

CMICOMMISSIONEDREPORT

Making Partnership Work

Vision and Implementation of a Development Programme

A Review of the International Development Strategy of Norwegian People's Aid 2008-2011

Elling N. Tjønneland and Arne Tostensen

Final Report
March 2011

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Norwegian People's Aid 2008-2011**

Commissioned by the Norwegian People's Aid

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Executive Summary

Background

This review was commissioned by the Development Programme Department of the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). The main purpose is to assess the implementation of the NPA's international strategy, in particular the partnership policy and the political work of the NPA. The review assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy, the relationship between the strategy and achievements, and provides recommendations for the 2012–2015 programme period.

The review is based on desk studies of documents on the NPA's international strategy and its implementation; interviews with NPA officials and other stakeholders in Norway; and case study material based on field visits to NPA country offices and their partners in Cambodia, Ecuador and Ethiopia.

Strategies and policies

In 2006, Norad commissioned a major Performance Review of the NPA and its ability to deliver effective aid. This study gave the NPA much praise for its strategies, policies and efforts, but the review also called for a number of steps to be taken in order for the NPA to become more effective. These steps related to strategies and policies, management and implementation.

The present review found that the NPA has made great efforts in addressing the

challenges, weaknesses and shortcomings identified in the previous organisational performance review from Norad. The team feels that head office strategy documents and policy guidelines provide sufficient overall guidance for the NPA's development programme. Further revision should be confined to editing and shortening. The team also noted that these documents are generally well known in the organisation. Staff interviewed provided broad support for the main direction and thrust of the organisation. Progress is also noted in the NPA's ability to plan and report on results.

The main challenge ahead for the NPA lies in strengthening operationalisation and contextualisation through the development of country strategy documents which can guide the NPA's work. Furthermore, the review also notes that the NPA programme is still big and may have too many partners in some countries.

The review notes that the NPA has successfully managed the transition from an implementing and operational agency to a donor agency working primarily with and through partners in programme countries. However, the review identifies a number of issues where clarification is required. These include the role of regional programmes; the role of trade unions in the development programme; and the poor relations with the mine action programme.

Partnership

Working with partners and civil society organisations in the South is a key pillar in the NPA's mode of operation. The Norad Performance Review found that the NPA had a sound partnership policy and had come a long way in its thinking on what partnership entails. However, the Review also noted that the NPA may have too many partners, and does not distinguish sufficiently between different types of partner (strategic and project partners). It was also found that the substantive dialogue between the NPA and many of the partners was weak – to some extent avoiding difficult and sensitive issues. In many countries there was very limited reflection on the mutuality of partnership.

The Norad Review also found that the approach to organisational development of partners ought to be systematised and strengthened. What the NPA presents as capacity strengthening was only scratching the surface of organisational change according to the review team. The Norad reviewers found that NPA staff at the field offices spent little time with each partners – sufficient for supervision, administrative monitoring and consultation but not for facilitating and supporting processes of organisational development. Nor was it clear whether partnerships are ends in themselves or means to other ends.

Following on the earlier review the present review team found that there are great variations in the ways in which the NPA supports and implements its partnership policy. In some countries, the NPA contribution may be mainly financial and administrative; in others programme advice and dialogue on substantive issues may be more important. Generally, however, there seems to be good adaptation to local conditions and commitment to working with partners. The NPA is also generally regarded as a very good donor-partner.

However, the present review also notes that the NPA struggles to move beyond donor-recipient relations in its partnership. More efforts should be placed on strengthening the voice of the partner.

The present team makes several recommendations to further strengthen NPA's partnership:

- take steps to ensure that long-term and important partnerships are sustained through long-term contracts where this is feasible and appropriate;
- make vigorous efforts to systematise lessons and experiences from support to organisational development and identify clear objectives beyond the ability to manage and report on the use of NPA funds;
- develop a communication strategy with partners to ensure that they and other stakeholders have easy access to the aims, goals and objectives of the NPA and the country programmes;
- identify and stay focused on what ought to be the added value of the NPA contribution to the partnerships beyond financial contributions; and
- make stronger efforts to ensure that the selection of partners are guided and informed by an analysis of political dynamics in the programme countries concerned.

Political solidarity

The review notes that the NPA's introduction of new strategies and policies in recent years can be interpreted as an effort to reinforce the NPA's important political legacy as the solidarity wing of the Norwegian labour movement.

The review team welcomes the attempts to develop the NPA's political solidarity profile. The current strategy document is far too ambitious. In its operationalisation and implementation the NPA has however, succeeded in sharpening the focus and in developing its profile. This included also

better linkages between country programmes and advocacy work in Norway.

Several recommendations are made to further improve the NPA's political solidarity profile:

- Scale down ambitions and sharpen focus;
- Be more pro-active in relation to Norwegian economic and political interests in programme countries;
- Make country strategies a tool in political work; and
- Maintain and strengthen skills in understanding political dynamics in programme countries.

The future

The NPA has made significant advances in the current programme period, but will

continue to face constraints, obstacles and new challenges – as well as benefit from opportunities – as strategies, policies and priorities are being elaborated for the next 2012–2015 programme period.

The review team is of the impression that the NPA has sufficient ability and capacity to change and adapt to shifts in the external environment. The team summarises its impressions from the review by listing several recommendations for improving NPA capacity to respond and deliver.

- Seven recommendations for improving strategies and policies;
- Five recommendations for improving country strategies and partnerships; and
- Three recommendations for improving management.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFD	Action for Development (Ethiopia)
AMARA	Cambodian Women’s Network for Development
APDH	Permanent Human Rights Assembly (Ecuador)
AUCC	Social Forum in Cotacachi (Ecuador)
AWSAD	Association for Women’s Sanctuary and Development (Ethiopia)
BABC	Bridges Across Borders Cambodia
BS	Banteay Srey (Cambodia)
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CCRDA	Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association (Ethiopia)
CD	Country Director
CDA	Children Development Association (Cambodia)
CHRAC	Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee
CMDP	Community Managed Development Partners (Cambodia)
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
CNC EA	National Peasant Coordinator “Eloy Alfaro” (Ecuador)
COMFREL	Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities in Ecuador
CPN	Community Peace Building Network (Cambodia)
CPP	Cambodian People’s Party
CRRT	Cambodians for Resource Revenue Transparency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DECSI	Dedebit Credit and Saving Institution (Ethiopia)
DPA	Development and Partnership in Action (Cambodia)
EDC	The “Dolores Cacuango” School for Indigenous Women Leadership (Ecuador)
ECUARUNARI	Confederation of the Kichwa peoples of Ecuador
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
FDA	Amazon Defence Front (Ecuador)
GNI	Gross National Income
HIBIR	Capacity Development and Self-Defence Organisation (Ethiopia)
HRTF	Housing Rights Task Force (Cambodia)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KABB	Kampear Aphivath & Bandos Bandal (Cambodia)
LICADHO	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights
LO	Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MELCA	Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action (Ethiopia)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MICC	Indigenous and Peasant Movement of Cotopaxi (Ecuador)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOK	Norwegian Kroner
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPA	Norwegian People’s Aid
OD	Organisational Development
PK	Pueblo Kayambi (Ecuador)

PKH	Ponlok Khmer (Cambodia)
PO	People's Organisation
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
ROBA	Rural Organisation for the Betterment of Agro-Pastoralists (Ethiopia)
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
STT	Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (Cambodia)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollar
UPCCC	Provincial union of Cañaris communities and cooperatives (Ecuador)
Vigilance	Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia

Preface

This report provides an independent review of the International Development Strategy of the Norwegian People's Aid 2008–2011. It assesses the implementation of the NPA's international strategy, in particular the partnership policy and NPA's advocacy and lobbying. The review assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy, the relationship between the strategy and achievements, and provides recommendations for the 2012–2015 programme period. The Terms of Reference is available in Annex 5.

The Review was commissioned by the Development Programme Department of the NPA. It was carried out by the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway. The review was led by senior researcher Elling N. Tjønneland (CMI) and the team comprised senior researcher Arne Tostensen (CMI) and Anna Mørck (NPA). Research Director Arne Strand (CMI) was responsible for quality assurance. The NPA appointed a reference group to provide advice and oversee the work of the team.

The team began its work in October 2010. Over a period of 12 weeks it collected data and material from the NPA and interviewed NPA staff in Oslo and NPA staff and partners in three countries – Cambodia, Ecuador and Ethiopia. Altogether 118 interviews were carried out. The team met with 29 of the NPA's partners in the three countries visited. A list of people interviewed is provided in Annex 4.

Tjønneland visited all three countries. He was joined by Tostensen in Ethiopia and Mørck in Cambodia and Ecuador. Tjønneland was responsible for writing the report. Tostensen prepared the first draft of the Annex on Ethiopia. The NPA's member of the team (Anna Mørck) was not involved in the writing of the report.

The team has benefited from the support and assistance of a number of people. Staff at the NPA head office in Oslo and at the NPA country offices have provided much assistance to the team during the review. In Ecuador our translator, Patrick Saari, played a key role in facilitating our discussions with NPA partners.

Above all, the team would like to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge and thank the NPA and its partners and the numerous individuals interviewed. They gave graciously of their valuable time to provide information, analysis, interpretations and explanations. The views of all of these stakeholders were crucial in helping the team to formulate its assessments and recommendations.

The draft report was submitted to the NPA reference group in January 2011. The draft was distributed to the staff at the International Programme Department and to the NPA offices in the three countries visited. Written comments were received in early March.

The team has attempted to address the issues raised in the Terms of Reference and in the response to the draft report. Needless to say, the shortcomings and omissions are entirely ours. The team is also responsible for the views and recommendations expressed in the report.

Bergen
March 2011

1: Introduction

This review was commissioned by the Development Programme Department of the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). It assesses the implementation of the NPA's international strategy and provides recommendations for the development of the new strategy for the 2012–2015 programme period.

Background

The NPA was established in 1939 as the Norwegian trade union movement's voluntary health and solidarity organisation. The NPA is formally an association with collective membership through trade unions and individual membership. The members take part in 136 local NPA branches. Currently, it has more than 10,000 members.

The NPA has a broad range of activities in Norway, encompassing (i) help and rescue work; (ii) reception centres for asylum seekers; and (iii) advocacy and campaigning. Its international work is divided between the Mine Action Department and the Development Programme Department, both reporting directly to the Secretary-General. There are also a Communication Department, a Human Resources & Administration Department, and a Finance and Accounting Department serving the whole organisation. The department heads together with the Secretary-General constitute the management team. There is also a Board of Directors, where both trade unions and individual members through the local NPA branches are represented. The Board of Directors is elected by the General Assembly which meets every fourth year.

Until 2008, the Mine Action Department and the Development Programme Department formed the International Department of the NPA under the joint leadership of an International Director. In 2008, these two sections were reorganised as departments, both reporting directly to the Secretary-General.

The Development Programme Department coordinates long-term international development programmes, serves the external offices (country and regional), and is responsible for reporting to donors. It has a current budget of nearly NOK 380 million, a staff of 19 at the head office and 20 liaison, country and regional offices covering over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe.

In 2007, the Board of Directors approved a new international strategy which governs the organisation's international work through the Mine Action and the Development programmes in the 2008–2011 period. The strategy identified the NPA objectives as mobilising and influencing national governments and international social policy with a view to supporting:

- Democracy and the equitable redistribution of resources as critical pillars for development;
- Improving the economic conditions of countries in the South, including trade and foreign debt relief;
- Civil society and collective organisations as drivers of democratisation and nation-building; and
- Protection of human security and the responsibility of the international community to assure it.

Strengthening civil society was highlighted as a key priority for the development work in the strategic plan.

Purpose

This report provides a review of the NPA's current international development work. The main purpose is to assess the implementation of the current strategy, with a particular focus on results from the political work of the NPA and its partners. The review assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy, the relationship between the strategy and achievements, and provides recommendations for the next strategic phase. In particular, the review assesses the strategic coherence and achievements of the programme and the implementation of the NPA's partnership policy.

In 2006, Norad commissioned a major review of the NPA's development work. It focused on the organisational performance of the NPA to provide effective aid.¹ The present review uses the 2007 review as a source of baseline data and assesses to what extent recommendations made by that review have been followed up.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) are attached as Annex 5.

Organisation and Methodology

The review is based on desk studies of documents on the NPA's international strategy and its implementation; interviews with NPA officials and other stakeholders in Norway; and case study material based on field visits to three NPA country offices and their partners.

Three countries – Cambodia, Ecuador and Ethiopia – were visited as part of the review. They were selected by the NPA reflecting the size of development programme; strategic relevance; ability to reveal positive and negative learning; different modes of intervention; inclusion of different continents; and practical/cost considerations.

The review does not provide a full account of the country programmes and their outcomes and impacts. The main purpose was to use examples and lessons from country programmes to inform the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the international strategy, and to provide recommendations for adjustments ahead of the next strategy phase. The main purpose

¹ See Stein-Erik Kruse & Kim Forss (2007), *Organisational Performance Review of Norwegian People's Aid, Synthesis Report*, Oslo: Norad (Norad Report 4/2007) (this review can be downloaded from <http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=109623>).

of the country visits was therefore on interviews with staff at the NPA country offices and staff at the head offices of partner organisations.

There are several methodological limitations and constraints affecting a review like this. The team only visited three countries. Although data were also accessed from other countries, findings from these three countries cannot be generalised and made valid for the implementation experiences in other countries.

There is also a limit to how many questions can be adequately answered in a short period of time. The team was faced with comprehensive ToR which included a broad range of complex questions. Total time and available resources were insufficient for addressing all questions in the same depth. During interviews and visits to partners the team had to prioritise and select certain issues to be pursued more systematically.

The review relied to a large extent on interview data with key informants. It may be questioned how truthful partners are when asked about their relationship with the NPA. There is no doubt a perception of a donor-recipient relationship, and most of the visited organisations have relied on the NPA for some 25–50% of their total revenue, if not more. Partners are likely to have been rather cautious about voicing criticism. On the other hand, the team was pleased with the openness and frankness of feedback – to a large extent explained by the confidence partners have in the NPA. The NPA should also be commended for its frankness. The level of soul-searching and self-criticism on the part of the NPA was often more evident than among its partners.

Another limitation relates to language. Ecuador was selected as one of the countries to be visited. None of the team member speaks Spanish. All interviews with partners in that country had to be done with the help of an interpreter. That constraint made interaction slower and more formal, and some of the qualities of direct communication were lost.

Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway was commissioned to undertake the review. The CMI provided the team leader and one senior researcher for the task. In addition, the NPA seconded one staff member to the join the team with the main task of acting as a liaison person between the CMI and the NPA, and of facilitating access to data and documents. The NPA appointed a reference group to provide advice and oversee the work of the team.

The team met in October 2010 for initial planning and preparations, including the elaboration of semi-structured interview guides. A first round of interviews with NPA staff and others in Oslo, and a meeting with the reference group, took place in October 2010. In November and December 2010 the team visited the NPA offices and partners in Cambodia, Ecuador and Ethiopia. The team leader visited all three countries and was joined by one more team member in all countries. The team spent roughly one week in each country.

A second round of interviews with NPA staff in Oslo and a new meeting with the reference group took place in January 2011. A final meeting of the team for discussion of findings and recommendations took place shortly thereafter.

The draft report was submitted in late January 2011.

Guide to the Reader

The bulk of the report is contained in Chapters 2 to 5. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the NPA's international development work, assesses its strategy and policies, and outlines the team's main observations and findings.

Chapter 3 presents and analyses the implementation of the NPA's partnership policy. This includes a discussion of the partnership profile and selection of partners; the structure of the partnership; organisational development; dialogue; and the challenges facing the NPA in improving its partnership relations.

Chapter 4 analyses the NPA's approach to and implementation of solidarity values and policies. The policies and objectives are presented, the current implementation discussed and the key challenges facing the NPA are identified.

Chapter 5 contains the team's main recommendations and implications for the NPA's 2012–2015 strategy period.

Annexes 1–3 provide a review of the NPA's work and partners in each of the three countries visited.

Annex 4 lists all those interviewed by the team while the final Annex reprints the Terms of Reference.

2: Strategies, Policies and Main Findings

This chapter presents an overview of the NPA's international development work, assesses its strategy and policies, and outlines the team's main observations and findings.

The NPA's development programme is large with a total budget in 2010 of nearly NOK 370 million, activities in over 30 countries and a programme staff of 19 at the head office and 20 liaison, country and regional offices in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and in Europe. Table 2.1 summarises the development programme's income by source of funding in the current programme period (2008–2010).

Table 2.1
Total income by source of funding (2008–2010)
(NOK million)*

Donors	2008	2009	2010
Norad**	117	124	128
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs***	154	133	110
USAID****	61	65	50
Government of South Sudan*****	6	33	33
Sida	--	3	15
EU	8	6	6
UNHCR	11	3	--
UNOCHA	--	2	--
World Bank Sudan	--	--	4
African Medical and Research Foundation	--	1	--
International Media Support	--	-	3
NPA's own contribution	23	23	22
<i>Total</i>	<i>382</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>376</i>

Source: Figures provided by NPA

* Figures are rounded off to the nearest million and only grants above 1 million are included.

** The Norad contribution includes a small allocation through the "oil for development" programme.

*** The MFA figures also include contributions from Norwegian embassies.

**** The figure includes NOK 12 million in 2010 and a small contribution in 2008 from the US Department of State.

***** Funding classified in NPA accounts as allocations from the Government of South Sudan is mainly coming from the Multi-donor Trust Fund.

The above Table reveals several trends. The main sources of funding remain Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Norad provides long-term funding (over a four-year cycle) through a framework agreement. This funding is crucial for the NPA's ability to make

long-term plans in accordance with its strategies and priorities. The funding from the MFA is typically of a one-year duration, provided for humanitarian relief operations (e.g. Burma and Zimbabwe), but also for politically important interventions (such as Iraq or Sudan) and may also be provided through long-term strategic partnership agreements between Norwegian embassies and the NPA (e.g., in Tanzania and Angola).

Funding from non-Norwegian sources is also significant, predominantly for NPA's projects in South Sudan from the Multi-donor Trust Fund and USAID. There is also an increase in non-Norwegian funding in other countries (such as Sida-funding in Rwanda) while other countries have seen reductions (e.g. Sri Lanka where the UNHCR was an important contributor in the early part of the period under review).

Table 2.2 provides a geographical breakdown of the NPA's development programme allocations in the 2008–2010 period.

Table 2.2
Geographical allocation of the NPA's development funds 2008–2010
(NOK million)*

Country/region	2008	2009	2010	Total
Russia	2.6	0.9	0.8	4.3
Balkan	13.4	10.6	11.3	35.3
<i>Europe</i>	<i>16.0</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>12.1</i>	<i>39.6</i>
Mozambique	4.7	3.8	3.6	12.1
South Africa	3.3	5.1	5.1	13.5
Zimbabwe	11.7	23.3	14.2	49.2
Southern Africa regional	2.2	3.3	3.0	8.5
Angola	29.8	23.0	22.5	104.3
Ethiopia	6.3	6.5	6.5	19.3
Rwanda	7.7	8.4	24.5	40.6
Tanzania	27.3	15.6	10.1	53.0
Somalia	4.8	5.9	8.0	18.7
Sudan	112.6	147.1	137.7	397.4
<i>Africa</i>	<i>210.4</i>	<i>242.0</i>	<i>235.2</i>	<i>687.6</i>
Burma	8.7	12.6	16.7	38.0
Cambodia	5.8	6.0	6.1	17.9
Sri Lanka	31.3	4.5	0.9	36.7
<i>Asia</i>	<i>45.8</i>	<i>23.1</i>	<i>23.7</i>	<i>92.6</i>
Iraq	8.1	7.2	9.0	24.3
Lebanon	13.7	15.7	16.0	45.4
Palestine	28.9	34.4	28.4	91.7
<i>Middle East</i>	<i>50.7</i>	<i>57.3</i>	<i>53.4</i>	<i>161.4</i>
Bolivia	4.3	5.3	5.7	15.3
Chile	0.8	0.8	1.0	2.6
Colombia	0.9	1.1	1.3	3.3
Cuba	4.0	3.7	3.6	11.3
Ecuador	11.8	9.7	8.4	29.9
El Salvador	3.2	3.2	3.2	9.6
Guatemala	4.5	4.0	3.4	11.9

Honduras	2.4	2.4	2.4	7.2
Nicaragua	4.5	4.0	3.5	12.0
LA regional	0.7	0.8	1.1	2.6
<i>Latin America</i>	<i>37.1</i>	<i>35.0</i>	<i>33.6</i>	<i>105.7</i>
Total**	360.0	371.2	358.0	1 091.0

Source: Figures provided by the NPA

* Figures have been rounded off to the nearest 100,000.

** The discrepancy between total figures in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 is largely explained by the allocation to the NPA head office/development programme department and global programmes which are not included in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 reveals certain trends. First, the bulk of the funds is allocated to African countries. We have also noted that in a majority of the countries the programme is funded through two or more different donor agencies. The Norad grant is disbursed in most, but not in all countries. In 12 countries (all Latin American countries except Ecuador, three in Africa and one in Asia) the NPA's framework agreement with Norad is the sole source of funding.

Furthermore, the size of the country programmes varies considerably. Many programmes have a volume between NOK 5 and 10 million, but several are much bigger. Sudan stands out as a massive programme which consumes more than 35% of the total programme in the period.

Nearly 30% of the funds are classified as emergency assistance (these are also funded outside the Norad framework). Half of this is allocated to Sudan, but sizeable emergency funding is also added to the programmes in countries such as Zimbabwe, Palestine and Burma.

Performance: The 2007 Review and its Recommendations

In 2006, Norad commissioned a major review of the NPA's development work. It focused on the organisational performance and capacity of the NPA to provide effective aid.² Similar reviews were carried out of the other main Norwegian NGOs. For Norad these reviews were important as a basis for shifting towards the dialogue with Norwegian NGOs towards strategic issues and results rather than individual projects.

The Performance Review found that the NPA was a flexible, dynamic and effective organisation sustained by two core values; international solidarity with marginalised groups and the necessity for political change. The Review also found that the strategic shift to working with partners with a focus on rights-based advocacy introduced in the 2003–2007 strategy was still in transition. The strategic mission and the objectives may have been clear, but the NPA, according to the Review, still had some way to go in implementation. The focus should be sharpened and further strategic decisions be made.

The Review noted that long-term funding from Norad made up a smaller share of funding compared to earlier periods. Shorter contracts for emergency and operational activities were

² See Stein-Erik Kruse & Kim Forss (2007), *Organisational Performance Review of Norwegian People's Aid, Synthesis Report*, Oslo: Norad (Norad Report 4/2007), and Kim Forss et al., *Organisational Review of Norwegian People's Aid. Case Study from Ecuador, Andean Program and Latin America*, and Stein-Erik Kruse et al., *Organisational Review of Norwegian People's Aid. Case Study from Mozambique*, (downloadable from www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=109623).

expanding. Monitoring and evaluation were also found to be weak with inadequate attention to the reporting of results and achievements.

The Norad Review also found that the NPA had a good partnership policy and – compared to many other NGOs – had come a long way in its thinking on what partnership entails. However, the Review also noted that the NPA may have too many partners, and does not distinguish sufficiently between different types of partner (strategic and project partners). It was also found that the substantive dialogue between the NPA and many of the partners was weak – to some extent avoiding difficult and sensitive issues. In many countries there is very limited reflection on the mutuality of partnership relations. The Review also found that the approach to organisational development of partners could be systematised better and strengthened. What the NPA presents as capacity strengthening was only scratching the surface of organisational change. The Review found that NPA staff at the field offices spend little time with each partner – sufficient for supervision, administrative monitoring and consultation – but not for facilitating and supporting processes of organisational development. Nor was it clear whether partnerships are ends in themselves or seen as means to other ends.

2007 Recommendations for Improvement:

- Sharpen strategy and narrow focus to a rights based approach to development; political solidarity; and not more than three thematic areas;
- Improve work with partners, especially related to organisational strengthening;
- Develop a better policy for monitoring and evaluation.

The 2007 Review recommended that the NPA revise its global policy and strategy document as a policy document (differentiate between policy and strategy) in order to focus on rights-based approaches to development, partnerships, a political solidarity perspective, and a maximum of three thematic areas. It was also considered important that the NPA maintain its flexible and responsive support and ability to adapt goals and

means to specific contexts. Finally, the NPA needed to explain and clarify its multiple objectives and different approaches and working methods. Furthermore, the Review recommended that the NPA prepare brief operational strategies at global and regional levels with a view to providing a holistic overview of all activities within a geographical area irrespective of funding source; explaining and justifying the selection of countries, thematic priorities and partners; justifying the allocation of resources between countries, partners and programmes; and describing the organisational set-up and support from the NPA. In addition, the NPA needed to strengthen its organisational capacity, including a clearer focus on the organisational development of partners and on monitoring and evaluation.

The Response: Improved Policies, Guidelines and Management

The NPA responded to these recommendations and the challenges identified in the performance review.³ This included the further development of the global strategy for its development work as well as the preparation of several policy documents and guidelines in what has since been referred to as the document hierarchy. Efforts were made to ensure that the NPA's development programme and staff were able to implement the recommended changes. In particular the NPA emphasised the need to further develop and sharpen its

³ The team has not been able to locate written documents from NPA responding to the report, but a memo from April 2007 to the management summarises suggested recommendations for action. See *Norad gjennomgang – oppsummering og oppfølging*. Til ledergruppen fra Per R & Liv 15.04.2007.

political profile and added value, and to strengthen its systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluation.

In 2007 the NPA developed a new strategy for its international work for the 2008–2011 period.⁴ The new Strategy did not break with its 2003–2007 predecessor: it rather developed and sharpened its focus. The bulk of the NPA’s work would continue to be supportive of organisations and players that may serve as agents of change in the struggle for democracy and a fair distribution of resources. These overall goals would then guide the selection of countries where the NPA would work, although more tactical considerations – such as the priorities of the donor community and the Norwegian government and the private sector, risk considerations and the potential added value of NPA interventions – would also be taken into account. Once a country had been selected the democratic deficits would be identified and the potential players and change agents identified.

The NPA would help to strengthen civil society organisations as key pillars of nation-building, democracy and development. The strategic areas of democratisation and natural resources would be the focus of support to partner organisations. Several specific interventions and objectives were listed to achieve this.

In addition, the strategy also more clearly identified the NPA’s own political strategies and objectives. It would seek to mobilise and influence national governments and international policy towards supporting democracy and the equitable distribution of resources, and to improve the economic conditions of countries in the South. Partners, members, Norwegian opinion and the international community would be mobilised in support of these goals.

NPA’s Hierarchy of Policy Documents

- International strategy 2008-2011;
- Policy documents; partnership (from 2009); land and natural resources (draft 2010); and Participation and organisation (draft 2010);
- Position documents for individual countries (7);
- Country strategies (3);
- Work plans and budgets.

In addition to these governing documents others documents such as discussion papers and handbooks are also available.

The next level in the hierarchy of governing documents for the development work are three policy documents: on partnership (2009), on land and natural resources (draft 2010), and on participation and organisation (draft 2010). These documents seek to provide guidelines in the operationalisation of the international strategy. The partnership policy was developed in the previous period, but a revised document without any major changes was finalised in 2009.⁵ See more on these documents in Ch. 3 and 4.

In addition to these documents the NPA has begun to develop a series of country position papers which guides the NPA’s development programme in the countries where it works and set out the NPA’s views on key challenges and issues related to developments in the countries concerned. Seven position papers have been prepared so far. Country strategies may also be under preparation. Only three countries

⁴ See NPA, *Norwegian People’s Aid – International Strategy 2008-2011*, Oslo: December 2007 (available from <http://www.npaid.org/filestore/NPAInternationalstrategy2008-20112.pdf>). The strategy is available in an official Norwegian version and unofficial translations into English and Spanish. The Strategy also covers the work of the NPA’s Mine Action programme, but with the split in 2008 of the international department into two separate departments – development and mine action – the strategy has *de facto* only guided the work of the development programme (see more on the relationship between mine action and development below).

⁵ The previous document, *Partnership Cooperation in Civil Society* was approved by the NPA Board in 2004 while the current document *Norwegian Peoples Aid Partnership Policy* was validated in February 2009 (available from <http://www.npaid.org/filestore/PartnershipPolicyNPAfinal30.01.092.pdf>).

have such strategies (Myanmar, Sudan and Ethiopia) and their role is a bit unclear. In countries where the Norad framework agreement is the sole source of funding a country strategy basically appears to be identical with the country programme presented in the application to Norad.

In addition to these developments with regard to governing documents a series of changes in the management and administration of the development programme have been introduced. Most significant was the establishment of two new positions in the department: one addressing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and the other partnership and organisational development. The task of the M&E advisor was essentially to improve and simplify the reporting of results and to help the development programme to develop better practices in results-based planning, monitoring and reporting. Following a series of consultations and workshops with NPA partners and staff in several countries this culminated in the publication of a handbook at the end of 2010.⁶

The person responsible for partnership matters was given other tasks (related to political advocacy and lobbying) and was therefore not in a position to dedicate as much time to this original task as envisaged. Among the initiatives implemented was a major partnership survey in 2009 (see further discussion in the next chapter). In October 2009, a first programme manager seminar was held in Oslo. This brought together the programme managers of the NPA's country offices responsible for the day-to-day management of support to partners.⁷

Important changes were also made in the structure of the development programme department at HQ. In 2010, a new leadership structure was introduced with a new management team of four. The person responsible for partnership and political advocacy became head of a new unit on development policy.⁸ This would be phased in as from 2011. However, with the sudden departure of the NPA's Secretary-General in December 2010, the Head of the development programme department took over as acting Secretary-General (and the deputy director became the acting head of the development programme).

What did we find? Impressions from the NPA in Action

The team noted that all key issues and challenges identified in the 2007 performance review have been addressed by the NPA. It is our firm view that an adequate response has been formulated by the development programme department. Furthermore, we note from our interviews with NPA staff in Norway and abroad and from many reviews and reports consulted that there is general support for the NPA's strategy and policies. The controversies so evident a few years ago regarding the shift from the NPA as an implementing development agency towards working with and through partners do not seem to be present today. The changes are to a large extent – or so it appears – internalised by NPA staff. Furthermore, there is also a clear message that there is no further need for major changes in strategies and policies. On the other hand, some respondents expressed reservations about the need for additional policy documents and felt that perhaps the strategy coupled with country strategies and position papers would be sufficient. In their view the challenge lies in operationalisation, not in the lack of policy guidelines from the development programme department.

⁶ See NPA, *Observing Change. Results based planning, monitoring and reporting (PMR)*, Oslo: NPA 2010.

⁷ See also the detailed report from the *International Program Manager Seminar, Oslo October 12-16, 2009*, Oslo: NPA 2009.

⁸ See also *Reorganisering av utenlandsavdelingen - beslutning, Dato: 28.09.2010* (unpublished memo).

However, a number of challenges and difficult dilemmas remain. In the subsequent chapters the team presents its findings related to the implementation of the partnership policy and how the NPA works to promote political change. Here we shall highlight a few general observations and findings.

Conclusions

- Key issues and challenges identified in the 2007 review have been addressed but major challenges remain;
- Maintain and strengthen capacity for political analysis in country programmes; Need for better approach to regional programmes and more efforts to work with trade unions;
- Better interaction between mine action and development programme;
- There is no need for major changes in the strategy papers and policy documents but more efforts should be made to develop country strategy documents

First, we note that the NPA so far has not really managed to scale down and concentrate on fewer countries as recommended by the performance review. However, some reduction – through a phasing out of country programmes – is under way. This includes Tanzania (ended in 2010), Balkan (ending in 2011), Russia (2011) and – earlier than planned because of Sri Lankan authorities – Sri Lanka (2008). Vietnam, Somalia and the Eastern DR Congo may be added to the country portfolio although with expected programmes on a smaller scale than those

phased out.

Second, the team has noted that the NPA is moving out of service delivery and development projects implemented by the NPA. The focus is now both on working with partners and on working with partners who act as drivers of change and mobilise for justice. There is still significant funding from the NPA to service delivery activities – particularly where country programmes also have large humanitarian components such as in Sudan, Palestine or Zimbabwe. However, the NPA reports that such projects are now mainly implemented through partners. A main emphasis according to the NPA, is to help building capacity among partners to do this. In the case of the Sudan programme – with major service delivery projects – there has been a gradual phasing out of traditional service delivery (e.g., within health and food aid) in favour of projects with a stronger focus on building the capacities of partners and local authorities to do this. Weak capacities at the government level in South Sudan – which is likely to prevail for some time – suggest that the efforts to build capacity will be a challenging task with many delays.⁹

Third, we note that a large share of NPA income is derived from short-term funding (annual disbursements). Long-term funding from Norad constitutes about one-third of the income (although some funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – primarily through strategic partnership agreements with embassies – are also long-term). This poses additional challenges for the implementation of the strategy especially its partnership policy.

Fourth, we emphasise the importance of the NPA's decentralised approach with devolution of decision-making authority to country and regional offices. Adaptation of the strategy and policy guidelines to local contexts is crucial for successful implementation of a strategy which focuses on ability to support advocacy and political change. However, this approach also makes the NPA vulnerable. Translation of strategies and guidelines to local contexts requires skills beyond management of traditional aid projects. It requires skills in political analysis and ability to understand political dynamics in the countries concerned. This is primarily the

⁹ See also the unpublished *NPA South Sudan Strategy* (2008) (23 pages).

responsibility of the country director and staff at the country office. Communication between HQ and country offices and support to country offices also becomes crucial – especially in countries and regions where these skills may be inadequate.

The team observed that NPA policy documents and reports have placed much emphasis on the distinction between development work/service delivery, on the one hand one, and advocacy and rights-based work, on the other. This may have been necessary as part of the shift in the focus of the development programme, but the team will emphasise that such a clear-cut separation of development work from political mobilisation and efforts to support political change is unwarranted. This applies especially among the poor and marginalised in rural areas – an NPA priority target group – where development work which can bring about improvements and tangible benefits are crucial for the credibility and legitimacy of the work of the NPA and its partners, and hence their ability to mobilise politically or in terms of rights. This is the case in poor African countries as well as in “better off” countries in Latin America. It also applies to many of the countries where humanitarian relief projects are included in the country programme (such as in the case of Sudan, Palestine, Zimbabwe or Somalia). In certain political situations high political mobilisation – as was the case in Ecuador in 2007–2008 – may enable strong social movements to focus more clearly on political issues, but even such movements depend on the ability to deliver services to members and supporters. When the NPA engages in rights-based advocacy it is important, therefore, that delivering on development/services and advocacy be seen in conjunction. NPA staff must have the ability to identify, select and work with partners that are able to facilitate linkages between development activities and advocacy/political mobilisation.

Sixth, the team noted a rather inconsistent approach to “regional programmes”. Such programmes are nominally in place in Latin America, Southern Africa and – until recently – in Southeast Asia.¹⁰ There are smaller regional projects in place, but the main role of these programmes seems to be administrative – they reduce costs and create flexibility in allocating funds to countries in the region. Regional programmes also help to facilitate sharing of experiences between NPA staff in different countries in the region, and also – potentially – between NPA partners in the regions concerned. These are all valid arguments for a regional programme. However, the team would suggest that the NPA also explores the possibilities of developing stronger regional programmes. This may take the form of support to cooperation between partner organisations in two or more countries or for the activities of a regional partner organisation. For example, we do note that NPA after having closed down the regional Southeast Asia programme is now contemplating launching a Vietnam programme. There may be good reasons for this route but an alternative option would be to consider joint projects with partners in the region such as access to natural resources of the Mekong River (which flows through existing NPA programme countries in the region in addition to Vietnam). Better linkages between country and regional projects may also help to reduce management costs.

Seventh, the team also notes one anomaly in the NPA profile and identity. The NPA has its roots as a political solidarity movement emerging out of the Norwegian labour and trade union movement. The main trade union federations are also members of the NPA and have a strong representation on the NPA Board. This notwithstanding, trade unions are – with very few exceptions – not listed as NPA partners abroad. Nor do we find much analysis of the role of trade unions in country programmes and documents. The reason for this state of affairs is

¹⁰ The Balkan programme is also a regional programme, but that comes to an end in 2011. The Balkan programme has not been examined by the team.

the role of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) which has insisted on a division of labour, where the LO focuses on trade unions and workers and the NPA on other issues. The team has noted this explanation but still feels that more could be done to build bridges to trade unions in the field. There appears to be some movement, *inter alia*, through a regular process of information sharing between the NPA's development programme and the LO's international department. There is a case for taking this further, for example through efforts in selected countries by the NPA country offices to facilitate support from Norwegian trade unions to local unions. The role of Norwegian trade union federations – some of which hold views that differ from those of their umbrella confederation on the “division of labour” – may be crucial in this process.

Eighth, the current international strategy is guiding both the Mine Action Programme and the Development Programme which jointly used to constitute the NPA's international department. This department was split in 2008 into two separate departments working relatively independently of each others. The explanations are several: a different mode of operation (centralised vs. decentralised); a different culture (military vs. development aid); and different partners (government institutions vs. civil society). In several countries there are both a mine action and a development programme. They relate to each other administratively (there is one office, one country director, etc), but operate as two different programmes. These divisions are unfortunate. A recent Norad-commissioned review of the Mine Action Programme concluded that the NPA is not only one of the leading worldwide organisations in mine action, but also one of very few organisations engaged in operational mine clearance programmes, the development of new methodologies as well as in advocacy. These are areas that are mutually reinforcing. However, the review also identified a particular concern: socio-economic aspects and skills could be better integrated into the programme, and the review points at the challenge of ensuring better coherence between the NPA's mine action programme and the development programme.¹¹ The team hopes that better cooperation and interaction can be established on the ground, perhaps especially in countries where the development programme is supporting major land projects and also struggles with its relations with authorities. The question of land use after mine clearance immediately presents itself.

In 2010, the NPA commissioned a review of its gender policy and the organisation of gender equality work at the head office. It strongly recommended that women's empowerment and gender equality be a central concern in the international strategy for the next 2012–2015 period. However, it did not call for new policy papers and guidelines. Instead it suggested that the policy papers on organisational development, democracy and participation and on access to land and resources place women and youth squarely at the centre of attention.¹² The present team concurs with these views.

This review concurs with the finding of the 2007 Norad organisational performance review which found reporting on planning and results from NPA country offices to be weak and insufficient. Partly because what is done is not sufficiently documented, but above all because the style and language of reporting in many instances make it difficult to grasp what is actually being done and achieved. There is also a generally poor understanding of how to deal

¹¹ See Cowi A/S, *Evaluation of the Humanitarian Mine Action Activities of Norwegian People's Aid*, Oslo, Norad Evaluation Department, November 2009 (*Evaluation Report 6/2009*) (<http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=150570>)

¹² See Berit Aasen, *Review of the organisation of the Gender Equality (GE) work in the International Programme Department, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research, May 2010.

with attribution issues in relation to political achievements – the causal links between an NPA activity and political results are rarely as direct as suggested in NPA reports on results. The team has noted much progress by the development programme department to improve and simplify planning and reporting on results. This suggests that improvements should be expected in the next programme period.

Finally, the team does not see the need for major changes in the document hierarchy. The current strategy will benefit from shortening and sharpening. It also contains a number of unrealistic ambitions (especially related to the NPA's political work, see Ch. 4 below) which should simply be dropped in the next version. The main efforts should be directed at operationalisation and implementation at the country and regional level. This may require development of appropriate country strategy documents which can serve both as governing documents and as communication tools with partners and stakeholders.

3: Partnership: How does NPA do it?

This chapter presents and analyses the implementation of the NPA's partnership policy. It includes a discussion of the partnership profile and selection of partners; the structure of the partnership; organisational development; dialogue; and the challenges facing the NPA in improving its partnership relations.

Working with partners and civil society organisations in the South is a key pillar in the work of the NPA's development programme. The 2007 Performance Review (see Ch. 2) found that the NPA had a sound partnership policy and – compared to many other NGOs – had come a long way in its thinking on what partnership entails. However, the 2007 Review also noted that the NPA may have too many partners, and does not distinguish sufficiently between different types of partner (strategic and project partners). It was also found that the substantive dialogue between the NPA and many of the partners was weak – to some extent avoiding difficult and sensitive issues. In many countries there was very limited reflection on the mutuality of partnership. The Norad Review also found that the approach to organisational development of partners ought to be systematised and strengthened. What the NPA presents as capacity strengthening was only scratching the surface of organisational change according to the review team. The reviewers found that NPA staff at the country offices spend little time with each partners – sufficient for supervision, administrative monitoring and consultation but not for facilitating and supporting processes of organisational development. Nor was it clear whether partnerships are ends in themselves or means to other ends.

What has happened since 2007? How is the NPA operationalising and implementing its partnership policies? At the policy level there have been no significant changes. The 2008–2011 strategy reaffirmed the previous emphasis on supporting civil society organisations, but amplified the message and further elaborated the presentation of the role of civil society. The 2009 policy guidelines did not really contain anything new; it was basically an edited reprint of the guidelines from the previous phase. A draft policy paper on *Participation and Organisation* was distributed as a hearing document in October 2010. It overlaps with the partnership guidelines but further emphasises the importance of focusing on actors and change agents, and the need for supporting organisational development. This document does not contain specific references to the distinction between strategic and project partners which was so strongly underscored in the policy document on partnership.

In 2009, all of the NPA's external offices participated in a partnership survey which attempted to map how the organisation practiced partnership and organisational development.¹³ It provides a wealth of information on the types of partnership in place and how it is

¹³ See NPA's *Report: NPA Partnership and Organisational Development Survey* (unpublished report, 38 pages, 2010). Cf. also the NPA's 2010 report to Norad on how they worked on these issues in 2009: *Special Report to Norad – Strengthening civil society* (4 pages) (available from <http://www.npaid.org/filestore/2009SpecialNORADReportStrengtheningSC28229.pdf>).

implemented – or more precisely: how this is perceived by NPA offices and staff. In addition, there are various reports, including recent independent reviews of country programmes, which together with interview data and case studies of Cambodia, Ecuador and Ethiopia enable the team to draw some conclusions about how the NPA operationalises and implements its partnership policy.

Who are the Partners – and How are they Selected?

The partnership survey found that the NPA in May 2009 had 233 partners. Most of them were NGOs, but there were also – especially in Latin America – a number of people’s organisations (defined as membership organisations that represent the interests of their members and mobilise for their demands). The government partners are located in Sudan and Cuba. Cf. Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
NPA partners in May 2009*

Region	NGOs**	POs***	Government	Total partners
Africa	72	20	3	95
Asia	24	0	0	24
Middle East	30	3		33
Latin America	10	38	2	50
Europe	31	0	0	31
Total	167	61	5	233

* Source: P. 3 in *Report: NPA Partnership and Organisational Development Survey* (Oslo: NPA 2010, unpublished).

** Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are organisations whose main purpose is to serve others outside their organisation.

*** People’s organisations (POs) are defined as membership organisations that represent the interests of their members and mobilise for their demands.

The survey also found that many of the current partners became partners only recently (although the survey does not tell us how many partners the NPA had previously that are no longer partners). Only five partners from the 1980s are still partners and 143 partnerships were established between 2000 and 2007. During 2008 and up to May 2009 44 new partnerships were established.

The partnership survey provides data on the type of work and focus that characterises the 233 partners, but unfortunately it does not provide data on what specific type of work the NPA supports through its partnerships. The survey furthermore provides some data on what the NPA’s country offices consider the most important criteria for selecting partners. They typically revolve around the potential partners’ ability to “represent people”, to “promote change in society” and to “promote women’s empowerment and gender equality”. As a rule, the NPA office will map the civil society landscape in the country (often informally and not necessarily through written assessments), makes an initial assessment of the potential partners, and then provide a contract for a trial or initial period.

Data from the three countries visited provided additional data on partnership profiles and types of work supported. Currently (end of 2010) there are 21 partners in Cambodia, 11 in Ecuador and 8 in Ethiopia. The majority became partners in the current strategy period (except in Ecuador where 6 of the 11 were partners before this period). In Cambodia none of the current partners was a partner before 2000, in Ecuador 5 and in Ethiopia 1. The partners are mixed in terms of profile. Nearly all partners in Cambodia and Ethiopia are NGOs – as defined by the NPA – while in Ecuador most (8 of the 11) are membership-based organisations. Most of the NGOs are large with a national coverage and have strong secretariats, but there are also smaller NGOs often confined to specific geographical areas. There are examples both from Ecuador and Cambodia where the NPA has partnered with NGOs with a view to strengthening specific social membership-based movements (such as using a human rights NGO to support a peace movement on the border with Colombia, and a Community Peace Building Network working with communities affected by land developments in Cambodia). In Ethiopia support to NGOs have been used to strengthen land use committees and promote local participation and cooperation with municipalities.

The support to people's organisations in Ecuador are mainly focused on indigenous peoples and peasants and has – in the current period – also been dominated by efforts to support interventions and responses to major political changes in the country, including inputs to the constitution-making process and efforts to build political alliances between various movements. This support has included assisting partners both at national, provincial and local levels, but with a stronger accent on national initiatives in the current period (due to the political situation).

The selection of partners – although anchored in the policy documents – seems to follow rather informal and context-specific procedures (although the process of initiating the partnership may include some common elements such as assessments and appraisals). In Ethiopia, where the programme is relatively new and where civil society is not particularly strong in the NPA's area of work, much effort went into identifying NGOs with abilities to work on the ground and with communities. This guided both the selection of partners in the land rights area and led to efforts by the NPA to help develop existing small NGOs to focus on advocacy issues (such as women projects in Addis). In Cambodia – where there is a plethora of donor-funded NGOs – there are many partners both at the national and local levels. The NPA has spent much time identifying potential partners in areas which are politically important – perhaps leading to a situation where there may be too many partners in too many areas. Practical considerations will also often play a role in the final selection (such as resources required in working with the partner).

In Ecuador – where the NPA has been present for a long time and where there are strong social and political movements – the current selection of partners has been guided by intimate knowledge of civil society and a “hands-on” grasp of political dynamics.

All support to partners in the three countries visited has profiles and foci aligned with NPA priorities although some may be more peripheral. Many of the partners are also active in implementing development projects and in service delivery (such as agricultural extension services), but NPA support to these activities are limited. NPA support generally centres on rights/advocacy issues. The situation may be different in countries with large funding from other donor agencies or where provision of humanitarian relief are important, but NPA reports that they also in these cases successfully have shifted from NPA-managed operation to support to partners with a focus on strengthening capacity of partners.

There are no partnerships between the NPA and other international or northern/Norwegian NGOs active in the three countries visited. There are, however, informal relations and the odd co-operation on specific issues, perhaps especially in Ecuador (e.g. with IBIS, a likeminded Danish NGO with a similar focus). In Cambodia there is some interaction through participation in co-ordinating forums.

In none of the three countries do the partners include research institutions or policy “think-tanks”, but such institutions have been used as a resource by the NPA in several countries both to help understand political dynamics and mapping civil society, and in assessing and reviewing partners. This is most evident in Ecuador, but probably more in the past than at present. In Southern Africa, NPA reports that important partners can also be found among “think-tanks” and research institutions such as the Cruzeiro do Sul in Mozambique, African Institute of Agrarian Studies in Zimbabwe, and the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa.

How is the Partnership Structured?

The team also looked at the formal structuring of the relations between the NPA and its partners. We found that all contracts with all partners in all three countries spanned no more than one year. The partnership survey also noted the paradox between long-term partnerships, and short-term contracts. The paradox in the countries visited is even greater than what emerges from the global picture. The partnership survey found that 77% of the contracts with the NPA’s 233 partners in 2009 were short-term, 13% had a 2–3 years’ duration and 9% of longer duration. Two of the NPA offices responded that 2–3 year contracts were most common in their country, while two country offices said that longer contracts were the norm.

There was clear dissatisfaction among many partners interviewed on the NPA’s position on the length of contracts. The NPA’s position here may also contrast with emerging trends among likeminded donor agencies where more efforts are now put on shifting towards long-term contracts. The arguments for longer-term contracts are that they would reflect trust between partners; allow for long-term planning and greater predictability; reduce the administrative burden (for both contractual parties); and provide more space for dialogue on strategic issues. For many partners in the three countries the NPA could easily shift to long-term contracts. There are, however, also many partners with whom this would be difficult and not achievable in the short run. Long-term contracts require a minimum of administrative and financial management capacity on the part of the partner, including the ability to draw up long-term plans.

Strengths and Paradoxes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPA has long-term partnerships, but provide short term contracts • Partners: the NPA is a very good donor partner

A related issue is basket-funding. The NPA does not participate in such arrangements in the countries visited. We do not have information about the situation in other countries, but suspect that it is limited there as well.

Many partners had critical comments on the NPA’s reluctance to enter into contracts of longer duration and – to a lesser extent – its reservations about basket funding arrangements. There was a general – near unanimous – praise for other dimensions of the NPA’s approach to and management of the partnerships. The NPA gets a very high score for their supportive attitude,

flexible approach, willingness and ability to listen and to respond. The team’s findings reinforce the observations made in the 2007 performance review.

The NPA’s partnership policy and other documents refer to different categories of partners. In particular, the distinction between “strategic” and “project” partner is highlighted. This is reiterated in the country strategy document on Ethiopia. Strategic partnerships are partnerships with organisations sharing values and visions, and they are long-term, and – if required – would include a strong component of organisational development. The project partnerships are focused on specific activities, may be limited in time, and not necessarily giving much attention to organisational development. The team found that this distinction had no practical meaning in any of the three countries visited. Informally, NPA staff may consider some partners to be more important than others, but that seemed to be less anchored in the strategic/project distinction and had more to do with organisational strength.

How is Organisational Development Implemented?

Support to organisational development (OD) is an important dimension of the NPA’s partnership policy. The partnership survey indicated that this is a strong component in most partnerships. In most countries OD is included in more than half of all partnerships.

The survey data also show that OD support in general has a broad scope in the different countries. Leadership capacities and capability to mobilise are included in 84% and 81% of the OD initiatives, respectively. Other important OD endeavours deal with capacities for planning, monitoring, reporting, financial and administrative management, but also capabilities to work politically through the mobilisation of members, forging alliances with others, and more. The responses on the extent to which they coordinated OD with other donors suggest that everybody did that to some degree (although many – 22% – seldom did so). 40% did it often or always.

Organisational development features prominently in all three countries visited but with different foci. More emphasis was put on technical capacities of the partners in Cambodia and Ethiopia and more on responses to external environment and political engagement in Ecuador. In none of the countries was there any co-operation with other donors.

A classification of OD support in three broad dimensions of developing civil society capacities may help to clarify further how OD is operationalised and implemented by the NPA.

<p>Strengthening Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little documentation of NPA support to organisational development of partners; • Strong focus on strengthening technical capacities in finance management and reporting; and • Less focus on internal governance of partners and on strategies for political mobilisation
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A: Technical capacities of the organisation. This element includes issues such as financial management, planning of activities, reporting on implementation, achievements and results, management of the organisation and other dimensions of internal strengthening of the partner. This is a prominent feature of OD support in Cambodia and Ethiopia with

emphasis on finance management and planning/reporting. In Ethiopia various joint workshops have been held with all partners to help strengthen capacities, especially in planning and reporting related to NPA-funded projects, but also on financial management issues. These

workshops are largely hosted and organised by the NPA-office, but may also involve outside resource persons/consultants. In addition, the Ethiopia office has provided much financial support to the organisational strengthening of Hibir – an organisation where the NPA played a key role in developing its focus on ending violence against women. This has included funding key positions in the secretariat and maintaining a close dialogue with the organisation.

In Cambodia, support in this area has been provided directly to partners, both through dialogue and visits and through funding of the secretariats. In Ecuador, there has been limited attention to this – in part because the NPA considers the partners to be sufficiently strong. However, the financial manager at the NPA has – on request – spent some time with individual partners on financial management and reporting.

B: Internal governance and gender equality. This component includes issues such as governance and accountability, leadership training, and relations between leadership and members. This has received much attention in Ecuador where most partners are membership organisations. It has included significant funding related to involving members (hosting of conferences and assemblies) and political training (training courses for new leaders and activists). The emphasis on these issues in the other countries has not been pronounced. In Cambodia, an NPA partner (Cooperation Committee for Cambodia) promotes good governance within NGOs and the NPA country director sits on the committee which issues awards and certificates to NGOs for achievements in this area.

Gender issues are to some extent addressed in OD support in all countries, but mostly through dialogue and less on specific initiatives. This issue was outside the ToR for this particular review and has not been explored further by the team.

C: Capacities and strategies for mobilisation and advocacy. This aspect includes issues such as how to do advocacy work, how to engage with authorities, how to reach target groups, and how to build and sustain political alliances. OD support in this area has been most prominent in Ecuador where interventions have focused on support to indigenous organisations and their engagement with the new political regime and the Constitutional Assembly, but also efforts to foster alliances and co-operation between different movements and organisations. Also included are internal seminars on strategic issues hosted by the NPA and bringing together key partners and others.

In Ethiopia a main example are the efforts by the NPA to assist in expanding the work of Hibir and in advising and funding efforts to start projects reaching girls and young women in schools. In Cambodia, it is exemplified by the efforts of the NPA to facilitate and support co-operation between different NPA partners that are active in rural areas in the north-western provinces (some with a strong background in extension work, others with a focus on advocacy).

OD support has a broad scope in all three countries. OD comprises both separate interventions and elements incorporated into other projects supported by the NPA. Few reports and assessments are available of the quality and impact of this work in the countries visited. Planning and reporting on results remain weak. The one clear finding that stands out, however, is that OD is being taken seriously and is considered important by the NPA staff interviewed.

Dialogue

Dialogue is defined as a very important component in the NPA's relations with its partners. The general impression – as pointed out above in the discussion of the structure of partnerships – is that the NPA is a very good donor partner (with the exceptions of the length of contracts and basket funding!). There appears in most cases to be good and frank discussions of administrative and strategic issues where the NPA both listens, provides advice and takes action on issues agreed upon. Some partners (e.g., in Ethiopia) may have been retained for historical or tactical reasons and the dialogue may not be very intimate. Administrative and financial matters to the neglect of strategic issues predominate in countries like Ethiopia and Cambodia, but we do not have sufficient information to pass a final judgement on this.

The team is of the impression, however, that the dialogue very much remains one-way traffic in the three countries visited. There appears to be limited discussion related to the strategic and administrative challenges facing the NPA, or how experiences from the work in the country could be used in the NPA's political work in Norway and internationally. There are several indications which point to that shortcoming. One is the lack of procedures for consultations with partners about the development of the NPA strategy in the countries concerned. Feedback from partners to the NPA seems primarily to take place through indirect channels: the NPA may learn from "one-way" discussions with partners – achievements and failures of the partner also feeds into the NPA's internal planning. Furthermore, NPA staff gets inputs from informal discussions with individuals and resource persons in the country.

Dialogue

- The NPA is perceived as a very good donor partner;
- there is too little focus on strategic issues; and
- emphasis on finance and management.

The team also noted that not all partners were familiar with NPA strategies – neither internationally nor in the country. Nor were they always familiar with the NPA's other activities in the country. It has to be added that this view was expressed by some recently recruited partners,

but it indicates that although the NPA may be viewed as a good partner it remains primarily a donor for many partners.

Challenges

The NPA seeks to develop a strong identity as a political solidarity organisation. It wants to support local civil society actors that can act as drivers of change. The NPA does not see itself primarily as an aid donor, but as partner with other organisations in the struggle for democratisation and justice. The impressions from the three countries visited give a strong message of an organisation committed to supporting and strengthening partners. The NPA's strong added value here is primarily its role as donor partner and its flexible and non-prescriptive way of working with its partners. The team is, however, also left with the impression that the NPA can do more to help develop alliances between itself and its partners, and to move beyond donor-recipient relations. In a true partnership, partners may to a greater extent help also be in a position to develop the NPA's own national, regional and global strategies. Findings from other reviews and assessments of the implementation of the NPA's partnership policy may provide more insights into these challenges.

A 2009 review of the Norwegian Embassy-funded strategic partnership programme between the NPA and Angolan NGOs also shed lights on those challenges – and on what the NPA’s added values may be.¹⁴ The review gives high praise to the NPA’s ability to provide financial and technical support to partners, but finds limited added value from the NPA partnership beyond funding. The NPA gets a much lower score on its ability to engage with partners on substantive thematic issues and in providing programme advice. The added value from the non-financial contribution from the NPA was found to be limited. The experience from the Angolan programme cannot be generalised, but it does identify what is most likely a weak and challenging dimension in the implementation of the NPA’s partnership model.

The 2010 review of the NPA’s major programme in Iraqi Kurdistan has a more positive appraisal of the added value of NPA’s contribution.¹⁵ Here the NPA is active on a broad front, of which partnership and support to civil society is but one component (through a community building programme). Support to civil society is praised for its achievements in strengthening local civil society organisations. The added value is identified as the ability to respond quickly, the priority focus on democratisation and human rights, and the NPA’s flexible and non-prescriptive mode of operation. The NPA has played a strong role in mentoring and coaching development of civil society organisations according to the review.

The recent review of the implementation of the NPA’s partnership policy in Myanmar provides further insights.¹⁶ The review found that most of the current NPA partners in the country fit into the NPA’s international and Myanmar strategy, and are relevant and worth continuing partnership with. The Myanmar-report also argues that partners that do not fit should not be ‘abandoned’ until they have secured alternative funding sources. The NPA should develop a phase-out strategy, and ensure that these organisations have secured sufficient funding to sustain themselves.

In selecting partners in Myanmar that have the potential to develop into “change agents” the NPA is facing a dilemma. Those organisations that fit best with the NPA’s strategy are also the ones that many other donors would like to support. The challenge, according to this review, is to help other local organisations, with less capacity and which are less well established, to grow and develop their capacity. The NPA should look at supporting relatively smaller local organisations that have the capacity and intention to develop.

The Myanmar review found that the NPA’s strategy of how to work with its partners is generally speaking good, and appreciated by these partners. The NPA’s strategy of establishing partnerships with local organisations, and its explicit mandate to support and strengthen civil society provides the main added value. It is also appropriate that the NPA defines partnerships beyond only financial support, and includes various capacity building activities. The NPA’s partners gave positive feedback on this approach, and hoped the NPA will continue to support civil society in Myanmar in this way.

¹⁴ See Manolo Sánchez et al., *Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Partnership for Civil Society in Angola. Final Report*, Oslo: Scanteam, December 2009 (unpublished).

¹⁵ See Nordic Consulting Group, *Review of Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) in Iraq, Final Report 20.04.2010*, unpublished (commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad).

¹⁶ See Tom Kramer, *Partnership Review for Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) Myanmar*, (unpublished report commissioned by NPA, August 2010, 23 pages)

The review of the Myanmar programme recommended that the quality and quantity of non-financial support to its partners should be strengthened. Several issues are listed. These include (extracts only):

- Promote equal partnerships; closely involve local organisations in decision-making and implementation about projects and programmes that are aimed to support them;
- Continue to focus on all three main areas of need: individual capacity building; organisational capacity building; and institutional development / networking and coordination;
- Capacity building should be diverse and relevant for the specific partner;
- Organise capacity building in various ways: carried out by NPA staff, by other partners, by other organisations and individuals hired by the NPA;
- More capacity building should be done in the field and on the job;
- Show long-term commitment and communicate with partners about the NPA's intentions and decision making processes and timelines about these issues;
- Improve what and how the NPA's communicates with its partners;
- Explain the NPA's goals and objectives as well as possible. Explain the NPA's intention on partnership including funding;
- In order to follow-up on all issues raised above, the NPA needs to invest in its own local staff and build their capacity; and
- Focus on accounting and financial management, implementation of M&E as a reflective and participatory practice, and on issues that are interesting to the partners, either upon their own initiative or after suggestions by the NPA.

Improving Partnerships

There are great variations in NPA support and implementation of its partnership policy. In some countries the NPA's contribution may be mainly financial and administrative; in others programme advice and dialogue on substantive issues may be more important. Generally, however, there seems to be good adaptation to local conditions and commitment to working with partners. Findings from three countries visited and from other recent reviews suggest that a main challenge for the NPA is to move beyond its role as a donor. As a political solidarity organisation seeking to build alliances and partnerships more efforts should be placed on strengthening the voice of the partner in the partnership with the NPA. This is not easy in a situation where the NPA has the funds and is organisationally strong compared to often much weaker partners.

The NPA has made good progress in developing its partnership policy and in reflecting on its progress and achievements in support to organisational development. The team suggests that partnerships can be further improved on several dimensions:

1. Take steps to ensure that long-term and important partnerships are sustained through long-term contracts. Also provide core funding to the partner and join other donors in basket fund arrangements where that is feasible and appropriate;
2. Make more vigorous efforts to systematise NPA's lessons and experiences from support to organisational development. Identify clear objectives beyond the ability to manage and

report on received NPA funds. Coordinate with other donor partners when OD support is provided;

3. Develop a communication strategy with partners to ensure that they and other stakeholders have easy access to the aims, goals and objectives of the NPA and the country programme;
4. Identify and stay focused on what ought to be the added value of the NPA contribution to the partnership beyond the financial contribution;
5. Make stronger efforts to ensure that selection of partners are guided and informed by an analysis of political dynamics in the programme country; and
6. Define what is meant by “strategic partner” and develop partnership accordingly.

4: The NPA and Political Solidarity

This chapter analyses the NPA's approach to and implementation of solidarity values and policies. The policies and objectives are presented, the current implementation discussed and the key challenges facing the NPA are identified.

The NPA originated as the political solidarity organisation of the labour movement. This was strongly expressed as from the 1970s in the support to liberation movements in Southern Africa, in the support to indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Palestinians as from the 1980s and – perhaps most strongly – in its close relationship with the SPLM in Sudan. The introduction of new strategies and policies for the development programme from the early 2000s can also be interpreted as an effort to reinforce this important political legacy.

Policies and Objectives

The 2008–2011 strategy emphasises that the key pillar of the NPA's development programme is support to civil society actors, but it is forcefully argued that the NPA support goes beyond this. It includes the NPA's own efforts to

“mobilise and influence national governments and international social (sic) policy towards supporting: ... improving the economic conditions of countries in the South, including on questions of trade and foreign debt.”

Furthermore, the strategy states that the NPA aspires to become a recognised resource centre for democratisation and civil society. Related to land and natural resources several objectives are identified. It states that the NPA in the 2008–2011 period shall:

- *“Make the redistribution of resources a top priority on the development agenda; ...*
- *Monitor the international oil and energy sector and its compliance with human rights and development needs;*
- *Lobby for internationally binding regulations for the private extractive sector;*
- *Develop NPA's expertise on land and resource rights.”*

In summary, the strategy also states that NPA will:

- *“give priority to and allocate resources in order to develop as a resource centre for and on civil society, including organisational development and context analysis;*
- *intensify its work on encouraging its membership organisations to undertake international work and commitments.”*

The 2010 draft policy guidelines on land and natural resources makes a stronger case for focusing on Norwegian political interests and the role of public and private companies,

including the investment policies and practices of the Government's Pension Fund. The NPA will:

“Monitor Norwegian investments in natural resources (enterprises or investments of the Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global) when these take place in programme countries and particularly if constituencies of partner organizations are involved. When relevant, raise issues of concern with Norwegian authorities (...) Use concrete experiences in recommendations to Norwegian development policies”

The 2010 draft policy guidelines on organisation and participation also emphasise that:

“NPA supports organised participation in a variety of social and political contexts around the world. Our role is to support those fighting to have their voice heard and their interests on the public agenda. Additionally, in Norway and internationally NPA seeks to promote the understanding that the right for social groups to exercise participation is crucial for development. In many instances local struggles are part of larger struggles for global justice or relate to sectors with global reach, examples such as the lack of implementation of ILO convention 169 on indigenous people's rights to consultation, or struggles over natural resources fighting land grab and dealing with foreign direct investment.

- *With partnerships in different contexts NPA seeks to raise common concerns raised from the south on the Norwegian and international development agenda.*
- *NPA works on advocacy in Norway and internationally based on experience from our programme work and consultation with partners.”*

How has the NPA implemented this ambitious agenda? How does NPA operationalise this in the three countries visited?

Performance

At HQ three working groups were established in late 2010 to help develop the NPA's policies on advocacy and development issues.¹⁷ One group is dedicated to redistribution and development and seeks to further operationalise the NPA's objectives in this area. This includes addressing the relation between redistribution and development; how to achieve a more just distribution of power and resources; and the implication for Norwegian development policies.

A second working group focuses on investment and development. It addresses the role of foreign investment, land and natural resources, and Norwegian companies. The final group works on democratisation and development and explores the role of democratisation, strategies and implications for Norwegian development policies.

The team's first important observation is that the NPA in its programme countries works through its partners and does not seek to develop a “political profile” separate from partners. The team also learned that the NPA's knowledge and views based on their work in programme countries may also carry weight and influence in Norwegian policy circles. Key examples may be the Middle East and Sudan, but others could also be mentioned. These countries are examples in which the NPA's country offices may play an important role not only in relations to the head office in Oslo but also to Norwegian embassies and other Norwegian agencies to the extent they exist in the countries concerned.

¹⁷ See “Mandat for arbeidsgruppene for politisk arbeid” (3 pages, unpublished, n.d. (2010)).

Political Profile

- Too ambitious and limited resources
- Main focus in Norway and on foreign and development policy
- In programme countries: Uneven and limited monitoring of Norwegian economic and political interests

The three countries visited showed limited engagement by the NPA country offices with regard to Norwegian interests and politics in those countries, although the Ecuador office is exploring every available opportunity. A main reason is that there is very limited Norwegian involvement in these countries. Ethiopia is an

exception. There is a Norwegian embassy in this country and strong Norwegian interests, perhaps mainly because of Ethiopia's role in the wider Horn of Africa and because it hosts the African Union. There is a significant Norwegian aid programme and some private Norwegian economic interests, especially related to natural resources. There is little or no activity on these issues by the NPA country and head office (vis-à-vis the embassy and the MFA in Oslo, Norwegian commercial interests or the media). The country programme as from 2009 does not specifically discuss these issues, but the recent position paper (2010) briefly mention these dimensions of Norwegian-Ethiopian relations. The NPA office in the country informs the team that it finds it difficult to be more active in relation to Norwegian policies due to the political situation in Ethiopia.

The NPA has attempted to strengthen and provide additional resources for this type of work at the HQ. Still, these resources fall far short of what is required if the very ambitious targets and objectives listed in the policy documents are to be achieved.

The NPA's strategy document outlines ambitious objectives for the NPA's own advocacy work internationally. This includes (see above) monitoring the oil and energy sector, lobby for international binding regulations for the extractive industry and to work for improvement of the economic conditions for countries in the South. The NPA has not reported any significant activities at this level. The focus for the NPA's own advocacy and lobbying has primarily been related to Norwegian politics and Norwegian engagement globally and in the South.

The NPA's main efforts have been linked to developments in NPA programme countries, to topical issues in Norwegian foreign policy, and to the role of Norwegian companies and Norwegian investments in the South. The NPA conducts formal and informal dialogues with institutions such as the MFA and is also involved in advocacy and political mobilisation – both on its own or in alliance with member organisations, and with other NGOs and interest groups.

The role of Norwegian commercial companies in natural resource management has become an increasingly important dimension of the NPA's political work in addition to issues related to developments in the NPA's programme countries. Hydropower (e.g., in Chile) is an example of an issue where NPA has helped put this on the agenda both related to the particular programme country and to Norwegian development policy.¹⁸

Position documents have been developed for some countries (cf. Ch. 2). They have provided a platform, according to the NPA, which has helped guide and focus NPA's political work in relation to these countries (Sudan, Palestine, Myanmar and others).

¹⁸ NPA also reports on achievement and results from their advocacy work. See e.g., "Resultater – Politisk arbeid i utenlandsavdelingen 2009 – oversikt per type aktivitet" (unpublished, 7 pages, n.d. (2010)).

Challenges

The NPA is facing several challenges.

One is capacity constraints. This means that ambitions must be scaled down. Some of the ambitions related to interventions at the international level in the current strategy document could simply be dropped in the next strategy document. The team concurs with the reduced ambitions outlined in the recent policy document on land and natural resources, and in the current work as indicated through the activities of the current working groups at HQ on development policy.

Second, the focus should be sharpened for greater influence and impact. This applies in particular to the NPA's efforts regarding oil and other extractive industries. Currently it runs the risk of fragmentation when responding in an *ad hoc* fashion in both country programmes and in Norway on this important matter.

Third, a more pro-active stance on the part of the NPA's country offices would be welcome with a view to making interventions and suggestions in priority areas (e.g. related to the role of Norwegian companies). Such suggestions would preferably be substantial inputs and proposals. They could be generated and facilitated by using partners, specialised NGOs or even students from Norway or programme countries to prepare brief background documentation.

Fourth, the country strategy documents also need to address how the NPA ought to work politically in Norway and internationally, and how the NPA would consider the relations between the country programme and work elsewhere. The position papers may be an important tool to achieve this.

Fifth, the NPA supports partners operating in very different contexts and under diverse political regimes – from radical and progressive regimes committed to democratisation to authoritarian regimes of variable shapes and colours. This poses many dilemmas for partners and for the NPA when providing support to partners. There are no blueprints. Responses will have to be tailored to local contexts, and difficult compromises will often have to be found. For the NPA it essentially means: (a) NPA staff need skills for understanding political dynamics in the countries concerned; and (b) the organisation needs to stay focused on the overriding objective: supporting and strengthening civil society actors.

Recommendations:

- Scale down ambitions;
- Sharpen the focus;
- Be more proactive in relation to Norwegian economic and political interests in the programme countries;
- Make the country strategy's a tool in political work; and
- Maintain and strengthen skills in understanding political dynamics in the programme countries.

5: Conclusion: Towards the 2012–2015 Strategy Period

The NPA has made significant advances in the current programme period. Strengths have been further reinforced and weaknesses and shortcomings have been addressed. The NPA will continue to face constraints, obstacles and new challenges – as well as benefit from opportunities – as strategies, policies and priorities are being elaborated for the next 2012–2015 programme period.

Unfolding developments and changes in the external environment will have strong impacts. Political changes in programme countries are most immediate – and perhaps most challenging in the case of Sudan where a number of unknown factors will greatly affect the ability to transform and consolidate the country programme. The rapidly evolving changes in the world economy and dynamics in international politics especially linked to the role of the emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil or South Africa in Africa, will pose new challenges for civil society actors and management of land and natural resources. And third, the funding requirements for the NPA's development programme are likely not only to continue to be dependent on a mix of short-term and decreasingly long-term funding, but also on the mix of diverse groups of donor agencies. This puts new demands not only the ability to report on results, but also on the ability to strike a balance between donor priorities and the NPA's own strategic objectives and policy guidelines.

The team is of the impression that the NPA has sufficient ability and capacity to change and adapt to shifts in the external environment. The NPA has also made great progress in addressing the recommendations for improvements contained in the Norad-commissioned performance review from 2007. Based on the findings of this review the team would like to make a number of recommendations which should be addressed in the planning process towards the next programme period.

Recommendations: Strategies and Policies

1: There is no need for major changes in the current global strategy document and policy guidelines. Some editing and improvements, including efforts to make them shorter and more readable, are necessary but further revisions on substance will not necessarily yield much additional value. The challenge for the NPA lies in implementing strategies and policies in the programme countries. These challenges cannot be addressed simply by adding more guidelines and documents from head office.

2: The contextualisation and operationalisation of the NPA's strategies and policies should primarily take place at the country and regional level. The NPA therefore needs to develop strategy documents for each of its programme countries. These documents – developed by the country offices in conjunction with the head office – should serve both as governing

instruments for country operations and as communication tools with partners and stakeholders. The country strategy document should provide an overview of what the NPA does in the country concerned, what it seeks to achieve as well highlight linkages with the NPA's work in Norway and globally.

3: The team concurs with the NPA's strong emphasis on partnering with civil society actors that are already or has the potential of developing into strong agents of political change. The team has also noted the NPA's continuous move away from being an implementer of development and service delivery projects to an organisation working with partners. The team will, however, recommend that the distinction between development projects and service delivery, on the one hand, and advocacy and political mobilisation, on the other, should not be exaggerated. In interviews with NPA staff this contrast is sometimes taken further into a distinction between "development aid" and "political solidarity". In most cases, especially in rural areas or in humanitarian relief operations such as in Zimbabwe, there are no sharp divisions. Civil society actors gain credibility and legitimacy from and generate political mobilisation through their development work. For the NPA the challenge is to identify, select and partner with such organisations and to stay focused on the advocacy dimension of the work of the partner.

4: The team has noted the dissolution of the International Department and the organisation of the NPA's Mine Action Programme and the Development Programme into two new and separate Departments. They are still to some extent administratively integrated in the programme countries abroad where both programmes are active, but rarely relate to each other beyond this. The team would strongly encourage greater interaction, perhaps initially piloted in selected countries. There may be mutual benefits to be reaped from such interaction, e.g. related to land issues, but also with regard to the NPA's engagement with national authorities.

5: The team feels that the identity and purpose of the NPA's development programme could be further developed and strengthened with a new focus on trade unions in programme countries. Regular information sharing with the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions as well as trade union federations is important. The possibility of the NPA facilitating support to trade unions in selected programme countries should be explored.

6: The team also recommends that the NPA revisits and clarifies its approach to regional programmes. Should it be limited to being an administrative arrangement, a vehicle for information sharing between NPA offices, or focused on certain projects where regional approaches may add value to country programme? Furthermore, regional thinking may help in guiding the selection, focus and concentration of country programmes.

7: The team has noted the NPA's progress in developing better procedures for planning and reporting of results, including ongoing efforts to strengthen the competence of country offices to deal with these issues. In addition the team recommends that the NPA consider selecting one or two intervention areas (e.g. support to leadership training in partner organisations) as the topic for a major evaluation in the next programme period.

Recommendations: Country Programmes and Partnerships

8: The decentralised organisation and implementation of the development programme remain a major strength of the NPA's development work. Contextualisation and operationalisation of NPA strategies and policies take place through country and regional offices. The team strongly recommends that this approach be maintained and reinforced, e.g. through the development of proper country strategies (cf. recommendation 2 above).

9: The NPA faces, and will continue to face, many dilemmas in partnering with organisations operating under different political conditions and in countries governed by diverse political regimes. This requires the NPA offices to maintain solid capacity to understand and design adequate responses to political developments, including the ability to select partners, and to stay focused on the main objective: to support and strengthen local civil society actors.

10: The NPA has a sound partnership policy, but the team recommends several improvements. Emphasis on long-term partnerships needs to be reflected in long-term (multi-year) contracts where this is feasible. Support for organisational development needs to be systematised better, including improved planning with the identification of appropriate aims and objectives. The team notes that progress is being made with several ongoing efforts to analyse experiences and lessons from individual countries. The NPA also needs to clarify what it means by "strategic partner" and whether it has any operational implications.

11: The team recommends that the dialogue with partners should seek to put more emphasis on strategic issues. This includes efforts by the NPA to highlight issues where it can provide added value beyond management and disbursement of funds. The NPA should consult with partners in the development and assessment of NPA country strategies.

12: The team noted that NPA offices visited have an uneven approach to how they can contribute to the NPA's political work in Norway. The team recommends that the NPA offices put more emphasis on engaging with Norwegian embassies and institutions in programme countries. Added attention should be devoted to more systematic monitoring and reporting on the activities and role of Norwegian companies and interests in priority areas.

Recommendations: Management

13: The NPA manages a large programme. In some countries the programme may also be too big with too many partners. The team noted that expansion of countries and partners tend to occur because of available funds and demands on the ground. Not sufficient attention is paid, however, to the NPA's own capacity to deliver. The operational and personnel constraints should have a bearing not only on the decision whether or not to expand, but also of the type of expansion that is feasible. In some countries the programme and the partnership may benefit from a reduction in the number of partners.

14: The NPA places heavy emphasis on partnerships with civil society actors and on the need to support democratisation and a fair distribution of resources. This stance requires politically savvy staff with strong analytical skills and ability to design strategies for partnerships and interventions in politicised environments, be they repressive or democratic. The NPA needs to put much emphasis on this aspect when recruiting country directors and/or to ensure that the combined skills of geographical advisors at HQ and staff at the country office are sufficient to

run with these tasks. Meetings and workshops of NPA staff from related countries (meeting at e.g. a regional level) will also be important instruments for strengthening capacities.

15: The NPA's political work in Norway must be made more effective by aligning ambitions and priorities with available staff resources. The current strategy document is far too ambitious. The team welcomes the recent efforts to focus more on Norwegian economic interests and expansion in the South, and would like to see even sharper attention to such issues, including the more systematic use of country offices.

Annexes

1: Cambodia

Introduction

The Kingdom of Cambodia has a population of nearly 15 million and a GNI per capita of around USD 600 (2008). It has achieved impressive economic growth rates and made strides in rebuilding economic, social and political infrastructure after genocide and wars. Despite significant gains the country remains one of the poorest in the region. Some 30-35% of the population live below the national poverty line. About 90% of the poor live in rural areas.

The majority of the labour force work in the rural areas and engage in agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Poverty reduction through land reform is a priority of the government and receives substantial funding from major multilateral and bilateral donor agencies active in the country. Land tenure security for the poor and vulnerable has been a major challenge. This has been a result of a complex legal framework, lack of official titling, land grabbing and the granting of land concessions to private developers. Common property resources such as forestry and fishery have been sold, legally and illegally, for private use as concessions, restricting access to the benefits of natural resources by the rural poor. In urban areas, especially in Phnom Penh, marginalised communities have been badly affected by development projects and housing evictions.¹⁹

Forests remain Cambodia's most valuable natural resource, but recent explorations suggest that extractive industries – oil, gas and mining – will emerge as major new sources of revenue. Recent years have also seen substantial growth in textiles and garments industries, mainly for export to the US. The 2009 recession led to a collapse in garments exports and tens of thousands of job losses among factory workers. Garments are Cambodia's main export earner and the country is ranked among the world's top 20 clothing exporters.

Cambodia is a constitutional multi-party democracy but the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has tightened its grips on political power. The current Prime Minister has been in power since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime. Following the 2008 election the CPP controls more than two-thirds of the lower house in the National Assembly. The party's poll victories and the CPP's harsh treatment of its opponents have caused growing concern that the country is becoming a *de facto* one-party state with few checks on the executive branch of government. The planned introduction of an NGO law is expected to put further constraints on civil society organisations. On the other hand, political reform such as the decentralisation policies following the 2002 establishment of Commune Councils offers new space and opportunities for interaction between local authorities and civil society organisations.

Civil society and foreign NGOs

Civil society has always been present in many forms in Cambodia, but the emergence of NGOs is a recent phenomenon. It began in the 1979–1982 period when a handful of international NGOs initiated humanitarian and emergency operations both inside Cambodia and in border camps across the Thai-Cambodian border. From 1988 onwards increased bilateral funding for humanitarian funding was channelled through international NGOs, many of whom moved from the border areas to work inside the country. Multi- and bilateral donors often used such NGOs as substitutes for public Cambodian institutions. This was, however, also the beginning of a process whereby international NGOs started to change their roles, giving more emphasis to working with local partners and with communities, including the training of Cambodian counterparts.

¹⁹ See more on the Cambodia context in the Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report Cambodia November 2010* (London: EIU 2010) and the *Parallel Report on Cambodia 2009*, submitted by the NGO Working Group, a coalition of Cambodian civil society organisations, to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, April 2009 (unpublished).

As from 1992 with the reintegration of Cambodia into the world community and the return of many Cambodians from abroad, local NGOs began to emerge and soon mushroomed. This was largely a result of donor funding and the need to implement donor agendas. Donor agencies also sought to facilitate NGO participation at consultative meetings between donors and the government and in donor/government working groups. Currently (2009) there are more than 330 international NGOs in Cambodia and nearly 1500 local NGOs – a dramatic increase from 1991 when the first local NGO was established. However, while nearly all of the registered international NGOs are active less than half of the local NGOs are believed to be active at present.²⁰

It is estimated that about 70% of the NGOs are engaged in service delivery while some 7% have advocacy as a declared objective in their mandate. Agriculture (13%), health (13%) and education (12%) are the top three sectors in which local and international NGOs implement programmes. A large proportion of total NGO disbursements (39%) are used to implement public health programmes. Total disbursements for other major programme areas include rural development (19%), social and community development (18%), and education (13%). In 2009, programmes implemented and managed by NGOs accounted for an estimated 20% of the nearly USD 1 billion disbursed to Cambodia as official development assistance. A study from 2006 reported that NGOs employ a total of 24,931 people, of whom 1,196 were believed to be international staff.

There are many national and – to some extent – provincial networks and NGO coalitions which may help to facilitate harmonisation, capacity development and common civil society positions and strategies for actions. The three most important national NGO umbrella bodies are the *NGO Forum on Cambodia* which has a strong focus on land and natural resources as well as development policy and aid effectiveness issues; the *Cooperation Committee for Cambodia* which addresses aid effectiveness, the role of NGOs, governance issues in the civil society sector and produces regular directories and status reports on the NGO sector; and *Medicam* which brings together the NGOs in the health sector. These three bodies also represent the NGOs in the various forums and technical working groups that bring together the government and the donor community. In addition to these three there are a number of smaller sector coordinating bodies.

Norway and Cambodia

Norway's engagement in Cambodia is limited. There is limited economic cooperation and political dialogue and no bilateral aid programme. Norad provides some technical and legal assistance under the "oil for development" programme. Norfund has recently made several investments and loans, mainly in micro-credit institutions. Other aid-funded projects include Save the Children which has a country programme and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) which has a project with the Building Workers' Union.

The NPA in Cambodia

The NPA's Cambodia programme originated in the early 1990s with humanitarian relief operations (mainly linked to refugees and repatriation) and with the first deployment of de-miners under UN auspices in the north-western part of the country. The NPA has provided financial and technical assistance to the Cambodian Mine Action Centre since 1993.

A coherent development programme only materialised in the last five years and the phasing out of the service-oriented projects (a legacy of humanitarian work from the 1990s). In 2010 the NPA country office has a budget for the development programme of about NOK 6.5 million (funded through the Norad framework agreement and a small contribution from the "Oil for Development" programme). The 2008 application includes an 8-page document which summarises objectives, intended activities and presents partners. A main effort is to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors. The NPA's main added value is listed as providing strategic advice through dialogue, and on strengthening technical capacities.

The 2008 document stated that NPA had 12 current and intended partners in the country. The NPA has since expanded the number of its partners and to more than 20 partners currently (2010). Each of them is profiled in the section below. They are all active in the NPA's priority areas of democratisation and the rights to land and natural resources. The programme also includes specific efforts to build capacities of NGOs and other civil society organisations. Gender issues are addressed both through specific projects and as a cross-cutting issue.

²⁰ These figures are based on official registration and are derived from Jane Bañes-Ockelford, *Reflections, Challenges and Choices. 2010 Review of NGO Sector in Cambodia*, Phnom Penh, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia 2010. See also Kristen Rasmussen, *NGO Contributions to Cambodia's Development 2004 – 2009, A Rapid Assessment*, Phnom Penh, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia 2010.

The team found it useful – given the large number of partners active in a range of areas – to make a further sub-division. Partners focusing on land and natural resources may be classified in three categories: rural development and land rights issues; urban development and housing; and extractive industries. Democratisation can also be sub-divided into three categories: elections, political freedom and human rights; decentralisation; and civil society support.

Several observations can be made from the list of partners and the partner profile below. One is that there is concentration on the north-western provinces both with regard to land and natural resources and democratisation (especially related to decentralisation).

Furthermore, there is heavy emphasis on gender issues and the targeting of women in several of the sub-themes, perhaps especially in decentralisation. This has been reinforced with the “Women can do it” project which has held three training workshops since 2008 (the first two with AMARA and COMFREL, the third in 2010 which also included participants from Banteay Srey).

Third, most partners are new. Only five of the current partners have a history as partners before 2006 and the majority (12) have become partners in the current programme period. All partners have one-year contracts.

Fourth, nearly all partners are NGOs. Some are large and national with big secretariats while others are small and confined to one geographical area. Many of the supported NGOs operate programmes initiated by international NGOs which have since become localised and - but not always - run by Cambodians.

The NPA country office is considering expanding its work to include the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country. It is felt that land conflicts in these areas are politically more important. Some of the existing partners have projects in these areas, but work is in progress to identify potential new partners in these areas. This may require that other areas or themes be scaled down and/or phased out, such as – possibly – human rights.

The Cambodia programme was originally part of the regional Southeast Asia programme (with Phnom Penh serving as the regional office). In 2010, the regional programme was discontinued and replaced by separate country programmes in Cambodia programme and Myanmar, and with the mine action programme expanding into Vietnam and Laos. The country office in Phnom Penh has the responsibility for both the development and the mine action programmes in Cambodia. The NPA is currently exploring the possibility of expanding the development programme into Vietnam.

The Cambodia programme is managed by the country director, three programme coordinators and financial and administrative support staff. There is currently no programme manager (the current CD was the former programme manager).

Partners

The presentation of the 21 NPA partners below are based on interviews with 11 of the partners and with the NPA office staff, the reading of project documents and contracts and consultation – if available – of websites of the organisations as well as the 2010 edition of the NGO directories from the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia.²¹

The figures below of support from the NPA to partners are – unless stated otherways - the disbursed 2010 amounts.

LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE RIGHTS (14 partners, USD 450,000)

Rural development and land rights (8 partners, USD 269,000)

The NGO Forum on Cambodia

The NGO Forum was established in 1987 as a coordinating body and network mainly for international NGOs, and has developed into a strong organisation with a secretariat staff of about 35 and over 85 members, mostly

²¹ See especially *Directory of Cambodian Non-Governmental Organizations 2010-2011* (Phnom Penh: Cooperation Committee for Cambodia 2010) and *Directory of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Cambodia 2009-2010*, (Phnom Penh: Cooperation Committee for Cambodia 2010).

local NGOs but also 33 international NGOs, including the NPA. Its purpose is information sharing, debate and advocacy on priority issues affecting Cambodia's development. All NGO Forum projects seek to build NGO cooperation for advocacy. The projects fall in three broad categories: the environment; land and livelihoods; and development policy. It has emerged as a main umbrella body – together with the CCC and Medicam – representing civil society in forums and as a coordination mechanism vis-à-vis the authorities and donor agencies relating to poverty reduction strategies and aid effectiveness issues.

The Forum has been an NPA partner since 2003. The current grant is about USD 35,000 and is earmarked for advocacy related to land issues. The NPA provides *de facto* core funding to the Forum's land issues programme. There are two other donors to this programme.

Kampear Aphivath & Bandos Bandal – KABB

KABB is an NGO established in 2001 which works in the Battambang province. It seeks to help local communities and strengthen their ability to claim their land rights, reduce loss of land and to strengthen the rights and roles of women. It has a staff of six.

KABB became an NPA partner in 2007. The current grant is USD 20,000 to a project which seeks to help local communities in the Koah Krator district to manage and develop their land in order to improve their livelihoods.

Community Peace Building Network – CPN

The CPN is a network of community-based advocacy groups, currently in 24 provinces. They assist communities affected by land developments and facilitates awareness-raising and popular mobilisation. It originated from communities affected by evictions, land grabbing and unfair distribution of natural resources and supported by international NGOs active in non-violence and humanitarian assistance. The CPN is currently provided with technical assistance from the international NGO Cord (acting as its legal entity). Other NGOs act as managing partners for different projects. The CPN seeks to further institutionalise itself in 2010, including through the establishment of a national assembly to improve co-operation between the networks of grassroots organisations in the different provinces.

The CPN is a new partner for the NPA. The 2010 grant is USD 33,000.

Ponlok Khmer – PKH

The PKH is an NGO established in 2005 to assist the indigenous communities of the Preah Vihear province, especially with a view to strengthening their advocacy capacity to protect and claim their land and resource rights; to promote and revitalise indigenous knowledge and skills; and to assist them in improving their livelihoods. The PKH has a staff of about 15, a head office in Phnom Penh and a branch office in the province. The PKH currently has four different projects funded by five donors.

The PKH became an NPA partner in mid-2009. It currently receives some USD 27,000 to a project supporting indigenous community advocacy and network activities in three districts in the province. The project is jointly funded with Trocaire.

Children Development Association – CDA

The CDA is a local NGO working in the north-western province of Oddar Meanchey. It works in the rural forest areas of the province and seeks to improve the living conditions of rural communities through sustainable management of forest resources. The land concessions, clearing of forests for sugarcane and palm oil production together with logging are major challenges for the local communities. The CDA was established in 2000 and has a staff of 11.

The CDA became an NPA partner in 2009. The current grant is USD 29,000 for activities to build the capacities of local communities, to network between communities and to improve the livelihoods of targeted families.

Srer Khmer

Srer Khmer originated as a FAO programme in 1997. When that programme came to an end in 2001, expatriates and local staff established Srer Khmer, *Field of Cambodia*, as an NGO in 2002. It is dedicated to the support of

sustainable socio-economic development through research, training, education and community development by promoting participatory discovery learning approaches, farmer-led activities, farmer networking, sustainable agriculture, and natural resource management.

Srer Khmer has taken the principles of FAO's farmer field schools training, and strengthened them for implementation on a more comprehensive and holistic platform of farmer-led activities that link social, environmental, economic, and production aspects to its programmes. It is active in 13 provinces. It has a staff of 35 professionals and a network of trained and certified farmer trainers at the provincial, commune, and village levels which is called upon for providing training at their respective communities and beyond.

Srer Khmer has been an NPA partner since 2001, beginning with support to farmers on demined land through support from the mine action programme. The NPA is currently one of ten donors with a grant of USD 61,000. The NPA funds are channelled to a livelihood project in the Battambang and Banteay provinces which involves facilitating co-operation with advocacy NGOs active in these two provinces.

Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia – Vigilance

Vigilance was established in 1992 as an NGO dedicated to eliminating human rights violations through increasing awareness and educating people on their basic rights in order to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Since 2005 the focus has shifted to economic, social and cultural rights with a main emphasis on land and natural resources.

Currently Vigilance has three donors. The NPA became a partner in 2007. The current grant is USD 34,000 for activities related to access to and control of natural resources.

Bridges Across Borders Cambodia – BABC

Bridges Across Borders Cambodia began as the Cambodia Country Programme of the international organisation Bridges Across Borders in 2003. The BABC became an independent organisation in March 2010. In recent years, the BABC has focused on land and housing rights and have helped to elevate the issue of forced evictions and land-grabbing in Cambodia.

The BABC has also been engaged in efforts to support human rights defenders and expand access to justice through the development and implementation of community legal education and empowerment programmes. This includes the development of a popular education curriculum on international human rights law, domestic law, and strategies that communities can employ to defend their rights in the face of forced displacement. Activities also include training of grassroots facilitators who are using these materials to raise awareness and support threatened communities across the country. It has a staff of 40 and 10 donors.

It became an NPA partner in 2007. The current USD 30,000 grant is for its community empowerment and a legal awareness programme.

Urban development and housing (4 partners, USD 90,000)

Housing Rights Task Force - HRTF

This is a national civil society coalition of 14 NGOs – both national and international –working on housing and anti-eviction. It was established as an initiative of UN Habitat in 2003. Its main activities include housing rights awareness and advocacy for change together with networking. Its main focus is urban and peri-urban communities in Phnom Penh and to a lesser extent Sihanoukville.

It has been an NPA partner since 2006. At present the NPA is one of four donors to the organisation. The current grant is USD 40,000.

Sahmakum Teang Tnaut – STT

The STT is a housing NGO established in 2005. It is working with poor urban communities in Phnom Penh and Kampot. The STT has two main programmes. One is the provision of technical assistance to marginalised urban communities to improve their tenure security through accurate mapping and documentation as well as assistance in urban planning. Second, it works in advocacy programmes to assist communities to increase their awareness

about housing issues and to strengthen their capacity to engage with the authorities. The STT has a main office in Phnom Penh with a staff of eight and a field office in Kampot with a staff of two.

The STT became an NPA partner in 2007. The NPA is currently one of STT's three donors. The 2010 grant is USD 26,000.

Community Managed Development Partners – CMDP

The CMDP is an NGO established in 2008 which seeks to help poor urban people in Phnom Penh and other cities to secure tenure of their accommodation and their housing rights through community mobilisation and assistance in their engagement with urban municipalities.

It became an NPA partner in 2009. The 2010 grant of USD 24,000 is for the project "Building relations to protect housing rights". The projects seek to build the capacity of the CMDP and for their advocacy work in Phnom Penh.

Young professionals

This is a new partner funded through the NPA's small grants facility. The organisation provides funding mainly for student graduates to work with poor urban communities in Phnom Penh under threat of eviction. A main purpose is to help to register their properties.

The budgeted grant in 2010 was about USD 4,000.

Extractive industries (2 partners, USD 91,000)

Cambodians for Resource Revenue Transparency – CRRT

The CRRT is an NGO coalition established by five local NGOs in 2008. It seeks to be an agent of constructive engagement with the government and the private sector to help ensure that revenues from extractive industries are equitably and transparently managed in a way that is understood by the general public.

The NPA has been a main donor since the beginning. The current grant is USD 55,000. The CRRT has also received support from the "Oil for Development" programme for participation in training courses run by Petrad in Stavanger.

Development and Partnership in Action – DPA

The DPA was established as a local NGO in 2006 but originated in 1979 with relief work carried out by European and North American Catholic organisations. The original focus was infrastructure and basic needs, but it gradually shifted to integrated community development projects. Since the 1990s, the emphasis has been on supporting and responding to the needs of a rapidly growing local NGO community which eventually led to the formation of the DPA. It has a staff of nearly 60.

The DPA has attempted to increase the capacity of its staff, partners and target groups through a series of training sessions, workshops and advocacy support in dealing with issues of land, logging and mining. The DPA works directly in four provinces through its own staff, and in six additional provinces through other NGOs and community-based organisations.

It became a new NPA partner in 2010 with a budgeted support of USD 36,000 for development and education programmes which emphasise advocacy, including social and environmental impacts of extractive industries. Funding is mainly provided for the Extractive Industry Social and Environmental Impact Network (EISEI) which is hosted by the DPA. The network engages in communication, knowledge-sharing and facilitates dialogue between communities, community organisations, government ministries and mining companies on extractive industry issues. The NPA is one of four donors to this DPA programme area, but the sole donor to the EISEI network.

DEMOCRATISATION (7 partners, USD 318,000)

Elections, political freedom and human rights (3 partners, USD 150,000)

The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia – COMFREL

COMFREL is an NGO founded in 1995 with the aim “to promote democracy through democratic elections, reforms and citizens’ rights towards full and active participation focused to bring maximum benefits to electorate.” In 2003, COMFREL expanded its mission beyond election observation to incorporate efforts directed towards expanding opportunities between elections for citizens’ influence and active participation in decision-making and democratic governance.

COMFREL is a large organisation with a secretariat of more than 50 people (of whom 30 are at the head office), ten member organisations (other NGOs active in the area) and a presence in all provinces.

The NPA has been supporting COMFREL since 2003. The current grant – USD 85,000 – is core funding to its project “strengthening citizens participation in decision-making and democratic governance”. In addition, COMFREL is supported through the NPA’s “Women can do it” project.

Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee – CHRAC

The CHRAC is an umbrella NGO established in 1994, currently with 23 human rights organisations as members. It seeks to provide a strong common voice in human rights interventions and works in three broad areas. One is monitoring and investigation of serious human rights violations referred to them by member organisations. The second is legal and judicial reform and the third a project on the Khmer Rouge Tribunal dealing with outreach, victim participation and monitoring. The CHRAC has a secretariat of ten and are funded by six donors.

The CHRAC became an NPA partner in late 2008 and is currently provided with a grant of USD 45,000 for its work on investigation and advocacy related to serious human rights violations.

Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights – LICADHO

LICADHO is an NGO established in 1992 by returning Cambodian human rights activists. It addresses serious human rights abuses, with initial emphasis on monitoring rights violations, and provide human rights training, and medical care to prisoners and victims of human rights violations. This NGO expanded in 1994 with the addition of the Women’s Rights and Children’s Rights offices. Subsequently, it established facilities offering rehabilitation services to victims of torture. It has a staff of 130 in Phnom Penh and 12 provincial offices.

LICADHO became an NPA partner in 2010 with a grant of USD 20,000 for a variety of activities linked to international human rights day, the international children’s day, support to victims, and more.

Decentralisation (2 partners, USD 113,000)

The Cambodian Women’s Network for Development – AMARA

AMARA was established as an NGO in 1994. It is based and works mainly in the Battambang district. Its aim is to strengthen the leadership qualities of local women leaders, to empower women for equal participation with men and for gender mainstreaming, and to build leadership capacity for engagement between citizens and the elected commune councillors and improved commune governance. It has a staff compliment of 24 and is funded by three donors.

AMARA became an NPA partner in 2001. The NPA is the main donor and is currently providing USD 83,000 for two of the three main training and advocacy programmes in Battambang.

Banteay Srey - BS

The BS – *Citadel of Women* – originated 19 years ago as a project of an Australian NGO. It is working with rural communities in Battambang and Siem Reap provinces with the aim of empowering vulnerable women to improve their political, economic and social situation. In the early days the main focus was on a needs-based community development approach, but since 2003 the BS has moved to a rights-based approach. It supports community women leaders at village, commune and district levels in order for them to advocate for their rights. This has included training in leadership and management skills and support to village working groups, gender

peace networks and community facilitators. It has a staff of 24 of which 16 works in Siem Reap, eight in Battambang and four at the Phnom Penh head office.

The BS became an NPA partner in 2009. The NPA currently provides USD 30,000 to the women's empowerment and leadership building project.

Civil society (2 partners, USD 55,000)

Star Kampuchea

Star Kampuchea was established in 1997 and is dedicated to promoting democracy and reducing poverty by strengthening civil society, especially at the provincial level and in rural areas. Star Kampuchea has established close cooperation with 39 officially affiliated NGOs in 11 provinces and coordinates four provincial networks of NGOs, which are working on advocacy issues at the grassroots level. It coordinates the advocacy team, a group of representatives from 27 cooperating organisations. Star Kampuchea also addresses the labour movement. Star Kampuchea currently runs three programmes: the Advocacy Action Programme, the Advocacy Building Programme, the Worker's Right Programme and Volunteer Action for Cambodia. It has a staff compliment of 24, a budget of nearly USD 600,000 and 11 donors.

The NPA has supported Star Kampuchea and its advocacy work with provincial networks since 2005. The current grant is USD 30,000.

Cooperation Committee for Cambodia – CCC

The CCC is a large association of NGOs with a current membership of 81 international and 39 local NGOs. It was established as a coordinating body by international NGOs in 1990. It seeks to represent the voice of NGOs vis-à-vis the government and the donor community. Currently, it has eight projects funded by 21 different donors. The project activities include enhancing NGO good governance; developing the capacities of NGOs; creating space for dialogue; and facilitating NGO engagement in discussions about aid effectiveness. It has a staff of 32.

The NPA became a member of the CCC in 1996. Funding has been provided since 2009. The current grant is about USD 26,000, mainly linked to a project related to NGO mobilisation and the planned new NGO law.

Issues

The development programme in Cambodia is well aligned with the international strategy and its focus on land rights and democratisation. The NPA is supporting a wide variety of NGOs engaging in highly relevant advocacy and mobilisation activities in the Cambodian context. Recently, the NPA has put more emphasis on establishing partnerships with organisations that work more directly at the ground (such as the Community Peacebuilding Network and Ponlok Khmer).

The international strategy document was judged by the NPA staff to be a useful reference document, but it appears to have been used mainly as a way of ensuring that selection of partners, projects and activities are within the mandate. The team has the impression that the NPA has made great efforts to adapt to local conditions in order to maximise achievements and results. In the case of rural development and land rights, for example, the NPA supports a major NGO (Srer Khmer) which mainly does extension work with rural farmers, but has also helped to facilitate co-operation with advocacy NGOs supported by the NPA and which are active in the same areas. This appears to have been mutually beneficial.

There is a “structural tension” between, on the one hand, development work and service delivery, and, on the other, political work and advocacy. The NPA support in Cambodia has in most cases mainly targeted advocacy work, but several – most – partners (especially those working on land issues and in rural areas) also do development work and see this as an essential ingredient and as a precondition for their ability to work politically. Some NPA funds are also allowed to be used for this purpose.

The team notes that the country programme has a particularly large number of partners or recipients of NPA funds. They also cover many sub-areas. The expansion and selection of partners may easily be justified if the

purpose is to ensure visibility and presence in relevant areas, but the team feels that this needs to be balanced against other objectives. Support to change agents and organisational strengthening of partners may benefit from a sharpening of the focus.

The number of partnerships and grant recipients takes us to another issue emerging from the Cambodia case. What does partnerships and strategic partners entail for the NPA in Cambodia?

There is a unanimous view among those interviewed that the NPA is a good donor partner. The NPA is not pushy and does not engage in micro management. The NPA office is flexible, supportive and tries to accommodate wishes and needs of the grant recipients. There is, however, one important qualification to this positive assessment: the NPA provides only one-year grants and not provide core funding to its partners. As one of the main NGOs receiving financial support from the NPA put it to the team: “NPA is the only donor among our old donors that does not provide long-term core funding”. The NPA office does believe that the current technical and legal regulations and funding arrangements between the head office and the external office do not make multi-year contracts possible. The NPA has however, in some cases entered into joint funding arrangements and contributed to basket funding of specific projects or programmes implemented by partners.

The NPA feels that only a handful of the current grant recipients – perhaps 4 to 6 – would be able to receive multi-year funding as this would require that the potential partner has a proper strategic plan and an ability to focus on results. This requirement would typically be satisfied by only a few of the main and bigger NGOs. The main partners have historically tended to be the stronger NGOs – often supported by a range of international NGOs – but there has been increased emphasis on identifying and selecting community-based NGOs working directly with grassroots organisations and local communities. The NPA sees this as dilemma. The main challenge is to help less well established local organisations with less capacity to enable them to grow and develop. Accepting only organisations as partners who meet certain criteria at the outset will push the NPA into working only with the more established local organisations, and prevent it from partnering with smaller and relatively new organisations and initiatives. The NPA office stresses the importance of being able to work with both types of organisation. Stronger NGOs that are able to enter into supportive relationships with community-based organisations are considered “strategic partners”.

NPA support to organisational development is mainly addressing the internal strengthening of the partners with emphasis on financial management and reporting. For stronger partners more attention is given to planning and implementation. The Cambodia office does not provide direct organisational support itself, but relies on other NGOs or consultants to deliver this input. There are a number of specialised NGOs in Cambodia – such as Star Kampuchea and Cooperation Committee for Cambodia – with skills in providing organisational support to other and smaller NGOs, both in the provinces and at the national level. The NPA is supporting several initiatives through such organisations. NPA support to a grassroots organisation – Community Peace Building Network – is channelled through a small NGO specialising in this type of work.

The NPA office has regular contact with all partners through visits and informal dialogue. The partners are not brought together in special “NPA networks”, but organise workshops on how to mainstream and work with gender issues. Through the “Women can do it” project the NPA office also holds joint workshops for partners dealing with gender issues.

The political work of the NPA office is confined to selecting and supporting partners. The office in Phnom Penh sees few opportunities to go further given the limited Norwegian engagement in Cambodia. With a Norwegian embassy and an official aid programme the office believes it would have been possible to do more, especially using the resources and influence of a Norwegian mission to support NPA work in the country. The NPA has not developed any position paper or country strategy document guiding their work in the country. There appears to be limited communication from partners to the NPA beyond what is related to the NPA support provided. Many of the newer partners also had limited knowledge of what else the NPA was doing in the country.

The NPA’s mine action programme has a long history in Cambodia and is now expanding in other Southeast Asian countries (Laos and Vietnam). The NPA office would like to see more integration and cooperation between development work and the mine action programme. Partly for practical reasons (they are managed by the same office in Phnom Penh and the country director represents both in relation to the authorities, registration and so on), but also because of potential mutual benefits relating to land development. In addition it provides a channel for communication with authorities.

2: Ecuador

Introduction

The Republic of Ecuador has a population of nearly 14 million and a GNI per capita of USD 3,640 (2008), far above Ethiopia (USD 280) and Cambodia (USD 600). While it has enjoyed rapid economic growth in the last decade, poverty is widespread and economic inequalities like in most other South American countries are very pronounced. The official level of poverty is estimated at 35% of the population living on less than USD 2 a day (at 1985 prices). This is a significant reduction from 46% in 2000. Other social indicators also improved in this period and ensured that Ecuador is now in the “high human development” category in the Human Development Index (and ahead of neighbouring countries Peru and Colombia). Inequality remains stark, however and has remained largely unchanged in the past decade with 20% of the population earning 55% of the income.

Ecuador is ethnically a very diverse country. An estimated one-quarter of the population (or between 15 and 35% depending upon definition and the basis of estimates) belong to one of the indigenous peoples. Most of the population has a mixed European-indigenous heritage. There is also a group of black people numbering up to half a million descending from slaves of African origin. The country is divided into three ecological regions with distinct political cultures and dynamics: the coast (including the Galapagos Islands); the Andean highlands; and the sparsely populated Amazon region to the east.

Agriculture has traditionally been the main pillar of the economy, but the sector has been in decline in recent years. Ecuador remains the world’s leading banana exporter with shrimp cultivation as the second export earner in the agricultural sector. An estimated one-quarter of the population depends on agriculture for its livelihood. Extractive industries have emerged as the main economic sector accounting for the bulk of export income and government revenue. It has since the early 1970s been dominated by oil exploration. The predominance of primary commodities exports makes the economy very vulnerable to external shocks.

Ecuador has been a multiparty constitutional democracy since 1979, but political instability has been a persistent characteristic of the system. Widespread social unrest coupled with fragile and highly politicised public institutions have paralysed and fragmented politics in the country. Against the background of a failed neo-liberal economic policy and social revolt, a new president, Rafael Correa, was elected in 2006 on a radical political platform promising a stronger state in economic management and regulation of the economy, a new constitution and an alliance with radical regimes in other South American countries through regional cooperation and integration. Correa promised a new constitution to make a break with the past and end the legacy of oligarchic rule. The constitution was adopted following a referendum in 2008. The President was re-elected in 2009 while his political movement – *Alianza Pais* – controls 53 out of 124 seats in Parliament.

The political crisis of late September 2010 – when the President was briefly held hostage by rebel police officers – has exposed the vulnerability of Ecuadorian democracy. While President Correa’s position was strengthened in the immediate aftermath of the crisis there are doubts about the loyalty of his support base as well as the future role of the security forces. In the face of severe economic difficulties the Correa government could be exposed to rising popular unrest and large-scale mobilisation similar to those that have previously been successful in extracting concessions from weakened governments, even in toppling them. One main source of friction in the alliance behind the President is the tension between those who want the state to speed up extraction of natural resources to secure government revenue and those calling for a more cautious approach to secure the interests of the indigenous peoples and the environmentalists. President Correa also needs to attend to the demands of the military which may have gained renewed political influence. The three previous, democratically elected presidents were all toppled with the consent of the army.

Civil Society and the indigenous movement

Ecuador has a relatively large, diverse and active civil society.²² The formation of the first peasants unions in the 1920s and 1930s marked the beginning of the organisation of indigenous movement. The organisations representing the indigenous movement are considered to be the strongest in Latin America. The first labour unions were formed in the 1930s. Charitable and voluntary organisations that provided services to the poor and vulnerable emerged in Quito and Guayaquil in the first decades of the twentieth century and then spread to other urban centres. Generally they were closely linked to the Catholic Church or to the economic elite..

In the 1950s, charitable organisations evolved into developmental NGOs. Many of these remained linked to the Catholic Church, worked in rural areas with indigenous populations during the agrarian reform process, and promoted rural development through technical assistance. A number of NGOs of the 1950s specialised in assistance to the disabled, family planning, and education.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the broadening of the NGO agenda. Think-tanks and social action research centres were formed which had an influence on burgeoning leftist political movements. The 1964 agrarian reform triggered the formation of several peasant organisations which demanded land rights. Industrialisation and the emergence of an international environmental movement gave rise to the first NGOs focused on urban development and the environment. The first women's NGOs were created at the end of the 1970s. The expansion of public services (education, health, water, and irrigation) during this period also led to the formation of users' associations such as parent, teachers, and students associations; housing, water, and irrigation associations; as well as neighbourhood associations.

In the 1980s the NGO sector grew significantly, encouraged by the new 1979 Constitution's guarantee of basic liberties. Many of these NGOs were dedicated to civil, political, and cultural rights, or indigenous peoples, gender equity, and the environment. The new Constitution also transformed state-civic relations by expanding voting rights to illiterates and securing citizenship for rural dwellers and indigenous people. This trend favoured the emergence of populist parties and social movements as channels for more effective representation of citizen interests.

In 1986, CONAIE (*Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities in Ecuador*) was created as the first national indigenous organisation spearheading the indigenous movement in the 1990s. Indigenous organisations in Ecuador date back to the first half of the twentieth century with the formation of peasant unions. An indigenous movement emerged when indigenous organisations shifted from operating at the grassroots level to form national networks. CONAIE focuses on territorial integrity and access to land as well as indigenous people's economic, political, and cultural rights. It is today the largest indigenous federation in the country. CONAIE has been an important player in the governance agenda in Ecuador, being credited for forging the indigenous movement, creating alliances with other socio-political groups, and developing participatory mechanisms at the local level. CONAIE is an alliance of organisations representing the three indigenous peoples and nationalities in the coast, the Amazon and the highlands. The indigenous movement in the highlands, organised in ECUARUNARI, is by far the strongest of the three.

In the 1990s a new relationship between the state and civil society took root as civil society actors engaged proactively in the governance arena. In 1996, intense social mobilisations took place in response to the deterioration of social and economic conditions, rampant government corruption, and the deepening crisis of representation. In 1997 the President was impeached. As a result, a National Constituent Assembly was called to draft a new Constitution. For the first time in Ecuador's history, civil society actors played a role in drafting the constitution and in broadening the constitutional base to include indigenous, women's, children's and youth rights.

Popular mobilisation and the alliance of social movements representing the indigenous peoples, peasants and trade unions played an important role in the dramatic political developments in Ecuador since the late 1990s, culminating with the election of Correa as President in 2006 and the adoption of a new Constitution in 2008. However, the alliance has since been weakened and is disintegrating with sharp divisions between those who

²² Data on civil society is largely derived from the 2006 CIVICUS study - Fernando Bustamante, Lucía Durán and Ana Cristina Andreotti, *Ecuador's civil society, "An efficient civil society going beyond its weaknesses"*. *Ecuador's civil society index final report*, Quito: Fundación Esquel and CIVICUS -World Alliance for Citizen Participation 2006 (http://www.civicus.org/new/media/CSI_Ecuador_Country_Report.pdf); the 2007 World Bank study, *Civil Society's Role in the Governance Agenda in Ecuador: Assessing Opportunities and Constraints*, Washington D. C.: Social Development Papers, Participation and Civic Engagement, Paper No. 105, June 2007 (<http://vle.worldbank.org/bnpp/files/TF053665.pdf>); and interviews by the team.

want to work with the new government in the implementation of the Constitution and those – including CONAIE – who want to break the ties and dialogue with the government.

International NGOs and development aid

Official development assistance to Ecuador amounted to nearly USD 820 million in the 2007–2009 period.²³ In comparison, remittances from the Ecuadorian Diaspora – probably numbering more than one million people with a main concentration in the US, Spain and Italy – amounted to over USD 3 billion in 2009. Some 70% of development aid was channelled through bilateral and multilateral channels. Nearly USD 240 million was channelled through foreign and international NGOs. Over 140 such NGOs are registered with the government. However, the “top ten” NGOs account for nearly 60% of these funds. The dominant NGOs are mostly from the US (such as World Vision, Care and Plan) and to some extent from Spain.

There are no statistics available about the kind of projects these NGOs support (beyond the sectors in which they are involved where social development, health and education predominate). The bulk of the funds, however, are directed at service delivery.

Norway and Ecuador

There is limited bilateral economic and political co-operation between Norway and Ecuador. The main political and aid-related engagement has centred on assistance from Norway under the “oil for development” programme and the NPA’s Ecuador programme. There are also long-standing development projects implemented by Lutheran organisations (The Mission Alliance and Normisjon). The Rainforest Foundation – with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the REDD initiative – has several projects in the Amazon region related to indigenous peoples. They are mainly implemented through a major NGO (*Pachamama*) and local consultants.

The NPA in Ecuador

The NPA’s work in Ecuador originated in 1985 with support to indigenous organisations. The first partner was an organisation in the Cañar province: the UPCCC (the provincial union of Cañar communities and cooperatives) which remained a partner until 2000, and returned as partner again as from 2008 (see below). The focus on indigenous peoples has prevailed to date, but the emphasis and type of support have shifted. Initially, there was stronger emphasis on support for service delivery and development projects implemented by partners (including humanitarian relief operations following the 1987 earthquake). Much support also went to NGOs.

There has been a gradual change both in the selection of partners and in the type of support provided. The focus on indigenous peoples has been retained, but most of the support is now provided directly to social movements and not to NGOs (of the current 11 partners only 2 can be classified as NGOs). Funding is also provided for “political” or advocacy work with limited funding for traditional service delivery. In the current period there has been a strong focus on support to projects and activities linked to national political processes, especially to the making of the new Constitution. Support for the organisational development of partners has also been important with a main emphasis on strengthening the partners’ ability to strategise and respond to a changing political context. There is also a strong emphasis on strengthening the partners’ organisational capacity, especially related to working with members (e.g., support to national conferences) and on leadership and political training. These changes also reflect a new role of the indigenous organisations, the strengthening of the indigenous and other social movements, and the advances and achievements made.

Funding for NPA’s programmes in Latin America is in most cases only coming from the Norad grant, but in the case of Ecuador there has in the current programme period been significant funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This funding has not been directly related to the indigenous movement but has focused on peace issues on the border with Colombia (“Plan Ecuador”). The project originated in the political dialogue between Norway and Ecuador. This funding is now coming to an end.

The partners supported reflect a mix of national, provincial and local organisations, though with a current emphasis on national initiatives. This is a response to the political context and the NPA expects a shift or return to a stronger emphasis on supporting provincial and local initiatives. Four of the 11 organisations supported became partners in the current 2008–2011 period. All partners have one-year contracts only.

²³ Data on development aid and NGOs are derived from the recently established (2009) Ecuadorian Agency for Development Cooperation – AGECI and their 2010 report: *Informe de Actividades, ONG Extranjeras 2007-2009*, Quito: Agencia de Cooperación Internacional (AGECI) 2010. The report attempts to provide a full list of all foreign and international NGOs active in Ecuador.

The partners and the advocacy work supported have been concentrated on indigenous organisations in the Andean highlands and on land issues. Support to organisations in the other areas have mainly focused on peasants on the coast, peace issues in the northern border with Colombia and on political mobilisation around oil exploration in the Amazon region. Historically, the NPA has also supported women's organisations, artisan fishermen and others but this has been phased out. The number of partners has also been scaled down. The main funding for the Ecuador programme – with a current (2010) budget of NOK 8.4 million - is provided from Norad through the framework agreement with the NPA. NOK 1.5 million was provided from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the “Plan Ecuador” project.

In the latter half of 2010, the NPA developed a draft position paper on Ecuador. It states that the main partner of the NPA in Ecuador is the indigenous movement represented by CONAIE and its regional organisations. The main purpose of the NPA's Ecuador programme is:

“to support a “people’s” agenda consisting of several key issues for the country: 1) a clear opposition to neoliberalism, ... 2) a new proposal calling for an alternative state, one which is inclusive and recognizes diversity and indigenous peoples, the plurinational state, 3) a call for a new land reform and control of natural resources, (and) 4) defence of indigenous and territorial rights. ...

Hence, the programme supports:

- *Internal strengthening of (social) organisations.*
- *Strengthening indigenous and social organisations through political education*
- *Alliance building between indigenous peoples' organisations and other popular organisations.*
- *Development of proposals of various types including policy and law and varying scope (national-scale as well as regional and local proposals); on a wide array of topics such as natural resources (i.e. water, mining, hydrocarbons); agrarian reform (food sovereignty, land issues); indigenous rights; security; peace; participation among other themes.*
- *Strengthening indigenous organizations in their efforts to develop forms of self-determination in order to construct the new plurinational state.*”²⁴

The position document highlights two current forces of change in Ecuador: the incumbent government and popular and indigenous organisations. The NPA identifies a clear tension between these two forces and recognises the challenge in supporting both a progressive government in its actions for change, as well as maintaining a critical position against policies that are not part of the project for change.

The NPA primarily works through partners in Ecuador, but also seeks to maintain a separate profile and activity in relation to Norwegian politics and relations with Ecuador. Issues highlighted in the position document include:

- *“strengthening the solidarity relations through interchange and cooperation between popular organisations and the governments of Ecuador and Norway.*
- *Influence the Norwegian Government to elaborate and implement a policy to control the performance of Norwegian investments (public or private) in Ecuador.*
- *Influence the Norwegian Government to promote an association treaty Norway-Ecuador including political dialogue, cooperation and commerce, with the intention to contributing to the democratisation and national control over the resources.*
- *The Pension Fund's investment in Chevron oil company represents 0.61% of the company's capital. The Norwegian government should assume an active role as share holder and work for the company's acceptance to clean up and compensate for the human and nature damage the company was responsible for during thirty years in the Ecuadorian Amazon until 1992.*
- *Norway should learn from Ecuador regarding the idea not to explore hydrocarbon in sensitive environmental areas.”*

The Ecuador programme is part of the NPA's regional programme. An office in Quito for South America was in place in the 1998-2003 period. A country office (liaison office) was established after 2004 under the regional office in Managua. In 2008, the regional office was moved to Quito, Ecuador. The regional programme, headed by a regional director, is responsible for five country programmes in Central America and the Caribbean and four country programmes in South America in addition to a small regional programme. The Ecuador programme has one programme manager in addition to support staff. In total there are 14 positions for the whole programme (1 regional representative, 6 programme managers and 7 finance and administrative support staff).

²⁴ The quote is from p. 3 in NPA, *Position document: ECUADOR. Norwegian People's Aid's work in Ecuador. Basis and strategy for political work and public communication*, Draft 08.11.2010

Partners

This section presents all current NPA partners in Ecuador. In addition to the 11 partners listed (all referred to as “strategic” by the NPA office) seven additional partners have received funding in the 2008–2010 period (but only two in 2010). They are either old partners being phased out or small contributions to potential new partners. The term “current grant” below refers to the budgeted 2010 grant.

Indigenous Movement

Confederacion de nacionalidades indígenas del Ecuador – CONAIE

CONAIE – *The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador* – was established in 1986 as the national umbrella organisation for the 14 nationalities and 18 indigenous peoples in the country. It has 700,000 members through its three regional federations of the coast (CONAICE), the highlands (ECUARUNARI) and the Amazon (CONFENAIE). Historically CONAIE has had strong mobilisation capacity and has been a major social force in fighting neo-liberal policies and in promoting the rights of indigenous peoples. It has also helped to build alliances with other social movements, such as trade unions.

CONAIE helped to establish a political wing in 1996 with the formation of the *Pachakutik* party. CONAIE has struggled with identifying a proper political strategy since the adoption of the new Constitution in 2008 (it played a peripheral role during the constitutional process). In 2008, it cut off all dialogue and cooperation with the Correa government. The alliance with other movements has disintegrated.

CONAIE became an NPA partner in 1996. The main NPA support in the current 2008–2010 period has revolved around support to organisational development and capacity development, primarily with a focus on support to interaction between leadership and members; strategy development; and activities focusing on the 2008 Constitutional Assembly. USD 20,000 was budgeted as the NPA’s contribution in 2010 (compared to 95,000 in 2009 and 124,000 in 2008). The current CONAIE leadership is considered very weak and is struggling to define a role for CONAIE in a rapidly changing political context.

Confederacion de los pueblos de la nacionalidad kichwa del Ecuador – ECUARUNARI

ECUARUNARI – *the Confederation of the Kichwa peoples of Ecuador* – is organising 18 indigenous peoples in the Sierra – the Andean highlands. It was formed in 1972 and is by far the strongest of the three regional federations which constitutes CONAIE. It was also instrumental in establishing CONAIE. It has 250,000 members and brings together 13 organisations from 11 provinces.

It draws inspiration from the communist movement and the Cuban Revolution, liberation theology as well as home-grown adaptation through indigenous intellectuals. It first organised and campaigned on land issues, education and respect, but gradually also incorporated an ethnic dimension through the demands for a “plurinational state”. It worked closely with the Constitutional Assembly, but is now struggling with how to engage with the Correa government – constructive dialogue or opposition?

ECUARUNARI has been an NPA partner since 1994. The current 2010 budgeted grant is nearly USD 137,000 (USD 440,000 for the 2008–2010 period). This makes the NPA by far the biggest foreign funder (in 2009 it had five other foreign donors – all NGOs from Sweden, Denmark, Spain and the US). The NPA was mainly focused on support for organisational development (such as facilitating the work in relations to the Constitutional Assembly, meetings with members and engagements with counterparts in Bolivia).

Movimiento Indigena y Campesino de Cotopaxi – MICC

The MICC – *the Indigenous and Peasant Movement of Cotopaxi* – is the organisation of the Kwicha people in the rural areas of Cotopaxi province in the central highlands. It brings together 32 municipality organisations in one of the provinces with the highest proportion of indigenous people. The MICC is a member of ECUARUNARI and CONAIE. The Pachakutik party – a MICC ally – has run the provincial government since 2000.

The MICC has been a strong social movement in the province working on land, water and education issues, but it has been weakened in recent years. This is partly caused by uneasy and sometimes tense relations with the elected authorities in the province.

The NPA has a long history of working with indigenous organisations in the province. The MICC became a partner in 1996, but was later phased out. The partnership was resuscitated in 2002 and since 2004 the MICC has been the NPA's sole focus in the province. The main activities have been organisational strengthening, especially leadership training and relations with members, but also support to the establishment of the MICC TV channel. The current support is USD 55,000. The NPA is the main foreign donor.

Union Provincial de Comunas y Cooperativa Cañaris – UPCCC

The UPCCC – *The provincial union of Cañaris communities and cooperatives* – represents 120 indigenous organisations in the Cañar province in the highlands. It is a member of ECUARUNARI and CONAIE. It has a strong focus on land issues and education, identity and culture. It has also worked extensively on supporting cooperatives and the commercialisation of agricultural produce from the indigenous communities. The UPCCC was established in the late 1960s.

In the early 1990s, the UPCCC established a UPCCC Centre in Cañar which also housed a community centre, a clinic, a library, and an alternative food/product market. In 1994, the Centre was subject to vicious and violent anti-indigenous attacks with support from parts of the local Mestizo population. The Centre was completely destroyed and led to a crisis for the UPCCC.

The UPCCC was the NPA's first partner in Ecuador and remained a partner from 1986 until 2000. It provided financial support to, *inter alia*, the UPCCC's community centre which was destroyed in 1994. A new partnership was entered into in 2008. The NPA supports various aspects of organisational development, including leadership training and relations with members. In view of the historical legacy, the NPA also provides some support (working capital) to the UPCCC's carpentry workshop. Current funding is USD 30,000.

Pueblo Kayambi – PK

Pueblo Kayambi – *The Kayambi People* – organises 180 indigenous communities in 15 organisations – mainly in the Cayambe municipality in the Pichincha province but it also has some activities in the Napo and Imbabura provinces. It was set up in 2000 and currently has some 60,000 members. It is a member of ECUARUNARI and CONAIE.

This organisation has played a key role in organising poor indigenous communities in Cayambe. Water supply and management have been at the focus of attention – a major challenge in this area.

Pueblo Kayambi became an NPA partner in 2008. The current grant is USD 25,000. Support is mainly channelled to organisational development, predominantly leadership training and relations with members.

Escuela de Formación Política de Mujeres Indígenas “Dolores Cacuango” – EDC

The EDC – *The “Dolores Cacuango” School for Indigenous Women Leadership* – was established by ECUARUNARI in 1997 as a training institution providing non-formal political and leadership training for indigenous women. The students are coming from all indigenous organisations belonging to CONAIE, but mostly from ECUARUNARI which formally owns the EDC. Having played a key role in providing training to indigenous women, the school has become a model for similar initiatives in several other South American countries. Many of the former students are in leadership positions in the indigenous movement.

The school went through an important transformation in 2010. The EDC was expanding into formal education and is seeking to offer formal education from primary to higher education levels. It also opens up for non-formal leadership training for males (this year some 30% of the students are males). Tension developed between the academic staff and the EDC leadership which led to the new incoming leadership firing all professional staff.

The EDC has been an NPA partner since it was started, but – following the current difficulties within the EDC – the budgeted grant is just USD 5,000 (compared to USD 77,000 in 2009). The NPA provides funding for some training staff, printing of training material, workshops and more. In 2009, the NPA was largest of the three foreign NGOs supporting the EDC. *Fundacion de Cultura Indigena – KAWSAY*

Kawsay is a Quito-based NGO which acts as a think-tank on challenges facing the indigenous movement. It also runs various development projects on intercultural education, management of natural resources and more. It was established in the late 1990s by prominent indigenous intellectuals.

It became an NPA partner in 2009. The current budget grant is USD 10,000, mainly for political and leadership training.

Others

Asamblea de Unidad Cantonal de Cotacachi – AUCC

The AUCC – *The Social Forum in Cotacachi* – was established in 1996. It comprises 25 organisations with some 20,000 members in the Cotacachi municipality. It promotes local development and participatory democracy. It works with the local authority and has a formal advisory status. The Mayor also sits on its operational committee. The AUCC is considered to have made major achievements in bringing together the indigenous Kichwa people, the Mestizo population, and Afro-Ecuadorians from all parts of Cotacachi (urban, highland and subtropical areas) and to have made important contributions to limiting clientelism in local politics. The AUCC has also recorded major results in health care, education and agriculture.

The AUCC has been a formal NPA partner since 2003. The current grant is about USD 62,000. Funding is mainly provided for core administrative support to the management of their formal meetings with members, the operational committee as well as political training, advocacy work and more.

Coordinadora Nacional Campesina “Eloy Alfaro” – CNC EA

The CNC EA – *the National Peasant Coordinator “Eloy Alfaro”* – was started in 1992 as a coordinating umbrella organisation for peasant organisations, mainly in the rural coastal region. It brings together both Mestizo and indigenous peasants. Its activities have centred on peasants issues such as access to land and water. It joined CONAIE and trade unions from the public sector in establishing the Pachakutik Party in 1996, but split from that party in 2006.

The CNC EA has also become highly critical of CONAIE and is now working closely with the Correa government.

The CNC EA became an NPA partner in 2008 with a current grant of USD 25,000. The support is mainly for organisational strengthening and advocacy work related to the Constitution and its implementation.

Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos – APDH

The APDH – *The Permanent Human Rights Assembly* – is a national NGO established in 1994. It currently runs three main programmes: an educational programme on human rights; a legal aid programme; and a border programme. It is funded by international and foreign NGOs.

Its “border programme” began in 2000 as an attempt to monitor the social, economic and human rights impacts of the US military and financial support to the Colombian authorities’ fight against drugs and armed group. This had major impacts on the border areas also on the Ecuadorian side with military incursions, insecurity, displacement and refugees. The APDH helped to organise a social movement – Red Fronteriza de Paz (RFP) – bringing together nearly 100 organisations in the three northern provinces. They comprise community organisations, local authorities, youth, women, and church groups.

The NPA has worked with the APDH since 2000. The current grant is USD 80,000. All funding is provided for the border programme (“Plan Ecuador”) and the APDH’s support to the RFP. The NPA is the sole funder of this programme.

Frente de Defensa de la Amazonia – FDA

The FDA – *the Amazon Defence Front* – was established in 1994. It comprises 15 peasant and women’s organisations in addition to human rights groups and local governments in the two Amazon provinces where onshore oil production is taking place. The FDA has represented local communities in a major law suit against

Texaco. In addition, it is providing legal and advisory aid to communities affected by oil extraction and undertakes environmental monitoring. The FDA is the only social organisation from the area working on oil-related issues.

The FDA became an NPA partner in 2008. It is currently the NPA's sole partner in the Amazon region. Current support amounts to USD 44,000. Funding is provided for organisational strengthening, advocacy work and monitoring. The FDA has four donors in addition to the NPA. Moreover, the FDA has been supported through Norad's "oil for development" programme through participation in Petrad courses.

Issues

There is high compliance between the NPA's global strategy and the programme activities in Ecuador. There is a strong focus on political work and partnerships. Much of this was in place even before the adoption of the current global strategy, but the approach has been further consolidated and strengthened in the current 2008–2010 period. The main focus is on land and natural resources, the indigenous movement and partnership together with specific efforts to help strengthen the partners' political work in the evolving political dynamics of Ecuador. The relations with partners in Ecuador appear to be very good. The NPA was appreciated by everybody interviewed for its flexibility and supportive approach. The NPA was consistently mentioned as being the "best" or "among the best" donor partners. The NPA belongs to a group of 5–6 NGOs from the US, Spain and Scandinavia that has been at the forefront of providing external support to the indigenous movement.

However, the NPA is facing a number of challenges in implementing its country strategy. Some special features of the programme and its application also need to be highlighted. One is the relationship between the new progressive government and the popular forces. New tensions have emerged. This has led to both a weakening of and division within and between several of the NPA partners – especially the indigenous movement. This has put the NPA in a delicate position. It has responded by emphasising the need for continued support to partners with priority given to political dialogue, assistance in developing capacities to engage with the external environment, and so on. Several of the key partners, including CONAIE, have not been able to develop or implement projects in 2010 which are suitable for funding from the NPA. For the NPA team in Ecuador, this illustrates the limitations of a pure "rights-based" approach. It needs to be supplemented by a thorough analysis of the political context and dynamics as a basis for designing the best interventions.

Political dialogue between the NPA and its partners become particularly important in a situation where the partners struggle to develop strategies to cope with a changing political context. This requires trust between the NPA and its partners. The team is of the impression that the NPA is in an excellent position to play a constructive role in these processes, but its impact and ability to influence the process may still be limited. Many key factors and variables impacting on the capacities of social movements are beyond the control of foreign agencies and NGOs.

This is also indirectly and unintentionally illustrated through the NPA's own plans and reporting in the current period. The project documents have a strong focus on building the capacities of the partner and several expected results are identified. Good progress on most parameters was reported in 2008 and 2009. In 2010, however, there were several setbacks with a weakening of several partners and new fissures were emerging. However, the setbacks cannot be attributed to the role of the NPA. Nor can support from the NPA claim to be responsible for progress and achievements in previous year – it was at best a contributing factor.

At the same time, the team noted that the dialogue between the NPA and its partners is a typical one-way traffic also in the case of Ecuador. There is hardly any formal input from partners to the NPA relating to the latter's strategy and policies. However, we expect that there is much informal consultation but mostly with informed individuals based on the NPA staffs' intimate knowledge of the country and the political dynamics.

We also noted that the NPA support for organisational development has a much stronger emphasis on strengthening the ability and capacity of partners to work politically (relating to external environment) and/or to engage with members. There is much less emphasis on support to financial and administrative management, compared to e.g., the country programme in Ethiopia. Membership organisations and social movements also receive much more attention while NGOs receive less. This is a reflection of the structure and strength of civil society in Ecuador in comparison with many low-income countries in Africa and Asia.

The relationship between service delivery or conventional development work, and advocacy or political work is also different in Ecuador compared to poorer countries. The state and public institutions have the capacity to play a stronger role as service providers, thereby leaving less need and space for the emergence of specialised

development NGOs. However, it should be underlined that most social movements in Ecuador are also involved in providing services to their members, including the implementation of development projects. Political or advocacy work would in most cases be only one component of the activities of NPA partners.

The Ecuador programme is part of the NPA's regional programme. The benefits of this arrangement have been financial and administrative: it has reduced transaction costs and allowed for more flexibility in transferring funds between countries within the programme. There have also been some programme benefits, mainly the sharing of experiences between NPA programme staff in the different countries, and – but to a lesser extent – between partners in different countries (perhaps especially between indigenous organisations in Ecuador and Bolivia). The regional programme, however, primarily remains a collection of country programmes.

The political work of the NPA in Ecuador centres on support to partners, but the NPA has also attempted to highlight political issues and key challenges facing partners by hosting small seminars and workshops. Furthermore, the NPA has helped to facilitate interaction between key institutions and individuals in Ecuador and Norway. Moreover, the draft country position paper devotes attention to Norwegian-Ecuadorian relations, including the role of Norwegian companies. The interaction and cooperation between the two countries are, however, very limited. The NPA is more active on this front in other Latin American countries.

3: Ethiopia

Introduction

Ethiopia is a large country (1.1 mill. km²) with an ethnically, economically and socially diverse population of about 85 million.²⁵ The GNI per capita was USD 280 in 2008. Ethiopia ranks number 169 out of 177 countries in terms of the Human Development Index (2007/2008) and number 105 out of 108 countries on the Human Poverty Index (2007/08). Life expectancy at birth is 52 and 54 years for men and women, respectively. Rapid population growth, a high prevalence rate of HIV and AIDS, environmental degradation, gender-based violence and climate instability add to the challenge of poverty reduction. Agriculture accounts for nearly 41 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 80 per cent of exports. Four-fifths of the labour force is engaged in smallholder agriculture. Exports are almost entirely agricultural produce with coffee as the largest foreign exchange earner. Ethiopia has recorded impressive rates of economic growth in recent years (10–11 per cent annually), although critics dispute the figures. The inflation rate is high, however, and the cost of living for ordinary Ethiopians has soared without a corresponding increase of income.

Ethiopia was never colonised. The regime of Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974 after a serious famine lasting two years. The military junta with a Marxist orientation that took over the reins proved oppressive and brutal. In 1991 it was toppled by a coalition of liberation movements – the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) – under the leadership of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). The EPRDF is currently Ethiopia’s incumbent party whose leader, Meles Zenawi, is also the Prime Minister. Expectations of a new dawn ran high in the early 1990s but gradually the relationship between the top leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia deteriorated and culminated in a bloody war between the two countries between 1998 and 2000.

Ethiopia’s current constitution was ratified in 1994 and has all the trappings of a modern, democratic state. The polity is organised as a federal republic based on ethnically determined entities which enjoy some autonomy. The constitution also contains a Bill of Rights which guarantees individual rights, reflecting international human rights conventions to which Ethiopia has acceded. The constitution provides for regular elections under a multi-party dispensation. Nonetheless, a dominant feature of social and political life remains its hierarchical and centralised organisation, and its authoritarian nature.

The 2005 elections promised to be free and fair. A coalition of opposition parties won a landslide victory in the capital city and also seemed to perform well throughout the country. However, as the official results were announced and the incumbent party was declared the winner, the wave of protests that ensued was brutally suppressed and some 20,000 arrested. In the aftermath of the post-election disturbances the government tightened its grip and passed anti-terrorism legislation with a wide definition of terrorism and discretionary power that even allowed for the prosecution of innocent demonstrators.

In the May 2010 elections the EPRDF garnered 499 seats in the House of People’s Representatives and its affiliate parties obtained 46 seats. Combined, the incumbent party and its affiliates thus control 545 seats out of the total 547. Altogether 63 parties vied for the votes of 32 million registered voters, of whom 30 million actually took part in the polling. The government described the elections not only as ‘free and fair’, but also as ‘democratic’ and ‘credible’. Although dismissed by the government, most international observers saw the 2010 election results as the temporary stalling of the democratisation process. The regime’s slogan appears to have gradually shifted from ‘no development without democracy’ (1991–2005) and ‘no democracy without

²⁵ This introductory section is gleaned from Norwegian People’s Aid, *Posisjonsdokument: Norsk Folkehjelps arbeid i Etiopia: Grunnlag og strategi for politisk arbeid og ekstern kommunikasjon*, Addis Ababa: NPA, 2010 (available in Norwegian only); Norwegian People’s Aid, *Development Programme Strategy 2009–2011*, Addis Ababa: NPA, February 2009, supplemented by other sources.

development' (2005 to date) to 'no development without stability' (currently). The emphasis is now decidedly on political stability. The regime is authoritarian but many development effects are observed in terms of infrastructure and economic growth, even though the economic dynamism has created a series of conflicts in its wake, e.g. over land and other resources.

Norway and Ethiopia

Norway has an embassy in Addis Ababa and a fairly large development aid programme in the country. Ethiopia is considered an important country in Norwegian foreign policy; Ethiopia hosts the African Union and is an important actor in regional affairs in the wider Horn of Africa – from Sudan to Somalia. There is also a small, but expanding Norwegian commercial interest in Ethiopian land and natural resources (especially linked to hydropower development, agriculture and the flower industry). The political relations between the two countries have normalised after the diplomatic crisis in 2007-2008.

Norwegian development assistance to Ethiopia started in earnest after an embassy was opened in 1992 and has since expanded gradually to reach a total of about NOK 250 million in 2010, including all channels.²⁶ The current programme prioritises three areas of cooperation: (a) hydropower development and support to the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation; and (b) capacity-building and good governance with regard to internal political and societal challenges; and (c) natural resources management and food security. The first priority is justified in terms of the collaboration between the riparian countries of the Nile Basin and Ethiopia's own considerable potential for hydro-electric power generation, coupled with Norwegian expertise. The second priority addresses the democratisation process and centres on the strengthening of key institutions of governance such as the legislature, the National Election Board, the human rights commission, the Federal Ethics and Anti Corruption Commission, etc. The third priority concerns poverty reduction, measures to mitigate environmental degradation, and the global climate change agenda. In addition there are several aid-funded regional projects – from river basin management to the training of police officers.

Most of the major Norwegian NGOs have aid-funded programmes in Ethiopia. Several have aid-funded strategic partnership agreements with the embassy. This includes the NPA (mine action) and Norwegian Church Aid (human rights and democratisation, now replaced by a programme on gender-based violence).

Civil society in Ethiopia

Civil society is broadly defined as associational life between the state and the family. It takes many forms and the degree of organisation spans from loose networks to tightly knit entities. Apart from well-established faith-based organisations and traditional mutual self-help and charity institutions – burial societies (*idirs*), rotating savings and credit societies (*iqubs*), etc. – that have existed for centuries, civil society in Ethiopia is young and limited in scope and depth. Its rapid growth has occurred since the mid-1990s when the policy environment became more accommodating, at least for a while. A few civil society organisations (CSOs) were established during imperial times and a number of international NGOs responded to the need for famine relief and post-drought rehabilitation during the *Dergue* years.²⁷ Most local CSOs emerged after the change of regime in 1991. Both the *Dergue* and the current government favoured organisations directly under their control, such as the official mass organisations of the *Dergue* and the current regional development associations. In 2007, the Ministry of Justice at the federal level had a total of 2,305 CSOs entered in its formal register, of which 1,742 were local NGOs, 234 international NGOs, 149 professional associations, and 125 civic advocacy groups. Additional CSOs are registered at the regional level, thus probably raising the total number to about 4,000.

The majority of CSOs are small in size with few staff and limited budgets, and a good number of them have struggled to survive. Their external challenges are above all the lack of a policy environment conducive to their growth and operation. The government has not fully acknowledged CSOs as legitimate actors and agents of change in society. Conversely, there is considerable scepticism within civil society to the government's intentions, and apprehension about future prospects. Civil society also faces expectations and pressures from their donors in terms of procedures and reporting, sometimes to the extent that their transaction costs rise unduly. The internal constraints are multiple, including inadequate institutional capability (planning, budgeting,

²⁶ See the Norwegian embassy's 'Strategy Paper for Development Cooperation with Ethiopia'. Available at http://www.norway.org.et/News_and_events/DevelopmentCooperation/Development-Cooperation/strategy_paper/

²⁷ See Dessalegn Rahmato, 'The Voluntary Sector in Ethiopia: Challenges and Future Prospects', in Taye Assefa and Bahru Zewde (eds.), *Civil Society at the Crossroads: Challenges and Prospects in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2008, pp. 81–133, and Johan Helland with Deresse Getachew, *Study of the impact of the work of Save the Children Norway in Ethiopia: building civil society*, Oslo: Norad, 2004 (*Evaluation/Study/6/2004*).

accounting, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic thinking), the lack of an internal democratic culture of decision-making, high staff turnover, and the lack of networking and collaboration among CSOs.

The relationship between civil society and the government has been uneasy and at times tense. The CSOs have been viewed with suspicion and distrust by the government, as reflected in the detailed and cumbersome regulatory framework discussed below, which has circumscribed their manoeuvrability dramatically. Ethiopian CSOs have tended to engage predominantly in service delivery and development work in sectors such as agriculture. They have tended to shy away from human rights advocacy and governance issues involving criticism of or confrontation with the government. To the extent civil society has engaged in rights advocacy it has been confined to the rights of children and women, which are considered rather uncontroversial. The new civil society law has reinforced pressures away from advocacy towards conventional service delivery and development activities related to poverty reduction.

The Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association (CCRDA), which was established in 1973 and registered in 1975, is the oldest and largest umbrella organisation for CSOs in Ethiopia.²⁸ It has evolved from its origins as a relief organisation to currently casting itself as a representative body of civil society. It is widely seen by its members as an interlocutor with the government and is tacitly recognised as such by the government that often invite the CCRDA to represent CSOs in various committees.²⁹ As of February 2010, it comprised 334 member organisations. Notwithstanding the consortium's name, many secular and non-Christian religious organisations are found among its membership, motivated by a basic commitment to serve all rather than to promote any religious values. While not covering all CSOs in Ethiopia the membership comprises a large proportion of active NGOs operating in both urban and rural areas of the country. Of CCRDA's total membership, 73 per cent (243) are local NGOs, and 27 per cent (90) are international. The members' activities cover food security, rural and urban development, health, HIV and AIDS, education, water and sanitation, infrastructure, environmental protection, etc.

New civil society regulatory framework

In February 2009, a new civil society law was adopted: Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009.³⁰ Civil society had for some time pressed for a new regulatory framework that would supersede the 1960 Civil Code of the Empire of Ethiopia and the Associations Registration Regulation from 1966 which were considered inappropriate to current realities. The new legislation distinguishes between three types of CSOs: (a) Ethiopian Charities or Societies, i.e. those controlled and funded by Ethiopians. They may not receive more than 10 per cent of their funding from abroad; (b) Foreign Charities or Societies, which are controlled by non-Ethiopians and predominantly receiving funds from abroad; and (c) Charities or Societies of Ethiopian Residents, whose members reside in Ethiopia and whose revenues from abroad may exceed 10 per cent. Different regulatory frameworks apply to each category, but basically it prevents CSOs that receive more than one-tenth of their income from abroad from working on vital issues of public importance. Only CSOs in the first category are allowed to work on: (i) human and democratic rights; (ii) the promotion of the equality of nations, nationalities, peoples, gender and religion; (iii) the rights of children and persons with disabilities; (iv) conflict resolution or reconciliation; and (v) enhancing the performance of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies.

On the other hand, the Proclamation allows for the establishment of consortia of charities or societies, which might have a positive impact on the effectiveness of CSOs. Though not adequate, the proclamation furthermore allows for charities and societies to engage in income generating activities, which could help CSOs to strengthen their internal capacity and ensure the sustainability of their activities. Moreover, the law establishes an autonomous Charities and Societies Agency tasked to register and supervise CSOs, and a corresponding Board for facilitating the implementation of the Proclamation. The Board gives attention to and recognition of civil society and may provide services to CSOs during registration and operation. Although nominated by the government, two CSO Board representatives provide civil society with a say in the regulation of the sector. The Proclamation envisages the active roles of federal sector ministries and offices in facilitating and coordinating the operation of charities and societies in their respective mandate areas. This was intended to foster a constructive relationship between government agencies and CSOs and could provide better opportunity for participation in policy processes.

²⁸ See CCRDA's website: <http://www.crdaethiopia.org/aboutCRDA.php>

²⁹ See Brian Pratt, 'CRDA: A Strategic Evaluation', London: International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), 2008. Available at <http://www.crdaethiopia.org/Documents/Strategic%20Evaluation%20of%20CRDA%20Program%20By%20Dr%20%20Brian%20Pratt.pdf>

³⁰ See Mandeep S. Tiwana, 'Analysis of the Ethiopia Charities and Societies Proclamation 00/2008', CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. Available at http://www.civicus.org/csw_files/AnalysisEthiopiaCharitiesProc140808.pdf

As nearly all existing domestic CSOs derive in excess of one-tenth of their budgets from foreign sources the new regulatory framework curtails, in effect, large parts of civil society activities related to rights advocacy and governance. The poverty level in Ethiopia and the absence of a culture of voluntarism make it exceedingly difficult for the overwhelming majority of local CSOs to raise more than 90 per cent of their revenues within the country.

With governance and human rights activities effectively banned, civil society interventions are confined to 'development' in an apolitical sense. The new Proclamation expands the regulatory power of the Agency and allows it to interfere excessively in the operational freedom of CSOs. Many observers take the view, however, that the Proclamation is intended to target only specific CSOs that the regime wishes to circumscribe because they are perceived as a threat. According to this view, the proclamation will remain inconsequential for most CSOs. Still, the proclamation has created considerable insecurity in civil society and uncertainty about its future role and prospects.

As a result, citizens are discouraged from organising and establishing new CSOs, notwithstanding Article 31 of the Constitution which provides for the freedom of association. The preclusion of CSO engagement in governance and human rights advocacy is also likely to discourage donor support. There is no doubt, therefore, that the Proclamation will hamper the growth of civil society and adversely affect the effectiveness of its interventions. When the new law was promulgated it drew much criticism from civil society and donor agencies alike.

The NPA in Ethiopia

The involvement of the NPA in Ethiopia dates back to 1984 with support to the liberation struggle and humanitarian relief and emergency assistance in Tigray. After 1991, the NPA entered into a partnership with the humanitarian arm of the liberation movement, Relief Society of Tigray (REST), and elaborated a major micro credit programme targeting women. As from 2005 a mine clearance programme was added. According to a review conducted in 2008 the mine action programme was a successful capacity-building and transfer-of-knowledge endeavour.³¹ Funded through the Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa (with additional funding from Finland and the Netherlands), it has been implemented by the NPA in partnership with the Ethiopian Mine Action Office. The added NPA value has principally been its technical competence in a highly specialised field, but also its flexibility and ability to respond quickly.

A local NPA office was opened in Addis Ababa in 2006 for the purpose of mounting a new development programme with partner organisations working within the thematic areas of land and resource rights; women's rights and gender-based violence; and democratisation. The 2010 budget of the NPA development programme amounted to NOK 6.9 million. Some 4.4 million are disbursed to the current (end of 2010) eight partner organisations working in the regions of Addis Ababa, the SNNP, Oromiya, Amhara, and Tigray. The NPA has four NGO partners focusing on management of land and natural resources. Four NGO partners are active in the programme area on promoting women empowerment and stop violence against women (following the restrictions on support to democratisation projects all NPA activities are subsumed under the women categories). See the summary of the partner profile and NPA support below.

In addition to supporting these partners the NPA has also hosted "Women can do it" workshops which may lead to establishment in 2011 of a small NPA-supported NGO (initially also located at the NPA office). Two partnerships have been phased out in the period.

Ethiopia is the only programme country (in addition to Sudan and Myanmar) with a country development programme strategy. It was published by the country office in February 2009 and covers the 2009-2011 period. The 12-page document outlines the challenges facing Ethiopia, the difficulties of providing external support to civil society following the new restrictive NGO legislation, and presents the focus and objectives of NPA's development programme in the country. Three objectives are identified. One is support to organisational development of partners. The NPA targets groups at the grassroots level and always work with NGO partners, both strategic long-term partners and project partners. NPA carries out regular participatory competency

³¹ For details see Axel Borchgrevink and Jon Harald Sande Lie with Berhane Achame, *End Review of the Norwegian People's Aid Mine Action Programme in Ethiopia 2005–2007*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2008.

assessment with its local partners and designs appropriate capacity development programmes to avert limitations and enhance the competency of partner organisations to enable them to deliver on their planned programmes.

The second objective is to contribute to a more equitable land and resource management. With its partners the NPA tries to demonstrate ways of proper resource management techniques, tools and skills for preventing conflict over resource utilisation, and promote equal access, right and management responsibilities. The focus is on smallholder farmers and pastoralists and the livelihoods of the rural poor.

The final objective is to promote women empowerment and to end violence against women. The NPA supports the training of trainers, gender training, self-defence, capacity building of women and shelter.

The difficulties of working in Ethiopia are recognised both in the country strategy and through the subsequent position paper from the NPA Board. The NPA seeks to strike a delicate balance between the official requirements and controls, on the one hand, and the precepts of its global strategy which emphasises advocacy and policy change, on the other. The NPA has felt the pressure to restrict its activities to service delivery. Notwithstanding the challenges that the political context poses, the NPA country office considers it feasible to work with partner organisations on land and resource rights and gender-based violence in ways that are compatible with the new regulatory framework.

The development programme has a country director, a programme manager and a financial and administrative support staff of four. Owing to irregularities and theft several staff members were dismissed in 2008 which had a temporary disruptive effect on operations.

All partners in Ethiopia have been identified and selected by the NPA office. The NPA attempted to identify potential partners within the broad thematic areas of land and resource management; democratisation; and gender. Much efforts was placed on identifying partners that worked in local communities and that were either focused on advocacy issues or could be supported in building up capacity and competence to do so (which was the case with several of the women's projects in Addis). Practical cost considerations also played its part; e.g. once one NGO in the Borana area had been selected it was easy to include one more in the same area. One partner from the past with close ties to the government was also retained for tactical and political reasons.

All partners submit project proposals to the NPA Addis office for consideration and approval. An appraisal form has been elaborated for uniform in-house assessment. In the course of this assessment process there is normally frequent contact between applicant organisations and the NPA office; it is a time-consuming process. Once the appraisal has been completed it is transmitted to headquarters in Oslo. Linked to the application appraisal process a competence assessment is made of the organisations in question to ascertain their functionality and ability to carry a project through to a successful completion. This occurs as a rule once a year. The parameters are multiple and ratings are given per parameter.

The NPA has put much emphasis on providing support for organisational development through training workshops bringing together all partners. This has typically focused on technical capacities linked to planning, financial management and reporting on results. Efforts have also been made to bring together partners in thematic areas to focus on substantive and strategic issues.³² At a more informal level, the NPA has instituted a tradition of informal partner lunches for networking purposes. This event intends to facilitate interaction between partners and donors.

Partners

The NPA has a total of eight partners in Ethiopia (end of 2010)

Land and resource management

Four NGO partners are working in these areas in Borana, Shaka, South Omo zones and Kofele Woreda of the Oromia and SNNPRS. The projects are targeting rural communities - both pastoralists and subsistence farmers - in three agro-climatic zones. These includes the southern and south eastern parts of the country's plain and

³² This included, e.g., a training workshop in the land and natural resources area in November 2010 bringing together all the four partners. See *Report on Participatory Impact Assessment, Conducted for the NPA Land and Resources Management Organisations Staff, November 5 – 12, 2010* (Addis Ababa: NPA, unpublished, 37 pages).

lowland grass and forest areas; the western part of the rainforests of the country; and the rift valley midland agricultural areas. Broadly speaking all projects are geared towards empowering the local communities to own and access natural resources in their respective areas and to equitably share the benefits among the community members.

Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action - MELCA

MELCA addresses environmental issues and gives priority to advocacy for policy change. The preservation of biodiversity is a major preoccupation. MELCA seeks collaboration with youth and elders in the communities where it operates, and combines traditional ecological insights with modern knowledge. As the new civil society law targets mainly CSOs involved in election and human rights issues, MELCA is not much affected. Advocacy regarding land rights appears acceptable as long as it is not done in a confrontational manner. Rather, the mode of operation of MELCA is participatory at the community level and applies research to make it fact-based. A series of books have been produced within social anthropology; on legal and policy aspects of international conventions about biodiversity; on land use and management; and on land economics. MELCA argued strongly that advocacy without some link to improved livelihoods is meaningless. Therefore, the organisation endeavours to use its insights to enable the local communities to exploit the local environments, yet without undermining sustainability. To that end, maps of various eco-cultural zones in 17 *kebeles* in Anderacha *woreda* have been compiled with detailed information about the vegetation. These maps have then been authenticated by professionals and elders so as to forestall disputes over accuracy.

The intention of MELCA is to produce a model to be replicated elsewhere in the country. It engages in advocacy for seed conservation but does not operate a seed bank of its own. Another element in its advocacy work is to introduce the acquired ecological knowledge into the school curricula. MELCA-Mahiber also seeks to include the Sheka area on UNESCO's list of World Biosphere Reserves.

The NPA budgeted contribution to MELCA was NOK 524,000 in 2010. Current funding is provided for staffing and awareness campaigns around constitutional and environmental laws, capacity building of the Clan Leaders Association, and education activities targeting the youth. *Ad hoc* funding has also been provided for the purchase of computers, office equipment and vehicles. The vehicle purchase was not part of the original budget but the NPA was flexible enough to make a substantial contribution. In contrast to working with the EU which is very bureaucratic, the NPA is considered flexible with which conducting a dialogue on priorities is possible. Training to improve skills has been provided. The trainees include 60 field workers involved in information gathering; they collaborate with the agricultural extension service. The field assistants function as eco-advocates but the impact of their work is difficult to measure. However, collaboration with the mass media increases the coverage of outreach. The field assistants have also been instrumental in fighting forest fires which has been perennial threat to biodiversity.

The greatest challenge of MELCA is high staff turnover and the long distance from Addis to the project area. Fund-raising is also a major challenge, compounded by the fact that the contract with the NPA is only for one year at the time. About 90 per cent of MELCA revenue comes from foreign sources. The donors are multiple (e.g. African Biodiversity Network and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature) but most contributions are modest; the NPA is a large contributor.

MELCA has 70 members who are summoned for General Assembly meetings although the cost involved is high. A Board is elected by the General Assembly. The Addis office with a few hired staff is headed by an Executive Director. The periodicity of quarterly reports is acceptable.

SOS Sahel

This is a major NGO and the largest recipient of funds from the NPA in Ethiopia. The organisation emerged from the Sahelian drought crisis in the 1970s. It has 20 years of experience in Ethiopia with a mission to improve livelihoods. It began when the national programme of an international NGO was established as a separate NGO. It is legally registered as a Society of Resident Ethiopians and had to undergo a metamorphosis after the new civil society law was introduced.

SOS Sahel works to sustain the environment through community-based management of land, water and forests. The NPA supports two main projects with SOS-Sahel. One is support to the local communities and water management in the Lake Hawassa catchment area. The projects supports communities in their efforts to exercise their constitutional rights by promoting decentralised resource governance system whereby they play an active role in the conservation and management of the key resources while enjoying the benefits that accrue from the

conservation process. The project seeks to reverse the current situation of open access resource regime by introducing, promoting and institutionalising the usufruct procedure that ensures local communities user-rights over communal land in the Lake Hawassa catchment area. The other project is to institutionalise pastoral traditional land and environmental use right and to increase their economic benefit from the development and commercialisation of natural products in the Borena and Guji zone.

The budgeted NPA contribution in 2010 was NOK 992,000.

With respect to the future of pastoralism in Ethiopia there are two polarised views: (a) the government's position is that pastoralism is a backward type of economy and that pastoralists should be settled on irrigation schemes despite bad experiences elsewhere with solutions of that sort; and (b) civil society does not subscribe to that gloomy view and sees a future in the diversification of the livelihoods of pastoralists. Pastoralism is arguably the best adapted form of economic exploitation of dry, marginal areas. CSOs working with pastoralists therefore want to enter into a constructive dialogue with the government on policy options to govern pastoralism in the country; a good relationship has developed with the government in this regard. Parliamentarians have been brought to Borana to see for themselves. Research is being conducted. The Ethiopian Pastoralist Association has been established. Within COMESA the Land Coalition Alliance has been formed to address cross-border mobility by pastoralists. SOS Sahel participates in the Dryland Coordination Group.

The partnership with the NPA which started in 2006 addresses land and resource management and customary resource rights. These are both *de facto* and *de jure* rights. In Ethiopia land formally belongs to the people, i.e. for all practical purposes to the state. However, the Borana see the land as belonging to them. SOS Sahel is brokering between formal government structures and informal traditional systems.

The state's custodial management of the forests has led to deforestation. SOS Sahel sees participatory forest management as the alternative. To that end, work is carried out by the Forest Department while SOS Sahel only plays a mediation role between the local customary institutions and the authorities at *woreda* and *kebele* levels. A key working principle is that local ownership leads to investment and caution with regard to fires and over-exploitation.

Poverty is not only lack of income but also about the denial of rights. This is where the agendas of SOS Sahel and the NPA converge. However, SOS Sahel is in constant discussion with the NPA about regular livelihood improvement work. According to SOS Sahel, the NPA does not seem prepared to accept that advocacy and policy work are derivatives of tangible work at the grassroots. The NPA insists that other donors should come in where the NPA is not prepared to tread. But flexibility is called for. NPA support is not only financial grants – which are modest anyway – but also capacity-building and organisational development. This, in turn, helps SOS Sahel to bring in other donors and to manage such support effectively. Training on results-based monitoring and evaluation is also significant. The M&E instruments are introduced at the appraisal stage. However, there are unquantifiable parameters that elude measurement. In those cases SOS Sahel uses stories/narratives/case studies to illustrate achievements. These organisational development aspects are the added value of NPA support. The one-year contracts with the NPA, however, were seen as disadvantageous and hampering planning. Multi-year contracts of 3–5 years would be preferable. That would enable SOS Sahel to retain valuable staff.

The Norwegian Embassy is also supporting SOS Sahel. Other donors include the European Union as a major one in food security, and the Netherlands in forest management. Support is also forthcoming from others.

Rural Organisation for the Betterment of Agro-Pastoralists - ROBA

This is small NGO which was registered in 1999 under the Ministry of Justice to engage in work to promote community self-help. It was reregistered as an Ethiopian Resident Charity in terms of the new civil society proclamation. The NPA is only one among eight donors (others include Oxfam, HIVOS and the EU) in respect of one particular project of participatory forest management in Awaro.

The budgeted NPA contribution was NOK 382,000 in 2010.

ROBA's objective is to maintain the forest cover by improving traditional ownership institutions and to resuscitate traditional mechanisms of management. Institutional aspects are emphasised in order to diversify livelihoods away from destructive tree-felling for charcoal production. An intact clan structure is being empowered through the so-called *Gada* system when previously large state farms are being privatised. The *Gada* system creates cohesion within the community and provides a basis for local mobilisation for influencing the

formal legal system. Additionally, Forest User Groups have been formed and established revolving funds as cooperatives.

Training is provided on the constitutional provisions for local government and for paralegals. The government bureau on traditional land ownership is involved in the training sessions and assumes a very cooperative stand. Similarly, the Ministry of Justice is cooperative with regard to constitutional training.

Apart from the exploitation of natural resources (forests and grazing land) by the local communities, commercial logging companies and dairy farms were given concessions under the *Dergue* and even as far back as the imperial times. To acquire precise information and to document what natural resources are available, ROBA undertook a survey by means of Geographic Information System technology.

To circumvent the new civil society regulation ROBA tries to avoid the rights terminology. Rather, it emphasises the need for Environmental Impact Assessment before new investments are made. This is indeed a requirement stipulated by the government's own 'Growth and Transformation Plan'. However, there is considerable uncertainty about the way in which the new law will be enforced at the regional and local levels.

With regard to sustainability, ROBA concedes that it is difficult to find complementary partners to fill gaps where the NPA decline to tread. Indirectly, the NPA has been helpful by enhancing ROBA's organisational capability. ROBA considers itself a strategic NPA partner which means that the amounts provided are not as important as other aspects of the relationship. The NPA and ROBA have a common vision and the assistance from the NPA is seen as help to self-help. Overall, the partnership is characterised by mutual accountability and flexibility. Discussions of policy are open without dictation by the NPA, which on occasion has helped to write the terms of reference for consultancies and even to select participants for training sessions. ROBA would definitely prefer multi-year contracts with the NPA to ensure predictability and facilitate better planning.

Action for Development - AFD

The AFD is an NGO which emerged out of the national programme of an international NGO initiated through FAO's Freedom from Hunger Campaign. It is registered as an Ethiopian Resident Charity in terms of the new civil society regulation. The focus of the organisation is food security and sustainable livelihoods in the Borana area. Towards that end, the AFD addresses the challenges of dryland development and natural resource management, including animal husbandry. Central concerns are the development of cooperatives for saving and marketing of produce; community health services; agricultural productivity; irrigation; basic services; education, etc. It receives funding from a range of international NGOs.

The supreme policy body is the General Assembly with only 28 members which elects the Board. The secretariat runs the day-to-day activities. The total staff compliment is 110, most of them deployed in the field.

Some activities such as rights education, conflict transformation and governance had to be dropped when the new civil society proclamation was launched. The promulgation of the new proclamation was accompanied by a government campaign against civil society that was seen to be agents of foreign governments engaging in wasteful activities. This created distrust at local and community levels alike. Deregistration was considered a potential threat which instilled caution and self-restraint.

Comprising 7–8 per cent of the total population, pastoralism as a form of economic management of the drylands is recognised in Ethiopia's constitution. But legislation to operationalise the constitutional provisions remains lacking. Still, the government has invested in education and health in pastoral areas. A standing committee on pastoralism exists in parliament. Even so, the government considers pastoralism a backward form of economic management. Sedentarisation is the official policy but it should be voluntary. Although some pastoralists engage in opportunistic farming, their preference is to preserve their way of life, economically and socially. The AFD subscribes to that view and has called for the recognition of pastoralism as a way of life with strong local ownership, but is careful to avoid romanticisation.

The NPA-supported project implemented by the AFD addresses natural resource management. Resources are being depleted and degraded for a variety of reasons, which, in turn, increases vulnerability to disasters. Creating synergies between traditional systems of natural resource management and those of the state is the hallmark of the AFD's agenda. To that end, the AFD facilitates dialogue between local communities and state authorities with a view to strengthening the overall natural resource management practices. The fencing of areas is a problem as is restriction of access to water for pastoral communities. Therefore, action to protect the interests of

pastoralists against encroachment by outsiders is a major concern. The AFD is involved in these processes with the use of modern mapping technologies. In the interest of improved natural resource management, greater involvement by women is considered advantageous. In practice, women are subjugated to men despite formal rights to land, including inheritance. Such harmful traditional practices persist but the AFD is allowed to engage in work to counter them.

The added value of the partnership with the NPA is the process aspects of internal organisational management and governance. This does not involve much expenditure but is critically important. Empowerment of the organisation is the objective. Other donors are larger in terms of the money they provide. But if the AFD had not received organisational development support from the NPA, it would not have been able to utilise the funds received from other sources as effectively as it does; there is a spin-off effect.

The AFD has relatively good contact with the NPA in the context of its networks. Moreover, NPA staff visit the AFD head office in Addis or go to field offices regularly. That said, the AFD would like the NPA to carry on with similar activities in the future in order to strengthen the AFD further as an organisation. Such activities include capacity-building, including training in environmental impact assessment, information technology, report writing, etc.

The AFD gets good feedback from the NPA on reports and plans. There is mutual criticism and learning in the dialogue. The NPA does not interfere in the internal affairs of the AFD. The reporting requirements are not too demanding and the periodicity is acceptable. However, there is room for improvement. The one-year contracts are a problem. There is a strong preference for multi-year contacts to ensure predictability. Accountability tends to be a one-way street, although there is commonality in approach, objectives and interests. Thus the inequality feature of the partnership persists.

Women empowerment and end violence against women

The NPA currently (end of 2010) has four NGO partners in this category. Two partners have been phased out (Vision Ethiopia Congress for Democracy and St. Mary's Community Development).

Enweyay

Enweyay ("Let's discuss") deals with the rights and obligations of rural people who normally do what they are told in a hierarchical and authoritarian society. It was originally set up in 1995 to provide civic and voter education; eight million people have been taught. However, those activities had to cease after the new civil society law was introduced. A respite of one year was given to readjust to the new situation and Enweyay is currently in a process of finding its bearings again with a revised agenda. It has obtained a licence to teach women about their rights and about discrimination between men and women in Ethiopian society because the government does not consider women's rights to be 'political'. Girls are seen as transient members of the family until, they are married off. Many are subjected to heavy workloads and suffer from harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, and are sometimes abducted for early marriage purposes. Property rights are also part of the agenda because statutory law gives women equal rights on a par with men in inheritance matters. However, traditional practices often disregard such laws. Enweyay also works on environmental issues

The teaching methods include drama and simple, rudimentary messages. Women are trained because they are more comfortable discussing sensitive issues with fellow women. All the supervisors are women. New teaching manuals are being prepared.

Before the new law was introduced, Enweyay had 200 instructors who operated at 17 teaching sites. Since then the staff has been reduced to only six. A General Assembly with a quorum of minimum 15 persons elects the Board of Directors. The office is run by the management. The NPA is a key donor. Other donors have turned their back on Enweyay but 'Bread for the World' remains a contributor. NPA assistance has been received for four years and is much appreciated. The training provided is particularly valued: (a) women's rights; (b) monitoring and evaluation; and (c) report writing. But the reporting requirements are considered too demanding, particularly in view of communication problems with remote rural areas. The contract with the NPA is for one year only at the time and the amounts are in Ethiopian Birr which has been depreciating in value so as to erode the real value of the assistance provided.

In 2010 the amount disbursed by the NPA was the equivalent of NOK 226,000. The NPA allegedly reduced the budget from 2009 to 2010 without consultation.

Measuring the effect of awareness-raising is difficult. Hence, reporting results is a challenge. Enweyay has only empowered the trainers, not the human rights activists in the implementation process. Women are told to report the violation of their rights to the police. But women are often afraid to contact the police because the police have a reputation of being perpetrators of violence themselves. The alternative is to contact the Women's Lawyer's Association for free legal aid. Enweyay avoids the mass media because they are perceived to be informers.

In January 2011 Enweyay informed the NPA that it did not intend to submit a new application to the NPA for funding.

Hibir Capacity Development and Self-Defence Organisation

This is a fairly new organisation that was formed only in April 2008. It emerged from a local NGO, Union Taekwondo Club, which was providing trainings on self-defence to women who were previously exposed to violence. The NPA took the initiative to establish Hibir as a local NGO with the aim of enabling the Taekwondo Club to combine the theoretical and the practical part of gender trainings. Hibir provides training for women at AWSAD. It targets youth, especially girls at high schools. It seeks to equip female students with the skills of self-defence together with trainings on gender issues and to ensure their welfare in their school surroundings so that female students would have equal chances and opportunities as their male counterparts.

Hibir currently works in eight high-schools in Addis Ababa. Teachers and administrative staff at the schools are also being trained which has a multiplication or ripple effect. The teachers organise anti-violence events in the schools. Today, Hibir is providing life skills for youth, training in public speaking and communication skills to be able to interact assertively and with self-confidence. In 2010 it hosted the first national girls' taekwondo tournament with side events on awareness creation on gender-based violence

The Women's Lawyers Association has collaborated with Hibir in making sure that the legal aspects of Hibir's manual are correct, and taken part in training sessions.

Hibir holds a General Assembly as its supreme organ. It comprises the financial and other sponsors but a wider membership drive is being planned. A Board of five members is elected by the General Assembly and the Board appoints the director. At present there are six staff at the secretariat, of whom four are trainers.

As a young organisation, Hibir has received much support from the NPA which has contributed towards its organisational development as an organisation combining practical training with educational awareness efforts. This has involved technical training as well as support to strategic and policy development of the organisation. In that sense the NPA has been involved in the building of a new NGO almost from scratch.

Members of the secretariat have benefited from training in results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, accounting, writing of reports and applications, needs assessment, and fund-raising skills. The quarterly periodicity of reporting to the NPA is considered acceptable. Hibir conceded that to date it has focused mostly on activities and process, rather than measuring results. However, the media activities at the schools are indicators of attitude change. The intention is to conduct post-intervention surveys to measure change in relation to a baseline established before the intervention.

The NPA provides feedback on Hibir's submitted reports and applications by face-to-face contact or by e-mail. And the external auditor's report for the previous year is scrutinised before next year's application is considered. It is seen as a problem that the NPA contracts are for one year only at the time. Multi-year contracts are highly preferable as Hibir is about to finalise a five-year plan, including fund-raising activities. Otherwise, the spirit of partnership with the NPA is characterised by equality and dialogue.

Currently the NPA is the sole source of funding but Hibir wishes to diversify the sponsors over time. New thematic areas are also being contemplated, such as capacity-building for women in economic activities, and youth.

The 2010 the NPA budget figure for Hibir was NOK 645,000.

Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development – AWSAD

AWSAD (formerly Tsotawi Tekat Tekelakaye Maheber - TTTM) was registered in 2003 and reregistered in 2009 under the new civil society proclamation. The NGO grew out of a major protest rally in 2000 against the abuse of children. A task force was formed which later evolved into an organisation of about 50 members, mostly professionals. So-called 'red words' are avoided for tactical reasons. The safe house in Addis was established in 2006 and is the only one of its kind in Ethiopia. But new safe houses are being established in Dukam and Awassa. AWSAD currently has 25 staff members.

The watchword of AWSAD is prevention. Still, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims into the communities is a major part of the organisation's activities because prevention has not been effective enough to counter the battering and abuse of women which remains a common practice in Ethiopia. Meetings are held quarterly with the police, health centres, etc. Women tend to be afraid of reporting violence to the police because they have a reputation of being perpetrators of violence themselves. Therefore, AWSAD is engaged in the training of police officers on 'Quality Support Services' which is a euphemism for gendered rights. This involves skills on how to receive battered or abused women. The majority of the women who are admitted into the safe house have been referred to AWSAD by the police. In some police stations child protection units have been established to separate children who have committed some sort of minor offence from adult, hardened criminals. A course on gender-based violence is conducted regularly at the Federal Police College (supported by Action Aid).

The financial NPA contribution in 2010 was NOK 556,000. Funding is provided for staff costs and activities related to capacity development of women affairs offices and police officers, prevention of socially constructed violence at community level (targeted schools where there is high prevalence of violence) and psychosocial support for survivors (provision of rehabilitation and reintegration services and skill trainings).

The contribution to AWSAD by the NPA for the safe house is significant, not only financially but equally importantly with respect to capacity-building and advice related to applications and other project matters. This is the added value of AWSAD's partnership with the NPA, as distinct from other relationships. The participatory impact assessment that was undertaken resulted from NPA assistance. Other training sessions have addressed the challenges of monitoring and evaluation by means of focus group discussions, surveys, and semi-structured interviews with key informants. The NPA differs in this regard from other donors who tend to give money only and think they can dictate AWSAD what to do, yet without any follow-up support.

The partnership with the NPA is genuine. On a scale from zero to six AWSAD was prepared to give the NPA a rating of six, notwithstanding the fact that the contracts are for only one year at the time. However, the contributed amounts have increased every year. The NPA reporting format was considered elaborate but most important and valuable.

Dedebit Credit and Saving Institution - DECSI

This partner organisation grew out of the NPA's early involvement with REST in the Tigray region. It later evolved into a major rural micro credit operation involving several hundred thousand borrowers. In contrast to the other partners DECSI is registered as a share company in which REST is the largest shareholder. An evaluation was commissioned jointly by DECSI and the NPA in 2003 which found the DECSI programme was extremely impressive.³³ The evaluators found that DECSI had succeeded in establishing an efficient organisational set-up; reached financial sustainability; expanded to cover virtually all of Tigray; achieved very respectable results in terms of gender and poverty outreach; and achieved considerable impact in terms of poverty reduction and development. Notwithstanding these impressive results, in line with its strategy the NPA wished to move away from micro credit as a form of service delivery and to drop DECSI as a partner. However, due to its position in Ethiopia and its close proximity to the incumbent government, DECSI has been retained as a partner 'for tactical reasons'. But the operations currently supported by the NPA have been reoriented towards women's rights and gender-based violence. The extensive coverage of DECSI throughout Tigray has been taken advantage of in reaching a large number of women.

The NPA contribution to DECSI was NOK 258,000 in 2010.

³³ See Axel Borchgrevink, Jo Helle-Valle and Tassew Woldehanna, *Credible Credit: Impact Study of the Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution (DECSI), Tigray, Ethiopia*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2003.

Issues

Most partners had vague knowledge about the international strategy of the NPA whereas others were totally oblivious. The NPA office in Addis appears to have adhered to the international strategy quite closely when adapting it to the country-specific conditions in Ethiopia as reflected in the position paper and the country strategy. The uncertainty that the new legislation governing the operations of civil society has produced is being handled pragmatically. Adaptive solutions have been found, at least in the short run. The NPA staff interviewed also felt that they have been able to provide important support for advocacy-focused work of partners in a situation where such funding from other sources may rapidly be decimated. It remains to be seen what other implications the legislation will have, both for the NPA and its Ethiopian partners.

The evolving political situation will also pose a number of new challenges for NPA. This is perhaps best illustrated by the informal invitation to the NPA in late 2010 from Ethiopia's Deputy Police Commissioner. He is seeking NPA support for a training programme on gender and human rights at the Police Training College. While one would not expect the NPA to enter into a partnership with a police institution and to act as a service provider for the training college, other questions require careful consideration. Should the NPA explore this opportunity with an existing partner – such as and in particular AWSAD which already works with the college – and support such engagement through a partner? Should the NPA identify a new partner – such as a group of lawyers, or a university institution – and provide funding for them to take on this task? Should the NPA take a pro-active role and exploit such “windows of opportunities” in the current situation? Or should the NPA keep a low profile and wait for an improved political environment?? In answering such questions the NPA has to take into account that training of the police is a crowded area where many donors are active (or want to be active!) and the NPA's added value must be clear (the ability to decide and act quickly and flexibly, and to bring in local civil society actors).

It also noteworthy that the NPA development strategy for Ethiopia says nothing about how to work and contribute to the NPA's political agenda in Norway and in relation to Norwegian authorities – at home and in Ethiopia. One might have expected the NPA to be more active in respect of Norwegian interests – in the aid programme as well as in monitoring of Norwegian companies.

The team also noted that the NPA is strongly committed to the partnership approach. This is evident both in the country strategy and in the relations with partners – although there is no distinction between strategic and project partners. The emphasis on organisational development is mainly addressed through training courses focusing on technical deficiencies in management and reporting. There have, however, also been efforts to more systematically help to strengthen individual organisations, including on strategic issues.

All partners interviewed expressed satisfaction with the way in which the NPA in Ethiopia is working with partners, although some criticisms were also voiced. Partners emphasised the mutual trust and flexibility that characterise the partnerships. In particular, the added value of their partnerships was highlighted such as the non-financial components: capacity-building and organisational development, and training in a variety of fields. Also, the role of the NPA in facilitating contact with other Ethiopian CSOs and donors was appreciated, especially the periodic pizza lunches.

Some critical remarks were made and some weaknesses were observed by the team. First, almost unanimously the partners see one-year contracts as constraining their planning and personnel policy. Such short time horizons create unpredictability and insecurity and are not conducive to retaining staff. There is a strong preference for multi-year contracts. The NPA also said this ought to have been considered, but argued that there had not been sufficient time to deal with this matter owing to the focus on improving the management of the NPA office). An added challenge was that only a few of the current partner would be sufficiently strong and enable the NPA to enter into a multi-year contract.

Second, the NPA accent on advocacy and policy change as its hallmark was raised as a concern. It was claimed that the distinction between advocacy and policy work, on the one hand, and conventional service delivery and development, on the other, is not easy to make in practice. Some respondents were adamant that advocacy and policy work divorced from tangible service delivery and development are meaningless. The former cannot be done in the abstract. Service delivery and development are indispensable for legitimising advocacy in the eyes of the grassroots. This point is underscored by the new context of the civil society legislation which significantly narrows the scope for advocacy. The team broadly concurs with that view and would warn against compartmentalising advocacy and service delivery. There are grey zones in between. Depending on the circumstances, there is a case for allowing a measure of service delivery and conventional development –

although with circumspection – to complement advocacy and policy work. The latter is likely to become more credible and effective if such synergies were forged.

Third, the relationship between the mine action and development programmes needs revisiting. There is an obvious linkage between the two that so far does not seem have been addressed. Once the mine-infested areas have been demined the question of the use of the land arises after the clearance has been completed. Given the shortage of land in Ethiopia this becomes a critical issue involving land rights. The NPA office in Addis would be well advised to address this question.

Fourth, the Ethiopia programme is a small programme and the staffing may be sufficient compared to the situation in other programme countries. Still, the review team feels that the number of partners may be on the high side for the office to handle effectively. Consequently, there might be a case for reducing the number so as to enable even closer follow-up of those accorded priority. This would also enable the office to deal more with issues currently neglected (such as the monitoring of Norwegian interests).

Finally, although the facilitation of networking by the NPA is appreciated there is probably scope for improvement in that respect. For example, there is a case for closer contact with the Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA) with a view to reaching out further. Similarly, closer involvement with the Dryland Coordination Group could also be considered for networking purposes and to enhance the effectiveness of advocacy.

4: List of Persons Interviewed

Cambodia

(all interviews in Phnom Penh)

Sok Panha	Director, Banteay Srey (BS)
Ok Mom	Team leader, Siem Reap, BS
Pich Sophea	Team Leader, Battambang, BS
Soeung Saroeun	Senior operation and administration officer (2nd in command), Cambodian Coordination Centre (CCC)
Suon Sareth	Chief of Secretariat/Executive Secretary, Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC)
Koul Panha	Executive Director, Committee for Free and Fair Elections (COMFREL)
Kim Chhorn	Senior Program Coordinator, COMFREL
Sok Ritour	Monitoring Coordinator, COMFREL
Sonket Sereyleak	Education and Gender Coordinator, COMFREL
Ek Yothin	Support Program Coordinator, Community Peace Building Network (CPN)
Phoeng Kimhuy	Working Group member, Banteay Mehanscheay province, CPN
Ly Pheak	Working Group member, Pursat Province, CPN
Mad An	Working Group member, Kampong Cham province, CPN
Vong Pham	Working Group member, Stung Treng Province, CPN
Hang Chinda	Working Group member, Preah Sihanouk Province, CPN
Chay Sarath	Coalition Coordinator, Cambodia Revenue Resource Transparency (CRRT)
Mam Sambath	Executive Director, Development Partnership in Action (DPA) (also Chairman CRRT and EISEI)
Dara Rith	Extractive Industry Officer, DPA
Lay Sophea	Program Manager Partnership and Development Education & Strategy, DPA
Sia Phearum	Secretariat Director, Housing Rights Task Force (HRTF)
Chhun Sona	Monitoring Project Officer, HRTF
Chhith Sam Ath	Executive Director, NGO Forum
Pen Raingsey	Program Manager, NGO Forum
Ang Cheatlom	Executive Director, Ponlok Khmer (PKH)
Poek Sophorn	Area Project Coordinator, PKH
Pou Sovann	Executive Director, Srer Khmer
Sours Sokha	Program Manager, Srer Khmer
Tang Sun Hao	Country Director, NPA's Cambodia office
Sok Neva	Development Program Officer, NPA
Keo Tai	Development Program Officer, NPA
Kheang Seng Horn	Development Program Officer, NPA

Ecuador

(interviews in Quito, Cayambe and Cotacachi)

Irma Torosina	President, Asamblea de Unidad Cantonal de Cotacachi (AUCC)
Jomar Cevallos	Participation Coordinator, AUCC
Leonardo Alvear	Former President, AUCC
Per Ranestad	Regional Director, NPA
Natalia Wray	Program Manager (Bolivia, Chile), NPA
Cristina Santacruz	Program Manager (Ecuador, Colombia), NPA
Jose Manuel Anrango	President, Pueblo Kayambi (PK)
Imbaquingo	
Geronimo Lanchimba	Head of Education, PK
Carmen Antaneba	Secretary, PK
Manuel Ernesto Catumogo	Head of Youth, PK
Galo Valverde	Head of Natural Resources, PK
N. N	Water Board, PK
N. N.	Water Board, PK
Eulalia Carrasco	Catholic nun, prominent activist and supporter of indigenous peoples' movements in Ecuador since the 1960s
Cesar Pilataxi	Fundacion de Cultura Indigena - Kawsay
Pablo Ospina	Professor, History Department, Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar, Quito
Jorge Loor Cevallos	Former President, Coordinadora Nacional Campesina "Eloy Alfaro" - CNC EA
Romelio Guacan	President, CNC EA
Jose Encalada	Coordinator, CNC EA
Gonzalo Guzman	Vice President, Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE)
Miguel Guatemala	Technical Expert, CONAIE
Luis Contento	Vice President, Confederacion de los pueblos de la nacionalidad kichwa del Ecuador, ECUARUNARI
Mario Yaucen Remache	Head of Finance, ECUARUNARI
Asencio Farinango	Head of Communication, ECUARUNARI
Bolivar Beltrán	Legal Advisor, ECUARUNARI
Guillermo Churuchumbi	ECUARUNARI
Vicente Chato	ECUARUNARI
Blanca Chancoso	Former Coordinator, Escuela de Formación Política de Mujeres Indigenas "Dolores Cacuango"
Diocelinda Iza	President, Movimiento Indigena y Campesino de Cotopaxi (MICC)
Abraham Salazar Chicaiza	Former President, MICC
Maritza Salazar	Technical Advisor, MICC
Manuel Guamán Guamán	President, Union Provincial de Comunas y Cooperativa de Cañar (UPCCC)
Magdalena Guamán Falcón	Head of Intercultural bilingual education, UPCCC
Roza Lazo Acero	Head of Cultural Education and Youth, UPCCC
José Antonio O. Buscan	UPCCC
Arturo Cevallos	Director, IBIS Ecuador
Humberto Cholango	Former president of ECUARUNARI

Anaite Vargas Mauricio Gallardo José Cuenca Jimmy Coronado	Executive Director, Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos (APDH) Coordinator, APDH Delegate, APDH Communication Coordinator, APDH
Ermel Chávez Carmen Aguilera	President, Frente de Defensa de la Amazonia (FDA) Secretary, FDA
Kintto Lukas	Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ethiopia

(all interviews in Addis Ababa)

Abdene Gebo	Acting Executive Director/Finance Officer, Rural Organisation for Betterment of Agro-Pastoralists (ROBA)
Danebo Dekeba	Programme Officer, ROBA
Abel Amdeselassie Million Shiferaw Wabit Melesse	Hibir Capacity Development and Self-Defence Organisation (Hibir) Project Officer, Hibir Project Coordinator, Hibir
Ametsah Tilahun Aschalew S. Bethlhem Mengistu Lewzegenet Nebyu Mehary	Counsellor, Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD) Communications Officer, AWSAD Project Officer, AWSAD Assistant Counsellor, AWSAD Programme Coordinator, AWSAD
Befecadu Refera	Programme Manager, Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action (MELCA Mahiber)
Sahlamariam Yirga Elias Worku Sahle Sellassie Berhane Mariam Tegegne Zeleke	Executive Director, Enweyay Supervisor, Enweyay Consultant, Enweyay Supervisor, Enweyay
Feyera Abdi	Executive Director, SOS Sahel Ethiopia
Habtamu Zeleke Yoseph Negassa	Head, Partnership Development & Fund Raising, Action for Development (AFD) Executive Director, AFD
Helland, Johan Nuland, Tormod,	First Secretary, Norwegian Embassy Programme Officer, Norwegian Embassy (formerly with NPA Ethiopia office)
Sisay Alemahu	Lawyer
Ånestad, Målfrid Michael Assefa	Country Director, NPA Ethiopia Office Programme Manager, NPA Ethiopia Office

Norway

(all interviews in Oslo)

Bergan, David Berre, Kjersti Bremer, Liv	Country Senior Advisor, Latin America & Middle East, NPA Advisor, Monitoring and Evaluation, NPA Advisor, Gender, NPA
Dalby, Orrvar	Director, International Programme Department (from December Acting Secretary-General, NPA)
Falch, Trude Feo, Claudio	Country Senior Advisor, Sudan and Somalia, NPA Advisor, South-East Asia (former Regional Director Southeast Asia), NPA
Haaland, Eva J. Hanssen, Helle Berggrav	Country Senior Advisor, Southern Africa Advisor Communications, Oil for Development, Norad framework agreement, NPA
Holter, Martin	Country Advisor, Middle East, NPA
Kjernet, Kari Kruse, Stein Erik	Country Advisor, The Balkans, NPA Consultant, Nordic Consulting Group
Lade, Rannveig	Advisor, 'Women Can Do It', Country Advisor, Rwanda, NPA
Moa, Ingeborg,	NPA Country Director, Burma (telephone interview)
Olsen, Svein	Country Advisor, Tanzania, NPA
Stabell, Henrik	Country Advisor, Ethiopia and Sudan, NPA, Oslo
Thoresen, Beate Thoresen, Finn Erik Torgersen, Sveinung Tørres, Liv	Policy Coordinator, Advisor, Organisational Development, NPA Leader, NPA Board Deputy Director, International Programme Department, NPA independent consultant (former Director International Department, NPA)
Vetlejord, Asgjerd	Country Advisor, Angola and Rwanda, NPA
Aasen, Berit	Senior Researcher, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research

5: Terms of Reference

Review of Norwegian People's Aid's international Development work in the 2008-2011 strategy period

Terms of Reference 7.10.2010 (SUMMARY)

Background

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) was established in 1939 as the trade unions' voluntary health and solidarity organisation. It expanded considerably in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly at the international level.

The NPA currently has over 10 000 members organised in local branches all over Norway. First Aid, Mountain Rescue Service and Emergency Aid are important components in its work. Other focus areas include the running of reception centres for refugees, voluntary activities for the elderly and disabled, as well as work against racism.

On an international level, Norwegian People's Aid has programmes in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, the Balkans and Russia.

The 2008-2011 international strategy identified the NPA objectives as mobilising and influencing national governments and international social policy with a view to supporting:

- Democracy and the equitable redistribution of resources as critical pillars for development;
- Improving the economic conditions of countries in the South, including trade and foreign debt relief;
- Civil society and collective organisations as drivers of democratisation and nation-building; and
- Protection of human security and the responsibility of the international community to assure it.

The overall goals of supporting processes towards democracy and a fair distribution of resources are intended to serve as a guide for the NPA in selecting partner countries. Having decided on a partner country, the NPA seeks to identify the main democratic deficits and obstacles that limit the opportunities for participation in democratic processes, and to identify players with the potential to make changes.

The NPA's working methods differ according to political circumstances, manifestos and the knowledge and organisational models of partners. The NPA's ideal working method in order to reach the stated goals is to work with and through partners. However, in situations and/or programmes where NPA partners do not have the ability to run programmes themselves, the NPA may establish and run programmes until the partners concerned have acquired the capacity to take over. After handover, the NPA may remain in a supportive role as required.

Strengthening civil society is highlighted as a key priority in the NPA's strategic plan. The approach in contributing to the development of an organised and dynamic civil society is two-pronged: on the one hand, supporting partner organisations in their struggle for change and, on the other hand, working in the political arena. The NPA's 2008-2011 strategy is designed to:

- Support measures to strengthen people's right to associate freely and join collective organisations;
- Strengthen people's own organisations towards greater sustainability, democracy and political influence;
- Strengthen young people's participation and influence in society;
- Promote the freedom of expression, the right to speak and be heard and to receive relevant information, including free and independent media;
- Develop the expertise of organisations in order to become a recognised resource centre for democratisation and civil society;
- Actively promote a gender perspective in partner organisations and programmes;

- Facilitate and support women's empowerment, especially in respect of young women;
- Strengthen the ability of organisations and groups to work actively in combating the oppression of women;
- Maintain focus on organisations aiming to end violence against women; and
- Maintain support for and partnerships with indigenous organisations as representatives of marginalised and under-represented groups.

The NPA decided that access to and control of natural resources should be a strategic focus area in the current strategy. Five aims were highlighted for the 2008–2011 period:

- Make the redistribution of resources a top priority on the development agenda;
- Support civil society action to protect land and resource rights;
- Monitor the international oil and energy sector and its compliance with human rights and development needs;
- Lobby for internationally binding regulations for the private extractive sector; and
- Develop the NPA's expertise on land and resource rights.

Purpose

The study shall provide a review of the NPA's international development work in the current 2008-2011 strategy period. The main purpose is to assess the implementation of the strategy, with a particular focus on results from the political work of the NPA and its partners. The review shall assess the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy, the relations between the strategy and achievements and provide recommendations for the next strategic phase.

The present review will use the 2007 Review of NPA's organisational performance as a source of baseline data and assess to what extent recommendations provided in that review have been followed up.

Scope

The review shall address, but not necessarily be restricted to, the following issues:

Strategic coherence and achievements:

- How do the profile and role of existing NPA partners compare with the vision and objectives outlined in the 2008-2011 strategy?
- Has the NPA made adjustment in its programme portfolio as a result of the adoption of the current strategy? If not, what are the main justifications for not making any adjustments or changes?
- What are the NPA's main achievements in relation to the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan? What are the main challenges and obstacles in implementing the strategy?
- How are activities and achievements monitored and measured?
- How does the NPA strategy impact on the planning of goals and expected outcomes of country programmes and projects? How realistic are the expected results identified at the planning stage?
- What changes should be made or new issues addressed in the strategy document for the next phase?

Partnership:

- To what extent is the selection of and cooperation with partners in line with the NPA's partnership strategy?
- To what extent and how does the NPA contribute to the strengthening/development of partners?
- Once partners are selected, how is the NPA aim of "supporting people's own agenda" operationalised?
- What is the quality of the dialogue between the partners and the NPA?
- To what extent and how has the NPA contributed to the strengthening of the political capacity of its partners?
- To what extent does the experience of partners and programmes feed into the NPA's political work in Norway?
- To what extent and on what issues does communication take place between the NPA head office, programme/country office and partners?

- How is cooperation with and capacity building of partners measured/monitored?
- How do NPA's partners assess the relevance of the NPA's strategy?
- Is there a need to make changes or adjustments in the policies for partnership and/or in the implementation of the policies?

Method

The review shall be based upon desk-based studies of documents on NPA's international strategy and its implementation; interview with NPA officials and other stakeholders in Oslo/Norway; and case study material based on field visits to three NPA country offices and their partners.

Documents studied will include the 2007 *Organisational Performance Review* (which also provides much baseline data for this review), the 2009 *Partnership Survey*, the Report from the 2009 *Programme Manager Seminar*, and the 2010 *Review of the Organisation of the Gender Equality work in the International Programme Department*, NPA as well as annual reports to Norad and related documents. The team will also examine strategy documents, reviews and reports from the three countries' to be visited and consult relevant reviews and reports from other NPA countries.

Three countries – Ethiopia, Cambodia and Ecuador – will be visited as part of this review. They have been selected by NPA in consultation with the team based on the size of development work; strategic relevance; ability to display positive and negative learning; reflection of different modes of intervention; inclusion of different continents, and practical/cost considerations.

The study will not provide a full review of the country programme and its outcome and impacts. The main purpose is to use examples and lessons from country programmes to help inform the analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the international strategy and to provide recommendations for adjustments and changes in the next strategy phase. The main focus for the country visits will therefore be in interviews with staff at NPA country office and the head offices of the partner organisations.

Team

The core team will be composed of team leader Elling N. Tjønneland, (senior researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Norway) and Arne Tostensen (senior researcher, CMI) and Anna Mørck (independent consultant, NPA).

NPA will appoint an advisory reference group to whom the team will report.

Implementation, time schedule and reporting

The study will begin on 30 September 2010 and be completed by 1 March 2011.

October:

Preparation, planning

Data collection from documents

Interviews in Oslo (telephone interviews with informants and stakeholders not available in Oslo)

Meeting with NPA reference group

November:

Field visits to Ethiopia and Cambodia

December/January

Field visit to Ecuador (first half of December)

Final round of interviews in Oslo after completion of field visits

Telephone interviews

Meeting with NPA reference group

Writing of draft report

February:

1 February: Submission of draft report

Final report to be submitted not later than two weeks after written comments have been received.

Presentation of report to NPA.

Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) is an independent, non-profit research institution and a major international centre in policy-oriented and applied development research. Focus is on development and human rights issues and on international conditions that affect such issues. The geographical focus is Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern and Central Asia, the Middle East, the Balkans and South America.

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