad put too much emphasis on organizational gaps, rather than on KDDS' needs.

### **5.4 St. Martin Catholic Social Apostolate, Kenya**

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the religious grass-roots organization St Martin CSA in Kenya since 2006 and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, Mensen met een Missie (through PSO), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in St Martin CSA's capacity? (2) What effects did St Martin CSA's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Mensen met een Missie in strengthening St Martin CSA's capacity? (4) What factors explain Mensen met een Missie's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study on St Martin CSA systematically describes its core capabilities and changes in

accordance to locally calibrated indicators. A self-assessment was done for each core capability using these indicators. All core capabilities showed a positive change. The unit of analysis was St Martin CSA.

- CC1: St Martin CSA had a clear identifiable structure with common values. Mission/vision statements have been formulated since 2002, and a committed and inspiring leadership has developed.
- CC2: The organizational infrastructure proved to be stable; adequate financial means were available, internal communication processes had improved and external communication to beneficiaries and stakeholders was efficient.
- CC3: St Martin CSA has growing (inter)national networks of stakeholders; its acceptance among target communities grew, and donors and supporters provide regular financial support.
- CC4: St Martin CSA increased its focus on learning, thanks to its visionary and pro-people management. Technical assistance played a vital role during the period 2002-2006.
- CC5: The current management style contributed to coherence in implementation; the handbook with guiding policies was improved; and induction/mentoring programmes were put in place, resulting in a better understanding of the organization's vision and goals.

### Changes in outputs

Overall, the outputs of St Martin's five programmes grew both in quantity and in quality. Most of the programmes succeeded in meeting their targets, as did those on training and facilitating. Quantitative assessment of community mobilization was not easy, but there was strong growth in programme diversity. The case report linked St Martin CSA's output changes clearly to changes in core capabilities.

### Changes in outcomes

The case study did not provide a clear tangible outcome definition with a time frame. The building of a strong organization with a network of volunteers, community ownership of the organization and relevant networks in the public, non-profit private sectors and local communities were seen as important conditions for outcome realization by St Martin CSA. However, IOB could produce a reasonably solid outcome statement on the basis of the various pieces of information available in the case study report.

### Connection CCs – outputs - outcomes

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities occurred in tandem with changes in outputs, but these were not specified for each output. Such parallels with outcomes could be assumed with the outcome statement.

### External factors

The case study describes different relevant external actors (state, international, civic society and community organizations) and indicates external factors for each core capability. These concerned dependence on external donor funding, pressure exercised by TA provided by Mensen met een Missie, changes in governmental policies and the existence of different ethnic groups.

*Effectiveness*

Mensen met een Missie focused its support on human resource development (HRD), in which its TA was central. This support was crucial for changes in CC1, CC2 and CC4 and to a lesser extent CC3 and CC5. The report did not elaborate much on the effectiveness of funding support by Mensen met een Missie.

**5.5 MKC-RDA, Ethiopia***Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the development organization Meserete Kirstos Relief and Development Association (MKC-RDA) in Ethiopia since 2006 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner, Tear NL (through PSO), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in MKC-RDA's capacity? (2) What effects did MKC-RDA's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Tear NL in strengthening MKC-RDA's capacity? (4) What factors explain Tear NL's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

*Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study describes the changes in core capabilities over four periods: 1998-2003, the emergence of MKC-RDA as independent NGO; 2003-2005, linking up emergency and development activities; 2005-2007, institutional development priority; 2008-present, leadership challenges. Indicators for CCs were calibrated in workshops and interviews. Assessment for each core capability was done using these indicators. The unit of analysis was MKC-RDA.

- CC1:** Strategic reflection from 2005 was important; the leadership crisis in 2007 was a setback; less technocratic leadership would have been more appropriate. Design of a new strategic plan started in 2010. There is a need to improve responsiveness to target communities. Transition to new management caused uncertainty. Infrastructure needs to be improved.
- CC2:** Capacity for development performance improved in the period 2006-2009. Since 2008 high staff turnover created management challenges and staff dissatisfaction over remuneration. MKC-RDA depends entirely on external funding, but donor diversification has been high. There is competition for qualified/experienced staff on the labour market. Communication facilities are in place.
- CC3:** MKC-RDA's credibility increased through its involvement in agriculture and rural development, health and education. Its relations with the church and the Integrated Rural Development Programme in Meta Robi were positive, but there was a lack of communication. Meanwhile relations with target communities have progressively improved. The inability to structure information sharing and internal consultation were critical factors in internal relationships.
- CC4:** The board of trustees and management proved incapable of overcoming the organizational crisis in 2007. Delays in decision making led to a further deterioration of organizational capacities. Management was aware of changing trends, and made attempts to take these into account. In 2008, external TA was recruited to improve management performance.

**CC5:** Lack of adequate funding, team spirit, inadequate motivation and unclear mandates of management and board were negative factors. There was no systematic interaction between the head office and programme offices, thereby hindering the achievement of coherence.

#### *Changes in outputs*

Outputs mentioned in the case report include: increased agricultural trainings, improved health and HIV training, organization of self-help groups, on-the-job training on business skills, leadership of facilitators, sensitization/mobilization of target communities. The report does not provide quantitative data on outputs and sometimes does not indicate output changes.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The report indicates outcome areas within MKC-RDA objectives, but gives no quantitative specifications or a time frame. Targeted outcomes include: (1) improved household food security, (2) sustainable livelihoods by service delivery on water, health, HIV/Aids prevention/control, and education, (3) broadening education training sessions on peace, (4) more self-help groups, and (5) functional adult literacy.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report does not indicate that changes in capabilities occurred in tandem with changes in outputs. Such parallels with outcomes could not be assumed, because the report did not provide evidence for this.

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#### *External factors*

Natural disaster (drought, floods and earthquakes) were influential. Also mentioned were changes in governmental policies on poverty alleviation, as well as the existence of tensions between ethnic groups, in spite of a culture of co-existence.

#### *Effectiveness*

The change in approach towards integrated rural development programmes was effective. Tear NL funded mostly capacity building and TA; capacity programmes were effective in strengthening the organization. The crisis in management was an important inhibiting factor.

## 6 Partos

### 6.1 CAL, South Africa

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the development organization Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) of South Africa since 2003 and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, Hivos (through Partos Quality House), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in CAL's capacity? (2) What effects did CAL's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective



was Hivos in strengthening CAL's capacity? (4) What factors explain Hivos' effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study describes the changes in core capabilities since CAL's creation in 2003. Indicators for CCs were not formulated. There was resistance to the 5CC framework and the concept of the unit of analysis; the 5CC framework was seen as a logical framework that did not provide an opportunity to analyze CAL's development and its activism in LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed) issues. The same position was held regarding the power cube (John Gaventa). The unit of analysis was not clearly defined; boundaries of CAL (as a coalition) were difficult to determine, as the organization was still young. Despite these criticisms, the evaluators record CCs, but provide no clear specification of changes in them.

- CC1: Conceptual clarity was first reached in 2004, when organizational objectives (i.e. outcome areas) were defined. CAL speaks of 'intellectual infrastructure'.
- CC2: CAL started with Hivos as its only donor; it now has more than four donors. Individuals/organizations provide intellectual inputs to CAL to gain a better understanding of LGBTI. The capacity of its secretariat has improved. Feminist leadership, governance and accountability have been addressed, as has the building of critical mass and succession planning.
- CC3: Membership in the organization expanded from 11 to 21. Relationships intensified and became friendships. Contacts developed with activists/strategists of LGBTI rights movements from across Africa. Lobbying took place against the Ugandan anti-homosexuality bill.
- CC4: CAL was oriented initially towards lesbians; later bisexual and transsexual people joined and widened CAL's orientation.
- CC5: CAL's vision is communicated strongly; African Radical Feminism serves as its guiding principle. CAP built a sense of pride and identity amongst its members. CAL provides a platform for heterogeneous members.

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Overall, personal and collective empowerment are interpreted as the capacity for social change. There are problems with membership coordination and priority setting, large differences between countries, limited space for communication or political dialogues in countries and high expectations of CAL in relation to its size.

### *Changes in outputs*

The case report describes outputs, but these resemble outcomes. The report refers to: (1) CAL's enhanced lobbying capacity, (2) the reduction of stigma and discrimination among human rights organizations, (3) participation in international forums through continental groupings (the African Union, the African Feminist Forum, the UN, AWID), (4) awareness raising regarding radical feminism and (5) support of national organizations. The report does not specify outputs in quantitative terms.

### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report describes outcome areas regarding LGBTI, but provides no quantitative specifications and no time frame. The outcome areas are: (1) building consciousness and solidarity, (2) advocacy, litigation and activism, (3) media and communications, (4) action

research and documentation and (5) defending defenders of sexual rights. The report does not indicate changes in these areas.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report states that changes in capabilities did not occur in tandem with changes in outputs; indeed outputs are unknown. No parallels with outcome changes can be assumed. The report provides no evidence for this.

#### *External factors*

There is widespread hostility towards LGBTI on the African continent. Religious fundamentalism plays an important role. Religious/cultural institutions, health care providers, police/security services have poor appreciation of LGBTI or seek to repress LGBTI advocacy.

#### *Effectiveness*

The case report states that Hivos was highly instrumental in the creation of CAL, which is evident in its funding and support of CAL's international and regional strategic meetings, the CAL Leadership Institute, and the publication of the book *Lived Realities of African Lesbians and the Situation of Lesbian Rights in the CAL Member Countries*.

## 6.2 Ethiopia Learning Alliance, Ethiopia

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of Ethiopia Learning Alliance (LA) since 2007. LA was the initiative of Dutch Development Partners (DDPs) Agri-ProFocus (APF), whose members are CORDAID, ICCO, Agriterra, KIT, SNV Ethiopia, APF-support office Netherlands (as supported by Partos Quality House), in collaboration with the Ethiopia Office of the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and Facilitating Farmers Access to Remunerative Markets (FFARM Plc). It also analyzed the role of the DDPs during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in LA's capacity? (2) What effects did LA's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective were the DDPs in strengthening LA's capacity? (4) What factors explain the DDPs' effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study describes LA's core capabilities since its establishment in 2007. Its major objective is to enable agricultural producers to become market oriented and to link with actors in the agricultural sector: producers, traders, processors, financial institutions and business development services. The study did not carry out local calibration of CCs; LA identified indicators in data collection. The unit of analysis was LA, consisting of different autonomous organizations with a common agenda of learning about value chains. Among the unit of analysis clusters were: (1) farmers' agri-business organizations (FMOs planning, implementation and learning activities; lead role in learning/reflection); (2) service providers (SP, chain facilitators); (3) DDPs (facilitating the overall capacity development process). The report did not often identify CC changes.

- CC1:** LA has a vision/mission statement guiding the MoU with cluster members. This is a simple informal organization set up with basic resources. DDPs have power over resources and interventions. SPs and FMOs appreciate guidance by LA's Coordination Team. No final CC changes were indicated in the report.
- CC2:** A clear working strategy, tasks and responsibilities have been established as well as an implementation methodology designed and known to all members. DDP financing of LA is managed by APF. Inconsistency of project staff representatives challenged cluster performance; permanent representatives from farmer organizations (FOs) have yet to be assigned. Integration lessons learnt in SP activities also posed a challenge. The report indicated no CC changes.
- CC3:** Relations with research institutions, business service providers and governmental agencies have been built; SPs have been established for relations with communities. However, those relations were not sufficiently consistent. The report indicates no final CC change.
- CC4:** It has been a challenge to manage cultural/ethnic diversity between cluster members. VC interventions were contextualized to the Ethiopian situation. The report indicates no final CC change.
- CC5:** There is a need to ensure consistency of LA's capacity development phases with its objectives. The LA business plan contest was instrumental in increasing best practices and results of business plans to other FOs. There is no evidence of CC change.

#### *Changes in outputs*

The study considers outputs to be expected results in terms of knowledge and skills in VC processes; members of the three clusters are expected to be strong chain actors in the case of FMOs and facilitators in the case of SPs. The report provides no quantitative indication of outputs.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The report provides the following outcome statement: 'Scaling up farmer organizations to a national level and forming an apex institution of farmer's organizations as a longer-term goal'. LA realized outcomes in terms of joint learning on VC as a multi-stakeholder process; strengthening the VC organization; increasing the interest of development organizations in VC; improving the capacity of VC clusters. The report provides no quantitative specifications or time frame.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

Changes in capabilities and changes in outputs took place in tandem. However, parallels with outcome changes could not be assumed, as there is no evidence of this in the report.

#### *External factors*

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Ethiopia are weak; CSO law limits the role of CSOs and international development partners. LA has been stimulated by the market economy, agricultural specialization/commercialization in the small-farm economy and promotion of public-private partnerships by government. Agricultural investors threaten small farmers; business development services are growing. Food markets are volatile.

### Effectiveness

Financial support by DDPs for training, workshops, coaching and travel, as well as staff time, have been essential. Considerable DDP staff contributions were made. However, the report does not indicate exact effects.

## 6.3 PADEK, Cambodia

### Introduction

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK) in Cambodia since 2008 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner, *Oxfam Novib* (ON, through Partos Quality House), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in PADEK's capacity? (2) What effects did PADEK's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was ON in strengthening PADEK's capacity? (4) What factors explain ON's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### Changes in core capabilities (CCs)

The case study on PADEK describes changes in core capabilities since 2008, when it was set up as a national Cambodian NGO. PADEK had operated from 1986 to 2002 as a consortium with ON as leader, and from 2002 to 2008 as an international NGO under the same consortium. The organization pursued its own approach, the Integrated Community Development Model (PICDM). Evaluators discussed indicators for CCs in a start-up workshop by PADEK management/staff; these were later linked to PICDM indicators. Scoring of CCs was done by PADEK staff. The unit of analysis is PADEK as a national NGO. Specification of CC changes was not clear, hence not much can be said about these changes.

- CC1: Regarding capacity to apply the PICDM, staff recruitment/skills focused on community organization and gender mainstreaming and HIV/Aids. Management/consultation structures and means to mobilize financial resources were set up. There was regular monitoring. Relations between the director, staff and the field were open and the director was trusted.
- CC2: PADEK considers this the most important CC. PADEK has an appropriate office infrastructure, namely a head office and four field offices with adequate equipment. Staff was gender balanced and appropriately qualified. Staff worked within a clear organizational structure including a programme support unit, credit finance unit, administration/finance unit and a volunteer project. Staff had access to knowledge through a library and internet. A research and policy unit was established, but has yet to function optimally.
- CC3: PADEK is recognized as the oldest NGO for community development in Cambodia. Its leadership is respected. It has received awards on rural development/rehabilitation/reconstruction and has been requested to expand its interventions. It maintains networks with partner NGOs and is a member of different NGO forums.
- CC4: Democracy and decentralization are evident in PADEK's capacity development approach. Gender mainstreaming has been introduced with support from ON as well as policies on HIV/Aids. Experimental learning is applied; there has been improvement in project M&E systems. Joint internal reflections, exchange, exposure and learning have been stimulated. PADEK is oriented towards learning and is output/outcome oriented.

**CC5:** Vision/mission/goals were formulated for 2005-2008, with PICDM as a well-defined strategy. The board exchanges ideas with staff regarding overall strategic direction. There is a logical connection between strategic principles and implementation.

#### *Changes in outputs*

The report provides no clear output definition, but indicates output areas. It gives a description of activities based on changed capacities; it sometimes notes outputs under activities (related to production training manuals, data collection, exposure trips, gender awareness trainings, veterinarian techniques, earth-worm farming, soil improvement and community finance). Key outputs are changing a community's mindset. The report provides no quantitative indication of outputs.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The report provides the following outcome description: 'empower disadvantaged people to improve quality of life sustainably through building civil society organizations'. Four impact areas have been identified: (1) organization building; (2) food security and income; (3) education and culture; (4) health. The report provides no quantitative specifications or time frame.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

Changes in capabilities and changes in outputs are not known. No parallels between capability change and outcome changes can therefore be assumed, as no evidence of this appears in the report.

#### *External factors*

During the 1990s Cambodia went through relief and post-conflict phases. Gradually more space for national civil society (CS) emerged, followed by the localization of NGOs. Currently there is space for CS and NGOs. PADEK cooperates with the government. Together with other NGOs it promotes land and human rights issues; PADEK adheres to governmental policy regarding traditional birth attendance .

#### *Effectiveness*

ON's financial support has been essential for the development of PADEK now, and previously, when PADEK was an international consortium. In addition, direct, indirect and local TA has been essential.

## **6.4 PST, Cambodia**

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of Programme Support Team (PST) in Cambodia since 2008 and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, *ICCO* (through Partos Quality House), during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in PST's capacity? (2) What effects did PST's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was *ICCO* in strengthening PST's capacity? (4) What factors explain *ICCO*'s effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The case study on PST describes the core capabilities since its establishment in 2006. PST is a group of four men who are connected with community leaders and networks, NGOs, lobby groups and policy initiatives in community organizations, advocacy, peace building and human rights/legal aid; it is an informal group with no legal status. There was no local calibration of CCs for the study; indicators were developed based on interviews with PST members, who ranked CCs in order of importance. The study indicated no CC changes. The concept of civic driven change (CDC, Alan Fowler) is central to PST's strategy. The unit of analysis is PST and its networks of grass-roots organizations, community leaders, networks and NGOs: it concerns a web of relationships, not a formal structure.

- CC1:** This capability was ranked fifth. All stakeholders improved their social and psychological ability to restrain negative behaviour. A capability to recognize local knowledge and to learn from it emerged, as well as a capability to reflect on/understand one's individual role. There is no evidence for CC change.
- CC2:** This capability was ranked fourth. The study found that youth participation had been promoted and youth morale improved. Community people are able to express their needs/concerns and to organize themselves. The capability, in terms of ecological intelligence, to address natural degradation was detected. The report provides little indication of CC change.
- CC3:** This capability was ranked third. PST collaborates with NGOs and communities for strategic cooperation. PST and ICCO collaborate and are involved in a complex communication process since their relation is based on trust and mutual respect. Confidence in communities has increased. The report indicates no CC change.
- CC4:** This capability ranked first. PST was able to synchronize strategies. PST and ICCO respect identity and sovereignty in a culture of dialogue. All stakeholders have the capacity to change themselves, and have a better understanding of situations/context through in-depth studies and research communities. They have reduced their dependency on donors by improving their sustainability strategies. The report indicates no CC change.
- CC5:** This capability ranked second. PST has strengthened (in)formal social structures. PST, NGOs and communities have the capacity to facilitate mutual learning. NGOs form networks/coalitions around commonly shared issues together with communities. ICCO develops a shared agenda with all stakeholders. There is no evidence for CC change.

### *Changes in outputs*

The report provides no output definition but does note types of output, namely: encouragement of community-driven change; support to coordination/facilitation networks or alliances; ability to impact advocacy and policy; joint programme on civic-driven change and strategic stakeholder cooperation. Analysis of storytelling in the report gives insight into the mindsets of communities, but does not indicate outputs. Changes in output were taken to be new outlooks people have about themselves and their communities. These changes have been seen as a major step towards long-term change. The report provides no quantitative outputs.

### *Changes in outcomes*

The report provides the following outcome statement: 'Facilitate home-grown civil society development through a programmatic approach'. The focus is on landownership, deforestation, religious discrimination and gender equity. The report provides no outcome areas, quantitative specifications or timeframe.

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

Changes in capabilities and changes in outputs are not known. Therefore, parallels with outcome changes cannot be assumed.

### *External factors*

The report contains an elaborate description of PST's context: the post-conflict character of Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge and the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces; 1993 elections; unrest in 1997; consolidation of the Cambodia People's Party's power; Cambodia has functioned effectively as a one-party state since 2008 (People's Democratic Party two-thirds majority); economic development has been slow; decentralization; political violence has been reduced; NGOs are active in advocating human rights; the government introduced an NGO law in 2009; NGO numbers have increased to 500.

### *Effectiveness*

ICCO's financial/moral support has been essential in encouraging PST's development.

## **6.5 SOCSIS, Somalia**

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the development organization (operating in Somalia, but established in Kenya) entitled Strengthening Of Civil Society Organization Involving Systems (SOCSIS) since 2002 and the role of its Dutch Development Partner Oxfam Novib (ON)(through Partos Quality House) in this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the capacity of SOCSIS? (2) What effects did capacity changes of SOCSIS have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Oxfam Novib in strengthening SOCSIS' capacity? (4) What factors explain ON's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

SOCSIS is not an independent Southern organization with its own legal status, but rather a programme of ON. The case study describes changes in core capabilities during the period 2002-2008. Evaluators discussed indicators for CCs with SOCSIS staff in start-up workshops; the 5CC framework was seen as having been developed 'elsewhere', abstract and sometimes intimidating. Nevertheless, the evaluators formulated applicable indicators for 5CC assessment for each core capability. The unit of analysis comprised SOCSIS, 120 trainee consultants (TC) and 120 Somali civil society organizations (CSOs/local NGOs or LNGOs). SOCSIS trains Somali consultants; they develop capacity in LNGOs.

**CC1:** All the LNGOs that strengthened their organization worked under SOCSIS. Three-year strategic plans were developed. LNGOs lack fund-raising structures and depend

mainly on external funding. The LNGOs are often lead by one person and lack plans for human resource development. SOCSIS managed to improve the LNGOs' human resource management and governance considerably.

- CC2: The LNGOs lack clear mandates, the ability to develop project documents or monitoring and evaluation processes. The LNGOs are unable to work beyond the local level, but project implementation with communities improved over time. SOCSIS' support of project cycle management was instrumental. The LNGOs received basic organizational infrastructure.
- CC3: The LNGOs' programme and financial reporting had been weak prior to SOCSIS intervention. The LNGOs were solely donor oriented, but now they see private sector actors and local authorities as stakeholders. NGO networks and umbrella organizations have been established over time. SOCSIS stimulated the LNGOs to become more visible, such as with newsletters; they now maintain regular contact with stakeholders. However, downward accountability to communities remains weak.
- CC4: Most of the LNGOs regularly reflect on developments taking place in an extremely fluid context. The LNGOs have generally adapted well to changing contexts.
- CC5: All of the LNGOs trained by SOCSIS since 2002 have changed their organizational identities. They show more clarity of vision, mission and values as well as improved administrative policies and procedures. There are official documented structures (organograms/job descriptions) in some of the established LNGOs.

### *Changes in outputs*

The study report identified the following main outputs: 120 LNGOs trained in programming and organizational development; the development of seven management manuals; 120 graduated TCs; 90 traditional leaders trained in leadership, dialogue with local administrators, etc; the founding of district associations (five teachers, five health workers and 12 entrepreneurs); 75 association leaders and nine managers were trained in association management. However, output changes over time are not clear.

### *Changes in outcomes*

The study defines outcomes in terms of SOCSIS's objectives. It provides no quantitative specifications or timeframe. Objectives include the development of LNGOs that are able to deliver better services to their beneficiaries. Linked to that goal are others, including: capacity building of civil society associations as agents of change and enhancing the role of traditional and religious leaders in decision-making, governance and conflict management.

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities moved in tandem with changes in outputs. Such a relation could also be assumed with SOCSIS' outcome statement, but not with achieved outcomes.

### *External factors*

The report notes such factors as weak security, lack of education, weak legal/technical infrastructure, limited human resources. Many international NGOs are active, but most operate from outside Somalia. 'Mafia' NGOs have created confusion.



### Effectiveness

It is difficult to attribute LNGO capacity development to SOCSIS and thus to ON because there have been other contributions, but respondents in the case study consider SOCSIS' and thus ON's contributions to be quite important.

## 6.6 YONECO, Malawi

### Introduction

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the development organization Youthnet and Counselling (YONECO) in Malawi from 1997 onwards, and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, Hivos (through Partos), during this process since 2002. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in YONECO's capacity? (2) What effects did YONECO's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was Hivos in strengthening YONECO's capacity? (4) What factors explain Hivos' effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### Changes in core capabilities (CCs)

YONECO is a local, non-political, non-profit NGO, created in 1997 to address social injustice, human rights, child delinquency and reproductive health affecting youth, women and children in Malawi. The case study report describes in general terms (not for each CC) changes in capacity during four phases: (1) 1999-2002 (formative); (2) 2003-2005 (development); (3) 2006-2009 (maturity); (4) 2009-beyond (sustaining growth). Indicators for CCs were adapted in consultation with YONECO staff. The 5CC framework was not used in stakeholder meetings; instead, the methods adopted included storytelling, most significant change and unit of analysis. The evaluators thus used adapted 5CC in their assessment. CC changes were not always clear. The unit of analysis was YONECO with stakeholders (National Youth Council Malawi, youth clubs, Malawi Network of AIDS Support Organizations, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, Natural Resources College and donors).

- CC1: YONECO formulated a 2006-2010 strategic plan that included objectives for financial/human resource sustainability. The organization was weaker before 2006. Following a 2002 confidence crisis between staff/volunteers and director, the board and director are no longer seen as lacking integrity today. Efforts have recently been made to strengthen YONECO's management team.
- CC2: YONECO was successful in organizing financial/material resources. It now has sufficient (field) offices and adequate personnel, who can gain academic qualifications and training in governance. YONECO very much depends on external donor funding and assistance in accessing knowledge resources.
- CC3: YONECO chairs national and continental networks and has hosted conferences. Stakeholders express satisfaction with YONECO. The organization was able to achieve synergy with other organizations and create opportunities for the organization. It successfully helped women affected by gender-based violence by working with the court system and police.
- CC4: YONECO encourages individual, team, and organisational learning. It showed ability to tackle some challenges and survived crisis in 2002. Expansion of the focus on youth to include women and children was the result of a search for organisational relevance.

**CC5:** Organization currently runs on the basis of operating principles. Key challenges remain the achievement of balance between ambition and vision and the avoidance of overloading its capacity.

#### *Changes in outputs*

The case report lists the following key results in quantitative terms: (1) health education on HIV/Aids and other health issues at the community level; (2) food security/economic empowerment initiatives for people affected by HIV/Aids; (3) orphans/vulnerable children development initiatives at the community level; (4) improved capacity of those who counsel students about school-related, gender-based violence; (5) community care for people living with HIV/Aids. Output changes were clear, but time periods were not indicated.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

Four outcomes were projected in YONECO's vision: (1) empowerment of youth, women and children; (2) prevention of spread HIV/Aids; (3) mitigation of the impact of Aids; (4) promotion of democracy and human rights for socio-economic development. However, outcomes had neither quantitative specifications nor time frames. The case report provides only narrative stories on achieved outcomes.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities occurred in tandem with changes in outputs. However, parallels with outcome changes could not be assumed, due to the lack of specific outcome definitions.

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#### *External factors*

The case report does not describe any socio-economical or political factors. It emphasizes the causes of HIV prevalence since 1999. Key players in the YONECO system are listed as: donors, staff members, the board of trustees, the public sector, training institutions, the private sector, volunteers, government departments, peer NGOs and beneficiaries.

#### *Effectiveness*

Hivos' support since 2002 (core funding, resource mobilization, training of board members, setting up of policies, systems and procedures) has been essential for strengthening YONECO as an organization.

## 7 SNV

### 7.1 Honey Value Chain, Ethiopia

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the Honey Value Chain in Ethiopia since 2005 and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, SNV, during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the Honey VC's capacity? (2) What effects did Honey VC's capacity changes have on its outputs

and outcomes? (3) How effective was SNV in strengthening the Honey VC's capacity? (4) What factors explain SNV's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

Core capabilities were described based on indicators calibrated in a local process. No quantitative data about the changes were provided. The changes in the five CCs concern the period 2005-2009; in this period a multi-stakeholder platform of honey VC actors was established. The unit of analysis was the VC – that is, all actors involved in the chain.

- CC1: A turning point in the honey VC came in 2005, when VC actors were brought together in a Multi-Stakeholders Platform (MSP). The MSP grasped opportunities identified by a programme entitled 'Business Organizations and Their Access to Markets' (BOAM). Joint planning/analysis of buyers and sellers was done based on understanding the links between VC actors. The Ethiopian Apiculture Board (EAB) is now in a position to take over the coordination of the MSP.
- CC2: Technical performance and service delivery improved in terms of increased productivity, lower costs and the inclusion of small farmers and women in the VC. Table honey is now sold on local markets and exported. Planning, strategizing and basic competencies of VC actors was strengthened, as were business-to-business opportunities. The case study claims the VC to be more pro-poor.
- CC3: The VC's social legitimacy improved, as did its national and international networking. Other major elements included the establishment of the EAB with participation of the government and other actors, certification of VC products according to quality/environmental criteria and facilitating export processes.
- CC4: VC actors understand international honey markets and are able to act strategically; VC actors are open to technical advice and able to collect and analyze relevant data about honey production and its marketing.
- CC5: The report highlights the positive influence of the MSP on the common approach; networking among VC actors has improved.

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#### *Changes in outputs*

The case report defined VC outputs as emerging capabilities. VC outputs, on the other hand, were described in terms of increased honey production and increased productivity, due to the introduction of new beehives. The case report puts strong emphasis on the achievement of VC output.

#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report provides the following outcome statement: 'The VC's objective is to create a well-developed Ethiopian honey sector that is globally competitive thanks to the high quality of its processed honey and beeswax with increased production and productivity and improved quality'. The outcome statement contains output-related elements. It provides no further operationalization with attention to pro-poor aspects nor a time frame for achieving outcomes.

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report indicates that changes in capabilities and changes in outputs were related. However, parallels between changes in capabilities and the outcome statement could not be assumed.

### *External factors*

The case report makes note of the factor of accommodating the government through its poverty alleviation policy and favourable international (EU) market conditions. The report describes the development of the Honey VC since 2005: honey was selected as a commodity in the BOAM programme. SNV created the MSP Coordination Group for honey in 2005 and helped establish cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, research centres and international (finance) institutions.

### *Effectiveness*

SNV's support to the Honey VC has been in effect since 2005, firstly by facilitating evaluation/research on honey production and marketing and secondly by facilitating, creating and strategizing the honey MSP. SNV advisors and local Capacity Builders played central roles in the facilitation processes; their relative weight in local development processes appears significant. It is not clear what kind of an exit strategy SNV has in place, nor what role the EAB is actually playing.

## **7.2 Livestock Value Chain, Kenya**

### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the Livestock Value Chain in Kenya since 2006 and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, SNV, during this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the Livestock VC's capacity? (2) What effects did the Livestock VC's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was SNV in strengthening the Livestock VC's capacity? (4) What factors explain SNV's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The indicators for assessing changes in core capabilities were calibrated in a kick-off workshop for the case study. No quantitative data about the CC changes were provided. The changes in the five CCs were not always clearly indicated. The CC changes cover the period 2006–2009. The Livestock VC was carried by a platform composed of the Samburu County Council (SCC), the Samburu Integrated Development Programme (SIDEIP), local marketing associations (LMAs) and the Kenya Livestock Marketing Association (KLMA). The unit of analysis was the Livestock VC, that is, all actors involved in the chain.

- CC1:** Key actors in the Livestock VC connected with each other through binding MoUs. The SCC harmonizes activities through a District Action Plan. This capability did not change because it was present from the outset.
- CC2:** The Livestock VC carries out technical and logistical tasks and provides services including the development of infrastructure for the livestock market at Lolkuniani and support to its market association. The VC could access credits by bankable

proposals and other financial resources. Any change to CC2 was not clear, however; the study made little reference to the CC's indicators.

- CC3: The VC gained legitimacy and established links with microfinance institutions. The VC linked up with the Samburu District Livestock Production Office for the introduction of new breeds. Functional links with regional and national governments were established. The VC was able to attract buyers and sellers from Nairobi.
- CC4: The VC improved its capability to strategize and manage learning for VC development. Involvement of communities in local markets was innovative. Other measures included the introduction of camel husbandry, disease control and the pursuit of added value in the hides and skins sector.
- CC5: The VC tries to balance coherence and diversity. Exchanges between VC actors (government, private sector, civil society) strengthened links. Pastoralists got an official voice at the national level in the Kenya Livestock Multi-Stakeholders Platform.

#### *Changes in outputs*

In the case report, VC outputs are defined as emerging capabilities. VC outputs were subsequently specified, however, in terms of volume of trade at the Lolkuniani market, and in other economic activities such as shops and kiosks. VC output was described, with little put in quantitative terms.

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#### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report provides the following outcome statement: 'A livestock VC that promotes equity and brings terminal markets closer to the producers'. Outcome is conceptualized as a VC's overall capacity to improve production, income and the employment of upstream VC actors, to identify and produce new marketable products and services with a higher involvement of women and the inclusion of small farmers. Outcomes were not put in quantitative terms and no time frame for achieved outcomes was given.

#### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report does not clearly indicate that changes in capabilities and changes in outputs were related. Parallels between changes in capabilities and outcomes could not be detected either, as no evidence was given in the report.

#### *External factors*

The case report describes external factors in anecdotal ways through some stories. It sketches the history of the Livestock VC from 2002 onwards. Important external factors are: a less controlling attitude by the ministry of local government, increased supportive attitude of the central government and a setback in the 2007 election unrest, which affected local committees. The effects of this last factor are not clearly described.

#### *Effectiveness*

SNV's support to the Livestock VC has been in effect since 2005. This involved strengthening the bonds between SCC, SIDEP, and LMAs. SNV advisors and local capacity builders such as the District Livestock Marketing Council played essential roles in the facilitation

processes; their relative weight in local development processes was important. It is not clear what SNV's strategy for future interventions is, nor what stakeholders in the Livestock VC expect.

### 7.3 Oilseeds Value Chain, Uganda

#### *Introduction*

The case study analyzed the process of capacity development of the Oilseed Value Chain in Uganda since 2006 and the role played by its Dutch Development Partner, SNV, in this process. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What changes took place in the Oilseed VC's capacity? (2) What effects did the Oilseed VC's capacity changes have on its outputs and outcomes? (3) How effective was SNV in strengthening the Oilseed VC's capacity? (4) What factors explain SNV's effectiveness? What lessons can be learned?

#### *Changes in core capabilities (CCs)*

The core capabilities were described based on indicators calibrated in local workshops. No quantitative data about the changes were provided. The changes in the five CCs concern the period 2006-2009; in this period various multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) of VC actors (national, regional) were established. The unit of analysis was the Oilseed VC, that is, all actors involved in the chain.

- CC1: The networks of the Uganda Oilseed Subsector Platform (OSSUP) and the Vegetable Oil Development Program (VODP) were vital in the development of the VC. Establishing guidelines for participation and decision making and transparent leadership were key; this resulted in improved VC efficiency and productivity.
- CC2: The number of contracts in the VC increased, as did the number of producer organizations (POs); more POs were strengthened with increased access to VC services and resources.
- CC3: Among indicators used were the quality of links between actors, the number of MSPs, resource mobilization and VC influence on government. However, no capability changes were observed.
- CC4: The number of new VC products increased, as did analysis of the organization. Participatory M&E was introduced and stakeholders increasingly acknowledged the VC. Positive changes are claimed, but these are not related to indicators.
- CC5: The report emphasizes joint VC solutions based on trust, transparency and the presence of competent leaders. It also claims positive changes, but these are not related to indicators.

#### *Changes in outputs*

In the case report, VC outputs are defined as emerging capabilities. This looks confusing, as VC outputs were also described in terms of the number of improved varieties and quality of oilseed planting seeds, increased production and productivity, increased access to financial services, collective marketing and enterprise diversification. Not all farmers could increase their productivity. The report indicates increased involvement of women in VC decision making.

### *Changes in outcomes*

The case report provides a short outcome statement : 'A competitive and sustainable oilseed sub-sector favourable to all stakeholders in the VC'. The outcome statement was not presented in measurable units, and there was no time frame for achieving outcomes. Better coordination and contact between five oilseed MSPs created in 2009 were seen as important outcomes.

### *Connection CCs – outputs – outcomes*

The case report does indicate that changes in capabilities and changes in outputs were related. Parallels between changes in capabilities and outcome statements could not be identified.

### *External factors*

The case report states that the development of the Oilseed VC has been taking place since 2000, when internal security was restored, per capita consumption increased, infrastructure improved and regional markets further developed. Donors and the government saw agriculture as an important contributor to development, resulting in increased funding to the agricultural sector. The Oilseed VC benefited from this.

### *Effectiveness*

The case report claims that SNV's added value to the Oilseed VC lies in a combination of process facilitation, brokering business-to-business relations, knowledge development and management and connecting different VC actors. SNV contributed to building trust between VC actors by setting up different MSPs. SNV advisors, together with local capacity builders, played dominant roles in these processes; their relative weight in local development processes appeared considerable. It is not clear what SNV's strategy is for the future development of the Oilseed VC, nor has the organization put an exit strategy into place yet.

## Annex 7 Type of support provided by the DDPs

CA = collaborative association

TA = technical assistance

DDP = Dutch development partner

DDP	Time period	Object of support	Funding (in euros €)	TA (In days or euros)	Expert role	Facilitation
<b>NCEA</b>						
Mozambique (MICOA, NGOs, consultants)	1998–2008	Instrumental association <sup>122</sup>		X	X	X
Georgia (MEPNR, MoED, NGOs, consultants)	2001–2009	Instrumental association		X	X	X
Guatemala (MARN and its delegations)	1998–2009	Instrumental association		X	X	X
<b>NIMD</b>						
Mali (CMDID, parties, parliamentary groups)	2006–2009	CA	X <sup>123</sup>	X		X
Guatemala (Instituto Holandès, parties, FPPP)	2002–2009	CA	X <sup>124</sup>	X		X
Kenya (CMD-K, parties)	2004–2007 (after that only CMD-K)	CA	3,058, 871	X		X
<b>SNV</b>						
Ethiopia	2006–2009	CA		2055 days		X
Uganda	2007–2009	CA		523 days		X
Kenya	2006–2009	CA		387 days		X

<sup>123</sup> The Environmental Assessment system is characterized as an open system with a wide range of stakeholders who are related to each other through the environmental assessment, legal and regulatory framework. In particular, for the Environmental Assessment systems, each stakeholder has its own objectives that may contradict those of other stakeholders.

<sup>124</sup> Exact amount is has not been mentioned in the case report.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.



Agriterra						
Madagascar	2001–2009	CA	262,557	X		
Tanzania	2004–2009	CA	X <sup>125</sup>	X		
DRC	2007–2009	CA	652,785. 44 (58.5%)	X		
<b>PARTOS</b>						
Somalia (Oxfam Novib, SOCSIS, NGOs)	2002–2007	Single organization	193,000	X		
Pan Africa (CAL/ Hivos )	2003–2008	Single organization	363,700			
Ethiopia (ELA, ICCO, Agriterra, Cordaid)	2007–2009	CA	200,000	€277,020		X
Cambodia (PADEK/Oxfam Novib)	2000–2009	Single organization	65% of the budget (Exact amount is missing)	X		X
Malawi (YONECO/ Hivos)	2002–2010	Single organization	€427,000 (Between 2002 and 2009) €1=\$1,40	X		
Cambodia (PST/ ICCO)	2007–2010	Single organization	102,015	X		
<b>PSO</b>						
Kenya (MM/St Martin)	2003–2009	Single organization	108,260	€334,832		
Ethiopia (Tearfund/MKC)	2003–2010	Single organization	197,163 (Between 2002 and 2009)	X		
Uganda (W&D/ KDDS)	2006–2009	Single organization	W&D 2009: 201,698 PSO 2009: 10,000	X		X
South Africa (NIZA/FXI)	2000–2008	Single organization	174,455 (Between 2005 and 2007)	X		X

## Facilitating resourcefulness

Sudan (ICCO/ CADEP)	2008–2009	Single organization	ICCO: 50,000 CADEP: 54,400 2010: 13,120	X		X
Ghana (RNE)	2002–2006	CA	€14.8 m/ year <sup>126</sup>	X <sup>127</sup>		X

Yes : x €	No / unknown
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<sup>127</sup> Total donor funding amounts \$74.9 m per year between 2002 and 2006. The total budget allocated to the district levels and below, in Ghana, increased from 23% in 1996 to 41% in 2008 according to the Ghanaian Ministry of Health budget statement to its Parliament in 2009.

<sup>128</sup> In the synthesis report of the Ghana health sector, training is mentioned separately from technical assistance.

## Annex 8. Assessment of synthesis report by external referents

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6<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB)  
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
The Hague  
The Netherlands

Att: Mr. P. de Lange

Dear Mr. de Lange,

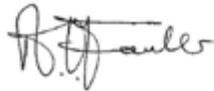
This letter is in response to a late invitation to provide an external reference group (ERG) perspective on the quality and relevance of the IOB study of capacity development. This IOB study was undertaken in cooperation with a number of Dutch Development Partners (DDPs) that receive public finance via the Directorate General for International Co-operation (DGIS). To accommodate specific features of this exercise, the ERG's involvement was adapted from IOB's normal arrangements. ERG engagement can be considered adequate during the process. The timeliness required to provide comments limited substantial ERG engagement in iterative drafts of the study produced in 2011. The timing of your request has not made it possible for me to deliberate with members of the ERG, resulting in reliance on the recall of conversations over time as well as their and my written comments on versions of the synthesis report.

The IOB study is rightfully acknowledged by the ERG and others as an innovation in terms of its original intentions towards: (1) evidence-based shared learning rather than theory-based performance evaluation; and (2) application of recent advances in the theory and practice of capacity and its development in the context of international aid and its policies. Broadly speaking, to a more than reasonable degree, the exercise has realised these intentions. In doing so it has produced new knowledge of relevance to the policy and practice of the aid system extending beyond capacity development by and of DDPs. The exercise has explored novel ways of gaining a southern perspective of change. Nevertheless, for reasons cited below, careful, unhurried reflection is merited in terms of applying lessons and other findings to the policy, conditions and practices associated with financing the capacitation of civil society.

As caveats to an overall positive assessment, two observations can be made. First, there is significant 'latency' in the existent to which fundamental distinctions between a complexity and more traditional linear, logically framed appreciation of capacity and its development can be consistently applied in the interpretation of evidence. Simply put, the exercise reflects an institutional pre-disposition of the official aid system. This is to locate a complexity framework within a traditional, sector-based way of understanding what capacity is and how it can be enhanced. This is not surprising. Complexity approaches to development are a work in progress. But this interpretative tension - particularly in relation to causation tied to effectiveness - needs to be born in mind when considering the study's results.

Second, there was a serious underestimate of the cost, effort and progress called for in the professional thinking and practice required to be true to the original intentions. Additional resources reduced, but did not alleviate, the problem. In this sense, the innovation was a significant 'stress test' of putting a new analytic framework and 'mind set' into practice. In terms of lessons learned, it would therefore have been helpful to include the IOB's reflection on this experience in terms of future approaches to evaluation.

At our last meeting, Dominique Houkonnou said that the synthesis report is not the end, but the start of a contribution to a critical area of effort that is already of value to those that took part as it will be for other agencies. I do not doubt that my colleagues would endorse this statement. They would, I am sure, also wish to thank the IOB for inviting us to be part of a seminal step forward in improving effectiveness in a critical area of development investment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Fowler', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alan Fowler (Prof. Dr.)

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Front cover : Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) Michoacan, Mexico

Pages 22, 30, 68: With its rear claspers anchored to a silk tether and a girdle of silk encircling its body, the Old World Swallowtail caterpillar (*Papilio machaon*) splits open to reveal the chrysalis within. Able only to wriggle, the chrysalis works the skin down to its tail end. The tail then lifts briefly to cast off the skin and re-attaches, held fast by a set of tiny hooks.

Page 98: Pupa of swallowtail, the butterfly's wings shine through the pupa.

Page 120, 128: The newly emerged swallowtail perches above its pupal case. It has torn the chrysalis apart, leaving the case suspended solely by a girdle of silk. Body fluids are pumped into the wing veins to make the wings expand. As the wings expand, air is pumped through the veins to dry and dilate them.

Page 134: Perched on a wild carrot plant (*Daucus carota*), the adult swallowtail opens pristine wings and basks in the sun to warm its body in preparation for flight.

Capacity development has a prominent place in international as well as in Dutch development cooperation. In order to be able to choose and follow their own development paths, developing countries need appropriate and adequate capacities. The substantial amount of support provided by the international donor community, however, has not yet resulted in sufficient capacity. This is particularly the case for capacity geared to poverty reduction. To gain a better understanding of how and under what circumstances capacity development support can be effective, this evaluation focuses on learning, and identifies factors that explain the achieved level of effectiveness.

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