



***Changing dynamics and strategies in cooperation
and partnership for sustainable funding between local
actors in the field of Development***

REPORT

**of the
CIDSE – Caritas Europa Regional Seminar**

Arusha/Tanzania, 13-16 November 2007

CIDSE (International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity) is a coalition of 16 Catholic development agencies in Europe and North America which share a common vision on poverty eradication and social justice and a common strategy on development programmes, development education and advocacy. CIDSE's advocacy work covers trade and food security, resources for development, global governance, EU development policy, climate change and the private sector. <http://www.cidse.org> - 16 rue Stévin, B-1000 Brussels.

Caritas Europa is one of the seven regions of Caritas Internationalis and brings together 48 organisations, which are active in 44 European countries. Caritas Europa focuses its activities on issues relating to poverty and social inequality, and issues of migration and asylum, all across the European Union and in the larger Europe. The organisation is strongly involved in supporting the activities of its members in international cooperation, emergency humanitarian relief and development. <http://www.caritas-europa.org> - 4 Rue De Pascale, B-1040 Brussels

PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR

With the Monterrey and Paris Declaration processes, the international donor community has committed to improve the quantity and quality of its development assistance. This has led donors to decentralise funds and develop new aid modalities. The growing recognition of the importance of local ownership in generating sustainable livelihoods and the increasing attention paid to the efficiency of the aid delivery system have been at the heart of these reforms intended to deliver not only more but also better aid.

It is, however, still unclear what impact these reforms will have in practice. The ability of a multiplicity of actors to cooperate within this new development framework and their capacity to respond to the emerging challenges and opportunities will determine the success or failure of donor efforts to deliver a more efficient, as well as effective, development assistance.

At this crucial moment of change, the CIDSE-Caritas Europa Regional Seminar created a space for reflection and joint learning for its member organisations and their partners. The Seminar, organised in Arusha, Tanzania on 13-16 November 2007 brought together International NGOs from Europe and local civil society organisations (CSOs)* from Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia, as well as government officials from these five countries and the international donor community.

Over the four days, participants discussed the impact of the new trends in development funding and how these affected the prospects of improving policy dialogue and project cooperation between civil society, governments and the international donor community. Guided by the Catholic principles of partnership and solidarity, the CIDSE and Caritas Europa networks had a constructive exchange on the respective roles of local CSOs and their Northern counterparts and addressed the coherence and complementarities between their actions at the local, national and international level.

A series of workshops allowed all participants to get actively involved in the discussions, sharing personal experiences and observations in smaller groups. The exchange was greatly enriched by the diversity of the participants who shaped and led the course of the discussions. The seminar established the precedent for a fruitful dialogue between the different actors, nourishing in particular the neglected local civil society-government relation.

During the four day event, participants identified recommendations towards individual CIDSE and Caritas Europa member organisations, their partners in Africa, and towards donors and government authorities. Seminar participants have committed themselves to taking forward the learning and ideas for better cooperation between the four parties represented at the Seminar.

Some participants are already putting into practice the Seminar's recommendations. One member organisation has started a consultation process across the network to identify challenges faced by Southern partners in view of the changing dynamics of the international aid environment. CIDSE and Caritas Europa are also actively implementing the recommendations from the Seminar. The two networks are advocating in Brussels for an EC budget support that will not undermine but promote the role of their partners in the South.

** "Northern CSOs" and "International NGOs" are used interchangeably in this report. "local CSOs" and "local NGOs" are also used interchangeably.*

SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to CIDSE/ CE Member Organisations and for joint actions as networks

Seminar participants agreed that a list of more specific recommendations towards better strategies of cooperation and partnership for access to sustainable development funding would also be developed within individual CIDSE-Caritas Europa Member Organisations.

1. Improve planning and strategic coordination at a bilateral (between individual Northern and Southern partners), as well as network, level to enhance support for local initiatives.

- Whilst promoting local solutions to local problems, allow for information sharing within and across different countries and regions. Foster strategic thinking on changing trends and their concrete impact on development actors by creating more space for joint learning.
- Support the capacity of local civil society to take on roles of monitoring of governments in service delivery and use of aid resources, especially budget support. When looking at strengthening technical or political capacity with local NGOs (e.g. training), consider synergies with others within the CIDSE / Caritas networks.
- Adopt an innovative approach to strike the balance between taking the lead when well placed to do so or if it is useful for local partners and respecting the principle of subsidiary (e.g. be creative in setting up local presence, consider establishing joint offices with local partners).
- Ensure the coherence of advocacy work carried out at all levels: local, national (Europe & Africa) and international to create greater synergies (e.g. CIDSE-CE to lobby the European Parliament for greater decision making authority being accorded to Delegations and field offices).
- Weaken the salience of funding in defining partnerships by creating stronger North-South alliances and a common strategic vision with a view to developing joint advocacy positions.

2. Facilitate the participation of partners in the South, and in particular smaller grassroots organisations, in engaging with donors and their respective governments on policy dialogue and project work.

- Ensure that local NGOs have access to timely and intelligible information on what is happening in their region regarding funding opportunities and policy dialogue. Support partners' efforts in establishing effective national platforms.
- Invest in strengthening local NGOs' capacity to access funding directly for their concrete development actions, lobby and advocacy, as well as for networking and coordination (e.g. ensure the appointment / recruitment of strong leaders for coordinating the development work carried out by church structures).
- Assist partners in collecting and sharing best practice examples of fruitful collaboration and dialogue with donors and national governments of aid recipient countries. Support local organisations' capacity to provide evidence (quantitative/qualitative) on impact of their project work and advocacy activities.

Recommendations to Partner Organisations in South-Eastern Africa

The following recommendations towards better strategies of cooperation and partnership for access to development funding were proposed by the Seminar participants for the consideration of Civil Society Organisations in Africa. More than 30 representatives from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia participated in the Seminar.

1. Develop strategies in cooperation and partnerships to attain sustainability

- Formulate strategies for financial sustainability (e.g. develop funding strategies, diversify sources of funding). Assess capacity needs and define what support is needed from Northern partners in order to be able to cooperate locally with a larger array of actors, including governments, private sector, international donors etc.
- Suggest innovative models for cooperation with Northern partners (e.g. develop new models for joint planning and implementation, create consortia).

2. Ensure better dialogue and cooperation with government and local authorities to identify entry points for cooperation. Explore converging objectives.

- Seek access to information on government planning and policy development processes to maximise opportunities for making contributions to policy debates. Identify where civil society has grassroots expertise and/or particular experience which could add new insights for planners.
- Develop programmes and strategies that are complementary to government priorities where possible and in accordance with your mission and values.

3. Improve engagement with development actors, in particular at the national level

- Advocate at the national level for more transparency and accountability for the use of public funds. Engage with other actors to develop systems for circular accountability. Sound monitoring systems supported by "best practice" manuals could provide practical models/prototypes, to enhance local/regional government monitoring systems.
- Invest in networking and information sharing at national level. Engage in establishing strong national platforms (general advocacy and / or sectoral specific issues) to coordinate lobby efforts and raise civil society's profile as credible and articulate bodies with a valuable perspective to contribute to policy and programming debate.
- Maintain relevance by adapting to new trends in development cooperation, but do not simply accept funding trends and their challenges. Be pro-active and try to change the course in your direction.
- Build capacity for evidence-based advocacy to improve visibility and profile.
- Put in place mechanisms for "self-regulation" to establish trust (e.g. develop own code of conduct/best practice and internal policies).

Recommendations towards Donors

European Commission (EC) Delegation representatives (EC Delegations in Tanzania and Uganda) and European bilateral donors (Royal Dutch Embassy, Royal Embassy of Sweden) operating in the region represented the voice of the international donor community during the CIDSE-Caritas Europa Regional Seminar. Based on the experiences discussed during the Seminar workshops, participants identified several recommendations to improve the essential cooperation with the international donor community.

1. Ensure that new aid modalities do not undermine but promote democratic ownership and national accountability in partner countries.

- Ensure that CSO activities are not adversely affected by the direct transfer of aid funds to national governments, especially in countries where general budget support is the preferred aid modality.
- Avoid that certain sectors, not identified as government priorities but recognized as key for poverty reduction by local stakeholders, receive less funding. At a time when donors are focusing on certain sectors and pooling funds together, a closer coordination among donors and regular dialogue with local civil society organisations is essential to ensure that concerns over the efficiency do not hinder the pro-poor impact of development assistance.

2. Invest more human and financial resources to deepen the engagement with civil society. Multiply efforts to reach out to smaller local and grassroots organisations.

- Donors and civil society should jointly identify clear objectives and follow up, establishing a structured dialogue.
- Recognise the need for a more flexible framework to engage with civil society, given the diversity within civil society players and the different roles that they undertake.
- Provide guidance to staff on good practices and procedures to follow for a meaningful engagement with civil society.

3. Improve the opportunities for and the quality of cooperation

- Specify entry points for CSOs to cooperate with donors. Proactive dissemination of information on practical issues such as programming, calls, reporting and their implications will be a first step in this direction.
- Encourage governments of partner countries to cooperate with local civil society organisations at all stages of the development process to ensure real democratic ownership.
- Create more space for civil society to engage in policy dialogue, monitoring and budget tracking, as well as in impact evaluations and evaluation proposals. Support systems of circular accountability.
- Explore funding modalities that are better adapted to local CSOs' needs. Consider providing funding at different levels to allow smaller grassroots organisations' access to these resources.
- Support local CSOs' options for financial sustainability (e.g. enhance core funding within agreed timeframe, improve predictability of financial assistance).
- Allocate more funding for institutional and capacity development of local CSOs.

Recommendations towards the Governments

Based on the experiences discussed during the Seminar workshops, participants identified several recommendations to encourage the currently feeble yet vital cooperation between local civil society organisations and the national governments of aid recipient countries. Government representatives from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda participated in the Seminar.

1. Reach out to civil society as true partners in development cooperation: establish trust and dialogue

- Establish an open and structured dialogue. Define clear objectives and ground rules. When inviting local CSOs to present proposals, establish balanced (unbiased) appraisals and awarding committees, including not only government officials, but also independent actors.
- Create forums and mechanisms for effective information sharing, dialogue and cooperation at all levels with civil society. Have transparent regulations for CSOs to establish trust and a meaningful engagement with civil society.
- Support local CSOs in their strategy for financial sustainability by providing funding for their institutional development and project implementation.
- Include local CSOs in national development strategising, planning and implementation (to ensure democratic ownership of the development process, as well as complementarity and coherence of actions); Put the political rhetoric into practice.
- Allow community consultation on policy, make resources available for a quality process and accommodate community innovations and priorities.
- Define percentage of government budgets that are targeted towards CSO action, in particular for capacity development and project implementation.

2. Be the gate keeper of democratic ownership and accountability as the leading national development actor.

- Ask donors to adhere to certain standards such as more predictable disbursements of funds, better alignment with national poverty reduction strategies and commitment to mutual accountability etc.
- Encourage a responsible and effective use of public funds. Develop and implement together with other stakeholders systems of circular accountability.

13 NOVEMBER

INFORMATIVE AND PREPARATORY SESSION

Following the opening by CIDSE and Caritas Europa officials and the presentation of the facilitators, the first day of the Seminar started with an informative session on new trends in funding and the resulting challenges and opportunities for civil society organisations in the North and in the South.



New trends in funding

Izabella Toth, Institutional Funds Policy Officer at Cordaid and convenor of the CIDSE-Caritas Europa Co-financing working group, started by giving an overview of the changing context of aid. She listed the growing reliance of the international donor community on new aid modalities such as general budget support, the use of 'vertical funds', regional and decentralised funds to be amongst the most influential trends, changing the dynamics of development cooperation. Within this new aid environment, the following two sets of actions were identified in order to facilitate Southern civil society's access to sustainable funding:

- 1) Active engagement by Southern CSOs in the local development debate at policy, programming and implementation level.
- 2) Developing new ways of fruitful cooperation between International NGOs (INGOs), their partners and (new) development actors as well as between Governments, the private sector and civil society.

The following speaker, Richards Mkwapatira, from the Diocesan Secretary at Zomba Cadecom, focused on the challenges and opportunities set by the new funding environment. He stressed that there must be closer cooperation between CSOs and International NGOs in order to avert any uncertainties in funding which would affect service delivery to the already marginalised. He also noted some positive aspects that these changes might lead to and emphasised the opportunity for a closer collaboration with governments and the prospects for more space for CSOs' participation in policy formulation. Mr. Mkwapatira ended his presentation by stating that the need for close cooperation amongst CSOs can not be overemphasised and must be taken as fundamental for success.

Fruitful collaboration experiences

Piet Spaarman, Sector Manager for Emergency Aid and Reconstruction at Cordaid and steering group member of the CIDSE Africa network, presented a collection of concrete examples of fruitful collaboration between civil society and governments/donors to open the debate on the respective roles of development partners and the added value of their cooperation.

Mr. Spaarman explained that CSOs around the world, with their proximity to the communities, are able to articulate the specific interests of the people targeted by development assistance. Combined with their know-how and track record, local civil society could make a valuable contribution in a variety of areas (humanitarian aid, reconstruction and long-term development) and play an important role in the design of policies, their implementation, assessment and monitoring. He identified improved efficiency and effectiveness of joint interventions, greater accountability and legitimacy and bridging the critical 'gap' between strategic goals and

their practical realisation as the most important considerations behind the need to strengthen cooperation between civil society, governments and donors.

As a reaction to Piet Spaarman's and Izabella Toth's presentation the participants raised several issues. The relationship between Northern and Southern civil society organisations would need to be more closely examined (Northern organisations acting as donors, Northern organisations acting as local NGOs), and new modalities for cooperation between Northern and Southern organisations formulated. At the same time, the capacity of Southern organisations to lobby and advocate, to be able to answer donor requirements during the formulation and implementation of actions and to meet pre-financing or co-financing requirements, needed to be strengthened. Generally, NGOs – both in the North and South – should measure the results of impact evidence. When looking at aspects of visibility of NGO actions (mainly locally), it was suggested to scale up successful models and draw on consortia actions. The problem of brain drain faced by local organisations was also raised during the discussions. It was suggested that this is linked to the paradox of the changing funding environment, intended to empower aid recipients through direct access to funds. In reality, however, local civil society organisations struggle with significant challenges in terms of contract management (due to financial regulations of donors). The plenary ended with some reflection on the question: 'What window of opportunity do we have to influence the Paris agenda?'

In the afternoon session, the plenary split into smaller groups to identify discussion questions around the following two sets of issues: 1) Access to sustainable funding and dialogue and 2) Challenges, resources and opportunities for cooperation among development partners.

The working group discussions were followed by a reception and press event organised in the evening.

Press event

Christiane Overkamp (CIDSE Secretary General), Father Joseph Mpinganjira (Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference Malawi), Dr. Maria Nannyonga Musoke (Programme Coordinator at Nsambya Community AIDS Care), Baraka John Mwabenga (Executive Secretary of MIICO) and Piet Spaarman (Sector Manager Emergency Aid & Reconstruction with Cordaid) were part of the panel presenting the objectives of the Seminar and answering the questions from the press. Journalists from six different news agencies with mainly Tanzanian coverage (ITV, Channel Ten, Citizen, East African, Arusha Times, Radio One, Danish freelance journalist) attended the event. For participants and especially Tanzanian partners, this was a unique opportunity for networking. A CIDSE-Caritas Europa press release was issued in Brussels and articles (in English) were published in the Arusha Times and Citizen newspapers in Tanzania.



14 NOVEMBER

DISCUSSIONS WITH DONORS AND GOVERNMENTS

Case study evidence on fruitful collaboration

The previous day's exchange on civil society experiences of fruitful collaboration between development actors led to the elaboration of several case studies. Fryson A. Peter Chodzi, CAYO & CSCQBE, presented an overview and analysis of these cases.

Panel discussion on Current Modalities of Cooperation with Civil Society

Following these inspiring examples, Dorothée Klüppel from Misereor moderated two sets of panel discussions, each comprised of a donor, government and civil society representative.

Jeannette Higham, from the EC Delegation in Uganda started with a presentation on 'Partnership with Civil Society,' emphasising the particular role that local civil society plays in development and the EC's increased efforts to facilitate and encourage participation by smaller rural and grassroots organisations. Following her presentation, Fortatus J. Mbiro, from the Ministry of Finance in Tanzania, offered his government's perspective, depicting the 'Tanzanian experience'. While acknowledging the important role played by CSOs in presenting the voice of local communities during the Joint Assistance Strategy exercise, he affirmed that this role of representation brings with it certain responsibilities. CSOs should be accountable to their constituents and the government for their actions and use of public resources. Baraka J.



Mwabenga of MIICO, as the last speaker of the first panel, reacted to the two presentations made and invited the speakers to reflect on why common aspirations of collaboration do not translate into practice.

In the second panel, Josephine Mwangi Mweki of SIDA, from the Royal Swedish Embassy, focused on the normative role of local CSOs as 'watchdogs' and 'drivers for change', and named multiple ways in which the cooperation with governments could be improved. Jackson Kinyanyui, from the Ministry of Finance Kenya, spoke about the government having developed a deeper sense and appreciation of the need to offer effective leadership and to enhance collaboration with its development partners. This would be necessary in order to speedily implement the important development agenda in which 'civil society is viewed as a window through which donors and governments with partners engage in pursuit of development objectives'. Based on the experience with the Nsambya HIV/AIDS Home Care Centre, Dr. Maria Nannyonga Musoke pointed at challenges when working with donors and the government: 'There are unrealistic demands on Programmes especially when donors need numbers', and although the government uses the project in its planning for resource mobilisation they would not inform on when funds are received. Consequently, she recommends joint planning and information sharing among CSOs and donors/governments.

The Q&A session following the panel discussions began with one of the participants asking what governments would do to ensure that the new emerging donors adhere to the Paris Declaration. Jackson Kinyanjui reacted to this query by pointing out that donors like China fund a number of projects with far less bureaucratic burden and conditions whereas with traditional Western donors it can take three to six years to get a project off the ground.

The debate continued with some participants pointing out the possible challenges set by General Budget Support on country ownership. With little, if any, precedence of government-local civil society cooperation and

advocacy dialogue, this arrangement, they feared, would erode funding for what they considered as essential projects. To the question of how the European Commission would guarantee that civil society has access to aid resources channeled directly to governments, Ingeborg Veller, Non State Actors Liaison at the European Commission Delegation in Tanzania, responded by referring to the EC guidelines developed in 2007 to better coordinate efforts towards CSOs, to be more transparent and to clarify funding opportunities and project information. Jeannette Higham, on the other hand, reminded participants to be 'persistent' in their work with donors and governments, especially in their monitoring role and when it comes to corruption and access to information. Goodluck Moshia, Economist at the Embassy of the Netherlands in Tanzania, also added that the 'proliferation of CSOs' is also an important challenge. He acknowledged that competition for resources is higher whilst the window of opportunities remains the same.

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1

Access to funding within the context of budget support and other new trends

Background

The international aid environment is changing, bringing about new trends that bear potentials and risks for northern development NGOs as well as for their partners in the south.

The probably most widely-discussed and important recent trend in international aid delivery is the growing reliance of the ODA donor community on **General Budget Support** (GBS), directly contributing to a partner government's budget. As of 2004, the World bank delivered over half (52,2%), and the European Commission more than one third (35,1%), of their ODA through GBS, with an increasing tendency. GBS appears to be an easily-manageable instrument for donors to comply with commitments to raise ODA, and it is expected to be more effective than programme/project aid, especially regarding transaction costs, ownership, accountability and donor coordination. Evaluations of the first GBS experiences, however, deliver a mixed picture of the performance of GBS as strategy for development, markedly in the areas of poverty reduction and democratic governance. Since GBS strengthens the recipient government's role and responsibility, the effectiveness of GBS depends on the quality of the national development strategies to be financed in the recipient countries. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) engaged in development, which in the context of programme and project aid were more directly involved in the planning and implementation of actions, are facing challenges; in the context of GBS, they tend to see the range of activities they have been traditionally involved in reduced to advocacy and empowerment of local civil society.

For European development NGOs, the **deconcentration** of project management responsibilities by the EC from Brussels to the local delegations brought about a series of new chances and challenges. On the one hand there is the proximity of the EU-officials to the implementing organisations, target groups and final beneficiaries in the south; on the other hand, rules and criteria for EC aid delivery undergo a more differentiated interpretation process when managed by over 100 delegations in the field. In this process, European NGOs tend to loose importance as access channels to EC funding, and to acquire weight in the field of advice and lobbying for improved access to funding for their southern partners.

Other recent phenomena linked to donors' aid effectiveness agenda are the **pooling of funds** and the growing trend of **channeling funds through big UN institutions** rather than through NGO structures both aiming at economies of scale and reduction of transaction costs, turning rules and criteria for access to funding for NGOs (in the first case) more complex, and reducing (in the second case) available funding volumes. Despite these potential challenges, the growing attention paid to aid effectiveness by donors could also open a window for more dialogue and cooperation in programming and service delivery given the local expertise NGOs have built up by working with people and communities at the grassroots level.

Last but not least in Africa **China as new donor** is challenging the traditional (western) aid donor community, by offering huge volumes of funds at extremely favourable conditions for the recipient countries. While many analysts welcome the competition in the supply of foreign aid that shatters oligopolistic conditionalities, others point at the very obvious underlying motivation driven by the need for cheap raw materials and the possible decay of certain professional standards (e.g. focus on poverty reduction, cross-cutting issues, good governance-criteria) that evolved under the traditional western aid delivery regime.

Questions for Discussion

1. What impacts do the new trends have on development NGOs' structures, their missions and visions?
2. Are there other new factors that impact on development NGOs and their conditions of access to funding?
3. What are the potentials and risks for European NGOs and their southern partners if they are expected to shift activities from service delivery towards capacity-building and advocacy/lobbying? What does this evolution require?
4. What are the impacts of the "other new trends"— what can be done to minimise risks? What are the positive chances/potentials that reside in these tendencies?
5. What impacts are to be expected on the cooperation modalities between CIDSE / CE MO and their partners?

OUTCOMES

New trends and aid modalities can make an effective contribution to the eradication of poverty and achievement of the MDGs, if they are embedded within democratic frameworks and guarantee that the ones targeted by them can be authors of their own development. This would require deepening the engagement and cooperation between development partners.

Key challenges	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of mistrust, suspicion and questions about accountability between the actors; • The problem of corruption within the government institutions: how to deal with that. The fear exists that genuine NGOs will not get access to funds due to this. • Recognition of civil society's role by government and donors (e.g. monitoring mechanisms). • The problem of the conditionalities (also unwritten) • Lack of available and timely information • The lack of capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Correctly interpret the available information ○ No equipment to access information ○ Use the donors' rules and regulations – reporting, proposal writing etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct access to funds for local CSOs due to deconcentration of funding opportunities; • Access to fund can be faster: no long waiting periods until you start the action. • With deconcentration, CSOs can deal with staff present locally, who understand local realities and priorities; • Collaboration between CSOs and national government (and local authorities): opportunity for both parties! • Recognition of civil society's role by Government and donors is easier. • Partnerships (consortium) between North and South will enhance confidence & trust by donors; • Closer partnership of all stakeholders (CSO, government, donors etc.) • Church organisations are privileged by being a registered organisation (experience, structure and trust)

Recommendations towards International NGOs:

- Formulate new models for cooperation (e.g. creating consortia, memorandums of understanding between partners, joint planning and implementation).
- Do evidence based advocacy, in cooperation with your partners.
- Invest in capacity development of the partner organisations towards access to information, sharing, donors' rules and regulations, advocacy and lobby.
- Facilitate mobilisation of resources at donors' level for capacity development in the South.
- Develop and implement together with other actors systems for circular accountability.

Recommendations towards local CSOs:

- Dare to take risks, try out new ways, be visible with what you are doing, and be the best at what you are doing, present your vision and mission the most attractive way you can.
- Formulate new models for cooperation (e.g. creating consortia, memorandums of understanding between INGOs and partner organisations, joint planning and implementation).
- Create forums & mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation at all levels with the Government.
- Establish working relationships with Government bodies in charge of resources (line Ministries, Treasury).
- Invest in networking, information sharing.
- Do not simply accept imposed challenges, but be pro-active and try to change the course in your direction of funding trends.
- Do evidence based advocacy.
- Maintain relevance by adapting to changes and looking for innovative ways (e.g. to have alternative sources of funding: Government, private sector, external donors).
- Where possible and in accordance with values and mission, develop programmes and strategies that are complementary to Government priorities.
- Develop and implement together with other actors systems for circular accountability.

Recommendations towards Governments:

- See CSOs in your country as true partners in cooperation: establish trust.
- Create forums & mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation at all levels with CSOs.
- Include local CSOs in national development strategising, planning and implementation (to ensure complementarity and coherence of actions); Put the political rhetoric into practice.
- Allow community consultation and accommodate community innovations and priorities.
- Define percentage of Government budgets that are targeted towards CSO action, in particular for capacity development and project implementation.
- When inviting local CSOs to present proposals for actions, establish balanced (unbiased) appraisal and awarding committees, including not just Government representatives, but other actors as well (independent).
- Develop and implement together with other actors systems for circular accountability.

Recommendations towards Donors:

- Create forums & mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation at all levels with CSOs (information sharing about funding possibilities, criteria for eligibility, communication with CSOs in planning and implementation).
- Encourage Government to cooperate with CSOs.
- Provide funding for capacity development for local CSOs.
- Define percentage of donors' budgets that are targeted towards CSO action (capacity development and implementation).
- Develop and implement together with other actors systems for circular accountability.

Focussing on few core recommendations, participants explored concrete implications and measures for partner and CIDSE-Caritas Europa member organisations (MOs) to take these forward.

Recommendation		Implications		Next Steps	Expected Results
		For Partners	For MOs		
1	Capacity development, better information access and use of information	<p>Conduct needs assessment, identify opportunities and include in early stage in work plan for proposals</p> <p>Seek Websites, look for calls for applications</p> <p>Form National CSO Platforms for information sharing</p>	<p>Encourage and monitor capacity development and project reports</p> <p>Include targets (budgets) for capacity development in proposals</p> <p>Assist National Southern Platforms to access donor information/ opportunities and guidelines</p>	<p>Budget/ Membership</p> <p>ICT Access</p> <p>Prioritise in annual planning 2008</p> <p>Commitment in the Work plan</p>	<p>Increased access to information would lead to increased funding and improved/effective performance</p> <p>Evidence of monitoring done and documentation of developed capacity</p>
2	Better dialogue and cooperation	<p>Strengthen in country dialogue through National CSO Platforms</p>	<p>Devote financial resources to build partners' capacity</p>	<p>Concrete concept plan for national platform and networking plan</p> <p>Start at the network level as CIDSE/Caritas to mobilise at national level</p>	<p>Enhanced partnerships among development actors</p> <p>Reduced duplication of services/interventions</p> <p>Reduced competition for resources</p>
3	Innovative and proactive funding solutions	<p>Need to develop a comprehensive funding strategy considering local governments and the private sector</p>	<p>Share best practices and be open for co-funding or pool funding</p>	<p>Support funding strategies of partners</p> <p>Lobby for endowments/ Investments</p>	<p>Independence and sustainability</p>
4	Invest more in impact monitoring systems	<p>Record project data</p> <p>Analyse data</p> <p>Develop manuals for best practice</p> <p>Establish capacity to use the system</p> <p>Determine lasting change</p>	<p>Support the establishment of results management in the South</p>	<p>Partner organisations assemble and improve quality of project data</p> <p>MOs collect best practices and make them available to others and provide technical assistance</p>	<p>CSOs are learning organisations</p> <p>Partners and MOs use data to raise awareness through dissemination (this will also improve visibility)</p>

Workshop 2

Civil society dialogue with government authorities

Background

Political theorists posit that where civil society thrives, there exists a weak state and where the state is strong, civil society is usually weak. In Africa today, emerging democracies and changing political and economic scenarios have raised consciousness around statehood as well as citizen participation in public affairs. Civil society has emerged as an entity that either complements the state's role in providing for the needs of its citizens e.g. health, shelter, education, water, food, security etc, or acts as a watchdog that seeks to hold the state accountable to the responsibility it holds for its citizens. In different countries, civil society, which may include a variety of groups including community based organisations, non-governmental organisations, international NGOs, human rights groups, women's groups, religious organisations, trade unions, universities, research institutions, media, private sector, has therefore had varied expressions of its voice given each context.

Civil society dialogue with government authorities is often used to measure the extent to which citizen participation in public affairs is valued as part of the development process and as part of a system of providing checks and balances towards ensuring good governance and leadership.

Government authorities in most Southern countries have engaged in dialogue with various groups of non-state actors including civil society, trade union organisations, private sector institutions, among others. Still, in most African countries, there is not enough dialogue between these different actors even though such discussion is a critical part of democracy building. For example, there is often little or no dialogue between government and civil society because civil society lacks the capacity to carry out assessments on the basis of which they can then engage with the government. The level at which this dialogue takes place and the quality of engagement is therefore varied and can only be finally measured by the incorporation and consideration of citizens' voice into policy frameworks and implementation plans.

Civil society has, in most cases, had to negotiate and often demand engagement and dialogue with government authorities. This has often been supported by international agencies including foreign governments and other development partners; at which point most international NGOs make entry. In other cases, however, where foreign aid agencies have, for various reasons, adopted a bilateral dialogue approach between themselves and the government, civil society space has begun to shrink and their watchdog role, in particular, has been stifled or assumed to have been taken up within this bilateral relationship. Questions of representation, transparency and accountability are therefore brought to the fore. On the other hand, where civil society is strong, government authorities may not fully take up their role of providing for citizens and encourage civil society organisations to engage in service provision on behalf of or instead of the State, resulting in a weakened State and a lack of confidence in this entity by its citizenry. Civil society's role has also begun to shift from service delivery to policy influencing and monitoring their implementation; a shift that further elicits debate on legitimacy and mandate, particular for non-local entities. This change in positioning presents a need to readdress engagement with government authorities and with development partners in general.

Increased dialogue between government authorities and civil society, as well as with other development partners could result in better delivery of citizens' needs, improved policy formulation, strategic and cohesive development planning, active engagement of citizens in driving their own development and overall good governance and accountable leadership. Nevertheless, there remain challenges to achieving optimal levels of dialogue where the quality of consultations is often poor and commitments often not achieved.

Questions for Discussion

6. Why should civil society pursue dialogue with government authorities? What is the added value? For civil society/local communities? For authorities and donors?
7. What are the challenges? Do time and energy put into this dialogue bear any fruits?
8. What role can national CSOs/NGOS as well as INGOs have in this dialogue?
9. Sharing of experiences and concrete examples? What worked well? What approaches have not worked well? What was the process like?

OUTCOMES

Civil society in general, but smaller grassroots organisations in particular, have scarce opportunities to engage in funding and policy dialogue with government authorities. The following key challenges and opportunities were identified and recommendations made towards addressing them.

Key challenges	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of institutionalised spaces for dialogue • Government approach to civil society • Meaningless dialogue with no clear purpose and no feedback/no impact or follow up • Dialogue difficult/impossible when opinions are fundamentally different, lack of political will (e.g. privatisation) • Duplication/overlap between Government/CSO projects in certain sectoral areas e.g. health centres • Multitude of CSOs, quality and credibility of certain CSOs operating in the field of development • Limited information on available opportunities for CSO engagement with government • Democracy not institutionally practiced in operation of many programmes • Poor coordination among CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of CSOs with different agenda to pursue • Incentives for CSOs and Government to establish dialogue • To support government in sectors/regions • CSOs recognise that they need to better cooperate and have networks for dialogues with government • Growing strength of civil society in developing countries • Growing demand for democratic governance and promotion of human rights • Governments have little by little come to realise the potential of dialogue with CSOs • Willingness of donors to support local CSOs and their participation

Recommendations towards CSOs:

- Organise yourselves according to sectors in order to have a common agenda.
- Proactively maximise opportunities for engagement.
- Seek access to information on government planning and policy development processes.
- Build strong networks for functioning and coordination.

Recommendations towards Governments:

- Provide more information on available opportunities through, e.g. website, media.
- Establish strengthened spaces for dialogue.



Focussing on few core recommendations, participants explored concrete implications and measures for partner and CIDSE-Caritas Europa member organisations (MOs) to take these forward.

Recommendation	Implications		Next Steps	Expected Results
	For Partners	For MOs		
1 CSOs organise sectorally with common agenda Build strong networks of CSOs for functioning and coordination	Go back to existing like minded networks and engage with governments If establishing new networks, define rules of engagement and agree on limits of operations in the network		Identify gaps and address those gaps Understand the purpose of the network leading to ownership	Improved ways of dialogue between government and CSOs Better knowledge of each other through networking
2 Using spaces to present concrete case studies – Lessons learnt and Success Stories	Document successful stories highlighting the change made or brought about in the society		Improving monitoring and evaluation to track all the success stories Set up tracking systems using M&E Set up good documentation and communication systems	Better visibility as the basis of dialogue with the government
3 CSOs proactively maximise opportunities for engagement CSOs access information on government planning & policy development processes Establish strengthened spaces for dialogue	Take initiative to conduct a survey on spaces for engagement available per country	Provide information and experiences	Convoke a core team for survey Identify source of information Disseminate results of survey	Spaces/opportunities identified, used and amplified

Workshop 3:

Civil society project cooperation with funders

Background

The increasing diversity among both Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and funders has created many new opportunities for fruitful collaboration on project delivery, and especially for direct access to funding for local CSOs. However this diversity also poses significant challenges, as it requires a greater range of knowledge, skills, resources, and flexibility on both sides than was the case when fewer actors were involved.

At present many local CSOs find themselves largely excluded from access to government and other funding, including those amounts earmarked for civil society. Similarly, many CSOs remain dependent on northern NGO partners for the bulk of their external funding, rather than being able to enter partnerships with other locally present institutional funders. The reasons for this situation are clearly complex, but some contributory factors could be summarised as the lack of opportunities for communications and capacity for dialogue between CSOs and funders, as the starting point for building confident and sustainable working relationships, based on mutual respect for the added value which each brings to development efforts.

Some of the important challenges are:

- The real (or perceived) complexity of funders requirements, including application procedures and reporting frameworks, which may be necessitated by the donors' legal and political commitments. Increasingly, responsibility for operating funding schemes is being devolved to local level, which poses challenges in terms of promoting visibility and access for potential applicants, ensuring uniform standards in interpretation of criteria, and finding staff capacity to deal with the level of dialogue and monitoring involved.
- Lack of confidence and capacity among CSOs to approach potential funding partners. This includes factors such as distance from the capital where most discussions would take place, but the primary constraints are probably lack of knowledge of specific funding opportunities and processes, and limited technical expertise and resources to devote to researching and pursuing these options. While various CSO fora and networks exist to promote awareness and access to funding opportunities, it is questionable whether these are being effective in meeting local organisational needs.

If the above mentioned challenges were to be addressed, however, increasing programming for civil society and direct access to funding for local CSOs would offer important opportunities for fruitful collaboration towards progress in development.

The May 2006 CIDSE-Caritas Europa Co-financing Forum in Brussels made a number of valuable recommendations in this respect, including creating spaces at country-level for donors to share information with civil society on practical issues such as programming, calls for proposals, and reporting requirements; flexibility in conditions of funding to allow greater access by CSOs with less experience, for example, less strict eligibility criteria, appropriate minimum and maximum funding levels, and procurement rules which take account of local constraints; greater efforts on the part of Northern NGOs to monitor donor policies, help their local partners make the contacts/links to ensure they are kept abreast of funding opportunities and donor policy dialogue, invest in strengthening local partners' capacity for accessing funding, lobbying/advocacy, and networking/coordination.

Questions for Discussion

- What are important factors which influence CSO-donor collaboration? (experiences and concrete examples of both what has worked well and where there have been problems)
- What steps can be taken by (a) CSOs and (b) Funders to address these issues?
- What resources and mechanisms will these require (e.g. for improving communications/networking; simplifying application/grant management procedures; building CSO capacity)?

OUTCOMES

While the proliferation of development actors brings as many challenges as opportunities to the cooperation of development partners, the distinct roles that each party plays make their cooperation essential for effective poverty reduction strategies.

Key challenges	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate core funding/institutional funding • Quality of partnership • Competition for resources and lack of CSO capacity to compete with NGOs and INGOs • Proliferation of CSOs and lack of information about the authenticity and impact of these actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities will now be able to play a more active role in social change. (e.g. in reduction of corruption). • Establishment of strategic partnerships • Competition raises standards and professionalism • More space for long term relationships

Recommendations towards international NGOs

- INGOs to lobby (e.g. European Parliament) for greater decision making authority to be accorded to delegations and field offices. Their ability to establish a fruitful dialogue and provide longer term commitments and core funding is vital for the institutional development of local CSOs.

Recommendations towards local CSOs

- Raise local / community awareness on the use of public funds, national policies/systems and civic rights.
- Self regulation by NGOs themselves (i.e. code of conduct/best practice) to show adherence to high standards and boost credibility
- Develop exit strategies and sustainability options

Recommendations towards donors (and INGOs when acting as funders):

- Capacity building for CSOs to enable them to access funding
- Funding CSOs at different levels to allow fair competition
- Invest in nurturing the relationship between development partners (e.g. communication, networking and sharing roles)
- Enhance core funding within agreed timeframe
- Develop exit strategies and sustainability options
- More transparency on the process of funds allocation

Recommendations towards Governments:

- Have transparent regulations for CSOs



Focussing on few core recommendations, participants explored concrete implications and measures for partner and CIDSE-Caritas Europa member organisations (MOs) to take these forward.

Recommendation		Implications		Next steps	Expected Results
		For Partners	For MOs		
1.	Enhanced core funding for an agreed timeframe	Get fuller information on what particular donors fund + mapping of donors into long term/short term.	Research and share information on relevant donors	<p>For Partners</p> <p>Internet search</p> <p>Seek donor meetings</p> <p>Local NGO information-sharing meetings coordinated by Caritas.</p> <p>For MOs</p> <p>Get / develop updated directory of Catholic funding agencies.</p> <p>Copy donor information to partners.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of what donors fund</p> <p>Better targeted proposals</p> <p>Improved networking.</p>
2.	Develop sustainability options and exit strategies	<p>Research ways to generate more local resources.</p> <p>Present proposals which include institutional support as well as project costs</p>	<p>Joint long term planning at project inception</p> <p>Provide support for developing fundraising capacity</p> <p>Share information on partners' successful in building self support.</p>	<p>For Partners</p> <p>Get information from NGOs who have developed some sustainability mechanisms.</p> <p>Approach existing funders to embrace institutional support.</p> <p>For MOs</p> <p>Plan sustainability and exit strategies with existing and new partners.</p> <p>Ask partners to document and share any successful sustainability mechanisms</p>	<p>Sustainability plan in place</p> <p>All partners will have a clear plan for increasing sustainability.</p>
3.	Increase capacity of CSOs to enable them to compete with INGOs and larger NGOs	<p>Ensure the right people are in the right positions and provide training</p> <p>Have systems and policies in place (e.g. external audit, recruitment processes).</p>	Get information about funding opportunities on a regular basis.	<p>Learn from international NGO partners who have already accessed funding.</p> <p>Put strategy & partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place</p>	

Workshop 4

Complementarity and coherence between actions of local partners and International NGOs

Background

It is acknowledged that traditional routes to access donor funds by civil society and international NGOs are changing rapidly as institutional donors focus on providing direct budget support to national governments and large international donors pool their funds in an attempt to have greater aid efficiency. This funding environment and changing dynamic for aid delivery will be considered during other sessions at this seminar.

This workshop will focus on the role that international NGOs and local civil society could play together to develop more coherent and complementary approaches when undertaking development interventions towards beneficiary communities to achieve greater impact, effectiveness and efficiency within the changing aid environment. Institutional donors are decentralising technical expertise and funds to country offices (delegations and embassies) for development actions implemented locally.

In parallel, international organisations have begun to establish a wider presence in the South. INGOs present in the field will, in effect, be accessing the same pool of funds as local civil society organisations. This shift in focus will provide an opportunity to strengthen already close partnerships between local and international organisations present in the field to bring together the strengths and added value of working partnerships to access funds. Effective partnerships between consortia of INGOs and local civil society networks could evolve to bring a coordinated approach that would avoid duplication of efforts, reduce demands on partner's time for reporting and information sharing and increase impact at community level.

Complementarity and coherence in interventions is more than just a coordination and operational role, it is also about establishing a unified voice towards policy and decision-makers both in the North and the South on development issues that affect local communities. International organisations have a legitimate advocacy role within their own constituencies in the North to raise awareness of issues that affect partner organisations and communities in the South. INGOs can support local civil society to play an independent role when holding their national governments accountable particularly in the context of direct budget support by bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors.

Questions for Discussions:

- In the context of a changing aid paradigm, what are the challenges facing international NGOs? What are the challenges facing local civil society?
- INGO/local civil society collaboration – please share your experiences and concrete examples of what worked and what did not work. How can we do it better?

OUTCOMES

The changing aid context requires an innovative approach to cooperation modalities. This provides an opportunity to strengthen the partnerships between Northern and Southern organisations. Dialogue, information sharing and joint strategies to map the way forward is key to achieve common objectives.

Key challenges	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of partnership is not always perfectly understood, limiting cooperation. • Increased demand for evidence and impact • Need for networks and information sharing (country platform) • International partners cooperate directly with local implementer, and do not pass through the national coordinating body • Local availability of funds pushes INGOs to seek local presence • Access to funds– considering the changing environment and increasing number of actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of strong national coordinating bodies • Establishment of strategic partnerships • Diversity of partnerships (local-international research, academia) – sharing experiences and learning from each other • Increased awareness and increased demand for joint ventures and efforts • There is a willingness and recognition of CSO demand to have active participation • Field presence of INGOs

Recommendations to both international NGOs and their local partners:

- Bishops (church structure) to ensure the appointment / recruitment of strong leaders for coordinating bodies
- Partnership should be clear in terms of roles of partners and not only focusing on funding
- Invest more in impact monitoring systems
- Be creative in setting up a local presence (e.g. consider joint offices)
- Strengthen country platforms for information sharing, lobbying etc
- Agree on common global goals to be achieved through each partners contribution (based on the strengths of each)
- Strategic partnerships need to be established and effective before joining in consortia

Recommendations to international NGOs

- Be aware of why you have a field presence – set clear objectives and strategy for change, as well as an exit strategy
- International NGOs should support or assist national coordinating bodies to become more effective/sustainable

Recommendations to local CSOs:

- Local NGOs should create strategies for sustainability and be able to access support from the donors/government towards their strategy and clearly define the role of Northern partners with regard to sustainability
- Local NGOs need to demand more accountability for the use of public funds

Recommendations to the Donor/Governments:

- Governments should facilitate demands for accountability on the use of public funds
- Government/donors should support local NGOs in the strategy for sustainability

Focussing on few core recommendations, participants explored concrete implications and measures for partner and CIDSE-Caritas Europa member organisations (MOs) to take these forward.

Recommendations		Implications		Next Steps	Expected Results
		For partners	For MOs		
1.	Southern CSOs should create strategies for sustainability and be able to get support from donors and be able to define the role of northern partners in the sustainability	CSO undertake self assessment: - Individually - Within like-minded networks (geographic or thematic)		Self assessment by CSO within 1 year INGOs support CSOs to carry out assessments (resources) Strategy formulated Within each project proposal from CSO, - include a component of organisation sustainability (determined following completion of assessment). INGO insist on component of organisation sustainability of local CSOs in donor proposals (where agreed by all partners)	Clear sustainability strategies for CSOs and better understanding of each other
2.	Recommend to form strategic, long-term partnerships (beyond funding to include e.g. advocacy, information sharing, learning from each other, monitoring)	Review existing partnerships and explore possibilities for new partnerships		Internal review by CSO and INGO Partners North and South meet to agree roles and modalities of support Assess new partners for alignment with our own objectives, value etc (whether North or South)	Commitment to the partnership clear to each partner in form of e.g. Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between partners and mutual accountability

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FORUM EVALUATION

What has been the value of this Seminar for your organisation?

Out of 56 participants, a total of 33 evaluation forms were returned. The large majority of the evaluations were positive (+) and very positive (+ +) on the Seminar's objectives being met, the methodology used, the preparation, and the setting.

Below is a selection of responses by participants to the question: ***“What has been the value of this Seminar for your organisation?”***

- “It was my first time to see such high level Government officials and donor interact with the CSOs and the quality of discussions and openness was very good. It gave me a lot of food for thought in terms of how many opportunities all sides miss out simply because they don't communicate or want to involve each other. There is so much value that can be added through an enhanced communication strategy.”
- “The bringing together of the CSOs from both the North and the South to share and map the way forward was excellent and reflects the true partnership. There is need to facilitate similar meetings by CIDSE/CE to facilitate exchange of ideas and review together the impact of this meeting we have had in terms of access to funds through the local delegation, establishment of partnerships & consortia.”
- “Frank openness on our strengths and weaknesses/challenges”
- “It was good to bring partners together. The topic needs to be tabled before it is too late. It has been a wake up call to some of us.”
- “Ability to invite Government officials from various countries to participate and share information on the changing trends on development policy and face to face discussions with civil society on what can be done better. EU delegation from particular African countries also gave more insight on the new funding procedures based on context in which they operate. Increased participation of Caritas members based in Africa as compared to only able to invite a few to a workshop outside the continent. Importance to discuss African Issues at the local level giving more clarity on the situation being discussed.”
- “It was a unique opportunity to meet members of Caritas Europa and CIDSE and a good source of information about new trends in development that would hardly be possible to obtain in my home country; interesting discussions and ideas...”
- “The seminar created awareness on the new trend of funding projects/services under CSOs, NGOs and the like, which appears to affect the whole process of supporting poor communities in the near future.”
- “Most useful to enable ‘comparing notes’ amongst CSOs and government representatives from the region. Useful to have a forum of open and constructive exchange on trends and concerns between CSOs, donors and governments.”