

EVALUATION DEPARTMENT



From Donors to Partners?

**Evaluation of Norwegian support to strengthen
Civil Society in Developing Countries
Report from presentation seminars in Nepal and Ethiopia
April 2018**

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Background

In 2017, Norad's Evaluation Department commissioned an evaluation of Norwegian support to strengthen civil society in developing countries through Norwegian civil society and their local partners. The report: *From donors to partners - Evaluation of Norwegian support to strengthen civil society through Norwegian organisations* was based on case studies from Norwegian development aid to Ethiopia, Nepal and Uganda. ¹Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) carried out the evaluation in association with Nordic Consulting Group and Ternstrom Consulting.

The final evaluation report was presented at a seminar in Oslo in January 2018.

Presentation of the report in Nepal and Ethiopia

To facilitate a discussion of the evaluation report at country level the Evaluation Department in consultation with the Civil Society Department in Norad decided to present the report to civil society partners in the case countries. Following consultations with the concerned Norwegian Embassies, it was decided to proceed with seminars in Nepal and Ethiopia. The seminar in Nepal took place on 20 April and in Ethiopia on 24 April 2018. The Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa hosted the seminar in Ethiopia while the seminar in Nepal was organized by the Evaluation Department with logistical support from the Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu.

CMI through the team leader of the evaluation, Elling Tjønneland, was commissioned to present the evaluation report. This was done in cooperation with country consultants Kanta Singh (Nepal) and Yeraswork Admassie (Ethiopia).

At both seminars, the participation was about 35. The main target group was local partners of Norwegian CSOs visited by the evaluation team, Norwegian CSOs in the country as well as the Embassy. In addition, each seminar – depending on the context – had participants from other embassies and donor agencies as well as representatives of other local CSOs. The programme followed a similar structure with (in the case of Ethiopia) a welcome address by the Ambassador, an opening address by Norad's Evaluation Department, a presentation of the evaluation report by the team leader and then a presentation of Norad's guidelines for civil society support by Norad's Civil Society Department. This was followed by comments from invited panellists and a Q&A session.

The below will provide a brief summary of Norwegian civil society support to Nepal and Ethiopia as well as summarising key points from the discussions in the two countries. A summary of each seminar including list of participants and key presentations are attached as annexes to the report.

Norwegian CSO support in Nepal and Ethiopia

Nepal and Ethiopia are countries that has seen much support channelled through Norwegian CSOs both from Norad's Civil Society Department and from other budget sources. In the evaluation period (2006-2016), about 30% of Norwegian aid to Nepal was channelled to or through civil society organisations. The figure for Ethiopia is about 50%.

¹ <https://www.norad.no/om-bistand/publikasjon/2018/from-donors-to-partners-evaluation-of-norwegian-support-to-strengthen-civil-society-in-developing-countries-through-norwegian-organisations/>

The civil society context is very different in the two countries. There is more open space for CSO work in Nepal while Ethiopia is characterised by a very restrictive political environment making it near impossible for foreign CSOs to engage with local partners in promoting democratisation and human rights – instead they focus on service delivery and work in close cooperation with government institutions.

The role of CSOs and the use of Norwegian CSOs within the Embassy's country engagement is also different in the two countries. In the case of the Ethiopia, the role of Norwegian CSOs in several Embassy-funded sector programmes is significant. This is especially evident in the case of Norwegian Church Aid, Save the Children and the Development Fund. They often work through the same local partners as in the programmes supported by the Civil Society Department. The Embassy in Addis also supports a joint donor-funded programme for civil society support.

The role of CSO support is less prominent in the Embassy programmes in Nepal. However, major local CSOs are supported in some of the sector programmes (e.g. INSEC in the governance programme and Blue Diamond Society and Sankalpa in the Women's rights, gender and social inclusion programme). Some funding is also channelled through one of the Norwegian CSOs (Forut in the case of the education programme).

Key points

Several issues of relevance for civil society support emerged in the discussion at the two seminars. Some of the overall and crosscutting issues are listed below, for more details see the attached reports from the seminars.

- The importance of country context is crucial in any external planning and implementation of civil society support. Rapid political changes in the country may also require the need for flexibility and ability to respond;
- Foreign support struggles with an unresolved tension between using local CSOs as service deliverers and support to CSOs as a means of strengthening civil society. The use of Norwegian and international CSOs in priority thematic areas, including humanitarian emergencies, has often – but not always – reduced local partners to implementers of foreign priorities. This has undermined the goal of building a civil society. The new introduction of thematic priorities in the Norad civil society support may weaken the goal of building civil society;
- There is insufficient coordination of different Norwegian funding mechanisms – this may also weaken the ability to respond to rapidly changing political contexts and to new opportunities for advancing civil society support;
- Modalities for providing direct support to civil society should be developed further. This includes finding ways of supporting smaller local CSOs (via joint donor funds – managed by donors and/or local institutions – or via local NGOs/umbrella bodies – or directly from Norad/embassies); and
- Increased use of core and programme funding to local partners in order to increase local decision-making and ownership.

Annexes

Report from the seminar in Kathmandu

20 April 2018

The Seminar was organized at Hotel Summit in Kathmandu on 20 April 2018 from 10:00 -13:00 hrs. A total of 34 participants participated. The participants included 10 local partners based in Kathmandu and 4 Norwegian CSOs, the Embassy of Norway in and others. For a detailed list of participants, please refer to Annex 1.

Introduction: The first session started with the welcome and introduction by Siv Lillestøl, the Assistant Director in the Norad Evaluation Department that highlighted purpose of the seminar as to get different views and stimulate discussion on how partnership should be developed.

This was followed by the presentation of evaluation report by Elling Tjønneland, the Evaluation Team leader that focused on main findings with special emphasis on the Nepal case study.

After the findings of the evaluation report Wenche Fone, the Director of Norad Civil Society Department presented the emerging new guidelines for Norwegian civil society support.



The panel at the seminar in Nepal: From left to right: Raksha Ojha, Hilde Ekeberg (hidden), Daya Sagar Shrestha, Prabin Manandhar, Biljay Raj Gautam and Manju Lima (Photo: Elling Tjønneland)

The second session started with panel discussion, the chair of the session briefly presented the purpose of the discussion – is to gain ideas, views and perspectives of Nepali professionals to strengthen CSOs in Nepal based on the experiences. The chair briefly outlined the following questions to be considered by the panellists:

- How the panellist based on their experiences see partnership?
- Strength and weakness of foreign support?
- What strategy will be useful in future to strengthen the CSOs as vibrant, stronger and has the stronger civil society been beneficial in improving the situation of human rights and democratisation?
- What are the lessons learned from partnership with Norwegian and other Norwegian organizations?
- Is the space for CSOs favourable and how CSOs can be accountable to the state?

With these view/thoughts, the panellists were introduced and invited to give their brief views.

Agro Forestry, Basic Health and Cooperatives (ABC) Nepal started by briefly introducing its organization as working in human rights issues focus on trafficking since 1987. It has worked with various donors, partners and government of Nepal. Since 2011, it started its partnership with Norwegian CSO -Stromme Foundation (SF) focused on raising the condition of the marginalized and vulnerable communities in Nepal.

ABC Nepal highlighted major experiences of working with Norwegian organization:

- Partner selection - fair and transparent due to which partners are chosen without any biases;
- Goal – share similar goal of socio-economic upliftment;
- Partnership approach - friendly, flexible and mutual learning, work and plan together;
- Capacity development – It has focus on capacity development from the national to community level and has enhanced ABC's capacity to tap resources from various donors;
- CSO strengthening – Number of networks, forums and self-help groups are strengthened in program area and are continuing the work;
- Result-based management –the organization and the program are more focused on results while reporting and the organization is taking ownership of the issues and promoting sustainability; and
- Cross partner learning - SF is working with 9 partners in Nepal. All the partners meets quarterly as cross partner learning to share each other's experiences, lessons, challenges and come up with way forward plan.

ABC based on these experiences feels that Norwegian organization now should enter into strategic partnership that is long term (10 years).

FORUT - a Norwegian CSO - shared its experiences of working with local partner organization. Its partners are medium size organization (Child workers in Nepal (CWIN) and Tuki Association). It has started its partnership from the year 1988 onwards and the partnership was selected through rigorous exercise by the Norwegian CSO.

- FORUT focus on youth and children and works with partners that are complementary to its focus (child right);
- FORUT has started to work on the findings and challenges of the present evaluation and is moving forward;
- The program has service delivery and strengthening of CSOs, social audit that are complementary and is producing intended results; and
- It has strong connection between partners and agrees that partnership should be long-term based as it has long term partnership with its partners.

NGO Federation is an umbrella organization consisting of 7156 members across the country. It is a focal organization of all CSOs in the country. It has no direct relations with Norwegian CSOs.

Based on the presentation of the evaluation findings and NORAD's guideline the NGO Federation came up with the specific views and suggestions for Norwegian CSOs and their local partners. Cf Table 1 below.

Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) is financially supported by the Norwegian Embassy and has no direct relations with Norwegian CSOs. INSEC was established as leading human right organization and received its first Embassy support in 1992. It has since its formation worked in different political environment in supporting human rights.

INSEC has enhanced its capacity in working in different political environment. During the early and mid-1990s, the political environment was favourable for civil society. Due to its nature of support working with the grass-root community and beneficiaries, it was able to work during the Maoist armed conflict and until today, it is working in the field.

INSEC had number of observations to the presentation done. They are included in the Table 1 below.

Program Support Unit (Danida): Danish development assistance to Nepal started began in the late 1960s. From the late 80s Nepal became a partner country for Danish development aid. The Danish Embassy has now closed and Danish aid to the country is now being phased out.

From 1991, Danida supported civil society organizations in Nepal with a separate funding mechanism consisting of 10 million DKK annually.

Approach:

- Flexible and invested in capacity development of CSOs – it adopted flexible approach based on CSOs needs. Capacity enhancement was an important component;
- A strategic framework was developed to guide Danida's support to CSOs.

Lesson learned:

- CSOs support did contribute to achieve universal goals such as millennium development goal (MDGs);
- CSOs were able to reach out to the poorest, marginal and vulnerable groups and communities;
- CSOs ability to deliver was enhanced by their transparency and trust enjoyed by the community and society;
- CSOs work with community has greater ownership/stronger engagement/effective results;
- Enhanced capacity – focus on fewer partners but with strong partnership approach.

Way forward:

- There is need for stronger coordination among the CSOs, stakeholders and community beneficiaries;
- It is better to provide capacity enhancement by focusing on CSOs competencies and comparative advantages;
- Sustainability can be achieved and it is essential to tap on new opportunities.

Q & A session

After the panel discussion, the team leader, the evaluation team, and the chair responded to the query of the panellists. In general, the participants were in agreements and supportive of the main findings and views in the evaluation. Several emphasised the need for increased local ownership. Many international NGOs paid little attention to this and often viewed local partners as implementers of their programmes. This became very visible in the humanitarian response to the earthquake.

Query and comments are summarised in Table 1.



Participants at the Nepal workshop (Photo: Elling Tjønneland).

Table 1

Summary of panel presentations with responses

Query/questions	Response
<p>NGO Federation and INSEC query</p> <p><i>Partnership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development partners need to follow and respect Paris Principles and Bussan Partnership Principles • Need separate country strategy to support CSOs in the NORAD guideline • Respect partnership principles • Expand the horizon of partnership • Involve CSOs when making country cooperation plan and strategies 	<p>Partnership – Norwegian CSOs and local partners work are aligned to local and national priorities. Partnership is based on mutual respect and local partners are selected based on their similarity of working areas such as association of blind. Norwegian CSOs work in partnership with local partners who again work with different CBOs in developing plans and strategies.</p> <p>Program designed – programs are designed through identification of local needs and national priorities. Different partners have their own approach and stakeholders are involved/consulted from the initial stage.</p> <p>Implementation – the new guideline proposed to look at longer period of support. Most of the</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow government framework <p><i>Programme Design:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design program based on demand driven/need based Try to involve all stakeholders when designing the project, including local governments <p><i>Implementation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply intrinsic approach rather than instrumental approach Avoid short project period <p><i>Access to resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice direct funding to national CSOs rather than through Norway CSOs/intermediaries <p><i>Priority areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to national road map of SDGs Focus on essential services such as education, health and water supply Support in disaster management Enhance capacity of local CSOs Civic space, civic freedom, and social justice <p><i>Sustainability:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared sustainability plan/exit strategy at the time of designing project <p><i>Public Private Partnership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How it can be facilitated? <p>INSEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the respondents? Or with whom was the interview taken? It is not clear? Is the conclusion based on document review always valid? What is the evidence that Nepali CSOs are politically aligned? What is the case in Ethiopia and Uganda? 	<p>partners have long -term support as partnership have started from long period.</p> <p>Access to resources – This issue is debated and considered and is looking at the advantages and disadvantages of providing direct funding to local partners or through Norwegian CSOs. There are different views of the partners regarding the issue.</p> <p>Priority area – Most of the areas are covered such as education, health, water supply, capacity enhancement of local CSOs and social justice</p> <p>Sustainability – This is one of the priority areas and based on the nature of CSO partners, and their local partners' existing strategy are incorporated during the designing phase.</p> <p>Public-private-partnership – Monitoring of private sector in cooperation with programs and projects is ongoing in Angola.</p> <p>Respondents of the evaluation- Norwegian CSOs based in Norway and those having county office, local partners, community members/ beneficiaries were interviewed. Documents were reviewed and on line survey with Norwegian CSOs were conducted and validated.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenges faced by Norwegian CSOs in these three countries are not mentioned. Or what are the challenges faced by civil societies while implementing Norwegian projects? • The best part of the report is, the impacts of Norwegian based projects are positive over all the three nations. • The world has entered into Sustainable Development Goals that goes up to 2030, as Norway is one of the initiators of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), however; the issues of these SDGs and MDGs are not incorporated in the report. 	<p>Political alignment – this is the general observation and compared to other two countries, Nepal has more space for civil society.</p> <p>Incorporation of SDGs – Civil societies have challenged Norway to incorporate SDG, and due to this SDG consisting of inequality has been incorporated.</p>
<p>Save the children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the civil society definition used by the evaluation team? Is it limited to the non-governmental organisations or does this cover a much wider civil society spectrum? • While the report has indicated that civil society organisations in Nepal could not undertake national level advocacy, the changed political/structural context in Nepal (i.e. the federal structure) requires civil society organisations to be much engaged with the local government and advocate for policy formulation/policy enforcement at the local government level. This is going to be very important as the local governments have now got the authority to develop their own legislations/policies within the mandate provided by the Constitution, and particularly Schedule 8 of the Constitution. • One of the reasons why Norad support did not achieve desired results on CSOs' strategy development, etc., beyond the project results, is because there is very limited opportunity for such organisations to invest on organizational development due to lack of 'free money', i.e. the budget not tied to any particular results. If the local organisations are to be further strengthened beyond project delivery, there should be more allocation in the budget that these organisations can invest in their 'organizational development'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society covers wider spectrum and the Norwegian CSOs are partnering with various organizations ranging from international networks, to larger NGOs and community-based organizations. • On advocacy, the Norwegian CSOs are not involved in national advocacy but the local partners are supported to influence government to incorporate policy/strategy on issues regarding child right, human right and differently able persons. • On Strategic partnership issue, NGO Federation responded the modality of partnership is changed in the guideline and CSOs have strong role that provide space for direct partnership. • Partners are not same and various partners have different capacity so partnership modality will be based on the partner's capacity and emphasis should be given on graduation plan.

<p>Nepal Association of the Blind (NAB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAB entered into Norwegian partnership based on shared issues and sentiments. NAB appreciates the support provided by the Norwegian CSOs • NAB made a suggestion to include if possible disabled People Organization (DPO) in the acronyms and abbreviations of the evaluation report. The report has included NGO, CBOs, CSOs in the acronyms and it is important the abbreviation –DPO should be included. • NAB pointed out during the panel discussion. NGO Federation has suggested to coordinate and work through local government as local government is responsible for program implementation. Coordination with local bodies and government does exist and due to various layers of local government. 	<p>Comments only</p>
<p>Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWIN is grateful with the Norwegian government for their support to strengthen civil society movement in Nepal. • CWIN-Nepal is the pioneer child rights organization in Nepal and has received financial and technical support from Norwegian CSOs from last 30 years. After 90s, it worked with Save the Children Norway and since 1994 it has been working with Forut-Norway. Presently the embassy is supporting CWIN in school reconstruction work. CWIN is grateful with Forut Norway for her continuous partnership. • During the armed conflict, CWIN was able to work in conflict zone with Norwegian support as the support was accepted by all parties and the community. • Regarding the issue on shrinking space of Civil Society, local civil society organizations felt they were ignored during the initial relief phase of the disastrous Earth Quake 2015. Domination of INGOs and UN agencies in the clusters where relief work was going was felt by the civil society. Voices of local 	<p>Comments only</p>

<p>organizations were ignored. In this crucial period, Norwegian CSOs working in Nepal put their efforts to place local organizations on the driving seat as Norwegian CSOs understood and respected local organizations who know local reality better.</p> <p>National Federation of Disabled Nepal (NFDN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NFDN and other disabled person organization (DPOs) for past 20 years have been supported by FFO Norway. The support is provided to empower differently able persons and organizational development of DPOs. Since past one year FFO Norway has developed the concept of inclusion of differently able persons in development where the disable issue is not only the concern of differently able person but needs to be acted by other organization as cross cutting theme. NFDN is interested to see type of strategy, funding modality and working modality of the Norwegian government? 	<p>Comments only</p>
<p>Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did evaluation capture government perception and their attitudes towards strengthening CSOs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No interview was conducted with the government in Nepal
<p>General Question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New regulations are coming up with the new federal structure in place. It is reported that the Prime Minister's office will manage the development projects managed by NGOs and INGOs. Therefore, what are the perceived changes? What is NGO Federation doing to make sure that there is conducive environment for the NGOs and INGOs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGO Federation responded – the government has divided roles and responsibilities for ministries and PM's Office. The discussion for the issue of management of NGOs and INGOs is still going on. NGO federation is preparing the internal documents to propose for the government. There is a discussion going on that PM's office will manage the 'Standards for NGO's and INGOs.

Report from the seminar in Addis Ababa

24 April 2018

The seminar took place at the Hilton Hotel in Addis Ababa and was attended by some 35 people. This included Norwegian CSOs in the country, Ethiopian CSOs supported by Norwegian CSOs and other Ethiopian CSOs. Staff from the Norwegian Embassy, including the Ambassador, and representatives of other donor agencies also participated. A full list of participants is found in the Annex.

The meeting was opened by a welcome address of Andreas Gaarder, the Norwegian Ambassador to Ethiopia, which was followed by an introduction by Assistant Director Siv Lillestøl from the Norad Evaluation Department.



Ambassador Andreas Gaarder opening the seminar in Ethiopia
(Photo: Reidun Gjengedal)

The seminar then got down to its main agenda with presentation of the Evaluation Report by the evaluation team leader Elling Tjønneland, Senior Researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute. The presentation focused on its main findings and with a special emphasis on the Ethiopia case study. Particular attention was paid to findings related to the value added by Norwegian CSOs and the lessons from partnerships between Norwegian CSOs and their local partners.



Elling Tjønneland presenting the evaluation report
(Photo: Reidun Gjengedal)

This was followed by a presentation by Reidun Gjengedal, Senior Advisor, Norad Civil Society Department, of Norad's emerging new guidelines for civil society support.

Finally, a panel presentation that was followed by Q&A discussion ensued. The panel was made up of three presenters, plus the leader of the evaluation team, Elling Tjønneland, and Norad's Reidun Gjengedal, and a member of the evaluation team, Yeraswork Admassie, who chaired it. Each of the three panellists represented a type of stakeholder perspective, and they were:

- Ethiopian CSO partner: (Girma Borishie, Commissioner of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus – Development and Social Service Commission– partner of Norwegian Missionary Society, Norwegian Lutheran Mission and the Norwegian Church Aid;
- Norwegian CSO: Eivind Aalborg (Country Director, Norwegian Church Aid); and
- Ethiopian CSO (Feleke Tadele, Country Director of Christian Children’s Fund - Canada).

As the purpose of the panel discussion was to get Ethiopian perspectives and views on partnership and civil society strengthening, the panellists reflected, albeit in varying degrees, on the quality and methods of the evaluation; on its findings (impacts, relevance, influence, value added, challenges, lessons learnt and the way forward) regarding delivery of Norwegian support to strengthen civil society through Norwegian CSOs (the reflections by the three panellists are attached as annexes).



The panel at the seminar in Ethiopia. From left to right: Eivind Aalborg, Feleke Tadele, Yeraswork Admassie and Girma Borishie Bati (Photo: Reidun Gjengedal)

After each member of the panel gave their comments and views for some 10 minutes, the floor was opened for questions and comments by the seminar participants at large. Some of the comments by representatives of Ethiopian CSOs were

Mr Sissay Dejene (Save the Children International)

- The national environment for CSO engagement is not sufficiently highlighted in the report. We have laws that do not allow us to work on advocacy. But we work around them by avoiding the

use of certain terms and by working with other governmental and non-governmental organizations that are permitted to do so;

- It is better to work with governmental organizations, because the legal environment does not allow CSOs to work freely in Ethiopia;
- We do not have a platform of Norwegian CSO partners, and we need to create one;
- It would be better to have all Scandinavian CSO organizations work together;
- It is necessary to work and develop tools for capacity building assessment; and
- We at Save the Children, have exit strategy with Norad. The recommendation made by the study regarding exit strategy is generic and needs to address the exit strategy of international organizations such as ours separately from those of local partners.

Ms Zebider Zewdie (Mary Joy Development Association) passionately described the critical role played by the support of Norad through Save the Children in the establishment of the now thriving organization she founded and continues to play. She then went on to identify some of the challenges faced by local partner local CSOs as follows:

- Decreasing funding is a major problem;
- The rich experiences of local CSOs are not well documented; and
- The fact that some of us have started to locally mobilize funding from the private sector, individuals, and even from our beneficiaries themselves ought to be highlighted and lessen drawn from it.

Ms Lemlem Tekuye (Love for Children Organization)

- Expressed her appreciation of Norwegian backing, not only for its financial support or handout, but also for the other types of backstopping;
- She wished there was more in the study report about the impacts of Norwegian support being illustrated with the story of success cases; and
- And wondered why there is no small unit within the Norwegian Embassy that could facilitate CSO work in general and those on children in particular.

Ms Blen Asrat (Forum for Charities and Societies)

- As everyone here has already noted, there has been a restrictive environment for CSO work for the last 8 years. But, these days, it seems that a better situation to revise those restrictive laws and regulation is about to emerge; and
- There has been a decrease in donor funding of local partners, partly because of the restrictive government regulation, but also partly due to the internal regulatory mechanism of the donors.

Mr Knut Andersen (regional director, the Development Fund) highlighted insufficient coordination the Norwegian support. Effectiveness will increase with different Norwegian funding streams being coordinated. There were uncertainties in the new emerging Norad guidelines. How will they operationalise increased direct support to local CSOs?

Other interventions was made by embassies and donor agencies. This included **Ms Annika Jayawaedena** (head of development at the Swedish Embassy). She noted inter alia that Sweden has supported a range of Ethiopian CSOs directly - through joint donor funds, through local Ethiopian NGOS/umbrella bodies and via Swedish CSOs. Sweden has also used support provided as core funding as a means to increase local ownership. A main challenge has remained: although the support reaches beneficiaries there are major challenges in building a strong civil society that can be a catalyst for political change and democratisation.

Mr Morten Heide (Norwegian Embassy, Development Cooperation Section Head) highlighted that the Embassy have regular meetings with the Norwegian CSOs in the country at the Embassy, headed by the Ambassador himself. This is an appropriate forum for discussing many of the issues in the evaluation report and by participants of this seminar. The evaluation and this discussion are not the end, as we will continue to deal with them in many of the forums we have.

Participants, Nepal

	Name	Sex	Organization	Position
Panellists				
1	Dr Prabin Manandhar, Chair	M	Lutheran World Federation	Country Director
2	Rakshya Ojha,	F	Agro Forestry, Basic Health and Cooperatives Nepal (ABC Nepal)	Team Leader
3	Hilde Ekeberg	F	Forut	Program Coordinator
4	Daya Sagar Shrestha	M	NGO Federation Nepal	Executive Director
5	Bijay Raj Gautam	M	Informal Service Sector Center (INSEC)	Executive Director
6	Manju Lama	F	Program Support Unit, Danida	
Presenters				
7	Elling Tjønneland	M	Chr. Michelsen Institute	Team Leader
8	Siv Lillestøl	F	Norad Evaluation Department	Assistant Director
9	Wenche Fone	F	Norad Civil Society Department	Director
Participants				
10	Madhav Pradhan	M	Cwin/CZOP	Chairperson
11	Kumar Bhattarai	M	CWIN	Program Director
12	Deepa Bhattarai	F	ABC Nepal	President
13	Sujan Shrestha	M	SAHAS Nepal	M&E Coordinator
14	Bhanu Parajuli	M	Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)	Program Manager
15	Pitambar Shrestha	M	LI-BIRD	Team Leader
16	Tika Dahal	F	National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN)	Vice President
17	Nor Bahadur Limbu	M	National Association of the Blind (NAB)	Director
18	Shova Neupane	F	National Association of the Blind (NAB)	Program Officer
19	Laxmi Pathak	F	Plan International Nepal	Program Manager
20	Meenraj Panthe	M	Plan International Nepal	Inclusion Expert
21	Dilli Guragai	M	Save the Children	Advisor –CRG/Child protection
22	Sagar Gaudel	M	United Mission to Nepal	Program Manager
23	Solveig A Midtgarden	F	Himal Partner	Country Coordinator

24	Carl Wahlstrom	M	Himal Partner	Advisor
25	Liv Wendel	M	Normision/UMN	Advisor
26	Renu Lohani	F	FFO-Norway	Nepal Representative
27	Ramesh Shrestha	M	Stromme Foundation	Country Coordinator
28	Jivan Basnet	M	Stromme Foundation	Program Coordinator
29	Elin G. Linnestand	F	Norwegian Embassy	First Secretary (Education/Gender)
30	Raj Kumar Dhungana	M	Embassy of Norway	Governance Advisor
31	Vivian H Opsvik	F	Embassy of Norway	Governance Advisor
32	Nabina Shrestha	F	Canada Fund Coordinator for Bhutan and Nepal	Consultant
33	Britant Tamang	M	Nepal Association of the Blind (NAB)	Helper
34	Kanta Singh	F	Evaluation Team Member	National Consultant

Participants, Ethiopia

Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus – Development and Social Service Commission	Abeya Wakwoya
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus – Development and Social Service Commission	Girma Borishie Bati
Norwegian Lutheran Mission	Mr. Solomon Bogale
Love for Children Organisation	Lemlem Tekuye
Norwegian Church Aid	Eivind Aalborg
Norwegian Church Aid	Kidist Belayneh
Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions	Tessema Heramo
Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions	Hunde Gudeta
Ethiopian Industrial Federation of Construction, Wood, Metal, Cement & other trade unions	Zegeye H/Selassie
Save the Children International	Sissay Dejene
Mary Joy Development Association	Zebider Zewdie
The Development Fund	Knut Andersen
SOS Sahel	Kidist Hailemariam
Farm Africa	Dr. Mulugeta Lemeneh
World agro forestry	Kiros Hadgu
World agro forestry	Niguse Niguse
World agro forestry	Hadia Seid
Norwegian Forestry Group	Øystein Aasaaren
World Bank	Shimeles Sima Erketa
Justice For All-Prison Fellowship	Mr. Woubshet Kibru
Swedish Embassy	Annika Jayawaedena
Danish Embassy	Sharlom Aklilu Haile
Forum for Charities and Societies	Ms. Bilen Asrat
Christian Children’s Fund - Canada	Feleke Tadele
Evaluation Team	Elling Tjønneland
Evaluation Team	Yeraswork Admassie
Norad	Siv Lillestøl
Norad	Reidun Gjengedal
Norwegian Embassy	Tsige Alemayehu
Norwegian Embassy	Andreas Gaarder
Norwegian Embassy	Morten Heide
Norwegian Embassy	Nora D Harboe
Norwegian Embassy	N. N.

07.05.2018

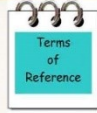
From donors to partners?
Norwegian support to civil society strengthening

Is aid through Norwegian organisations an effective instrument?



CMI in Association with Nordic Consulting Group and Ternstrom Consulting

Evaluation Purpose



- What is the added value of using Norwegian CSOs as channel and instrument for supporting civil society?
- How do they work with their civil society partners?
- How do Southern partners perceive the partnership?
- What are the results?
- How can Norwegian aid be improved?

How did we do it?




- Document review
- Interviews with sample of Norwegian CSOs
- Survey – Norwegian CSOs
- Field visits to Ethiopia, Nepal and Uganda
- Interviews with local partners and beneficiaries
- Workshops

Norad's civil society grant

- Main instrument for long-term support for civil society strengthening
- Objective: contribute to stronger civil society in developing countries with capacity and ability to
 - Promote democratisation
 - Realise human rights
 - Reduce poverty

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Mapping: Where does the money flow?



- 4-5 % of Norwegian aid is allocated for civil society strengthening, virtually everything through Norwegian organisations
- More than 20% of all Norwegian aid is channelled through Norwegian organisations

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Norwegian aid and civil society in Nepal 2006-2015 (NOK million)

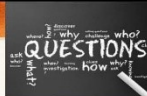
Long term aid for civil society strengthening through Norwegian CSOs	391.2
Through international CSOs and direct to civil society in the recipient country	1.7
Aid from other budget sources channelled through Norwegian and international CSOs and/or directly to local CSOs	444.0
Total Norwegian development aid	2771.7

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- More than 25 Norwegian CSOs channel funds to CSOs in Nepal
 - Dominated by 10-12 {
 - Working through international NGOs: Save the Children, Plan
 - Managing from Norway: Red Cross, Forut, Development Fund, DIGNI and the Atlas Alliance; and
 - Country office: Stromme Foundation
- The evaluation covered 6 Norwegian CSOs and 15 local partners in Nepal

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Key questions



- What is the added value of Norwegian CSOs?
 - Professional/thematic, organisational development, networking
- What are the results of the partnership?
 - Advocacy, service delivery, civil society strengthening

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What do Norwegian organisations bring to the table in Nepal?




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- Norwegian organisations believe they do – but are not good at planning for this, telling us how or documenting what it is
- A wide variety of organisations and approaches – from instrumental to intrinsic
- A variety of activities and thematic areas
- Norwegian organisations work through local partners
- Local partners perceive Norwegian partners as friendly, flexible and predictable

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Finding added value



- Intermediary between Norad and local organisations
 - Very important role
 - Most are doing very well, has become more important with demands for results, led to more emphasis in partnerships on compliance with donor requirements – but has also had positive spin-offs

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- Organisational development – strengthening the local partner – strong focus for most
 - Technical support for administrative and organisational development
 - Emphasis on financial management and reporting and less on governance, strategy development
 - Limited attention to exit planning

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- Professional support for programme development and implementation
 - Uneven, some are good
 - Depends on professional competence, understanding of context and commitment
 - knowledge and advocacy skills on global development issues, and access to international networks

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Results

What is achieved?

- Activities are implemented and outputs delivered - short-term objectives achieved
- Emphasis on service delivery and strengthening of local individuals, groups and informal networks
 - Small associations have developed into strong organisations
 - Marginal/less developed areas, vulnerable groups
- Less attention to national advocacy – emphasis on «soft» advocacy
 - Difficult to measure results from Norwegian support –

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Partnership approach and results

- International NGOs/big Norwegian CSOs: (extensive, impact, especially in relation to service delivery)
- Smaller Norwegian CSOs: depth, strengthen partner (depending on likeminded relations, contextual knowledge, commitments)
- Norwegian CSOs strengthen individual civil society organisations in Nepal – and civil society – one way or the other

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Civil Society Support

The image shows a road that splits into two paths, one leading towards the left and one towards the right, both paths leading into a distance. A signpost stands at the junction, with a sign that reads 'What Now?'. The background is a bright blue sky with white clouds.

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Emerging contextual changes

- Local partners become stronger and demand greater say and direct transfer of funds
- Donor agencies establish local funding agencies
- Changing Norwegian thematic priorities and management priorities
- Changing political environment in Nepal

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Recommendations




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- Sharpen purpose of civil society grant
- More strategic use at country level
- More direct transfer to civil society where possible
- Norwegian CSOs must plan for and maximise the use of their value added

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Partners in Nepal

- Are they in a position to have a greater say in the partnership? Can money and decision-making power be shifted to partners?
- Do they prepare for a partnership with a reduced or different role for the Norwegian partner?

Presentation of Norad's guidelines for civil society support, Nepal


07.05.2018

 Norad

Wenche Fone
Director for civil society, Norad


New Guiding Principles for Norad's support to civil society



 Norad


The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are our common framework and it calls for the "intensive engagement" of civil society!

This is a new and changing environment and together with shrinking space for civil society, we see the need to revise Norad's principles for civil society from 2009.




Civil society in the light of the SDGs

- *A strong civil society is a key feature of any democratic social order and a goal in its own right.*
- *Development aid cannot and should not fully finance the SDGs, but require multi-stakeholder partnerships where civil society is a key.*
- *The main role of international and Norwegian organisations should be to find common ground with and support southern partners, with an aim of exiting when sustainable results are achieved.*
- *The principles will be released this spring.*

 Norad

The Guiding Principles:

- 1) Sustainability
- 2) Inclusion
- 3) Partnership
- 4) Legitimacy
- 5) Accountability
- 6) Cost-Effectiveness
- 7) Context Sensitivity

 Norad

- Each guiding principle is defined and discussed in a civil society context.
- They are interlinked, equally important and mutually reinforcing, but should be applied in a contextual way.
- Each section suggests a set of examples of what Norad and civil society partners should do to adhere to each principle. The lists of examples are not exhaustive.
- Civil society actors will find that some examples are more relevant than others to their particular area of work.

Sustainability

- **Examples of what civil society actors can do to strengthen sustainability**
 - Enhance sustainability at entry by discussing exit strategy when entering into a partnership and ensure agreed expectations from all parties;
 - Consider entering into private-public partnerships in order to contribute to a more catalytic aid and secure long-term financing;
 - Diversify financial foundations; including national governments and corporate actors, to avoid dependency and overreliance on one partner.
- **In order to strengthen sustainability Norad will:**
 - Support civil society actors that have a sustainable and knowledge based transition strategy for their partnerships.
 - Provide multi-annual funding rather than short-term funding to enhance planning, flexibility, predictability and sustainable results;
 - Contribute to smooth transitions from humanitarian assistance to long-term development cooperation.

Inclusion

Examples of what civil society actors can do to enhance inclusion

- Hold governments to account
- Provide services and livelihood opportunities
- gender-sensitive and inclusive programmes and ensure gender balance and inclusion of minorities in own organisation
- Open up spaces for voices that are not typically heard
- Advocate for free, prior and informed consent for affected groups in large-scale infrastructure projects;
- **In order to enhance inclusion Norad will:**
 - In line with MFA guidance, continue to prioritise "Countries left behind".
 - Continue to support civil society effort in social services where health and education are especially important.
 - Support civil society actors, programmes and projects that have an explicit focus on leaving no one behind and work to enhance inclusion, representation and participation of marginalised groups and individuals;

Partnership

- The value added of Norad's civil society partners take different forms, including technical and administrative capacity to handle Norad funds, access to marginalised groups and individuals in both long-term and humanitarian settings, knowledge and advocacy skills on global development issues, and access to national and international dialogue platforms.
- Civil society actors who represent or have great access to those left behind, may lack the necessary financial or technical skills to meet Norad's and other donors' demands for direct support. Partnerships with Norwegian or international organisations, South-South partnerships, or trust fund mechanisms are some means to reaching these civil society actors.

Partnership

- **Examples of what civil society actors can do to strengthen partnerships**
- Ensure that partners are treated with respect and as equals;
- Shift money and decision-making power in the partnerships towards locally rooted organisations;
- Collaborate with private sector;
- Collaborate with local and national governments to make sure that project plans are aligned with national plans;
- Monitor and evaluate their own added value in any partnership
- **In order to strengthen partnerships Norad will:**
- Seek to requirements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with other donors; harmonise and simplify financial and results reporting
- Ensure that Norad's application of results based management allows for flexibility;
- Explore further support to selected organisations, networks, consortia and alliances in order to leave more of the funding and the decision-making at the local or national level.

Norad

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Legitimacy

Examples of what civil society actors can do to strengthen legitimacy

- Support partners' own agenda;
- Northern based actors should ensure that their partners have a place around the table
- Connect traditional civil society organisations with youth, grassroots and social movements;
- Seek to work in line with national plans and strategies;
- Avoid financing projects that rely on sitting allowances or per diems to motivate the participation of the target groups;
- **In order to strengthen legitimacy Norad will:**
- Take a broad and contextual view on legitimacy – in addition to formal representation
- Support human rights defenders and other civil society actors who work to strengthen the rights of minorities of faith and belief, sexual minorities, indigenous and other minorities who are suppressed but have legitimate human rights claims
- Challenge organisations' governance structures and reward actors that contribute to equal power balances within their own organisation

Norad

10

Accountability

Examples of what civil society actors can do to strengthen their own and other actors' accountability

- Openness and transparency. Maintain or establish internal and external accountability mechanisms
- Embracing failures as opportunities to support future success.
- Facilitate local civil society actors' access to regional and global fora.
- **In order to strengthen their own and civil society partners' accountability Norad will:**
- Publish it and do it in English
- Whistle-blowing, feed-back and reporting channels
- Meet directly.
- Have a results based management that meaningfully supports learning and adaptation

Norad

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Cost-effectiveness

Examples of what civil society actors can do to increase cost-effectiveness

- Consider thematic and/or geographic concentration
- Build their work on a solid theory of change and a clear plan for achieving results, and explicitly link these to budgets;
- Critically examine their own cost-effectiveness and their value added
- If necessary, rethink organisational structure, consider relocating headquarters or key functions
- Increase the percentage of funds reaching beneficiaries;
- Increase cash-based programming when appropriate;
- **In order to increase cost-effectiveness Norad will:**
- Analyse funding streams
- Clear guidance
- Encourage innovative projects aiming to reach marginalised groups;
- Consider more direct partnerships
- Consider strategic partnerships

Norad

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Context sensitivity

Examples of what civil society actors can do to strengthen context sensitivity

- Contextual understanding
- Apply appropriate tools in order to ensure conflict-sensitive planning and programming;
- Consider how the intervention and the context are likely to affect each other
- Do no harm.
- **In order to strengthen context sensitivity Norad will:**
- Support civil society actors that demonstrate relevant contextual competence and experience;
- See long-term development cooperation and humanitarian assistance through civil society actors in context.
- Increase dialogue and coordination with selected embassies regarding context analysis and priorities for civil society support.


The principles will be launched this spring

- These principles will form a cohesive framework for Norad's partnerships with civil society.
- They will provide guidance and direction for Norad's planning of the overall support to civil society and provide backdrop for dialogue.
- They will apply to all Norad's support to civil society.

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From donors to partners?
Norwegian support to civil society strengthening

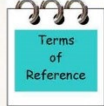
Is aid through Norwegian organisations an effective instrument?



CMI in Association with Nordic Consulting Group and Ternstrom Consulting

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Evaluation Purpose



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- How do they work with their civil society partners?
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How did we do it?



- Document review
- Interviews with sample of Norwegian CSOs
- Survey – Norwegian CSOs
- Field visits to Ethiopia, Nepal and Uganda
- Interviews with local partners and beneficiaries
- Workshops


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Norad's civil society grant

- Main instrument for long-term support for civil society strengthening
- Objective: contribute to stronger civil society in developing countries with capacity and ability to
 - Promote democratisation
 - Realise human rights
 - Reduce poverty

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Mapping: Where does the money flow?



- 4-5 % of Norwegian aid is allocated for civil society strengthening, virtually everything through Norwegian organisations
- More than 20% of all Norwegian aid is channelled through Norwegian organisations

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Norwegian aid and civil society in Ethiopia 2006-2015 (NOK million)

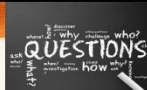
Long term aid for civil society strengthening through Norwegian CSOs	560.0
Through international CSOs and direct to civil society in the recipient country	0.3
Aid from other budget sources channelled through Norwegian and international CSOs and/or directly to local CSOs	672.5
Total Norwegian development aid	2631.5

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- More than 20 Norwegian CSOs channel funds to CSOs in Ethiopia (but 8-10 dominates)
 - Working through international NGOs: Save the Children, Plan;
 - Managing from Norway: FOKUS, ADRA, Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions; and
 - Country office: Norwegian Church Aid, Development Fund, Drylands Coordination Group, Norwegian People's Aid, DIGNI
- The evaluation covered 4 Norwegian CSOs and 7 local partners in Ethiopia

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Key questions



- What is the added value of Norwegian CSOs?
 - Professional/thematic, organisational development, networking
- What are the results of the partnership?
 - Advocacy, service delivery, civil society strengthening

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What do Norwegian organisations bring to the table in Ethiopia?




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- Norwegian organisations believe they do – but are not good at planning for this, telling us how or documenting what it is
- A wide variety of organisations and approaches – from instrumental to intrinsic
- A variety of activities and thematic areas
- Norwegian organisations work through local partners
- Local partners perceive Norwegian partners as friendly, flexible and predictable – but also disagreements

CMI THE SCHULSEN INSTITUTE

Finding added value



- Intermediary between Norad and local organisations
 - Very important role
 - Most are doing very well, has become more important with demands for results, led to more emphasis in partnerships on compliance with donor requirements – but has also had positive spin-offs

CMI THE SCHULSEN INSTITUTE

- Organisational development – strengthening the local partner – strong focus for most
 - Technical support for administrative and organisational development
 - Emphasis on financial management and reporting and less on governance, strategy development
 - Limited attention to exit planning

CMI CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE

- Professional support for programme development and implementation
 - Uneven, some are good
 - Depends on professional competence, understanding of context and commitment
 - knowledge and advocacy skills on global development issues, and access to international networks

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Results

What is achieved?

- Activities are implemented and outputs delivered - short-term objectives achieved
- Emphasis on service delivery and strengthening of local individuals, groups and informal networks
 - Small associations have developed into strong organisations, empowerment of citizens
 - Marginal/less developed areas, vulnerable groups

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- Adapting to restrictive space - Less attention to national advocacy – emphasis on «soft» advocacy
 - Child rights
 - Genital mutilation
- Increasing cooperation with government, alignment with their policy priorities
- Increased sustainability in service delivery?

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Strengthening civil society?

- Capacity building of diverse set of Ethiopian CSOs
 - Better position to respond to needs
 - Better management and networking abilities
- Increased engagement with government by Ethiopian partners, improved implementation of pro-poor policies
- Norwegian CSOs strengthen individual civil society organisations in Ethiopia – and civil society – one way or the other

CMI CMI
MICHELSEN
INSTITUTE

Norwegian partnership approach and results

- International NGOs/big Norwegian CSOs:
 - extensive, impact, especially in relation to service delivery
- Smaller Norwegian CSOs:
 - depth, strengthen partner (depending on likeminded relations, contextual knowledge, commitments)

CMI CMI
MICHELSEN
INSTITUTE

Civil Society Support through Norwegian CSOs

What Now?

A photograph of a road that splits into two paths, one leading towards the viewer and the other leading away. A signpost stands at the junction, with a sign that reads 'What Now?'. The background is a blue sky with clouds.

CMI CMI
MICHELSEN
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Emerging contextual changes

- Local partners become stronger and demand greater say and direct transfer of funds
- Donor agencies establish local funding agencies
- Changing Norwegian thematic priorities and management priorities
- Changing political environment in Ethiopia

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Recommendations

A photograph of a spiral-bound notebook. The cover is white with the text 'WHAT TO DO' in large, bold, black letters. Below it, in smaller text, it says 'if you want it DONE RIGHT'.

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- Sharpen purpose of civil society grant
- More strategic use at country level
- More direct transfer to civil society where possible
- Norwegian CSOs must plan for and maximise the use of their value added

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A red pushpin is shown pinning a small white piece of paper onto a larger, textured white surface. The paper has the text "And Finally..." written on it in a black, handwritten-style font. The pushpin is red with a silver-colored metal base.


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Partners in Ethiopia

- Are they in a position to have a greater say in the partnership? Can money and decision-making power be shifted to partners?
- Do they prepare for a partnership with a reduced or different role for the Norwegian partner?


Presentation of Norad's guidelines for civil society support, Ethiopia

07.05.2018

 Norad


**Norad's support to civil society
New Guiding Principles**

Reidun Gjengedal
Civil society department, Norad
Addis Ababa, 24 April 2018




Civil society in the light of the SDGs

- We cannot reach the SDGs without a strong civil society
- A strong civil society is a key feature of any democratic social order and a goal in its own right
- Civil society important in localisation of the SDGs

 Norad

The Guiding Principles:

- 1) Sustainability
- 2) Inclusion
- 3) Partnership
- 4) Legitimacy
- 5) Accountability
- 6) Cost-effectiveness
- 7) Context sensitivity

 Norad

Sustainability

Civil society actors can

- Discuss exit strategy at entry
- Maintain long-term partnerships that go beyond financial support
- Diversify financial foundations

Norad will

- Support actors that have a clear transition strategy for partnerships
- Provide multi-annual funding
- Link humanitarian assistance with long-term development cooperation

 Norad



Inclusion

Civil society actors can

- Hold governments to account
- Provide services and livelihood opportunities
- Open up spaces for voices that are not typically heard
- Work with representatives of marginalized groups

Norad will

- In line with MFA guidance, prioritise *Countries left behind*
- Continue to support civil society effort in social services
- Support an explicit focus on leaving no one behind

Partnership

Civil society actors can

- Ensure that partners are treated with respect and as equals
- Shift money and decision-making power in the partnerships
- Collaborate with social movements, private sector, and local and national governments
- Monitor and evaluate their own added value in any partnership

Norad will

- Seek to harmonise and simplify reporting requirements
- Ensure that results based management allows for flexibility
- Explore further support to selected, local organisations

Legitimacy

Civil society actors can

- Support partners' own agenda
- Ensure that partners have a place around the table
- Connect traditional civil society organisations with social movements
- Seek to work in line with national plans and strategies
- Avoid sitting allowances or per diems as a motivation

Norad will

- Take a broad and contextual view on legitimacy
- Support civil society actors working with the rights of minorities
- Challenge organisations' governance structures



Accountability

Civil society actors can

- Maintain or establish accountability mechanisms
- Disclose information from the organisation
- Embracing failures as opportunities to support future success

Norad will

- Publish information, also in English
- Whistle-blowing, feed-back and reporting channels
- Meet directly with beneficiaries
- Use reporting on results to learn

Cost-effectiveness

Civil society actors can

- Consider thematic and/or geographic concentration
- Critically examine their own cost-effectiveness and their value added
- Increase the percentage of funds reaching beneficiaries

Norad will

- Analyse funding streams
- Encourage innovative projects aiming to reach marginalised groups
- Consider more direct partnerships

Norad

10


Context sensitivity

Civil society actors can

- Contextual understanding
- Apply appropriate tools
- Consider how the intervention and the context are likely to affect each other

Norad will

- Support civil society actors with relevant contextual competence
- Increase dialogue and coordination with selected embassies

Norad

10

Comments by Girma Borishie, Ethiopia

Reflection and comments on “Evaluation of Norwegian Support to strengthen Civil Society in developing Countries through Norwegian CSOs

As a representative of one of the local partners of Norwegian CSOs in Ethiopia, I feel honored and privileged to take part on this very important platform as a panelist. Thank you so very much organizers for offering me this opportunity. As already indicated, my name is Girma Borishie and I’m working as a Commissioner for Development and Social Services Commission of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY-DASSC) for the last five years since 2013.

To start with, it would be unfair if I rush to expressing my reflection without briefly touching upon the fact that the background history of the three main Norwegian CSOs in Ethiopia namely NLM, NMS and NCA were predominantly linked to the life and ministry of the EECMY. The first two are mission oriented agencies while the third one is meant to involve in humanitarian response and poverty alleviation efforts. The age of their partnership with our church EECMY/DASSC ranges from 50-70 years and they were initially invited to Ethiopia by the EECMY in connection with either mission or diakonia/development work or both. Thus, EECMY highly values the contributions of these Norwegian CSOs in the effort of wholistically changing lives of millions of needy people in Ethiopia and we’re so grateful to NORAD who has been channeling funds for such a long time through these agencies with a view to strengthening the capacity of local CSOs and combat poverty.

Having said this as an introductory remark, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the evaluation team for its commendable work. Followings are few points I would like to make:

1. Strength and weakness of foreign support

Strengths

- Source of funding
- Transfer of knowledge & technology
- Diversified Experience sharing opportunities

Weakness:

- Donor/recipient relationship/mindset - unnecessary pressure on local CSO/donor driven planning,
- Unsustainable funding mechanism , sudden cut of budgets
- Is a cause for local CSOs prohibition from involving in advocacy, HR & democracy in eth
- Growing demands and sophistication of planning, monitoring and reporting formats/templates

2. Lessons learnt from Norwegian CSOs & other northern partners

- The importance of talking and walking together as partners in development
- The significance of having a shared vision, mission & core values
- Considering program approach, formation of consortia to access more funds
- Sustainable and long term partnership –mutuality

3. Impact of working in close cooperation with gov’t on local CSOs strengthening

- Legal environment not inviting CSOs to take part in advocacy, HR etc
- Churches & their development agencies trying to influence the understanding of govt authorities towards local CSOs –to create space for CSOs to involve in

4. Regarding Objectives of Strengthening local CSOs

As can be seen from the evaluation report, the main objective of strengthening local CSOs with NORAD administered civil society funds is to enhance their ability to actively involve in democratization process, realization of human rights and poverty reduction efforts; and the team found out that less achievement

has been registered in the first two areas. In my view, one of the major reasons for the Norwegian CSOs' failure to creating enabling environment for local CSOs largely embedded in the very fact that these organizations have been and still are being governed by the Charities and societies proclamation and subsequent directives which do not allow any NGO or CSO raising over 10% of its total income from abroad, to involve in issues pertaining to advocacy, democracy, and human rights. I think, this reality on the ground need to be more emphasized in the evaluation document in relation to the question why independent local CSOs promoting democracy and human rights could not be sufficiently realized through Norwegian support as may be anticipated.

5. Intermediary role & Capacity building

The liaisoning role played by Norwegian organizations in Ethiopia between NORAD/Digni and various Ethiopian CSOs is very crucial. I know almost all INGOs that have country level offices here in Ethiopia to get their objectives realized through local NGOs/CSOs are considered as intermediary organizations. Nevertheless, the practical role of these organizations actually goes beyond intermediary services of just transferring funds and guidelines. As pointed out in the report, they persistently involve in the enhancement of institutional capacities of the local CSOs and also assist them technically in the actual implementation sites taking all risks of traveling to and staying at geographically and culturally hard- to-reach areas. This in my opinion is a pragmatic encouragement to strengthen local societies and their visibility among the community while also contributing towards increased effectiveness of interventions.

6. Value addition

On top of the evaluation findings in this perspective, the new move of some of the Norwegian organizations to establish a consortium to work together collaboratively with local CSOs and other like-minded INGOs is a great value addition worth mentioning. This arrangement helps local civil society organizations to get good exposure, experience and opportunities to access diversified funding sources, which otherwise is hardly possible. The support these Norwegian agencies are offering to local churches and other faith communities with an aim of promoting peace, justice, & tolerance, is another area where the presence of these organizations adds value. I think, this is another feasible way of promoting NORAD's objective as religious organizations in one aspect belong to civil societies sector and are not as such restricted by law from involving in advocacy, democratization and human rights issues. There're spaces for religious organizations to advocate for human rights, social and economic justice and also environmental stewardship. I know from practice that situations may require robust commitment on the part of the religious leaders to loudly voice for the voiceless!

7. In a nutshell, I agree with the concluding evaluation recommendations that emphasizes the continuation of Norwegian CSOs presence in Ethiopia with enhanced commitment to strengthening local CSOs in an innovative manner in the area of capacity building, high level professional assistance, and fund raising efforts through various mechanisms including consortium formations.

Institutional capacity enhancement is also very critical calling for the attention of Norwegian CSOs in the future without which competitiveness and delivery of quality services by local CSOs would be so difficult. Tendency of some of the Norwegian CSOs to shift from strengthening local CSOs to directly working with government institutions and communities need to be critically reviewed and reconsidered. From experience, I learnt that a kind of donor-recipient relationship emanates not from the nature/policy of the organizations as such, but it rather comes from distinctive characteristics and attitudes of the leaders of each of these organizations. We have faced such an incidence just once in our partnership with one of these CSOs and the situation is now vitally solved. With regard to direct transfer of funds to local CSOs, it works for relatively big and experienced organizations like EECMY-DASSC, while smaller organization may need closer follow up and assistance to meet requirements.

Comments by Eivind Aalborg, Ethiopia

- What are the strengths and weaknesses in foreign support?
- What are the lessons from partnership with Norwegian and other Northern organizations?
- How does working in close cooperation with the Ethiopia authorities affect the strengthening of civil society and delivery of services?

By Eivind Aalborg, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)

- In NCA we believe that a prerequisite for a positive and democratic development in any given society is a well functioning state, dynamic business sector and a vibrant civil society. Our contribution is into the civil society, but we fully acknowledge the importance of the other sectors!
- NCAs “niche” is to work with other Faith based organizations in Ethiopia. The reason why we do this, is that they are Ethiopian organizations, deeply rooted in the society, are “everywhere” and have a potential to influence both people and society. Many of the FBO also belong to the ACT Alliance together with NCA
- One important point: I think that a prerequisite for the strengthening of the civil society, is “real” or “genuine partnership” – in other words a partnership between “equals”. I don’t believe in instrumental approach. You and your partners must belong to the same network, family, area of work etc.; FBO, labor unions, sport, culture etc. are good examples
 - o A possible weakness when it comes to foreign support, is of course that we dominate, influence and set the agenda for our local partners.
 - o That is why “genuine partnership” is so important. As FBOs and members of the ACT alliance – my experience is that the relationship between NCA and e.g. DASSC is robust and between equals, and that we are able to solve disagreements between us in a constructive way – and within the framework of our existing partnership.
- One challenge is that the support from the civil society allocation in Norad is focused on thematic issues like, climate issues, wash, gender etc. We have limited space in the budget to work on more pure organizational issues. On the other hand – support to good program activities is also a support to the building of professional local institutions and a strong civil society!
- Our lessons from partnering with Ethiopia organizations is excellent. But the partnership should be based on
 - o A long-lasting partnership. We are not “swopping partners”. NCA has been a partner with EECMY-DASSC for a long time. Of course different project, geographic areas – but same partner
 - o We need a presence in the country and establish a close relationship to our partners
 - o We need competence staff that can follow up and have a critical and constructive dialogue with our partners. Knowledge on relevant thematic areas and compliance (to donor requirements) is key
 - o Not focusing on “policing” of partners – but on constructive cooperation where we are developing projects and programs together with high quality, that can make a difference for people

- Openness to take up problems and critical issues – both ways! I am sure that DASSC has not always been happy with NCA!

I do believe that cooperation based on these principles, are contribution to building strong institutions.

Locally there is a good working relationship between us, our partners and the government structures. We always sign a tripartite agreements between us. The biggest challenges is that this can be a time consuming process, and often delay the implementation.

When it comes to our license from the Ethiopian government, we have a couple of challenges:

- Support to partners, so we can strengthen them as institutions, will normally be categorized as “administration”, and will create problems for us when it come to the 30/70 regulations.
- We are also pushed to implement ourselves, not only being a “donor”. This is a challenge for us, a partner-based organization. This has a potential over time to undermine the local civil society.

From Donors to Partners?

Reflection on the Evaluation of Norwegian Support to Strengthen Civil Society in Developing Countries through Norwegian Civil Society Organizations

Feleke Tadele, PhD
24 April 2018

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Approaches to conduct the reflection.....

U/1301 2

Reflection.....

The Evaluation Methods/ Approaches:

- The Evaluation methods are comprehensive and mixed. The Evaluation has covered a fair deal of 19 Norwegian CSOs that received NORAD support for civil society strengthening in Ethiopia. This mainly applied in particular to the biggest ones; Norwegian Church Aid, Save the Children and the Development Fund.

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Reflection...

- The Evaluation examined the effects of using Norwegian civil society organizations as intermediaries through different partnership/ collaboration approaches to strengthen the civil society sector in 'Developing' countries.
- The Evaluation categorized the approach of the Norwegian CSOs in three ways: international network approach, country office approach and bilateral approach being implemented through trade unions, faith-based organizations and secular national NGOs.
- It examined and assessed the partnership contribution of Norwegian CSOs in each of these three main approaches.
- It would have been better to apply the Most Significant Change methods and undertake physical inspection of best practice initiatives to articulate the changes and identify the foot prints of Norwegian CSOs contributions to the CSOs landscape in Ethiopia.

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Reflection.....

- **Relevance:** The Norwegian-funded partnerships are generally found to be relevant in relation to providing services to direct beneficiaries.
- They often align with government/national/partner priorities: the ability and capacity to promote democratization, realization of human rights and poverty reduction.
- The focus on national advocacy is more limited in the partnerships studied, but it found several efforts to mobilize locally and build on these efforts to influence changes at the national level, e.g. in relation to the rights of people with disabilities.

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Reflection....

- The evaluation revealed that the Norwegian civil society support is broadly relevant in relation to local needs, priorities and possibilities. It is also in line with the thematic priorities of the Norwegian development cooperation and the broad grant scheme rules guiding Nored's civil society allocations.

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Reflection....

- Historically, Norway's support to CSOs in Ethiopia has been relevant and significant. It has begun since the 1960s. The Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI) was founded in 1970 through the initiative of the Norwegian and Swedish Save the Children organizations seconded by the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia. The Institute got its name from the Norwegian physician, Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen, who first described the leprosy bacillus (*Mycobacterium leprae*). AHRI was established as a biomedical research institute located next to the Ali Africa Leprosy Rehabilitation and Training Hospital (ALERT). Example of such best practices could have been identified by the current evaluation.

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Reflection....

Impact: Resources Allocations

- The volume of support from the Nored administered civil society grant has increased from about NOK 1 billion in 2008 to NOK 1.9 billion in 2015. The volume has remained relatively constant as a share of the Norwegian development budget at 4-5%. This is very positive.
- The evaluation identified that the volume of support provided for Norwegian support to civil society strengthening is large. The Nored civil society grant is an important mechanism to contribute to a stronger civil society with the ability and capacity to promote democratization, realization of human rights and poverty reduction (environment).

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Reflection.....

Impact/ Added Values/ coordinated :

- ▶ All the Norwegian organizations studied have contributed to strengthening civil society in Ethiopia - in one way or another. Local partners have been strengthened, more grassroots organizations have been formed, and individuals have been empowered.
- ▶ However, the evaluation could not articulate the critical mass of changes / impacts that have been imparted by the CSOs as the initiatives seem to have been fragmented and not well knitted to demonstrate greater IMPACT.

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Reflection.....

Influence:

- ▶ The evaluation found less evidence on the results in relation to civil society strengthening and contribution to good political governance. There is much less attention given to such higher level outcomes in reports from Norwegian CSO and their partners. There are also **deficiencies in most partnerships in terms of how they are contributing to a vibrant, national civil society capable of affecting and altering outcomes on politically sensitive topics.** While the most direct project activities are well planned and delivered; the contributions of such results to broader aims and objectives were not well stated by the evaluation.

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Reflection.....

Impact/ Challenges :

- ▶ There is limited country strategic framework for Norwegian civil society support at country level - They have had little knowledge base on the needs and opportunities of country contexts to make strategic choices and securing optimal impact. The civil society portfolio in Ethiopia is also highly fragmented between the respective Norwegian civil society organizations and among the various departments : the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Embassies and Norad.

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Reflection.....

- ▶ Weak coordination and high level of fragmentation are part of a broader systemic feature in the Norwegian development aid sector - more than a problem for individual Norwegian CSOs.
- ▶ The partnerships and partnership models have mostly remained unchanged. Several partnerships have lasted for many years and even decades. Despite noble partnership principles, asymmetries of power between a donor and recipient remain as an issue. This calls for more innovative ways of using the partnership model to strengthen civil society. This presupposes a shift to a more strategic use of Norad's civil society grant.

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The Way Forward ...

1. More coherent country level strategic framework , shared TOC and Strategic Intent
2. More internal coordination , learning, documentation of best practices among Norwegian CSOs and its partners.
3. More Focused and Impactful Programming- limited thematic niches/ innovation
4. More visibility and increased profile to influence policies and practices
5. A shift in approaches beyond intermediaries/ *Support to CBOs/ Indigenous Institutions... Two ways Learning ...

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The Future....3 "I"s

Impact	Innovation	Influence
More Focused and Impactful Program Partnership	Innovative Work	More systematic and Greater Visibility

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Reflection....

- The End..
- Thank You...

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