

Reviewing Civil Society's Role in European Community Development Assistance in Senegal, Kenya, Bolivia and India

- **Organisation:**
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- **Partners:**
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€80,548
- **Countries/ Regions Covered:**
Kenya, Senegal, India, Bolivia

Background and Objectives of the Research

The research aims to provoke a debate on aid effectiveness between governments and civil society in Europe and aid recipient countries in the developing world. As the European Commission launches the Mid Term Review of its Country Strategy Papers (CSP) processes, this report offers a reality check on European Community (EC) efforts in Kenya, Senegal, Bolivia and India. The research focuses on the degree and quality of civil society participation in drawing up the CSPs, which determine how EC aid is allocated. It is argued that tackling the democratic deficit in European aid will make Europe a more credible actor in development and foreign policy.

organised consultation process involved civil society groups with concrete outcomes in terms of input to the CDP. The research in Senegal uncovered many of the same problems encountered elsewhere in terms of the responsibility to support a board-based and inclusive process. It also highlights the balancing act that all EC delegations must perform: how to exercise a proactive role in promoting democratic decision-making without compromising the national authorities 'ownership' of the process.

- The CSP in **Bolivia** involved no civil society participation. Without legal obligation and little political direction, delegations under the DG External Relations umbrella have few incentives to promote participation. Whilst acknowledging that there cannot be a blueprint, the Bolivian experience suggests that increased engagement with traditional or emerging indigenous structures and processes, rather than exclusively new parallel structures or established institutions unaccountable to the poor, may help open up the process.
- **India** is the largest Asian recipient of EC funding for NGOs, yet the current 2002-2007 CSP involved no consultation of civil society. There is a heavy emphasis on working with professional NGOs, think tanks and private sector organisations, but not associations representing the poor or the marginalised. Thus concerns remain that the EC's analysis and action is insufficiently focused on the needs of people living in poverty or in social and political exclusion.

Research Findings

- The research suggests that EC aid still suffers from a democratic deficit. There is a policy focus on the needs of people living in poverty, however the practice is still beholden to World Bank prescriptions, historic EC funding priorities and decisions taken in Brussels.
- In **Kenya**, there was no engagement of civil society in policy dialogue on the CSP and so far little in the planning phase. EC staff emphasise that participation can happen at programme and project level and that, with the change of government, allocations to democratic governance initiatives and NSAs can be substantially increased.
- The CSP process in **Senegal** offers a positive example of participation in comparison to other countries studied. A

In cooperation with



Policy Recommendations

- The EU should assume the role of an 'activist' donor' to promote EC and EU member state official development assistance focused on poverty eradication and the promotion of human rights and democracy. The EU should prioritise the democratic accountability of its development aid.
- Civil society organisations should be recognised as political actors, not just project implementers, with due consideration given to their diverse roles. Civil society organisations also bear a responsibility to ensure their legitimacy and accountability to their members and beneficiaries.
- Civil Society should be included in the evaluation and follow up of the Mid Term Review Process.
- Participation of civil society in policy formulations should be made legally binding and consistent across all regional groupings.
- The EC should prioritise the proactive inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups in policy dialogue. A single Development Commissioner should have responsibility for EC official development assistance to all developing countries and regions, with the whole programme cycle united under the same authority.
- An independent research with expert knowledge of local civil society should be appointed to all EC delegations.

For further information on this research project, please visit:

EC-PREP website: www.ec-prep.org

University of Sussex website: www.bond.org.uk

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EC-PREP is supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). In 2001, DFID, in collaboration with the European Commission, launched the European Community's Poverty Reduction Effectiveness Programme (EC-PREP). The main objective of this research initiative is to produce findings and policy recommendations that support and contribute to improving the European Community's effectiveness in attaining poverty reduction targets via its external assistance programmes. The programme has funded 13 Research Projects and 10 Commissioned Studies, which relate to one or more of the six focal areas of EC's development policy. More information about the research funded by EC-PREP can be found on www.ec-prep.org.