The current procedures and policies dominating the disbursement of aid: are they building strong relationships and enabling NGOs to meet their stated aims?

A report on research carried out in Uganda between 2000-2004. DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION , 15th March 2004.

Funded by ESCOR, DFID

With support from the Nuffield Foundation, UK and ActionAid Uganda

Team leader: Tina Wallace (now of International Gender Studies, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University. Previously of Oxford Brookes University)

Research team:

Meenu Vadera, Martin Kaleeba (both formerly with ActionAid, Uganda)

Rosemary Adong, John de Coninck and other staff of CDRN

With support from:

Mary Ssonko, PhD student, Swansea University

Juliet Kiguli, Dept of Anthropology, Makerere University

Patrick Mulindwa Makerere Institute of Social Research

With inputs from:

Rashid Sesay, Sierra Leone

Rajiv Khandawal, independent consultant

Crispin Kintu, Centre for Basic Research

Uganda country case study report.

CONTENTS:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the research: the team, the methodology, and frameworks of analysis *(Tina Wallace)*

Chapter 2: The context for the research *(Martin Kaleeba, Rashid Sesay and Tina Wallace)*

Chapter 3: Critical funding issues arising from interviews with a range of NGOs in Uganda: analysis of first round interviews *(Tina Wallace and Martin Kaleeba)*

Chapter 4: Donor conditionalities: analysis of first round interviews (Martin Kaleeba and *Tina Wallace with inputs from Patrick Mulindwa)*

Chapter 5: Reflections on some critical concepts dominating development discourse in Uganda: some contextual notes *(Rosemary Adong, CDRN)*

Chapter 6: Three case studies exploring the impact of Western management tools on SNGOs *(Rosemary Adong and named staff of CDRN)*

Chapter 7: The untold story: competing cultures in development partnerships. The UPPAP partnership; a new way of working in development? *(John de Conink and Meenu Vadera)*

Chapter 8: Case study of a partnership between an international NGO and two local NGOs *(Martin Kaleeba)*

Chapter 9: Case study on gender and advocacy (*Mary Ssonko***)**

Chapter 10. Case studies of working north-south and the range of relationships identified *(Tina Wallace with inputs from Rajiv Khandawal)*

Chapter 11: The aid chain reaches the ground *(Tina Wallace and Juliet Kiguli)*

Annex 1. The research team

Annex 2. The sample NGOs in Uganda

Bibliography for the Uganda study

Chapter 1. Introduction to the research: the team, the methodology and the frameworks of analysis

Tina Wallace

This research in Uganda developed out of a long-term research project, which was started in UK in the mid 1990s. The work developed from observations of the lead researcher, while a participant in a major UK NGO, of the growing number of policies and procedures being put in place to support 'partners' in the south. There was a clear shift in many UK NGOs from relatively minimal procedures, light measures of evaluation and a responsive approach to funding, to a more tightly structured and bureaucratic set of systems. In the late 1980s most agencies had few policies around monitoring and evaluation, project management or reporting systems but by the end of the 1990s these were evident everywhere and their volumes were growing rapidly.

What and who informs the development of these manuals and regulations, how similar are they across agencies, and how does it feel to be at the receiving end of them? These were some of the questions driving the first phase in 1995. Then the focus was on exploring the reasons for the rise of the new management systems within NGOs in the UK. The research identified major shifts in the policies and procedures around development management and found that UK NGOs were heavily influenced by donors and changing donor demands, as well as by the increasingly stringent requirements of their boards. Boards often had business people sitting on them- or even running them- and many aspects of private sector performance management and management by results were being introduced into development NGOs.

Questions were raised during the research about how relevant/appropriate the tools being increasingly adopted by UK NGOs were in improving their roles and relationships with those they supported in the south. It was noted that few changes observable in UK NGOs were being driven by feedback from field staff or partners, rather changes were driven by changing management agendas found across the business and public sectors in the UK (and beyond). The research established that there was a growing standardisation of development management tools among donors and UK NGOs[1].

These changes have continued apace. Restructuring, strategic planning, new policies and procedures for accountability, the promotion of new forms of work, especially advocacy, are evident across the board in UK. UK NGOs now spend much time and energy developing new policies and procedures for use by those they work with across the globe. Phase 2 of the research was developed in order to try and chart these changes over time and to explore the links and connections from north to south, in two country case studies-South Africa and Uganda.

---

[1] A book, T. Wallace et al, Standardising Development, was published from this work in 1997, along with a number of articles.

The research teams in all three countries[2] were interested in exploring how far the new management tools are proving effective in promoting the new poverty agenda for poor people. How do local NGOs engage with these requirements, shape, change or reject them? What are the implications of using these tools for the relationships and activities in Uganda and SA?

Phase 2 has focused on the relationships between UK donors and NGOs and their partners overseas in Uganda and South Africa to understand how NGOs negotiate changing management practices and donor conditionalities. As key examples of new management practices the research focused on rational management tools (logframes, monitoring and evaluation, impact indicators, reporting, strategic planning), and other donor conditionalities (e.g. gender, advocacy, rights and participation). As the research progressed it widened to explore how these tools shape the relationships between donors, UK NGOs and partners in SA and Uganda, exploring issues of power, identity and development practice. The aim has been to explore what tensions are created by the current terms and conditions of funding, whether different funding requirements enable different kinds of work to be undertaken, and how funding conditionalities are negotiated at different levels within the funding chain. The research is important because it is an attempt to start to trace the impact of the detail of aid management and funding conditionalities on shaping development work.

The research in Uganda has been funded primarily by ESCOR, DFID in the UK, with support from ActionAid Uganda and the Nuffield Foundation (who are the funders of the SA case study).

Methodology

It was important to continue to explore issues raised in the first phase of the research about the compatibility or otherwise of the two languages of development. These were seen on the one hand as accountability to donors, project planning, indicators and impact assessment with a focus on achievement and on the other as the language of participation, bottom up, building strong local civil society, ownership and sustainability. Many commentators said that these can be meshed, however evidence from phase 1 suggested they cause major tensions that are hard to handle and resolve when undertaking development work on the ground.

While the focus originally was on policies and procedures, and these remained central to the research, over time the question of how these impact on and enhance or diminish cross-cultural relationships with partners and communities became paramount.

In the UK the research mapped the changing donor landscape, comparing this with the baseline information collected in the first phase of the work in 1995, and the impact of these ongoing changes on UK NGOs. In Uganda and South Africa the research investigated how southern NGOs understand,

---

[2] The research teams are listed in Annex 1

receive and respond to or manipulate the demands that now accompany the release of money from the North.

Research design

Research partners were chosen and the research started with a meeting of all the key researchers to agree and finalise a framework, key research questions and methods. The aim was to ensure comparability and connection across the three countries, while following up issues that were specific to each country. The proposal was discussed with all the participating NGOs in the UK, to agree which ones would continue to work with the research and make available files, staff time, and allow access to projects and partners in SA and Uganda.

The team in Uganda changed during the course of the research, something that made the continuity of the research difficult. Original team members found themselves overloaded or unable to complete the work with the resources available, and others stepped into the breach. The final team working on the Uganda report is quite different to the team that started, pushing the UK research co-ordinator into a more prominent role than expected and hoped for.

Key research questions

The major questions driving the research were agreed early on. They were:
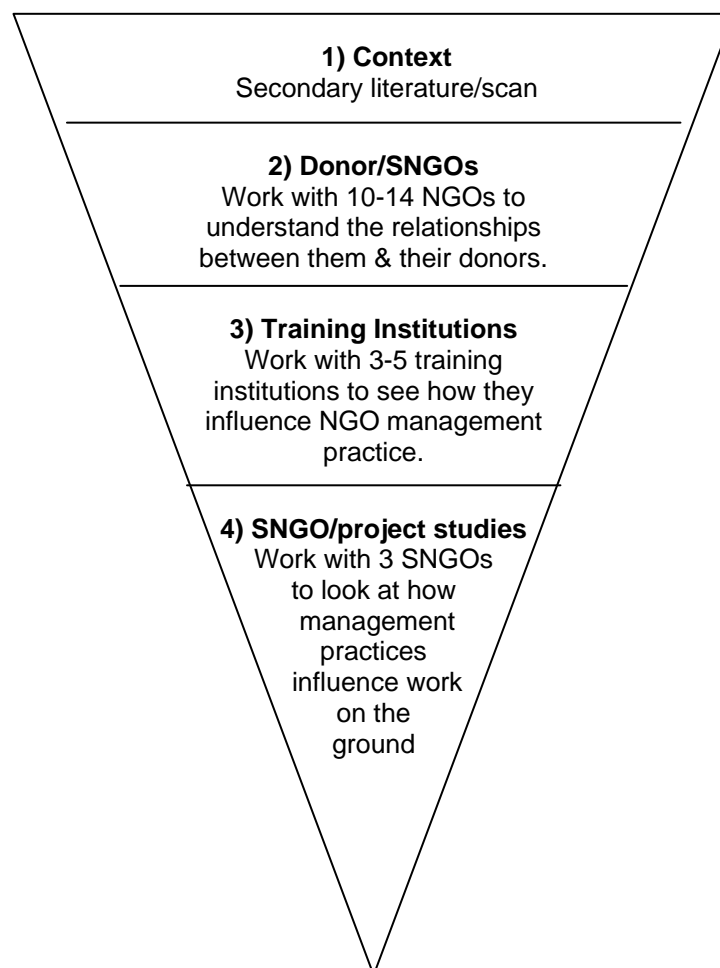
1. What are current patterns of donor giving to UK NGOs? - size of funding, range of funders and their conditionalities, and new management requirements?
2. How far do conditions and requirements around the disbursement of funding from donors (institutional, bi-lateral, NGOs) influence and direct the work of NGOs? What conditionalities are being imposed? How much room is there for manoeuvre?
3. How are changes taking place in the policies and procedures of UK NGOs affecting the way in which they relate to their southern counterparts? How far do the rational planning and management tools now being promoted fit with the different organisational and developmental cultures of the south?
4. What have been the influences behind the adaptation of these tools?
5. Do current management approaches enhance the ability of local development actors to promote civil society organisations, community participation, and strong advocacy voices? Do they strengthen the work of SNGOs to deliver sustainable and poverty-focused development? Are they good tools for capacity building?
6. How do southern institutions react and behave in increasingly tight donor contexts and what implications does this have for:
   - Their relations to communities,
   - Participation and empowerment
   - Efficiency
   - Partnership and local ownership
   - Building strong civil societies

- Local knowledge/cross-cultural issues
- Empowerment

7. How far do the changed policies and procedures promote upward and/or downward accountability, and with what effect?
8. Can NGOs and donors hear the voices of local women and men and community based organisations? What are the mechanisms? How do these voices fit with the dominant paradigms of strategic planning, project management cycles and measurable impact indicators?
9. What other pressures for change are local NGOs responding to, especially those within their own context, and how do these interact with externally imposed agendas?

To investigate these questions, the teams in Uganda, South Africa and UK combined two elements:

- Broad research to understand the context within which NGOs are working
- Deep research to follow through the links from donor or NGO in the UK to field level work within the country concerned.

This can be presented diagrammatically:

1) Context
Secondary literature/scan

2) Donor/SNGOs
Work with 10-14 NGOs to understand the relationships between them & their donors.

3) Training Institutions
Work with 3-5 training institutions to see how they influence NGO management practice.

4) SNGO/project studies
Work with 3 SNGOs to look at how management practices influence work on the ground

The shape of the triangle represents the breadth of the study. Elements 1) and 2) gave a wide perspective, elements 3) and 4) a narrower but more in-depth one.

Methodology and sample in Uganda.

The methodology in Uganda combined these different elements. An analysis was done of the database of NGOs in Uganda and relevant literature was read to gain a picture of the broad NGO context in Uganda. Then several NGOs were chosen for a first round of interviews; they were chosen according to the following range of criteria:

- ❖ They all had links to external funding, either as funders themselves or as recipients of UK donor and NGO funding
- ❖ As many as possible had links to the case study NGOs in the UK, to ensure that management practices could be followed through the aid chain
- ❖ They were interested and open to participating in the research. Experience has taught the researchers that working with unwilling NGOs is time wasting. The research relationship requires trust and openness, so only NGOs willing and able to talk freely and share documentation were interviewed for this phase
- ❖ They had time to give to the interview process
- ❖ They were willing to become a case study NGO if that was needed
- ❖ Initially they were all based in Kampala. The plan was to interview those who had direct and close contacts with foreign donors, and inevitably this meant working with mostly larger Uganda NGOs initially.

Two training institutions (MISR and CDRN) were very involved with the research at different times and contributed to the analysis of the NGO sector. The next and final stage was to follow the funding of a small sample of these NGOs and interview the NGOs, CBOs and members of the community they worked with around Uganda, so reaching down to the rural organisations and beneficiaries of development aid. Some of the case study research was done by external research staff, but some was undertaken by 'insiders' who were able to draw on years of work and in depth understanding of an agency and its relationships, which external researchers could not hope to achieve.

The organisations interviewed included large and medium sized international NGOs with their headquarters in UK, and national Ugandan NGOs. The organisations represented a wide range of experiences and perspectives, and they provided a variety of responses because of their somewhat varying visions, missions, values and goals. Some were exclusively donor agencies, others were membership and or network organisations representing the interests of their members or special groups, while others were either international or local NGOs involved in different development programmes. The interviews were sometimes with senior staff who had good understanding of the work and issues facing their organisations; in other cases the researchers worked long term with the NGO and knew a wide range of their staff and partners. Some interviews were done with groups of staff rather than individuals.

The methodology of the different case studies varied, and different people undertook them over the course of the research. CDRN drew on their own experience as facilitators as well as researchers, so their contributions were from the perspective of an agency deeply involved in this work. One case study was requested from a researcher undertaking independent research, whose research was closely related to the core concerns of this project (Mary Ssonko). Others had deep experience of the NGO sector in Uganda, but wrote their studies while working on Master's degrees or away from the day to day of NGO life in Uganda (Martin Kaleeba and Sesay Rashid). All the case studies drew on experience and knowledge of some of the people directly involved, which enabled the research to go beyond the expected boundaries of academic research and delve deeper into relationships and behaviour that these people knew over many years. It does ofcourse mean that they had a particular experience and perspective, but all have tried to be as clear as possible about their position in the case studies.

A critical methodological issue needs to be highlighted here. Almost every NGO, local and international, requested confidentiality and anonymity as a condition of their participation in the research. People would only agree to talk to the researchers under this strict condition. Although one NGO definitely was happy to be named, this was not possible because of the deep need for anonymity of the others. This has major implications for the research in terms of writing up case studies and data in ways that reflect the reality but keep the confidentiality. It results in data presentation sometimes being less sharp and more disguised than would be best for clarity. It has much bigger implications for development practice, because if NGOs cannot say what they want to say about their work and relationships openly how can relations of trust and transparency really be well built?

The donors selected for interview in Uganda were DFID as the key UK based funder, the European Union and the World Bank. These represented key multi-lateral players and one bilateral, the most significant bi-lateral funder in Uganda. The government staff interviewed were located in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Department of Local Government. Discussions were held, and meetings attended, with the staff of UPPAP based in the Ministry of Finance.

The organisations interviewed are to be found in annex 2. The key findings were discussed at a workshop at CDRN in 2003, with a range of participating and non-participating NGOs and were endorsed by the Ugandan NGO staff who came; they said the findings did reflect and represent their own experiences and challenges.

From the table presented in annex 2 some clear issues emerge about NGOs and the sample for the research:

- ❖ NGOs differ along so many dimensions: where they are based, how they are funded; what they focus on; where and how they work; how big they are and how wide their reach.
- ❖ The larger ones are the international NGOs and national umbrella organisations.
- ❖ The first round of interviews focused on the international NGOs and these larger Ugandan NGOs, the next level of interviewing and participatory observation work was with their partners in the field, who were smaller, more local and focused on fewer issues, by and large.
- ❖ Not all UK based NGOs work through offices in Uganda. The data on these NGOs was collected in the UK and form part of the UK study, but relevant data will be drawn on for the Ugandan study when necessary.

The main objective of conducting the initial interviews was to establish the broad parameters and trends around the relationship between donors and UK based NGOs with southern NGOs, and how different players perceived these relationships to impact on the operations and the development work of the NGOs in Uganda. From the initial round of interviews key trends and research questions were developed. These were then followed up in depth in the case studies that were subsequently undertaken.

The one to one interviews were supplemented by round table workshops with donors and NGOs held by MISR (Makerere University) and by group discussions at some of the NGO head quarters in Kampala. The data presented here are also supplemented by information gathered at a range of workshops and meetings research staff attended in Uganda during the research period, and work done previously for DFID on NGOs and their poverty focus in Uganda.[3] The data also included documents, guidelines, reports, evaluations and other 'grey literature' held by the donors and NGOs.

The conceptual framework for the research

There is a separate paper available to those who are interested, covering the literature review and the key conceptual frameworks used in guiding this research. CDRN can provide this paper to those who request it.

In summary the key approaches drawn on for this study are listed below:

- ❖ The clear dichotomy between approaches to change that define social and economic change as controllable, predictable and measurable, and those that see change as non-linear, contingent, continually evolving and often unpredictable.
- ❖ The importance of understanding who has the power and why, and how this is used to ensure conformance with dominant thinking, policies and procedures. The denial of being powerful by those with power means it is not addressed and strategies to counter-balance it remain poorly developed.

---

[3] The research done on ODI's poverty effectiveness by Birmingham University. Tina Wallace led the Uganda research team and while the findings were never published, they were used to inform the CSP developed by DFID in 1999.

❖ Related to this the critical role of history in shaping power relations, and the often undiscussed and unanalysed issues of race and class in cross cultural development relationships.

❖ The contradiction between the current dominant management approaches wrapped in the language of accountability and targets, and what is actually required by an organisation that wants to work participatively with the poor setting their own agendas. The alternative approaches will be highlighted where possible to show the choices the NGO sector is making and what could be done differently.

❖ The need to question all the time whose benefit certain management practices serve.

Chapter 2: The context for the research

Martin Kaleeba, Rashid Sesay and Tina Wallace

Overview of context for NGOs in Uganda: donor, government and NGO roles and perspectives

Uganda was in an advanced state of collapse when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) under Museveni took power in 1986, following years of instability, conflict and political isolation. Income levels were very low and there had been a large scale 'retreat into subsistence'. Social capital was seriously eroded in many areas after ten years of conflict, and the provision of education and health by the Government – essential for building human capital – was almost non existent; private provision was patchy and inaccessible to the poor. Uganda was faced with the rising AIDS/HIV pandemic, while the political process and government institutions were deeply damaged and traumatised from a prolonged period of authoritarian rule and civil war (Twaddle and Hanson, 1988). The physical infrastructure was in an advanced state of decay; the country faced a huge rehabilitation challenge.

Since 1986 Uganda has undergone rapid change in many areas, although war and conflicts internally and externally continued to take their toll through the 1990s and up to the present day. Structural adjustment programmes were introduced soon after the new government came to power and over the years the government has met almost all of the IMF conditions; this has been recognised in debt negotiations and Uganda was the first country in Africa to receive limited debt relief. The country has performed well in macroeconomic stabilisation and growth; the liberalisation of the exchange rate, control of public expenditure, and some trade liberalisation together with a relatively stable political environment have contributed to a good economic performance.

International donors through much of the 1990s defined Uganda as a star economic adjuster and performer. From 1986-96 growth averaged 3% while for much of the rest of Africa it was only .8%. How well this economic performance has translated into reducing the poverty of the majority of the population remains a matter for debate. The issues around the collection and analysis of the poverty data in Uganda and elsewhere are the subject of extensive research and the shortcomings of some of the poverty data are documented elsewhere. [4]

There have certainly been improvements on some of the human development indicators though they remain low, and Uganda remains in the bottom 10% of countries worldwide on the HDI index. The household surveys (which

---

[4] See for example, Simon Appleton of the Centre for the Study of African Economies, Howard White at IDS, Sussex and a large poverty study headed by Francis Stuart, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University. The issues were also discussed at length in the poverty study done for DFID in Uganda, by staff at International Development Department, Birmingham University. Tina Wallace headed the team researching the impact of UK overseas aid on poverty in Uganda for DFID.

measure only one poverty indicator, consumption) showed a decrease in poverty from 56% to 46% over a three-year period in the late 1990s, though these figures were not confirmed by the national accounts[5]. The quantitative and quantitative data suggest that poverty for the bottom 20% (now called the chronically poor by some researchers[6]) has worsened in Uganda. Poverty remains predominantly a rural phenomenon, where over 80% of the population still live; it is worse in the east and the north of the country, which have been especially affected by conflict. Gender and HIV/AIDS status are two other factors that are linked with poverty, along with other factors of social difference such as disability and ethnicity.

The human development indicators, though somewhat improved, remain low. The figures are unfortunately often inconsistent and variable between different sources, however. For example, infant mortality figures from the World Bank figures show a major drop, while some analysts suggest a much smaller improvement. Malnutrition and stunting remain a serious problem with 38% of children being stunted according to some, and 41% of pre-school children being malnourished, even in the context of rising farm gate prices (Elson, 1997).There is very limited use of contraception and high fertility rates, with 6–7 children per female being the average. While vaccination rates have improved, the AIDS epidemic has had a serious negative impact on all aspects of health in Uganda.

The education enrolment figures have improved dramatically since the introduction of UPE in 1997, when student enrolment numbers more than doubled. Prior to that enrolment rates were only 41% and in 1994 the literacy rate was only 56% compared to 67% for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 1994). In spite of UPE there remain serious and continuing problems with quality at all levels of the education system and the primary sub-sector especially has been characterised by a high level of untrained teachers, large classes of often over 100 children and lack of books and other resources. There is a lack of well-trained teachers at all levels of education and many schools have poor facilities, lack of materials and high rates of absenteeism. Attendance figures vary by gender, region and social class, with the highest proportion attending secondary school being male, urban and in the southern half of the country. Dropout rates remain high.

The majority of the population still work in agriculture and live in rural areas. During the 1980s Uganda's agricultural production slumped, cash crops almost disappeared, the agricultural infrastructure for providing inputs and extensions advice, credit, and access to markets all collapsed. Even now access to new improved seeds is restricted for many farmers and Uganda had the lowest use of fertiliser in the world in the 1990s. Agricultural technology is

---

[5] Detailed analysis of the figures by Enzo Caputo, a macro-economist for the DFID poverty study revealed discrepancies in the different data sources around the impact of growth on poverty reduction.
[6] The problems of those who remain long term poor are currently the subject of DFID funded research at the Centre for Chronic Poverty at Manchester University. The directors are David Hulme of IDPM at Manchester and Andrew Shepherd of ODI, London. The issues of growth, redistribution, safety nets, welfare measures are all being analysed by the researchers and Uganda is one of the case study countries.

basic, largely relying on hand-held tools; even in the east where animal traction was the norm the loss of cattle means that the opening of land, planting, weeding and harvesting is now done by hand, much of it by women. Women provide the majority of labour in agriculture in Uganda across all regions, and rely almost entirely on hand power. There is little technological innovation, nor much access to new ideas and inputs.

The government has introduced a modernisation of agriculture plan and land reform is underway. The Land Bill, which was originally intended to release land for sale through the extension of private property titles and rights to extend the free market in land, enabling commercial farmers to expand, was criticised and subsequently modified. Concerns about security for poor farmers across Uganda and the need to protect women's access to land were issues GOU was asked to address. The position and condition of small farmers, many of whom are women, are critical in addressing poverty in Uganda.

Even before the war some analysts argued that the marginalisation of small farmers in Ugandan government policy was a key cause of poverty in the country:

> small farmers have dominated export and food production in Uganda … their position deteriorated sharply in the post-colonial period. Crop marketing monopolies had favoured processors over growers since 1920s … from 1972 state control over crop marketing, processing, taxation, and the exchange rate was used to reduce prices to growers to non-sustainable levels … thus small farmers generated most of the government revenue, but were starved of resources for technical change, and continued to use an iron age technology. (Brett, 1998: 4)

Fifty-six per cent of women and 53% of rural men are engaged in agriculture; about two thirds of food produced is for home use. Women provide most of the labour in all three categories of agriculture: food for consumption, traditional exports and non-traditional agricultural exports such as fish, maize and beans. 'Agricultural production is a female labour intensive activity, control of production decisions and of the income generated in agriculture is male intensive; the social and physical infrastructure which support agriculture is more easily accessed by men than women' (Elson, 1997: 7). There has been a lack of recognition of the constraints facing women farmers, especially their time constraints, posing a serious barrier to much agricultural improvement in Uganda.

The lack of a clear link between economic growth and effective poverty reduction was a cause of concern to the World Bank and the Government of Uganda (GOU) in the late 1990s. There was a shift in thinking from only focusing on growth with the expectation of trickle down to poor people, to the need for clear and deliberate pro-poor policies to ensure the poor benefited properly from the new economic growth. The Government adopted a Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) to address poverty issues head-on, even before poverty focused plans became a major and compulsory international

aid instrument, first for receiving HIPC money (debt relief), and later for receiving budget support from donors to impoverished governments in sub-Saharan Africa. The PEAP led to the development of the second poverty plan, in line with the now almost universally used PRSPs. The World Bank undertook research with NGOs (the SAPRI project) to look at how to make the links between growth and poverty reduction stronger in order to address poverty in Uganda more strenuously. At the level of policy it was agreed in the late 1990s that there was a weak understanding of the causes of poverty in Uganda, and more work was needed to find the best way to ensure that economic growth translated into real long term benefits for poor people.

The GOU was committed- when it took power- to embed democracy in Ugandan society, to prevent the continuing cycle of coups and counter-coups that marked the years since independence. The political structure of the original local resistance councils, established after the war at every level from the village to the national, evolved into a representative political structure whereby officials are elected for council office at every level from the village upwards. There are regular elections at every level and there has been some work on voter education in the country. The pace of decentralisation has accelerated, with devolved budgets and decision making about allocations being made increasingly at the district level. There are regular elections at this level and all the levels down to the villages. There are many issues around the decentralisation process, including the evaporation of funds as they move from the centre outwards, and the degree to which policies at the district level are still centrally controlled[7]. There are also major issues of capacity, especially in the newer districts. However the commitment to bring planning and implementation closer to the people is evident in this rapid and wide-ranging decentralisation agenda.

The Uganda constitution was developed after widespread consultation, showing an early commitment to involving ordinary Ugandans in the political life of the country. The constitution enshrines many important rights, especially for women, and has been an example used by other countries in Africa.

The fact that there were no political parties in Uganda by 1997 was an issue for the international community but did not really affect their support for the GOU until the second round of presidential elections. Elections up to now have been held with people standing as individuals belonging to the national movement rather than as party members, because of the deeply divisive nature of party politics in Uganda in the past. The situation was reviewed by the GOU, especially as it was becoming an increasing cause of discontent among sections of the Ugandan population, as well as the donors. In 2003 the President agreed to move to multi-party democracy, with all the opportunities and dangers inherent in such a process.

---

[7] The problem of the 'evaporation of funds' was highlighted by a World Bank study in the late 1990s, which tracked funds from the central Ministry to the districts.

Many elements of 'good governance' have been put in place, though there are growing concerns within and outside Uganda about the continuing conflicts especially in the north of the country, and the problems caused by corruption.

NGOs

The NGO sector started with the end of the civil war and has been fast growing since then in Uganda:

> Foreign and indigenous NGOs have flooded Uganda since the National Resistance army stormed Kampala in 1986. The invasion of NGOs has impacted on almost every sector of Ugandan life and every region of Uganda, although some districts have higher concentrations of NGOs such as Rakai (badly hit by the AIDS virus), Luwero and Kampala. The flood of NGOs and NGO activities has produced varying degrees of both cynicism and optimism. (S. Dicklich, 1994, p2)

That sense of both enthusiasm and confidence in NGOs, and cynicism, was evident through the 1990s. NGOs were seen by many to be critical in service provision, in a context where many services have broken down and limited funds prevented GOU from making adequate provision; this is a role GOU wanted NGOs to fulfil. However, alongside NGOs working hard in service provision many 'briefcase NGOs' sprang up, usually in response to donor funding, promoting a degree of cynicism about the sector. It is seen by some as a place where educated but unemployed people, especially civil servants made redundant or are struggling to make a living wage, can make a career regardless of their skills and commitment.

The pressure from most donors and GOU during the 1990s was for NGOs to fill the gaps in government provision of health, education, water. A few NGOs went beyond this and entered the arena around rights, e.g. rights for women, land rights, lobbying to cancel the debt, and involvement in civic education. They started lobbying on these issues; the GOU was much more cautious about these roles for NGOs:

> to a certain extent, years of war have created a culture of suspicion and fear, which has even placed NGO motives and activities under public scrutiny. Consequently many NGOs especially those that can be considered 'political' in any way, are regarded as having ulterior motives and objectives. The state is also very suspicious of NGO activities, especially those considered to be 'political'. Although the Resistance Council system has helped to re-politicise Ugandans, there seems to be a hesitancy among Ugandans to embrace organisations that may somehow alienate or confront the regime. (Dicklich, p.6)

The ambivalence of GOU towards NGOs was well illustrated by the following experience. In 1989 under the NGO Registration Statute the NGO Registration Board was set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (rather than Planning and Economic development) implying a security concern around NGOs. Several conditions are placed on NGO work and the

NRM has made attempts to integrate NGO work into the national plans. Even though in practice the GOU lacks the resources to adequately monitor and control NGO work, it attempts this through the NGO co-ordinating office in the office of the Prime Minister. The existence of this office initially led the Government to refuse to register the NGO forum, an umbrella body set up by the NGOs in Uganda, as it was seen as a potential rival to the NGO office. One reason for the refusal appeared to be the leading role played by international NGOs in promoting this forum, something the GOU felt uneasy about.

Most local and many international NGOs in Uganda are Kampala based, raising questions about their ability and commitment to work with and represent the grassroots in the countryside. There are few NGOs working in the conflict ridden and poorest areas of the country, the North and East. Many NGOs in Uganda are not rooted in the rural areas where the bulk of the population lives and there is uncertainty about how far they can legitimately claim to reach or represent the poorest in Uganda. The international NGOs remain dominant and the most vocal, probably because they have more experience and far more resources than local NGOs. While some work closely with local NGOs in funding partnerships and work on capacity building, other international NGOs remain operational and work directly with communities in rural and urban areas. Much of the lobbying work was initiated and done by these international NGOs, who also hold much of the funding for lobbying work.

In the 1990s the sector was somewhat fragmented, largely focused on delivering services, with international NGOs dominating many lobbying forums. Over time NGOs had become significant players in development and relief work in Uganda, something which aroused both enthusiasm and also suspicion in government and donors who were concerned about what role NGOs should be playing and how well they are able to perform:

Given the degree of co-ordination, competition, dependence on foreign funding for survival, the relative youth and apolitical focus of most NGOs in Uganda, the NGO sector does not presently present a strong vehicle for the development of a democratic civil society capable of pressuring the state and keeping it accountable. (Dicklich, 1994, p16)

Things were changing during the period of the research in a number of ways. The advocacy and lobbying agenda was becoming much more important to international NGOs and to donors, who were changing their funding roles vis a vis the Uganda government. As many bi- and multi-lateral donors moved away from implementing projects, to supporting sector wide approaches and later to full budget support, so they wanted NGOs to play different roles.

On the one hand they wanted local NGOs to support local governments at the district level, in their delivery on their plans in health, education, water and so on. NGOs were to continue to support services, but through and with local government, accessing funds devolved to the district by GOU for spending against local priorities. The overall thrust of the plans was on addressing

poverty in Uganda, an agenda close to the hearts of many NGOs. NGOs would, in future, access more funding locally, though government officials, to support the meeting of district targets around poverty reduction through the provision of key services. This proposal will radically change the relationships between NGOs and government, but the implications of these changes were only just being grasped when the research ended.

On the other hand donors especially wanted NGOs to contribute to the building of a strong civil society. They want them to learn to hold government to account against their new budgets, freed from direct donor control (though many donors have key personnel in Ministries as part of a process of capacity building and checking budget spending). NGOs were to get involved in raising public awareness, building strong local civil society organisations, and monitoring the government and undertaking lobbying and advocacy on behalf of the poor.

Some Ugandan NGOs were already doing work around the policy and advocacy agenda and these new roles suited their own agendas. Many others have been pushed into undertaking work that they are ill suited and ill prepared for. At the same time the government of Uganda has introduced an NGO bill, which is a cause of major concern to the NGO sector, because it threatens growing government regulation through e.g. annual registration procedures and increased control of their activities.

There are thus many conflicting pressures and influences on the NGO sector at the start of the new millennium. The government wants them to become an integral part of the fight against poverty, through support to service delivery at the district level. They should be integrated into the district plans, their budgets declared and their work is to complement that of government offices. Many donors want them to become monitors of government spending and behaviour and to call them to account for the use of these new untied budgets. Others want them to become active in the policy making forums, especially representing and working with the wider civil society on issues such as poverty assessments and development the poverty reduction strategy papers. Some local and international NGOs have their own agendas, which include examining and questioning donor as well as government behaviour. It is against this fast changing and complex set of agendas, requirements, roles and responsibilities that this research took place.

Most NGOs, both local and international, are still based in Kampala and their work is clustered in the central and southern areas of the country. Only a few are located in the northern and eastern areas of the country, areas seriously affected by continuing conflict and extreme poverty. While there is evidence of GOU willingness to open up political processes to ordinary people, they have been wary about the role of NGOs in Uganda and tried to keep them in the role of service providers. They have not welcomed NGO involvement in, for example, civic education and have not found many ways to work in co-operation with the sector in Uganda's development programme.

Quantitative analysis of Uganda NGOs

The analysis provided in this report is based on the information contained in a quantitative survey initiated by Crispin Kintu of the Centre for Basic Research at the start of the research project, and provides tabulated information about NGOs in Uganda. The survey was based on NGO registration data held in the Office of the Prime Minister and provides information on the registration status of NGOs; the country of origin; the sponsors/funders of the NGOs; the sectors they work in; their addresses and districts of operation in Uganda. For this study, a detailed analysis was made of the countries of origin of all the registered NGOs, while a random sample of 354 NGOs was taken to analyse the key activities of the NGOs.

A full analysis of geographical location and sectoral spread was done for all the NGOs to ascertain the numbers of NGOs operating in the different districts and regions of Uganda and the reasons/ factors influencing NGO operations in particular areas. It was difficult to make a comprehensive analysis of the sectors of intervention, however, because most activities were recorded descriptively, rather than being categorised into thematic or sectoral areas. The researchers developed specific themes/sectoral categories under which the various activities were classified. These included evangelism, agriculture and food security, education, health, water and sanitation, research, environment, emergency and relief and shelter programmes. Allocating NGOs to each category was sometimes difficult because of the paucity of information on their activities, and it was not possible to identify those working on issues such as gender, participation, representation and advocacy from the registration data.

It is important to recognise that ***these data provide only a snapshot of one point in time.*** Many local NGOs come and go, and overall the numbers are increasing all the time. Many are unstable and do not stay open for very long, while others are well-established and long term. The numbers of registered NGOs was 2655 in 2000, but over 3000 by 2002, 4000 in 2003 and still growing; some that were listed in 2000 were defunct by 2002, others that were operating had not yet completed their registration. The numbers of CBOs is of course much higher.

The situation is fluid, many CBOs and NGOs are transient, often responding to an immediate need or short term available funding. This was highlighted in a World Bank study in 2002, which talked of 'sector nomadism' whereby NGOs suddenly switch sector or focus in response to availability of resources and changes in funding priorities.[8] This research team found that some NGOs die off and some exist only in name. However, the figures provide some useful pegs to help to map out the NGO terrain in Uganda, and some

---

[8] These data were presented to the NGO sector and donors on 23rd October 2003, by the Worlds Bank research team, at the Hotel Equatoria.

interesting issues emerged from this study, which are applicable beyond the 'snapshot'.

Overview of NGO database in Uganda

In 2000 there were 2655 registered NGOs working in Uganda; the majority were local NGOs, (southern NGOs) some describing themselves as operating countrywide (working in several districts of the country) while others are more local working in only one district, and often in only in county. Others are Community Based Organisations (CBOs) working solely in one location addressing the specific needs of their constituents. This number has now risen to around 4000; the sector is fast growing.

There are also international NGOs (northern NGOs) working in Uganda, mainly from Europe or North America. These NGOs have operations in many other countries of the world. Some have field offices in Uganda, others work directly from their home base with local partners in Uganda. Some who have bases in Uganda work operationally, and provide services and support directly to local communities, others work only through partners; some do both.

Countries of origin of NGOs working in Uganda

An analysis of the countries of origin of NGOs in Uganda indicates that NGOs come from diverse areas of the world. It also provides a basis for their classification into two broad categories; Southern and Northern NGOs. The southern NGOs include those whose foundation bodies are based in Uganda, while the northern NGOs are founded in the western developed countries especially in western Europe and north America. The following diagram shows the countries of origin of NGOs registered in Uganda.

□ Uganda	■ USA	□ UK	□ GMY	■ Kenya
□ OEC	■ OAC	□ Asia	■ Australia	
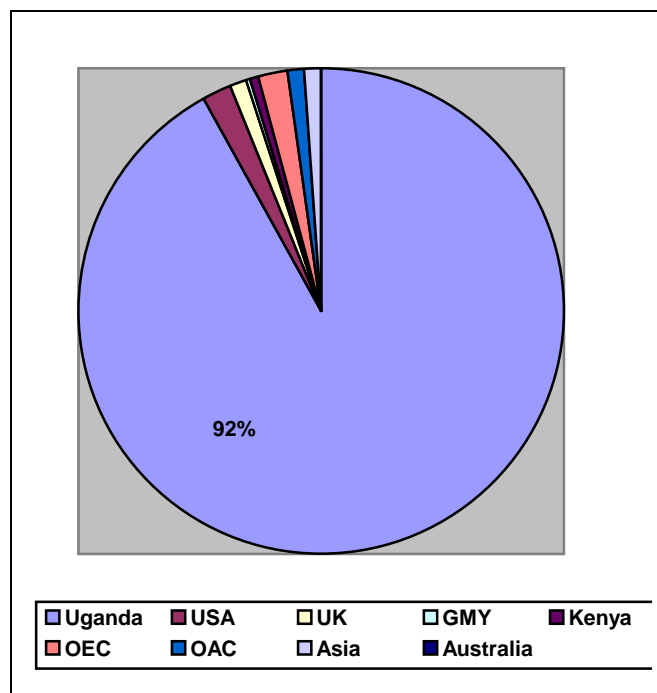
It is interesting to note that the overwhelming majority of NGOs in Uganda (over 90 percent of all registered NGOs) are of Ugandan origin. This number includes a wide range of local NGOs including church organisations, community-based organisations, community groups and a significant number of associations. A significant number of local NGOs are religiously based, predominantly from the Christian faith, and are actively involved in promoting evangelism.

This is important for the research because the focus is on the international sector and those they fund in the local NGO sector. It is only a small part of the whole sector, but our hypothesis is that it has a wide-ranging and significant influence across the work of NGOs in Uganda.

Sources of funding

Funding for local NGOs generated within Uganda is limited. It ranges from membership fees and subscription fees, grants, donations and government subventions for most CBOs and local NGOs. Some organisations do have access to donor funding from international NGOs, bilateral or multilateral funding, and from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank. These are a minority of Ugandan NGOs, but they are the largest and probably the most significant players; some also have extensive relations with a wide range of smaller NGOs whom they, in turn, fund.

International NGOs have a range of funding sources and strategies, ranging from child sponsorship, through to shops and other forms of public fundraising. They also have access to project and programme funding from their governments and multi-lateral organisations.

It is very important to stress that this research project did not explore the issues of development funding, policies and procedures of small Ugandan NGOs who do not receive any funding from outside Uganda. These, however, form the bulk of the NGO sector in Uganda and are very under-researched; researchers, government and the international NGO sector little understand their strategies and behaviour.

Geographical spread

While the socio-economic indicators of Uganda indicate that the northern and eastern parts of the country are the poorest and therefore require more support from non-governmental organisations, the analysis indicates that the majority of NGOs operate in the central region[1] with Kampala hosting over 550 NGOs, about 18 percent of the total NGOs registered in Uganda. The eastern region[2] hosts the second biggest number of NGOs (about 520) with

the majority of them operating in Mbale, Jinja and Iganga districts respectively.

Although the study did not explore reasons for the concentration of NGOs in particular areas in Uganda, there are reasons that can be advanced for this scenario. In the central region there has been peace and stability for a relatively long time now, and many parts of the region are well served by infrastructure including communications. Regarding the eastern region, Mbale is a big commercial centre with well-developed infrastructure like power, telecommunication, road infrastructure and reasonable office accommodation that are necessary for the efficient and effective operations of NGOs. The availability of these services is also important for keeping the operational costs of NGOs low. Urban centres with good infrastructure do certainly attractive to NGOs to establish their offices in such areas.

Non-governmental organisations that registered as operating countrywide were about 420 constituting about 14 percent of the total NGOs registered in Uganda. The study however, did not explore whether these NGOs were actually operating on the ground in all the districts that they indicated as their operational areas.

The poorest regions in Uganda are the northern[3] and eastern. These regions however, are served by far fewer NGOs. Several reasons can be advanced for this scenario: firstly, throughout the late 1970s to the mid- 1980s, Uganda was experiencing war and resultant political instability and insecurity, especially in the northern and the eastern parts of the country. In the mid - 1990s, there was a lull of peace in the north and the eastern parts of Uganda. This period saw an upsurge in the number of NGOs registering to work in the north and the eastern regions mainly involved in relief and rehabilitation activities. Rebel activities however, have continued to linger on especially in the north and West Nile regions which has checked the operations of NGOs in those areas due to insecurity, poor roads, telecommunication and a general breakdown of the overall socio-economic infrastructure. The few that operate in these insecure districts are mainly international and seek assurance from government for the protection/security of their staff working in those insecure districts, which protection cannot equally be extended to local NGO and CBO staff. Also, there are few NGOs, especially local NGOs, that have skills, experience and knowledge in the emergency, relief and rehabilitation programmes that are needed in areas of conflict and insecurity.

The southern region of Uganda, which for the purposes of this study includes the extreme southern districts of Kisoro and Kabale, is generally a better off area with good agricultural potential, tourist attractions and with a relatively well-developed socio-economic infrastructure. This area hosts the least number of NGOs. The following chart illustrates the coverage of NGOs in

---

[1] For purposes of this analysis, the central region covered the districts of Kampala, Mpigi, Luwero, Wakiso, Masaka, Mukono, Kayunga, Kalangala and ssembabule .
[2] Eastern Region covers the districts of : Jinja, Iganga, Kamuli, Tororo, Pallisa, Mbale, Busia, Kumi, Soroti, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripiriti.
[3] Nothern Region covers the districts of Gulu, Apac, Lira, Kitgum and Pader districts

Uganda by region.

NGO Coverage by Region
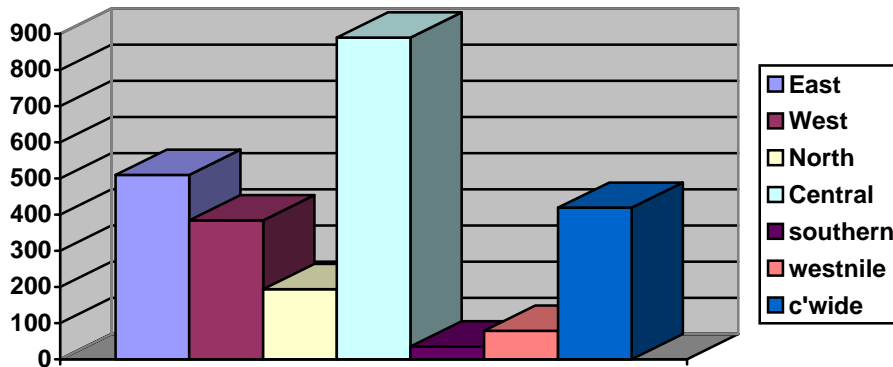
The spread of NGOs in Uganda follows patterns noted elsewhere, and which has been graphically described by Robert Chambers as 'ribbon or roadside' development. Most local NGOs tend to be clustered in areas where security and accessibility are good, and where basic services and communications are in operation; there are, of course, notable exceptions. Many are urban based. Some international NGOs work in the more remote and conflict affected areas, but they are very few and their focus is on humanitarian and emergency aid. These NGOs, however, tend to be well facilitated with communication services like mobile radios and/or satellite telephones and use heavy top of the range four wheel drive vehicles that most local NGOs cannot afford.

Sectoral Interventions by NGOs in Uganda

In view of the large number of NGOs covered by the study, it was deemed fit to take only a random sample from the database to get a representative picture of NGOs operations in Uganda. In this regard, a sample was taken of every fifteenth NGO and the activities of every fifteenth NGO were recorded to represent a sample of activities. Accordingly, a sample size of 354 was used to analyse the sectoral intervention of NGOs in Uganda.

The following sectors were identified: education, evangelism, health, income generating activities (IGA), advocacy, training and capacity building, special programmes for women and youths, water and sanitation, research, environment, emergency and relief, HIV/AIDS, agriculture, and shelter.

Of the 354 NGOs, the study found out that 52 of them are engaged in evangelism (about 15 percent). 43 were in agriculture (about 12 percent), 42 in special programmes for women and youths (about 12 percent). 41 NGOs were involved in micro finance or income generating activities constituting about 12 percent of the total NGO. 32 were engaged in environmental protection programmes (about 9 percent) with a focus on land management

and agro-forestry, 30 were in education (about 9 percent) and 27 were involved in health related programmes (eight percent).

Twenty NGOs were implementing training and capacity building initiatives (six percent) while 19 were engaged in advocacy activities constituting six percent. Fourteen were involved in HIV/AIDS programmes with a percentage of four percent and 34 were engaged in other activities such as water and sanitation, research, relief and emergency and shelter. The above trend indicates that more NGOs are involved in evangelism related activities that include preaching, education through the church than in any other activity.

This can possibly be explained by the recent (within the past 10 years), establishment of many Charismatic/born again churches with foreign foundation backing, especially from the United States of America. Though how many are funded from abroad, through churches as well as official donors and INGOs, is not known at this time. There are some, but far fewer, Islamic founded NGOs.

Although the analysis did not analyse exactly the number of NGOs that are involved in more than one sector, the available data indicate that quite a number of NGOs are actually involved in more than one sector. In many cases, NGOs that are involved in health and or education activities tend to also address HIV/AIDS related issues. Similarly those dealing with agricultural related activities also address health related issues and HIV/AIDS. The complex nature of NGO activities are highlighted later in the case studies

Key Sectoral Interventions by NGOs in Uganda (listing NGOs by their major activities)
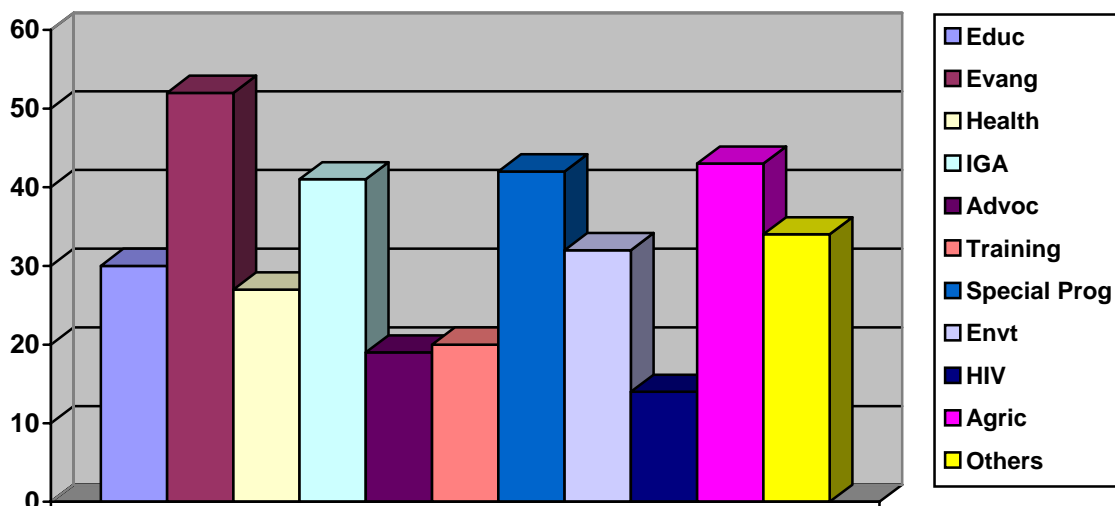
A further sectoral analysis indicates that almost equal numbers of NGOs were involved in agriculture, youths and women activities each constituting 12 percent. This percentage is higher than for the NGOs involved in direct

sectoral activities such as education, health and water. It can also be argued that most women and youth programmes have a micro finance component as well as agricultural related activities. Such activities are important for promoting the empowerment of women and the youths.

NGOs involved in education and health registered a lower percentage (eight percent) than for example evangelism. This can be explained, perhaps, by the fact that over the past 10 years, international and some local NGOs in Uganda have been changing their methodologies and strategies. There has been a shift from direct service delivery and implementation of activities to building the capacities of local NGOs and CBOs to take charge of the development process. Others have adopted the approach of working through partners. In addition, following the first phase of the foreign debt cancellation and the most recent enhanced debt relief (HIPC), as conditionality, all debt relief funds have to be invested by government in the social sectors. These are especially education and health, as well as support to the agricultural sector through the plan for modernisation of agriculture. The availability of funds from government to invest in these social sectors, especially in physical infrastructure development that was a realm of some of the NGOs in the past, compelled NGOs to change their strategies. Some now focus more on the software aspects of the social sectors(for example capacity building of the government staff for better service delivery, policy advocacy and promoting the rights agenda as a basis for more accountability and transparency) rather than investing in social infrastructure development Though some NGOs are still doing service delivery and now try to access funds for this work through the district plans and budgets, rendering them less independent from government funding.

A relatively large number of NGOs were support programmes for the disadvantaged women and youths. They undertake wide-ranging activities such as caring for orphans, the disabled, widow and youths, Skills training in middle manpower schemes such as tailoring, carpentry, masonry, weaving, brick-making etc were among the key activities. Almost all the NGOs were seen to have incorporated an income generating activity into their operations, mostly in the area of micro finance or revolving loan schemes.

A World Bank study of NGOs undertaken in 2002 found that education, health, micro finance were the most popular sectors, with work in advocacy, HIV/AIDS, water and other sectors also emerging as key intervention areas . There was a lot of duplication found, and not all NGOs they studied had a good grasp of issues such as advocacy and lobbying. They ranged in the degree of competence they had in their sectoral specialisation, their structures and mechanisms for planning, implementation and reporting, as well as budgeting. It is a very diverse and uneven sector, which includes unstructured, small organisations as well as those well able to plan and implement development work.

The range of local NGO activities is very diverse and depends mainly on the problems and needs of the people in their areas of operation as well as the different agendas of the funding institutions, agencies and/or governments. Whereas NGOs working in the northern and the eastern parts of Uganda are

mainly involved in relief, war trauma counselling, rehabilitation, resettlement and recovery work, NGOs in the central, western and southern areas of Uganda are involved in a diversity of development programmes. Many NGOs are also actively involved in general capacity building activities that are directed towards building and enhancing the capacities of community based organisations to take charge of the development process.

During the last seven years since the promulgation of the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda, many NGOs have got actively involved in promoting gender and children's rights. The enabling legal and policy framework provided by the constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the many women network organisations that continuously advocate for gender equity and women's rights, partly explain this recent trend in NGO activities.

An interesting observation from the study is that NGOs from the north who work directly with poor people (and not through partners),especially those from the US and UK, are involved in funding high capital investment projects and programmes such as construction of schools and health centres, roads, bridges and promoting livelihood enhancing activities like agriculture. They are also involved in supporting micro finance schemes and/or small-scale income generating schemes. Southern NGOs especially indigenous local NGOs are engaged in promoting, training and middle manpower skills programmes, HIV/AIDS activities, advocacy, evangelism and agriculture and food security programmes and projects.

Whereas NGOs in southern Uganda have tended to focus on environmental protection activities and promoting livelihood enhancing programmes, the NGOs in the north focus on resettlement of refugees, food security and shelter programmes, peace and reconciliation, education activities particularly adult literacy programmes, and HIV/AIDS.

An overview of NGOs and their activities in Uganda

Several issues emerge from this quantitative analysis of the registered data on NGOs and a first attempt to analyse the reasons for the findings. These provide a backdrop for the research that follows.

It is clear that the bulk of the NGO sector in Uganda is made up of local NGOs, working from the national right down to the community level. They vary significantly in their purposes, their reach, their activities, their staffing and their funding. Many other researchers have developed a range of typologies of NGOs, focusing on different critical dimensions of their organisation and work.[9] For the purposes of this research the typologies were somewhat crude and there has been no attempt to disaggregate the local NGO sector into a neat categorisation of NGOs by key criteria.

The key issues guiding this research became: distinguishing between locally based and internationally based NGOs. Within the locally based NGOs the focus was on differences according to size, location and sources of funding.

---

[9] References for important work on typologies includes Thomas Carroll, Alan Fowler

Within the international NGOs the important criteria became their size; whether they had field offices or not; and whether they worked through partners or directly with local communities.

The data were not used then to develop typologies, but rather to set a context against which to focus down on some sub-sections of the NGO sector and its activities. Some of the broad findings from the database reviews and associated discussions were that:

1. **The sector is dynamic and growing**, in a context where although there are some issues between NGOs and GOU there is a constitutional and legal framework for addressing the rights of women and children, for improving services for poor people, and for working on burning issues such as HIV/AIDS, peace and reconciliation.
2. **The bulk of the sector is made up of local NGOs**
3. **The sector has grown, and continues to grow, very fast**
4. **Many local NGOs are engaged in evangelism** something that is often not included within the development NGO sector activities at the international level. However the lines between evangelism and service are often very porous for faith based agencies worldwide.
5. **Local NGOs may have very short life spans, others are well established.** The sector is fluid and responsive to all kinds of external factors including conflict, community needs and demands, availability of funding
6. **Local NGOs are very diverse in their coverage, location, size and focus** though the majority are based in the central region, with parts of the north and east of Uganda being very poorly served.
7. **The funding sources for NGOs are also very diverse**
8. **There are significant numbers of international NGOs working in Uganda,** many have been there since the start of the Museveni government, and others are more recent. They too have a range of mandates and operations, and they vary significantly in their size and the scale of their funding in Uganda.
9. **Some local and international NGOs are involved in advocacy and policy work and in addressing rights,** as well as working on service provision and community mobilisation.
10. **It is hard from the available data to track international or national funding flows or the size of different agencies and who funds them.** This work has to be done through case studies, because the data are simply not available to describe the funding to the NGO sector in Uganda.
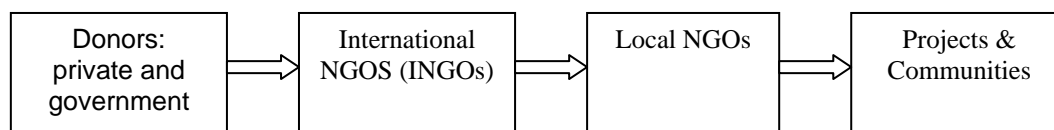
Chapter 3: Critical funding issues for NGOs in Uganda: analysis of the first round interviews.

*Tina Wallace and Martin Kaleeba*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts to explore the aid chain and how it is working in Uganda. The first figure shows the essence of how aid is transferred to the NGO sector from donors, be they the public or official funding sources, to NGOs in Uganda, to local beneficiaries.

A simple aid chain

```
┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│  Donors:     │     │ International │     │  Local NGOs  │     │  Projects &  │
│  private and │ ──▶ │ NGOS (INGOs) │ ──▶ │              │ ──▶ │ Communities  │
│  government  │     │              │     │              │     │              │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
```

However, in reality aid flows are complex and there are many different channels through which aid flows. A better picture of the aid relationships shows more complexity.

A typical aid chain

Located in the United Kingdom or Europe/USA

Located in Uganda
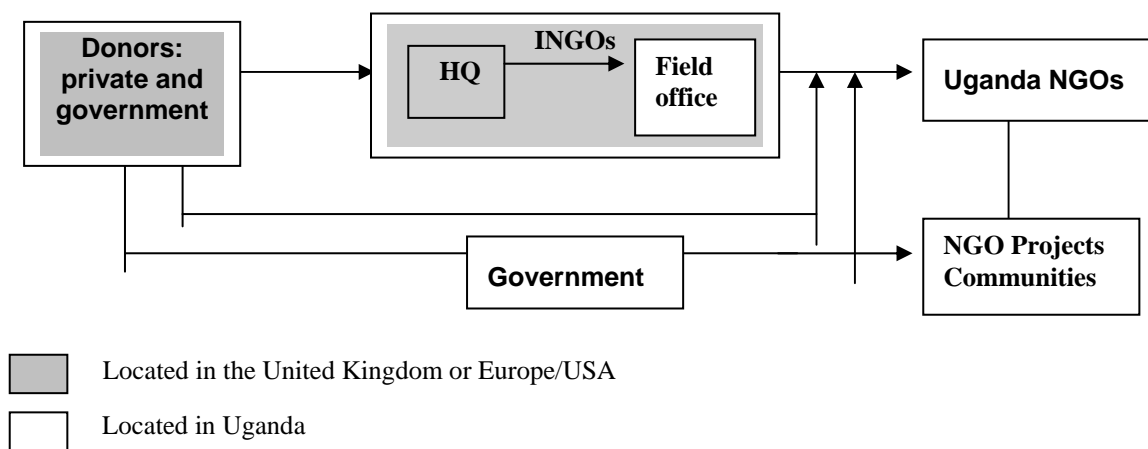
Diverse funding channels and changes in donor agendas

Funding can go direct from donors to INGOs to local NGOs; it can go direct from donors to government in Uganda and then to local NGOs; it can go directly from donors to local NGOs in country. The preferred channels for funding are different between different donors and change over time. So for example while DFID used to fund only through UK based NGOs, in 1994 it shifted to providing some funds directly to NGOs in Uganda, through the regional office in Nairobi, and later directly from its new office in Kampala. Over that period it also changed it funding focus and procedures, from responsive funding for NGO designed projects to funding projects that fitted

DFID's poverty agenda to umbrella funding for a few NGOs working strategically at policy level in Uganda.

Some funders, such as the Community Fund and Comic Relief, continue to fund only through UK NGOs and have no in country funding. In contrast the EU, which had no direct funding to NGOs in the past, started exploring the new direct funding streams for civil society in 2002; this represented a huge shift from the past where all EU funding was state to state and channelled through the government.

The size of the funding flows, as well as the preferred channels for disbursing aid to the NGO sector, change also. During the 1990s the global trend was for funding NGOs; the World Bank defined the state as seen as heavy, inefficient and often corrupt, and most large donors subscribed to this analysis. It changed dramatically at the end of the 1990s with a major donor shift to directly funding governments that had good pro-poor policies and shared aims around democracy and governance issues. This was seen as more sustainable and wide reaching; funding for NGOs became less significant in the overall development strategy of the multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors.

The mechanisms of funding also changed and diversified over time. Donors may give grants for the work, they may offer co-funding. They may also allow NGOs to compete for bids for discrete pieces of work administered through contracts, with retrospective payment on completion of a good/satisfactory job against the contract. There has been a move recently towards 'partnership' or umbrella funding for a few selected NGOs by some donors, where the funding is based on shared strategic aims not on detailed project proposals.

International NGOs change their funding priorities and practices as well, often in response to new strategic plans, Trustee requirements, changes among their donors, and new ideas circulating in the development community at home. The situation is not static but fast changing and fluid. However, the diagrams do help to conceptualise the core relationships around the aid flows that are discussed here.

Webs of relationships as well as linear aid flows

While there are clear aid flows through a complex and changing set of relations and conditions in the aid chain. It is also important to recognise that each organisation and level of the aid chain is involved in a complex web of relationships. These relationships also affect their behaviour and focus. For example, DFID relates to the Treasury in UK and is part of wider government agendas and thinking about how best to achieve change. Currently the UK context relies heavily on concepts of managed change, that targets can be met if the right inputs are made and procedures followed. It is a rational and linear approach to managing change, and this has an impact on the way DFID frames its work.

UK NGOs have relationships of competition and occasional co-operation in the UK, and contacts with a range of consultants and think tanks, as well as

government agencies, around development. These influence their thinking and actions, as well as their relationships with their key donors, which may include the public in UK. In Uganda NGOs have inter-relations which are sustained by, for example, movements of staff between agencies, attending meetings together, and working on advocacy and lobbying issues together. For people at the level of the communities their contact with CBOs or NGOs or donors is only one small part of their web of on-going relationships that shape their opportunities and day to day context.

One purpose of this and subsequent chapters is to try and understand whether the funding flows result in donors being more important or dominant than these other relationships, or indeed how they do or do not shape and influence these other relationships.

Capturing, fluidity, change and complexity of relationships

This chapter will try to capture the fluidity and constantly changing patterns of aid, and how this 'instability' around funding priorities and financial flows affects the NGO sector in Uganda which is heavily aid dependent. It will also try and reflect the factors affecting donor behaviour at each level, drawing on the wider context and web of relationships in which they are embedded.

This chapter focuses on funding issues, the following chapter looks at the conditionalities around accessing and accounting for funding, including the changing roles donor organisations expect civil society to play and the tools dominating the management of development aid. The data also touch on a range of closely related issues including who is setting the development agenda, what is and is not discussed in the current development context in Uganda, NGO identity, and the adoption or appropriation of learning north south and south north.

Donor Funding

DFID

All bilateral and multilateral donors to Ugandan NGOs now have detailed strategies for their work with civil society, even though civil society is often vaguely defined and lacks any significant political analysis. The roles donors have recently developed for NGOs and civil society in Uganda are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

During the research period DFID's funding was driven by the Uganda country strategy paper, 2000-2003. There was a strategic framework for working with civil society developed during this period and this replaced the direct funding initiative that had guided funding to NGOs working in Uganda in the previous few years. The focus shifted away from funding NGO proposals, often built around specific areas of expertise and focused on clear areas of need in Uganda, towards strategic partnerships for reaching the millennium goals (then called the international development targets).

DFID has been the largest bi-lateral funder to Uganda, with EU (EC and European bi-laterals) as the largest multilateral, supplying 51% of Uganda total aid budget. DFID increased its funding to Uganda during the research period, from £40 million per year in the late 1990s to £55 million by 2000/1. No figures were given in the country strategy for work with civil society, though this accounted for only .1% of the budget in 1998/9. The focus was on the poor and promoting pro poor strategies in Uganda. Civil society was seen as one legitimate partner for achieving the goals of poverty reduction, though civil society was very broadly defined as ' non state organisations who can help to effect pro-poor economic growth, social progress and democratisation.' DFID said it wanted to move beyond a donor-recipient relationship with NGOs it funded in Uganda, but only two short paragraphs are devoted to civil society, and these include a growing commitment to work with the private sector in Uganda.

The mechanisms of funding civil society organisations in Uganda

There are many different routes to DFID funding for NGOs, especially international NGOs working in Uganda. For this reason, and because the funding flows change when the mechanisms change and budgets vary year on year it was not possible to discover how much money was channelled from DFID to NGOs in Uganda. It is, however, possible to say:

1. It is a tiny percentage of DFID's spending in Uganda
2. DFID is the largest and most influential bi-lateral funder to NGOs in Uganda
3. Other leading influential agencies such as the World Bank and the EU share DFID's changing agendas for civil society and NGOs in Uganda; DFID is a critical player in shaping the NGO sector in Uganda
4. Most mechanisms are only open to UK based NGOs

Different types of DFID funding for NGOs: the range of mechanisms and changes over time

Type of funding	Location of funding	Terms and conditions of funding
Until 2000. **Joint Funding Scheme**. The major funding mechanism for UK NGOs working in direct implementation or implementation through partners	UK, East Kilbride	Proposals sent in by NGOs; have to fit within broad strategic framework of JFS Assessment by external advisors (University contractors) 50% joint funding, for between 1-3 years usually Annual reporting system Annual workshops in UK for UK based NGOs
Direct Funding Initiative (started in 1994-2000) Open to Ugandan and UK based NGos	DFID Kampala	Proposals submitted by local or international NGOs in Uganda, to fall within DFID's CSP Project assessed by DFI officer-work together on proposals Sent proposals to DFID advisors in Kla and Nbi for consideration

		Budgeted out of sector budgets
		Funding 1-3 years
		Mid term reviews as well as reports
		Training on logframes and financial systems

Emergency grants Open to UK based emergency focused NGOs	CHAD, DFID London	Administered through Programme Manager Can disburse large sums of money fast Variable reporting systems
Contracts (on-going and an increasing source of funding for large UK based NGOs)	DFID in London or Kampala (Nairobi when there was no KLA office)	NGOs sub contracted to do specified work over 2-5 years NGOs bid for the contracts Sector budgets provide funds Tight monitoring, mid term reviews Output to purpose reviews Paid retrospectively
Accountable grants Open to UK based NGos	Nairobi and later Kampala	NGOs have contract to deliver work which DFID wants done Grant paid 'up front' Sector budgets fund Tight monitoring and evaluation Usually given through bidding process
BHC funds Open to UK based and Ugandan NGOs	Kampala	Small grants Disbursed by High Commissioner Run by BHC
Beijing portfolio (short term in late 1990s) Open to Ugandan and UK based NGos	Kampala	Run by British Council NGOs submit proposals under three priority areas Small grants given, BC work closely with NGOs on writing proposals Training on proposal writing
Civil Society Umbrella Fund, started 2000 (DFI ended then) Open to Ugandan and UK based NGos	DFID in Kampala	Funding for NGOs for work on the new strategic framework. Specific focus on monitoring government and calling government to account, lobbying and advocacy on behalf of the poor. Working with government on service delivery. More flexible mechanisms and a more process approach to working with NGOs
PPAs from DFID in Uganda A new form of block grant funding to UK based NGOs for their work in Uganda. An add-on to thei UK PPAs they already have. Only for UK based NGos	Kampala	More flexible form of partnership funding, against strategies not project proposals. Issues around new forms of accountability for these grants Funding to UK NGOs for work around rights based approaches to development and advocacy to

Civil Society Challenge Fund and PPAs, 2000 onwards. Replaced the JFS and block grants	DFID in UK, East Kilbride	improve the policy context for development work. Focus on working in partnership with local NGOs. Concept notes, full proposals including logframes and business plans, clear indicators for m and e

There are many ways UK NGOs can access funding from DFID for their work in Uganda. These have changed over time, with a clear trend away from responsive funding for NGOs towards funding NGOs to compliment DFID's work on the country strategies. There has been a shift away from service delivery (unless this is done in partnership with government or is especially innovative) towards rights based approaches, advocacy and lobbying work. In addition a new role for NGOs in monitoring government and enabling poor people to call the government to account when they fail to deliver on their basic rights.

We will seek to strengthen the role of civil society as advocates of the poor ….we will focus on pro-poor policy and its implementation, and initiatives which represent the views of the poor through advocacy and lobbying, promoting accountability and the ability of the poor to achieve their rights. (DFID's Strategic framework, 2000)

Local NGOs can access DFID funding through the international NGOs they partner and who receive DFID funding, or directly from DFID through the CSUP. They can also access DFID funding now at the district level, as part of the basket funding for government programmes; they can apply to local government for basket or sectoral funding to help them to deliver on their district development plans. This implies a new way of working together with government on service delivery, while at the same time being asked to monitor government spending and use of budgets, and to promote poor people locally to call government to account for shortfalls in their rightful provision.

DFID is continually revising and refining its understanding of the role of civil society and the role of NGOs within civil society, and as they change their funding relationships with government, so they in turn change their funding priorities and mechanisms for NGOs. They have increasingly set the agenda for their funding for NGOs:

The majority of DFID funds are now channelled towards supporting the Uganda government's own budget within the framework of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Now the PRSP) and sector wide approaches. We will encourage, where appropriate for these resources to be used by Government to promote partnerships between Government and civil society, and in particular to procure services from civil society.' (DFID's Strategic Framework 2000)

DFID are an influential donor, and are also influenced by dominant donor trends and the wider UK political context. The focus now is primarily on meeting the targets outlined in the millennium goals around poverty reduction, working through governments which have 'good policies' as defined by the donor community, and encouraging the poor to gain their rights with the support of the NGO sector. The NGO sector is expected to continue to deliver services, but in partnership with government and in support of government targets; this trend is also clear in UK.

The European Commission

The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union and through the European Development Fund they allocate money to be spent in the partner states. The European Parliament can give special support through budget lines for specific topics, and European NGOs could quite easily access these. There was a dedicated NGO budget line, but it was only open to European NGOs and money has to be applied for in Brussels.

The NGO budget line in Europe was undergoing major changes in 2000-2 and shifted from a situation where NGOs could submit proposals and discuss them at any time to one where they have to bid for funding in line to with detailed tenders set out by the EC. The new approach was to increase transparency but in fact it was very difficult at that time to find out about the tenders and there were huge delays between the time of calling for proposals to be submitted to the allocation of funding. It was also the case that the funding being spent through the NGO funding line was declining, from €200 million in 2000 to €160 million in 2001, and the bidding process was likely to favour the larger and stronger European NGOs.

The EC was revising its strategy for civil society in Uganda as well as in Europe during the interview period. It was also refocusing its overall programme within Uganda, moving away from project work to budget support in two focal sectors, the modernisation of agriculture and roads- the budget for roads is to be 45 per cent of the entire budget. Work on civil society and good governance issues were now to be introduced.

Under the new 2000 Cotonou agreement the EU agreed a much stronger participation and partnership going beyond the state actors. This was new for them; they planned to start working directly with civil society organisations, the private sector, and other economic and social actors. In the past all EU money went direct to governments, but from 2001 they were be able to do direct funding in-country with local civil society organisations. The delegation in Uganda was preparing a programme for working with NGOs around civil society issues and they had a team of consultants looking at this. They used one of the same UK consultants that worked with DFID in these issues, working alongside some local consultants. The work of the consultancy team was to map current civil society capacities; analyse the political space open to them; and identify the mechanisms for civil society organisations to get involved in a watchdog role.

A critical issue that emerged during the research is donors heavy reliance on a few key institutions for consultancy support, especially- for DFID- one or two Universities and one or two consultancy organisations. Many other donors also drew on these same institutions and the documents they write, and sometimes the same individuals, for help. The result is ofcourse, that the same analysis and ideas tend to get replicated across the donor community through consultancy reports. There is a heavy donor reliance on European and often UK based consultants, a cause of concern to local organisations as well as to the research team, who saw that a small pool of people were exerting a great deal of influence with donors around civil society definitions and roles. Indeed the EC openly shared the views of DFID in understanding civil society and referred to a paper written by IDS, which was proving seminal to the thinking about civil society among donors. Uganda is seen by donors as a positive context for much experimental work in development aid, e.g. the shift to sector wide funding, the use of PRSPs as the framework for this funding, and the need to involve civil society in key roles in the management of donor aid. External consultants have been brought in to work with donors on these new approaches, even if they did not know Uganda, and new ideas and possibilities for civil society have been proposed by them, sometimes based more on generic ideas about the sector and its potential than on local knowledge. They do, however, work alongside local consultants, though the TOR and agendas are often set externally.

In the past the EC in Uganda funded NGOs only for project implementation of EU projects, for example in micro finance projects, human rights and governance projects. They sub-contracted NGOs to implement the European Union programme around capacity building and community mobilisation. Now they planned to move beyond sub-contracting with NGOs and to work more closely with civil society. At the time of the interview the EC staff were finding it hard to meet with civil society actors because everyone was over using them. Also they are busy implementing their programmes and have little time for influencing work with donors; they are constantly searching for money. They felt that the language and the paradigm of donors was not well understood by most NGOs in Uganda at that time.

While there was some unease in EC around aspects of budget support and concerns about the accountability of budget support and the problems of control and regulation that the donors will face were raised. However, there was a definite commitment to it and Uganda was seen as a good country to try this approach out. The budget support approach under the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and subsequent PRSP is a joint donor position, in spite of a clear recognition that this money may put stress on frail and new structures at the district level; there was a recognised need for capacity building. The EC was using programme advisers to work at the district level building capacity and mobilising communities; like DFID they wanted to find an appropriate role for civil society in this new context of basket funding and capacity building.

Other UK funders

In the UK Community Fund and Comic Relief fund the international NGOs that in turn partner local NGOs in Uganda. However one point was strongly made by many local NGOs during the research process; whatever the requirements of CF and CR they usually receive the funding through the normal channels of their funding INGO, and the grant follows the INGO policies and procedures. Only a few local NGOs interviewed had had direct contact with these funders. The one who knew CF directly had found them to be bureaucratic, operating with complex procedures and with little locally available information. The two who gave feedback on Comic Relief had different experiences: one found them to be committed and allowed space for the NGO to operate as it wanted, the other found their demands tight and bureaucratic.

The more radical NGOs in Uganda dislike the fact that CR funds through UK NGOs, the funding is then affected by the quality of relationships between the UK NGO and the Ugandan partner- these are not always positive. If the local NGO has problems with the UK NGOs this can be serious. For NGOs with a strong and positive UK link the CR funding is seen as excellent- flexible and includes administration funding (Director of a Ugandan NGO, 2001)

Overall, however, local NGOs appear not to really experience the different approaches or policies of different UK donors and they do not benefit from the new partnership agreements that DFID has with some UK NGOs, which allows them flexibility in use of funding. These donor relationships are predominantly mediated through the policies and procedures of the INGO that funds them and involvement with these funders may indeed add new reporting requirements to already busy NGO staff.

International NGOs

As recipients of donor funding and funding from their HQ

The international NGOs based in Uganda raised a number of questions and issues around their funding and position in the development hierarchy during their interviews and in other discussions. Most receive their funding from their HQ agency based in the UK, though some can apply to a range of northern donor counterparts (sister organisations in a federation) based across Europe, USA, Hong Kong and Australia. To access funding they either write project proposals (when seeking funding from the federated funders based around the world) or they need to show that their strategic plans and annual plans are in line with the current global agency strategy. They usually submit detailed annual plans and budgets for funding, though some agencies are more flexible than others on this issue.

The country directors are responsible for raising this funding from HQ. Increasingly they also have to raise other donor funding through a range of local channels. International NGOs are under pressure from their HQ to raise funds locally, especially from donors who are decentralising and relocating their funding bases within Uganda. This reflects the growing pressure to find new funding sources experienced by NGOs in UK as some key donors shift away from Europe to in-country funding. Several country directors said they

found this time consuming and often onerous because they lack the fund raising specialists and skills available to HQ staff in the UK. It is an extra new task to add to their already lengthy job descriptions, and is time consuming and difficult.

For some international NGOs local fund raising was a source of concern; there was clearly a possibility that they would perhaps be competing with their partners for funding locally. Only one agency had a clear policy on not doing this. Others were feeling their way and applied for local funding only when they felt they were in the best position to undertake the development work. This is a thorny issue for international NGOs, and one where pragmatism and the pressure from UK to raise more funding from local sources largely drives their behaviour.

In one NGO the director was encouraged by UK to continue working on a project in Uganda that the director felt was inappropriate and causing tension with the partners; some were losing confidence and trust in the INGO. The UK pushed the office to continue to earn the significant local income and to raise the local profile of the NGO- this was a significant project within Uganda. The director believed that sensitivity to partners and the local context were more important, but knew that performance was measured against competence at local fundraising, raising profile and diversifying income streams.

All the country directors interviewed said that local fundraising raised issues for them, both workload and ethical issues, but these had to be handled in the light of growing UK HQ pressures. As competition for funding and profile increases in UK so the pressure grows for staff in Uganda to compete with each other and with local NGOs for grants and for contracts. They were also under pressure to identify key projects and partners for fundraising activities in UK- developing projects that could be funded e.g. by Comic Relief or Community Fund rather than drawing down too much on internal budgets. This involved them in a lot of work, writing proposals and meeting the different donor requirements.

While some international NGOs have experienced increased autonomy following decentralisation and regionalisation, all were aware of the need to fit the country programme to the key global strategic priorities of their organisation. Some were increasingly tied to following detailed business and implementation plans, which allowed them less decision-making authority and local response than they had had in the past.

The country directors feel pressured to ensure that they raise the funding (from HQ or other donors) they need to deliver their programmes, either operationally or through partners. They have greater responsibility for fundraising than they did in the past. They may take grants or contracts that tie them very closely to donor agendas and conditionalities, and special projects are sometimes developed to capture existing donor funds.

Power issues

The issues of power between HQ and field offices around funding policies and procedures are rarely discussed or analysed by international NGOs. The tensions are often glossed over as inevitable, with grievances on either side. In the field staff often feel pushed around by an endless rain of demands for fundraising, new policies and procedures, shifting strategies and demands for visits, reports, plans and budgets, and evidence of success. These tensions were apparent in the interviews, especially around the process/experiential approach to change versus the need for measuring and proving outputs to justify funding and to attain further funding from HQ and from other donors.

One international NGO explored some of these power relationships, at an international workshop in 2001. The Uganda office played a leading role in the workshop, which openly explored issues such as gender, culture, institutional systems and hierarchies, and the generation of knowledge and information. The focus was on power and when people wield power over others, something they found hard to acknowledge or even recognise, and those where others had power over them. They saw power was an issue that was not monitored and yet played a major role in development relationships at every level. Power is especially tied to the allocation of funding and who controls budgets.

This group highlighted the pressures at all levels to deliver an output rather than to focus on the process of social change and issues of complexity and ownership of the process. Reflection was usually driven out by the need to deliver the next plan or document. This is all ultimately tied to the need to generate further funding and justify existing funding. They learned that many participatory processes squeeze out the voices of diversity and marginalisation and saw how easy it is to ignore discordant voices within the current aid paradigms. The pressure to find simple recipes and replicable solutions was strong, even in an agency where people understood a great deal about the need for analysis, reflection and learning.

They identified many contradictions and tensions within such a complex international organisation, including issues of local vs international identity and the existing dominant culture rendering processes to transform power on the ground impotent. They raised questions about whose knowledge and priorities count, suggesting that those at the centre over-rule those developed locally. They related this to the straight jacket of financial and other accounting, which militate against adopting the more open and 'learning' approaches the organisation espoused. The power of the budget continued to be dominant and the demands to provide evidence of impact was a strong force which made taking longer term, process approaches more difficult.

They particularly highlighted the contradictions between the tight financial and budgeting systems dominating the agency's bureaucracy, and the way these conflicted with promoting new ways of working on the ground.

In relation to their relationship with their partners locally similar issues of power of funding, contradictory cultures, and systems out of step with demands for learning and taking new approaches were identified. The lack of

downward accountability to partners was discussed; partners are highly accountable to their international NGO funders but there is no reciprocal accountability downwards. International NGOs often have one set of funding policies and procedures for all countries and all partners, yet partners vary greatly as do local contexts.

The issue of funding and profile

One thorny issue for the international NGOs (and indeed for donors to these NGOs such as Community Fund, Comic Relief and DFID) was that of profile and attribution. Donors fund the work of other agencies, and it is the implementing agencies who do this work on the ground. For all UK donors and for many UK based international NGOs funding is channelled through local 'partners'. However, when it comes to issues of accountability and the demonstration of impact and effectiveness- issues now dominating development agendas in the UK- they are all under increasing pressure to claim the successes of projects or programmes as their own.

The push to increase their fundraising activities is tied to this; to raise funds they need to show they are effective and so the work of local partners is often appropriated by the international NGO or donor as their development work and achievements. This tension was evident in the international NGOs interviewed in Uganda though it was exhibited in different ways.

The development of new logos and the need to get these logos out into the public domain is very evident in Uganda. International NGO logos may appear on documents that purport to be the 'voice of local civil society'. These logos may appear on partners' own business cards. The tensions experienced by INGO staff are very acute. On the one hand they are asked to facilitate and enable partners to do the development work, but on the other they are told to ensure that the profile of their agency is raised through this work.

Local staff can find these mixed messages very confusing. They feel competent and trained and proud to belong to an international NGO and may even question why they need to find and develop partner organisations when they are able to do the job quicker and better themselves. They are Ugandan so why not simply work operationally and then claim the credit for the development achievements? Most international NGOs now push them to work through partners, which may well be weaker organisations, yet still want the international agency to get the credit and claim the impact. This makes little sense to many staff and causes resentment among some.

It is a major issue that is poorly analysed and discussed in development agencies. Does providing the funding and other support legitimise the donor agency claiming the successes? If it does then why do they not also associate themselves more closely with the failures, which are instead blamed on local organisations that lack adequate capacity? The current push to show the effectiveness of funding, to prove cost effectiveness and impact and to demonstrate positive change is a pressure on every agency from DFID through to the smallest NGOs. The Community Fund and Comic Relief want

to show their supporters and funders in UK what they have achieved, so does Oxfam, Actionaid, Save, Plan, Care and so on. This can lead to seriously mixed messages being sent to staff about the role and value of local partners. Concern with their own profile and need to demonstrate success can result in overshadowing or even crowding out the voices and legitimate claims of the local organisations.

Many donors are seeking out 'the big idea', the powerful impact to share with their public or donors to explain their use of the funding and to raise more funds. Yet this can conflict with a commitment to use funding to support local development organisations and to work to empower others to guide their own development on the ground. It can lead to competition for profile and claiming success, while allowing donors to distance themselves from failure.

As donors to local NGOs

Most UK based NGOs work through local organisations, and building and funding these 'partnerships' is their central funding strategy. A few continue to work directly with the poor, especially in emergency or humanitarian aid, but those in the sample all focused primarily on working with local partners- local government, NGOs and CBOs.

All INGOs now have clear strategic plans, drawn from and closely aligned with the global strategies of their organisations. The most recent strategic plans guide the work, and these have often involved major changes in focus and strategy. This in turn has led to major realignments for the international NGO in Uganda with significant impact on their relationships there. One agency had reduced the number of their partners from over 50 to about 10, focusing on large network and advocacy organisations and moving away from support to small, localised NGOs. Another had undertaken a huge shift from operational work to funding partners, requiring the development of exit strategies from communities where they had worked intensively over many years. Another was moving out of funding direct service provision to developing relationships with both local NGOs and district governments for the provision of key services.

The strategic shifts in funding priorities, tied to new strategic plans have significant implications and impact on local NGOs. Some lose their funding almost overnight, others are required to change their focus to retain a funding relationship, sometimes staff have to be shed in large numbers. There appears to be little analysis of the implications of major strategic shifts by these INGOs. Indeed they often argue that they have the right and indeed the obligation to their funders (both public and donors) to develop clear strategic aims and objectives and to seek out those who can support the delivery of these.

These shifts can be experienced very negatively by those on the receiving end, partners and communities. The repercussions are not well acknowledged by some international NGOs, while others do agonise over exit or phase out strategies that do respect those they have worked with in the past. Some UK

based NGOs have built up a legacy of distrust and suspicion by making such rapid changes made in line with externally driven agendas rather than the needs of those they have been working with in the past.

The INGOs all work very differently with their partners. Yet their requirements are myriad and often very tight around funding. These often include demands for very detailed receipts and reporting requirements around budgets. Detailed line by line budgets sometimes have to be reported against every month; some agencies require every cup of tea or samosa to be accounted for by local NGOs before they will pay expenses.

Some very significant issues around INGO funding of local NGOs emerged from the interviews. These were:

- ❖ The fact that **no** UK based international NGO had passed on the benefits of block grants or partnership funding to their partners in Uganda.
- ❖ Almost all donor funding channelled through international NGOs is administered using the INGOs policies and procedures. Local NGOs were usually unclear where their funding had come from i.e. who the back donor was. So NGOs receiving their funds in Uganda did not often experience the relatively open and process oriented approach taken by e.g. Comic Relief with NGOs in UK.
- ❖ The power given to those who hold the funding was not properly recognised, and was glossed over when in setting up local 'partnerships.' INGOs were however very aware of the power their funders held over them.

The interviews carried out for this research suggested that the pressures to move fast, to be upwardly accountable, to deny the power of donors in relationships often, but not always, over-rode the need to work in more open, flexible and sensitive ways. The pressure to find partners to deliver on international agendas risked over-ruling the role of being a supporter and builder of local organisations and processes. Many of these pressures came to field offices from the UK context and the web of relationships that UK NGOs were involved in there.

Ugandan NGOs

As aid recipients

All the Ugandan NGOs interviewed depend mainly on donor funding to finance their activities. Some NGOs felt they had adequate funding and few problems with accounting for the funds, while others experienced funding gaps and were finding problems with reporting to their donors. The NGOs that are membership organisations can draw on membership subscriptions and donations from other sister organisations abroad and well-wishers, but most have no alternative significant sources of income beyond project funding from donors.

International NGOs, bilateral and multilateral organisations provide most of the funding for the local NGOs. The key donor agencies include; DFID, USAID, DANIDA, CIDA, and some multilateral organisations like the European Union, and international NGOs based in Uganda or working directly from Europe/USA with partners. While it was true through the 1990s that donors were increasingly channelling aid through NGOs, especially through the international NGOs to the local NGOs, this pattern is changing now.

Uganda was a priority for many donors and seen as a star performer in economic and political reform, and a lot of donor money came into Uganda. The NGO sector grew significantly in response. However, of late some bilateral donors have moved to basket funding for the GOU, as an improvement on the sector wide approaches or the project funding of the past. This entails channelling funds through line ministries to district governments; the focus of donor funding is shifting to direct government support so the competition for declining donor funds among the local NGOs is increasing. Many new NGOs are trying to tap into this basket of donor resources and are starting to face tougher times; at the same time donors (including many INGOs) are tightening the conditionalities around funding.

Budget support (basket funding for GOU plans) means that now NGOs and other civil society organisations should apply for resources directly from the district coffers to run their activities. There are fewer channels and budget lines for them to access funding directly from donor agencies, as they did in the past. This approach however, was new during the research period and had not yet been fully embraced by the NGOs; the implications of getting their funding locally through district government budgets were only being absorbed by the time this research ended. There is clearly increasing pressure from the government for NGOs to declare their income/budgets to be spent on programmes in a particular district, so their budgets could be treated as part of the district budget, and to raise their funding in future through district budgets.

All NGOs talked of funding conditionalities and the increase in these in the past few years. Funding conditionalities come in different forms many of which are discussed in the next chapter. Some NGOs said that donors had become stricter on demanding accountability for their funds, dictating specific planning, reporting and accountability systems as well as other systems and procedures due to fraudulent practices and misappropriation of funds by some southern NGOs.

Many local NGOs observed that there is a tendency for some NGOs to develop proposals to respond to the interests of the donors in order to get funding, although they may not have the competencies in-house to run certain programmes. This creates problems on the one hand for the recipient NGO in trying to grapple with implementing activities that they are not well positioned to implement. On the other hand, the donor demands for accountability in the form of progress reports that have to contain specific details on particular outputs and outcomes have to be met. One senior member of a national NGO in Uganda remarked that:

> *"Sometimes we get out of our way to satisfy the donor. It is because of the desire to get funding is high"*

A number of NGOs are funded by different donors: while diversified funding sources make available more resources to a southern NGO, they often complicate the working of that NGO because by splitting their work into many programmes dictated by the priorities and interest of different funders. This creates problems within the organisation and sometimes breaks up the organisation completely. Unless an NGO has a strong culture it can fail under these circumstances. To be able to deal with many donors, the organisation needs to develop some special skills such as good report writing, computer, auditing (internal and external) and networking with others to enable them to understand the language of donors.

Almost all the Ugandan NGOs observed that there is still serious dependency on external donor funding for NGO activities and this perpetuates the 'dependency syndrome' of the Uganda NGOs. There are very few opportunities and little efforts made to fundraise locally. The perpetual dependency of southern NGOs on foreign aid to fund their activities was cited by many as a key factor that inhibits independent decision-making. One NGO staff noted that:

> *"NGOs are beggars in relations to donors- they do not take the time to understand them, aid and its intricacies. Go to beg and accept donor priorities and conditions and format- an in built fear of questioning in case you don't get the money. Can they be questioned? NGOs have poor negotiating skills and a colonial mentality- lacking confidence to challenge. Yet donors want to be called partners and not donors!! Ugandans should tell donors how money is to be used and not be pushed around by donors. The money is 'ours'"*

A senior member of one membership organisation said that:

> *"Dependency continues and Uganda has not moved beyond colonial mindset. There is still no real sense that Uganda belongs to Ugandans. There is no independence of thought. The whole fabric is set up in a dependent mode of thinking and management. Do Ugandans have the will to break existing systems? The politicians benefit and the population has a very low level of political literacy. Most want to survive, accept status quo and don't criticise. There is a lack of capacity within the local NGOs to stand up and challenge the status quo"*

Several commented that the dependence of the Ugandan NGO sector on foreign funding mirrored the dependence of the GOU on external aid and placed Uganda in a weak negotiating position. It was debated hotly in the newspapers in Uganda one year[10] whether aid was undermining local

---

[10]

democracy and perpetuating a government agenda that was more responsive to donor demands than local needs. Many Ugandan NGOs raised the same thoughts during the interviews; their lack of independent fundraising was forcing them into dependent and weak relationships with donors, who were able to set the agendas and conditions for the local NGO development agenda. They also identified the tendency of many development donors to undervalue indigenous organisations and cultural forms.

Ugandan NGOs did not distinguish between their donors. While INGOs and different donors pride themselves on the very different funding relationships they create between themselves and those they fund this view was not reflected in the local NGO experiences. While there were a few exceptions, these were tied more to individual relationships than organisational structures, and the claims of many international NGOs to fund differently from e.g. EU, World Bank or DFID, and from each other were, by and large, not reflected in the local NGO feedback. Donors were definitely experienced as donors and not partners in development.

As donors to other smaller NGOs or CBOs in Uganda

Many of the problems of power and creating dependency were said to be replicated in the funding relations between smaller local NGOs and the larger more powerful umbrella NGOs based in Kampala. These issues were not included in the first phase interviews, but were covered in some of the case studies and are presented later in the report.

Chapter 4. Donor conditionalities: analysis of first round interviews

Martin Kaleeba and Tina Wallace, with inputs from Patrick Mulindwa

The issue of donor conditionalities is critical and affects donor NGO relationships. All the NGOs interviewed talked of the significance of different conditionalities and how they experienced them, sometimes positively, often negatively. This applied to international NGOs working in Uganda as well as to national NGOs. In turn it will be seen in some of the case studies that CBOs experience a range of funding conditions from their NGO donors, whether they are locally or internationally based.

Donors set conditionalities in a number of different ways; they may relate to:

- programme content and development purpose (service delivery, rights based approaches, working to build civil society, advocacy, poverty focus etc),
- project design and implementation (tools for managing the project cycle)
- funding modalities and accountability systems (the changing nature of grant giving and accountability/reporting systems)
- the redefinition of the roles to be played by civil society in poverty reduction and development

These conditions come down the aid chain along with the much needed funding that all NGOs in Uganda are searching for and need to secure. Some NGOs manage to negotiate and modify the conditions, some have influenced the terms and conditions of aid in different ways; many just accept and work with them as best they can.

The research showed that the terms and conditions for accessing, using and accounting for aid have increased and did have a real impact on the way NGOs were working and their relationships with their donors and those they in turn fund.

Changes in programme content and development purpose

International NGOs and donors

The focus of many international NGOs has changed in recent years, and change is a constant feature of their agendas. These changes have, however, been communicated in new ways to the country level. In the mid 1990s only Oxfam and Save the Children Fund UK had experimented with country and global level strategic planning; by the time of this research global strategic plans were virtually universal for UK NGOs working in Uganda. Most also had developed country level strategies which 'nested' within the global plans, reflecting the key purposes and aims of the wider organisation.

Interestingly most of the key donors to UK NGOs do not have global strategies, including DFID. They do have clear mission statements, for DFID set out in government papers, and sets of principles or purposes that guide

their work. DFID and EU have country level strategies but this is not the case for Comic Relief of Community Fund. Comic Relief has remained quite steady in its focus and principles over the last few years, providing a relatively stable set of funding criteria. CF has changed their criteria slowly over time. Many of the international NGOs have made major changes in recent years however.

The way strategic plans for international NGOs are developed in the UK is the subject of the UK research report. What is important to note here is that while most country offices feed into the strategic planning processes through consultation and feedback the final reports are written in the UK and often draw heavily on the development context in the UK for their final shape. The extent to which local field offices and staff feel 'ownership' of the international strategies varies; it is extremely rare for agencies to involve their partners in developing their strategies. Indeed to do so might tie them to continuing along paths they wish to change and so most consciously do not try to involve partners in this level of planning.

The purpose of strategic planning is to focus, to clarify purpose, to prioritise and as such was seen as a tool for professionalising the NGO sector, following the private sector. However, it is important to note here that while there are myriad forms of strategic planning within the private sector, the NGO sector has settled for a planning process that is less flexible and responsive than some of the models available.[11] NGO strategic plans can be quite rigid documents, made more so by the fact that for those with partnership funding agreements with DFID in the UK their effectiveness is to be judged against their strategic plans rather than project level work. This ties them to holding strategies as tools for planning, monitoring and evaluation, rather then, for example, as maps to guide flexible and devolved decision-making.

Different degrees of autonomy are given to field offices within organisations. In the case study INGOs, two operate without field offices and through visits to partners, and they take a flexible approach. The five large sample INGOs work through strategic plans, with some allowing their offices more autonomy although overall their strategies do have to follow the parameters of the global strategic plan for their agency. In one large agency strategies are translated into tight business plans against which their performance will be judged. Of the three medium sized agencies one was taking a very different approach and rethinking their purpose and vision and how to work. They were moving away from their existing structure towards an agency that promoted horizontal networking, organising office across Africa by themes. They were keen to promote more autonomy at the field level to enable offices to work together across regions on core programmes, with much more decentralised decision-making. This process was underway during the research period. The other two followed quite closely the strategic plans of their agency and applied these within the changing context of Uganda.

The degree of flexibility afforded to each field office by their international agency clearly varies. While for some autonomy in the field office and at the

---

[11] See H. Mintzberg, The strategy safari for a comprehensive discussion of the multiplicity of models for developing and using strategies within the private and public sectors in USA

country director level has risen, for others autonomy and local responsiveness have greatly decreased, with approaches and strategies increasingly being drawn from global documents and analysis, not local requirements.

There have been major shifts in the focus of many agencies and these are contained in their strategic plans. Some have moved from operational to partnership approaches; some have highlighted issues such as gender or advocacy as their way of approaching poverty reduction; others have shifted away from support to service delivery local NGOs to working with alliance and networks on global issues. Some have focused and slimmed down their operations, cutting the number of partners drastically, others have shifted their focus while trying to work with the same partners, expecting them to change to fit the new agendas. One was phasing out of the country.

Strategic planning is a new process for international NGOs and has experienced many teething problems. While some experimented with top down and bottom up planning, and others tried extensive consultation the final plans are usually more heavily influenced by the international than the local agendas. In some agencies once they are written they are almost ignored, in others they provide the framework for annual plans and the day to day work. In only a few exceptional cases have the implications of changing the work quickly in response to new strategies been recognised; then time is allowed for offices and partners to make changes more slowly and in a way that fits the local context. This was clearly evident in one of the case study INGOs. For others change must come fast and is consequently quite disruptive and confusing for both staff and partners; this was clearly seen in the case of two of the sample INGOs and is an issue that is explored in a case study later.

Several issues around strategic planning arose during the interviews with staff in the field offices of international NGOs, and from close participant observation of three agencies:

1. It is universally used now by international NGOs (those with UK bases)
2. It is seen as a professional tool, for focusing and clarifying the work. It is often described as a tool for laying out an NGO's position and for seeking out partners who share the same vision and strategic approaches
3. Staff in the field are involved to different degrees in the development of global strategic plans for their agency
4. Global strategies are often 'rolled out' for them by head office
5. Head office write detailed guidelines for strategic planning; some also provide support and training to local offices. Country staff do encounter a range of difficulties in following guidelines written far away, and often lack adequate support to write their strategic plans
6. There is a sense in some agencies that the global strategies do not reflect their local agendas well
7. Approval systems for country strategic plans are often unclear and many agencies work for long period with draft or unapproved plans
8. Partners are rarely consulted or involved in the development of country strategies, which are guided more by the global strategy and guidelines, and their own staff than partners

9. Strategic plans can signal huge shifts in focus for the work on the ground
10. Some agencies recognise the implications of these shifts but many do not. Many in UK expect fast changes in field offices around the world, and provide little support to staff or partners to manage change; only a few allow change to go at a slow pace. Exceptionally an agency does invest time and money in a proper change process that allows for staff development and training and partner debates
11. Staff in the field office may not really understand the new strategy or the changes it implies, or the reasons for these changes
12. There is very little debate about the way changes in agencies might affect the partners and the work on the ground; the change is always assumed to improve the work

Local NGOs

The larger local NGOs also undertake strategic planning now, some drawing on the guidelines developed for their donor INGO. There is a push for more agencies to develop strategic plans, though about half of the sample local NGOs did not have a written strategic plan at the time of the research interviews. Many were working towards developing them and felt they were an important tool, especially for fundraising from donors.

Four local NGOs said they had developed strategic plans in a participatory way with their members or the communities where they worked, and at least two were clear they would only work with donors who accepted their strategic plan. They said, however, that only the strongest NGOs in Uganda could take that kind of stand vis a vis the donors, because the need for funding for most NGOs was overwhelming. Others confirmed that they were trying to write their plans to fit different donor agendas.

Over half of the local NGOs talked of the difficulties raised for them by trying to work to the different strategic plans of their donors, and how the changes in donor strategies could cause stop-start funding, or raise new priorities and demand different ways of working from them. They are sensitive to major changes in the focus of their donors and several reported losing funding when a donor changed their strategic focus. Others were consciously shaping their work to the new strategies of likely donors in order to secure funding.

When donors clearly stipulate the kind of programmes that they will fund in their strategic plans this definitely leads to some recipient NGOs changing their development agendas, planning, and reporting and accountability systems to fit the themes of the donors. A few directors observed that global strategic planning puts the control of the development agenda in the hands of the international agencies; local NGOs have to find agencies that want to include them because they fit their plans, or change their focus to secure funding. Some of the case studies presented later show local NGOs changing even their sector focus in response to the new strategic priorities of their donors.

Project design and implementation

During a workshop with key UK based donors held in Kampala-Uganda in November 2001, local NGO participants outlined the following as the major tools employed by most UK based NGOs. They experience many of these as requirements they must fulfil in order to get access to aid money:

- Written guidelines relating to key issues that have to be addressed by southern NGOs, for example on governance
- Terms and conditions of grant making, progress reports etc
- Written agreements between UK NGOs and partners
- Quality frameworks
- Knowledge management
- Logical frameworks
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Strategic planning, visioning techniques, organisational development, change management
- Participatory research methods
- Tool kits
- Impact assessment
- Branding

The donors who participated at the meeting were not able to tease out the implications of these various tools for the southern NGOs. Many international NGOs appear to use management tools and approaches with little analysis or reflection about the relevance or appropriateness of the local adoption of these tools, and the impact they may have on their work.

The tools to be focused on in this section are the logical framework and reporting requirements because, apart from the direct funding issues, these were the two most commonly used tools and the focus of most discussion. Tools around gender, participation and advocacy work are addressed later.

Logical frameworks

These are tools for project planning and also are used in the monitoring and evaluation of projects. Increasingly logframes have to include indicators for measuring the project and against which its success will be judged. The logframe has become a central tool for project planning, for guiding implementation and for evaluation of achievements. It is a framework that is based on a logical approach to change. The assumption behind it is that certain inputs will lead to defined outputs; change is understood as linear and controllable. While the framework allows for assumptions and risks that could jeopardise the project, these are usually listed and left, they are not usually an integral part of the analysis of the project plan and expectations.

100% of the UK based NGOs use logical frameworks in their work, even though some of them have reservations about their usefulness and relevance in the local context. All international NGOs do not use them however. They have been widely used by UK and German NGOs, with several variations in

design and use such as ZOPP and process frameworks. The Americans do not use them widely and certainly do not require them as a tool for project proposals; the Dutch and Scandinavians used not to but are increasingly adopting them now. There is debate about their significance and value among some European NGOs and academics, and the problems with them are well documented and were agreed by DFID during the earlier phase of this research.[12]

Given the dominance of UK funders in Uganda it is not surprising that the research found that 100% of the local NGOs interviewed know about logframes and can use them. They are compulsory instruments for many donors, especially DFID and the UK based INGOs.

The study revealed that about a third of the local NGOs said they find aspects of the logframe tool useful; they help them to be more logical in planning projects. They help with becoming more focused, and really addressing the objectives of the project, thereby making them 'more effective and efficient'. Specifically the logical framework was deemed 'to be practical, logical and to give an overview of the whole programme'. Some said they help the organisations to be clear and not meander into activities that may not be useful in the realisation of the programme objectives.

Using the logframe also helps NGOs to be more accountable to their donors, because their plans, monitoring and evaluation are presented in formats easily understood by donors. This can lead to the improvement of the donor-client relationship. Ugandan NGOs said they help management and donors to trace the progress of the implementation of the planned activities and help them to ascertain whether they are making progress and achieving the anticipated goals. They openly recognise the worry that donors have about corruption and the misuse of funds, and the use of a logframe is seen as a transparent way of showing what is to be done and against which actions can be measured.

However, almost all of the sample local NGOs voiced criticism of the **application** of the logical framework as 'not being ideal in the local situations'. There is a huge gap between the plans and aspirations recorded in the paperwork, and the realities of working on the ground. There are a number of clearly stated reasons **for the disconnect between the paperwork and the experiences of development in reality**.

1. Some NGOs said that logical frameworks are so complicated that the lay persons- that are in most cases the primary beneficiaries of most programmes- cannot understand them. The use of the logframe in practise often excludes the very people who should play critical roles in the planning, implementation, and management as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the projects.

---

[12] See T. Wallace et al, Standardisation of development and Das Gupta at ISS, The Hague. These debates also form part of the UK report for this research, to be shared soon in Uganda. See also T.Wallace and J. Chapman in a forthcoming Intrac publication on these issues.

2. Other NGOs see log frames as donor designed instruments that impose a method of thinking that is drawn from the western world. It is logical, dry and complicated and cannot be understood by simple people.
3. While it may be an easy and clear management tool and document, several said it is of little use in running and managing projects. The day to day realities, unexpected challenges, delays in funding, recruitment, shortages of fuel, changes in government policy and so on mean that the aims and objectives in the written documents often bear little relationship to the realities of life on the ground. Front line staff cannot work to logframes, but need to be able to be flexible, responsive and able to rise to the many challenges of working with people who are poor, often marginalised, far removed from the world of written project plans
4. When questions are raised about its relevance some donors, especially those from UK, were said to be so rigid about the use of logical frameworks as the central project management tool. The rigidity of such donor's forces the users of such instruments like the logical framework to 'become dependent on the tool itself, even when they do not like it and this inhibits creativity and innovation'.
5. Log frames are not a consistently understood or applied tool, their application varies and can be formulated according to the donor source. There is a general lack of consensus among the donors in the UK and Europe on uniform frames. This creates difficulties for southern NGOs when they get multiple funding and have to adapt their logframes for several different donors.
6. Logframes are written and submitted in English. A few of the sample NGOs raised this as a critical problem, pointing out that the people they work with do not speak English and cannot really participate properly in the development of a logframe. One agency that finds them easy to fill in and knows their significance for raising funds said of them 'they lose the voices of the poor but they please the donors'.

The position for the majority of Ugandan NGOs is that they are constantly searching for funding and are often desperate for money because of lack of sources of funding. This makes their relationship very dependent. Mostly, whatever they think of them, they struggle to develop and keep to the log frames as much as possible lest they lose funding. The use of logframes was universal in the NGOs interviewed and those met through different forums. Whatever they think of them and their appropriateness they are now the programme management tool with almost 100% use by NGOs who access foreign funding, especially UK funding.

The Ugandan NGOs interviewed had certainly mastered the skills of developing log frames, or sometimes they had bought in experts to help them to write them, and could adequately discuss them with donors. Yet very few NGOs said they could really use them in their development practice.

It was found through the research and related activities that local staff working in communities are, in fact, often ill prepared for the difficulties of working with change in communities and local organisations, and that the written project plans were not helpful in guiding their relationships and work practice. Their

training had often focused the project cycle and project management tools, on developing logframes, reporting requirements, and developing impact indicators, while the skills of listening, flexibility, responsiveness, managing conflict and handling change have not been included on most donor run capacity building agendas.

The local NGOs interviewed were clear that this was a necessary tool for accessing funding, they learned how to do it and some found it useful in mustering and sorting their thoughts and ideas. But it was not a tool that helped front line staff to undertake their work with poor people, and many ignore the logframe at that point. However learning how to do the logframe had taken a lot of training, time and money. Few international donors or NGOs had spent comparable amounts of time or money on how to build partnerships at the local level, how to be responsive, how to engage with social change at the community level. Indeed many said this tool actively cuts across being responsive and flexible, especially because they are now required to report their progress against the logframe with its pre-determined indicators.

Reporting

All the NGOs interviewed and those that attended the different workshops raised reporting requirements as a major issue of concern. They said that reporting requirements have risen in recent years, in response to a perceived misuse of funds and lack of clarity about what local NGOs were doing. They understand that reporting on paper is seen to be a key tool of accountability, especially to distant donors who cannot visit them and see their work. Yet it was found to be very onerous, and often by its very nature lacking in transparency.

Many local NGOs said they find different ways to manage multiple reporting to different donors who all have their own requirements and timetables for reports. Some ask for monthly reports, which most of those affected found very demanding. One large local NGO says that it has been able to negotiate a reporting timetable with its multiple donors that it can manage well. Another said that it could discuss with its key donor (in this case USAID) and reach mutual agreement about how to meet the legitimate demands of the donor. Some of the other larger local NGOs have dedicated and trained staff for managing the reports or can pay to buy this help as and when they need it. The majority said they find reporting onerous and time consuming; writing these reports takes a great deal of valuable staff time. Yet, and this is a critical point, most donors do not pay for their core funds and administration costs. They make these heavy administrative demands but do not pay for staff costs. This was felt to be a serious contradiction by several NGOs, who said they lost staff time from working on the projects so they could do report writing.

Some said they found the multiple reporting 'a nightmare' at times. They believe that the growing weight of detailed and frequent reporting is probably the result of a lack of trust by donors and was used as a form of ensuring

accountability. But they get little feedback or response to their reports, some said they do not know if they are even read.

Another issue that was raised was that reports are usually to be written against the logframe and pre-set indicators. But they often do not use the logframe for project implementation, it is not a useful document for guiding the work day to day. So when they come to reporting they have to leave behind the daily realities and try to report against a written management document that is often far removed from their work. A few said that this makes it a far from transparent tool; reporting is often tailored to the project document rather than the project experiences. Often reports are rewritten as they rise through the aid chain, with project managers revising the reports from the field, and staff in INGOs revising them again for forwarding on to the donors. Some employ 'experts' to help with their report writing. The research findings raised questions about how useful this kind of heavy reporting is for either accountability or transparency in fact.

In addition both writing long reports and writing in English are difficult for many NGOs. This problem with the heavy demands of donors around reports, and the appropriateness, or otherwise, of detailed written reports against a logframe being a good tool for accountability and transparency have been highlighted in other comparable research (cf Mawdsley et al).

Many donors say they want NGOs to discuss their failures as well as successes, their problems as well as what worked well in their reports. But many NGOs wondered about this. In one INGO it only proved possible for local NGOs and communities to open up about the negative as well as the positive issues when face to face meetings were held and the focus was on mutual learning rather than reporting and accountability. At the moment the nature of the relationships and the sense that reports are a form of control and accountability make it difficult for most local NGOs to open up to donors about the problems they face, unless a good relationship exists already and there is trust between them. Most feel they have to show their effectiveness through their reporting.

There are elements that can even encourage lack of transparency. When NGOs have to write reports on progress before they have received the funding and so have not been able to do the work, this is actively pushing them into situations where openness is impossible. Several raised this as an issue of deep concern; donors expect regular reports even when they have failed to meet their obligations to provide timely funding.

Support also comes down the aid chain

Alongside these conditions some donors and many INGOs offer support to local NGOs in the form of capacity building and training. Some of this support was much appreciated. One large NGO said

Most funders are supportive and go a long way to give help to make us succeed

Several said they appreciated the technical support they had received from their different donors, which they found enabling and raised the standard of their work. The training available for technical skills around e.g. water, health or working in participatory ways is appreciated, but for most agencies there is less of this than training provided for project management and evaluation. Many more had had training in proposal writing, report writing and budgeting than had had training in specific skills around sectors or approaches to development work such as participatory ways of working of working with gender issues.

Several agencies, especially INGOs with offices based in Uganda, offer a range of workshops, seminars and other networking opportunities, which local NGOs appreciated. They did meet others and gain access to new ideas through their relationships with these donors.

The quality of the relationships being built

Four agencies defined their relationships with some or all of their donors as good, and others had one off examples of supportive donors. There was no consistent pattern; one agency, for example, cited DFID as a good 'partner', many others said they found DFID rigid and bureaucratic. Similarly one agency built a strong relationship with USAID, while others found them distant and inflexible. Several agencies said they had a good relationship with one or other of the UK NGOs, more cited the Dutch agencies as more open and flexible to work with.

No clear pattern emerged from the interviews and discussion workshops, which highlighted any donor as a consistently good and appreciated source of funding. There were, however, were consistencies among the NGOs who felt they had been able to build good/strong relations with some of their donors. They were all large and respected NGOs in Uganda, with a wide international and government donor base.

The factors they identified as making the relationship supportive were:

- Face to face discussions
- Relationships were not policed but visits were for sharing and support
- There was trust built up between key individuals on each side
- The focus of the relationship was not investigative but focused on how to improve and learn together
- The agencies shared trust and values
- The provision of appropriate and needed training
- Negotiations began right at the start, from project/strategic planning onwards
- Their equal involvement in evaluations and learning

The majority of the local NGOs interviewed did not feel they had built really strong relationships with most of their donors and they did not view these relationships as partnerships. They felt themselves to be recipients of donor

funding, having to accept most if not all the conditions attached to that funding.

They find there to be a plethora of management tools and conditionalities now dominating the access to and use of international aid money. They do not feel they have been involved in developing or shaping these tools, or that they are built on local knowledge and needs. They are concerned that they:

❖ Allow the donors to set the agenda- strategic planning is seen by some as a donor driven tool for defining priorities and what will and will not be funded
❖ Tend to rely on writing rather than face to face interactions. Face to face relationships are being substituted by written procedures- because of time and distance and also because they are seen as more objective and transparent. Yet they are far less comfortable for, and useful to, many local NGOs
❖ Are based on concepts of change and how to plan and monitor change drawn from contexts far away from Uganda. The tools do not reflect local knowledge or understanding
❖ Value highly the knowledge and approaches of the donors while undervaluing the skills that local actors bring to development in Uganda. They emphasise the importance of literacy and use of English over skills such as knowledge of the local language, cultural sensitivities, ability to work with poor people
❖ Highlight that trust is being lost, so increasingly written reports and budgets are being used to monitor relationships and performance
❖ May or may not be good management tools but they are not useful for developing local skills and a good development practice at the community level
❖ Promote upward accountability to the donors; they do little to promote strong bonds between NGOs and the communities they work with, indeed community voices are often squeezed out in the planning processes within the logframe. They take time away from the latter and focus on the former.

The critical issue for many is not whether or not donor polices and procedures are good- some are and some aren't- but the reality that these external interventions shape the dynamic of local relationships and even the identity and agenda of the different organisations involved. These concerns are well expressed in an interview with one of the umbrella research and capacity building organisations in Uganda. This interview highlights the role played by donors and the problems facing local NGOs in breaking their subordinate/recipient roles.

One training/research NGO's perspectives on the current donor-NGO relationships

The director was talked boldly of the need to challenge the existing paradigms and start to experiment and seek out a real Ugandan agenda, not one so closely tied to the dominant World Bank/ neo liberal economic agenda. He said that NGOs are easily intimidated by both the Uganda government and the donors, and find it hard to set their own agenda. He challenged NGOs in Uganda to get clear what they were for, what their agenda is and how they want to address development. Are their values and ideology clear and distinct?

He argued that it is hard for many local NGOs to think clearly on these issues, when their focus was to try to raise funding for their work. They had to be able to write in English to raise donor funds, and inevitably have to learn the language and requirements of the donors. No donor is working in local languages for funding proposals, or taking time to listen to the discussions and debates on the ground.

The current system of funding creates a serious dependency and sets agendas for NGO activities, yet most funding is very short term and so chasing funding becomes almost an end in itself and very time consuming. Donors wants to fund programmes that fit their current development agendas, but not the core costs, yet NGOs need equipment, training, materials for their work. This is hard to find, leading them often to inflate budgets to cover core costs, an issue that donors suspect and so the lack of trust may start.

The structure of aid and the bureaucracy that accompanies it leads many donors, especially for example EU, to set agendas, criteria and parameters. The messiness of reality on the ground is seen as too complex and hard to manage, and the problems and solutions are simplified. A few donors do understand and work with complexity, but when their funding dries up NGOs are passed on to other less understanding donors. The problems of an impersonal bureaucracy, little rapport and no personal relations were highlighted as major issues preventing the building of good relationships. Again there are exceptions, and a few donors do work closely with local NGOs, build good relationships and work well with their counterparts.

Lack of flexibility for changes in use of funding is a major problem for local NGOs, especially when the funding arrives late, as it frequently does. Donors can fail to meet their obligations, yet still demand strict reporting on monies that NGOs have not received in time. They may ask for three months advance notice for change of use, but external events and unexpected problems can require much more flexibility of response from local NGOs working with communities.

Donors are increasingly setting agendas, and most NGOs feel like beggars in relation to donors, begging for funding and accepting the conditions attached. They often fail to analyse or understand aid and its intricacies, accepting inappropriate conditions and formats. Donors can be questioned, for sure, but most NGOs lack the confidence and negotiating skills to do this.

Ugandans should be telling donors how money is to be used in Uganda, the money is aid money and is 'ours'. A few have rejected funding because of unacceptable conditions but it is only the most well known and strongest NGOs who can risk refusing donor funding because of unacceptable conditions. One or two NGOs have tried to call donors to meetings they convened to discuss critical issues in local terms, but donors do not come to listen. NGOs in Uganda have not yet found a way

to demand that donors come and listen to their needs and perspectives.

Instead NGOs are busy inventing indicators for donors, accepting difficult conditions around budgets, reporting and answering demanding questions, which show such a lack of donor trust in the NGOs.

On the whole dependency continues and Uganda has not moved beyond a colonial mindset- people still do not believe that Uganda belongs to US. There is limited independence of thought and the whole aid fabric is set up in a dependent mode of thinking and management. The question remains do Ugandans have the will to break these existing systems and relationships? Many just want to survive and accept and even promote the status quo- they do not criticise. Many others lack the capacity to take on the donors. A few are raising difficult questions about donor behaviour and dependency, but they risk jeopardising funding from some donors in the process.

Some strong local NGOs are certainly able to negotiate more acceptable and useful planning and reporting procedures. They have been able to reject some unacceptable conditions, such as employment of expatriates who may be expensive and not conversant with the local problems, or procuring equipment from certain markets (tied aid). A few donors, or more commonly individuals within donor organisations, are open to more flexible and alternative ways of working. However, the majority of sample NGOs often felt forced to accept conditionalities because they need the funding. They try as much as possible to accommodate the conditionalities, sometimes at the cost of affecting their identity, profile and even their values.

One condition highlighted during the research related to the reliance by many donors on external experts. Often these are said to have little experience in Uganda. Several local NGOs complained that consultants were expensive and diverted much-needed funds. They also took up a lot of their time, as often they know so little about the context. They may exhibit a lack of trust and even a sense of superiority to the local agencies, yet they are often inefficient because they require a lot of support to deliver their work.

Funding modalities and accountability systems

Budgets were a major area of concern. The trend has been for budgets to get more detailed and for less flexibility in the use of budgets, coupled with the rise in the practice of retrospective funding. Retrospective funding places a huge burden on NGOs who have to find upfront funding for their work and then reclaim it later. Many local NGOs are too small to actually work this way and so cannot apply for funds to agencies such as DFID that fund retrospectively.

Many donors and INGOs have demanded very detailed financial accounts and invoices. The onerous nature of the evidence needing for claiming was an issue that recurred many times. Examples were given of women being expected to sign or put their thumb print on a paper every time they had a drink or a meal at a workshop in rural areas, to ensure that the project worker

was not claiming for meals and tea that had not been provided. Others said they had to ask people to sign for every samosa or boda boda ride.

The detailed level of accounting required by many demonstrates a deep concern about financial probity and the misuse of funds, and the local NGOs recognised that there has been misuse of funds in the past and this was a legitimate issue of concern for donors. Yet the systems devised to deal with this make some local NGOs feel they are under suspicion and not trusted with even tiny amounts of money.

Several said they have to change or adapt their accounting systems to fit the needs of different donors. Some donors such as USAID have such complex accounting procedures that an NGO has to be trained in these, even when they are only to receive a relatively small amount of money for one year. In a later case study it will be seen that NGOs that receive sustained funding from an INGO may have to change their accounting procedures to fit the requirements of that donor.

The issue of late funding and the problems this causes for NGOs were raised several times. It is not at all uncommon for local NGOs- and even INGOs in Uganda- to find themselves in a fix after signing contracts with donors that are very detailed and binding. These have to be followed to the last dot, even when the donors fail to honour their commitments as stipulated in the contracts/agreements. One of the most common and oft heard complaints is that donors provide their funding very late. Many NGOs cannot work without the funding 'upfront' and yet they have to account to the same donors for the use of those funds *as if they had had them from the start of the project.* This causes major problems and highlights for the local NGOs their lack of power in the relationship. They cannot call a donor to account for poor performance; indeed they have to 'cover up' that poor performance by reporting as if their funding arrived on time.

Local NGOs with multiple funders may find that they have to keep their accounts in different ways for each funder, using different currencies for their accounting and financial reporting. One NGO was trying to devise a computer programme that would work in multiple currencies, but it was proving a very hard nut to crack. While the introduction of the Euro has cut back on some of this complexity, NGOs are still working in $, £, Ugandan shs, Euros and a range of other currencies including yen.

Time and again local NGOs pointed out the demands these reporting requirements and financial accounting make on their staff. They have to employ specialists and experts to help with these tasks. Yet donors are on the whole deeply reluctant to pay for core running costs; these are costs they have to find ways to bear themselves. The demands are high but the resources available to meet those demands are very limited.

The views and experiences of the training institutions of donor conditionalities

CDRN have presented their perspectives on some key aspects of donor conditionality- especially issues such as participation, gender, partnership- as a stand alone piece, which forms the next chapter of this report. MISR had some interesting reflections on the issues raised by this research, and these were discussed in two workshops held in 2001 and 2002 at MISR with a range of Ugandan NGOs.

The critical points raised by MISR and others during the discussions that were held there were these:

- donors do set the broad agenda for Uganda, and the way policies are introduced and imposed (from structural adjustment through to the new poverty agenda) has often denied Ugandans the opportunities to say what they want and to help to set the policies: *'Uganda has no right to decide what is best'*
- the lack of good analysis in Uganda and the sophisticated quantitative knowledge held by international funders allows external players to 'know best'
- this affects the NGO sector which sometimes feel a lack of control of and participation in the decision making. Yet some of the policies exacerbate the problems of poverty and powerlessness of the poor in Uganda, and social costs of e.g. adjustment, cost sharing and privatisation are often overlooked
- the NGO sector remains deeply dependent on external support, and in turn many communities have a dependency approach, relying on others to sort out the problems
- sustainability is required of NGOs, but there is no money in communities for local fund-raising, and competition for existing funds in Uganda is very high. This gives donors the power to impose many conditions on funding
- lobbying is only possible when fitting in with the government or external policy agendas
- funding is useful, indeed essential, when it is timely and comes with other support. Feedback is especially valuable, as are challenging discussions about projects and programmes. This works best when there is a continuity of staff (and trust) on both sides
- Experiences with individual donors vary greatly; relations can be strong and positive or very demanding and problematic. There is the need to guard against being donor driven
- Servicing too many donors is very difficult as their demands vary greatly
- Many donor conditionalities started out as indigenous ideas or approaches. For example participation is a critical element in the way many communities in Uganda work. Yet this concept has been taken away and repackaged into a set of tools and approaches that are then returned to Uganda as 'conditions'. Similarly women's oppression is a real issue, embedded in social and economic realities here. But the issue has been 'renamed' and claimed by northern experts, who are returning it under new labels and frameworks- such as gender mainstreaming.

The changing priorities for development work

Priorities change over time. The focus has shifted from micro level service delivery to scaling up, from a real concern with environment to a focus on rights. New priorities come even as old ones are left unfinished. One key feature of these are that they change and often very fast.

A second critical issue is that wherever the concern first originates, it becomes part of an international agenda and debate, which is centred in London, Washington, Geneva. It is often experienced as an imposition when it reaches Uganda through donor requirements. The terminology may well be unfamiliar, and often a concept arrives with a set of frameworks and tools that have rarely been developed within Uganda.

A third issue is that the changes do not often seem to be evidence based. They are not driven by an analysis of past work and the findings of experience, but more often by changing debates in influential agencies in UK, Europe or USA. The reality of ideology driven policy and priorities in development work, rather then changes based on actual experience and the analysis of evidence, has recently been highlighted at the macro level of donor policies, and also applies to the changing priorities for NGO work (see Killick, 2004).

Some of these different priority issues are discussed in the next chapter, by CDRN. Here a few short points are made on two of the dominant current themes- one on the wane, gender and one in the ascendant, advocacy.

Gender

Many donors require that project documents show how the work will address issues of gender, and gender mainstreaming is the current discourse around gender. CDRN and a later case study chapter will discuss some of the issues around approaches to gender currently dominant in Uganda, and a chapter addressing what happens at the local level also picks up on the gender issues and how they are played out at the village level.

Gender and its role in poverty is highlighted in most strategies of donors, INGOs and those local agencies that have strategic plans. Project proposals all have sections covering gender issues. However, when looking at the broader context in Uganda it is clear that donors have not really pushed a gender sensitive agenda and many key policy instruments are weak on gender; few donors appear to be very concerned about this. For example there is no synergy between the National Plan for Women and the PEAP, now the PRSP. There is little gender analysis to be found in the sector wide plans and the four pillars of PEAP/PRSP – growth, governance, raising incomes and enhanced life for the poor- do not take a gendered approach. Others have analysed this weakness around gender in the policy process and the key instruments for disbursing aid- it is certainly evident in Uganda in spite of the excellent commitments in the Uganda constitution to gender equity.

The gender issues are real and urgent in Uganda. DFID and many agencies have papers on the plight of women, especially poor women in Uganda who have heavy work burdens, bear the brunt of the AIDS crisis, shoulder many responsibilities in the home and community and yet have access to far fewer resources than their menfolk. Access to land, education, representation and decision making is limited for women, and their barriers to positions of power within their household, village, district and nation are many. While there are some strong laws promoting their rights, customary law that accords women far fewer rights is often the law that dominates their lives in practice.
Some INGOs and local NGOs have made gender their priority, and have made progress on raising the issues and awareness in many forums across Uganda. There are some strong debates and good advocacy work at the national level, and some agencies are struggling to implement a gender approach on the ground. International agencies such as ACORD and Actionaid Uganda especially have made gender a priority and have produced a range of thoughtful analysis and materials on the issue. They have undertaken widespread staff and partner training, undertaken research and are trying to learn from experience about how to work with these issues in different contexts in Uganda.

However, the gap between the written documents about gender and the lived experience of most agencies and the people they work with appears very wide. Transform is currently undertaking detailed research into this area in several countries in Africa, and Uganda is one of their case studies. They are finding that while NGOs and some community participants can explain gender and gender equity, it is usually in terms of frameworks, definitions and concepts drawn from northern sources. Local definitions of gender and what the issues are for women and men in a specific locality seem to be over-ridden by the use of concepts and tools imported from outside and often used with little understanding on the part of local people.

The issue is real. The issue is dynamic and central to poverty reduction. The motivation to address gender inequalities is positive and the push from donors is appreciated by those fighting within Uganda for more rights and recognition for women and changes in male-female relationships. However, the practice appears to be dominated by definitions and frameworks far away from the field level. These are being used by many agencies apparently without any real or deep understanding of the issues, and without drawing on local terminology, definitions and analysis of the issues for men and women at the local level.

It was interesting to note that while all agencies said they had to include gender in their project proposals, they said there was little follow up or monitoring and evaluation by the donors of what had been achieved in practice in relation to gender issues. It is an agenda that continues to be more evident on paper than in reality. It is an agenda that is actively pushed in practice largely by individuals- usually women- within agencies who have a personal commitment to the issue; it still does not appear to be central to the way organisations organise their work or assess their achievements.

Some NGOs felt that gender was becoming less important to donors and INGOs as the rights based agenda and the poverty focus were becoming more urgent.

Policy and advocacy work

One of the recent trends in the role of NGOs in civil society is the formulation of network organisations, alliances and coalitions; these play crucial roles in advancing and/or advocating the rights of particular groups. Many such NGOs have developed over the past ten years in Uganda, around issues as diverse as debt, women's rights and civil society participation in policy setting.

NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) exist to promote the rights of their members- for example the National Organisation for the Trade Unions of Uganda (NOTU) that promotes the rights and privileges of the workers, and the national Union for the Disabled persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) among others. Other NGOs actively engage in civic education activities and especially election monitoring during the times of elections. Others are actively involved in peace and reconciliation activities as well as reconstruction and development.

These agendas are relatively new for most NGOs in Uganda, and which some are struggling to become professional in. While these agendas fit with the priorities of a few national Ugandan NGOs, and indeed they have been instrumental in pushing these issues up the agenda, problems have been caused by the recent push by donors for most or all NGOs to follow the new lobbying and advocacy agenda. Many lack the skills and experience needed to work in these new, more fundable areas of work, and have to struggle to follow these new agendas:

'CBOs are not traditionally associated with policy, rather they were more involved in service delivery. But in the recent years, we have seen an increase in the participation of CSOs in policy issues at the centre. However, their participation is by invitation, rather than on demand.' (CDRN)

CDRN found, and the research interviews endorsed this view, that while some CSOs participate actively in the policy agenda work they continue to feel marginalised in the policy debates and say they are responding to donor/funding demands rather than really representing their constituencies. They are rarely given the space or time to develop proper representation mechanisms and 'this limits their role in representing poor people and their power to influence policies.' (CDRN). Often their response to funding demands undermines their ties to local constituencies, raising major questions about their legitimacy, which in turn undermines their ability 'to be heard' at policy meetings. Some researchers have argued that some local NGOs are severely compromised because they are sub contractors effectively to the very organisations they wish to lobby (government and donors), thus leaving them in a weak position for advocacy work (McGee, 2001).

Other reviewers have found that policy dialogues have not always been based on broader consultations with the poor; neither communities nor CSOs with close links to the poor are really involved. Several NGOs in this research study felt that their kind of knowledge counted for less than the knowledge and evidence of 'experts', usually from outside Uganda working with quantitative and often economic data. CDRN had similar findings: *'access to information and control over what is considered legitimate knowledge are mechanisms through which more powerful actors maintain their power and influence over the policy processes.'*

The interviews we held confirmed this sense among many Ugandan CSOs of being in a relatively weak position in the policy processes while some of their funding is dependent on them participating in these processes. While the donors have created several forums and opportunities for such lobbying work, which has been welcomed by networking and advocacy NGOs, they also control who comes and the terms of the debates. Previous research has found that the donors often set the advocacy agenda, so local NGOs are participating in agendas not yet led by them (IDS refs).

Several international NGOs were aware of the danger that international donors and NGOs are often filling the spaces for advocacy work that should perhaps belong to local civil society. However, their international experience and expertise make them attractive to many donors, and the pressure on them to obtain access to high level meetings and their own need for real influence combine to make them dominate some of the advocacy spaces. But there is a level of unease among some of them, and they recognise the resentment many local NGOs feel when they speak for them or for the poor in Uganda.

The redefinition of the roles of civil society: the 'uncareful' use of power

The donors are setting the agendas in many ways, even including redefining the roles and responsibilities of the NGO sector in Uganda. Findings from this research project are supported by other research in Uganda carried out by CDRN, which showed that powerful donor agendas are carried through policy processes and also through the very tools of project planning and implementation. The detail of development management is rooted in who holds the power:

'The research found that bilateral and multilateral donors and international financial institutions (usually collectively and inaccurately described as "donors") are perceived to be very powerful in Uganda. More than 50% of the national budget comes from aid and loans from these actors. Due to the financial clout they come with, 'donors' have a very strong influence on the policy process.
CDRN research reported in the newspapers (ref?)

Donors in Uganda have a very strong role and position, vis a vis both government and civil society. In recent years there has been improvement in GOU /donor relations and a convergence of poverty reduction agendas.

However, CDRN and many other civil society observers put this down less to a really shared agenda and more to the fact that 'government has had to agree with the donors on many policy changes as a condition to access aid and loans.' The relationships between donors and NGO often echo this kind of donor relationship with GOU.

The power of the larger donors, especially DFID, extends to setting out new roles for NGOs in Uganda. They fund NGOs and select those they will support and work with on the basis of their new concepts of NGOs and their roles in civil society. Key donors supported by some international NGOs, with inputs from one or two large local NGOs, have developed this new agenda. The focus has shifted away from good service delivery for poor people towards issues around advocacy on behalf of the poor and the representation of the poor on government forums. In addition the experience of NGOs in working participatively have been picked up by donors, who have involved them heavily in participatory poverty assessments and preparing the PRSPs in Uganda.

DFID and the EU, among other major donors, are now requiring a wide range of competencies and activities to be undertaken by NGOs working in Uganda, both international and national. They want them to engage in the many new policy processes that have accompanied the shift to a pro poor donor agenda, the availability of HIPC money and the shift to budget support. They appear to change the agenda for NGOs without careful though about the impact they will have; they seem sometimes rather careless about the degree of power they really exert in Uganda.

Now that donors no longer manage and control their own individual projects they need new channels of monitoring and accountability for their funding. As they put their money into sectors under sector wide plans and more recently into generic budget support underpinned by pro-poor policies and procedures, so they have an urgent need for assistance in monitoring the government's use of this money. NGOs have been identified as the key players to monitor budgets and to play a role in 'calling government into account' if budgets go astray and do not reach the districts and parishes and the projects needed by the poor in Uganda.

This new agenda is clearly set out in the new Civil Society Umbrella programme run by DFID in Uganda. Its purpose is to promote 'civil society interacting with government at all levels to effect pro-poor policies, social progress and democratisation.' The aims are:

❖ To make poor Ugandans aware of and able to exercise their rights
❖ CSOs engaged with government at all levels of pro-poor policy environment
❖ Civil society to hold government to account on it pro-poor commitments
❖ Innovative approaches for pro-poor service provision implemented and disseminated
❖ An enabling environment established and sustained for civil society to pursue these objectives.

This is hugely ambitious and marks in many ways a change of purpose for most NGOs in Uganda, where working with and monitoring government has not previously been part of their role. It was developed by donors with highly limited local NGO participation, and will have a profound effect on what will and what will not be funded. Perhaps inevitably in the first phase DFID funding has switched largely to Kampala based networks and alliances.

The complexities of both dialoguing with government, increasingly accessing funding through district level government in line with district plans, and holding government to account in policy implementation seem largely to have been overlooked. The politics of power and control between NGOs and government at all levels are ignored or glossed over, and sets of contradictory roles are laid out for NGOs and civil society to follow. NGOs are given a legitimate role as advocates, but are also expected to work closely with government in providing services; they are expected to get some of their money from government now, and also to hold government to account on behalf of the poor. One consultant report discusses these dilemmas (Lister) but they do not appear to have been adequately addressed yet.

The following case study, largely drawn from long-term discussions with two local agencies whose stories have been merged to protect their identity, closes this chapter. The case study draws together a number of the issues raised in this chapter, and shows how they can affect development work in Uganda. It is based on extensive discussions with several staff members and on observation of work on the ground.

The experiences of a local development organisation

This development organisation has received money from donors, including members of the public in Europe, over many years. Plans and budgets have been set during bi-annual round table discussions with staff and donors, with regular external evaluations of the work in Uganda informing these debates. Over time there have been questions raised about aspects of the running of the development programmes of the NGOs and there has been a marked shift in the way negotiations take place. Donors do not now listen and respond to the agenda of the organisation as in the past; rather they come with their strategies and expectations and indicate what they are looking for prior to agreeing the funding. 'Donors have a way of indicating what they want and it sounds like the idea has been initiated locally, but it is dictation.'

The shifts away from service delivery and direct support to the poor which have taken place during debates around development in the north, are now being passed on to the local organisations. They are being asked to change the work they have done in the past e.g. providing a family with a cow and the skills and support to benefit from it, towards empowerment projects; often the expectation is that changes can be made abruptly. However, they work through local and sometimes church structures and directly with local people, who often do not understand the reasons for ending projects they have benefited from.

The new agendas of the northern NGOs that support them appear to include advocacy, democratisation, governance, gender and HIV/AIDS. The organisation assumes that some of these switches may have been made in order to ensure continued funding for these international NGOs and could be related to how they raise their money at home. They know their own donors now have to raise money from official and other donors as well as from public giving in their own countries, and suspect they are constrained by the agreements they make with their donors. They pass these requirements on to the southern NGOs who do usually quickly adapt to the new agendas because in Uganda there are few alternative sources of income. However, their grassroots constituencies, who have certain expectations based on past experiences and their relationships with the local NGO, see their roles and responsibilities very differently. This can cause real difficulties for staff trying to implement new agendas with local people; they experience many frictions and disagreements as they start to implement new agendas.

This organisation senses that there has been erosion of trust between some of their northern donors and themselves over time. They do know there have been problems with financial accountability, but they have been trying to address these with new staff and financial systems. The problems of rebuilding trust have been exacerbated by the very high turnover of staff in northern NGOs. They now find themselves negotiating new agreements and difficult issues with young people from UK and Europe who lack any experience and understanding of Uganda. They may meet a new person every time they have donor meetings and there is a serious lack of continuity, making it hard to build strong relations. On one occasion a new staff member was in the process of negotiating with them over some difficult issues when he received the news from UK that his job was being restructured and he was no longer to work in his current post. They find that the drive from donors to pursue new agendas, combined with the inexperience of many programme or project people they have to deal, cut across the relationships of trust that they felt existed with many of their donors in the past.

They are now being asked to operate where the donors wish them to and to deliver a new high standard of accounting and reporting. There is a shift away from relating directly with the donors they have known for years to being expected to help them to meet their back donor requirements.

Their work is based on a set of values and beliefs and not all demands from northern donors and NGOs can easily be met within these paradigms. For example, the common approach to the use of condoms to prevent HIV/AIDS can be understood at the local level as the NGO promoting promiscuity. The withdrawal of direct project support to the poor is often not understood by local people, who feel the loss of direct help in their poverty hard to cope with. This organisation feels it is increasingly trying to adapt and meet secular development agendas that have been set elsewhere. This raises many problems for them in communicating with local people and local staff, and raises concerns about their own understanding of their role 'in looking after the welfare of the people'.

Another example of an issue that causes problems for this organisation is the donor focus on 'mainstreaming gender' and the idea of gender as equity. Yet, for many this goes against biblical teaching (and Uganda is a deeply religious society, where the teachings of the Koran and the bible are of critical importance in people's daily lives) about the different but complimentary roles of women and men in society. At the local level people can find this thinking hard to understand. While the organisation does try to promote the need to involve women and to ensure they benefit from programmes, implementation is slow. This is especially true where they work with local partners who hold strong beliefs and whose work may be directed by staff who also share these beliefs.

The churches and communities themselves have been slow to move on issues of women's equality, so it is hard to expect their local partners to easily adopt gender approaches as defined by external donors. Addressing these difficult issues requires a very slow process of attitudinal change, and for some it may conflict with their religious beliefs.

In recent years this organisation has been asked to adopt strategic planning, which is something they find useful and it has enhanced their dialogue with the donors. They often hire consultants to help them with aspects of this process, and have technical experts to help them to deliver on the plan. They work to a five-year plan with clear goals and target groups, with improved systems of accounting and a management committee. They reach down to the community through the regions, dioceses and parishes; grassroots activities are derived from the overall strategy. They are also still trying to be responsive to locally developed proposals and programmes, and encourage participatory ways of developing these with communities. Many use PRA techniques. However, at the implementation stage of local projects there are often many misunderstandings and difficulties. For example a local person often see loans of oxen or ploughs as gifts and see no need to repay them; they may have a different concept of the role of the project and do not consider issues of future sustainability.

This organisation is now being asked to undertake advocacy work, which they understand to be the general promotion of development and development solutions. They feel they have always worked on capacity building, especially building the ability of local staff to run grassroots programmes for development. Now they need to find ways to develop capacities for advocacy work. They face difficulties in explaining this role to local people, and one striking image comes to mind here. When waiting to see a local district official the staff member explained to the local people attending that this time he would do the talking. But in future they were to undertake their own lobbying with district staff, to obtain the resources that were theirs by right. This had to be explained several times. Slowly the women and men present started to understand and one woman started to smile and then to laugh. She ended by wiping away her tears of laughter and explained her disbelief. Did the staff person not understand or had he forgotten the realities of the local politics in the district. They came from a minority group in a sub-county largely by-

passed by the district; how could they ever expect to be 'heard' by officials who had a political agenda to follow?

The organisation has always tried to work in a participative way, as donors now request, but the donor agendas appear at times to undermine local needs and voices. They try to mobilise households and communities for local activities and are concerned to see increased devolution of power and activities away from the centre down to the local level. Yet at times they feel puzzled by the fact that they know that some local agendas do not fit well with the current donor objectives. They see there is no representation of poor women and men on the committees or boards that set these wider agendas. Participation appears often to be confined to processes at the community level; it does not usually reach up into the organisational level. Poor people have no say in setting the predominantly donor led strategies and plans.

There has been a huge growth in the demands of donors, especially around reporting requirements there is now 'an emergency of producing reports as part of donor demands'. Sometimes they have to hire consultants to help them with the work that this requires and to meet the multiple donor deadlines. They sometimes feel that their identity, their way of doing things, their communications and relations in Uganda risk being eroded as a result of this focus on meeting donor demands, though some donors (Scandinavian) are more open to locally driven agendas being part of agreed plans and reporting. The erosion of local identities is not openly discussed between north and south NGOs and it may even be denied.

Many in the local partner organisations are deeply concerned about the way projects and agendas are set in Kampala or Europe; control is far from the local people. Yet how will they ever learn how to run development work until they are given the chance to be involved in the planning and can be allowed to take the lead?

On the other hand the organisation does recognise the real problems of 'eating' from grants, a cultural norm around taking some of the project money for other needs. It tries hard to ensure local transparency and accountability, and a lot of work is being done on this issue now.

The organisation has to grapple with a range of complex issues in the field of development, including issues of ethnicity and conflicts and rivalries between ethnic groups. There are tensions between Christians and Muslims in some communities; rivalry between different church groups in some areas; and the local norms around running projects sometimes conflict with the organisational culture in Kampala. These issues are difficult to manage and conflicts may be hard to resolve, yet they rarely form part of the discussions and negotiations with donors, whose concerns seem more focused on addressing global and international agendas and issues.

This organisation was acutely aware of the complexities and challenges of running projects, where men, women and youth may have different aspirations and expectations of a project. Often local cultural norms may

exclude women from ownership or benefits, and local rivalries and inequalities along ethnic and religious lines, can seriously affect project implementation. Organisational as well as local politics can also cause real dilemmas. However, their conversations with donors do not usually delve into these difficult realities of development work, indeed these issues are usually ignored.

Chapter 5: The impact of Western management tools on Ugandan NGOs: Some contextual notes.[13]

Rosemary Adong, CDRN, Kampala.

Introduction

This chapter attempts to explore recent shifts in development practice in Uganda, as evidenced by the engagement of aid agencies, international NGOs and local NGOs in ever broadening political processes. Away from project delivery, "development actors" are now seeking new relationships, with an accent on enhanced ownership by the country, organisations and local people.

Parallel to this shift has been a focus on particular dimensions of the development process, especially with regard to "participation", "partnership", "lobbying and advocacy" and "gender" which are all have emerged to inform these new development relationships.

Where do these words come from? And how are they interpreted locally? How much is put into practice? The paper reviews these selected themes, using our experience of working with a wide range of NGO partners in Uganda, as well as our own reaction at CDRN, as a local "capacity-building" organisation.

The new language of aid and poverty reduction implies shifts in control and distribution of power: this requires that a relationship of trust and transparency is allowed to flourish, within and between aid agencies and their partners in Uganda. This also means narrowing the gap between words and actions, a process that can in part happen (in both the North and in Uganda) if we start re-thinking old behaviours, procedures and organisational cultures that have kept us trapped into the old ways of doing things.

Shifts in policy and practice

Recent years have seen major shifts in the policies of most aid agencies in Uganda. Poverty reduction is more than ever the overarching goal and agencies have been shifting from supporting projects and service delivery to becoming co-players in broader political processes. They are now seeking new relationships, with an accent on enhanced ownership by the country, organisations and local people. Consequently approaches and requirements such as partnership, participation, gender sensitivity and transparency have emerged to inform this relationship.

This implies shifts in control and distribution of power. However, in practice there is a wide gap between what is said and what is done!

---

[13] This paper was originally prepared as a contribution to "Impact and Implications of Rational Management Tools on NGO Partnership and Practice" a research project run by Oxford Brooks University (UK) and partners in Uganda and South Africa. The full report arising from this initiative is available from CDRN.

This paper attempts to explore these selected themes, using our experience of working with a wide range of NGO partners in Uganda, as well as our own reaction at CDRN, as a local "capacity-building" organisation.

1. Participation

The concept of "participation" has been widely used in the development discourse in Uganda for over 20 years now, but this has mainly been driven by the Western world (international development agencies and/or other donors). This however does not mean that participation was alien to Ugandan society: participation has been and will continue to be part of our traditional culture. The West however imposed its own vision of "participation" without much consideration for local tradition and practice: this puts the sustainability of participation, including scaling up, into question.

The meaning and practice of participation has however also been changing with time- though not necessarily in a linear way. For example, participation was originally equated with the involvement of target beneficiaries in running projects; this was followed by greater involvement of marginalised groups in community life. More recently the engagement of civil society in local decision-making and wider political processes.

The participation discourse stems from disillusionment with failed development initiatives in Uganda in the '50s, '60s and '70s, which themselves reflected a colonial and neo-colonial vision on community development that sought to 'modernise' its subjects, and to transfer technologies that would ensure compliance with an external vision of development- as well as transforming these subjects into 'good citizens'- domesticated so to say.

In the '80s, the failure of these 'blueprint' approaches pointed towards the critical role that 'beneficiaries' could play in ensuring the success of development initiatives. For was it not their needs that development initiatives sought to address? Thus beneficiaries began to be 'invited' to participate to have their needs incorporated into projects, so that projects would be appropriate and acceptable. Rapid rural appraisal techniques were introduced into the Uganda participation landscape - as a quick method of gathering information from the poor, using semi-structured interviews, diagrams and other techniques using local materials. The issue of 'project ownership' also gained currency: for projects to work and be sustainable, the community had to have a sense of ownership. As a result, more and more communities were drawn into the entire project cycle. The poor thus began to be recognised as key in the development process.

It is also during this period that role of Uganda's state and government was rethought because they were perceived to have failed in delivering services to ordinary people. The state had to be 'rolled back' so that market mechanisms could be left to promote development. Structural adjustment programmes were instituted as a result of this: as elsewhere in Africa, this entailed

reducing government expenditure on service delivery and creating the necessary conditions for the private sector to provide those services. Cost sharing in hospitals, retrenchment of civil servants, demobilisation of soldiers, removals of subsidies on agricultural inputs are but a few examples of this. The poor were now viewed as 'consumers' of development rather than 'beneficiaries': this led to a number of people joining the ranks of the poor and increased the vulnerability of those who were already poor.

NGOs stepped in to fill this vacuum in service delivery, a drive mainly triggered by the donor world through the provision of hefty resources for service delivery, both to international and local NGOs. As a result, many NGO s were formed in Uganda - some for genuine reasons (poverty reduction), others for self-serving economic gains.

With donor support to NGOs came the participation agenda: NGOs were seen as well-equipped to "operationalise" participation. They were people-centered and their work involved organising the poor into groups and supporting them to address their needs. Further, because of their experiences in using participatory methods, NGOs were generally perceived to be closer and more responsive to communities than governments.

By the 1990s, the meaning and extent of participation deepened further. The poor began to be seen as stakeholders in development and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods became widely used to engage with the poor. Participation became an end and not just a means to development.

The widespread use of PRA in Uganda was however not only informed by the genuine desire to empower the poor. Some organisations used PRA as a fashion (because every other person was using it), and in a bid to attract resources from donors and to remain relevant on the NGO job market. Some were forced into PRA because it was a donor conditionally - PRA was presented by some donors as if it were a 'magic bullet' or panacea for poverty alleviation. On the other hand, some development workers could not apply PRA because of the nature of their organisation (bureaucratic, top-bottom). Poor quality training also contributed to the limited impact of these approaches, as consultancy firms emerged to engage in the lucrative business of training development workers and often did shoddy jobs. Above all, the technocratic application of PRA by some organisations had its toll on the transformative objective of participatory approaches.

Of late, participation has been extended into the realm of government policy-making and citizenship. Could this arise because donor agencies and some NGOs have come to realise that traditional development projects have offered little in terms of changing the structural causes of poverty and inequality?

How has CDRN positioned itself?

CDRN was initially formed to promote participatory approaches to community development work. Training development workers in PRA was thus our "core

business". We were however concerned by two obstacles: the cost and quality of PRA training and the way in which it was being applied by various organisations (lip service and technocratic application). On the one hand, foreign and expensive consultants were being hired to provide training in PRA within a cultural context that they were not conversant with (issues of cost effectiveness); on the other hand some (money minded) local consultants offered poor quality training.

CDRN thus introduced a new approach to PRA training in Uganda, based on a rigorous six-week training programme, divided into three modules of two weeks each. Each module covered both the theory and practice of PRA. Field practice took place in selected villages to provide 'hands on experience' for the participants. The outcome of the six weeks was a community project, which in part compensated the community for time spent during field practice.

This approach enhanced the capacity of development workers (behaviour, attitude and skills) to facilitate community members to participate actively in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their projects. It also helped communities to better understand their situation and their potential to shape their destiny.

Much as this training contributed to the empowerment of target communities from a micro perspective, it did not promote a fundamental change in the structural causes of poverty and inequality in those communities to any large extent. This in part was attributed to the micro-focus of the training and the tools, which sometimes did not allow for a "revolutionary" process.

Another core area of CDRN's work is organisational strengthening. The focus is to facilitate local organisations to adopt participatory principles in their thinking, practice, and the way they are organised and behave. Facilitating these organisations to adopt participatory management styles is the principal tenet of this approach. This has helped local organisations become more participatory in the way they organise and manage themselves, as well as becoming more critical in the way they engage with poverty reduction activities.

2. Partnership

The concept of "partnership" emerged in Uganda in the '90s, at the very time when the meaning and extent of participation had deepened. As we noted, the poor started to be seen as stakeholders in development with the right to influence development initiatives - as opposed to being "mere" beneficiaries. The partnership agenda also emerged as a new language of development aid meant to transform unequal power relations between aid agencies and development organisations not only in Uganda but also in developing countries as a whole. Of particular interest to us has been the relationship between local and international NGOs.

The aims and objectives which international NGOs believe they are fulfilling by working with and through local organisations include strengthening civil

society, improving the sustainability of their work by enhancing local structures, encouraging mutual learning through co-operative relationships, and encouraging participatory approaches through local intermediaries. Local organisations are usually felt to be better acquainted with program/project areas. They usually maintain better relationships with local communities and are more sensitive to local cultures and traditions. Further, the involvement of two or more agencies can increase the power and creativity of the work at hand.

In principle, partnership is supposed to foster the empowerment of the weak, and to promote accountability, transparency and ownership of development processes. In practice, however, it is often the opposite because aid agencies with funds normally carry the day: conditions are imposed (although empowerment is preached), accountability is demanded (although aid agencies are rarely accountable to local organisations themselves), ownership is much talked about (although these agencies heavily influence local policy!)

With the changing environment of development aid, many international organisations active in Uganda have moved from service delivery to facilitating local organisations to deliver services to their constituencies. They include ActionAid, CARE, Save the Children and ACORD to mention but a few. Support to local NGOs involves funds and other forms of capacity-building, such as management support and other forms of organisation development and training. In principle, the relationship between local and international NGOs is based on authentic partnership – a type of collegial equality.

Partly as a result, many local Ugandan development organisations have become "mirrors" of their international partners, both in terms of thinking and practice. Some of them have become unfocused in the process and are largely seen as instruments for implementing the agenda of donors or international NGOs; others have lost their original purpose of existence. This points to the fact that INGOs are failing to let go of their operational agenda: is this why there is a push on their side to make local NGOs do exactly what they used to do themselves?

Further "down the aid chain", community-based organisations (CBOs) and small groups are also feeling the pinch through local NGOs who espouse the agenda of their donors. To give an example, a small group we recently worked with was encouraged by an international NGO to become a CBO to implement the former's agenda of constructing schools and health units, run literacy classes and promote sustainable agriculture. When asked why they exist, this CBO realised that they had lost their initial vision and were implementing someone else's programme…

Secondly, the unequal relationship that exists between international and local NGOs in Uganda is deepened because many local NGOs view themselves as "children of international NGOs" since their existence depends on them (money, capacity-building). This parent - child relationship prevents local

organisations from growing into purposeful and self-determined entities. It appears that little is being done by INGOs to address this problem. INGOs need for instance to explore whether it is possible for them to be capacity-builders and donors simultaneously and still be effective - or whether they should only do one at a time.

Thirdly, many international NGOs have limited trust and confidence in local NGOs, in addition to expecting too much from them. This manifests itself through the stringent conditions imposed on local organisations (reporting and proposal formats, accountability mechanisms, composition of the board/educational background…), even on those that are located in the most remote parts of the country. In addition, follow-up visits are rarely used to provide adequate back-stopping support: instead, some local organisations view them as faultfinding missions. Some local NGOs have viewed field visits by their donors as interfering with their work and belittling them in front of their target group. This is especially evident with international NGO staffs that were once field based.

Fourthly, many international NGOs in Uganda are competing with local NGOs in the field of capacity-building. Instead of positioning themselves strategically to build the capacity of local, indigenous organisations that are themselves involved in capacity-building, they are threatening their very existence and "poach" capable staff from the local NGO sector, thanks to the better terms and conditions of service they are able to offer.

Despite the ideals and aspirations of those seeking to form partnership, the problems encountered in forming equitable and effective partnerships therefore remain considerable, to the point where the usefulness of the concept is being seriously questioned, highlighting both value incompatibilities and practical constraints (governance and management, financial management, reporting and communication)

How has CDRN positioned itself?

CDRN believes that authentic partnership (understood as a mutually enabling, interdependent interaction with shared intentions) is crucial because relations of such quality between national and international NGO would contribute to the 'social capital' which enables civil society deal better deal with states and markets at all levels of their operations. Partnership is a process of permanent negotiation, which demands acknowledgement of and respect for differences, as well as a strong belief in the need to reach specific agreements based on the higher concern of achieving maximum impact on poverty reduction. These views have informed CDRN's engagement with its international and local partners. CDRN also supports its local partners to develop "authentic" partnership with Northern NGOs and government.

CDRN has itself entered into a strategic partnership with a few international NGOs, to foster synergy and complementarity. ActionAid is thus providing institutional support to CDRN, and CDRN is building the capacity of ActionAid

partners. CARE and CDRN are involved in a joint research venture (with, importantly, funding from both institutions). CORDAID has funded CDRN to undertake a capacity building project for CBOs in Eastern Uganda - at the same time as CDRN is building the capacity of a few CORDAID partners. CDRN's partnership with MS is yet evolving - but is likely to take two forms-capacity building to CDRN and a joint venture in the field of policy advocacy and gender. Although CDRN has also tried to develop a partnership with SNV, this appears not to be taking off, possibly because the two organisations do not see how they can complement each other's efforts, although they are all participating in the same arena.

CDRN's successes and challenges with partnership have highlighted two issues: in the first place, compatibility of values and mission is the most important criterion for developing and managing a partnership; where these are incompatible, the relationship becomes unequal and turbulent. Secondly, partnership should be built on equality of commitment with recognition that the contributions each partner makes to the relationship will be different but is afforded equal respect. Choosing to enter a partnership should be a process of mutual selection, without any exploitative hidden agenda.

As a member of the Transform network, CDRN has been engaging with donors to improve their relationship with Southern NGOs. Transform is an international network made up of 6 African training institutions plus a unit in the UK. A three-pronged approach is being used by CDRN to improve partnership between southern and Northern NGOs:

1) Strengthening the capacity of Southern NGOs to become self-determined, purposeful and strategic in engaging with their northern counterparts.
2) Lobbying Northern NGOs for a policy environment that promotes authentic partnership.
3) Cultivating a relationship of trust, confidentiality and equal partnership with southern NGOs (CDRN and local NGOs/Transform partners).

When requested by an international NGO to support the capacity of local NGOs, CDRN thus attempts to use this opportunity to engage with the international NGO as well as with the relevant local partner NGOs.

Experience has shown that problems of partnership must be tackled at several different levels. There are many practical ways to strengthen partnerships but basic assumptions, attitudes and behaviour need to be tackled as well.

To be effective in redressing the inequities and imbalances created by a world becoming quickly global, CDRN will need to form alliances (by joining or facilitating their formation) within and beyond the aid system which are equitable and mutually empowering. These coalitions can act as mediators for CSOs when negotiating partnership issues.

3. Lobbying and Advocacy

Liberal capitalism, as the dominant mode of social organisation, currently defines the development context and indeed influences development theory and practices the world over. Development and aid transfers have thus come to be dominated by a 'New Policy Agenda', which is driven by beliefs organized around the twin poles of neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory. Markets and private initiatives are seen as the most effective and efficient mechanisms for achieving economic growth and providing services to people. Within this framework, civil society organisations are considered vehicles for democratisation, acting as a counter-weight to state power by opening up channels of communication and participation. Aid to civil society organisations is thus a way of operationalising the New Policy's economic and social goals.

This perception has not spared Ugandan civil society: here too, if Civil Society is seen as a necessary counter-balance for good governance, and efficient, demand-driven service delivery, then it has a role to play in the policy process. Lobbying and Advocacy are thus now widely accepted by donors, civil society and Government institutions as a means of ensuring greater transparency and accountability. Yet in practice much of what is done could be considered as shallow.

This assumption about Civil Society's role originates outside Uganda: while the growth of Civil Society is partly due to the change of government in 1986, it must also be seen as the result of a donor-driven agenda. Bilateral and multilateral donors, convinced that the assumption mentioned above is essentially correct, have invested time and other resources into CSOs, in their belief that through supporting civil society, a ' vibrant, multi-form political system' would emerge.

Such a belief, some of whose roots can be found within the international development community, has also informed funding strategies and many CSOs are thus 'forced' to take on a role in tune with this dominant assumption if they are to survive. This is happening against the backdrop of the prevalent local notions about civil society, which are rather different. These are indeed based on a perception of civil society as a mostly neutral body that can create mutually beneficial linkages, such as with Government, of a non-confrontational nature.

The tension between these two views gives rise to an identity crisis amongst CSOs. Which role should they play, at a time when their survival greatly relies on external resources and their participation in decision-making relies on invitation?

Given donor power on civil society actors, some CSOs have tried to adapt to these pressures, for instance by having flexible strategic plans to fit donor talk.

As a result of donor pressure, CSOs engagement in advocacy is also still centred in Kampala. District-level CSOs have mixed feelings about participating in advocacy work: some feel that contributing to policy making is a corrupting process, which they do not want to be part of. Others feel that, much as they want to participate, they are never invited, and that if they invited themselves, they would be ignored.

Lack of capacity of CSOs to engage in policy advocacy is a major bottleneck. Many districts CSOs do not understand how policy gets made and how government operates. And many do not have a critical view of poverty, beyond its material dimensions (food, shelter, clothing and health).

Many civil society organisations are thus comfortable with service delivery because they feel that it is there that they can influence the quality of service provision and promote good practice rather than to engage in abstract policy issues. More importantly, CSOs view subcontracting as a crucial source of income for their survival. How does one raise resources from government and at the same time hold it accountable? Engaging in policy advocacy would undermine this crucial source of income.

Subcontracting of CSOs to deliver services on behalf of government is also a role that has been prescribed for them by some donors/international development organisations. Many CSOs that do not have concrete pro-poor values, and the capacity to influence contracts (to suit their agenda), are being turned into business organisations whose interest is in profit maximization rather than poverty reduction. Many district-based CSOs appear to be falling into this trap.

There is thus considerable debate about the role of the expanding CSO sector. While the World Bank believes that civil society organisations have the ability to substitute for weak public sector capacity, opponents of this view question the place of CSOs in the New Policy Agenda, both in terms of taking on service provision and in assuming a democratising role for good governance. They point to the growing financial dependency of CSOs and to less diversity in CSO roles and functions. This is reinforced by the discourse of the market but challenged on the other hand by participatory approaches which can open up state-society-market relations.

How has CDRN positioned itself in this context?

To address some of the challenges above, CDRN has re-defined its mandate to include mobilising and triggering civil society to re-think its role in the light of the current development context and challenges. CDRN's focus is to stimulate civil society to influence policy processes that are key to poverty reduction in Uganda.

CDRN understands advocacy as a political process that involves the coordinated efforts of people in changing existing practices, ideas, and distribution of power and resources that exclude disadvantaged groups. Advocacy therefore deals with specific aspects of policymaking and the

values and behaviours that perpetuate exclusion and subordination. It is about causing a fundamental change in society, and therefore includes changing specific decisions that affect people's lives and changing the way decision-making happens into a more inclusive and democratic process.

CDRN's advocacy agenda targets different layers of civil society in Uganda, which includes CBOs, NGOs, and civil society (as a sector).

We believe that CBOs are poor peoples' organisations which, if promoted and strengthened, could contribute to a deep-seated change in the landscape of poverty in Uganda. For this to happen, the recognition of CBOs as a necessary instrument in the fight against poverty is crucial, to allow for their active participation in the poverty reduction policy-making. CDRN is involved in three different initiatives to promote these issues. Research has been undertaken to understand the CBO sector in Uganda and the environmental challenges that hinder it from achieving its goals – the outcome of this research is being used to promote the status and recognition of CBOs in Uganda. Finally, many development interventions focus on CBOs with the assumption that: "Find the groups and you have found the poor", or that groups comprise of the poorest of the poor - or at least represent the interests of the poorest (This is CDRN's' perspective as well). Research is currently being undertaken to clarify this assumption-the outcome will be used for advocacy purposes.

CDRN is also implementing a project aimed at promoting collaborative and accountability mechanisms for CBOs and local government in Nakasongola and Lira districts. This project promotes a rights-based approach that encourages female and male participants to realise their rights to participation in decision-making, accountability, access to information and demand for them.

CDRN's new vision for the CBO sector in Uganda is to facilitate the emergence of a Centre for Public Participation. This centre will deepen the quality and practice of participation and promote citizen centred and social justice advocacy in Uganda.

Our NGO advocacy agenda focuses on capacity-building and improving the relationship between local NGOs and Northern NGOs and governments. The capacity of local NGOs is built so that they can understand their role better and engage constructively with government in the policy process.

In addition, CDRN in collaboration with CARE, is currently involved in a research project "Biting the hand that feeds you" to assess the effect of sub-contracting of local organisation (by government) on their autonomy and performance. The outcome of this initiative will be used for advocacy and lobbying purposes.

Lastly, our civil society advocacy agenda seeks to engage more strategically with the impact of global capitalism on civil society (and its poverty reduction endeavours) in Uganda. Although this idea is still young and requires further

development on CDRN's part, it tries to work through and with several Networks and coalitions within the country and the region.

4. Gender

Gender analysis has become widely accepted as an essential part of development thinking and practice. The major development actors, such as the UN agencies, the European Union and bilateral funders such as DFID and DANIDA, include mandatory frameworks to check that gender is considered in all projects they support.

In addition to donor agencies being the force behind gender in Uganda – through conditionalities -, the dominant political ideology of the Movement Government has created a healthy environment for gender to thrive. This includes a national gender policy to guide the integration of gender concerns and affirmative action for women in the political and educational spheres. This strategy has improved the status of women in Uganda to some extent. A handful of women are now participating actively in the political and economic arena. Many girls have joined higher institutions of learning on an affirmative action ticket.

Many people, especially men, however see government's interest in women as a strategic trick to amass political capital. The support that the movement government rallies mainly comes from women, although a few women are beginning to question the 'so-called benefits' that they have garnered from this government.

In many ways, civil society organisations have embraced gender as a development issue. This is usually operationalised in terms of ensuring that women do not get left out of the development process. Development policy is now fully gender balanced, rather than being male biased, as was the case in the past.

A closer look at development policy in Uganda however shows that gender issues have been co-opted and internalised into mainstream development activity rather than allowing them to fundamentally challenge ideas and institutions. Consequently, gender mainstreaming has become a technocratic endeavour (gender balance) informed by the desire to maintain the status quo, an indication that gender analysis is loosing its transformatory intention and potential.

Many development agencies furthermore view gender oppression in isolation of other forms of oppression such as ethnicity, class, age and region. Yet these different forms of oppression are intricately linked: they are all informed and perpetuated by the quest for power over others and one form of oppression cannot be removed without the other. In addition, gender oppression cuts across all other forms of oppression, implying that many poor women suffer from 'multiple oppression'.

As a result, many organisations in Uganda appear to be "practicing gender at face value". In practice they hide behind jargon (gender blind, gender sensitive, gender responsive etc.) without a genuine desire for change. A closer look at their work shows just how little gender considerations inform what they do. This arises because the very language of gender is seen to be a western obligation, a neo-colonial imposition on organisations and communities where other priorities and understandings of gender differences and gender roles in fact prevail. This causes outright resistance in people, especially men, who will learn the new language of gender, or reject it, but they will not change. The western approach to gender thus appears to have been designed without a critical understanding of local institutions, norms and values.

Such resistance to change also occurs because the root cause of women's subordination is seen as caused by men and masculinity. Yet men also have multiple gender roles: changes in men's ability and desire to fulfil these roles pose challenges for men as well as women. In Uganda, more often than not, men's concerns are not the focus of gender analysis: they are not supported to appreciate that gender sensitive work would be beneficial to them as well.

In addition, local organisations construct their gender knowledge from various sources: government, church, western world and local community. Each of these sources reflects its an ideology and worldview. Because development workers are in constant interaction with these different sources of gender knowledge, they become ideologically and conceptually confused and find it difficult to engage constructively with gender in their work.

How has CDRN positioned itself?

Recognizing that gender and other forms of inequality are the major causes of poverty in Uganda, CDRN has made a deliberate move to position itself strategically to address this concern. To measure up to this, we have had to build our own capacity in the field of gender. This has included a 'gender awakening' process for the whole organisation, training staff, developing a gender policy, and mainstreaming gender in the organisational structure, programs, values and culture. This re-awakening process has allowed CDRN to broaden its gender agenda to include diversity and social justice issues. We are also a member of several gender networks (for learning and to share our perspectives).

CDRN's capacity building work with local NGOs and CBOs is also implemented with a gender perspective since we believe that Development – Gender sensitivity = Underdevelopment. Our partner organisations are thus supported to develop gender sensitive worldviews and values.

We are currently steering a new initiative, having been selected to lead and coordinate the " Africanisation of gender thinking and practice" a project of the Transform Network. The purpose of the project is to develop an approach to

gender that is rooted in the local cultural context. This project will employ three strategies:

1) Research to identify tools and frameworks that are relevant to African women and men.
2) Lobbying and advocating for a policy environment that allows this African approach to flourish and
3) Capacity building of local organisations to operationalise this approach.

Within this context, we plan to develop a gender-training package based on the principles of popular education, geared towards a radical approach to challenging sexism, gender and other forms of oppression. This training aims at reclaiming the transformatory potential that gender analysis appears to be currently loosing.

Conclusion

The new language of aid and poverty reduction implies shifts in control and distribution of power, with more ownership by partner countries, local organisations and citizens. This however, requires that a relationship of trust and transparency is allowed to flourish, within and between aid agencies and their partners in Uganda.

This means narrowing the gap between words and actions. A "reduction process" that can in part happen (in both the North and in Uganda) if we start re-thinking old behaviours, procedures and organisational cultures that have kept us trapped into the old ways of doing things.

Chapter 6. The impact of Western management tools on Southern NGOs: the case of three "Transform" partners[14].

B. Mboizi, R. Adong, S. Basemera, A. Kasingye, A. Nanafuka (CDRN).

This case study focuses on reflections arising from the use of the different management tools and approaches that are the subject of this research. Three local NGOs were facilitated by a Ugandan training NGO (The Community Development Resource Network - CDRN), within the context of a regional "capacity-building" initiative, the Transform programme. This chapter highlights the experiences gained from recent work with three local partner organisations, which CDRN worked with using the "Transform process".

The key question underlying this case study is: how do donor requirements (as well as donors' and other development actors' accepted understanding of management "good practice) shape (or not) local NGO/CBO work on the ground, with their own beneficiaries. In particular, we attempt to explore three issues:

- What issues were these NGOs facing, and which were donor related?
- How has the Transform programme shaped the work of these three organisations?
- What challenges and lessons have emerged?

The case study explores the experiences of three local organisations, which were funded on the Transform programme by 2 UK-based Northern NGOs, both of which are case study NGOs in the research project.

1. About Transform

Transform is a non-profit making network of training and advocacy organisations. It consists of "training partners" in seven African countries and in the UK. Transform is not a donor-led programme (its direction and stewardship is the task of the network partners); it is however funded by three "consortium members"; Christian Aid, Oxfam, CAFOD and the programme, in addition to co-funding from the EU, has also been receiving local income in Africa.

Transform exists "to improve the effectiveness of the NGO sector in Africa, to better fight poverty", and in particular, "to facilitate organisational and

---

[14] This paper was originally prepared as a contribution to "Impact and Implications of Rational Management Tools on NGO Partnership and Practice" a research project run by Oxford Brooks University (UK) and partners in Uganda and South Africa. The full report arising from this initiative is available from CDRN.

institutional change of African NGOs to release their potential, achieve self-determination and combat poverty and its causes."[15]

CDRN is the Transform training partner in Uganda. CDRN's mandate is to promote the efforts of civil society in Uganda to reduce poverty among men, women and children, through organisational strengthening and institutional development. CDRN is strongly committed to making an effective contribution to righting social injustices which it believes arise from gender and other forms of inequality, poor governance, limited empowerment and denial of rights. We facilitate this agenda through training, research, lobbying and advocacy, and networking. Our participation in the Transform network is meant to help further this agenda and be more effective in engaging with poverty-related issues.

This paper describes experiences during a phase of the programme when local NGOs went through a two-year process, primarily targeted at NGO leaders, their organisations, and how they relate to their beneficiaries, their funders and the environment more generally. In so far as it works with approximately 10 local NGOs at a time in each country, the programme, as then offered[16], comprised:

- 4 common workshops for senior managers on thematic areas of relevance to NGO leadership.
- On going in-house sessions with consultants
- The development and implementation of an organisational strengthening plan ("Transform plan") annually by each organisation on the programme.
- Two annual grants to allow for the implementation of these transform plans.
- Activities to explore relationships with donors, and to look at other issues of an "institutional development" nature.

During the period under review, activities were broadly delivered in the following order:

- A "pre-visit" to test the possibility of a future relationship, to gauge the suitability of each organisation for the Transform programme and to establish its degree of interest. This was also an opportunity to outline the Transform process for any intending participating organisation.
- The pre-assessment set the stage for a five-day organisational self-assessment process, using the "Excellence Model" as template[17].

---

[15] Transform has also recently developed activities in the UK, working with British NGOs engaged in development work in Africa to help them reflect on and change unequal power relations between Northern and Southern NGOs.

[16] The Transform programme has now been reviewed and the process is no longer entirely comparable.

[17] This model was originally developed for British industry, later adapted for the UK voluntary sector, and further adapted by Transform. It was thought useful for voluntary sector organisations that want to approach organisational assessment and improvement systematically. See also the appendix.

- Over the two years, the partner was entitled to eleven consultancy days, upon request.
- Alongside these individual "in-house" activities, leaders of all participating organisations were brought together to attend four workshops designed to improve on specific skills, develop a "learning group" and appraise each others' Transform plans. The four workshops consisted of:
    1. A "Foundation workshop" where the process of organisational change and its management were introduced.
    2. A "Self-determination workshop" to help managers develop their autonomous leadership skills and those of their teams.
    3. A workshop to "Win Resources" with emphasis on local fundraising. This includes raising resources from the private sector, organizing special events and optimal use of existing resources.
    4. The last workshop, named "Looking to the future", was designed to reflect on impact issues (i.e. change at "field" programme or activities level, to reflect on the Transform programme to date at both organisational and programme levels, to fill in gaps and plan the future of the organisation beyond the Transform period.
- Besides the four structured workshops, programme participants were free to express other felt needs and seek support as a group. These additional activities constituted the foundation for an institutional development (ID) agenda

2. Three local participating organisations[18]

2.1. Angaleu

Angaleu ("Being healthy") was founded in 1991 with the aim of addressing the AIDS epidemic in an eastern district of Uganda. Its target population is people living with HIV/AIDS and affected families. Since its inception, Angaleu has largely confined itself to care and support work, primarily through counselling services. Angaleu has made good progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the District and has thus gained credibility among local communities.

Since its inception in 1991, Angaleu has received funding from various donors, including local government. The donors include Trinity Church in USA, UNDP, ICR, the Netherlands Embassy, Teso Development Trust and ActionAid Uganda. At the time of our interaction, however, funding had virtually "dried up".

2.1.1. The Transform experience.

The genesis of Angaleu's participation in the Transform programme was a pre-assessment visit by CDRN facilitators. The objectives of the visit were to introduce the programme, to gain a quick understanding of Angaleu in order to gauge whether they would benefit from Transform and to seek their

---

[18] Fictitious organisations' and donors' names are used throughout, for confidentiality's sake.

commitment to participate. The organisation was at that time undergoing serious difficulties, with virtually no resources to run its activities, as a result of which some staff members had left, and those who remained were working on a voluntary basis. Their expectation (unsurprisingly) was that the Transform programme, having engaged them at the request of their main funders, would provide them with financial resources.

They were told that Transform could improve their capacity to address their goals and to raise their own resources, but not fund directly. Angaleu however accepted (somewhat reluctantly) to be part of the programme with the hope that, one of their donors, AFD, would continue funding them beyond sponsoring them onto the Transform programme (as a result of their participation).

The team also learnt that AFD had commissioned an evaluation of the organisation, which had pointed out that its leadership was weak and was behind its woes. According to AFD, there was a need for a change of leadership in Angaleu: this greatly undermined the management of the organisation at that time.

The pre-visit thus raised a number of questions and worries within CDRN:

- Would the Transform process heal this very "sick" organisation?
- Given Angaleu's desperate need for financial resources, would it be committed to a programme that would immediately provide none?
- Since CDRN had been contracted by AFD to work with Angaleu, wouldn't they see CDRN as AFD's agent?

Despite these doubts, CDRN went ahead to work with Angaleu. One reason was that CDRN depended on recruiting a sufficient number of "clients" to cover its own costs[19]. Transform was an expensive programme to deliver[20] and this was a "client" coming with assured sponsorship onto the programme, sponsorship originating from, furthermore, one of CDRN's own core funders. Secondly, CDRN wanted to use this as a learning opportunity: the possibility of helping a dying organisation to get back on its feet looked plausible…

After the pre-visit, CDRN facilitated a five-day organisation assessment workshop, whose aim was to enable Angaleu reflect critically on its current status and to design improvement measures. This exercise revealed that Angaleu did not have a clear/focused strategy, and consequently its projects/ programmes lacked coherence and relevance. In addition, Angaleu's leadership was found to be weak and its organisational structure did not clearly define the roles and responsibilities of staff members and the board.

---

[19] CDRN derives its income from three major sources: donors who respond favourably to proposals introduced to them, fees on commissioned work, and charges for the sale of miscellaneous services (such as selling publications).
[20] The programme was expensive both in terms of time and cost. The 2-year process was time demanding for both CDRN and the partner organisation. The cost was also high because of the international structure of the programme and provision of grants to local partners (about 6,500 pounds per organisation for two years)

Despite the achievements of this workshop, facilitating the Excellence Model proved challenging. The majority of the participants could not comprehend the framework because it was the first time they were engaging with it and because it proved too complex for participants who were not highly literate. They could not fully explore the cause and effect relationships/linear thinking, which this model emphasizes. This rendered the process time consuming, even tedious, and difficult for both participants and facilitators. It became apparent that the complex nature of this model (emphasizing systematic thinking) could not augur well with those who are not highly literate and who live in a culture of oral and visual communication, powerfully expressed through art, music, and traditions of story telling.

This however raised another question for CDRN: Was the Excellence Model the right framework for Angaleu, given that it was on the verge of collapse? This was an organisation that was thinking about survival - and this had to be addressed pretty fast. How helpful was the framework in helping them address their immediate problem? Another strategy was consequently developed: this involved a brainstorm session around the key challenges the organisation was facing, ranking them, analyzing their root causes and developing a plan of action. In this way, Angaleu was able to zero down on the key issues it was struggling with. The main areas that the plan focused on were strategic planning, programme development, leadership development, capacity-building for staff and board members, developing other policies and systems, and establishing a participatory monitoring and evaluation system.

Angaleu's management later underwent two common Transform workshops. The first workshop, "Self-determination" focused on enhancing the capacity of the leaders to become self-determined and to steer their organisation forward in a purposeful way. The subject matter of this workshop included strategic leadership, personal development, managing people and managing donor relations. The second workshop equipped Angaleu with skills and capability to raise resources in a strategic manner, especially with regard to local fund-raising and optimum use and management of resources. Two staff and two board members attended both workshops.

These were rated as highly successful, mostly because of the facilitation style that was informal and highly interactive. The thrust was to challenge participants to evaluate themselves and their ability to steer their organisations forward, and to develop a culture of reflection and action, to empower and sustain their organisations.

Another dimension…

But a different reality transpired during our engagement with Angaleu and AFD: as we noted above, an organisational assessment/ evaluation of the agency had been undertaken in July 2000, by external consultants, with financial support from AFD. This stressed that the organisation suffered from

some key managerial and programming gaps, which needed to be addressed in order for it to be effective in its work.

The Angaleu staff and board members were not happy with the outcome of this evaluation. They reacted and sent a report to AFD and CDRN (this happened when they were already on the Transform programme), indicating that, in their view, the AFD consultants were biased because a former staff member of Angaleu who now works with AFD - but holds grudge against the current leadership - had influenced them. At that time he was AFD's programme officer in a neighbouring district and therefore a key link between AFD and Angaleu. The latter also strongly felt that AFD's decision to drop Angaleu from the list of organisations for their 10-year partnership was partly a result of this critical report by the consultants.

We recall that Angaleu was recommended by AFD to join the Transform programme in order that some of the challenges arising form the evaluation report be addressed. Indeed, it appears that AFD's decision to sponsor Angaleu on the Transform programme was meant to confirm its own diagnosis of the problem (reflecting the conclusions of the evaluation), but also to legitimise their decision of discontinuing financial support to Angaleu. At the time, since AFD's view was that Angaleu had a weak leadership, the solution to their problem laid in leadership change.

This influenced AFD's expectations from CDRN as far as Angaleu's participation in the Transform programme was concerned. First and foremost, AFD expected the Transform process to endorse and address Angaleu's perceived leadership problems. CDRN was expected to implement this agenda. AFD staff visited CDRN on two occasions to share their concerns about Angaleu. In these meetings, it was clear that they were quite sceptical about Angaleu's future. Secondly, it appears that AFD used the Transform process as a last resort for Angaleu (or even as a "smart" way of deleting it from its list of local partners).

Finally, CDRN was requested to write a confidential report to AFD about Angaleu. This report was meant to help AFD decide whether to resume funding for Angaleu. Given (amongst other factors) CDRN's own funding from AFD, this placed us in a difficult situation. CDRN however declined to provide the report, as this was felt to go against our ethics of working with local partner organisations. Instead, we shared Angaleu's Transform plan with AFD making clear our approach of working with local organisations (using a process approach, which strives to being dynamic, flexible, long-term and empowering). Since then, AFD has not followed up with CDRN to check on Angaleu's progress. Currently AFD is not funding Angaleu and neither has its leadership changed.

2.1.2. The Outcomes

At the start of the Transform process, Angaleu was on the verge of collapse due to lack of funds and weak leadership. The current situation allows for

some hope: Angaleu has developed a fund-raising strategy, which is guiding it to raise resources. A few months after the last workshop, Angaleu raised funds from 2 new donors. Angaleu is once again active on the ground.

Part of this turn-around might be due to the leadership training that has enhanced Angaleu's management and the way in which they engage with other stakeholders and hence their ability to raise resources (from a desperate, negative self-image to more visionary, positive and self determined leaders).

This may also be due to the Transform process having facilitated Angaleu to become a more effective developmental organisation. Prior to this, it was welfare oriented, providing food, caring for and counselling patients. AIDS is now viewed as a development issue with social, economic, political and cultural implications: Angaleu has developed a two-year integrated development plan encompassing this new perspective.

Staff empowerment has also been a key product of the Transform process. Employees have participated in the development of a strategic and operational plan for Angaleu. Others have attended training in participatory approaches. In the process, they have not only acquired skills but also clarity and ownership of Angaleu's new mandate. Discussions have also been held on ways to improve on Angaleu's field methodology, making it more participatory.

Whether Angaleu's partnership with AFD will be revived or strengthened is yet to be seen. While Angaleu's leadership has become more vibrant and self-determined, it appears that AFD has not stepped in to renew its partnership with the organisation, although AFD staffs currently pay occasional visits to Angaleu.

Instead, AFD has opened an operational programme in Angaleu's district of operation, which is seen as competing not only with Angaleu, but also with other local organisations. This of course raises a deeper question for AFD: what is its ultimate goal and what image does it want to project? Does it want to strengthen or to out-compete local organisations? It appears that AFD has not thought critically about how to position itself (either as a capacity builder of local organisations, a donor or an operational agency) and what it should be doing with local NGOs. This clearly has implications for the survival of 'home grown' civil society organisations.

Fortunately, as noted, Angaleu has received funding from another two sources and the organisation is again on its feet. Although not AFD funded, Angaleu currently appears more independent and confident in driving its own agenda than previously!

The most helpful tools that led to these outcomes were brainstorming sessions, participatory ranking tools, group discussions and mentoring sessions for the leadership. In addition, the facilitation process was

participatory, flexible and people-centred, nurturing a culture of trust and respect for the participants.

2.2. Kwikate

Kwikate ("Let's work together") is a non-governmental, Christian inter-denominational organisation working in Eastern Uganda and whose mission is "to holistically support women, children and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs) to realise their potential and have control over their lives". Its key strategies are capacity-building, Christian faith-based work and creating an enabling/supportive environment for its target group. Their capacity building work involves the provision of welfare services (agricultural inputs, food, school fees) to their clients, as well as sensitisation workshops.

Kwikate's activities include economic empowerment of women under difficult circumstances, child advocacy, support to PLWAs as well as to orphans and needy children through education sponsorship and household Income Generating Activities (IGAs) to improve their quality of life. In addition, it strengthens the capacity of community structures such as Community Mobilization Teams, Community Counselling Helpers and women groups to support and care for needy persons

Kwikate's main source of income has been Tear Fund UK, which has been very supportive and consistent in providing support in the areas of women, children and to cover administration costs. Save The Children Norway, supports the Child advocacy and Participation Programme. ActionAid Uganda has supported Kwikate as external support agency for the CBOs it works with. Other funders are United Kingdom Evangelical Trust (UKET), Judas Trust, and Canada Fund for local initiative, UNDP, some churches, individuals as well as the district health services office.

2.2.1 The Transform experience

In 2000, CDRN was requested by AFD to provide capacity building services for Kwikate, another of its local partners. Prior to this, Kwikate had undergone an external evaluation with the support of Tear Fund. The evaluation recommended that Kwikate should undergo a relatively long term organisational and programme development support process.

Unlike Angaleu, however, Kwikate was then a vibrant organisation, readily interested in the Transform programme, having shown interest in this initiative long before AFD opted to support them. This was reflected in their active participation in the programme. Kwikate implemented all transformation activities, as per their Plan. AFD sponsored Kwikate on the programme with the aim of developing a long-term partnership with them.

Kwikate went through a process similar to Angaleu's. The first intervention was a pre-visit, followed by a five-day organisation assessment exercise and

finally three management workshops. In addition, Kwikate was provided with in-house consultancy services in the form of a strategic planning workshop.

Difficulties were encountered during the organisation assessment and strategic planning workshops. Many of the participants could not comprehend the process. In the first workshop, a combination of tools were used, starting with the Excellence Model and proceeding to the "levels of complexity[21]" and "SWOT analysis[22]" when the first model proved difficult (to community members who were semi-literate).

The Excellence Model did not take root in Kwikate because it was not very relevant to their culture. This is premised on church and extended family system values, which emphasise love, concern and harmony as a way of life. These influences how people are recruited, relate and perform. For example, when a staff member is ill, field activities are sometimes cancelled and Kwikate's vehicle is used to take him/her to the hospital. This culture did not fit well with the Excellence Model (with its origin in a business culture that emphasises efficiency, targets, excellence, and quality.)

A similar situation arose during the strategic planning workshop. The workshop attracted community members, Kwikate staff and board. Participants found it difficult to understand and engage with the strategic planning model. Some were not aware of current environmental trends (donor trends, development thinking, CSO trends etc.), an essential ingredient for "proper" strategic planning. The model not only inhibited participation but also reinforced the dis-empowerment of some members. The facilitators had to adapt the workshop methods and process to suit the needs of the participants. These included group-based methods and the use of diagrams and pictorials. Group discussions were useful in helping the participants to learn about environmental trends they were unaware of. Participants were thus helped to develop a broad strategy framework for their organisation rather than a fully-fledged strategic plan. A small team was selected to continue with the process (developing a strategic and operational plan) with the facilitators' help.

This raised a number of questions/challenges for the facilitators; was it realistic to involve non-literate community members in the workshop? If they were not involved, how could their needs and perspectives inform Kwikate's activities? Was this model relevant to the context of Kwikate, especially its target group? How could participation be enhanced?

This process would have been more successful if community members had been consulted in a different forum. Their expectations and interests would

---

[21] This highlights an organisation as a complex living organism with six levels of complexity. Each level has a greater or lesser effect on the others. They include physical level, procedures/systems/structure, relationships, values/culture/policies. This type of diagnosis can, however, be rather inward-looking, focusing on the internal environment of the organisation and less on its external environment.

[22] SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Identifying these can help an organisation plan how to use and build on its strengths and opportunities, while addressing its weaknesses and threats. This can, however, result in a somewhat static analysis.

then have been incorporated in the main workshop. A rigorous and difficult strategic planning exercise can be wasteful if the organisation does not have the capacity to understand and deliver it, resulting in a well-crafted document that is seen but never put to active use. Small local organisations thus need to be facilitated slowly and gradually to think strategically (develop a strategy framework) rather than be rushed to develop fashionable strategic and operational plans.

2.2.2. Outcomes of the Transform process

Prior to joining the Transform programme, Kwikate had a top-bottom and welfare methodology that was causing dependency and dis-empowering their target group. There has been a gradual move away from this. Kwikate's strategy now for instance aims at empowering women groups to become agents of poverty reduction. Their strategy has also changed, from addressing the symptoms of gender oppression (practical gender needs) to addressing root causes. This arises from its mandate and vision, which have been engendered.

Kwikate's management has been empowered to provide an enabling and liberated leadership to the organisation. Other employees have started to realize their role and potential in the organisation. The organisational structure has been reviewed and roles clearly understood by all. This has created some sense of accountability that was in the past lacking.

Finally, Kwikate has developed a strategic plan that has given it a focused and clear sense of direction. This is accompanied by a two-year operational plan, which is currently being implemented. However, Kwikate has a limited capacity to operationalise the plans.

Having completed their "Transform process", however, and in spite of AFD's intention mentioned above, the partnership with AFD is still hazy, exemplified by erratic contacts between the two organisations and little or no follow-ups by AFD. Kwikate has tried on several occasions to request support from AFD, but this has not as yet yielded positive results.

To conclude, the Transform programme has helped Kwikate to become more active and focused in addressing the root causes of gender oppression. Its programmes are based on the life cycle approach to addressing women's oppression. This approach is underpinned by the fact that women are oppressed from the cradle to the grave. However, at each stage of life (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age) oppression manifests itself differently, requiring specific types of response. Three aspects from the Transform programme helped them in this respect: gender training for the organisation, the self- determination workshop for the leaders and elements of the strategic thinking process.

2.3. CCID

CCID is the development arm of a large Catholic Diocese in North Eastern Uganda. Initially involved in welfare and relief services during the war period in that part of the country (in the 1980s), CCID later took on the role of promoting development work. Its current mission is to empower the communities in the region to achieve sustainable socio-economic development, targeting deprived households, through various initiatives (food security through the transfer of modern farming techniques, environmental protection work, community-based health care promotion, etc.).

By 1998, CCID was a very large organisation, with operations decentralized in four districts, and employing 140 paid staff, involved in a wide range of activities (agriculture, forestry, human and veterinary medicine, social work, running a large training and conference centre, credit management, etc.) At the time of our interaction, CCID was running a budget well in excess of 1 billion shillings.

2.3.1 The Transform experience

CDRN had approached one of the British funding agencies supporting Transform in an effort to identify potential partners to be seconded to the programme. This had led to the selection of CCID.

CDRN first organised a half-day pre-assessment meeting, using a ''spider web" assessment tool[23], which helped to start understanding the organisation in terms of strengths, weaknesses and culture, as gauged by the participants themselves.

This was followed by a five-day organisational assessment, which included Board Members and Staff. Various tools were used to collect information, including a "Mode of Transport" tool[24] to highlight the different perspectives of the different stakeholders on their own organisation. A timeline was used for understanding organisational trends and to get new comers and facilitators on board. As with the other organisations on the programme, the overall analysis was done using the Excellence Model, leading to a ranking exercise to prioritise problems. In CCID's case, the model was more successful because the participants were highly literate and the organisation was much bigger and developed compared to the first two. The outcome of the process was the development of a one-year Transform Plan (mostly focusing on internal capacity issues, such as communications systems and improving on staff motivation), followed by a second Plan, in year 2 (with more emphasis on institutional issues, e.g. looking at impact issues at community level).

---

[23] A visually simple way to depict organisational strengths and weaknesses, along the legs of a "spider", each leg being graduated to represent a specific indicator.
[24] The organisation is viewed as a mode of transport with the different parts interacting to steer it forward. When there is a problem with one part of the organisation, it affects the whole.

The process thus heavily relied on the use of the Excellence Model, a useful tool for collecting baseline information and making a detailed assessment of the organisation's ability to meet its objectives. Interestingly, the assessment was generally positive: it however overlooked the strategic issue as to whether the current operations were sustainable or not. Further, a strategic model used in the Self-determination workshop assumed that moving from projects to programme would lead to sustainability and impact at community level. Yet this was not sufficient to help the organisation strengthen its community-level work.

The Organisational Assessment process was also a challenge as our partner was struggling with issues of self-assessment and evaluation. The leadership perceived the process as threatening while staff saw it as an opportunity to speak out. These differences made the first two days difficult, until a greater degree of comfort could be instilled in all during the subsequent days. Team and trust building exercises contributed to this.

A large organisation, such as CCID, stretched CDRN's skills: the organisation needed more experienced facilitators than we were at the time, who would have been able to see the 'whole' and not just parts. Looking at the 'parts' (at CCID's secretariat) was only touching the tip of the iceberg. The limited scope of the facilitators prevented them from sufficiently addressing programme design and community related issues. Further, we did not have sufficient capacity to manage some other issues. The projects were many and scattered in four districts. The head office was very large in terms of staff and their activities. Workshop participation had to be restricted. On reflection, we feel that the Transform process was probably not the right one for this size of organisation.

But there was another challenge too: CDRN's role was to facilitate a capacity-building process which had been jointly developed by the entire Transform Network. It was meant to be a supportive role characterized by participatory assessments, training, mentoring, follow-ups and consulting processes. As mentioned above, the programme included a grant (£3,200 pa.) to assist participating organisations in implementing their Transform plan. CDRN was ultimately responsible for managing this grant. In the mind of our partners, they initially saw CDRN as "donors" or, at best, as middlemen linking them to their donor.

During the initial stages of the process, CCID exhibited a measure of suspicion: could CDRN in effect be used by their donors to gather sensitive information that would later be shared with them? These fears were especially prominent during the five-day organisational assessment process: CCID found it difficult to "open up" during the first two days. It took some time to build confidence and re-assure the participants that CDRN was acting independently of their donors and that such a relationship was meant to be supportive, rather than undermining.

The challenge for CDRN was to keep everything in balance. It was important to work with donors so that they could support the local partners better. On

the other hand we strongly believed the process would enhance the release of partners' potential in delivering services to their beneficiaries.

Relationships with donors were especially important to CCID at the time: we found this organisation at its peak in terms of funding and number of projects / programmes. After a year so, they started facing a crisis with their major funder. Demands were being made to scale down, and funding was greatly reduced: a number of staff left and others were laid off because the organisation could not pay salaries. This major donor itself was going through a merger, entailing a "rationalisation" of three previously independent European funding agencies active in Uganda, with the number of local partners being reduced, geographical concentration being sought, and other activities suffering budgetary cuts.

This also placed CDRN in a difficult situation: there was no attempt to help CCID scale down because it was not seen at the time to be in CCID's interest: the focus was on seeing CCID get better at what they were doing, while the donors were interested in budget cuts through reduced activities. Further, donors were pressuring CCID to distance itself from its parent Church, seen as inefficient and dedicated to spreading services equally over large areas, rather than allowing for the preferred area-focus approach of the donors.

CDRN took on the challenge to stand by CCID: it could call us at any time, ask for advice and consultation days shifted from physical visits to telephone discussions. This strengthened our relationship and confidence in each other. CDRN went a step further by taking the debate up with the donor. After long negotiations, the donor eventually adopted a more conciliatory position and a measure of long-term funding resumed.

2.3.2 Outcomes of the Transform process

The challenges and successes mentioned above cannot wholly be attributed to the Transform programme because the organisation had earlier experienced other capacity building initiatives. Based on reflections and through informal interactions, however, some general observations and speculations can be made. The challenges and successes facing CCID were of a mixed nature. They range from the Transform model of capacity building, facilitation skills, OD issues to donor pressures.

Improvement in the organisational climate: The Transform model was directed towards improving the effectiveness of organisations with a bias on internal capacity. As far as effectiveness is concerned, the organisation improved on its management style. A management approach, which provided space for staff to participate in the most important issues facing their organisation, was readily accepted. A general understanding of 'where they were' and 'where they were going' and the criteria for making certain decisions were clarified.

Difficulties with the concept of integration: In the name CCID, 'I' stands for integrated, with reference to services to local communities. This proved

difficult to put into practice and delivery remained sectoral, water, primary health care, etc. (providing for highly specialised quality services that are financially more costly and consume much community and organisation time than if a more integrated community delivery approach is adopted).

Ability to respond to donor demands: Knowing that donors are moving away from service delivery, CCID is now both "operational" and "non-operational". Some initiatives, where donors still have some interest at grass-root level, have been retained, while capacity-building work is now being undertaken for numerous emerging Community-based Organisations.

This is a noteworthy achievement given that, when joining the Transform Programme, CCID was struggling with a donor-imposed requirement to drastically reduce large budgets, whose impact at community level was felt to be limited. This was followed with budget cuts, while donors insisted on mergers, strategic sustainability plans, scaling down, and restructuring, to mention a few. This affected the pace and general running of the organisation resulting in the resignation of several senior staff members and, generally, into a smaller organisation.

Support of the leader to the programme: Throughout the two years the leader was supportive and enthusiastic to see changes take place in the organisation. He availed himself for all the time we needed him. Our relationship has deepened with involvement in other ventures two years after Transform.

3. Lessons/emerging issues

3.1. The Transform process.

Some of these positive outcomes could be attributed to the following factors:

1. Using a combination of tools: this helped to reinforce their inherent individual strengths, while minimising some of their weaknesses. Realising that the Excellence Model was rather static, complex and not very environmentally sensitive, other more dynamic tools were used, such as timelines and the strategic thinking model. Such combinations also helped in using tools to guide thinking and analysis rather than getting imprisoned by them.

2. Using a process approach (informal, flexible and dynamic) rather than a rigid blueprint approach. This approach tallies with CDRN's philosophy and values, since we view development as a dynamic, long-term and people-centred process that cannot be achieved in a formalised and quick course of action.

3. Building a relationship of trust and confidentiality with partners, so that the facilitating organisation is not seen as a donor agency. This was done in

the spirit of developing authentic partnership-a relationship that is humanising and not demeaning to local partners.

While these positive features were noticed, constraints were equally evident:

1. The Transform process is time demanding (over a two-year period) and involves paper work, "professionalisation" and systems work. A majority of the organisations on the programme echoed this concern. They felt that this to a large extent replaces time that should be spent with communities hence potentially constituting a hindrance to organisations addressing their external social goals. This is reinforced by the fact that professionalisation (of local NGOs) sometimes alienates them from their target group, making them more responsive to donors than to their constituency.

2. The Transform programme is derived from a Western frame of reference. Some of the tools are complex for staff to learn and use (hence their failure to institutionalise these tools in most cases), and can be culturally and conceptually alien. This inhibits real participation and innovation because the concepts and logic are foreign. Angaleu's experience clearly reflects this challenge, where participants found it close to impossible to use the Excellence Model. The inability of organisations to understand and use Western management tools is seen by donors as a weakness and can fuel a lack of confidence in funding them. The relationship problem that arose between Angaleu and AFD clearly reflects this (Angaleu's inability to produce fashionable logframes, reporting procedures etc.). Much as CDRN trains its partners in logframes, reporting procedures, and monitoring and evaluation, we try to emphasise a participatory and process approach in the use of these tools. For small local organisations that cannot engage with the above tools effectively, CDRN trains them in participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation tools, which are simpler to use and more appropriate to the local context.

4. The Excellence Model and other tools find their origins in the business sector, with a tradition of profit maximisation, control, rational planning, and measurability that carry the values of social efficiency rather than social transformation. Yet most developmental organisations are meant to foster social transformation, promoting external social goals in the public sphere. Does this not therefore denote fixing square pegs into round holes? This could have affected the impact of the Transform programme - promoting social efficiency at the expense of social transformation.

3.2. Assumptions behind the "Transform approach"

Behind this balance sheet, lie deeper-rooted assumptions:

1. Most Western management tools currently in use are being driven by values of "people participation" and involvement in activities as a way to achieve effective development. Top-down approaches are discredited: "participation is in". What, however, is the local cultural context for such

"participation"? Furthermore, the language stresses participation but many demands and ideas continue to be imposed from "above". Many of the tools used in the Transform program thus originate from the West.

2. Organisations with different mandates, missions, aims and objectives, working in a wide diversity of cultures and contexts, are assumed to require similar methods for naming and addressing their ailments. It should however be remembered that no tool is neutral, each carries within it concepts and perspectives that may conflict with other people's views and hence fail to address the issues organisations are grappling with.

3. How do some partners view the Transform programme? And what are donors' intentions on getting their partners onto this and similar other initiative? In most cases, donors subtly force their partners' participation in such initiatives. Our first encounter with Angaleu showed that they were interested in funds to run their activities, rather than a two-year "Transform process". Furthermore, some donors seek to shape organisations to suit their own agenda by telling the facilitating organisation what "the problem" is and what should be done.

4. The design of the Transform Programme is based on the assumption that if the inputs are correct, with the use of good processes, good results should ensue. Given our local context where the critical funding dimension is never assured on a long-term basis, however, and where communities are not empowered to speak out or assert themselves as to what works and what does not work, this assumption may not be valid. Being part of the Transform programme, CDRN can be seen as a transmission belt of this assumption. We have however been able to adapt these tools to suit local organisations - by making them more participatory, flexible and process-based. Using models that are relevant to the local context may be more appropriate than using Western models, which are designed to respond to Western contexts.

5. Sustainability is also not only about funding issues but has to do with community attitudes, appropriateness of the services offered, time investment, ownership (which has much to do with how a project is initiated), benefits achieved by beneficiaries and gender implications.

6. Our experience has also shown that local partners' absorptive capacity is constrained: time is short, money is short, other local needs often assume precedence to "management workshops". Low literacy levels also limit local organisations from comprehending and owning complicated processes.

4. To conclude: some broader reflections

1.   Western management tools and practice can derail the implementation of activities. Many development initiatives nowadays come with a well-

funded "capacity-building package". It is not uncommon to see top management spending week after week in 'workshops and meetings', while their actual jobs are left undone. The skills thus acquired are rarely put to use: a manager may, for instance, attend a strategic planning workshop for seven days while his/her organisation's budget for the following year will still include a strategic planning consultant. At the end of a project period, several activities are therefore reported undone because the 'officer' was away on training. Capacity-building activities thus hinder the organisation from concentrating on community level work.

2.   Management tools and practices can actually increase the gap between local NGOs and beneficiary communities. Tools that aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations rarely address the way organisations work to improve conditions at community level. Community members are not seen as fellow stakeholders to the extent that, if an allowance is paid out to a community, it must be followed with long written explanations. The strategic planning process with Kwikate exemplifies how a western management tool could reinforce the marginalisation of beneficiary communities. In this workshop community members' participation was inhibited because of the complexity of the tool (for strategic planning) in view of their low literacy levels.

3.   Management tools can isolate local development organisations from each other. Many times the use of different approaches triggers competition between local NGOs. While international NGOs fight for geographical boundaries, local organisations compete for donors. Information is protected so that "your neighbour does not copy what you are doing or else they will snatch your donor".

4.   Donor pressure can lead to fragmented or sectorially oriented approaches (or at best parallel, but disjointed projects). Different donors have different practices: several donors may fund organisation X but none may care to know how "their" project can support others, let alone how staff share out their time among these projects. This is illustrated by different reporting demands, budgetary requirements, etc.

5.   Management science and its tools can be restrictive. Tools are usually aimed at improving organisations, sometimes to the detriment of the type and quality of development that goes along with programme activities. Where this happens, organisations have flourished with skills and facilities, while services to communities have remained unchanged and poverty has persisted.

6.   Management practices highlight capacity building, which leads to poaching of staff. When staff get adequately or overly skilled, they become eligible to "poaching" by other local (and especially) international NGOs, through higher salaries. Angaleu and Kwikate have suffered as a result of poaching. When Angaleu started facing financial problems, many of their staff left for international organisations.

7.   Donors' influence on "capacity-builders". Donors' influence on intermediary organisations, such as CDRN, often exerts itself: donors may wish their diagnosis of partners' "ills" to be fully taken into account; and want their needs to be reflected in any capacity-building initiative to try and control their partners. At worse, the donors appoint their consultants to intervene entirely on their behalf, as the Angaleu example demonstrates: prior to the start of the Transform programme, AFD had already performed its own diagnosis of "the problem" and expected CDRN to implement the appropriate solution.

8.   Ideological underpinning. A market-based model of development informs many Western management tools. It emphasizes social efficiency rather than social transformation. However, what ultimately matters most is the ideology and values of the facilitators and their organisations. Do they stand for social transformation or social efficiency? A radical ideology can transform even the most rigid tools in practice: the most important tool in an intervention is the facilitator and his/her values! In the cases described above, we tried to introduce a flexible and innovative facilitation process to transform the excellence and strategic planning models into more radical and culturally appropriate tools.

9.   A new Transform programme. The Transform programme has now been reviewed and the process is no longer entirely comparable. This has been done to respond to some of the challenges met in the process of accomplishing the programme e.g. cost, time-consuming, complex tools/driven by social efficiency values, using one package for all types of organisations as if they were homogenous, etc. The programme has been divided in two parts, each of a year's duration. The first, "Building Blocks for Change", targets young organisations that are still struggling to get established-but do not have the requisite foundation (the blocks include People Management, Gender Equity and Social Justice, Project Planning, Fund-raising, Financial Management, Governance and Strategic Planning). The second part of the programme, "Organisational Transformation" targets fairly complex and developed organisations that are grappling with leadership and impact issues. It aims at re-engineering the culture of organisations. The Excellence Model, though not abandoned entirely by CDRN, is no longer emphasised in the Transform programme.

The model is based on the following premise: Customer Satisfaction, People Satisfaction **and** Impact on society **is achieved through** Leadership **driving** Policy and strategy, People Management, Resources **and** Processes, **leading ultimately to** Business Results. **Each of the elements is a criterion that can be used to assess the organisations' progress towards Excellence.**

THE EXCELLENCE MODEL

Enablers
Results

Processes

		People Satisfaction	
	People Management		Business Results
Leader-ship	Policy and Strategy	Processes	Customer Satisfaction
	Resources		Impact on Society
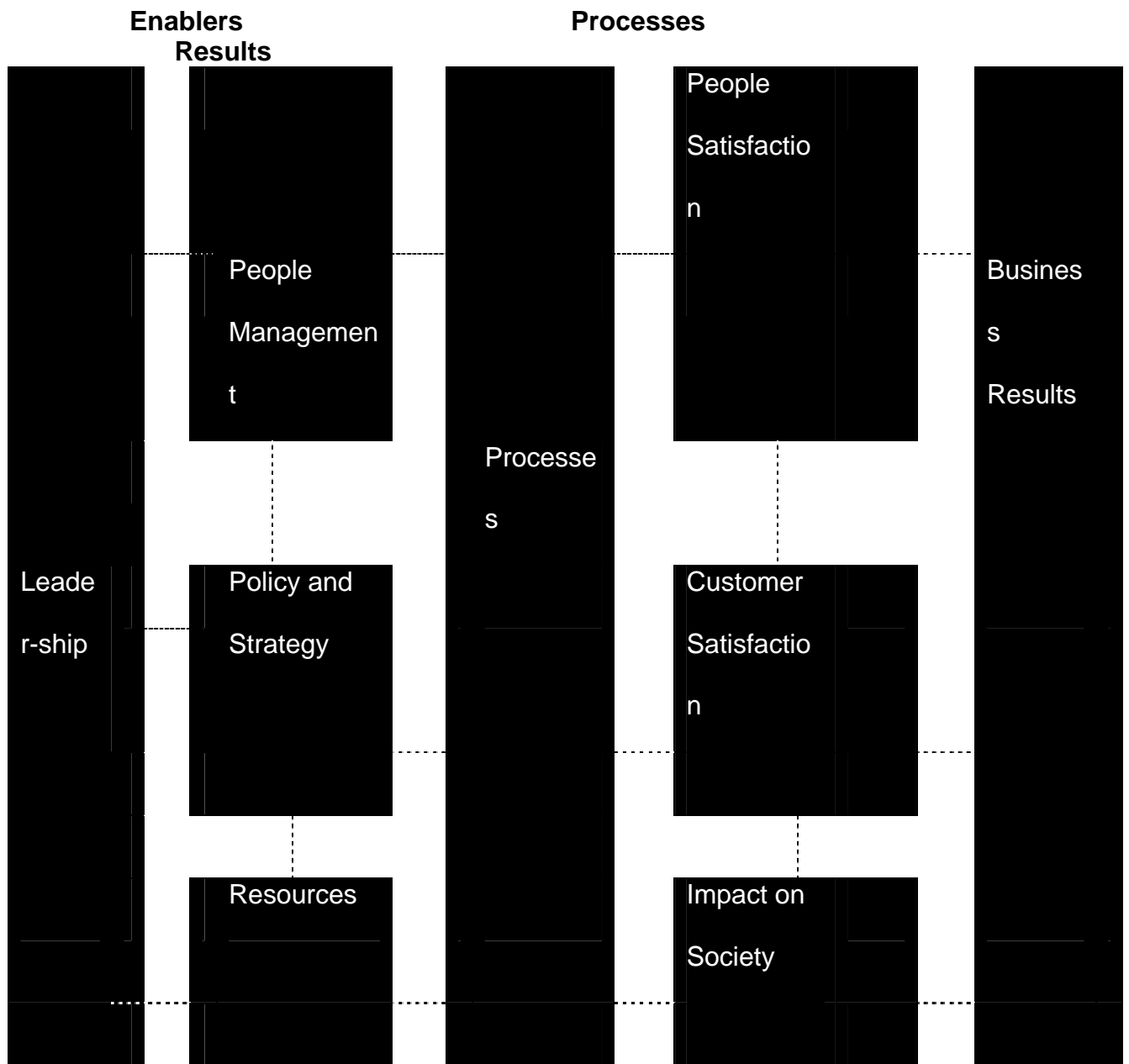
The model is divided into three inter-linked parts (enablers, processes and results). The enabler side consists of "integrated strategy and

purpose", "enabling leadership", "people management", "donor relations", etc. The process side consists of elements or levers that translate enablers into results e.g. "communication", "planning/monitoring and evaluation", "financial management", etc. The results side comprises of the outcomes and the impact of the organisation. Enablers are concerned with how the organisation runs. Results are concerned with what the organisation achieves.

CDRN modified this model by facilitating organisations to identity their own indicators-which are relevant and culturally appropriate instead of using the criteria, as originally developed. Participants then assess their organisation against the indicators and proceed to identify critical issues that the organisation must work on. This process is empowering both for the participants and their organisation. It provides baseline information for the organisation/programme, and inculcates a culture of excellence and learning. However this model has a number of limitations; it is a static tool, too complex for small organisations and forces local people to start thinking systematically (not systemically) and is underpinned by values of excellence and efficiency at the expense of transformation.

Chapter 7. The untold story: competing cultures in development partnerships[25].
The UPPAP Partnership: "A new way of working in development"?*([26])*

John De Coninck (CDRN), with Meenu Vadera (ActionAid Uganda)[27]

Introduction

UPPAP (the Uganda Participatory Poverty Process) is an on-going initiative of the Uganda Government, under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Initiated in 1997, UPPAP meant, amongst others, to enhance knowledge on the nature and causes of poverty (as articulated by the poor), to generate strategies for action, and to establish a capacity for participatory policy research in Uganda.

After almost six years of existence, it is generally accepted that UPPAP has been a "success story", as evidenced by its contribution to enhancing the centrality of poverty concerns in Uganda (with public resource re-allocation towards poverty reduction initiatives) and by its contribution to a widened consensus on poverty reduction strategies. It is also billed as an example of a successful partnership between Government, donors and civil society organisations (CSOs).

But was this story one of unmitigated success? How participatory was the process? And who benefited from UPPAP? This case study attempts to explore these and related questions.

It concludes that UPPAP achieved much and many positive lessons can be learnt from this. As an example of a partnership between donors, Government and CSOs, however, the picture is mixed. On the one hand, UPPAP has provided the various "partners" involved with an invaluable experience of working together, bringing in different perspectives, as well as a recognition of each other's worth.

On the other hand, for CSOs, the "UPPAP partnership" has remained substantially devoid of contents: if they learned much from UPPAP, there was a constant contradiction between management style and exclusion from decisions, and the objectives and participatory nature of the project. This reflected the various agenda, cultures and values of the different partners, the lack of skills in establishing and managing "partnerships" (in spite of the current fashion for such arrangements) and the fact that this was a partnership between very unequal parties: a monolithic Government actor,

---

supported by donors, faced fragmented CSOs experiencing considerable skills and "vision" deficits.

To what extent a sub-contractual arrangement can accommodate a genuinely participatory process: are we faced here with an insoluble contradiction between ends and means? Can a participatory process occur within a tightly regulated framework, where participation can all too quickly be reduced to rhetoric: could it be seen as a populist measure giving credence to existing policies (bar a small adjustment here and there…), which in the final count, may not entail much change in the livelihood of those UPPAP was meant to listen to?

The chapter finally argues that the idea of such a tripartite partnership was very much owned by one party, the donors, and sold very well in international circles. For the CSOs (for this is a story from a CSO perspective), who had to live and learn the hard way, the experience of participating in a relationship where power dynamics were skewed meant that important lessons had to be learnt.

One is the danger of CSO "participation" and "partnership" being used to legitimise processes and policies that may not be apparent at the outset, such as the privatisation of basic services - health, water, education - in the name of "listening to the voices of the poor". The main lesson that the UPPAP story can therefore bring home is the importance of retaining and even reclaiming autonomous spaces for the CSOs; to bring back the politics of power into the concept of "participation" and to remind ourselves that the poor are not poor because the policy makers don't know what causes poverty.

1. UPPAP: "A success story".

UPPAP (originally the Uganda Participatory Poverty Project, later Process) is an on-going initiative of the Uganda Government, under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED).

As for other Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) that have now become an essential component of national policy making (and often a donor condition) elsewhere amongst poorer countries, Uganda's PPA was designed to "bring the voices of the poor" into the Government's policy and planning processes. More specifically, the objectives of this project were stated at the outset in 1997 as:

- Enhancing knowledge on the nature and causes of poverty (as articulated by the poor) and to generate (as well as apply) strategies for action.
- Strengthening district capacity in planning and implementation for poverty reduction, through enhanced use of participatory methods.
- Developing a national system for participatory and qualitative poverty monitoring.
- Establishing a capacity for participatory policy research in Uganda.

This was to be achieved through a three-year process, comprising field research in two "rounds" in 21 districts (and 96 community sites), various dissemination activities, support to community action plans (CAPs) at the research sites and assistance to local planning processes.

After almost six years of existence, it is generally accepted that UPPAP has been a "success story", as evidenced by:

- Its successful investigations of policy and programme-related issues of relevance to poverty reduction, beyond a narrower investigation of poverty, its causes and consequences.
- Its contribution to enhancing the centrality of poverty concerns in Uganda and to the need for long-term - rather than one-off - participatory processes on poverty research.
- Its impact at the policy level, with public resource re-allocation towards poverty reduction initiatives.
- Its contribution to a widened consensus between different actors on poverty reduction strategies.

The reasons for this success have been variously described as:

- A receptive policy and institutional environment.
- A design that linked research to policy processes and to the policy environment.
- A successful and flexible partnership between various parties (including government, donors, civil society actors and other research institutions), under the leadership of Government.
- The location of UPPAP within Government and, more specifically, within MFPED.

But was this story one of unmitigated success? How participatory was the process? And who benefited from UPPAP? This case study attempts to explore these and related questions.

2. UPPAP's origins.

The intent of UPPAP stemmed from the convergence of several factors:

a. A view held by donors (especially DFID[28] and the World Bank) that the Uganda context lent itself to a PPA, highlighted by "the open nature of the poverty dialogue in Uganda"[29], at a time when such an initiative had only occurred in a few other African countries, since circa 1993 (Ghana, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya).

---

[28] Britain's Department for International Development, with the World Bank, OXFAM and UNDP, the early UPPAP official funders.
[29] DFID draft submission, mimeo, Kampala, July 1997.

Donors also saw UPPAP as providing an opportunity to build on the Government's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). They had been actively involved in the PEAP, which was ultimately to play the role of the PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) elsewhere on the continent. Another donor priority, decentralisation, was seen as providing the opening for a "PPA process to inform local government planning".

b. A wish by civil society organisations to build on earlier "PPA work" in Uganda – especially since this coincided with a growing interest by international NGOs (and particularly OXFAM) to engage Government on poverty reduction issues.

c. A wish by Government to address poverty reduction: "It is recognised by GoU that there is a need to understand better the nature of poverty in Uganda, changes in poverty, and the impact of policies on poverty reduction"[30], especially at a time when the PEAP was being finalised, with a direct influence on the 1997-98 national budget. A key objective of the PEAP was not only continued growth, but also spreading its benefits more widely: UPPAP could help in understanding how this could be done[31].

This background helps us place UPPAP's early objective in context: "to bridge the gap between national policy and practical action at the local level, through a process bringing the voice of the poor into the policy and planning process".

3. The initial design stage: civil society, government and donors coming together?

From the outset, the project took pride in its participatory design[32]; this early design phase however turned into a long drawn-out affair, with DFID very much in the driving seat. In July 1997, the then Social Advisor had coordinated the development of a draft project submission "agreed by MFPED, World Bank and DFID".

It was only thereafter that DFID extended an invitation to OXFAM to become the "lead institution in taking this forward" and suggested to OXFAM that they work in partnership with a local NGO "who would benefit from their involvement in this project to build capacity in Uganda for participatory policy research". OXFAM would implement the project ("organising fieldwork, training and reporting" and report to a Steering committee (while the MFEP "will have overall responsibility for project implementation"). The project design also provided for a 7-member Technical Committee: in effect a working group for the project, with representatives from DFID, MFPED, a local NGO (the Community Development Resource Network - CDRN), the NGO forum, OXFAM and two district representatives.

---

[30] Ibid.
[31] Some of the underlying reasons for this interest are discussed in Brock et al (2002).
[32] "The project has benefited from a design process involving participation from officials from Government, the World Bank, UNDP, and DFID", DFID, draft submission, July 1997

The selection of OXFAM, however, does not appear to have resulted from a transparent process, in which the strengths of other possible NGO partners could be objectively compared. The reality was that other CSOs had been involved in early thinking on the PPA, although this was not widely acknowledged. This had in part stemmed from an early PPA, conducted by CDRN in 1995/6 and funded by three international NGOs active in Uganda (NOVIB, ActionAid and OXFAM). This had entailed research in 7 districts, with a number of local NGOs as "corresponding organisations" and its agenda included both "first generation PPA" information[33], as well as an attempt to link this picture with the policy environment. One of its recommendations was to encourage further research into poverty issues, from the poor's perspective. OXFAM continued the dialogue with CDRN after the completion of this research effort and a number of lessons arising from this initiative influenced OXFAM's and CDRN's position with regard to UPPAP. Amongst these, three stood out:

a. The need to ensure ownership of the process within Government itself to avoid a risk of its being dismissed as an "NGO product", yet allowing NGOs to play an active part.
b. The need to avoid a situation where the research would be "extractive".
c. The need to incorporate a longitudinal dimension to the research, to better understand poverty trends (and thus be in a position to address counter-arguments to the effect that: "Yes, we are poor, but poverty is declining").

Some of these concerns were shared by DFID, among others, and there was some success in informing UPPAP's early design accordingly. UPPAP was, for instance, designed as a three-year process (to allow for longitudinal investigations), and a provision made for facilitating and financing CAPs at the various research sites.

There were however areas of disagreement:

a. Scepticism was expressed by NGOs about the proposed involvement of expatriate advisors and institutions, as opposed to local resources: "[DFID] is very keen to bring in a celebrity/someone from IDS – Robert Chambers, Mel Gibson, Elvis Presley!"[34] Similarly, there appeared to be some reluctance in recognising, let alone learning from, previous work…
b. The tight timetable, made tighter by the long drawn-out negotiations at the outset, was seen as a threat to capacity-building initiatives and UPPAP's avowed desire to build long-term capability by Ugandan organisations to engage in PPA-type research.
c. The large-scale nature of the process and its simultaneous roll-out in 9 districts to start with – rather than the adoption of a piloting approach to learn from experience, linked to a desire to derive national-level information and thus "homogenize" research results.
d. Unrealistic expectations with regard to an "impact assessment" to be carried out in Year 3.

---

[33] As described by Norton (2001).
[34] Memo to CDRN, August 1997.

The final design reflected these debates and departed somewhat from the early ideas:

a. The main actors were now DFID and Government, with OXFAM assuming a lead role in the implementation arrangements. It confirmed the central role ascribed to OXFAM as the "project implementer": as part of this, OXFAM would hire senior UPPAP personnel. Further, the project would benefit from OXFAM's international policy influencing experience. In spite of OXFAM's insistence, however, DFID held to the view that a local organisation would not have the capacity to handle such a complex undertaking[35].

b. It located UPPAP physically within MFPED, rather than within OXFAM or within its own "space", and envisaged significant contributions from the government in the implementation of the programme, including personnel, offices and facilities. As we shall see, this led to much confusion later, within the individuals concerned themselves, who had to manage the requirements of OXFAM's culture within the walls of the Ministry of Finance.

c. Instead of working with one local NGO, the final design called for several local organisations to be invited to participate. This was very much at the instigation of IDS[36]. The participation of Civil society thus spread across a number of organisations: 6 very diverse organisations were eventually to take part in the first PPA round; 5 in the second round[37].

d. The project called for the creation of various committees and other bodies: complicated lines of communication ensued.

e. IDS was identified to "provide on-going technical assistance to the project". (November 1997 agreement).

4. The PPA finally gets under way….

After training of researchers[38], research finally started in September 1998 with field work in the initial nine districts. There were three "shifts" covering three districts at a time, with "mini-workshops" in between, bringing all researchers

[35] CDRN would probably not have appeared at all if OXFAM had not insisted… -"in the end we (OXFAM and CDRN) agreed that we could bring in the local research expertise, while they would provide the macro-economic/advocacy dimension. – "The relationship between OXFAM and CDRN could be one of genuine "partnership" using the skills and capacities of both organisations in an exciting way" (OXFAM, Aug. 1997). After a year, possibly CDRN could take the leadership role….

[36] Although CDRN planned to work with other NGOs in each of the districts concerned. R. Chambers, in a visit to Uganda in February 1998, drew on his experience from a recently conducted PPA in South Africa to suggest that 3 local NGOs be invited to participate, rather than a single organisation. This was agreed by the UPPAP Technical Committee (3rd Meeting, 17th Feb 1998)

[37] MISR (Makerere Institute of Social Research, ACFODE (Action for Development), CDRN, DRT (Development Research and Training), CHDC (Child Health and Development Centre), EPRC (Economic Policy Research Centre) in round one; CDRN, DRT, the Faculty of Social Sciences at Makerere University, ActionAid, UDN (Uganda Debt Network) in round two (though UDN eventually dropped out), in addition to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

[38] This was facilitated by IDS and concentrated on PRA training; one shortcoming was the absence of tools allowing longitudinal data to be collected.

from the 6 partner institutions together to write-up and exchange experiences. This culminated into a "national synthesis" workshop in April 1999 and the eventual production of a national report at the end of the year[39], accompanied by a highly successful video.

The latter was part of various dissemination activities that punctuated Year 2 of the UPPAP process, which also included the launch of a National Poverty Forum in May 2000 under the aegis of Makerere University's Institute for Social Research and the production of various policy briefing papers to accompany Forum sessions; a needs assessment process in the 9 districts to establish their planning support needs; and a number of support visits to the research sites to support their CAPs. It also included advocacy training for the CSOs involved.

The year 2000 also saw the production of a mid-term review report. This set the scene for debates on the next phase of UPPAP - what had been originally conceived as the second-round PPA or the third and final year of the project - and for reflection on the longer term future of Participatory Poverty Research in Uganda.[40] In March 2001, a "local experts'" planning workshop thus brought together 51 participants (of whom 12 could be classified as coming from Civil Society), to work on the design of the second-round research. Arising from this and subsequent design work, two major themes were selected:

- deepening one's understanding of poverty: the poorest of the poor, poverty trends, gender.
- the impact of selected policies and programmes on the poor.

In the event, a rather uniform, centralised approach was to be followed for the second-round research: 12 districts were chosen, with no less than 60 research sites. There was a move away from a case-study, more demand-driven approach, earlier anticipated, illustrated by a desire to work closely with UBOS to marry qualitative and quantitative approaches and the use of "panel sites", arising from National Census work. The issue of avoiding extractive research and building capacity, while mentioned, did not result in a concrete agenda. Following an earlier "invitation to express interest" for CSOs published by OXFAM in the local press, 67 organisations had responded: 4, then 5, partners were selected to undertake this stage of the research.

In July 2002, OXFAM started withdrawing from UPPAP: unhappy with the design process leading to UPPAP's second phase, with what they saw as DFID's hand-on role (including their role in staff appointments), OXFAM also expressed a desire to give more prominence to mobilising NGOs/CSOs in PPA work.[41]

---

[39] See MFPED (2000).
[40] Ehrhart et al Nov. 2000.
[41] OXFAM: "Exit strategy", March 2002, with a fully sustainable PPA process within an agreed structure handed over to MFPED (p.2); also T. Wallace interview with OXFAM, 15/7/2001.

5. The realities of "partnership".

The UPPAP partnership is generally described as reflecting the predominant role of one partner, the Uganda government, with other parties lending a supportive role: *"Government was very much in the lead from the beginning, and in control of the design process."* [42] But it is also generally viewed as having been successful: *"The partnership of government, donors, academic institutions and NGOs in taking forward the UPPAP process is a fairly unique one in the Uganda context. This partnership has been widely valued and often referred to as "a new way of working in development."*[43] Government has lent credibility to the process and UPPAP has been able to use opportunities for policy influencing. Donors have been involved, have strengthened their partnership with Government, helped draw international expertise and thus raise UPPAP's profile internationally. [44]

Further, the long-term future of Participatory Poverty Research has been defined in terms of this success: when asked how such a long-term undertaking should be carried out, most respondents in a study carried out in late 2000 by the UPPAP secretariat suggested that a similar collaborative arrangement should continue, under the leadership of a Government institution. [45]

But, going beyond these statements, what was the reality of partnership?

<u>The first point</u> is that this was a partnership between very unequal actors. On the one hand, the donors and MFPED worked very closely together[46] and assumed a dominant role. This became evident when a Management Committee was established for UPPAP, on which Government, donors and OXFAM were represented. Other civil society organisations engaged in the UPPAP process as "partners" were not represented and thus sidelined from the major decisions affecting the programme. This "sidelining" also took other forms. A "participant" described UPPAP consultations as follows:

Consultations regarding post UPPAP started around July 2001… that's the earliest I can trace in my memory. It was a workshop, organised at a very short notice at Hotel Equatoria in Kampala. A consultant, (later we were informed, one who was hired by DFID, without even involving the UPPAP secretariat), a young Englishman, who had been in country for around a fortnight and had done an extensive secondary literature review, presented to us the DFID version of a post-UPPAP scenario. Of course there were many of us who raised many fundamental concerns with the manner and content of what was presented. An almost insignificant detail perhaps, but which for me was very symbolic was the manner in which the presentation was concluded.

---

[42] Bird, Kakande in Norton (2001:45)
[43] Bird, Kakande in Norton (2001:52)
[44] Yates (2002).
[45] See Ehrhart (2000).
[46] DFID in particular – for a discussion of this, see Brock et al (2002)

It was a very slick, technologically impressive "power point" presentation. At the last minus- one slide, the presentation stopped and discussions ensued. The discussions, as I said, raised fundamental concerns, and almost required the drafting team to go back to the drawing board. Then, as a concluding statement, the final slide was shown. The final slide was now about time frames, and finally how the proposed "post-UPPAP" scenario would be further built upon. It was, for me, too shocking, to be true. That one can actually, in these times, have a "participatory discussion" to chart a future course, and yet come prepared with a foregone conclusion!! And not just come prepared, but to share it, with the group, as if the discussions just a few moments ago had not happened.

Further, by selecting to work with a wide range of somewhat disparate and geographically dispersed civil society actors, the latter were in a position of weakness which was compounded by their relative youth as organisations and inexperience in policy research work and, more specifically, in PPAs.

It was only in October 2001 that CSOs came together to discuss their role in UPPAP as a group. There was then a collective realisation that: *"The current "partnership" is quite limitative, given the Ministry's desire to be firmly in control of the process. UPPAP is generally presented as a government programme. There was also mention of the central role of donors in this. Although CSOs have managed to influence UPPAP, this has not been as decisive as some would have hoped."[47]*

In addition, unequal power relationships were re-enforced by the continued down-playing of the knowledge base of the NGO partners: ActionAid, for instance, was considered a novice throughout the process, although it had acquired much relevant experience in Uganda, including its pioneering work with such methodologies as REFLECT and "Stepping Stones". The ownership of results was also primarily described in terms of DFID and the Government of Uganda: the acclaimed video on UPPAP, mentioned above, for instance, makes no reference to the other partners involved[48].

<u>Secondly,</u> the partnership was placed in the hands of overworked and relatively inexperienced managers, the UPPAP team based at MFPED. While there was much rhetoric about "partnership", "common agenda" and "shared values", and while discussion fora seemed to multiply with the years[49], the reality was a directive management style that was no doubt seen as the appropriate (and possibly the only) method to keep such a varied group focused and productive![50] The matter came to a head when CSOs involved in the UPPAP process wrote to the secretariat in April 2002:

---

[47] Minutes of meeting, 17.10.2001.
[48] The first national PPA report, authored by MFPED, also downplays partners' roles. Policy briefs were later written up and attributed to OXFAM and the government.
[49] The technical committee hardly ever met.
[50] This included impromptu visits to partners' offices "to check" ; forced allocation of researchers to certain districts, forced partnerships between institutions, correspondence lying unanswered for months, etc.

"Having previously agreed (UPPAP and CSOs) that key decisions regarding the design and implementation of the PPA process would follow a consultative approach, what later transpired are substantive decisions and directives which depart from the collaborative decision-making approach we had been led to expect and also significantly "shift the goal posts" - for example focus of PPA2 on the two key themes at the expense of a more "case study approach", participation in local level planning process, etc."

<u>Thirdly</u>, the partnership could not mask the very different agendas of the various actors present. From government's and donors' perspectives, for instance, political considerations and the need for "macro-type" research results dictated part of UPPAP's eventual research agenda. Thus, as many districts as possible were included in the process and the timetable for activities adhered to central government imperatives.[51] A "roller coaster approach" was thus adopted, in spite of the constant criticisms of those involved in the field research.

This was at the expense of UPPAP's objectives of capacity-building and adopting non-extractive research processes: the growing number of local partners, for instance (both district administrations and CSOs) made the implementation of a "capacity-building agenda" increasingly unrealistic, if not impossible.

An early attempt by the UPPAP secretariat to ask partners to define their strengths and weaknesses was thus not followed up.[52] Similarly, the recommendation by a group of "local experts" to assist in the design of the second-round PPA and place "capacity-building as central to UPPAP"[53] failed to materialise. Implementing partners were also asked to submit their own proposals for dissemination and other initiatives: this they did in April/May 2001 but most were not taken up and Year 2 activities mainly concentrated on dissemination workshops and follow-up of CAPs.

The partnership – which was originally meant to revolve around the capacity-building objective of UPPAP – was thus drained of its contents, as precedence was given to the immediate imperatives of the "elder partners", over the longer-term objectives of the programme, of which "capacity-building" was one.

This shortcoming also reflected uncertainty as to whether the PPA 2 research process was meant to ensure the inclusion of people's needs on the policy makers' agenda or to more directly stimulate people into action to address their plight"[54]. The debate about CAPs illustrates this: were these to be seen

---

[51] "*There is some urgency now, we want to get results from the first PPA by March in order to feed into the Background to the Budget in 1998 and DFID's country strategy development*" (DFID, July 97).
[52] So that they could be supported in addressing their weaker points – See May 2002 "SWOTs", UPPAP mimeo.
[53] UPPAP report, March 2001, p.26
[54] Phase 3 planning workshop report, p. 5 and "Group 4 work on partnership issues".

as an empowerment tool, as compensation for time provided, or as a learning process?[55]

As the UPPAP mid-term review noted: *"It is not surprising that despite the revision of the project time-frame, it is still running behind schedule. There is the need for a further revision to reflect the nature of a participatory project which is seeking to build the capacity of a number of stakeholders. In this respect, it has to allow time for joint planning, developing a true spirit of participation, partnership and institutional arrangements with implementing partners and districts, and for quality implementation of project activities. Participation is a process, it cannot be rushed."* [56]

Similarly, at the local level, CSOs commented thus:

"A purely extractive process? The main reason for inclusion of Community Action Plans in PPA1 was to avoid having a purely extractive process. We however understand the reasons for which these CAPs were excluded from PPA2. Nonetheless, it was thought that PPA2 would seek to influence the planning process at Sub-County and District levels through involvement of researchers. This idea so far seems to have been given minimal or no attention at all. The failure so far to engage more fully with local level planning processes put the PPA2 at risk of becoming an extractive process, worsened by the new requirement for the researchers to "go back and collect more information on priority actions by social group and age."[57]

The participating CSOs became increasingly anxious about the divergence of objectives. They for instance commented on the first synthesis report arising from Phase III research:

"We would therefore like to recommend and emphasise that PPA2 should continue to focus on the policy imperatives, and how these would influence or shape poverty experiences of people. It should not at this stage try to undertake a rigorous analysis of definitions and understanding of poverty aspects, which were adequately covered in the first round. PPA2 should also allow for leeway to highlight the specificities of the various sites, reflecting the individual site-specific research themes (…) There are many and we mean MANY follow-up issues raised. Apart from wondering why these details are coming so late in the day; we are wondering why there is a need for homogenising the process across all districts. One could also put the sustainability of such a process in question!! It is our belief that participatory processes are not about agreeing to implement a set of standard methodologies, but much rather about probing issues with people and then developing a logical analytical exercise with them on priority issues in a participatory manner.

---

[55] For the results of CAPs, see Yates (2002). As she notes, the site selection for the second round did not learn from this experience of CAPs; while CAPs were possibly not the "right" solution, more long-term mechanisms were not developed.

[56] UPPAP mid-term review, Recommendations, February 2000, p. 2.

[57] April 2002 memo.

Further, they went on:

"The research, documentation and analysis process seems to have taken on a uniform approach. All teams are expected to do nearly the same things, come out with information on similar issues and adopt a format of reporting that is consistent with this. We see some of the advantages of having a uniform approach, especially if the focus is on comparability of information. We however are uneasy about uniformity being applied "indiscriminately" with similar themes or even rigid structures being imposed on the teams, completely oblivious of the fact that PPA2 set out to "deepen understanding on poverty with a focus on specific categories of the poor" - who may present different details. We believe that different districts have the potential (and indeed already are) highlighting specific poverty issues. The specific nature of this can get lost in the huge requirements of uniformity that are being placed on the teams."[58]

Specific examples were also given:

"On the section on causes of poverty: Keeping the above in mind, policies that create poverty need to also be examined in depth (…) The whole issue has been rather lightly referred to (…) The displacement of people in Mubende, due to what is perceived as a "progressive" national policy, highlights how the market led growth paradigm further marginalises and impoverishes poor people. This indeed deserves to come in as a case study, and needs to be given a louder voice (…) What is becoming clear is the role policies play at the grassroots level in terms of impoverishing people further. Often this evidence gets blurred when discussing and negotiating policies at the macro level. These cases should therefore get a clear voice in the synthesis document. Liberalisation of the agriculture sector, through the removal of subsidies, privatising the extension services, a near complete dependence on volatile commodity markets etc. lead to greater vulnerability on the part of poor farmers. (…) (We say this here because clearly the PRSP and post-PRSP policies are being "sold" as based on participatory processes. Yet what is clear from PPA2 is that the poor do not want complete liberalisation. Poor people are demanding state protection in various forms (..) This needs to be highlighted, to break the myth that rapid privatisation, without support to the poor and vulnerable, will reduce poverty. (…) The urban/peri-urban poverty section should dwell on the complete absence of any policy on minimum wages. Etc.(…). We are concerned that the gender issues in the document are not given adequate space, and hope that there will be something additional that PPA II report will say about gender."[59]

<u>Fourthly</u>, the "partnership" took the form of a *sub-contracting* relationship, so far as civil society organisations were concerned.

In May 1998, for instance, OXFAM - under a new country director, who seemed to have little problem with a radical shift in relationships - issued an "invitation to participate in the UPPA Project", by way of the secondment of

---

[58] Memo to UPPAP, April 2002
[59] "Comments on UPPAP synthesis document", 15th April 2002.

researchers from NGOs and other local institutions (whose CVs were vetted by UPPAP) for about 3-4 months p.a. for 3 years. Any earlier type of involvement was considered irrelevant because, as OXFAM stated, "since there is no contract, there is no obligation"[60]. This signalled a large step backwards as far as some of the CSOs were concerned: in another OXFAM communication, local NGOs were told that they would be able "to bid" for involvement in the third phase if their performance has been satisfactory in the previous stages….

This was in spite of the laudable principles developed by UPPAP and OXFAM: in one communication, UPPAP for instance stated that *"All partners shall have equal opportunities in the shaping and implementation of the PPA process to its logical conclusion."* In May 2001, UPPAP also defined "principles of partnership" to describe partners' involvement in the third phase PPA. These included "long-term commitment to the PPA process (5 years); commitment to learning and internal capacity building in participatory policy research and advocacy; commitment to transparent sharing of experiences between the institutions involved. These principles were re-affirmed at a "partners' meeting" in June 2001. Similarly, OXFAM stated in the early days of the project: *"Based on the key participatory principle of inclusion, a wide range of strategies will be adopted including: promoting communications at all levels and building consensus through networks and alliances [with] all stakeholders, involving primary stakeholders in collective action for policy changes and understanding and utilising the strengths of different stakeholders"*[61]

The implementation of such principles proved virtually impossible. We already noted that, when Civil Society partners were asked to present their own proposals for PPA work in the country, for instance, these were turned down by UPPA's management committee, ostensibly because they were not fitting squarely within a "narrow definition of UPPAP's work".

Other than researchers being granted three days a month to report back to their respective organisations, and the expectations that they would "contribute to the research objectives", the agreement with OXFAM and MFPED covering the first round was thus of a consultancy nature whereby "partner organisations" would second to UPPAP researchers against a monthly fee[62]. In a subsequent agreement (covering Year 2 of the process), "*the memorandum is also made in the spirit of fostering an interactive process that builds mutual learning and sharing of experiences between Partners, OXFAM and the GOU"*[63]: the same document stipulated that partners' books of accounts would be audited by OXFAM auditors…

The mid-term UPPAP review thus observed that *"The implementing institutions also want a partnership relationship with the project, rather than*

---

[60] CDRN latter to MFPED, OXFAM and DFID, March 1998.
[61] OXFAM, KG/UGA 400, undated.
[62] Memorandum of Agreement, October 1998.
[63] July 2000 MOU

the existing client-contractor relationship"[64] and that there was little way in which OXFAM and UPPAP *felt accountable to the implementing partners.[65]* The UPPAP secretariat recognised that, as a result, "the commitment of most partners was not very strong due to a lack of institutional ownership" [66]

But there was another side to this coin: the implementing partner were facing their own difficulties: some NGOs could not retain the personnel trained at the outset[67], deadlines were frequently missed, analytical skills were limited in most NGOs unused to PPA-type work and, when asked to develop their own proposals and agenda, some NGOs found this extremely challenging. There was also much confusion as to how local NGOs could lead research processes in the districts that had been allocated to them, while having to work closely with local authorities which recognised the authority of central government instead. Finally, it was sometimes unclear how participation in UPPAP, for some partners, fitted into their vision as non-governmental development organisations, rather than as sub-contractors in search of financial advantage[68].

6. To conclude…

The UPPAP has achieved much in Uganda and many positive lessons can be learnt from this[69]. As an example of a partnership between donors, Government and civil society organisations, however, the picture is mixed.

On the one hand, UPPAP has provided the various "partners" involved with an invaluable experience of working together, bringing in different perspectives, as well as a recognition of each other's worth: *"The experience of working with NGOs in UPPAP has boosted the acceptance by the MFPED of engaging with civil society (…) UPPAP has helped to give NGOs some legitimacy and credibility in the area of policy analysis and policy advocacy"(…) and to have widened the consensus on where we want to go (on poverty reduction)"[70].* There is little doubt that, as result, the different partners did have a measure of influence on the process.

The other side of this coin cannot, however, escape scrutiny: so far as civil society organisations are concerned, the "UPPAP partnership" has remained substantially devoid of contents: whereas they have learned and gained much from UPPAP[71], there was a constant contradiction between the management

---

[64] UPPAP mid-term review, MFPED, 2000, Recommendations, p.2.

[65] See proposal for partners' forum, Mid-term Review, recommendations, p. 7.

[66] MOU draft, Aug. 2001, p.9.

[67] A number of researchers attached to NGOs, able to market their newly acquired skills, moved on after the first PPA round.

[68] This type of pressure was less evident amongst the larger, international NGOs involved, e.g. Action Aid than within the cash-strapped, smaller, local NGOs. This introduced another point of tension within the partnership.

[69] See Brock et al (2002)

[70] MFPED official quoted in Yates, (Yates in McGee, pp17-18).

[71] Through training in advocacy, poverty monitoring, utilisation of the experience in other contexts, so long as CSO staff remained in their organisations…

style, the exclusion from decisions on the one hand, and the objectives and participatory nature of the project on the other.

This inability to move beyond a sub-contracting mode towards partnership reflected three main constraints:

- First, the different agendas, cultures and values of the different partners (as symbolised by the on-going debate about UPPAP: extractive research or empowering the poor?). Thus Yates notes: *"The appropriate degree of pluralism for UPPAP thus needed to be decided with reference to all its objectives and the ensuring of trade-offs faced squarely and explicitly: for example between capacity-building and ownership objectives on the one hand, and the aims of producing credible outputs in a usable form, on the other."[72]*

  Further, one could ask to what extent a sub-contractual arrangement can accommodate a genuinely participatory process: are we faced here with an insoluble contradiction between ends and means? It was thus paradoxical that a project meant to learn from others (the poor), was in itself unable to develop mechanisms whereby "partners" could contribute to the learning of UPPAP as whole, rather than "experts" from outside Uganda, and indeed outside the continent.

  This also raises a question about the "participatory" nature of UPPAP: is "participation" about the use of PRA and other techniques? Can a participatory process occur within a tightly regulated framework, where participation can all too quickly be reduced to rhetoric: could it be seen as a populist measure giving credence to existing policies (bar a small adjustment here and there…), which in the final count, may not entail much change in the livelihood of those UPPAP was meant to listen to?

- Second, the lack of skills in establishing and managing "partnerships": while this is an increasingly fashionable concept in the development literature, little is known about *how* to build and sustain partnerships. The managers of the UPPAP partnership were not much prepared for this formidable task.

- Third, a partnership between unequal parties proves even more difficult to manage: on the one hand a monolithic Government actor, supported by donors, faced fragmented CSOs experiencing considerable skills and "vision" deficits: in such circumstances, unless such a partnership had elicited a much greater degree of attention and care, its outcome could not meet the high expectations that all had vested into it at the outset.

  Further, the idea of such a tripartite partnership (between donors, government and CSOs) was very much owned by one party, the donors. It was pushed through, and sold very well in international circles[73]. In reality,

---

[72] Yates (2002:25).
[73] This is no longer exclusive to UPPAP: the euphoria at international, donor and even academic groups about such "partnerships" is now part of the rhetoric so far as several

for the CSOs (for this is a story from a CSO perspective), who had to live and learn the hard way, the experience of participating in a relationship where power dynamics were skewed meant that important lessons had to be learnt.

One is the danger of CSO "participation" and "partnership" being used to legitimise processes and policies that may not be apparent at the outset, such as the privatisation of basic services - health, water, education - in the name of "listening to the voices of the poor". The main lesson that the UPPAP story can therefore bring home is the importance of retaining and even reclaiming autonomous spaces for the CSOs; to bring back the politics of power into the concept of "participation" and to remind ourselves that the poor are not poor because the policy makers don't know what causes poverty.

We can then finally start to ask ourselves who has benefited from this "participatory" (and hence theoretically "empowering") process. Is it DFID who could gain much credit for being at the cutting edge of participatory policy making discourses? Is it the Central Government – within whose structure, at least a number of individuals, especially at the Ministry of Finance, can claim to have learnt much about poverty and linkages with policy processes? Is it the partner CSOs who gained in experience and legitimacy, in the eyes of government (but lost a measure of independence and gave a seal of approval to UPPAP by participating actively in its implementation)?

Or is it the poor themselves? It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the ultimate impact of UPPAP among them, those who "lent their voices" to the process. Nevertheless, an example from the Kalangala islands in Lake Victoria illustrates some of the possible shortcomings: while the poor stated their needs for water transport and while authorities used reallocation of resources from feeder roads to water transport as an example of UPPAP influencing policy (and this is convincingly captured in the UPPAP video), by 2003, the major investment in water transport was on a large ferry and pontoons to ease communication between the largest island and the mainland, (whose prime beneficiaries appear to be logging interests), rather than in what the poor had asked for, better access to education and health on the main island, from the outlying islands where they live…

Postscript

At the time of writing (early 2003), the final UPPAP reports are being edited by a team of consultants hired by the UPPAP Secretariat. OXFAM has completed its withdrawal from the programme and CSO partners have started consultations among themselves to develop their own PPA work, under the aegis of the NGO forum.

---

national government programmes are concerned, as well the PEAP/PRSP revision processes (See UPDNet, 2002).

By mid-2002 the CSOs involved in UPPAP had indeed moved to the opinion that an independent CSO-led and owned process of participatory poverty assessments would be important. It was proposed, and also accepted, that such a venture could be housed in the National NGO Forum, supported by several small donors and international NGOs, thus avoiding large, single-donor influence.

This post UPPAP scenario did not envisage large scale, cross-country PPAs, as have been the case so far: the idea was to work collectively, and conduct small scale, good quality, in-depth participatory assessments focussed on specific issues, such as conflict and the situation of internally-displaced persons, or the impact of Foreign Direct Investments on the poor. These would be shared with the rest of the group and the outputs would be used to lobby and influence policy positions locally, nationally and internationally.

This was meant to go on, in parallel if need be, as the Ministry of Finance worked on its own plans for "institutionalising UPPAP". If the MFPED needed support in their large scale UPPAP kind of ventures, it was suggested that a clear contracting process could be adopted towards CSOs or other parties, rather than carry the burden of a process where the rhetoric on participation outpaces reality and becomes the source of innumerable tensions and stresses, as described above.

In a sense, this represented a return to the first chapter of PPAs in Uganda, that of the 1996 CDRN study. It remains to be seen whether such an initiative – diverging from the current mantra of tripartite partnerships between donors, governments and CSOs – will turn into a practical reality in the coming months.

Chapter 8   Case study of a partnership relationship between an international NGO and two local NGOs

Martin Kaleeba

Introduction

This case study is about an international development NGO working in over 30 countries in the world including Uganda. Its goal is one of poverty eradication and its programmes are located in some of the poorest countries of the world. The focus of the case study is how the NGO underwent a change process and moved its focus from an operational to a partnership approach to development. It explores how far the different management tools and requirements of the organisation influenced the operations of the organisation itself, as well as its work with the partners. While the organisation was committed to working with partners in new ways, there were some constraints within the way it had to account for its work and spending, and patterns of thinking and behaviour within the staff. There were also factors on the local NGO side that to some extent pre-determined how they related to this new donor/partner, and the case study shows clearly the different expectations of each side from the relationships.

The international NGO was struggling to create more open and less controlling relations with their new partners in Uganda. However, it was clear that both the international NGO and the local NGOs were acting within webs of complex relations and the currently accepted mechanisms of aid; these to some extent constrained how far they were able to change the more traditional donor-dependent relationships seen in Uganda before.

The motivation of the international NGO was towards more equal and open relationships with the local NGOs they selected for long-term support. In practice this was not always easy to achieve and some of the existing patterns of planning, reporting and accountability did shape these relationships within the dominant paradigm of donor-dependent NGO. The role of strategic planning in setting parameters that the local NGOs had to meet did skew the way the relationships were initially set up and set some patterns that proved hard to break. Staff attitudes were also important in shaping the way discussions and relationships were handled, with staff often feeling more skilled and better informed than those they were negotiating with. In other ways the international NGO and the local NGOs it supported were able to develop some mutually beneficial relationships and ways of working together, though while for the international NGO these organisations were 'partners' for the local NGOs the INGO was their 'donor'.

The international NGO

It started its operations in Uganda in 1982 working in humanitarian aid. Over the years their approach to development evolved from emergency work to direct service delivery in the key social sectors of education, health and agriculture to integrated rural development programmes and more recently to

working with or through partners as well as engaging in policy and advocacy work. The key guiding principle of their work now is the rights based approach to development. This emphasises the rights of the poor and marginalised to have access to their basic needs as rights; the poor have a right to demand basic services as basic rights, and the INGO supports building this movement towards demanding change to meet the rights of the poor.

These have been major paradigm shifts, and the INGO has downsized over the years. It now employs far fewer staff whose major role is to build the capacities of the local NGOs and CBOs to implement poverty reduction programmes. This case study explores the extent to which the international NGO has been able to build the capacities of its partners to address the poverty issues of their constituents, and been able to take a 'hands off' approach.

In the late1990s the corporate strategic direction of the case study NGO changed and provided the guiding framework for country programmes to develop their own home-grown country strategies. The shifts in the Uganda programme in part reflect these changing organisational priorities, and the strategy promoted country autonomy. However, some of the funding and accounting strategies that were developed at the headquarters to support the new global strategy initially limited the space country programmes had to be really creative and innovative. These included the annual planning and reporting systems, which were detailed, time consuming and tied staff to rigid implementation timetables. The international finance systems were inflexible and involved layers of procedures and the sponsorship policies and procedures tied the INGO to certain ways of working. Guidelines were, until recently, developed at the headquarters in the UK and disseminated to country programmes to ensure adherence to global planning and budget processes. All plans and budgets were approved at the headquarters, which had limited knowledge about particular country programme contexts; at the end of each financial year, guidelines for writing annual reports would be sent to the regions and to country programmes.

These guidelines were largely for accountability purposes, to trustees, the public and the donors and provided little room for reflection, learning, innovation and creativity in the country programmes. All these systems effectively made the INGO hierarchical and bureaucratic, allowing limited autonomy at country level.

A series of strategic shifts followed the global strategy leading to an increased independence and autonomy of the INGO from its head office in London. Within the framework of the agreed new strategy it can now make certain decisions without consulting the head office and plans are approved in Africa, not London. More flexibility has been introduced around planning and budgeting, and the INGO in Uganda has been allowed freedom around some of the central policies and procedures, including new participatory and reflective processes for learning and reporting. The rigid reporting systems required by HQ were dropped, though they may be reintroduced for upward accountability purposes. Budgets have become more flexible with fewer

budget lines and a rolling approach to plans and budgets; the time spent on planning and budgeting has been reduced.

However, as the office in Uganda starts to raise more funding from official and other donors reporting against their contractual requirements has increased considerably. The procedures needed for meeting different donor requirements have cut across some of the new, more flexible approaches. There are also limits to local autonomy with new global requirements on offices raising funding locally, on demonstrating impact, on engaging with the many evolving global agendas of the headquarters, and on meeting concerns of trustees about upward accountability. These all affect the work in Uganda. Working through partners, which the INGO cannot control completely or ensure they will deliver all that is needed for the target groups, is raising new problems in relation to accountability and attributing impact. Indeed in other countries there is evidence that this INGO may now be swinging away from working through partners and back to direct implementation to ensure the achievement of results on the ground.

The INGO has its strategy and a clear development agenda that is characterised by five key themes: education, food security, HIV/AIDS and gender and women's rights. The INGO seeks out partners within that agenda and ensures that the capacities of the partner NGOs are built in order to implement this agenda. In addition to promoting its own development agenda, the case study NGO introduces to its partner NGOs, systems and procedures of reporting and accountability that are similar to it own. Where donor funding is sought for key aspects of the work, both the INGO and the local NGO are subject to donor conditions around fulfilling and reporting against the contract.

THE INGO and its relations with local NGOs

Principles of partnership

The case study NGO developed a new set of clear values, which were hammered out over the period of the review and planning process with the involvement of most staff. These are clearly articulated in the recent country strategy paper. The key values include:

- **Learning and Reflection:**

  From the organisation's own experiences; experiences of poor women and men, and experiences of its partners and other players, the NGO believes that only if it continues to be a learning and reflective organisation, will it continue to be alive and relevant in the struggle against poverty.

- **Creativity and Innovation:**

  To keep alive a spirit of critical and constructive questioning. To be open minded and flexible so that the NGO can respond to the local realities, to the changing context and to its own evolving understanding of social reality and poverty.

- **Honesty and Integrity:**

  To have honesty and integrity in all aspects of NGO work and the way the work is done. In the way staff relate with each other (as men and women) and with the external world.

In the way the NGO uses its resources (time, financial, human and any other).

- **Mutual respect:**

To respect and value each individual irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, race and any other "differences". To respect and value the poor - women, men, boys and girls, and its partners and recognise their critical contribution towards overcoming poverty.

- **Team Work:**

To share responsibility for leading as well as following. To be guided by the fact that each staff have a role to play. To create an enabling environment that helps staff to realise our best potential. To believe that it is the contribution of all of us put together that will help us in achieving our mission.

These values are ambitious and rooted in an alternative view of development as a shared process of multiple actors working together, openly and respecting each other, to achieve poverty reduction. Such an aim is complex and the values recognise the need for learning and reflection, and honesty about mistakes, to ensure that the work is built on solid foundations drawn from evidence as it progresses.

Selection criteria for partners

The partnership identification and appraisal processes of the INGO are guided by criteria outlined in the partnership identification and operation guidelines they developed. They clearly state, however, that the guidelines are flexible and are only an indicative checklist that those involved in the appraisal process can follow. The used in selecting partners include: the type of organisation and its mission, the characteristics of its founders, the operational area of the partner NGO, its financial records, human resource issues and its management structure.

The NGO selects an internal multi-disciplinary team to take charge of the appraisal process of the prospective NGO partner. The team, following specific terms of reference and guided by the partnership guidelines and operational procedures, discusses with the prospective partners a wide range of issues. The discussions/consultations involve:
- ❖ the management teams of the partner organisations,
- ❖ the boards of trustees,
- ❖ government departments that might be working with the local NGO,
- ❖ current and past donors to the NGO,
- ❖ the community leaders within the programme area of the NGO,
- ❖ the intended beneficiaries from the activities of the local NGO.

Factors and Features of Prospective THE INGO Partners

Issues	Features

Organisation	• Should have legal basis-registered with appropriate authorities with an approved constitution by the registration authority • Have a board of trustees/directors. • Should have the mandate to operate the business that it wants to enter into agreement with the case study NGO. • Working or willing to work in at least one of the thematic areas in that fall within the case study NGO's strategy and free from corruption, nepotism and acceptable to other players in the area. • Have genuine constituencies and recognised at Sub County, district or national level and should be working with both men and women. • If the partnership is to be supported through child sponsorship, the potential partner must have legal status. • There should be some strategic value added for all the partners in the partnership arrangement.
Organiser /Founder	• Founder members should be socially reputable, respected, honest, acceptable staff and the community at large • Should have the willingness and vision to develop the organisation further.
Working area	• Working area must be poverty-stricken and should have potential to expand programme to avoid duplication with other actors.
Financial	• Accountability: • Cash book, Receipt Book, Payment Vouchers, Bank account. • Regularly audited by INGO internal auditor or an agreed external.
Human Resource	• Adequate number of regular and full time staff, honest committed and has missionary zeal. Should have full time chief executive staying in the working area
Management	• Chief executive should be dynamic with good management capability. • Have good reputation among staff and the communities.

This is a long, demanding and complex list of requirements, requiring high levels of sophistication in the local NGOs. It should be noted that some of the issues that the INGO looks out for in identifying partners mainly suit the interests of the INGO rather than the interests of both parties. For instance, the INGO seeks out only those partners that fit the five key themes of the organisation. This can lead to a tendency of the INGO to influence the development agenda of the partners to fit its own. Also the financial requirements during the appraisal stage are high. Such financial procedures may be non- existent within small NGOs and this poses a potential danger to the partner organisations. They may be forced to adopt financial systems that suit the financial reporting systems of the funding NGO; these systems may be too onerous or inappropriate for the level of activity and organisation of the local NGO.

There is an emphasis on setting up boards, modelling 'good practice' among INGOs, but which again may be more complex and not necessarily the best way to meet the needs of good governance locally. Local NGOs are subject to very rigorous scrutiny at this stage; the INGO does not open its books and systems for scrutiny by the local NGO in return.

Partnership in practice

This study takes a critical look at partnerships relationships between the case study international NGO and two local NGOs. One of the local NGOs has a strong Muslim background and well-established linkages with many international and local NGOs. The second local NGO partner was founded by health workers working in a hospital in eastern Uganda, to address the issues of HIV/AIDS in that region. Before the partnership with the international NGO, the two local NGOs were involved in various development activities guided by their own strategic documents; one of the NGOs was involved in HIV/AIDS work while the second was involved in health and food security programmes.

The NGO involved health and security programmes had as its stated goal:

"To enhance the capacities of local communities to take control of their own health and other development issues in a participatory and sustainable manner".

The main focus of the programme at the time of starting the partnership health programmes, including HIV/AIDS activities as well as water and sanitation. The goal of the local partner NGO however changed when the partnership was started. The partnership arrangement led to an expansion of their programmes and included new themes of food security and education. It is interesting to note that the themes of food security and education are among the five key themes of the international NGO.

However, it needs to be recognised that because of past funding relations and shifts in funders, the programme aims have been modified before to meet different donor targets. Due to a lack of any consistent and sustainable funding mechanism for the two local NGOs, the two local organisations have had different aims and objectives over time, tailored to their different donors who have funded specific projects, within the thematic areas they were interested in. The change of programmes to meet the agenda of the international NGO provides only another example of how a local NGO has its development agenda influenced by the funding NGO.

Funding sources, duration and activities of one of partner local NGOs (1995-1999)

Funding Agency	Activities	Duration of Funding
The World Bank	Training in sexually transmitted diseases	1996-1999
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Train teachers and students in HIV/AIDS prevention and care	1995-1997
The World Bank	Construction of Ventilation Improved	1998-1999

(District Health Support Programme - DHSP-	latrines and protection of water springs	
United Nations Aids Programme (UNAIDS)	Raising awareness on the control and spread of HIV/AIDS	1998/1999
Plan International	HIV/AIDS prevention activities in Kawempe Division- Kampala District	April to July 1999
Plan International	Consultancy on orphan support and succession planning	May 1999

Between 1995 and 1999, UNDP and the World Bank stood out as the major funders. After the establishment of the new long-term partnership, however, the local NGO stopped fundraising from other organisations. The international NGO provided the child sponsorship funding mechanism ensuring long-term funding for at least the next ten years; this created funding security for the partners but it also risked killing their innovative ways of fundraising from other agencies. It also gave them the impetus to take on too many themes in a bid to expand their programming portfolio. This rapid expansion and adoption of the international NGO agenda led to some changes in the local NGOs.

Appraisal process for the partner NGOs

The partnership appraisal process for the two local NGOs entailed among other issues, various discussions by the staff of the international NGO with the management team of local NGOs and district leaders in the proposed programme areas. In addition, the international NGO conducted an organisation assessment exercise to establish the Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the partner NGOs. The analysis, revealed the following features as summarised in the table below:

SWOT Analysis of one of the partner NGOs before the partnership with the international NGO

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

The Local NGO had clear aims and objectives for poverty alleviation and compatible with the international NGOs vision of poverty eradication. -Good and elaborate financial systems and procedures of accountability. -Experience with dealing with multiple donors and implementing development project. -Committed staff and well-established office premises and procedures. -One of the few local NGOs founded by Muslim Volunteers. -Forming a partnership with such an organisation identifies the INGO as non-partisan. -Had a good strategy of using the existing community resource persons to facilitate development in the communities.	-Absence of sector specific community workers to facilitate specialised knowledge dissemination to the communities. **-Lack of a concrete integrated community development approach as opposed to sector specific programmes.** -Lack of reliable data and information about the programme area that can be used for planning purposes -Lack of experience amongst staff and the communities in gender responsive planning -Limited staff skills in fundraising and project Planning and management. -Scattered nature of the projects that the local NGO had been implementing in the past.	-Building on the experience that the local NGO has had in the past in implementing development projects. -Recognition of the local NGO by the district authorities as serious development player in the area.	Lack of a reliable long-term funding for the programme activities. -Lack of sustainability strategies for the programme activities.

The SWOT analysis was detailed and the partnership agreement set out to address many of the identified weaknesses. No similar SWOT of the funding INGO was carried out by the partners, making a negotiated agreement about how they should work together and build on strengths and address weaknesses very one sided. Yet the INGO has some weaknesses as a donor that have been highlighted in past partnership meetings (e.g. lateness of funding, over complicated accounting procedures) which could usefully be part of negotiating a partnership agreement.

The partnership programme area and methodology

The partnership programme for one of the local NGOs is in the former "Luwero Triangle" an area that was severely affected by the 1981-1986-guerrilla war. The programme area covers three sub-counties that are some of the poorest sub-counties of the Mpigi and Luwero districts. The three sub-counties are characterised by dilapidated social and economic infrastructure, poor agricultural productivity and low incomes for the people, disease and malnutrition are also rampant. The problems addressed by the partnership programme include: low agricultural productivity, low levels of education and poor health facilities. The area is also host to large numbers of poor and vulnerable groups of women, the resource poor farmers and the youths.

The objectives were ambitious and the activities very wide ranging.

1. **To enhance the communities capacity to optimally utilise their land for improved agricultural productivity and marketing**.
2. **To support the improvement and development of social services within the programme area.**
3. **To enhance the communities coping capacities with HIV/AIDS pandemic and other health problems**
4. **To Strengthen the entrepreneurial potential of the local communities with a view of improving their saving capacities.**
5. **To Promote Gender equity**
6. **To establish linkages, networks and alliances with other development players within the programme area and beyond for advocacy, influencing and learning**

This programme required a huge range of skills and the ability to undertake multiple activities at all levels. To implement the above objectives and myriad activities the local NGO works through the local council structures from the village level up to the district level. In addition, development committees and community facilitators were to be selected and trained in participatory approaches in planning monitoring and evaluation to be able to facilitate and/or implement the programmes.

The partnership proposal documents describes the programme methodology as:

> "*A community based participatory methodology in which community based resource persons will be identified and trained. The trained resource persons will then build the capacities of the of the grassroots communities through training awareness raising sessions, campaigns and offer guidance to communities to take charge of the development process…staff will be equipped with skills that will enable them to manage and implement the project effectively. The INGO staff will facilitate the identification of trainers, facilitate some of the training programme.*"

This is a complex and demanding approach to development work, yet the focus of the INGO was on building skills around management issues rather than the hands-on skills of working at the level of communities. The expectations of the ability of the NGO to deliver good development in practice were high, and there was little analysis of all that would be required to work in these ways with communities.

The management structure of the local NGO did not change after along term partnership was established with the international NGO, even though the remit of the NGO had widened significantly. This was to enable the local NGO to continue to implement activities outside the partnership programme areas, to maintain autonomy in decision-making, and to enable the local NGO to maintain its identity. There was little or no discussion around what the new aims and objectives might mean for modifying or changing management structures to meet the new demands.

Monitoring and evaluation

The INGO introduced participatory community based monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to the local NGO to ensure that information was generated that could be used for both reporting and learning purposes. Although the local NGOs had their own M&E systems that included writing of regular reports to their funders, the international NGO did not build on these existing systems but introduced its own systems to fit its new participatory reporting and learning mechanisms. By this method, community planning and budgeting was to be central to the process, with community-based indicators developed at the beginning of programme activities to be tracked by community members as well as members of the community development committees during the projects.

However, the real problems that INGO staff had had with learning this new, very different way of analysing and reporting on success and failure and learning from experience were by-passed. They were not used to provide lessons about how much has to change within NGOs and within staff attitudes and approaches for them to undertake this kind of M and E.

Sustainability strategies

The sustainability strategies outlined in the partnership proposal documents mainly focus on building the institutional capacity of the local NGOs and staff to be able to manage the programme. It is argued that the communities will be able to utilise the skills gained during the implementation process to promote their self-reliance.

Involvement of the communities in planning and budgeting at the local administrative structures, taking charge of the implementation of the development projects are seen as critical factors for the sustainability of the partnership project. Proposal writing and advocacy are mentioned as critical for enabling local leaders in the programme area to lobby the district to allocate more funds for the development of the area, as well as influencing the districts to develop policies that are sensitive to the needs of the poor. In this way, it was assumed that the partnership programmes would be able to continue even when funding from the international NGO comes to an end.

The major weakness of the strategies above lies in the fact that there is no concrete policy and plan with the aim of achieving sustainability of the partnership programme. It is assumed that the district will allocate funds for project implementation, yet it is a well-known fact that the districts where the partnership programme is being implemented are poor and rely on conditional grants from the central government for their activities. It is therefore highly unlikely that the district will be in position to allocate substantial funds to enable the partnership programme run after INGO funding is phased out.

Analysis of the partnership issues arising from the two case studies

This section presents a qualitative analysis of the key issues around the partnership arrangements. Interviews were held to explore the views of staff at the senior and middle management levels, as well as field staff from both the international NGO and the two partner organisations. The issues explored were the understanding and interpretation of the partnership concept, the rationale behind forming partnerships, and benefits of the partnership relationship to both parties. Interviews also covered roles and responsibilities, decision-making mechanisms, identity issues, financial resource mobilisation, allocation and utilisation, sustainability issues, monitoring and evaluation issues, power and interest issues. Various reports and strategic documents including annual reports, review and reflection reports, partnership proposal documents, memorandums of understanding between the international NGO and the partner organisations were consulted to provide the relevant secondary information.

Understanding and interpretation of the partnership concept

The strategic documents of the INGO clearly articulate the new strategic direction of the international NGO of working in partnership with other players to fight poverty. These strategic documents provide the framework within which country programmes develop specific guidelines for working in partnership with other development players. The study findings revealed that there is a fairly a consistent understanding and interpretation of the concept of partnership especially at the senior management, middle management of the international NGO. Although some of the respondents described the concept in their own words they were all confident and articulate about their understanding of the partnership concept.

The country director of the international NGO however, was conscious about coming up with a blanket definition and interpretation of the concept. During an interview the country director defined and interpreted the concept of partnership as:

> "A complex and quite often a misunderstood and/or misinterpreted or misused term. It refers to an agreement between one or more entities to work together towards a common cause. It involves complexities that include among other things, terms and conditions of the relationship"

The director further observed that the relationship is bound to be unequal in the case of north south NGO relationships and the challenge is how to bring the two or more parties together on an equal footing and to appreciate each other as partners. The director said to build partnership relationships with local NGOs on an equal footing, it was important for staff to change their attitudes and behaviours and see the international NGO not as a source of power and authority, but rather as a resource to be deployed for the local NGOs to take charge of the development process. The international NGO has tried to be flexible in the way it interacts with the partners to create room for the partner organisations to make decisions that affect their programmes and how they want to manage themselves.

However, it was interesting to note that the finance and administration staff of the international NGO were of the opinion that the aim of the partnership relationship is essentially to achieve the goals that were set by the international NGO. The reasons given for this opinion were that partners depend almost totally on the financial support given by the INGO.

Almost all the international and local NGO respondents stated the need for the partnership to be based on mutually agreed principles and values as well as similarity of objectives. The responses showed that both parties (the international NGO and its partners) recognise the need to pool resources together in order to ensure mutual benefits from the relationship.

Many of the definitions by the two partner organisations for establishing partnerships with the international NGO were similar, though the partner organisations emphasised the need to have secure and more reliable funding for their activities as a key factor in developing 'partnerships'. Reliable and long-term funding assures them job security, enables them to work towards sustainable results and enhances accountability to their constituents. Asked how the long term funding enhances accountability, one senior official of the partner NGOs said:

" *Certainty of funding enhances accountability of local NGO staff. Due to uncertainty of job security, people get tempted and become corrupt because they are not sure of a job tomorrow".*

At the community level, *the beneficiaries of the partnership programmes that were interviewed, could not clearly understand the concept of partnership*. During a focus group discussion with 15 members of development committees and women's groups (10 women and 5 men) where one of the local NGOs runs its programme, the participants described the relationship as some kind of union between the local NGO and the international NGO. They were aware that the international NGO provides money to the local NGO to support them with their development activities but they did not recognise and were not sensitive to their input in the partnership programmes in terms of time, local resources, knowledge and expertise. To them the international NGO was seen as a donor but not a development partner.

The rationale for partnerships

The study explored the rationale for the international NGO working in partnership with local NGOs, and what the staff of the international NGO and the partner organisations understood this to be.

Most of the international NGO staff mentioned the key rationale to be the realisation that, in the past, work of the international NGO was not empowering communities and building

sustainable change for poor people. Working in partnerships could achieve these aims better, because the local organisations were closer to the people and often from the communities where they were working. Other reasons given by the NGO staff included:

- To nurture partner organisations to develop systems and structures to address poverty issues at the grassroots.
- Reduction of overhead /administration costs by the international NGO through using staff of local NGOs
- Positioning of the international NGO to mobilise and/or tap resources from the north to support CBOs in the south.
- Ensure more effective resource utilisation
- Avoid duplication of resources and activities
- Wider coverage of programme activities-benefiting more people
- Building the capacity of local organisations to take charge of the development process

The primary rationale for the local NGOs was accessing reliable and long term funding. Other reasons mentioned by the partner NGOs included being associated with a high profile organisation; this relationship helps them to raise their profile and be regarded as serious development players:

"To be associated with such an international development organisation like this international NGO gives us a lot of pride. Now the communities we serve take us more seriously when we advise them on development issues, for they hear about the good things the international NGO has done in other areas. Our identity is being promoted through this partnership. We can now develop long-term plans and have time to think about broad development issues".

It was clear that while the international NGO emphasised the need to work together for a common cause, for more coverage and a rational use of resources, for the partner NGOs security of funding and job security are considered the major factors for establishing long term relationships with the international NGO.

Benefits of the partnership to partner NGOs and the communities

The study reveals that all parties in the partnership relationship had expectations that were consistent with those stipulated in the partnership project proposal and in accordance with the memorandums of understanding. However, the information below indicates that while the international NGOs expectations were mainly of a programme nature and basically of the "software type", the partner NGO included hardware expectations, including finance and physical assets. The communities expected improvements in their livelihoods as a result of increased funding and other forms of support from the international NGO.

Summary of expectations from the partnership

EXPECTATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL NGO	EXPECTATIONS OF THE LOCAL NGOS	COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

-Increasing the knowledge base of our NGO through sharing and learning with the partner NGOs -Reduction in administrative and overhead costs of our NGO -Increased coverage of our NGO activities country wide -Create more networks and alliances of local NGOs for advocacy and policy influencing. Empowered CBOs that are able to facilitate the development process with minimal support from our NGO.	-Increased and more sustainable funding -Learning new skills from the international NGO. -Getting exposed to new development approaches -Establish linkages with other development players -Acquire more facilitates and equipment to enable us do our work better. -Expand our programme to cover new areas and activities due to increased funding	-More support from our local organisation in form of tools, seeds, schools, health units. -More training from our local organisations to gain more skills in agriculture, savings and credit management as well in HIV/AIDS prevention -Increased support from our local organisation to be able to generate more income to enable us meet our basic needs like paying school fees, paying medical bills, buy new cloth and assets like radios.

Source: Writer's findings during fieldwork conducted in summer (2002) Kampala-Uganda

Roles and responsibilities of the international NGO and partner organisations

The partnership guidelines of the international NGO, memorandums of understanding and Country Strategy Paper of the international NGO, clearly spell out the envisaged roles and responsibilities both parties in the partnership arrangements. The study however, sought to establish whether the staff of the international NGO and the partner organisations clearly understands these roles. The study revealed that the roles and responsibilities of the international NGO in partnership relationship depend on the type of partnership, the duration, the agreed objectives and the specific needs of the partner organisations.

Staff of the international NGO saw capacity building of partner organisations as a crosscutting and key role for them in almost all partnerships. Asked to explain what kind of capacity building they were referring to, they mentioned: institutional capacity building, organisational development, project planning and management, participatory planning and budgeting (using Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques), poverty analysis and as well as a general understanding of development issues. Other roles included financial management, gender mainstreaming, advocacy and influencing skills, fundraising skills and report writing skills.

The INGO saw its roles very largely in terms of teaching the local NGOs a range of skills currently associated with development aid and aid management. The focus is on management and budgeting, accountability and fundraising, reporting and planning.

> **Areas of training provided by the international NGO**
>
> Project Planning and Management, Participatory Poverty Analysis and Problem Analysis, Project proposal writing, Fundraising Skills, Financial Management; Gender analysis skills, Advocacy skills Participatory Rural Appraisal skills Workshops and seminars, Exposure visits and attachments.

Source: Writer's diagrammatic representation of fieldwork findings during summer (2002), Kampala-Uganda

The development issues stressed were PRA, gender and advocacy. The focus was much more on management and financial issues than on how to enable local NGOs to engage more fully and appropriately with local communities. Indeed some of the management requirements may have actively limited the NGOs close involvement with their local communities as they strive to meet new accountability procedures and deliver on INGO aims and objectives.

The international NGO introduced its own financial policies and procedures that required submission of financial reports on quarterly basis and following particular formats. These were tight and did not reflect the same loosening of planning and budgeting that the INGO itself was implementing. Indeed, while there was a range of training activities that the international NGO provided for partners, the two local NGOs expressed the view that the international NGO put more emphasis in training them on financial management rather than the other training that the local NGOs suggested themselves. Financial training was seen as being critical for the management of the partnership relationship since almost all partners with the international NGO have a financial relationship. Financial accountability is therefore seen as one of the key factors that indicate a successful partnership with the international NGO.

The table below summaries the roles of the two partner NGOs.

Roles of the local NGO
- Identifying poverty issues within their programme areas and come up with strategies, plans and budgets for addressing the poverty issues. - Implement the programme activities, Routine monitoring and reporting progress on the implementation of the partnership programme plans in the communities - Conduct regular reviews of the programmes - Participate in the programme evaluations. - Donor reporting - Liasing with the local government (district) authorities for technical support - Training the grassroots communities, group leaders in participatory planning and budgeting skills. Identifying training needs for the staff -   Responsible for the day to day administration and management of the partnership programme - Responsible for the recruitment, appraisal and termination of staff

While the international NGO provides much of the support required for the two partners NGO to be able to implement their activities there was no clear indication that the partner organisations had something to offer to the international NGO (at least it was not mentioned). This was a clear example of a situation of over dependency of the southern NGO on the northern NGO.

The international NGO is seen as the major provider of much of the technical, material as well as institutional support; the local NGO is seen as a recipient only. This situation has negative implications for the identity of the local NGOs as well as their power to make independent decisions.

The organisational assessment for one of the partner NGOs revealed that the local NGO had strengths in HIV/AIDS programming and that the international NGO had hoped to benefit from that wealth of knowledge. However, the findings revealed that in the first two years the international NGO had not once attended any specialised training in HIV/AIDS organised by the local NGO.

Decision Making Mechanisms

Critics of NGO partnership relations argue that in most north-south NGO partnerships, whereby the northern NGO is the dominant donor, the southern NGOs find it difficult to make certain decisions without consulting the northern NGOs. This has implications on timely decision on making, programme implementation and the autonomy and identity of the southern NGO.

This study explored the extent of involvement of the partner organisations in the decision-making process and the degree of influence that the international NGO had in the decision making process. The findings reveal that although responses from the senior management of the INGO indicated that the partner NGOs were at liberty to make their independent decisions especially regarding programming, administrative and operational issues, there were certain strategic and policy decisions that the international NGO as a partner must be involved in. Such decisions included changing of programme priorities from those agreed in the proposals and MOUs, changing budgetary allocations from one cost centre to another, and major strategic issues like programme expansion and procurement of capital assets.

Indeed in a true partnership both parties should make participatory decision-making and therefore, the international NGOs involvement in making such decisions is important. However, responses from the partner organisations tended to regard consultation with the international NGO on certain decisions such as financial and programming issues as affecting their autonomy, identity and in most cases leading to delays in programme implementation. The leaders of the partner organisations, for example, argued that the policy of the INGO of centralising procurement of capital assets leads to delays that affect the operations of the programme. One INGO staff member, however, recognised that some partners too, tend to over depend on the international NGO for their decision-making, which is unnecessary but understandable:

> *"Some partners tend to look at decisions made by the international NGO as paramount, especially financial decisions. But we do not blame them, for the financial systems and procedures are all tailored to the international NGO systems. The international NGO sets the approval levels for the various staff. Many times, financial decisions made by partner organisations are turned down by (the INGO) under*

the guise that the decisions have not been made within the generally acceptable accounting principles. One wonders whether the international NGO takes time to fully explain to the managers of the partner organisations what these principles are."

The above response compliments the responses from the partner NGO managers:

" *The international NGO is our funder and this almost predetermines the way we relate in decision-making. As partners in our programmes, the INGO participates in deciding what programmes we should do and not do. This is not bad, however, there are situations when we feel that we ought to carry out certain programmes, but if these are not within the five thematic areas of the international NGO, we are compelled to drop them. In financial decision-making we are, to a large extent, guided by the international NGO in certain cases, we jut have to go by what the NGO decides since "they hold the purse anyway"! For example, in the year 2001, we agreed on our proposed plans and budgets with them at a planning workshop and as required, we got approval from them. A month later, after we had even started implementing activities and recruited staff to do the work, we were asked to reduce our budget by half! This decision was disastrous and de-motivating on our part. We had to terminate the contracts of the staff we had hired, as well as cutting down on our programme, logistical and administrate activities. This is just one example of how we dance to the tunes of the funding NGO but we cannot do without them*"

Identity Issues

The study examined the extent to which the partnership relations influenced the identity of the international NGO, as well as of the two partner organisations. This particular area (identity) was rather difficult to analyse, as most staff respondents from the international NGO as well as those of the partner NGOs, did not clearly understand what the term identity meant. For the purpose of this study, the term was simplified to mean: "*What the organisation was perceived to be in the eyes of others*".

Despite the vagueness of the term, the study revealed that most staff of both the international NGO and the local partner NGOs currently perceive the international NGO as a donor to the two partner organisations, rather than a partner. The respondents based their perception on the fact that the two NGOs rely on the international NGO for all their funding. They find it hard to strike a balance between seeing the international NGO as a donor or an authentic partner. In addition, the child sponsorship fundraising mechanism that was introduced to the local NGOs by the international NGO as a long-term way of fundraising for the programmes is a system that goes with reporting conditionalities that have to be met by the partner NGOs. In the eyes of the communities, the introduction of the child sponsorship fundraising mechanism makes the two partner NGOs to be seen in the mirror of the international NGO. They get involved in almost all child sponsorship fundraising activities at the community level as well as some administrative

activities at the office level just like a traditional programme for the international NGO.

The partner NGO staff respondents also stated that although the international NGO provides the funding, not much effort has made by the INGO to explain to the partners " we are partners of equal footing". They tend to believe that the international NGO works through them but not with them since their organisation became partners with the international NGO because their programmes were similar to those of the international NGO programme. The partner NGO staff further noted that the international NGO designs the MOUs that fit into its own reporting systems and procedures as well as the programme themes.

Staff from field programmes of the international NGO also perceived the identity of their NGO as changing from that of a development organisation to one of a donor. At the national office in Kampala, senior staff also acknowledged that the identity of the international NGO has changed over the past three years since the new strategy (2001-2005) was drawn. They perceived this as a change that has made the NGO become a stronger development organisation involved in broad poverty issues and striving to address more of the structural and root causes of poverty rather than addressing symptoms of poverty. Currently the NGO is a member to a number of international, regional, national and local committees, networks and alliances involved in a range of issues including advocacy for change of policies of various institutions and government.

Identity of partner organisations

The partner organisations have striven to maintain their identity by maintaining their original names and some of their original activities before forming partnerships with the international NGO. However, they had to broaden their scope of activities to fit within the five themes of the new programme under the partnership arrangement. In essence, the partner organisations are implementing activities that the international NGO would have implemented directly in the past. To the partners, the expansion of the programme activities is seen as a good move that assures them of continuous funding, but the expansion of the programmes had to some extent distorted their original identities.

One senior officer of the international NGO expressed fears that the INGO is increasingly becoming invisible in the partnership programme areas and this may lead to losing out its identity as development NGO. The local NGOs are also changing, to mimic the INGO. The officer remarked that:

" Our organisation is becoming invisible by working through partners. Partners are becoming "small representatives of our organisation". They change their systems and procedures to suit our own ways of doing things. They purchase similar vehicles to those that we have, demand for better office accommodation, some even want to construct their own offices, claim for higher allowances and salaries and are trying to convince us that they need to

buy all sorts of sophisticated office equipment, just like ours! The spirit of voluntarism that used to exist in some of these partner organisations is gradually dying out. We seriously need to re-examine our approach".

This mixed understanding and perception of the changing identity of the international NGO may lead to confusion amongst staff and may lead to staff sending different messages to different audiences about the identity of the international NGO. It also affects the way staff in the field relates with the partner organisations. On the other hand one can interpret the above response to mean that the partner NGOs are growing in strength and are curving out an identity for themselves although for now it is in the image of the international NGO. One of the senior staff of a partner NGO observed that, whereas senior management of the international NGO understood the new direction of working through partners and the roles of staff, some field staff of the international NGO do not fully understand the new direction. The officer further remarked that:

" In certain instances staff do not seem to understand the thrust of the programmes of the partner agencies. For example, in the case of the local NGO involved in HIV/AIDS activities, some staff does not understand the prominence of HIV/AIDS in the programme and as a result, HIV/AIDS did not get the prominence it deserved in the 2001 plans and budgets. Staff of the international NGO also exhibit, superiority complex tendencies and do not exploit the opportunities to learn from the expertise of the partner organisations.

We have expertise in HIV/AIDS programming but staff of the international NGO shows little willingness, if any, to learn from us. This has as a result, affected the quality and timeliness of support from the international NGO as well as the implementation of the planned activities".

Financial resource mobilisation, allocation and utilisation

The two partner NGOs had in the past received funding from various organisations to run their activities. However, when they established long-term partnership relations with the international NGO, they stopped fundraising from other organisations. Although the child sponsorship funding introduced by the international NGO assures them of long-term funding, it is risky for them to be complacent about exploring alternative funding sources just in case something happens to the child sponsorship mechanism. Surprisingly, for the international NGO, it is vigilantly exploring alternative sources of funding to reduce their heavy reliance on child sponsorship (child sponsorship generates about 75 percent of the total global income for the NGO).

There was a sharp rise in funding after the local NGO entered into partnership with the international NGO. The total income from the international NGO for years 1999 to 2001 was higher than the local NGO had received from all its donors up to 1998. Although this was good news for the local NGO in terms of having more reliable funds available for its programmes, over accelerated

growth in future may have implications on the programmes' capacity to absorb the funds and appropriately accounting for them.

Although the local NGO is assured of long-term funding from the international NGO, it is highly desirable that the local NGO explores other funding alternatives to reduce over dependency on one source. The local NGOs should also learn from the experiences of other partner organisations, whose partnership with the international NGO was terminated due to lack of proper accountability of funds that largely grew out of the accelerated growth in income. Management of those two previous relationships with local NGOs was overwhelmed by the "big and sudden" income and misdirected and or misappropriated some of the funds.

The study revealed that financial resource allocation was highly influenced by the international NGOs planning and budgeting guidelines. At the onset of the annual budgeting period (August - October), partner organisations are issued with planning and budgeting guidelines that among other things, indicate the expected income for the partner organisations, the percentage limits for programme/project costs and the support costs. The partner NGOs then embark on a budgeting process based on the budget guidelines.

It is also worth noting that, although one of the key objectives for the international NGO forming partnerships with local NGOs is to build their capacity to manage the programmes effectively; only a small percentage (two percent) of the budget is allocated to staff development for the partner NGO. Over 70% must go to programme activities. Yet if the staff capacities are not well built, this is likely to affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme as well as its sustainability.

Sustainability of the Partnership Programmes

The study examined the sustainability strategies in place to ensure continuity of the partnership programmes when funding from the international NGO comes to an end. Management and field staff of the international NGO and staff of the two local NGOs were asked how they think the partnership programmes will continue post funding. There were mixed responses to the question. While the staff of the international NGO enumerated various ways and means through which the partner organisations could survive without the support of the international NGO, one senior staff member recognised the issue of sustainability of the partnership programmes. The officer said:

> *" Sustainability is one of the biggest challenges facing us. There is too much reliance of the partner organisations on our organisation, especially the small CBOs. They do not have enough capacity to look for alternative funding. There is much more to do in the area of capacity building than has been done so far. We also need to come up with a clear and coherent sustainability and phase out strategies for each one of the organisations were are in partnership with. Before we continue to seek out for more partners, there is need to take the partners through an organisational development process to discuss*

various issues about how the partner NGOs can re-align themselves to the changing development environment issues such as sustainability and phase out will be critical to such discussions".

During a leadership staff retreat in 2002 to reflect on partnership issues, management staff of the INGO realised that issues of empowerment and sustainability of the partnership programmes need to be urgently addressed. In separate group discussions, staff noted the issues indicated below as requiring urgent attention in order enhance the empowerment of partner organisations:

- There has been no chance given to our partners to develop their own accounting systems and as a result our organisation has assumed a donor/funding status that has affected our relationship with partners
- There is a lot of sub-contracting of our work to the partners
- We make decisions and influence partners to work as if they were part of our organisation. We refuse to unlearn and learn from others
- The weak partners are phased out or ignored instead of building their capacity to become better development players

The above observations show that the issues of sustainability of the partner organisations are not yet well addressed. The issues of sustainability cannot be addressed in isolation and a complex list of approaches was drawn up, including capacity building and linking to other sources of income.

These suggestions were consistent with feedback from the two partner local NGOs. Their staff recognised the need for enhanced capacity building as a prerequisite for gaining skills and knowledge to enable them write good project proposals to raise funding and run competently managed programmes. However, they observed that the budget allocation for staff development is so small that not much capacity building is done for staff. They appreciated the efforts the international NGO made to involve them in staff training workshops and seminars, however, capacity building alone is not seen as enough to ensure the sustainability of the partnership programmes. One staff person remarked that:

> *"It is not enough to gain skills and knowledge per se, but the NGO needs to help its local partner NGOs to put in place financial sustainability strategies. This is our major concern. Since it is an international Organisation, it would be good if the NGO linked its partners to potential donors and make them aware that we are capable of doing a good job if we are financially assisted. Without such strategies and assured funding after the partnership comes to an end, we might just perish from the development scene. Something must be done sooner than later."*

Power and Interest Issues

The study explored the extent to which the power and interest concerns of either the partner NGOs or of the international NGO influences the

partnership relations. The research revealed that there were a number of power and interest issues that characterise the partnership relationship. Responses from staff of the partner NGO were of a mixed nature. While some staff clearly indicated that it was more of the International NGO that had an upper hand in the relationship, others indicated that since it was a partnership between two organisations, both parties had their own interests that they had to protect and promote. One senior staff INGO field staff person observed that:

> *"The partner organisations are not yet empowered enough to object or dispute suggestions from us, for fear of loosing the financial support and the linkages established with our NGO. It is true that our NGO has its own interests and uses its enormous financial and other forms of power to promote its areas of interest.*
>
> *Our NGO will only choose to partner with those organisations that are in line with her strategic themes. Some local organisations even change their programme strategies to fit within the themes of NGO and/or the selection criteria for partners. This makes some partners lose sense of direction. Much as the memorandums of understanding (MOU) formats designed by us are intended to provide safety nets for both our NGO and the partners, some partners feel that the MOU format with its legal language is patronising. As an organisation, we have our values and principles. We must protect them".*

During a leadership retreat for the international NGO, staff were asked to discuss how the NGO takes into account the interests of the partners in the memorandums of understanding, contracts and agreements, the staff in group discussion noted that:

"All the MOUs are designed to guard our interests especially the finances. The INGO draws the MOUs and the partners have almost no say to the content….(we) still have an upper hand in the relationship".

The INGO staff at the retreat observed that for peer organisations (other INGOs, national networks and alliances) they treat such organisations as equal partners, because of the resources and status (finance, material, human and others) they have. But for small local organisations and the community-based organisations (CBOs), the INGO treats them more as recipients of aid or as sub-contractors rather than equal partners. This is manifested in the systems, both financial and programme, that the partners have to adopt in order to fit in the INGO's reporting and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Community views on the benefits from the partnership programmes

The two case study NGOs had been in partnership with the international NGO for just over two years by the time the study was conducted, so it was too early to examine the extent to which the partnership programmes had contributed to poverty eradication. Rather, an attempt was made using the

PRA tools of focus groups discussions, key informant interviews and observations, to explore the benefits that the communities were reaping from the partnership programmes.

Discussions were held at two of the villages where the two local NGOs work. The interviews and discussions revealed that the community members had started benefiting from the partnership programmes. In both programme areas, the community members had attended training organised by their local NGOs that included training in the use and application of PRA tools to help them identify, analyse, initiate and implement development projects. They had received training in improving farming methods and production for various crops had started improving. Other benefits included increased awareness on the control, prevention and spread of HIV/AIDS, revival of adult literacy classes and availability of clean water in the communities. One resident of in one of the villages where one of the NGO works reported that:

We have begun to use safe and clean water that is not dirty, as we no longer step in it as we collect it. The source is not a risk any more to our children who used to fall in the open well, and it is easy to pump because even the young children can pump it. We no longer spend a lot of time cleaning the source. Our wives and children, who have to do most of the fetching of water, have been saved from walking long distances. Our wives have more time for looking after children, caring for homes and the fields. More time will be available and less burden to our to our children.

The long-term success and sustainability of the programmes started under the partnership programme will depend on many issues, including the financial sustainability of the partner NGOs. They will also depend on the appropriateness of the broad socio-economic framework of government, and the ability of communities to take control of the development process without necessarily relying on staff of the international NGO and the partner NGOs.

Conclusions

The study revealed that the application of the principles of an authentic partnership was not always followed in the partnership relations with the two local NGOs. The international NGO was largely being perceived as a donor, contributing almost all the financial resources for the activities of the partnership programme. It had significant influence over most major decisions especially programme focus and financial utilisation as well as monitoring and reporting frameworks.

The international NGO has its own vision, mission, goals and objectives, values and principles clearly stipulated in the country strategy paper. The INGO therefore, seeks to promote its vision and mission through working with or through partners on the one hand, while on the other hand, striving to build the staff and institutional capacities of the partner organisations to better serve their constituents. By shifting from direct implementation to working with partners, the international NGO creates some space for the local NGOs to enhance their legitimacy as serious development players. The challenge

however, is for both parties to pursue their agendas without compromising the autonomy, identity and profiles of each other.

The original activities of the local NGOs were maintained under the partnership arrangement with the international NGO, but the scope of activities was expanded to include some activities that fitted into some of the five key themes for the international NGO. This was made possible through the increased funding from the international NGO that also enabled recruitment of more staff. Although this was a healthy move for the partner organisations, it had huge implications. These included the capacity of the partner organisations to manage the "expanded agenda" given staff skills limitations, the identity, profile and dignity of the partner NGOs, as well as the effectiveness of the partner organisations to implement programmes. The international NGO and the partner NGOs therefore, have to carefully think through the implications of accelerated funding vis a vis the organisational capacities to manage the programmes and the potentially damaging effects of a distorted identity.

Although most staff of the international NGO believed that the partner NGOs had the liberty to make their own independent decisions, the local NGO staff still felt that the INGO had an upper hand in decision making especially regarding financial and key programme decisions. The international NGO provides almost all the financial resources for running partnership programmes; although this assures long-term funding it puts the INGO firmly in the driving seat
.
The identity of the international NGO was perceived as that of a donor by both its own staff and the partner NGOs. The partner NGOs were perceived as mirrors of the international NGO by some staff and the communities they worked with. These perceptions have diverse implications; for the international NGO they may lead to change of its profile and identity from that of international development organisation working in Uganda to that of a representative of an international donor organisation, a profile and identity they would not prefer to assume. For the partner NGOs, the identity issues impact on their autonomy, self worth as local NGOs, and self-determination as well as their overall creativity and innovation.

Chapter 9 Gender networking and advocacy work in Uganda: controlling the agenda and strategies of resistance

Nabacwa Mary Ssonko (PhD Student University of Wales Swansea)

Introduction

This study draws on the on-going PhD research carried out by a gender officer from one of the international NGOs in the research sample. The focus is on gender and advocacy work and how this is shaped by the relationships among the various actors. It is an ongoing study but preliminary findings suggest that the relationships forged inhibit the NGOs from understanding the lives of poor women or building on this for meaningful advocacy programming on gender issues.

This chapter examines the relationships between donors and national level NGOs in Uganda who have taken a gendered approach to development and explore the experiences and implications of the drive to create networks and alliances to promote advocacy work around gender issues in Uganda. Both donors and national NGOs subscribe to the need for work on advocacy to raise the profile of key gender issues and to try and influence policy and practice. They sometimes have different motivations and their agendas may diverge from each other at times, and from those of their members. This study shows the complexity of relations between donors and national level NGOs undertaking gender advocacy, and in turn their relations with their member NGOs and the grassroots.

It highlights issues around the power between donors and national NGOs, and conditionalities that promote certain agendas. It also explores international NGOs and their complex web of relations at home and in Uganda and how this impacts on the gender advocacy agenda in Uganda. While there are clear lines of domination and control from donors to local NGOs and through the various intermediaries, the case study also highlights relations of resistance as well as collaboration and compliance, and how these affect the advocacy work undertaken. The tensions of matching different agendas, of working to multiple constituencies, of managing upward accountability and downward co-operation are analysed. The differences between the purpose and achievements of advocacy networks on paper and the complex realities of development practice emerge clearly.

One final point. Gender is said to be a key strategic concern on the development agenda and the words written about gender and gender mainstreaming are myriad. However, it was found during the overall research project that while there are commitments on gender, there are serious challenges in development practice. This challenge is manifested in filling pages on project documents, a necessary requirement for access to donor resources, the emergence of several advocacy agendas of those who are committed to women's issues, but it is not a driving condition in practice in development work at the grassroots level. It is present on paper and in rhetoric but absent in practice for most donors and NGOs, UNLESS the

organisation has a specific focus on gender and women, or there is a motivated individual within the organisation promoting a gendered approach on the ground. And even where such individuals may be available the approaches used and the relations with the community often act as impediments to change in practise. Commitment to advocacy and the presence of powerful networks and coalitions at the national level does not necessarily translate into processes of change at the grassroots level.

NGO-Donor relationships

Relationships between the donors, both small donors (INGOs) and the big bi- and multi- lateral donors usually called official donors (Edwards 2002) exhibit a range of characteristics that can be broadly classified into the following:

1. Producer/nurturer/mother/father
2. They also exhibited characteristics of providers
3. Seller/buyer relationship
4. Partners
5. Superior/inferior
6. Agents
7. Enemy

The manifestation of these characteristics depends on the type of donor. International NGOs sometimes enjoy a more cordial relationship with the local NGOs than agencies such as World Bank and DFID. This may be partly due to the INGOs that have in-country offices (e.g. OXFAM, VSO, ActionAid) having a higher level of engagement with local NGOs on the ground. However, INGOs also have a double face, on the one hand they act as donors and on the other they act as NGOs. The double face gives them close access to the functioning and programming of the local NGOs; at the same time it gives them opportunity to distance themselves from the big/official donors in relation to policy making.

Many INGOs clearly engage quite closely in the functioning and programming of the local NGOs they support. They exert an influence over the areas of operation in the partnerships that they make with these organisations. They usually want to be openly recognised for their contribution to this work; so often the INGOs name appears on the local NGO publications; the name also appears on the banners, media statement or T-Shirts of the local NGO that it sponsors. Showing that they have contributed to an initiative is as important to the image of INGOs as it is to the local NGOs. There instances in which they contribute marginal resources but still want to have their agency name mentioned. According to Edwards, (2002) security, recognition and status are very important to these INGOs in their home countries.

Edwards assists in understanding these INGO relations with the local NGOs. According to him INGOs are subject to similar vulnerability in their mother countries as the local NGOs are in Uganda. Issues of financial security and thus recognition are very important to them and some would argue that in

certain respects these agencies use the local agencies by having their labels on their activities to enhance their status back home.

Many donors (large and small) have paternalistic relations with the NGOs they fund: the NGO-donor relationship is mainly characterised as a dependency relationship. The INGOs nurture these relationships through the use of the following mechanisms:

- ❖ Being in the forefront of formation of structures such as networks and alliances that bring local actors together to discuss a particular issue. Several gender networks in Uganda were funded and promoted by one or more INGO, with whom they remain closely identified.
- ❖ In certain cases these agencies influence the areas of operation of the networks and Alliances.
- ❖ Development of their Country Strategy papers in which they provide their guiding discourses that the local NGOs are expected to adopt, and perhaps also feed into
- ❖ Participation in the meetings and workshops organised by the networks
- ❖ Offering training opportunities to their staff and in some cases some partner agencies
- ❖ Carrying out research in partnership with local agencies

There are maternalistic relations between donors and local NGOs in which the donors nurture and provide for the local NGOs. Most donors see local NGOs as lacking in capacity and theoretical frameworks. They view local NGOs as those whose capacities need to be built. In an interview one research subject said that their donors were interested in the local partners acquiring all the skills they needed to do their jobs better. These included the knowledge and materials that the organisation needed to do advocacy; to improve on their practical sectoral development work; to manage their offices better; and to become more gender sensitive. In addition to increasing and improving the skills and knowledge of their partners, the INGOs also provided finances.

INGOs have, however, worked hard towards increasing the knowledge and skills of their own employees and their partner organisations mainly through in-country short courses or workshops. Training has been provided to individual organisations or several organisations. For example they can support workshops especially in advocacy and gender-using facilitators from Europe complemented by Ugandans. In certain cases staff or partners would go to Europe to attend short courses. In addition some INGOs support exchange visits among the partners in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Addis Ababa.

While these are often positive inputs, the relationship between the local NGOs and the INGOS are often of an inferior and superior respectively. One research subject said that INGOs are more privileged than the local NGOs because of their understanding of both the donor policies and the local context. In spite of this superiority, they are however less privileged than the local NGOs (LNGOs) in influencing government, so they facilitate LNGOs to take on that agenda. This brings us to the relationship of producer, mother and nurturer. In order to overcome their limitations of legitimacy in effectively

influencing government policies, INGOs have majored in influencing and facilitating the formation of Alliances, forums and networks to do this on their behalf.

One group of INGOs said that they needed an organisation that could address the strategic needs of women following the Forward Looking Strategies and in preparation for Beijing and become one was not available nurturing one was inevitable. The local NGOs were also in need of working together and recognised this need though it is likely that the donors and the local agencies involved had different priorities in the formation of this network. For the INGOs the issue of linking with their southern partners around global advocacy is critical. This may explain why, in spite of many problems experienced with this network, the INGOs continue funding it. The way it struggles with its membership was not easily visible to outsiders and the INGOs ignored the resistance [which they were much aware of between the network and its member organisations (see below)] because this was not seen as a threat to the international agencies' agenda. It is deducible from the research findings that the alliance and the donors had very different priority interests. The obsession with building local capacity and local linkages, which are stipulated as blue prints for effective advocacy, meant that eventually the donors even fostered the relations of resistance between the network and its membership.

Edwards (2002 pp98) states that
> ....the real strength of Northern NGOs (INGOs[74]). lies in their simultaneous access to grassroots experience in the south and to decision makers in the north

My understanding of Edward's statement is that the INGOs use the grassroots experiences to share them with the northern decision makers. Getting the right information, in a cost effective way and packaging it in the way that their decision-makers want is critical. Thus having structures that will provide such information in a timely manner when it is needed by the decision makers is critical. This may explain the approach the INGOs have used of forming alternative structures which they can then control and thus use their products.

Forming alternative structures such as alliances and networks, a key INGO and donor priority currently, has had several major effects on local NGO relationships, as will be seen in the case study. First, the formation of such structures has led to an increased number of local NGOs engaged in advocacy work -actively or inactively -through their membership to the newly formed networks and alliances. Secondly, relationships to networks and alliances have in turn had an effect on the programmes of the membership organisation: that effect varies between the various organisations. Thirdly, the formation of new alternative structures to the existing structures has resulted into rifts with existing organisations that felt that they were doing the work *including advocacy* that the newly formed structures are claiming to be doing. This can lead to quiet and at times overt resistance to such newly formed structures by the existing similar structures.

---

[74] My addition, as what they are referred to in this study

They INGO donors and facilitated the process of creating a new network because at that time (according one research subject) they felt there was no vibrant women's organisation working beyond welfare programmes on strategic gender needs. They needed an organisation that was willing to venture into challenging the status quo and none of the established organisations had that ability and they lacked the qualities of such an organisation. Another group of INGOs was instrumental in setting up another alliance with a clear subject focus, which they saw as a way of linking quickly with key agencies working on the same set of critical issues; in other words, it was cost effective.

The fourth effect is that working in coalitions, partnerships and alliances is currently 'trendy'. Government and donor agencies have created various forums/task forces on the various thematic areas in the PEAP, and INGOs view the formation of such structures as an opportunity for strengthening civil society to undertake advocacy work. However, such structures have at times become sources of co-option of local NGOs by big donors into decision making processes, an issue already discussed earlier in this report. The impact to the processes of the World Bank and government polices is yet to be clearly understood:

> but now that NGOs have been admitted to the dialogue(with the World Bank[75]), some argue, that the high volume, public critique is at best back-ground noise, at worst a distraction from serious dialogue"(Nelson 2002)

The Bank certainly manipulates its relationships with the NGOs at times, to either show they support a particular cause or at times to co-opt the NGOs into its agenda (Ibid p. 147).

Other issues arise during the formation of alternative working structures by donor agencies. INGOs are as vulnerable as their local counterparts to the tendency to want immediate results for accountability purposes. To try and ensure impact while working closely with local NGOs INGOs often build relationships based on trusted or reliable individuals within the local organisations. An informal group discussion showed that donors nurture individualism through their focus on the individual and not the organisation when providing funds. They said that donors establish personal relationships with individuals among the organisations and then fund the organisation based on these individual relationships. One person said that, "they lift the veil and see the individual yet this individual is supposed to represent the organisation". This assertion was confirmed in another informal discussion with another person who said that their organisation led a coalition only because one of their staff had been informed that a donor agency had money that could be accessed to her organisation.

---

[75] my addition

These relationships have implications for the advocacy agenda because they are being used to access donor funds. If a donor agency will give money to organisation A and not B or individual A and B, then the others will let this person or organisation to play the leadership role so that they get these funds. This results in the formation of cliques and advocacy work to be nurtured and maintained based on individuals and not institutions.

Local staff in donor agencies are often in a strong position to influence and shape these agendas and relationships. One staff of a donor agency said that because her bosses do not understand the gender relations in Uganda, she has an upper hand on the issues they as an agency fund. It is buyer/seller situation which is thus demand/supply relationship. The donors are the buyers and the NGOs are the sellers. It is like a market where the buyers have particular tastes and the sellers work tirelessly to meet the buyer's demands. Many local NGOs specialise in the 'same product'. They work on the catchy (marketable) issues of the day which they brand differently based on the taste of the different buyers (donors) or the same donor to ensure that it is funded (bought). The buyer asks for bids from various sellers and picks the best seller. In this way one research subject said that currently donors are forcing NGOs to do advocacy, because that is what they want to fund. Such relations nurture and reinforce competition among the NGOs; the bidding process has created a situation of 'survival for the fittest'.

In addition to buyer and seller relations, the relations between the donors and local NGOs are relations of accountability. The buyers have control over the seller's production process and have interest in the cost effectiveness of the production process. The seller thus has to account for the resources received from the buyer. The various donors have varying accountability mechanisms with some more strict and rigid in comparison to others. The buyers' accountability mechanism results into disjointed advocacy initiatives because they buy the products in different packages and at different times. The sellers market particular advocacy initiatives to particular donors. This is because without the buyers, the sellers cannot do any thing as one research subject said that,

> "NGOs do not have resources, they cannot go in an issue that is not funded. They have to tailor their activities to what donors want. They also do not have capacity leading to dissemination of contradictory goals"

Relations of accountability and provider result into relations of fear. The local NGOs are in constant fear of loosing funds from the donors either due to change of donor priorities, or poor accountability in terms of activities and funds. The relations of fear may also explain why the some, quite dysfunctional networks, continue to exist amidst the resistance they have from the membership. The NGO is obliged to sustain and support their donor's baby even though they probably do not like the baby's clothes. Probably if these relations did not exist, they could have nurtured this baby differently. NGOs would rather keep quiet than expose their feelings, just in case they affect their access to the donors' resources.

The same fear was expressed when presenting the research findings to a cross section of NGO staff. While they were interested in the findings, they were also mindful of its implications to donor funding. The NGOs do not want to expose what is going on in their organisations just in case the donors decide to stop funding them. Relations of over respect of donors also affect the allegiance of the organisations which results into strained relations among the various actors. During a workshop on monitoring CEDAW sponsored by one INGO, members were not satisfied by the modalities of work that the local network had agreed upon with the donor INGO. They questioned as to whether the donor will be flexible enough to accommodate the changes in the proposal taking into account the voices of the workshop. The network, however, was reluctant to renegotiate the MOU; indeed the way it was treating the members showed that its allegiance was more inclined towards the INGO than its members. They were reluctant to the respond to the requests of its members even when the funding INGO gave reassurances that they were happy to make changes.

The relations of accountability and provider result in relations of over respect of the donors. The donors in certain instances are taken as 'Gods' or they themselves portray their image, especially the official donors, reinforcing the relations of superior and inferior. One research subject noted that in order to access DFID money, they tell you what to do and exactly what they expect, and that has to be followed.

The issue of whether non performance by some local NGOs is due to lack of technical capacity is subject to debate. A research subject said that donors fund what fits in their agenda and NGOs focus on fulfilling this from a rhetoric point of view by choosing a selected advocacy issue(theme of focus by the INGO or donor agency). They write a very good proposal to get funding but may fail to translate it into practice. Research findings indicated that the implementation failure might probably be due as much to- or even more from- lack of conviction as any lack of capacity. In situations where implementation takes place, this lack of this conviction is reflected in the messages[76].

In addition to the above relations, the findings indicate that there exist relations of mistrust between NGOs and the big donors especially the World Bank. One research subject said that when NGOs respond to donor agendas they are responding to macro policies. She also said that there is a broader set framework by the World Bank with a linkage between the macro and micro policies and that this explains the current situation in which everyone is doing the same thing with only a difference in the words used. She also said that the macro level influences the micro. She said that the PEAP was brought around by the IMF and the World Bank. In addition, she said that WB directs the policies to Uganda and they are not pro-poor. The WB works on poverty eradication in its own terms and it sees poverty reduction in its own way; the Bank is presenting structural adjustment using various names. The Bank is interested in trade and politics; women are not seen to be related to

---

[76] This situation is more reflected in rural areas and mainly in cases where INGOs have funded CBOs to implement advocacy programmes especially in the area of women rights such as Women's Land rights.

development and that what the Bank writes about gender is just rhetoric. However another big donor agency, DFID, no longer has country strategy papers in countries with Poverty Strategy Papers instead it has what it calls country assistance plans. This is because donors have agreed on the PRSP as the 'cardinal instrument' in poverty eradication. It is not only DFID but all donor agencies are subscribing to the PEAP as the instrument of developing Uganda yet some NGOs are very suspicious of the blue print to Uganda's development. Gender is very weakly analysed or addressed in the PRSPs.

One research subject said that the donors meddling into the activities of the NGOs started in 1997/98. She said that DFID wants to initiate the idea for you, they pick on it and say this is what we are funding, if they liked an organisation, they would give it money and would fund it. . Sometimes they just jump on an issue, put three organisations together without thinking through the relationships-sometimes this is not feasible. Many official donors only want to ensure that the policies do not adversely affect the poor but they want to continue with their economic and social policies: local NGOs then become agents of these agencies.

 "Most advocacy is rhetoric." This is because of the missing linkage of the micro feeding into the macro. It is top down process"(Interview June 2003) The same concerns were re-echoed in an informal group discussion that said that the concern of the donors is not poverty that for example the WB lends so much to the African nations and that its survival is dependent on these nations. Another research subject called it 'the double rule game' in which the donors do not apply the rule to themselves She said that we concentrate on good governance , human rights, dealing with a global system that cannot facilitate this process and even acting against these things. She said that there is a global dimension in which strings are pulled at international level.

"Development partners? They are donors, it is not a relationship. He who plays the piper calls the tune. They play the piper, they call the tune. It is unhealthy relationship" (Interview June 2003).

Donors' agencies and INGOs have focus areas usually outlined in their strategy papers on themes such as human rights etc. They usually seek these out in the proposals received from the NGOs. INGOs and Donor agencies make NGOs to take on reformist approaches in advocacy rather than the radical form of rejecting the policies. This is because, like local NGOs, the INGOs depend on the development arms of their governments for their survival. It is not clear the extent to which they may completely oppose the policy of their funders. Also Edwards (2002) states that structural macro reforms have been accepted by all donors (and they are not challenged) as prerequisites to overcoming the fundamental causes of poverty. Indeed challenging the orthodoxy of powerful official donors is not necessarily an easy task for INGOs. They are likely to be limited by the charity laws that govern them in their mother countries. Secondly these institutions (the INGOs) depend on resources from the big donors and some of the tax payers in their countries. Due to issues of competition, recognition and status, they lack a common vocabulary. This affects their ability to undertake initiatives

that are likely to offset the existing status quo. The politics of aid risks maintaining the current status quo between the rich and the poor countries making it "a necessarily evil".

> We cannot after all bite the hands that feed us and hope to find a meal waiting for more than a week or so" (Edwards 2002, p.109).

They have thus opted for a reformist approach with incidents of confrontational advocacy (Edwards 2002).

NGO-NGO relationships

The competition among the NGOs for resources, status and attention is clear in Uganda. The key things according to the research findings that cause competition among the NGOs are limited funds in comparison to the number of NGOs. In line with the need for resources is the issue of identity status and attention which enhances the potential of receiving funds from donors.

Competition is greater among NGOs with similar interests/characteristics, for example many women organisations find themselves competing for attention, competition is also common in organisations that have memberships. This competition among the NGOs manifests itself in both overt and hidden ways. Much competition is done in hidden ways and can only be gleaned through reading the organisational documents and interviewing a cross section of staff and members of the selected NGOs.

A study of one network showed clear but hidden competition with its member organisations (MOs). The competition has gone on for a very long time. It was envisaged at the early stages of the network that, "the operations of the network do not and should not weaken the autonomy of its members" and the members agreed to form a "loose network with a focal point to which the member organisations would convene to review progress on priority issues and *the members were to play the lead role*". One of the founder members said that "we had an idea of a small advocacy unit, a secretariat not supposed to become an NGO". The network was seen as a strategic rallying point for women's organisations for addressing gender inequalities focusing on women's strategic and not practical needs. However, to hire staff and hold a bank account, the network needed a constitution and registration as legal requirements.

Registration made the network an independent legal entity. The hiring of staff that needed to perform their work enhanced the independence of the network from its members. This marked the beginning of stiffened and persistent competition with its MOs. As already noted, the members wanted a network that depended on them but it was evident that the network had become an independent entity that indeed had the potential of competing with them. Mos feared the weakening of the autonomy of its members.

From the research findings, the MOs have a 'love'-'hate' relationship with the network depending on what they want or it wants from them. At times, the

network and MOs have agreed to collaboration as a better alternative to competition. At other times relations of hostility, passive resistance, lack of involvement and poor communications have dominated. The network's reaction to these relations has played a critical role in the shaping of its advocacy agenda.

Relations of competition and resistance

MOs of the network use various mechanisms to resist the network. The network especially through its secretariat has also used various mechanisms to cope with the members' resistance. The competition between the network and its MOs has exhibited itself in a number of ways.

One of the ways in which the members have resisted the network's domination is through provision of limited information. Information is critical for effective advocacy planning. Limited information has put the network in precarious situations where they take on advocacy issues at the suggestion of the members, but then with limited information to back up these initiatives the network is forced to stop the active advocacy.

> 'It was observed that effective communication between the members and the member organisations was almost non existent. It was learnt that even where attempts have been made for members of the planning committee to report to their respective organisations, some of the later have continued to isolate themselves from network activities '

> 'But many Member Organisations (MOs) do not differentiate the network from other NGOs; for many it is one of the many Women Organisations in Uganda. Generally, members look at themselves as organisations or individuals that are invited to participate in, support or co-operate with the network. The owners are seen to be the donors and the Secretariat in general, but particularly the Co-ordinator. ' (refs to come)

Those who participate in the network committee activities do so as individuals and that there is no systematic mechanism to report back to the MOs. This type of participation does not put the full weight of the MOs to the work and life of the network. Committees are poorly attended; the few who attend take decisions on behalf of the many.

A consultancy firm defined the problem between the network and its membership as a conceptual issue.

"…there is a general lack of understanding of a Network and how its different from an NGO. The concept of Network is new to Ugandan NGOs and variously understood/misunderstood. There are questions of when is the network programme the programme of the (whole) Network and not the NGO? The network and the member organisations develop and plan their own programmes in isolation of each other. This hampers the building of synergies between and among the MOs"

The report further says that the network and member organisations compete over constituency (clientele), influence and they also compete and rival over donors' funding/favours. The belief that the network is a competitor fuels inter NGOs/Networks rivalry with some NGOs/leaders undermining each other before donors.

A recent external evaluation report states that:

> **'The network work is not institutionalized; it rests on the shoulders of individuals who attend meetings. Representatives of member organizations are sent to meetings but top level involvement is limited. Few members take back to their organizations the issues discussed during networking and hence the constant fear expressed by member organizations that the network might be hijacking their work. There is also a fear that the network is over shadowing other NGOs. Yet it is individual representatives of member organizations who plan for it. The secretariat hardly gets any feedback of what is happening in the member organisations and even if takes efforts to do so, it is not successful.'**

Again the review indicates that the problems of resistance of the network by the members are still ongoing. Fears and suspicion of either the network overshadowing them or hijacking their work are prevalent. The fear and suspicion among the MOs and their network does not allow it to 'reverberate with dynamism' in its activities. Communication between the network and members is poor.

There is non-attendance at meetings, or the sending of junior staff who cannot carry decisions. There is non- co-operation with network activities and poor communications. A number of research subjects attributed non attendance of meetings to being MOs of the network but at the same time having the same agenda, and competing for the same donors with the network.

Recognition for their efforts was another causal factor for the competitive relations among the gender focused NGOs. Member organisations fear that networks may put their name or logo over their work and claim the credit for it.

> We like to network but at times you network to your disadvantage, you do a lot of work, you fail to have time for your own work that was be accounted against you and in a coalition you would not be recognised no one will say that you did something
> .

The networks, as well as members, need recognition for their in put to the advocacy campaigns. Sometimes members feel that the network receives recognition for the work of its members. With limited monitoring mechanisms, the closest proximity to measuring one's role in advocacy is the extent to which one is perceived to be advocating. One research subject said that one

is likely to loose or gain donors based on the perception of whether they are working hard or not. Unfortunately, networks and alliances do not reward or recognise members based on their input into the advocacy initiatives. The network and alliance mainly recognises those who subscribe to an advocacy issue, because they need the numbers to show that the issue is popular. Hence, some organisations join to ensure that their names appear on these lists. Even if one organisation joined an agenda after it has been designed, it will receive the same recognition as that which joined before. This situation leads to limited utilisation of the available resources to agenda setting because there are no enticements to work more. The members are unwilling to work more because it is not likely that their organisations will gain more from their input.

Competition for recognition at times results in contradictory messages and competing for constituencies. One respondent says that the competition between the network and its membership has not been so much about financial resources because these were available. She said that competition was mainly about image building, "to be seen that they are doing something".

One research subject said that to compensate for lack of members support and active involvement the network's secretariat habitually makes decisions without the members input, which creates further dissatisfactions and quiet withdrawal of the members because they feel that they have no control over the network. The behaviour of the network is reinforced by the fact that the secretariat fundraises for its own funds. The secretariat is aware that the key factor in their work is the availability of funds for the network's activities. Assured funding means that whether the members support or do not support an idea, it will be implemented. Independent fundraising by the secretariat enhances its power over the members' control of the network. While the endorsement of the members is needed, it is not the determinant of whether the activity will or will not be done. Thus while the members may resist the network by not attending meetings or sending junior staff who are not decision makers as it was observed, this is not necessarily an impediment to the continuity of the activity. It may affect the strategies used but not the actual continuity of the activity itself.

A different coping mechanism for networks has been organising advocacy initiatives in collaboration with a member organisation so that they could both report on the same activity. This assists them all in managing the accountability, status and recognition concerns. The secretariat realises that the members are not willing to share their information with the network because they accuse it of stealing their information. On the other hand the secretariat is also accusing the members of using the information from the network meetings to make individual proposals which they use to quickly obtain funding from donors. In order to overcome the mistrust but also meet the needs of the donors, the networks and the members, they can agree to organise advocacy activities in collaboration with any of the MO.

However, undertaking joint programmes can be problematic because some donor agencies require member organisations to show tangible results; this

can lead to conflict among member organisations over competition for results and recognition, and the fear that their identity might be swallowed by the network. The same concern was noted by one research subject who said that donor accountability mechanisms make it difficult to ensure that the organisation that has a co-operative advantage undertakes a particular initiative because they expect accountability from the recipient organisation.

Some networks/alliances have restructured themselves differently to cope with these potential conflicts of interest. One started with centres located within the members' offices. The member organisation seconds staff to the centre and this person is paid directly by the Alliance. This leads to a much better commitment and 'buy in' but raises some other difficulties. For example, one staff member was struggling with accountability. He said that the two organisations have different missions and it is at times difficult to reconcile the two. In spite of these difficulties, the benefiting organisations were quite happy with this alliance because it shares resources with them, they are recognised, their status is maintained and it is also able to further its initiatives.

Relationships can also be improved by the network's sharing of its proposals and annual report with the member organisations so that they do not give an excuse that they were not aware of what the network was doing. Individual relationships can also strengthen networks. One research subject said that the relationship between the individuals within the different organisations were critical in getting that organisation's support of the network's activities. It was important to know the individuals personally. Knowing people beyond the organisations assisted in understanding them individually and their values. It made them feel important. It also made the secretariat to know how to relate with them at the organisational level. Informal individual relations are important in fostering the minimal formal relations required in agenda setting and management.

> The more people you would relate with, the more people you would likely to get them on board to support the network activities. When you look at the organisation that really we worked with, I made them to be personal friends, that you know them beyond the organisation

However, individual relationships have their own shortcomings. One research subject noted that when the mutual trust was among individuals that it never trickled to the whole organisation. This created discontinuity when those persons left the organisation. In addition to discontinuity problems, one informal group discussant said that the process of building individual buddies resulted in the formation of cliques among some of the members and staff of the gender focused NGOs (especially among women organisations) that made some members isolated and feel unimportant. The cliques were mainly based on age, old school mates or tribe mates. The cliques also made agenda formulation to depend on the views of a few individuals. Although they assisted in quick decision making, rather than consolidating and reducing the resistance some individual relationships alienated some of the members who felt that the secretariat is not respecting them.

Relations of co-operation

Even while the members are often aware of problems and unhappy with the way the network uses its identity, they continue being a part of the network. This according to the informal group discussions is because the members believe in the issues that the network is working on. They said that the problem is not with the issues but the mechanisms and strategies of handling the issues. One person called the relationship between the network and the members a 'marriage' in which there is some allegiance. They also pointed out that the members benefit from the network through profile raising and capacity development (they learn advocacy, they get ideas, strategies etc)

As seen from the fore going discussions, the competition among the NGOs is intense. However it is done in such a way that it is not easily noticed. In addition to hidden competition, there was overt competition expressed through holding of workshops or publishing activities in the media on initiatives undertaken by any of the NGOs. This is seen in one off activities that these organisations will hold on an issue have a lot of media coverage to provide opportunities for recognition and accountability.

The continuity of the network is important to the members. This analysis is based on the observation that while the membership has the power to change the relations with the network they choose not exercise this power. This is because if they did, it is likely to affect the over all functioning of the network and probably its continuity. Resistant non-confrontational means ensure that the members are not seen by the network and donors as sabotaging an important initiative. The network survives and members take from it what they need and reject what they dislike. The secretariat find ways to manage these relationships and continue to achieve the aims set out in the funding proposals, with or without members' co-operation.

There is a clear recognition of the power of the network by the member organisation in comparison to the power they have as individual organisations. They would not like confrontation because it may be costly to the identity of their organisations (respect, status and recognition); this has led to continued but quiet competition of the network with the MOs. They would not like to be listed by the network and its members as the non-supportive members. The network is very popular and it shares the same donors that provides the life blood for the continuity of these NGOs

The findings clearly show that competition is consciously and carefully maintained and that duplication of activities in itself is a sign of this competition but also a strategic choice to further the advocacy agenda -to show that their cause is popular and widely supported. People did believe that the networks/alliances break isolation among the various organisations, and provide a forum where issues can be handled with a concerted effort. There was also recognition of the importance of the web of relations among the various actors, which are mainly nurtured and maintained by the networks.

It enables organisations to deal with politically gender sensitive issues as a collective; members can take advantage of numerical superiority to challenge power centres. Providing a platform to sharing common concerns and speaking one voice is important around women's issues if they are to become part and parcel of the public debate.

Segments of civil society, personnel of donor agencies, universities and several NGOs have benefited from their interaction with the networks and have incorporated gender concerns and findings into the policies of these institutions. Several research subjects noted that networking provides opportunities for unity among the NGOs, they realised that there are limitations of working alone as independent organisations. One research subject said that some issues are controversial and some NGOs fear staking out alone, the network provides protection. The network provided opportunities to link beyond the women's organisations. A second research subject said that networking provides a 'bigger voice' while another called it 'a collective voice'. A collective-voice achieves greater results and some members get emotionally and professional satisfaction from being members of the network. Networking provided opportunities of pulling together resources though one research subject noted that due to competing relations, the network has not fully taken advantage of the human capacity that is available within its membership organisations.

Thus, in spite of the relations that have developed that the members do not like, their recognition of the importance of social capital nurtured by the Networks and Alliance has led to their continued relations with the network. Indeed due their recognition of the importance of these relations, various coalitions such as the Domestic Relations Bill Coalition-(DRB coalition), Coalition of Politics and Women (COPAW), Coalition Against Violence Against Women (CIVAW coalition), alliances (ULA) and forums (Women Leaders Forum) have been formed.[77] Membership in these Networks is open to gender focused NGOs and individuals-women such that those in government can be enrolled as Individual members. In terms of the coalitions and the Alliance, membership is open to Individuals (women and men, International and National NGOs, Government institutions and the NGOs themselves though the Local NGOs play the lead role though donor agencies have played a critical role in the formation of these relations. Most of the Coalitions are dominated by Women NGOs, partly because they began this way of working in the country through the National Women Council which was later turned into an NGO.   Due to constrained resources for the various actors in these relations, they are characterised by each of the members fighting for survival within and outside the web of relations but in ways that ensure that the relations remain intact because they are valued by the various actors.
Competition is mainly for material resources such as funding and non material resources such as, attention, recognition and status.

---

[77] One needs to be careful in analysing the trend in which coalitions, task forces etc have been formed, sometimes this is an echo effect, or a situation in which it becomes trendy to work in a certain way. Government and donor agencies have also started working this way but they call their formations forums and task forces or working groups.

In the process of ensuring that these relations are not endangered, they have at times turned into relations of political convenience. The relations between the network/alliance and some of their members are relations of political convenience for both the network/alliance and their members. It's important for the members to show the outside world that they belong to such an important and big network and it is also important for the network and Alliance to show that is has a very big number of NGOs subscribing to their advocacy agenda. Indeed the formation of coalitions was to enlarge the list of advocacy agencies beyond the network membership. This is partly due the current international development orthodoxy of working through and with partnerships that saw donors call themselves development partners working in partnerships and forming partnerships. This became the 'trendy' way of implementing a number of initiatives by both the government and the NGOs. There was an added value to show in the funds application proposal that your organisation belongs to a network, task force, alliance or a coalition; it shows that you are not working alone.

NGO-grassroots relationships

The level of relations with the grassroots differs among the various NGOs. Some have a direct relationship with the grassroots through their district offices, others relate with the grassroots through their membership organisations though some nurture these relations more than others.

The relations between the NGOs and the grassroots are by and large manipulative relations on the part of the NGOs and the leaders of the grassroots men and women.

One research subject said that through research and consultations with local people NGOs legitimise their advocacy work. She however said that this does not mean the issues they are talking about are not of importance to the people. According to this research subject the agenda is set at international level such as the international conferences like the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. Such relations obscure listening to what the people have to say. The grassroots, especially the leaders, also view the NGOs as having resources- material and non material- which they would like to access. Relations and identification with the NGOs provide opportunities for identity, status and recognition enhancement, things that are critical for local politics. The leaders are also much aware of the importance of their relations with the led and are thus careful about upsetting the status quo.

One respondent said that the leaders go for workshops and when they come back they do not pass on the information to the other community members. The NGOs focus on the leaders as the representatives of the people. This creates a situation in which it is difficult for the NGOs to know the exact situation at the grassroots level because they do it through community leaders.

In instances where NGOs have related directly with the community it has mainly been in the context of relations of giver/ recipient. Through workshops, NGOs have created awareness at the community level of the ongoing policy advocacy initiatives. In certain cases NGOs have undertaken the initiative for the grassroots to advocate for themselves, this is done within set boundaries because of the relations of control at the various levels as already discussed above. The relations of control are exercised through strategy papers, which stipulate the areas of focus of the various institutions.

Such boundaries give limited space to the community to exercise their power and thus determine the relations that they would like to have with the various actors. I observed in one of the districts that community men and women especially in public forums(such as workshops) would like to protect their dignity and will thus either keep quite, share what you want to hear or laugh when issues of gender inequality are discussed. Understanding the relations of communication at community level is critical in understanding the power relations between the community's various groups of people and the NGOs. Attendance of workshops and non-communication with the wider community is one of such communications. Such workshops have created limited space for the community men and women to discuss on what they would like to change in their community.

However their behaviour does not mean that they are powerless as …… has argued that "no amount of power, influence and effective advocacy can take the locus of struggle away from those hardest hit by the decisions of the powerful". While the relations between the NGOs and the grassroots may show the NGOs as the powerful the grassroots hold the power in the sense that changes in practises have proved to be more influential in changing gender relations at the grassroots level than any law reform (KIT 2001). Due to the existing relations the grassroots have not been able to foster the NGOs understanding of the grassroots or contribute actively to the advocacy agenda.

Conclusions

In conclusion, understanding of the relationships, the formal and informal, hidden and overt is critical to our understanding of advocacy agenda setting. Lack of resources, the need for recognition, status and identity and the current politics of aid are key determinants in how these relationships are shaped and manifest themselves. The way in which the NGO manages these relationships has major implications for its gender advocacy agenda.

Chapter 10: Case studies of working north-south and the nature of relationships built through the management processes

Introduction

Tina Wallace with inputs from Rajiv Khandawal

This chapter picks up some of the key themes running through the research and presents shorter, but representative and telling case studies. These are also drawn from the same sample of donors and NGOs in the research (with one donor-government example as an exception) to expand on, and draw out, some of the issues a little further.

The chapter starts by presenting a donor-government case study. This is included to highlight the reality of the wider context in Uganda, where donor actions and desires play a major role in shaping priorities and the way things are done. NGOs are operating in a context where donors provide over 50% of the Uganda government budget, and while the forms of aid disbursement change the reality of donor involvement and direction remains.

The second case study is of DFID- a major player in Uganda and of critical importance as a funder to UK based NGOs working there and also to some of the larger local NGOs. The case study spans a period of time, because while changes being made now may lead to different relationships, these have to be understood within the context of the past experiences of working with DFID. The conditions under which aid is given to NGOs changes so fast that they have to take into account the past as well as the present, and wonder what the future will bring them.

A case study of a DFID-international NGO is presented next, highlighting many of the tensions and contradictions for both DFID and NGOs around contracting. The needs of the contractor often conflict with the values and aims of the NGO undertaking the contract- yet securing contracts is a key way for international NGOs to 'scale up', to raise their profile and to extend their work. The relationship can often be an uncomfortable one for both sides, and this impacts on the quality and value of the work for people in the ground.

The final case study in this chapter explores a little deeper the relationships between HQ and field offices of UK NGOs, and how changes at HQ can enable (or inhibit) changes in development practice in Uganda. This case study shows an organisation changing as HQ which allows for more local flexibility, but it also highlights the difficulty of changing development work on the ground. The challenge of enabling front line staff to grapple with the complexities of development in practice has been largely overlooked in many agencies, but lies at the heart of social change and transformation. While much time and effort is put in to changing policies and strategies by international NGOs, far less time, money and effort is actually allocated to enabling staff to learn how to implement changes in response to these new approaches.

The following chapter takes the case studies the next step closer to the ground, and explores the findings drawn from research with local NGOs and CBOs working with communities, funded either by Ugandan NGOs or directly by UK based NGOs working in Uganda.

The complexity of relations within the aid funding system

The short case studies presented in these two chapters illustrate further the complexity of the relationships between donors and recipients, and how far these shape behaviour and outcomes. They throw up questions about identity and who sets agendas and for whom. Who has the confidence or power to resist new donor demands? They also highlight the difficulties of building relations of trust in contexts where priorities and policies are fast changing, where the procedures are tight and based on upward accountability, and where little time is really given to training staff and partner organisations in how to do development with local people. The tensions inherent in many grants and contracts between meeting set targets and the focus on impact while working to develop local organisations and processes are also explored.

These are all issues that emerged strongly from the research, which initially focused more narrowly on the policies and procedures of aid management. As the previous chapters have illustrated, these tools have an in-built bias towards tools and ways of thinking imported into Uganda from the countries of their donors. They place the donor agencies in the driving seat much of the time. They tend to impose donor or managerial ways of thinking and defining issues that may not be shared – or even understood- by local organisations or communities, and which contain culturally specific concepts of how to promote change and for whom.

These tools and approaches tend to simplify the complexity of doing development work with poor people in Africa. Issues of inequality and poverty are over simplified; more challenging issues such as ethnicity, the legacy of colonialism, the cultural norms around issues of age and gender are often overlooked altogether. These case studies highlight the messiness of development in reality, and the contrast between the tools and the challenge of development in practice.

The research led us back time and time again to issues around power, culture, partnership, whose agenda, NGO identity, and whose voice was driving the work. It highlighted the tensions that exist where two or more very different organisational cultures work together, and the lack of understanding, listening, and often suspicion and lack of trust that exist in so many of the relationships at each level.

There are a few exceptions. A few NGOs work to a different paradigm. An example of an independent research NGO in Uganda and their views on these relationships are included in this chapter. This NGO finds it hard to get funding from the dominant donors in Uganda. Some positive elements are

also to be found within some of the cases presented, even though the overall picture may not be so promising.

The potential of working differently with the aid system

It was possible to start to identify approaches that can lead to better and healthier relationships within the current aid system. These included the need for genuinely mutual respect between agencies, listening and learning and the development of shared not imposed agendas. This was possible where donor agencies were really willing to listen and was facilitated by time for discussions and face to face meetings. It was possible where donors and local NGOs worked together on shared and negotiated planning, and where the donor had trust and confidence in the implementation of the project and took a 'hands off approach. Advice and support was appreciated when the overall context was one of support rather than control. Joint evaluations allowed for learning, flexibility and openness, but were far less common than externally imposed evaluations against fixed agendas.

Time and again local NGOs said that they needed to be part of the process from the strategy setting and planning stages, and they needed to be able to find ways to allow the needs and voices of the poor to be integral to the agenda. Most development actors subscribe to these principles and values, in theory; in practice, however, they are hard to find. Indeed some international agencies ostensibly committed to building strong local organisations and partnerships have been seen in recent times to start becoming operational again, seeing themselves as more effective in addressing the needs of the poor than local organisations. How then will local organisations and voices ever set and run the agenda for development and change?

Donors-GOU

It is all too easy for donors to shift agendas, and change the parameters of programmes and projects because of their power and often their belief that they have more knowledge, expertise and can guide the work better than local agencies. Where donors listen and really engage with agencies then they can build strong mutually respectful relations, but most often the model is one of dominance requiring local organisations to meet externally driven strategically defined agendas. In building relationships though funding and other support, donors (including international NGOs) often demand a major role in planning and even implementation, and risk skewing and over-riding the identity of agencies based in Uganda.

Over the past decade aid conditionality has moved from the strictly economic sphere into every aspect of government. It is now commonly accepted for donors to make demands around social policies, around budget allocations, about democratic structures, about systems of accountability. This is well illustrated by a quote from the donors group in Uganda:

> The country's macro-economic policies are close to perfect, socio-economic policies are very much OK …(with a few exceptions…)

Democracy, human rights, corruption, transparency, accountability and in general the regional security situation are issues that concern us very much…(they concern) all donors and especially those putting in general budget support.
The New Vision, Uganda, April 25th 2003.

Civil society has become a legitimate concern of the donor community with donors are allocating civil society roles within the global agendas for addressing poverty. The World Bank, DFID and many others now have civil society strategies, covering the work of NGOs, at global and national levels in the countries receiving their aid, and the parameters of NGO engagement are tight:

> *The World Bank, IMF and governments (under the influence of IMF according to critics) are not allowing debate and alternative views on fundamental questions of economic policy. The participation in economic policy making to which civil society is being invited in the PRSP process is strictly limited.*
> **Panos, Environmental and globalisation programme, Press release, 12th Sept. 2002.**

Nyamugasagure and Rowden (2002) argue, convincingly, that in Uganda the whole poverty eradication process is flawed, being based on structural adjustment principles, which ignore the realities of liberalisation and its contribution to poverty in Uganda. NGOs are not invited to critique the growth and development model, only to participate in a process set within its tight parameters. At the heart of the new PRSP framework for highly indebted and heavily aid dependent countries in Africa lies the neo-liberal economic agenda unchanged.

Donor intervention in development policy and procedures and in ways of conducting business within and outside of government has expanded immensely but has been relatively unquestioned globally. This is the wider context within which development (and humanitarian) NGOs have to work. Aid flows are tied to donor conditionalities that increase and constantly change. Changing foreign policy positions fuel these, along with the outputs of think tanks and key individuals- often funded by the same donors that fund development. Evidence-based research does not noticeably shape this analysis, which appears to be influenced more by changing ideologies at the level of macroeconomics.

The following example of a donor-GOU relationship is typical, and happened between high level national organisations and donors. The names of the organisations, and even the sector from which this study was drawn have been changed in the case study. This was to protect confidentiality, something so important to all organisations in this research who did not want to risk being identified for fear of upsetting or angering their donors.

Partnerships Without Tears *by Rajiv Khandelwal*

Of all the meetings Lawrence had helped set up and facilitate for the Health Service Agency (HSA), the one proposed for this morning was likely to be the most difficult.

Sitting across the table from HSA would be the top managers of the all-new Health-Plus agency, and Lawrence had to help them reach some decision on their respective roles, functions and potential partnerships. As a consultant to HSA his task was to help set up new partnership linkages for this once mighty but now in decline government organisation.

The HSA was a traditional government service agency facing the threat of extinction if it did not revitalise its activities. Like many other state agencies HSA had come to be heavily dependent on donor aid; a consortium of bilateral donors and the World Bank supported ESA. In their recent thinking the donors had been insisting that HSA should transform quickly into a new generation organisation. The donors firmly believed that aspects of the health services had to be privatised and made commercially viable. They wanted HSA to devise a system of cost recovery for health services from local users. These changes were envisaged as part of a larger restructuring of the health sector.

The renewed donor interest in health provision and research had spurned off a frantic flurry of missions and studies commissioned by the donors and carried out by external consultants. Lawrence saw that 12 reports had been produced in the last 18 months - all of them based on short visits by international consultants and many making very serious and sweeping recommendations on HSA's future.

Impatient with the pace of change the donors announced that they would support a new national programme – Health-Plus – to provide some privatised support to existing health services. The announcement of Health-Plus led to a growing question mark over HSA's future and virtually all health distribution activity came to a stand still in the country. Health-Plus began to be staffed with managers who quit HSA to access their financially attractive offers and terms of employment; these included some individuals in top positions. Soon HSA was told that they had to "dovetail their mandate with that of Health-Plus" and "reconcile roles in order to achieve cost efficiency in service delivery". Lawrence was called in to help HSA in doing exactly that.

In many ways Lawrence was an excellent choice for the task on hand. He was amongst the few country-based, local development professionals with strong practical, hands-on experience of healthculture extension and administration. To this experience he brought considerable scholarship in the area of institutional development. Lawrence knew many of the actors in both organisations and understood the sources of tensions between the personalities. Above all he was not seen to be partisan.

Lawrence spent several days meeting with donors, directors and officers of HSA and Health-Plus. He studied documents with meticulous care and began to sound both parties on areas of potential partnerships. The responses on either side were cautious yet not without promise.

While on his many rounds of the two organisations Lawrence began to notice that much had changed in the past eight years since he had last visited these people. Shortage of funds was on everyone's minds and internal competition for resources

was highly evident. The donors had provided a large number of fellowships for health managers to study in northern universities. There was a fresh wave of methods, words and jargon *(integrated participatory learning, outcome mapping, appreciative enquiry etc)* which many people mouthed. Finally the presence of donors and their consultants was intense – Lawrence found them in every meeting – there was no getting away from them. At least three full time expatriate staff had been placed in HSA and they were involved in every discussion of any significance – they were always ready with a power-point presentation where the local staff either kept quiet or made some token comments on their inputs. Several staff silently resented their presence, yet they represented power and attracted other staff within HSA attempting to get a better deal!

Lawrence found that HSA's relations with Health-Plus represented another level of complexity altogether. Firstly there was real duplication – both were mandated to provide some of the health services to the same areas and communities. Even though Health-Plus's approach was proposed to be radically different and "new-generation", there was little understanding of how it would be operationalised. These new approaches were being argued and thrashed out among a virtual army of experts and consultants and decisions remained vague or speculative.

At a deeper level, Lawrence figured that the problems had a strong personal dimension as well. The new Director of Health-Plus had worked long years in HSA and his departure to this better position was seen as opportunistic. Many others followed him to Health-Plus and that drained HSA of good talent and in turn made it more difficult for the organisation to implement new mandates. The donors clearly favoured Health-Plus and there was a strong feeling within HSA that they are being victimized and not being given a fair chance to prove themselves. The Health-Plus had hence emerged as a rival on HSA's turf and looked likely to take over.

It is in the background of these developments that Lawrence organised a first high-powered consultation between HSA and Health-Plus. He hoped to put before them hard issues and get them to talk to each other frankly about the future, and the possibility of partnerships.

Everyone reached the Mwengya Conference Hall on time – both the Directors and their core managers were present. There had been a self-conscious clustering of people before the meeting started – this was an event both sides had waited for and needed to get right.

The meeting began on an expectedly stiff note. The opening remarks from the Directors were surprisingly candid. They admitted to be under pressures from donors yet felt that they could work together if they resolved the outstanding issues.

Lawrence suggested that the group talked about these pressing issues first. These were listed- but not without argument – a few issues were not seen as relevant or were designated as beyond the purview of the meeting. Lawrence encouraged the group to talk about these issues, and the discussion slowly opened up. There were heated exchanges, arguments and even accusations. As a facilitator Lawrence allowed these to a fair degree while bringing back the discussions to relevant issues each time it drifted. Even though the atmosphere had heated up, Lawrence felt satisfied that people were talking to each other and speaking their minds. It was a critical starting point.

The meeting broke up for tea after couple of hours and Lawrence did a quick check to ascertain how the participants were feeling. The discussion had helped in easing the tensions and people were talking to each other animatedly. Many new ideas were surfacing informally but more discussions on the constraints were needed.

During the break Lawrence noted a new face. She introduced herself as Laura, a World Bank

partnership and intermediation expert who had been asked to participate in this event. She had arrived in the country two days ago and was late in getting to the meeting. Lawrence wondered who had informed or invited the Bank but then knew these things happened in Kitolo, all the time.

It wasn't time yet for the donors to jump into this discussion. Yet he welcomed Laura and gave her a brief on the meeting.
As the meeting reconvened after the break Lawrence immediately noticed that the participants had become more guarded. Laura introduced herself as an expert from the World bank and announced that she would like to join in facilitating this meeting. Lawrence was amazed that she would make such a proposal – she barely knew the HSA-Health Plus context and wasn't she completely new to the country?

Lawrence proposed that the discussion be continued on constraints and problems. As the participants started on the next issue, Laura began to get restless. She began to prompt Lawrence, asking him to intervene or asking him technical questions on issues being discussed. Laura could no longer contain herself when the discussion turned somewhat heated. She interrupted the group and announced that she is well versed in an intermediation technique that can help them reach consensus and could she use it?

It was a difficult moment of decision for Lawrence. To agree to her proposal would mean handing over the facilitation to her. He turned to the participants who gave their demure consent.

Laura briskly whipped out a set of coloured cards of different shapes and drew a complex matrix on the board where these had to pasted by the participants. She insisted on breaking down the issues to fit the matrix and did a quantitative ranking exercise each time there was disagreement. She flashed cards and labels and got people to make "buzz groups".

Lawrence watched helplessly as a healthy discussion among mature, senior officers turned into a full scale juvenile workshop gimmick. He saw with dismay how the mood around the table completely changed. Laura's main emphasis was on reaching a quick consensus and she attempted to achieve it not through discussion but through tools and games. The participants had obviously begun to enjoy themselves without realizing that *they had stopped talking to each other directly* – they were now talking to each other through Laura and through the frameworks, cells and matrixes she had thrown at them at a frantic pace.

Lawrence realised that Laura's brief was to generate partnership areas in a way that made HSA's roles secondary to Health-Plus. She had little ear for the underlying tensions and certainly had no time to find out. Sure enough a neat list of partnership areas was formulated within an hour even as many, many constraints and tensions remained unspoken and unresolved. Many around the table perhaps felt more at ease with such an unworkable and contrived act of consensus building.

The meeting broke up for tea after couple of hours and Lawrence did a quick check to ascertain how the participants were feeling. The discussion had helped in easing the tensions and people were talking to each other animatedly. Many new ideas were surfacing informally but more discussions on the constraints were needed.

During the break Lawrence noted a new face. She introduced herself as Laura, a World Bank partnership and intermediation expert who had been asked to participate in this event. She had arrived in the country two days ago and was late in getting to the meeting. Lawrence wondered who had informed or invited the Bank but then knew these things happened all the time.

It wasn't time yet for the donors to jump into this discussion. Yet he welcomed Laura and gave her a brief on the meeting.

As the meeting reconvened after the break Lawrence immediately noticed that the participants had become more guarded. Laura introduced herself as an expert from the World Bank and announced that she would like to join in facilitating this meeting. Lawrence was amazed that she would make such a proposal – she barely knew the HSA-Health Plus context and wasn't she completely new to the country?

Lawrence proposed that the discussion be continued on constraints and problems. As the participants started on the next issue, Laura began to get restless. She began to prompt Lawrence, asking him to intervene or asking him technical questions on issues being discussed. Laura could no longer contain herself when the discussion turned somewhat heated. She interrupted the group and announced that she is well versed in an intermediation technique that can help them reach consensus and could she use it?

It was a difficult moment of decision for Lawrence. To agree to her proposal would mean handing over the facilitation to her. He turned to the participants who gave their demure consent.

Laura briskly whipped out a set of coloured cards of different shapes and drew a complex matrix on the board where these had to pasted by the participants. She insisted on breaking down the issues to fit the matrix and did a quantitative ranking exercise each time there was disagreement. She flashed cards and labels and got people to make **"buzz groups".**

Lawrence watched helplessly as a healthy discussion among mature, senior officers turned into a full scale juvenile workshop gimmick. He saw with dismay how the mood around the table completely changed. Laura's main emphasis was on reaching a quick consensus and she attempted to achieve it not through discussion but through tools and games. The participants had obviously begun to enjoy themselves without realising that *they had stopped talking to each other directly* – they were now talking to each other through Laura and through the frameworks, cells and matrixes she had thrown at them at a frantic pace.

Lawrence realised that Laura's brief was to generate partnership areas in a way that made HSA's roles secondary to Health-Plus. She had little ear for the underlying tensions and certainly had no time to find out. Sure enough a neat list of partnership areas was formulated within an hour even as many, many constraints and tensions remained unspoken and unresolved. Many around the table perhaps felt more at ease with such an unworkable and contrived act of consensus building.

Even as he went through the motions of this gimmick ridden session, Lawrence's mind was struggling with a number of questions. How was Laura allowed to show up at this workshop without a real invitation? Her brief was to clearly ensure that Health-Plus retains a positions of power in the discussions with HSA. Why then was HSA's top management not really offering a serious rebuttal? Their spirited arguments before Laura showed up had been laid to rest and they were now giving in meekly to her strongly articulated conclusions.

"Very useful techniques don't you think Lawrence? You should learn a few yourself", Laura urged Lawrence as she drove away to brief the Bank on the meeting.

This case illustrates well a number of issues that recurred in the interviews with NGOs during the research in Uganda, and which were indeed also found at the government-donor level as well.

- ❖ The reticence of Ugandan organisations and individuals to speak out in front of donors
- ❖ The way key local issues can be overlooked and silenced in the search to meet donor agendas
- ❖ The favouring of external tools and management approaches over direct communications and conversations between local players
- ❖ The focus of many conversations is the donor rather than the local players and constituents

This latter point is very critical, and has been raised in the wider political arena in Uganda, where some commentators have said that donor agendas and donor support have resulted in a government that is more accountable to the agendas of external donors, than to its electorate. Donors can sustain unpopular activities and policies because they hold the purse strings; they run the risk of being anti-democratic when their perceptions and approaches over-rule local voices. They can also deeply affect the internal structures of organisations and relationships because they do offer money and rewards to staff who meet their requirements.

The issue of donors and international NGOs poaching staff from local organisations has been raised earlier, and was also an issue here. It is inevitable that higher salaries and better terms and conditions will lure people but this may not always be in the best interests of the local agencies they leave behind.

It is important to recognise, at this point, that many NGOs in Uganda actively endorse and support donor agendas and ways of working. This is either because they believe they are more effective and efficient, 'more professional' and relevant, or because they can directly benefit from them, as did individual staff in the above case study. Not all are unhappy with them- and of course not all donor activities and policies are unhelpful- and some actively promote these agendas. Some believe in them while others support them to obtain personal benefits.

Donor-NGO funding: problems for both sides in the relationship

The following cases and feedback are taken from a series of workshops held with NGOs over a five year period in Uganda, exploring their relationships with donors in the context of the new poverty agenda. It starts by presenting the conclusions drawn from a global study on poverty reduction carried out for DFID during the 1990s. This sets the context for DFID-NGO relationships in Uganda, and undoubtedly shapes current relationships even while some of the key mechanisms of aid are changing.

Two day-long participatory workshops were held in Kampala for NGO staff. The first one, organised with Makerere University, was for international NGO staff, the second for local NGO staff, although at times these distinctions become blurred. The workshops gave the NGOs an opportunity to present their experiences and understandings of poverty in Uganda, to discuss their relationships with donors, especially DFID, and to highlight issues of concern arising from their work with local people on poverty issues.

Many had received funding from DFID under the direct funding scheme set up in 1994 to enhance the poverty focus of DFID's programmes and to build local capacity, this included building their ability to work within DFID procedures. These were modified for the NGO sector but remained quite different from many of the approaches and procedures then used by NGOs. The DFI ran training courses in e.g. logframes and financial procedures, and worked closely with NGOs in their project preparation.

Even with this training in how to meet DFID requirements most of the grants went to large UK NGOs working in Uganda; only one third went to Uganda based organisations, including TASO and CDRN. The paperwork and procedures were demanding, slow and time consuming. Project preparation could take between 5 and 10 months, involving much discussion between the liaison officer and the NGO prior to projects being sent to the relevant sector advisors for comment, and then to the cross cutting advisors. The fund was intended to compliment the bi-lateral programme, so advisors had to know what was being considered, however, because of their heavy workloads papers were often delayed. The NGOs did not always appreciate this level of involvement- some called it interference- that some advisors insisted on. Many local NGOs could not sustain this level of activity for a grant application, others could not meet DFID procedures and requirements. Sometimes DFID advice conflicted with either the NGO experience and expertise or the needs of the people on the ground, who had often been involved in the project generation and design. Issues of ownership, flexibility, responsiveness to different agendas, and who can make decisions and on what basis could all be very problematic.

NGOs had access to other kinds of funding from DFID in the late 1990s. Some funds were only accessible to UK NGOs, such as emergency grants, accountable grants and funding to UK NGOs in UK through the Joint Funding Scheme. Others were de facto only open to large international NGOs (only UK NGOs as third country NGOs are not funded) such as contracts, because of the complexity and financial demands of the funding. Many said the bidding process was untransparent and time consuming for contracts, and working to contracts was costly because funding is given retrospectively.

Direct funding did open up the way for closer relations between DFID and some local NGOs in Uganda; the office in Kampala did manage to build positive relations with a

few NGOs (local and international). The procedures were modified over time (though still heavily logframe based) with NGOs having some influence over them. However, few local NGOs were funded this way and even some international NGOs found aspects of the negotiations difficult, especially where DFID advisers cut across their own experience and that of the communities they work with.

One NGO could have several funding relations with DFID, all requiring liasing with different people in DFID, meeting different requirements and following different procedures. In addition most NGOs had funding relations with a range of other funders, again all making different demands. DFID supported training in project writing, logframes and financial accounting (project management); however, it did not give training in e.g. working in partnership with communities or other forms of capacity building at the local level (development practice).

Ofcourse things have changed since then, and DFID has a new approach to funding NGOs in Uganda using a strategic framework. NGOs are to play clearly defined roles in delivering on the poverty agenda in Uganda, and these include monitoring budgets and enabling local people to call government to account for their pro-poor spending. It also requires NGOs to work with government to provide innovative services for the poor and promoting a right based agenda and awareness in Uganda. DFID has a clear strategy for their funding of NGOs in Uganda, in line with their country strategy. The aims, objectives and expected outcomes are clearly laid out in a logframe and their monitoring of success is measured against this logframe based on the strategic framework.

Funding is primarily now for NGOs in Uganda working on advocacy and lobbying and the monitoring of policy implementation and focused on umbrella NGOs. The modes of funding have been widened and the are more open, but within a tight DFID framework of what they want to achieve from this funding. The only evaluations available to date are those done for DFID about whether this funding is enabling them to meet their aims in Uganda; no data are yet available on NGO experiences of accessing and using this funding.

It is important to note that donor funds and their purposes change quite frequently in line with new country strategies and new donor thinking. The current focus is concentrates on building strong civil society and advocacy work, using a rights based approach. The earlier focus was on good pro-poor service delivery and mobilisation of the poor to undertake their own development. The agenda is set by DFID, not the NGOs, and changes in line with DFID imperatives, not those of local NGOs.

Issues raised by DFID about working with NGOs

DFID wants NGOs to deliver a range of work in Uganda and the purpose and focus of that work changes over time as DFID policy changes. In the late 1990s DFID wanted NGOs to sharpen the poverty focus of the programme, now they want them to monitor and hold government to account for their use of basket funding provided by the donors acting as a consortium. Whatever roles they devise for NGOs and however much they want to work with them to fulfil their own purposes, they do have some problems and concerns around working with NGOs.

DFID finds that the negotiations around the establishing contracts and accountable grants can be protracted and sometimes difficult. There are differences in approach and disagreements about how best to work on e.g health or education. Donors can find the 'intransigence of the NGOs' problematic, and sometimes deep rifts occur between the NGO and donor, with a lack of trust and confidence on both sides.

DFID staff find problems on the NGO side when they are asked to change their way of working, e.g. in order to become a contractor. They are required to adapt their systems to meet the requirements of the client and the 'clients perception of how project resources should be utilised effectively', yet often they find this difficult or even refuse to change sufficiently. NGOs with their highly committed staff and essential belief in their own effectiveness at aid delivery " have some difficulty in adapting to the notion that, under contract, their role is to deliver aid in the way that the Project Memorandum sets out as the most effective, and that their accountability for project resources is to (the donor), using rules acceptable to (them)."

The differences in procedures and ways of organising projects do cause problems; DFID has complex and bureaucratic procedures that are often alien to NGOs who can not easily adapt. There can be a clash of cultures which causes concern to DFID staff who are used to accounting for the spending of public money in particular ways. A major cause of concern in working with NGOs is their lateness in submitting reports and the lack of analysis of their work contained in their reports. All donors want to find ways to ensure NGOs start to be more evaluative and learn lessons from their work, and DFID was no exception.

Some DFID staff felt that it important to keep a close eye on NGOs and check their work and their funding sources carefully. They feel some NGOs are less than transparent about where they are applying for and receiving funding from and they may try to get 'double funding'. At the same time they are aware of, and sympathetic to, the fact that NGOs have multiple donors and have to dance to many different funding tunes and this is an issue they have been trying to find different ways to address.

In spite of these problems most DFID staff were positive about the overall potential for NGOs in enabling them to meet and extend their aims in Uganda and were committed to finding ways to improve relations with NGOs and to support and improve the quality of the work NGOs deliver. However, only a tiny fraction of their budget goes in to working with the NGO sector in Uganda.

Issues raised by NGOs about working with DFID

Unsurprisingly, while the NGOs met and interviewed in Uganda had a great deal to say, both positive and negative, about their experiences of working with DFID, they wanted their views to be kept 'anonymous'. They do feel vulnerable because DFID has the power to refuse their funding; while some of them have raised problems directly with DFID staff many more have kept quiet about issues that concern them. The NGOs have a wide range of different relations with DFID, and the NGOs themselves are all different, so they have a wide range of experiences with DFID which present a complex pattern. Not every NGO had the same points of praise or concern, indeed some had experiences in direct contradiction with others, highlighting the importance of personal relations and personalities in the relationship.

NGOs views of DFID as a funder in the late 1990s

Strengths	Weaknesses
Professional project applications, training in logframes, support provided, encourage participatory approaches in the logframe (DFI)	Logframe too rigid, not flexible, do not allow learning from experience. Fixed indicators limit the project and can miss

	real results.
Involve UK NGOs in sectoral debates	Do not involve Ugandan NGOs
Hands off (JFS)	Too dominating, interfering. Advisors over-ride NGO experiences, impose their ideas on projects, insensitive, top down (DFI, accountable grants, contracts)
Encourage participation of people in project design	Over-ride findings of PRA and insist on their approach
Approachable and easy to talk to	High handed, arrogant, do not listen. Patronising.
Timely remittance of funds; funding often quite large and for 3 years	Funding very slow. Bureaucratic approach makes things work very slowly. Three years is still short term for the development problems being addressed
Cover administration costs	
	Decisions about projects very protracted and slow. Too many people comment and change of advisors makes this worse. Confusing and sometimes contradictory advice given.
	No clear sense of direction for the development work
	Lack of clarity in contracts. Problems around who is responsible for what, who 'owns' the project, who makes which decisions. Imposition of external consultants, reviewers.
	Top down in their approach
Meetings held with other donors to work out procedures for basket/joint funding fro some NGOs in Uganda	Multiple donors, multiple procedures make life complex and time consuming
	No use of local consultants
	No feedback on reports submitted

No work was done to explore how NGOs were experiencing the new approach to NGO funding in Uganda under the new strategic framework. However, this affects only a small number of NGOs in Uganda and the monitoring and evaluation for DFID has to be done against a logframe and clear set of indicators, which may make it a less flexible tool than planned.

Local NGOs in Uganda are 'shaped' by DFID in many ways, often more through the UK NGOs that are using DFID funding than directly with their relationships with DFID in-country. Some of their major concerns were and continue to be:

DFID sets the development agenda
NGOs are seen as part of DFID's strategy for Uganda- a delivery mechanism for DFID plans
Monitoring and evaluation is against plans and indicators set by DFID, and this is increasingly the case
There are high levels of demand around budgets, plans and reporting systems
There is limited room for dialogue and 'influencing DFID' in the way DFID works

In the past the systems for accessing and accounting for funds were very tight; even though these have loosened in some ways accountability is against achieving high level aims for DFID

The past experience of learning logframes, strategic planning, reporting against indicators and tight budgeting has an influence on how NGOs work with DFID now

Donor- NGO funding through contracts: the tensions between a process approach and meeting contractual targets

The following case study well illustrates some of the contradictions and tensions that result from working to tight donor contracts and clearly defined targets, while being expected to work in partnership with local communities and organisations. It raises issues about who is responsible for what, where responsibility lies, and illustrates how sometimes conflicting donor demands can cause real implementation problems. This case study is based on a sample international NGO, but was undertaken at the end of the 1990s as part of an earlier research project.

The Safi health project.

The Safi health project is in one of the poorest districts in Uganda, an area recovering from a vicious civil war, drought, and the ravages of cassava mosaic which deprived people of their 'famine crop' and a key staple. It was highlighted as an area of special need by the UK donor.

The Safi health project was part of a large and complex project covering three different districts in the late 1990s. The aims were rehabilitating ruined health centres; increasing community involvement and demand for reproductive health services; providing efficient and effective reproductive health services; and establishing decentralised structures and systems for their effective management.

During the life of the project there was a shift from focusing mainly on outputs and targets to empowering the district and devolving power from the project to the district. This represented a new paradigm for the project and raised questions for the implementing NGO. In the light of the shifts in focus and responsibility they would have liked a tripartite arrangement between the donor, the District and themselves; they felt they would also benefit from guidance from the donor about how to develop new district-project relations. It was unclear to the NGO whether it remained responsible for 'the deliverables' in this new context or not.

The project was for four years prior to handing over to the district; this was a short time horizon for the wide range of purposes, and the limited time available caused problems for staff in the implementation process. They knew they needed much more time to develop and foster a sense of local ownership, for a project that was brought by a foreign donor and NGO.

The project was very slow to get started, as is often the case with complex projects. The legacy of the delay affected some relationships within the district, at both the village and the district official levels. Some people were suspicious of the NGO even though they were not the cause of the majority of the delays.

The first delay, lasting many years, was essentially caused by disagreements

between the donor and the first NGO it asked to develop a proposal. The proposal, based on their existing work in the district, once submitted was not seen to be in line with the donor view of health work in the area. There were protracted and often acrimonious negotiations, which eventually came to a halt. No agreement could be reached around aspects of the design, running and costing of the projects; priorities did not come together and a stalemate was reached. This wasted both time and resources, something of real concern to both sides. Meanwhile the dire needs of the people in the district were unmet.

Following the complete breakdown of relations the donor designed the project and put it out to tender for NGOs to bid for. By now the donor was well aware of some of the problems and pitfalls of working with NGOs, including clashes around procedures and accounting as well as development approaches. The project was tightly written and the contract contained stringent conditions. Two NGOs bid for the contract, one local and one international. The international NGO won the bid even though it emerged later that they did not meet some of the essential conditions around recruitment of staff; this caused a major problem with the local NGO who lost the contract. Again, bad feeling was created and the donor was accused of lack of openness and transparency in their dealings with NGOs.

The donor and the NGO clashed on the best structure for running this complex project, but the donor insisted on a structure they had devised. This also led to many delays in the first year.

In spite of the delays and the poor start, the NGO team worked hard to build a partnership with the district; the district did appear to have a growing sense of ownership and involvement in the project. There was, inevitably, a tension here for the NGO: while they worked with the district as closely as possible, they were also responsible for implementing a donor project with clear contractual targets. They were trying to implement a project in a way that was participatory and co-operative with the district and the communities. Yet, as they learnt at the district level and community levels they felt unable to feed this in to the project design, because it was tied directly to legal contracts. The relationship of contractor prevented them from implementing their learning in the project in the way they wanted. Some staff talked of the donor handicapping their 'comparative advantage' of getting close to people in the district at all levels, learning and yet not being able to adapt the project accordingly. Concern around this issue came up repeatedly and eventually led to an agreement with the donor to rework the logframe with a consultant/facilitator.

There is a critical set of issues here. The donor was are clear that the project was theirs, implemented by a sub-contractor. This was marked by small things such as the stamping of the donor logo and country flag on the offices and vehicles, and by larger issues. For example the NGO felt that issues of nutrition and water should become part of the project because these directly affected the health status of the population, especially the poorest; the donor rejected this. The NGO had to refer back to the donor on all issues of design, such as the provision of electric power in the clinics, not covered in the original design but often replies took months to come. The nature of the contractual relationship is constraining and undermines the NGOs wish to work in a process way. The district also saw this as a donor project, which raised questions about the intention of the project to promote local ownership in order that the project becomes sustainable.

The problems of motivating and mobilising communities, especially after years of debilitating and divisive war and the trauma of camp life and food aid dependency were underestimated in the project documents. The reality of getting people, many of

whom are poorly nourished and very poor, to contribute in a timely way was also very complex. It was hard to know whether trying to promote community participation in previously divided communities was a healing process or a process that confirmed old divisions, with only some sections of the population being willing and able to work together.

The contract required a certain number of buildings to be built yet the need to involve the community in the rebuilding sometimes come into conflict with meeting these targets. The NGO was legally contracted to provide a certain number of new clinics each year, yet they had to go at the pace of the community facilitators who were working in a fractured community. This process was inevitably slow, leaving the builders ready but unable to start building. Friction was evident within the project, between different staff, and caused stress both to those working to tight legal contracted frameworks and to the community mobilisers who needed more time.

The project had many other components, around cost recovery, staff training and health education. All caused problems between the different players, who had different views on the appropriateness of cost sharing, the priorities for staff training and the key messages needed for health improvement in these communities. For example, the NGO staff were very aware that the messages chosen for education were not necessarily addressing the priorities of the people. Indeed during the baseline survey and subsequent discussions with local people the priorities of food insecurity, of poor water supplies and sanitation were raised as the major causes of poor health and issues of massive concern. They saw poverty as the cause of their poor health and felt that if their poverty was addressed then their health status would rise. They saw the roots of their poverty lying in the loss of cattle used for ploughing, meat and milk; their poor healthcultural technology and lack of improved seeds; lack of fertilisers and low productivity leaving them with not enough to eat let alone to sell.

The Director of the NGO was concerned about the very ambitious expectations that the donor had around issues of changing knowledge, action and practice around key health practices within a four year period. In the logframe knowledge is equated with changed behaviour, but the NGO knew that the relationship between information and behaviour change is highly complex and problematic.

The project raised issues important in the effective running of the project.

- Ownership between the NGO, the donor and the community: this was clearly a donor project and the NGO felt their lack of ownership of the project acutely. They felt obliged to deliver the targeted outputs on time as they were legally obliged to, but this conflicted with their desire to learn and develop the projects through experience.
- Sustainability: within four years this project was expected to become the responsibility of the district and the communities, but four years is a very short time to devolve sustainable structures and processes to people in villages.
- Learning was felt to be at loggerheads with the contract culture and requirements. While donors use process projects now, this project was tied closely to a contract and an expected set of outputs and deliverables. These were proving hard to meet alongside the targets of community involvement and working with the district.
- NGO- donor relations: the implementing NGO was a large and highly sophisticated international NGO with complex bureaucratic procedures, which did not easily fir donor requirements. Yet, they have the financial and managerial capacity to handle large contracts, unlike many NGOs, and still there were problems around many procedural issues where the two organisational cultures

did not easily fit together. It is unclear what benefits donors derive in working with NGOs in this way, because while staff in the two agencies formed good working relations over time, the underlying contractual relationship remained problematic.

- Community ownership: the problem of the community owning the project was explored. It seemed simplistic to imagine that if people are persuaded and even perhaps coerced into making a contribution to the project they will then feel they own it. Questions about who does and who does not contribute, who does and who does not stand for the management committee, who does and who does not have access to the services all need exploring further.

- The project doesn't meet some of the stated priorities of the poor; these include improving food production and water supplies. The project may then remain a low priority for many villagers so where will the sustainability be once the project ends?

- gender issues: the main gender issues were clear. Women play very subordinate roles: young girls are sold by their fathers to raise meagre resources in the face of acute poverty; girls have low levels of education and high levels of teenage pregnancy. Little money is spent on ante-natal care, almost none on post- natal. Women have heavy workloads yet little access to money or decision-making, the men make decisions in all spheres of life. Widows are passed to their husband's brothers, or left to fend for themselves if poverty prevents this widow inheritance. Less money is paid for girl children to be born than male children. Yet these realities were not adequately addressed in the project design and activities and the IEC was targeted primarily at women who have little control over many aspects of their lives or the lives of their children.

NGO-staff relationships: conditionalities exist further down the aid chain as well

The final case study in this chapter is of a UK based international NGO looks at the relations between HQ and the field office, and in turn the field office and the staff who work directly with the partners they support. It shows the importance and role played by policies and procedures set centrally in London, and highlights how difficult it is to change practice on the ground even when these policies change. The dominant role of HQ in the past, combined with the tight bureaucratic and well understood ways of working, combined to make it very hard for staff to change. Many staff found it easier to follow the rules and regulations that had been in place for a long time than to become more adaptive development workers once these onerous regulations were removed. They had learned a way of thinking and working that required them to follow the hierarchy; changing to become responsive workers able to take decisions and responsibilities and to work flexibly with local organisations proved problematic. The past policies and procedures had shaped their approach to and delivery of development work; shifting this to a more responsive 'bottom up' approach was very difficult indeed for them. The agency itself provided little hands-on training or experience for front line staff in this new way of working on the ground. This was being rectified at the time of the case study.

Turning strategies into practice

The global strategy for the organisation has shifted dramatically. This has been

accompanied by the lifting of many tight and bureaucratic procedures and the increase in autonomy for field offices to develop their own strategies, polices and procedures so long as they are in line with the overall aims of the organisation. Many shifts at the global level in the organisation have proved enabling for the Ugandan office including the move from implementation to partnership, the strong focus on gender, and the changes to financial and reporting procedures. The HQ has given the country programmes a degree of autonomy and freedom to develop their own plans and approaches, which is completely new. This has given the Uganda office room to experiment and they have put in place new strategies, policies and procedures for working to address poverty in Uganda.

The office has undergone major changes in both focus and structure. Senior staff have been trained in leadership and how to take responsibility for change processes. They have learned to become leaders rather than followers of directives from outside. The development agenda has changed and so has the way they work in Uganda, with more local decision making, devolved authority even within Uganda, decisions being made closer to the ground, less controlling planning and reporting.

From all the discussions and observations with the NGO it was clear that the changes within the Uganda office of the international NGO were positive and real, especially within the leadership teams. Some challenges remained: first in their work and relationships with local CBOs and communities, and second in their relationships with the wider global organisation.

1. Interface with communities

This was the most critical outstanding challenge for the NGO. How are they actually working with partners and communities in Uganda? There were some contradictions and lack of clarity around partnerships, a lack of specificity about their role, and the way front line staff should be working to support partners. While there was a clear and accepted policy commitment to working with partners there was no clear development methodology (or methodologies) for how to develop partners and partnerships. The policy is clear, how to make that work in practice remained vague. The staff who experience these problems most acutely are the programme staff trying to turn the NGO's aims and objectives into daily development practice in Uganda.

There were contradictions within some of the policies that compounded their difficulty about knowing how to work with partner organisations in practice.

Contradictions within some aims: raising the profile of the organisation in

Uganda

One contradiction that staff were grappling with was the need to promote and raise the profile of the international organisation within Uganda at the same time as empowering local organisations to act and speak on their own behalf. Staff became concerned when local organisations they had supported undertook high profile work in their own name without crediting the NGO itself. There is a real confusion in people's minds about when they should promote their NGO and many programme staff feel they should ensure that promoting the NGO's name in Uganda should be in the forefront of all the work they are involved in.
Others see this as essentially undermining a commitment to building a strong, indigenous movement against poverty in Uganda. It can perpetuate dependency, something that was seen in the use of the international NGOs' logo on partners'

literature.

Who takes the credit?

While working through partners is expected to build the capacity of partners, the NGO itself has a set of aims and objectives that go beyond capacity building local organisations. This led to confusion about who should be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the work of local partners and who should claim the credit for successes in addressing poverty in an area or village.

The agency is expected to show its supporters what it is achieving, yet how to do this when working to through others and aiming to empower them to take over the agenda eventually was not clear to many staff. If a local organisation is failing to deliver should more work be put in to support them or should their funding be stopped? What was more important- the delivery of a poverty focused programme or the building of local capacities?

Linking the macro to the micro

Another area of tension is around the global thematic work and linking the macro to the micro. This work is very important to the overall organisation. Inevitably the thematic staff in the NGO in Uganda work in fast moving arenas and these are largely driven by information, analysis, events and concepts from the north. While they need to be up to speed with the latest global thinking and theories for their national level policy work, these are often very far removed from the day-to-day realities of poverty in rural Uganda. Thus, it is a complex task for them to ensure that what is passed on to programme staff in relation to each theme is rooted in local realities and not being driven by externally-derived priorities. It is not easy to see how one person carrying responsibility for a theme can work with programme staff across Uganda to help them to address the problems raised by local communities and partners. Perhaps, inevitably, this pushes thematic staff back into developing generic positions and strategies, which may or may not be helpful to staff working directly on the ground. There is a tendency also to put increasing reliance on policy work, with a belief that a better policy context will 'trickle' down to better practices on the ground.

The work of Programme Officers

It was clear in discussions that many Programme Officers are not yet empowered, and do not feel empowered. They see themselves as following the plans from the Country Strategy Paper, and feel that taking decisions to do things differently or to question strategies lies beyond their control. Nearly all the training, meetings, retreats and external inputs that other staff have received have not yet reached down to Programme Officers. Many are working in ways redolent of the past, implementing what they understand to be their work in Uganda, based on quite rigid approaches without engaging flexibly and creatively with concepts or issues, or bringing the specificity of their specific context into the way they work.

Indeed many question the shift from operational work to working in partnership, believing that they have more skills and competence to do the job than local, weak organisations. Often their attitudes were quite negative towards the organisations they were supporting and building up, and they followed quite rigid ways of working with them. They demanded planning, accounting, and reporting that fitted with their own ways of working within the international NGO. They promoted the development of policies around gender, advocacy, rights based approaches, even when these were not relevant to the organisation they were working with. Models of development were imposed, with the use of logframes dominating for project planning, and requirements about boards and ways of governance that mirror their own

organisation.

There is a lack of clarity about what skills Programme Officers need. Huge and varied expectations exist in the documentation about what Programme Officers will be able to do on the ground. These require multiple skills which will vary according to their role, the geographical area, the themes chosen, the culture of those they are working with and the competence and resources of their district. There was a universal agreement that many Programme Officers do lack the required skills, yet there has been little systematic analysis of the myriad demands is making of Programme Officers, and the many things they expected to accomplish. No comprehensive work has been undertaken to explore how best to develop and train Programme Officers in a wide range of skills, perhaps the most important of which are about being able to understand and interpret local conditions and find appropriate ways to support local processes.

These problems are most acute for people working on the frontline when ideas and approaches, especially, for example, around promoting the idea of poor people learning to claim their rights, are presented without a good analysis of power relations. Local people claiming their rights is not seen as problematic, nor are the power and inequalities inherent in poor people lobbying those who control resources or policies really analysed. Power relations between the international NGO and its 'partners', between communities and the police and courts, between CBOs and district level organisations require detailed understanding before people can be asked to pitch themselves against individuals or organisations more powerful than themselves. Without this negative outcomes can result; a lack of analysis of power can lead to unrealistic actions and damaging results.

Programme Officers do tend to work in quite limited ways with most small partners, focusing on issues such as governance, financial accountability and reporting; these are core requirements, which all partners are expected to fulfil. But many may be too onerous for the size and experience of small CBOs, and some said that the standards of finance and accounting required from CBOs remains too high for their capacities and needs. In addition partners are expected to share the international NGO's values and vision, and are often expected to absorb and respond to concepts such as gender, advocacy and rights that may not be relevant at the early stage of their development.

2. Interface with the wider organisation

This is clearly very important. The HQ sets agendas and frameworks, which allow for more or less autonomy at the field level. While the current context is favourable to local action and interpretation, there were some perceived threats to this new autonomy.

The global strategy is not yet embedded within the organisation, and the office in Uganda is grappling with many aspects of taking the ideas in the strategy and embedding them in concrete work in Uganda. Yet the organisation is already moving very fast on to the next major change of internationalisation. The timeframes for are very short and driven by global agendas, which threaten to overshadow the perspectives from Africa. The externally driven processes of change do not always giving space to local processes to develop naturally as programmes change to meet the challenges of moving from implementation to partnership, from service delivery to policy work.

The pressure on fundraising internationally is impacting on the office in Uganda. There is a new demand for local fund raising, which may or may not lead to more flexibility for the NGO in undertaking work on its priorities. Some see it as an opportunity to get access to more funding than they raise now from the public, but donor conditions would require much tighter reporting and accounting which could undermine the participatory processes now being developed. The logframe approach of donors, and tight contractual requirements risk pushing the organisation in Uganda back from some of the new more flexible ways of thinking and working.

New participatory learning approaches, rolling plans, new budget processes and devolution of plans to Africa were all enabling factors for positive change, but recently there are fears that new, rigid global reporting frameworks and Management Information Systems could reverse some of this freedom/space. Recent output from the Impact Assessment Unit on global reporting requirements, and even the recent minimum information framework developed by the Impact Assessment network in Africa appear to be reverting to pushing programmes into identifying measurable change, successes and demonstrable global impact year on year. These approaches, usually presented within a log-frame, are inimical to the more open questioning and learning that has enabled the office in Uganda to start understanding and analysing the deeper processes behind its development work.

There is evidence of seepage into Uganda of concepts drawn from the global strategy, for example, the rights-based approach. These concepts are not always well understood and have not been analysed by staff in Uganda themselves, and they can easily confuse or over-ride locally relevant thinking and understanding. There remain real problems of the 'echo effect' in the organisation, where internationally generated ideas, concepts and approaches are adopted without question in country programmes. They are often difficult to put into practice because they are poorly understood, or of limited relevance in that context.

The positive context provided by the international NGO needs to be sustained and international changes need to go at a pace that make sense to country programmes and support the regional agenda.

Agency workshop to analyse these challenges

The challenges of turning the aspirations of the NGO in Uganda into a development practice that can help to achieve them were fully discussed at a workshop where the need to find ways to deepen the changes in leadership behaviour to reach the Programme Officers and partners was emphasised.

Many of the challenges lie in addressing the weaknesses in development practice. For the organisation in Uganda to become 'strong' they need to understand the term 'partner' and analyse their different roles and responsibilities in relation to partners at different levels. These range from large, established organisations working in Kampala, to medium-sized NGOs at national and local level, to both established and new networks, and to small, informal or more fragile organisations working at the community level. They also include relations with local and national government. Terms such as 'support', 'facilitation' and 'partnerships' need to be defined to clarify what they actually mean in practice.

Another critical issue was- is this agency and its staff a facilitator or an actor? What are the implications of moving from being an actor/implementor to a supporter/facilitator in practice? Do they have a strategy that enables partners to become independent development actors? How should they tread the thin line

between co-opting CBOs and NGOs to deliver on their Country Strategy Plan, sub-contracting, and building organisations able to work for the poor ultimately without external support? How well can they work to strengthen local NGO capacities, or facilitate their work when they are also funding, monitoring and checking up on them?

It emerged that there were different messages embodied in the aims, objectives and activities. Overall, this international NGO in Uganda was still an implementor only sometimes undertaking facilitation of others. They were also seen as a giver of skills and resources, with little sense that they could also be a learner or receiver when working with others. In the tension between being a facilitator and a doer, they are still tending to be the doer. They remain a powerful and significant force at the district and community level, though they have developed more equal and negotiated partnerships with national NGOs in Kampala. They still have a tendency to lead, expecting others to follow. They have not yet analysed their role and power as a donor, nor how to combine that role with facilitation and handing over power to less skilled or strong organisations and individuals at the local level.

These are major challenges for all international agencies. This agency is very well placed to address them because of all the work it has done to develop a thinking, questioning and responsive leadership over the past few years. It has a wide portfolio of approaches to addressing poverty, now the challenge is to think through their different roles and which ones should they be handing over in the future. They need to explore questions such as to whom they should be handing over parts of the work, what they can do to ensure the new players are able to undertake poverty reduction work effectively, and what roles should they continue to play?

The next chapter explores further the issues of NGO relationships with local organisations and communities and how these work in practice.

Chapter 11. The aid chain reaches the ground.

Tina Wallace

Introduction

This chapter draws on case studies of several local partners and the communities where they work, to explore how the final links on the chain work, and whether they are promoting the kind of changes that the development agencies want to see. These partners receive funding from either a Ugandan faith based organisation that gets European funding via the churches there and provides funding for the local church based or independent NGOs to work, or a UK based service NGO that works through a field office in Uganda and through local partners.

The findings in this chapter are intended to build on and compliment the work done by CDRN in their work with local NGOs and presented in chapter 6.

The partners

The partners that were traced through these two donors varied in size from 140 employees through to 3-4 paid staff, less when funding was difficult to find. Most work with volunteers to support the work. Some work in several sub-counties, some work more widely across the district while others work in only a handful of villages.

They worked in a wide range of sectors and aspects of development, covering issues as diverse as restocking, nutrition, water, HIV/AIDS, women's programmes, micro-finance. A few worked in relief and food security as well as infrastructure development. They range of activities was surprising, especially for the smaller NGOs, but it became clear during the interviews that this happens because often they develop specific programmes in response to the availability of donor funding. As donor funding priorities change, or they come to the end of project funding with one donor and need to seek out another their profile of activities change to meet available donors requirements. Most of them have had experience of a wide range of funders over time, including the Government of Uganda, World Bank, UNICEF, various international NGOs, and faith based agencies in Uganda. They have quite extensive experience of working to different donor policies and procedures; often their funding is short term exacerbating the need to constantly seek out new funding and find new donors and find how to work with them.

In spite of their many differences, in size, staff makeup, focus of activities and the contexts in which they work several themes emerged from the case studies that showed a remarkable similarity of experience and perception around development work.

Relations with donors

They all said that their donors- be they Ugandan organisations, field offices of international NGOs, or other international donors- talk of partnership. They all say that the donors want to promote partnership relations and ensure that the partners they work with (the local NGOs) represent the aspirations and needs of the communities they work with. Yet in spite of this commitment they find that almost all their donors work to a strategic plan or business plan- a set framework- that has been developed far away from the local setting. They appear to be driven more by their own strategic plans than the local needs and perceptions:

However, donors have not stopped prescribing frameworks for the prioritisation or choice of programmes for communities…..this makes the whole notion of community choice and the reality that the poor know what they want very superficial….

The donors often set the priorities and the core agenda, and can sometimes divert local NGOs away from their own core mission. Some said that they found it hard to fit their vision in to donor strategies and priorities. They found that some of their perspectives and values could not be easily accommodated within donor procedures. For example, one person said that spiritual approaches couldn't be fitted into a logframe. For him development was not a package or a product to be delivered to people, as it so often appears to be in project and strategy documents, rather

Development is never a finished process of mankind, nations or organisations. Outsiders and partners can only contribute in the sense of enabling, assisting to remove obstacles…

The donors have clear policies and procedures around what they will and will not fund, and how they want the work to be done. One of the local NGOs had in fact refused funding from individual donors because the terms of the INGO funding were not acceptable. The INGO wanted two staff seconded to their programme work but were not willing to cover all their salary costs. The local NGO had to keep their other work going and could not spare two full time staff for the one project without more donor support so reluctantly they refused the funding. They saw this as a missed opportunity to learn from the INGO in developing new ways of working, but they could not meet their rigid funding conditions.

Most find they try hard to meet the conditions, but often find them onerous. For example, the requirement of many donors for monthly reporting feels very onerous and makes them feel more like employees of the INGO or large donor than an independent NGO. They feel the way funds are given often emphasises their role as receivers and the donor role as givers and this undermines any real potential to build relations of trust that are essential for partnership. Others say that because of donor fears of misuse of funds they have to provide receipts for everything. One example given was where all the women at a workshop have to sign or thumb print a receipt **every** time they had tea or a samosa at a workshop, as well as for their travel and accommodation costs. Project staff feel this undermines their position and

wastes a great deal of time at workshops with youth or women's groups for example. This was not uncommon, yet they noted that INGOs and donors do not require them to sign every time they are offered a soft drink of cup of coffee.

Increasingly some donors are providing funds retrospectively. They require detailed levels of receipts and accounts, yet for many NGOs paying upfront for project work is very difficult. For some it is impossible and they are unable to access donor funding at all if it is paid retrospectively.

Some donors pay late, some very late indeed (examples of payments coming 6 months into a one-year project were not uncommon). Yet donors expect the local NGOs to account for the money as if it had come on time and they had been able to undertake all the planned activities. This is not realistic, as many small NGOs do not have reserves to draw on to fund activities prior to receiving payment. It pushes the NGOs in to very awkward positions of having to report on work they have not been able to complete because they did not receive the funding on time.

They are acutely aware of their position as receivers. They know donors can change priorities or stop funding at almost any time, sometimes without explanation. Donors are rarely transparent about the funds they have to spend in a country, or about how those funds are allocated; only one or two INGOs have even tried to be more open about their funding flows in Uganda. As a result some local NGOs said that they prefer small local donors who provide them with regular but limited grants, to 'large donors who come with strict rules and ideas from their own countries.'

They find it difficult to sustain projects once funding stops, and they are in a constant cycle of seeking out funds for their work. This is demanding and time consuming and can detract from actually doing the work. Often funding is short term, and yet donors expect to see real impact. This is very difficult to achieve:

If someone has been doing something the whole of her life, change of behaviour and attitudes does not come overnight. Learning is not usually achieved within the lifespan of projects

The pressure on them is high. While funding is often short term and limited to project rather than administration and capital costs the expectations of what they can and should achieve are high.

All the NGOs have adopt the language of the donors in their proposals and reporting formats. Many feel comfortable with this, and feel they have become more professional through using these procedures. There were however issues around the project frameworks being in English, and how to manage differences between donor perspectives on the logframe for example, and what the communities were expecting.

They feel less comfortable with some of the other donor conditionalities, particularly the new thrust towards advocacy work. Most said that they were feeling under pressure to undertake or increase their advocacy work. Yet most do not really understand this language and it does not fit easily with the way they work, their skills or their priority activities.

Several people interviewed talked of the tension between the world of the donors with their strategies, plans, objectives and impact frameworks, and the reality of the lives of the poor in their area of Uganda. The incompatibility of the frameworks with people's lives led to conflict and caused friction between some of the local NGOs and their donors. Others tried to manage these conflicts internally and did not report back any problems to their donors.

Benefits from external funding

There are ofcourse real benefits from accessing external donor funding. This funding allows them to scale up their activities and employ more staff. It often enables them to become more specialised and they do receive training and support from some of their donors to improve their work. They especially appreciate the training they receive in logframes, budget management and leadership, which help them to run their organisations better and in turn access more funding. They also appreciate training in skills such as consensus building, strategic planning and technical skills.

Donors have encouraged and enabled them to formalise their organisations in some cases, and set up boards and ways of working that in turn attract other donors. They also enjoy the interaction with external players, which stimulates them to think and work in new ways. Through some funders they can become members of networks with other NGOs and so learn and develop through contact with them.

All the NGOs said they needed external funding to survive. They could only raise small amounts of funding locally through membership fees, donations from the church and selling a few services. The funding was critical for their survival and expansion and to enable them to employ and train professional staff. The findings of the fast changes in the NGO sector, highlighted through the database analysis, confirmed the reality that many local NGOs are highly donor dependent and appear and disappear in response to new funding or the ending of funds from a donor.

The challenges of donor funding

These local NGOs said they faced many challenges in working with donor funding however. A few funders were singled out as being more flexible and approachable. This happened sometimes because of a certain individual who had built a strong relationship of openness and trust with them, or because an agency had a more open and flexible approach (a Dutch agency was cited in this context a few times). Overall though they did not distinguish greatly between their different donors and implied the problems they faced applied to almost all their funders.

The challenges they listed were as follows:

- ❖ The evident lack of trust in them by their donors, who are very concerned about their ability to be accountable and competent
- ❖ Meeting the different demands, timetables and budget processes of different donors
- ❖ The lack of real recognition of all the factors that affect development work and can delay the work and its effectiveness. For example, insecurity; local politics and power relations; el nino and other climatic problems; financial difficulties; limited access to essential resources- including transport, buildings, office equipment
- ❖ The tension between trying to meet targets set by donors and the need to mobilise and engage local people in the work, which can take much longer than the project span
- ❖ The packages around PRA and involving communities are often superficial and do not promote involvement or local ownership as they are supposed to
- ❖ The donors want local participation, but do not allow for the time this takes. They also overlook the heavy demands this places on local people, who are often too busy for the work involved
- ❖ Cost recovery is a current mantra but people often cannot find the money to pay for the whole range of services they are expected to contribute to- their situation is not understood in its entirety. Instead each donor thinks only of the cost recovery element in their sector
- ❖ Local people often do not understand loans and expect these agencies to give them grants, because they are poorer than the agency. Repayments can be hard to secure
- ❖ Now they are expected to access funding through the district government, but this is very hard for many reasons. The district lacks adequate income; resources are often allocated along political lines with some groups and areas marginalised or even excluded; there is limited capacity in some districts for disbursing and monitoring funds

Several of these NGOs recognised that they struggled to meet the planning and accountability demands of their donors. They found these too demanding and onerous, but their failure to meet these demands caused serious problems in their relationships with the donors.

Two issues were explored in more detail with these NGOs: gender and participation.

Gender

The understanding of gender that most of these local NGOs were working with was very limited. The main thrust of the 'gender work' was 'having some women included'.

They found that by and large the term gender was not understood by local people, and they explained in to them largely in terms of having women's

representation on boards, in user groups, on committees and ensuring women had access to some of the project resources.

The terms gender and gender mainstreaming were heard widely in these NGOs, but what staff really meant by these terms was often unclear. They said that gender meant women and men, and that women needed to be more included in their work. However, there was a lack of deep analysis of what the gender issues were in each context and many of the gender issues identified through research and work elsewhere were not part of the discussions. The focus was far more on finding ways to get women to participate in meetings, to join boards and to come to groups than on analysing the real problems they were facing and the barriers that kept them in relative disadvantage.

This was not surprising given the short time that most local NGOs have for their needs assessment and community consultation processes. In a one-year project the community consultation phase is often only a few days long, and PRA processes are carried out quite hurriedly. None of the sample NGOs were using the more challenging and deeper analytical tools with communities, such as Stepping Stones, which does enable local NGOs to go deeper into what the key gender issues are for any given community.

There are certainly local NGOs doing more in depth work on gender inequality and using a range of methodologies for understanding the issues. Some agencies such as TESO, ACORD and ActionAid have really focused on equipping their staff and partners to work analytically on these issues on the ground, but the partners in this sample had not worked with those agencies.

While there are exceptions and examples of good practice working with gender issues[78] these appear to be the exceptions, and to exist especially in relation to issues of sexual and reproductive health work. The norm for local NGOs in Uganda is what is presented here. This finding is confirmed by recent work undertaken by Transform, also working in Uganda as one of their case studies. Transform is an international NGO that was part of the research sample; they are currently undertaking a study (funded by Comic Relief) into why there is so much resistance to gender in many local NGOs, CBOs and communities. That research explores what concepts and understanding of gender are being used, and how far they are imported from outside, and how far they build on local experience and approaches. Their initial findings suggest that the dominant gender discourse in Uganda is drawn from concepts, literature and frameworks developed in Europe and USA and is often poorly adapted or explained in the local context. This is one cause of the widespread resistance they identified across local organisations in Africa, who are usually not adopting gender approaches in practice.

This research endorses the view that for many local NGOs gender is an imported term and concept. It is poorly contextualised or analysed and staff grapple to find ways to translate the gender concepts they do learn into practice. Overall they address gender through the application of quotas.

---

[78] Reviews of Stepping Stones, Acord's gender review, AA gender training

They often find it hard to get women to participate and find there is resistance from the community to trying to include women in debates and decision making. They have few tools or strategies for addressing these problems, and instead report their experiences of e.g. women's inability to attend and speak at meetings. They say it is hard for women to participate, they are shy and unwilling; they are busy and prefer men to represent them, they are little involved.

Staff know that gender is a key donor concern and have often received some training in gender concepts and tools. They appear not to have training in how to reach out to listen to women or to work with them to overcome some of the barriers they face, or to find out what the critical issues are for women in their area. In addition, for staff from church based organisations gender appears to them to conflict with their religious beliefs, where God created man as women's superior and head of the family. Trying to interfere with these positions seems inappropriate to them and they say that congregations will reject any such teaching.

Discussions on gender focused on how many women participated in consultations, committees, restocking, well building and so on. Often women's participation could be 'cooking for the labourers' or carrying sand and stones. While they try to get women involved in the benefits of projects, this can prove very hard for them. In one restocking project only 27 women had benefited out of 209 people in total.

The staff of these NGOs often knew the differences between Women in development and Gender in development, and could use some of the language of the well know gender frameworks. There was, however, a big gap between that information and a real understanding of gender inequality and how working with this issue could be done in their communities. The lack of time for real work at community level and the lack of understanding of the concepts and words now used by development agencies around gender seemed to combine to mystify the issue. The positive experiences of working directly wirh women and men on gender issues that has been seen in some HIV/AIDS and conflict work especially, seemed to be lacking in the sample NGOs. Although one of the donor agencies had a strong commitment to gender, this was translated in practice into simple numbers of ensuring women participated in some of the committees and activities.

None of the donors required gender monitoring or any detailed gender analysis about what was happening to relationships between women and men, whether women were really able to access and use project benefits, and how workloads were affected for example.

The findings at the local level supported the findings presented in the gender and advocacy chapter. The hypotheses that
❖ the rhetoric of gender within the development sector is not being turned into good gender practice on the ground

❖ there is little real commitment to monitoring or learning about gender issues- outside of a few key agencies with a strong gender focus in practice-

appeared to hold in the sample case studies. While there rhetoric of gender and the language and concepts of gender (in English) are known and used in these local NGOs, turning those concepts into a development practice that related to the needs, fears and aspirations of local people was very difficult for staff. Concepts had been reduced to some simple actions, largely focused on trying to increase the number of women in different meetings and forums.

Gender is said to be a key strategic concern on the development agenda and the volumes written about gender and gender mainstreaming are myriad. However, it was found during the overall research project that while there are commitments on gender in almost all the documentation, there are serious challenges to putting these into development practice. Ways of relating to and working with local communities on issues around exclusion, inequality, unequal access to resources including knowledge and decision making appear weak in all but a few agencies. The focus on meeting the targets for restocking, provision of health care, water supplies, savings and credit can often over-ride the commitment to spending time working with local people on their perspectives, needs, hopes and fears. Yet gender work needs to be rooted in 'where people are', and build on local understanding and analysis of the issues to have any real meaning and bring about real social change.

Participation

A similar set of findings around participation emerged from these local NGO case studies, supporting the analysis of CDRN. The commitment to local participation and the use of externally developed tools, in this case PRA, had become watered down or distorted when applied in practice.

For example, participation was often equated with contributing towards a project. So the contribution of labour, sand, stones, equipment was equated with participation. Yet often people are forced to contribute these things if they wish to share the benefits, and these contributions may be very onerous for the poor in the community.

This kind of participation then becomes equated with ownership. People are said to 'own a project' if they have made these contributions. Yet the research showed that the local people consulted were clear that the projects they were part of did not belong to them. They had been brought in from the outside, they were being asked to join in someone else's project. This had huge implications for long term sustainability.

Participation in practice is often reduced to a few short exercises, carried out over a few days, or even only one day. Often tools from the PRA toolkit are used; it is rare to hear staff talk of story telling, dancing, poetry as sources of participation, even though these are often preferred forms of expression in

Uganda[79]. Participatory exercises often have to be undertaken in a short time, and can easily become mechanistic and no longer a conduit for really listening to and engaging local people.

Even where local people do get involved with a local NGO in developing ideas for a project, once their ideas are converted into a logframe for fundraising and project management purposes, the community becomes dissociated from the project, 'it is all too complication for them'.

There are great expectations built on the concept of participation. Through participation the community is expected to be mobilised and contribute actively to the development and implementation of the project. They are also expected then to take on the responsibility for the running of the project and collecting fees, managing repairs, replacing health kits, continuing the savings and credit service and so on. Volunteers are expected to take on often complex roles as managers, overseers, mechanics, regulators and these are essential for the long term running of the project.

Yet the use of volunteers in poor communities is often unrealistic and they drop out after a time because of other commitments and heavy workloads and responsibilities. Usually the project has been introduced quickly and without adequate time for real community participation and involvement, so it remains defined as an external input and so the responsibility of the local NGO or donor. Often local people have not even understood some of the basic tenets of a project, for example that loans are to be repaid and revolved between people, or that women are to participate to improve their status and voice in the community. Many concepts and tenets underlying development thinking get lost in translation between the donors, local NGOs and the people they are trying to work with.

Comment

In a debate in London on March 3rd 2004 on aid to Africa[80], every one of the six speakers stressed time and time again that aid is only valuable and useful if it is put at the service of those it is sent to. Yet this research showed all down the line, and perhaps even especially at the grassroots level, that local people have little say in shaping the projects and work. Even the concept of participation often becomes, in reality, a tick box activity, carried out using a set of tools that are applied mechanistically and quickly.

The time needed for real dialogue, to share issues and analysis with local people is rarely available in projects receiving short-term donor funding- though there are exceptions as noted earlier. The pressure to deliver against clear plans and targets and to show these have been achieved certainly

---

[79] See the review of Strategies for Hope, ActionAid 2002, where these forms of discussion and information sharing were prioritised by several groups consulted in Uganda. See also the work of Su Braden, Participation- a promise unfulfilled? ActionAid. CD Rom and booklet 2004.
[80]'The best way to help Africa is to leave it alone'. Debate organised by Intelligence Squared and addressed by Clare Short, and a range of academics, media analysts and activists. London, March 2004.

appeared to threaten long term community development work with these local NGOs and the people they work with. The way the work was being done in many cases undermined the aims of long-term sustainability and addressing issues of gender equality.

Conclusions

A wide range of issues has been raised through this research, and approached through a number of angles. These have included research from involved participants, interviews and observation carried out by professional research staff, and think pieces by those involved in research institutions in Uganda. Whatever the perspective and starting point a number of consistent trends were observed consistently and constitute the challenge of these research findings.

These were:

** While in UK the concept of partnership dominates discussions, in Uganda no NGOs are calling their donors partners- they call them donors. There is a gulf in perception and starting points in most negotiations between northern and southern NGOs from the start.

** The politics of power exist and are clear. There is evidence of real fear, easy compliance, 'rolling over' for donors to access funding; many do not want to challenge or rock the boat. Many NGOs in Uganda know how to play the roles of 'subservience' to donors, providing what is asked for. The donors- including INGOs- do not overtly recognise or address their own power or really try to address is within relationships.

** The dance and the deception on the part of some local NGOs came across clearly in the case studies – presenting information the way donors would want to hear it, manipulating budgets, taking donor's suggestions even if they are not really appropriate in the context.

** NGOs/donors do not act in isolation. Therefore looking at their one to one relations is not enough to help to understand the dynamics involved. They are all working in complex webs of relations with multiple relations to different donors, other NGOs and CBOs etc. So even when a donor/INGO takes a different approach that alone may not break some of the patterns- both because of the web of accountability for the INGO/donor and also because of the web of other relations the NGO has with donors, consultants and NGOs locally. So there are identifiable norms of behaviour, created and constrained by multiple actors, which individual NGOs find it hard to break through.

** These relationships create contexts where there is little openness, little dialogue, and often behaviour of resistance that is unspoken and often unrecognised

** tracing the use of tools and funding requirements in detail has been critical to showing these relationships clearly, and to demonstrating the power of

external tools in shaping NGO agendas in Uganda. Both the details and the 'big picture' around power are critical to the research.

** The funding climate is tight now- after a period of lots of funding for NGOs in Uganda for all sorts of political and humanitarian reasons. This is increasing relations of competition and suspicion between local NGOs (the same pattern is seen in UK.

** The poverty agenda dominates NGO work in Uganda, yet concepts and definitions of poverty, ways of measuring etc are highly politicised and manipulated for wider political purposes. Local definitions of poverty are developed but in the complex web of relations other approaches/ideas will dominate agendas.

**Agencies that experienced more open solidarity-style relationships in the past are increasingly finding themselves pulled into the world of targets, plans, tight reporting against indicators, tight budgeting and upward accountability. This can distort their relations with their constituencies quite significantly.

** There is competition around accessing funding, but also for image, profile, status. 'Getting your name on the product' affects Ugandan NGOs as much as UK NGOs and causes many anomalies in their relationships.

** Competition leads to an easy acceptance of conditionalities of all kinds, even where the competence is lacking. People can take on projects without the capacity for managing them because the main focus is the attached funding and maintaining the sustainability of the organisation.

** There is a clear fracture between the tools used for development and accountability- LFA, planning, reporting against indicators etc- and the messiness of development work. The front line work with communities is not supported well by these tools- in practice the work is often or even usually divorced from all the paperwork used for management, accountability and funding purposes. Even when donors let go of these requirements, NGOs now go on using them (in UK as well) because this is what they now know and they make relations with donors easier. Also other donors continue to demand them.

** There are different forms of resistance seen within the Ugandan NGO sector- often donors/INGOs may see an action as due to a lack of capacity while it may be lack of relevance or use, or active resistance to imposed and inappropriate ideas that mean the NGO doesn't adopt it.

** the dominant relations are paternalistic between donors and NGO recipients. This applies to donor- GOU relations as well. It relates to a sense across Africa of the failure to shake off colonial models of behaviour where each side knows the rules and plays them easily. Issues of race, class and gender all contribute to shaping dominant patterns of behaviour between donors and receiving NGOs. There is a lot of anger created by these realities, and this co-exists along with the fear and sense of lack of autonomy. Yet

these issues are not properly aired face to face in most cases because NGOs do not want to lose the funding. When issues are raised donors usually perceive this as NGOs whining and complaining, something heard every time the findings of this research are fed back to donors and INGOs.

** Beneficiary communities do not understand any of the underlying concepts about ownership, sustainability, partnership etc and usually see both donors and NGOs as providers. Their ability to 'own' the projects and run them later is severely constrained by the way the aid chain works as well as their lack of local funding to do so. There is a serious lack of sustainability.

** Ownership is a concept that dogs the work from top to bottom. Wanting local ownership but also wanting recognition for the work you as an agency have done, to ensure profile and future funding and invitations to policy forums means that often NGOs 'label' activities and achievements as theirs rather than the communities'.

** Donors are writing the roles for NGOs and these are constantly changing- from service delivery and scaling up, to building strong civil society, to monitoring and bringing government into account. Yet funding is also changed and NGOs are to advocate and call GOU to account at the same time as getting their funding through district plans and budgets.

** Donors provide the spaces for advocacy and lobbying work in Uganda. They also write the roles of NGOs and change them over time, constraining what is able to develop and flourish from the NGO sector itself.

** There is no real downward accountability at any level, all the tools in most use are designed for and ensure accountability is flowing upwards.

What of the future?

Each time this research is discussed in wider forums the cry goes up- where is the hope? Where are the green shoots? What can be done differently? People often complain the research findings are depressing and do not reflect the good ideas and better practice.

Yet the ideas of better practice are embedded in the research throughout. For example, if the problem is lack of openness and listening to those who are funded, then the solution lies in reversing that reality. If the problem is lack of trust, then ways to build trust need to be found, including more face to face work, more devolution of power, more allowances to be made for problems faced and difficulties distorting planned outputs.

There are many alternative 'tools' and approaches out there which could be used more and which would change the balance of power in favour of local people. The have been discussed and presented many times but people like Chambers, Braden, Welbourn, the participatory researchers at IDS, Sussex, the groups in Uganda such as Theatre for Development, Deniva and others. There is no shortage of interesting alternatives and other ways of listening

and learning from local people, including Stepping Stones, Reflect, and other participatory processes. Many gender activists have proposed a whole range of alternative ways of approaching poverty issues and new ways of working inside and outside organisations.

The problem is not that there is no 'good practice', innovative ideas, or better models of relationships. The literature and NGO manuals are a tribute to the range of different ideas and approaches to working developmentally. However, it appears that these new approaches can very easily become incorporated into the dominant patterns of relationships. They can easily become bureaucratic; their radical edge is often blunted by turning political agendas into technical fixes. The answer may not lie in developing more new tools and paradigms; there are excellent ones to choose from and many indigenous ways of thinking and analysing that are not being tapped already exist.

The challenge is to tackle the issues of power and control and management of knowledge by the more powerful. It is imperative to start to confront ways of behaving that are self serving for the survival of organisations but not necessarily relevant to tackling poverty and ensuring those at the margins become included in the processes of positive change. The literature is full of recommendations around how to work in partnership, in participative ways, in ways that empower those who are most excluded- poor women, those with HIV/AIDS, the disabled and the refugees. Many agencies struggle to try and implement work that incorporates these ideas and approaches.

Yet the research clearly shows that these are approaches on the margins, isolated and not creating the dominant 'culture of development' as undertaken by NGOs. Our contention is that until the realities of the relationships that do exist are accepted and the problem is identified, it will be very hard to move forward. Moving forward requires much more than undertaking small technical shifts. It requires confronting the realities of power and patronage, subordination and subversion; only then can new ways forward really be forged with confidence.

Annex 1. The research team

<div align="center">

Research Team

</div>

<u>**South Africa**</u>

Core researchers, School of Development Studies, University of Natal

Lisa Bornstein   Terrence Smith
Annsilla Nyar   Isaivani Hyman

Other Contributors
Alan Kaplan of CDRA   Carol Ann Foulis of Olive
Catherine Ogunmefun   Dan Setsile
Vicki Tallis   Shelly Dill

<u>**Uganda**</u>

Core research staff
Tina Wallace
John de Coninck, CDRN
Rosemary Adong, CDRN
Martin Kaleeba, previously of ActionAid, Uganda

Supporting researchers:

Meenu Vadera, previously of ActionAid, Uganda
Juliet Kiguli, Dept of Anthroplogy, Makerere University
A Kasingye, A Nanfuka, S Basemera, B Mboizi of CDRN
Patrick Mulindwa, Makerere Institute Social Research
Crispin Kintu, Centre for Basic Research
Rajiv Khanderwal, independent consultant
Sesay Rashid, DACO, Sierra Leone; worked when a student with Martin Kaleeba
Mary Ssonko, independent PhD researcher, Swansea University

<u>**United Kingdom**</u>

Researchers, previously of Oxford Brookes University

Tina Wallace, International Gender Studies, QEH, Oxford University
Jennifer Chapman, researcher- freelance and with ActionAidUK

Advisory Panel
John Hailey, previously of Oxford Brookes University, now with INTRAC
Maggie Baxter, Womankind
Dave Harding, Independent
Sarah Crowther, previously of Swansea University, now with REAP (UK NGO)

Annex 2. Organisations interviewed in Uganda, with donors and geographical spread (Jan 2002)

AGENCY	UK based or local NGO	Donors in Uganda	Donors in UK	Size in Uganda	Uniqueness/ focus in Uganda	Span in Uganda
ACORD	UK based	Bread for the World, NOVIB, Uganda Govt. Warwick University (joint research project)	Funded by consortium of large European NGOs, plus project funding from European institutional donors. No public fundraising.	International NGO working operationally in discrete areas of country	Working on peace and reconciliation, building CBOs in marginalised areas. Long term projects.	Mbarara Project, Northern Uganda: Kitgum & Moyo
Actionaid, Uganda	UK based international NGO (2004 moving to an international NGO based in Pretoria)	Limited local fundraising, but funding from DFID. Main funding from UK office, and other European AA offices- 88% in 2000.	Large public supporters base from child sponsorship. Increasing its funding from institutional donors. Push for more official funding from 2000.	Turnover in 2000, £3.28 million; by 2003 to be £5.3 million. 142 staff in 2000 (following a major shift in focus and downsizing)	Worked operationally in services, moving to work in partnershipWide range of strategies- capacity building, policy advocacy, gender work. Work with a range of women's organisations in Uganda.	In 12 districts in 2002, across every region in the country, run from Kampala and three regional offices. In Uganda since late 1980s
Aids Info Centre (AIC)	Ugandan NGO	MoH UG, Interaid, USAID, **DfID,** JIKA, UNDP, DED, UNFPA, TASO, UNICEF, EU, Nakasero blood bank.		Large organisation	1st one of its kind in Sub-Saharan Africa – it's a model for HIV/AIDS work.	20 districts in Uganda
AMREF	East African NGO with representation in UK		CIDA & SIDA provide core funding directly to HQ in Nairobi, DfID, EU, Comic Relief, Community Fund	Large EA organisation	Health focus, capacity building	
Appropriate technology Uganda (AT)	Yes	USAID, DFID, Meknut Foundation, FICAH, PL 480, core funds from HQ, revolving fund, Vegetable Oil Dev. UG, IFAD, IFPRI				
CAFOD			70% own supporters, DfID PPA, EU ECHO, Comic Relief			

AGENCY	UK based or local NGO	Donors in Uganda	Donors in UK	Size in Uganda	Uniqueness/focus in Uganda	Span in Uganda
CARE		SIDA, National Endowment for Democracy, **DFID**, FES, MS Uganda, Ford Foundation.			Main strategy is capacity building	Has both formal and informal partners
CDRN	Ugandan NGO	DfID, Oxfam (UK and Uganda), ActionAid Uganda, Christian Aid, Transform, SNV, World Bank, Unicef, Plan international, GOU, ICCO, DED, Cordaid and many others over the years	Funders to Transform include CAFOD, Bread for the World, Christian Aid, ICCO, Comic Relief, EU	Budget 2000 of 712 million Ug shs, 61% from donor agreements	Capacity building of local organisations; participatory research, networking and advocacy	Works with NGOs and CBOs all over Uganda

198

AGENCY	UK based or local NGO	Donors in Uganda	Donors in UK	Size in Uganda	Uniqueness/focus in Uganda	Span in Uganda
Church of Uganda (PDR)	Uganda church organisation, funded by international churches	Churches in Europe, Canada and NZ including Christian Aid (a major funder), are the key funders for COU development work. Donors started as ecumenical partners to support the weaker churches in their work, increasingly dictate terms and set agendas	Donors to Christian Aid include DfID PPA with Christian Aid, EU, churches, UK public. Christian Aid week, DfID, EU, Comic Relief, Trust Funds	Extensive-works in every diocese	Works through the church structures, with its own development arm. Poverty, civil society, peace & conflict resolution, Health (HIV/AIDS), food security, grassroots rights.	Works in all districts.
Deniva	Local umbrella NGO representing Ugandan NGOs	Ford, NOVIB, SNV, Hivos, IIED, Commonwealth Foundation. In the past Church of Uganda, Mennonites, FES			Representation of the Ugandan NGOs, capacity building, advocacy and lobbying. Public awareness raising on global issues.	Works with member NGOs and CBOs that come from all over Uganda. Over 400 inddigienous members and many international NGOs are associate members

AGENCY	UK based or local NGO	Donors in Uganda	Donors in UK	Size in Uganda	Uniqueness/ focus in Uganda	Span in Uganda
Farm Africa	UK based NGO		DfID (used to get quite a bit now fallen to nearly 0), some through civil society challenge fund, EU, farmers in UK, Canadian, Swedish & Dutch governments. Have MOU with Dutch NGO NORAD allows to get consortium funding.	Small		
HelpAge International	UK based membership international NGO		Help Age UK, EU DfID, Lottery, Diana Memorial Fund, Comic Relief, Islands of Guernsey, Trusts, Bilaterals: Netherlands (from UK), Finland, Irish Aid			
Hurinet (Human Rights Network)	Local umbrella NGO	SIDA, NED, DfID, FES, MS Uganda, Ford Foundation, British Council, Donations from foundations and Universities			Human rights advocacy, capacity building, peace and social justice	National umbrella network
Living Earth Uganda	International NGO established in Uganda under funding from Shell	DfID, ActionAid, Shell International, Shell Uganda			Focused on environment and specialising in urban work. Social problems and natural resource management	Works on several projects across Uganda
National Association of Women's Organsiations, Uganda (NAWOU)						
National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU)	Local umbrella NGO	Oxfam, CAFOD, ILO, NAD, DfID	Comic Relief		Union of disabled persons	Policy, awareness and representation for the disabled

AGENCY	UK based or local NGO	Donors in Uganda	Donors in UK	Size in Uganda	Uniqueness/ focus in Uganda	Span in Uganda
NGO Forum	Local umbrella NGO	UNDP, ActionAidUganda, World Bank, Oxfam			Represents both local and international NGOs at policy a Forums, research, advocacy and lobbying	National umbrella for local & international NGOs Across Uganda
Oxfam	UK based international NGO	Oxfam UK, DfID, EU, UNHCR, Govt,	DfID PPA, ½ million regular givers, EU, ECHO, UNHCR, trading/shops, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, trusts, foundations, Comic Relief, Community Fund, UN agencies		Works as both a funder to partners in Uganda (mainly now large national NGOs) and an implementor in emergencies/ conflict	National coverage
Plan International			Sponsorship, USAID; DfID; EU; Dutch; CIDA; SIDA etc.			
Population Concern			Used to get DfID JFS, now Challenge Fund, used to get block grant from EU, didn't get 2002, Community Fund, US Foundations			
SCF	International NGO, SCF (now Save UK) based in UK	DfID, EU, CDC, Irish Aid, World Bank, different northern offices of Save.			Focus on children; work closely with government as a partner; several SAVE offices in Uganda working more closely together now.	Health, food security, nutrition, early childhood development, child protection, advocacy. Works across all regions.

AGENCY	UK based or local NGO	Donors in Uganda	Donors in UK	Size in Uganda	Uniqueness/focus in Uganda	Span in Uganda
Straight Talk	Local NGO	UNAIDS, UNDP, and a range of UK NGOs			First NGO to write, print and widely distribute HIV/AIDS materials to young people. First newspaper in 1993. Focus on building confidence and saying yes to life.	Works across the whole of Uganda. Increasingly translating materials into different local languages
TASO		USAID, DANIDA, DfID, SIDA, EU		big	First HIV/AIDS organisation led by llocal woman, in Africa.	National-offices across the country
Uganda debt network	Local umbrella NGO	UNDP, MoFPD UG, Cordaid, Hivos, Christian Aid, ActionAid/ DfID, Ms UG, Oxfam, Trocaire		medium	Lobbying NGO tackling global issues such as debt, poverty funding, anti-corruption	Advocacy, poverty reduction. Based in Kampala but lobbying on global issues
Uganda Land Alliance	Local lobbying NGO	Membership fees, Oxfam, AAU, SNV, NOVIB, DfID, Veco, FES, and many other international donors over time		Income of 3 million Ug shs in 2000	Land issues, lobbying, capacity building	Based in Kampala but working on land issues with over 50 members throughout Uganda
Uganda Women's Finance Trust	Local NGO	NOVIB, USAID		big	Works only with established groups	In all regions in UG except the North

AGENCY	UK based or local NGO	Donors in Uganda	Donors in UK	Size in Uganda	Uniqueness/focus in Uganda	Span in Uganda
Ugandan Women Network (Uwonet)	Local lobbying NGO	NOVIB, DFID (EA), SNIV, MS Uganda, Donor Technical Cttee, USAID, VEDCO, AAU, DfID, FES, World Bank, Membership fees			Advocacy of women's rights	Kampala based
UPPAP (Uganda participatory poverty assessment project)	Tri-partite partnership: donors, GOU and some NGOs in Uganda	DfID, SIDA, UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank, Oxfam		small	Interested in north to south co-operation. Spearheading the work to get the voices of the poor in policy	
Uganda Society of Disabled Children (USDC)	Local NGO, now with representation in UK	DfID, EU, Parent organization in Europe		small	Focus on a range of work with disabled children and their families	Only in four districts
VSO Uganda	UK based international NGO	VSO UK	EU NGO co-financing (but not currently), DFID PPA, National Lotteries, corporate/private donors		Volunteer sending agency, working on development in Uganda, in partnership with government and NGOs.	Spread across the country
Wateraid	UK based international NGO	DfID, Rotary Club UK, EU, Danida	Water industry, DFID, Comic Relief, Community Fund	small	Water supply and community mobilisation, hygiene, financial management & governance through partners. Advocacy work.	Works ion selected districts of Uganda
World Vision						

Bibliography of key texts by author for Uganda study
February 2004.

ActionAid 2001 *Transforming Power*, Participatory methodologies Forum, ActionAid, Feb 2001. (Unpublished)

African Forum and Network on Debt and Development, Reality of Aid, Africa Edition. 2002. AFRODAD, Zimbabwe.

Aune Jens B, 2000 *'Logical Framework Approach and PRA - mutually exclusive or complementary tools for project planning?'* in Development in Practice Volume 10, Number 5 Carfax Publishing

Biggs, S and Smith, S. 1998. *Beyond methodologies: coalition building for participatory development.* World development. Vol.26, No.2. 239-248

Biggs, S and Smith, S. 2002. A paradox of learning in project cycle management and the role of organisational culture. University of East Anglia, unpublished.

Bird, B. Kakande, M., "The Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process" in Norton (2001).

Blackburn, J & J Holland (eds). 1998. Who Changes? Institutionalising Participation in Development. Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd, Rugby.

Blunt, Peter & Michael Warren 1996 Indigenous Organisations and Development IT Pubs £17.50 from Amazon

Braden, Su. 2004. Participation- a promise unfulfilled? CD rom and booklet, ActionAid, London, UK.

Brehm, Vicky M. 2001. Promoting effective north-south partnerships. Intrac, Oxford.

Brock,K, McGee, R, and Ssewakaryanga, R. 2002. Poverty knowledge and policy processes: a case study of Ugandan National Poverty reduction Policy. IDS, research report 53. Brighton.

Brock, K. and Mc.Gee R, "Knowing Poverty", Earthscan, London, 2002.

CDRA, Annual reports over many years from SA. Development practitioners: artists of the invisible, 1998-9; The high road, practice at the centre, 1999-2000; Measuring development, holding infinity, 2000-2001.

CDRN, "A study of poverty in selected districts of Uganda", Mimeo, Kampala, 1996.

Chambers, R. 1983. Rural development: putting the last first. Longman, Harlow.

Chamabers, R 1994. Challenging the professions. ITDG publications, London.

Cooke B & Kothari U (eds) 2001 Participation: The New Tyranny, Zed, London

Cornwall, Andrea 2000 Making a Difference? Gender and Participatory Development, IDS Discussion paper 378

Crewe, E. and Harrison, E. 1998. Whose development: an ethnography of aid. Zed Press, London.

DAC ,1999. DAC scoping study of donor poverty reduction policies and practices. ODI, London. Unpublished.

Dawson, E. 2000. The relevance of strategic planning for UK aid agencies. In The Arnold Companion to development studies.

Development Initiatives, Development updates. www.devinit.org

Development in Practice Readers, 2000. Development, NGOs and civil society, introduced by Jenny Pearce. Oxfam, Oxford.

Development in practice readers, 2000. Development and management; introduction by Tina Wallace. Oxfam and Open University.

Development in Practice Readers, 1999. Development with women, introduction by Dorienne Rowan-Campbell. Oxfam, Oxford.

DFID, 1997. Eliminating world poverty: the challenge for the 21st century. Cmd no. 3789. Stationery Office, London.

DFID, 1999. Uganda country strategy paper. DFID, London.

Dia, Mamadou 'Development and cultural values in Africa.'

Dolan, Chris 2003. Collapsing Masculinity's and Weak States – a case study of northern Uganda, in Cleaver F (ed) Making Men Matter: Men. Masculinity's and Gender Relations in Development, Zed Books, London (forthcoming)

Eade,D and Ligteringen,E. *Debating development*. Oxfam, Development in Practice reader, Oxford.

Eade,D. 1997. Capacity building: an approach to people centred development. Oxfam, Oxford.

Earle, L. 2003. Lost in the matrix: the logframe and the local picture. Paper presented at Intrac conference, Holland.

Edwards, M., Hulme, D., and Wallace.T. 1999. NGOs in a global future: marrying local delivery to world-wide leverage. Public Administration and Development.

Edwards, M. 1999. Future positive: international co-operation in the 21st century. Routledge, London.

Ehrhart R. et al, "Participatory Research for pro-poor policy; Envisioning the future", Mimeo, Kampala, 2000.

Escobar, Arturo (1995): Encountering development - the making and unmaking of the third world. Princeton University Press, USA.

European Commission, (no date) Information Note Subject: Management of the NGO Co Financing Budget Line B7-6000
http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/sector/ngo/b7-6000en.htm

European Commission, 2002. Communication on the participation of non-state actors in development. Com 598

Fowler, Alan, 1992. *Distant obligations: speculations on NGO funding and the global market.* Review of African Political Economy, Vol.55 pages 9-29

Fowler, Alan, 1992 1997. Striking a balance: a guide to enhancing the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations in international development. Earthscan, London.

Fowler, A. 1999*. Development management.* Development in Practice, Vol.9. Nos 1 & 2.

Fraser, A. 2003. PRSPs: who calls the shots? Paper presented to ROAPE conference, University of Birmingham, 'Partnerships as imperialism'. Sept 2003.

Gasper, Des, 2000 Logical frameworks: problems and potentials. Institute of Social Studies, The Hague 5 September 2000

Gasper, Des, 2001 Reform or replacement? What to do about logical framework approach? Draft - not for quotation

Gasper, Des. 2002, Overview of the strengths and weaknesses of logframes

Goetz, A.M. 1998. Getting institutions right for women. Zed Press, London.

Goudge,P. 2002. The whiteness of power: racism in third world development and aid. Lawrence and Wishart, London.

Grenier,L. August 1972. *Evolution and revolution as organisations grow.* Harvard Business Review.

Hailey, J. 2003. Measuring success? Issues in performance management. Paper presented at Intrac conference, Holland.

Harrison, R. 1995. Steps towards the learning organisation. McGraw Hill, London.

Harriss-Curtis,E. 2002. Experiences of north-south relationships: enhancing autonomy or fostering development. Intrac paper, Oxford.

Hearn, J. 1999. Foreign aid, democratisation and civil society in Africa: study of South Africa, Ghana and Uganda. IDS discussion paper, No 368. University of Sussex.

Hearn, Julie, 2000. 'Aiding democracy? Donors and civil society in South Africa' *Third World Quarterly Volume 21, Number 5*

Hirsh,J. 2004 The state's new clothes: rethinking Marxism. (forthcoming)

Hofstede, G. 1991. Cultures and organisations: software of the mind. Harper Collins, London.

Hudock, Ann. 1996. *Sustaining Southern NGOs in resource dependent environments.* Journal of International Development, Vol.7. No.4, pages 653-668.

Hudock, Ann, 2001 . NGOs and civil society: development by proxy? Polity Press, Cambridge, UK

Hulme, D. and Edwards,M. 1997. NGOs, states and donors, too close for comfort? Macmillan, London.

Hyden, G. 1983 No Shortcuts to Progress: African Development Management in Perspective. University of California Press. Los Angeles.

Institute of Development Studies policy briefing, 2002: The new aid dynamics of aid, power, procedures and relationships. University of Sussex, UK.

Institute of Development Studies, Helsinki. 2003. Voices from southern civil societies: the interplay of national and global contexts in the performance of civil society organisations in the south. Policy Papers, No. 6, 2003. Helsinki.

IDS bulletin, July 2000. Questioning partnership: the reality of aid and NGOs relations. IDS, Sussex, July. (Many key articles by Fowler, Hudock and many others, all relevant)

IDS, 2001. Procedures, power and relationships. Workshop at IDS, Sussex.

James, Rick (ed) 2000 Power and Partnership? Experiences of NGO Capacity Building . Intrac, Oxford.

James R. 1998. Key Factors in Capacity-Building: Lessons from OD consultancy experience. Mimeo INTRAC, Oxford.

Kapiriri, M, Manyire,H, Hearn, J, and Kanji, N. 2000. An assessment of DFID's engagement with civil society in Uganda: past work and current shifts. Paper for DFID, Uganda.

Kaplan, A. 1998. Crossroads: a development reading. Annual report for CDRN, South Africa.

Kaplan, 2002. Understanding development as a living process. In David Lewis and Tina Wallace, NGO roles and relevance.

Kiggundu,M. 1991. The challenge of management development in sub-Saharan Africa. Journal of Management Development, Vol.10. No.6.

Killick, T. 2004. *Politics, evidence and the new aid agenda.* Development Policy review. Vol. 22, No. 1 pp 5-29

Kothari, U and Minogue, M. 2002. Development theory and practice: critical perspectives. Palgrave, Hampshire.

Levy, C. 1999. Mainstreaming gender conference, DPU, London University.

Lewis, D. 1998. International perspectives on voluntary action: reshaping the third sector. Earthscan, London.

Lewis, David, 2001. The management of non-government development organisations: an introduction. Routledge, London.

Lewis, D. et al 2002. Understanding the culture of development agencies. ID 21, IDS, Sussex.

Lewis, D. 2003. *Practice, power and meaning: frameworks for studying organisational culture in multi-agency rural development projects.* Journal of International Development, No.15 541-57

Lewis,D and Wallace, T. eds. 2002. New roles and relevance: development NGOs and the challenge of change. Kumarian Press, USA.

Lindenberg,M. and Bryant, C. 2002, Going global: transforming relief and development NGOs. Kumarian press, Connecticut, USA.

Lister, S and Nyamugasira, W. 2001. A study on the involvement of civil society in policy dialogue and advocacy, lessons learned on their engagement in policy advocacy and future directions. For DFID, East Africa.

Long,C. 2001. Participation of the poor in development initiatives: taking their rightful place. Earthscan, London.

Long, N and Long, A. 1992. Battlefields of knowledge. Longmans. London.

MacIntyre, 2002. After virture, a study in moral theory. G. Duckworth, London.

Marsden, D. 2003 Rights, culture and contested modernities. Paper presented at Intrac conference, Holland,

Matthews, S. 2003. Investigating NEPAD's development assumtions. Paper presented to ROAPE conference, University of Birmingham, Sept 2003.

Maudsley, E, Townsend, J, Porter,G, and Oakley,P. 2002. Knowledge, power and development agendas: NGOs north and south. Intrac, Oxford.

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development: UPPAP Participatory Poverty Assessment report: Learning from the Poor, Kampala, 2000.

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development: UPPAP Mid-term review, Kampala, 2000.

Mintzberg, H. 1994. The rise and fall of strategic planning. Prentice Hall.

Mintzberg, Quinn & James, 1988. The Strategy Process Concepts, Contexts and Cases. Prentice Hall.

Mintzberg 1999 The Strategic Safari

Moser, C. 1994. Gender planning and development: theory, practice and training. Routledge. London.

Mosse, D. no date. The making and marketing of participatory development. Unpublished paper from SOAS, London University.

Norton, A., "A Rough Guide to PPAs", ODI, London, (2001)

Nyamugasire, Warren and Rick Rowden, 2002 Does the World Bank PRSP and the IMF's PRGF actually support the poverty reduction goals outlined in Uganda's PEAP? Jan 2002 Uganda NGO forum, Kampala (unpub).

OECD, 1999. DAC scoping study of donor poverty reduction policies and practices. OECD, paper 99, ODI, London.

O'Neill, O. (2002) Lecture 1 'Spreading suspicion', Lecture 2 'Trust and terror', Lecture 3 'Called to account', Lecture 4 'Trust and transparency' BBC Reith lectures, March. www.bbc.co.uk/radio4

Petras,J and Veltmeyer, H. 2000. Globalisation unmasked: imperialism in the twenty first century. Zed Press, London.

Preston, R. 1999. Communication in complex projects: research project. Warwick University.

Quinn, J. 1980. Strategies for change: logical incrementalism. Irwin, Homewood, IL, USA.

Randell, Judith and German, Tony. The Reality of Aid: an independent review of development cooperation. Year on year they provide annual worldwide Overseas Development Aid statistics

Reality of Aid,2001. Reality check. Poverty, inequality and aid: rhetoric and reality. January.

Review of African Political Economy, 2001. Civil society, kleptocracy and donor agendas- what future for Africa? Number 87. (articles by Hearn from the Robinson research especially important)

Riddell, R. 1995. The direct funding of SNGOs by donors: new agendas and old problems. Journal of International Development, Vol.7. No.6.

Riddell,R, and Robinson, M. 1995. NGOs and rural poverty alleviation. ODI/Clarenden Press, Oxford

Robinson, M. 2001. Aiding civil society? Democracy assistance and public policy in Africa. DFID funded project. There are myriad publications from this research, which covers SA and Uganda.

Robinson and Hearn research on donor funding of civil society- case studies in SA and Uganda

Rondanelli, Dennis. 1993. Development projects as policy experiments: an adaptive approach to development administration. Routledge, London.

Shein, E. 1999. Process consultancy revisited: building the helping relationship. Addison Wesley, Mass. USA.

Schon, D. 1983. The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action. Avebury Press, UK.

Senge, P. 1990. The fifth discipline. Doubleday.

Simbi, M and Thom, G. 2000. Implementation by proxy in D. Lewis and T. Wallace, 2000. New roles and relevance.

Stiglitz, Joseph 2002. Globalization and its discontents. Penguin books, London.

Taylor, J. 2002. So now they are going to measure empowerment! CDRN, South Africa. Unpublished.

Tevoedjre, Albert, 2002. Winning the war against humiliation: report of the independent commission on Africa and the challenges of the third millenium. Forward by Amartya Sen. UNDP, New York..

Thom, G. 1999. Challenging the Chain- paper presented at the Birmingham NGO Conference January 1999.

Townsend, J. Porter, G. and Mawdsley, E. The role of the transnational communication of NGOs: governance of poverty reduction. University of Durham, Dept of Geography. Unpublished

Tvedt, T. 1998. Angels of mercy or development diplomats? James Curry. Oxford.

UNCTAD, 2000. The least developed countries 2000 report : aid, private capital flows and external debt: the challenge of financing development in LDCs. United Nations, New York.

Underwood, Tamara. 2000. ACORD gender training consultation. ACORD, London, UK (unpublished)

UPDNet, "Joint venture of Misadventure: Government/CSO collaborating on national government programmes", 2002 Workshop report, Mimeo, Kampala, 2002.

Van Rooy, A 1998. Civil society and the aid industry.

Wallace,T. 1997. *New development agendas: changes in UK NGO policies and procedures.* Review of African Political Economy. No.71 Vol 24

Wallace, T., Crowther, C. and Shepherd, A., 1997. Standardising development: influences on UK NGOs policies and procedures. Worldview Press, Oxford.

Wallace, T. 1998. *Institutionalising gender in UK NGOs.* Development in Practice. Vol.8. No.2.

Wallace, T. 1999. Report on the third international NGO conference. Report to DFID and participants, Birmingham. Mimeo.

Wallace, T. 2000. *Does development management matter? How the disbursal of aid affects development practice*, in D.Eade, T. Hewitt and H., Johnson, eds. Open University. (forthcoming),

Wallace, T. 2000. The expanding role of NGOs in Uganda: is the role played by DFID enabling the voluntary sector to develop effectively? In Paul Collins, ed. John Wiley

Wallace, T & Lewis D, 2000, New Roles and Relevance: development NGOs and the challenge of change, Kumarian Press, Connecticut.

Wallace, Tina and Chapman, Jennifer, The donor landscape for UK development NGOs, Work in progress: Draft For ISTR Conference, July 2002, Cape Town, South Africa

Wallace, Tina and Jennifer Chapman, Do donor conditionalities promote good development? Talk at BOND, in London, 2002.

Wallace, Tina. 2003. *Trends in UK NGOs: a research note.* Development in practice, Vol . No .

Wallace, Tina and Kaplan, Allan, 2003. The taking of the horizon: Lessons from ActionAid Uganda's experience of changes in development practice. Foreword by Meenu Vadera. ActionAid, London.

Wallace, Tina. 2003. *NGO dilemmas: Trojan horses for global neoliberalism*? in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds. The new imperial challenge. Socialist Register, 2004. Merlin press, London.

Wallace, Tina and Chapman, Jenny, 2003. Some realities behind the rhetoric of downward accountability. Paper presented at Intrac conference, Holland, 2003. To be published by Intrac in 2004.

Welbourn, Alice. 1995. Stepping stones; a training package. Strategies for Hope, ActionAid, London. UK.

Whitehead, Ann, 2003. Failing women, sustaining poverty: gender in PRSPs. Paper for GAD network, UK. GAD, Womankind

Yates, J. and Okello, L., "Learning from Uganda's efforts to learn from the poor: Reflections and lessons from the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project" in "Knowing Poverty" (Mc.Gee and Brock, 2002).

Websites

M & E website
www.mande.co.uk

IDS website on participation
www.ids.ac.uk/participation

DFID website
www.dfid.gov.uk

Financing for Development
http://www.un.org/esa/ffd

Development Initiatives,
www.devinit.org