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Mapping Best Practice Guidelines in working with Civil Society Organisations

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Government departments are increasingly working in partnership with Civil Society organisations in the delivery of international aid to advance Open Society and Human Rights agendas.
External shifts in expectations around race and inclusion have increased the need for principled guidance on a coherent approach to working with civil society on questions such as:

- **Overcoming barriers to funding local and national CSOs**
- **Ways of working through and with INGOs**
- **Building organisational capacity within our programming**
- **Empowering local grassroots organisations, supporting social movements and shifting to a more locally-led model of development.**

This document maps the guidance produced by different government and CSO groups over the past ten years. While it identifies few significant changes in the principles behind working with CSOs there is a progressive move towards localisation and an increasing emphasis on diversity and inclusion. The challenges of decolonising development have not yet entered development corporation literatures and remain in the academic sphere.

Contents

1. Overview of Guidance Available

This report sets out to map the different guidance documents available on how to work most effectively with civil society in the delivery of international aid in ways that deepen democracy and advance the rights of marginalised or excluded groups. It includes a review of guidelines published by other key international development funders and implementors written for their own teams, an overview of guidance provided for DAC members within OECD countries and policy papers on cooperation between the state and CSOs. It looks primarily at documents produced in the last ten years, between 2011 and 2021 and includes those related to cooperation on specific issues (such as drugs policy or human rights, as well as those that deal with specific countries or regions (such as Europe or the MENA region). The majority of documents identified are written by government aid departments (eg USAID, Norad) but there are one or two produced by umbrella civil society organisations (such as Bond) or international legal think tanks (such as ICNL, the International Centre for Not for Profit Law).

There was a remarkable consistency between the issues Millican addressed in the different documents although their size and length varied between outline guidance on 2 – 3 pages and a comprehensive (62 page) overview that included definitions of civil society, range of organisations, reasons for collaborating, mechanisms for financing, monitoring and ensuring accountability and challenges in and guidance on the ways in which donors might work with CSOs.

Key issues covered include

- The nature of civil society and definitions thereof
- Working with INGOs, core aims and principles
- Localisation, national CSOs and social movements
- Strategies for engaging with civil society
- Funding Civil Society
- Defending and protecting civic space

Guidance on each of these areas will constitute the key sections of this report.

The majority of documents reviewed were government facing guidelines or policy papers, but most government websites also include guidelines for partners on how to apply and the purpose of different funding streams. Documents were identified during a literature search (using terms civil society, guidance, 'working with NGOs' and 'changing civic space') but also through an internal call by FCDO to other government departments as part of the DAC OECD network. Interestingly guidance included very little reference to issues of either gender or disability.

2. Most Recent Recommendations

> ''the most significant lesson in international development over the past 15 years is that politics lies at the core of this challenge. Development is not simply about what needs to be done, but, perhaps more importantly, about how it is done. Politics, power and the interactive dynamic between actors and structures shape institutions and give them substance and meaning. This has placed the need to understand political settlements

and how they frame developmental trajectories at the heart of current international thinking and practice on state-building and peace-building". (Rocha Menocal 2017: 560)

Recent guidance on working effectively with civil society recognises the symbiotic relationship between states, the market and the role that civil society and social movements are able to play, in the delivery of services, the mobilisation of communities and as a watchdog of state interference and legitimacy. Open and progressive relationships with civil society will impact the resilience of the sector, and in turn social accountability and the creation of an open society. There is a causal relationship between state/civil society relationships, the maintenance of a democracy and effective development or response. (USAID 2016, EU 2017)

Those states, such as Australia, Greece and the UK, where diplomatic and development services have been combined into a single department and set of strategies, negotiate a delicate balance in bringing together the priorities associated with each. Others, such as those where development cooperation is discrete from national diplomacy or national interests, tend to focus more on the nexus between humanitarian response, peacebuilding and development outcomes. Where this document has identified a series of general principles for working with civil society, their effectiveness and their implications for development are all affected by context and the "fit" (Hossein 2018) between state, civil society and market actors in the development process. This is less dependent on the freedom with which civil society is able to operate and more on how far they are able to use that freedom to hold state, political and economic actors to account. In general this entails getting close enough to powerholders to be able to influence change, while having sufficient distance to provide scrutiny, critique and policy alternatives (Hossein 2018).

The most recent guidance, produced by DAC in 2021 (Enabling Civil Society in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance 2021, DAC) provides recommendations on creating an 'enabling environment'; written in response to the 2030 Agenda and calling for CSO involvement in the process of localisation, and in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. The recommendations were produced after reviewing a range of reports and papers and concludes that CSOs are central to peaceful and inclusive societies and in particular to the delivery of SDG 16 and 17 – ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and the need for cross-sector and cross-country collaboration in pursuit of these goals by 2030. DAC aim to work towards a consistent framework, reinforcing impact through alignment within and across DAC countries. They are working to capture political commitment across providers that adheres to general principles while recognising important differences in individual contexts.

The DAC guidelines set out three inter-linking pillars for how development cooperation and humanitarian assistance might enable civil society involvement:

1) Respecting, protecting and promoting civic space
2) Supporting and engaging with civil society
3) Incentivising CSO effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

They stress the principles of humanity, neutrality and independence across the humanitarian-peace-development nexus and their (draft) guidelines were produced through a community of practice approach, drawing together a diverse but representative group to set out recommendations under the headings outlined above. These can be summarised as

1. **Respecting Civic Space:**

- Maintaining clear policy positions and engaging in dialogue wherever possible
- Maintaining an intention to 'do no harm', and working with the private sector and independent media to counter disinformation and support greater participation in public policy
- Addressing risks and inequalities around digital marginalisation

2. **Supporting and Engaging with Civil Society:**
   - Promoting consultation and active participation of different actors in identifying risks and opportunities.
   - Supporting local ownership, investing in leadership and providing financial support to diverse NGOs
   - Supporting strategic alliances and sharing lessons between formal and informal groups, TUs, faith-based groups, etc.
   - Streamlining administrative requirements to enhance transparency and promote international standards of protection

3. **Incentivising Effectiveness, Transparency and Accountability**
   - Building on existing good practice and meeting relevant Human rights standards
   - Providing mutual capacity strengthening through equitable partnerships, encouraging CSO leadership
   - Working through participatory approaches that respect international rights-based approaches and legal standards.

3. Key Issues covered in the literature

The Nature of Civil Society

The literature defines civil society in similar ways. Sida describes it as an arena, separate from the state, the market and the individual household, in which people organise themselves and act together in their common interests. The term civil society organisation covers 'a non-profit organisation at the local, national or international level that works according to shared values towards common goals, with a certain level of independence from the state and the municipality… CSOs include foundations, cooperatives, trade unions and temporary organisations that raise funds for a specific purpose' (Sida 2020). It also includes Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) committed to civic or humanitarian action at a local or international level.

The DAC OECD definition refers to NGOs (Non-governmental organisations) rather than CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) as any non-profit entity organised on a local, national or international level to pursue shared objectives and ideals, without significant government-controlled participation or representation. They similarly include foundations, cooperatives and trade unions as well as ad hoc organisations set up to collect funds for a specific purpose, umbrella organisations (that support CSOs) and networks.

A K4D Helpdesk report completed in 2018 goes further to identify the roles that civil society plays:

- service provider (for example, running primary schools and providing basic community health care services)
- advocate/campaigner (for example, lobbying governments or business on issues including indigenous rights or the environment)
- watchdog (for example, monitoring government compliance with human rights treaties)
- building active citizenship (for example, motivating civic engagement at the local level and engagement with local, regional and national governance)
- participating in global governance processes (for example, civil society organisations serve on the advisory board of the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds).

There is a general understanding of the difference between INGOs (international NGOs), NGOs (generally nationally registered organisations with an independent board of trustees), CBOs (community-based organisations, which may or may not be formally registered) and informal social movements or activist groups which may or may not be connected by place and location. There is recognition of the rapid growth of the digital sphere and its impact on civic space and global social movements, the speed at which the latter can be set up and grow, as well as the fact that not all CSOs promote the broader 'public good', highlighting the existence of right wing or extremist groups within this broader sphere (Baker and Blaagaard 2016).

Core Aims and Principles for working with NGOs and INGOs

Most funders agree on the advantages of working with and through civil society organisations in terms of their flexibility, apparent neutrality and ability to represent diverse voices and the needs of diverse groups in the delivery of development aid.

While the literature uses the term CSOs and NGOs equally, the term INGO appears less frequently in the current guidance literature, with some reference to concerns over their legitimacy (K4D helpdesk report 2018) and a strong emphasis on the need for localisation. While INGOs still feature largely within the humanitarian sector because of the speed with which they can mobilise, they are increasingly expected to form partnerships and work closely with local and grassroots organisations on the ground. The K4D report identifies the advantages and risks of working directly with Southern NGOs.

Advantages include:

- Sustainability in maintaining projects in the long term
- Empowerment through capacity building
- Concern with climate change but no evidence that NGOs have a positive influence on environmental reform.

Risks include:

- Possibly hostile relationships between NGOs and governments
- BRICS countries prefer state led development
- High transaction costs to local NGOs
- Limited capacity to upscale programmes
- Dependence on external funding.

The report recognises that UN and international humanitarian NGOs still dominate the humanitarian sector but stresses that relationships with local populations are essential to respond rapidly in a crisis. Guidelines identified for direct funding cover

1. Accountability

2. Ensuring short term results but long-term sustainability
3. Investing in core capacity building in Southern organisations
4. Removing barriers to funding southern organisations
5. Promoting better information sharing and funder collaboration
6. Supporting evidence generation and peer learning spaces

A number of challenges are also identified, including

Lack of Evidence: South-south civil society led initiatives are relatively unknown and under analysed, so there is little evidence to inform direct working (Moilwa 2015); Many CSOs lack the information systems necessary for documenting international initiatives systematically (Moilwa 2015);

Lack of Independence: The rising powers prefer state led approaches to development, hence there is a focus on government to government relationships (Moilwa 2015); a rise in government sponsored NGOs means these often have preferential access to government funds (Doane, 2017), further concerns around government intentions to regulate civil society in some parts of the world, further restricting neutrality (Doane, 2017), and CSOs in the south may have difficult relationships with the state; for example, the legal framework and political context may be highly restrictive (Moilwa 2015);

The ongoing Influence of Northern NGOs on Southern priorities: Some NGOs in the south are dependent on foreign funding and adapt their programmes to suit the preferences of donors (AbouAssi, 2013),
some civil society initiatives such as LGBT+ rights are seen as the infiltration of "western values" in the south (Doane, 2017), rising powers see development as part of foreign policy which raises the sensitivity of some key issues and undermines dialogue (Moilwa 2015);

However, although the K4D review was undertaken in 2019 sources identified are often over five years old. Since then further global trends and pressures have made the environment in which CSOs operate even more challenging, the ongoing rise of fake news, bots and artificial intelligence technologies that have caused people to challenge the messages and credibility of civil society (Doane, 2017), and reductions in independent funding unlinked to government or business interests (Moilwa 2015). There has been a steep rise in the role of philanthropy and the new philanthropists in recent years, led by the super-rich (Lambin & Surender, 2021) and while this is still largely under analysed it is likely to have an increasing impact in the future. The OCN guide (2017) encourages the role of philanthropy and tax benefits for CSOs. An IDS paper on collaborative relationships suggests that with increasing external private philanthropy in the sector, financial aid was becoming less important than evidence as a 'currency' valued at the policy table (IDS 2019 pg 59). Lambin and Surender (2021) note that '*Big philanthropies* have begun implementing social protection projects on a vast scale across the Global South and have become integrated within global governance structures' (2021 pg 1).

There are few guidelines from any partners that refer explicitly to social movements and these are dealt with more in the literature related to closing civic space. Social movements tend to make strong contributions to social accountability and may be more significant in enforcing accountability than single development interventions. They play an important role in giving voice to and enabling inclusion of marginalised groups and in preventing the kind of tensions that can lead to conflict. They also play a role in peacebuilding (Hossein 2017).

Strategies for Engaging with Civil Society

The different country guidelines cover a range of strategies for engaging with civil society.

USAID Recommendations: In a document dating from 2013 USAID provide a good review of key issues in promoting cooperation between CSOs and Public Authorities. They recognise their role in shaping policies and laws that promote citizen need and form a bridge between citizens and government. They emphasise the need for a supportive and enabling environment, allowing them to carry out their work without political interference.

Strategies to facilitate this are listed as

- Creation of Policy documents for cooperation; (bi-lateral and uni-lateral)
- Establishing Government offices for cooperation;
- Identifying Contact persons or department for CSOs at ministerial level;
- Identifying Contact person in the parliament;
- Forming Councils for civil society development;
- Supporting other cross-sectoral advisory bodies focusing on specific areas or issues;
- Ringfencing Civil society funds/foundations;
- Providing Codes/regulations on citizen participation.

They recommend compact agreements to set out the parameters of relationships developed through participatory processes with regular follow up. Governments need a clear mandate with decentralisation processes in which CSOs work with various ministries rather than being represented by one, devolved ownership of projects and periodic reviews of mechanisms through which partnerships are working.

A second USAID paper dated 2019 echoes many of the points above: ensuring political support and state actor ownership, using participatory and inclusive processes, designing well-functioning action plans and building capacity for implementation, M&E etc.. However, they also recommend designating a department or unit for implementation of CSO work and encouraging experience sharing between countries.

Finland focuses on the importance of policy dialogue through international forums, EU's development agenda and the UN and iterates a commitment to defending human rights defenders. They are committed to a principle of effectiveness and deep understanding of context, and multistakeholder cooperation and see CSOs as autonomous and independent actors.

SDC highlight their commitment to strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus and applying a human rights-based approach to mainstreaming gender and good governance. They similarly stress policy dialogue, partnerships and cross sector collaboration, cost effectiveness and transparency and accountability. They provide financing through programme contributions (to enable flexibility and responsiveness), targeted contributions for specific projects, and contracts for the provision of services.

SIDA has been moving away from project support towards core support since 2008, providing un-earmarked grants towards local organisations own strategic action plans and using their systems of auditing and reporting. They see this as 'trust based' support, shifting power and transferring ownership. Their guiding principles for working with CSOs (2019) include supporting CSOs in their own right and towards their own goals, creating an enabling environment and engaging in continuous dialogue.

Norad guidelines hardly mention strategy at all, but outline a set of guiding principles (sustainability, inclusion, partnership, legitimacy, accountability, cost effectiveness and context sensitivity) and provide examples of what NORAD will and will not fund.

Italy produce a guidance document which highlights how Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) supports Italian CSOs financing development and humanitarian projects, the dissemination of their activities among Italian citizens, and strengthening partnerships with other actors (public and private, profit and non-profit) and finally, thanks to an open dialogue with Italian CSOs networks, identifies jointly solutions to problems as occurred, for example, during the COVID pandemic, where supporting tools were identified in response to the CSOs contingent difficulties.

AICS is constantly questioning its ability to generate lasting and measurable changes by adopting methodological approaches and tools (RBM, Theory of Change) to plan, programme and evaluate its initiatives more effectively. In 2020 AICS adopted a new approach and new rules for national CSOs project design, emphasising a 'results-based management', where results are itemised and budgeted rather than activities and costs. It is therefore required that targets and results are built around the SDGs and sectoral goals with pre-set indicators and "concrete and progressive measurability." The change of approach goes in the sense of a greater flexibility coherently with an "adaptive management" and a "systemic approach to understanding the change generated".

France publishes its guidelines in French, unlike other EU countries who use English, and lay out ways of working between their ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEDI) and Civil Society (OSC). Like many of the guidelines these relate to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, recognise the specific expertise and potential for mobilisation with OSCs and their ability to intervene in their own communities in ways that governments are unable to do. They value reciprocity, mutual understanding and knowledge sharing but are one of the only countries to mention the importance of decolonising ideas alongside ensuring good governance and upholding of territorial rights beyond national borders. They fail however, to provide any guidance on strategies, on ways of ensuring there is decolonisation of ideas or on how to balance the competing demands of government agencies.

A Bond report, written in response to the UK Government in 2019 confronted what they saw as then DFID's inability to effectively engage with CSOs. The report specifies different types of engagement:

- Meaningful engagement – relevant and purposeful rather than to reinforce existing decisions
- Inclusive engagement, informed by diverse perspectives and expertise
- Deliberative, rooted in open discussions encouraging participants to work together to develop solutions

In order to properly hear and respond to CSOs they recommended

- Beginning early and giving people sufficient time to engage fully.
- Being open and accountable, ensuring participants are kept informed.
- Creating a well-structured and consistent process.
- Recognising and committing to invest the necessary time and resources required.

The image below, taken from the report, outlines different mechanisms for engagement:
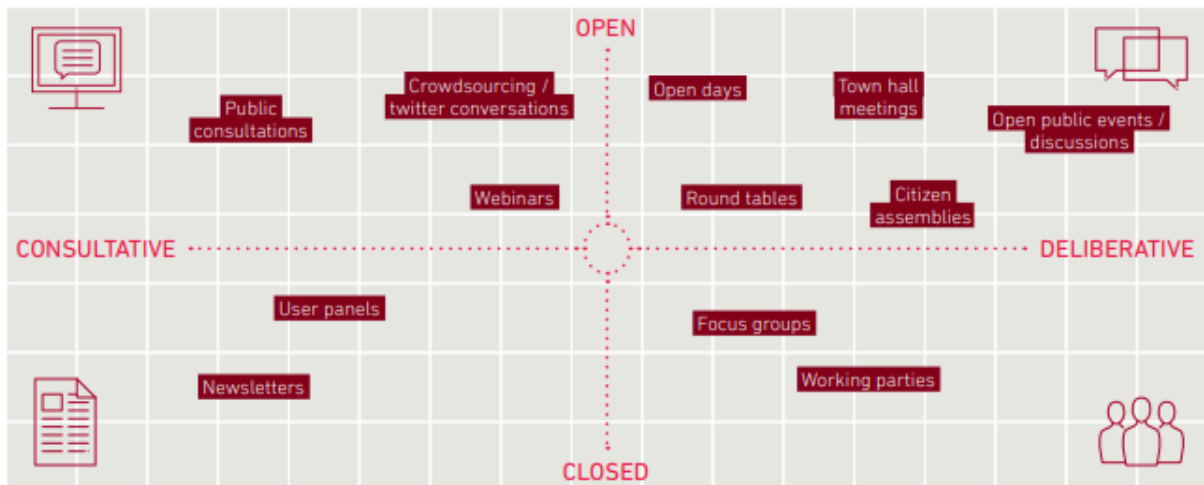
Source: Bond 2019 pg 11 Mechanisms for Engagement with CSOs reproduced under CC BY-NC 4.0

Funding Civil Society

Almost all documents provide some guidance on funding civil society, and these are reasonably consistent across the piece. The 2016 DFID Partnership Review consolidates funding streams into 4 windows

1. Aid Match: matching private donations from charity appeals
2. Aid Direct: granted in response to bids from small and medium CSOs
3. Aid Connect: inviting collaborations between CSOs, think tanks and private sector organisations
4. Aid Volunteers: targeted support to volunteering programmes.

In all of these they look for: transparency and accountability, CSO leadership, shared values and objectives, open competitive programming and due diligence checks. They aim to increase opportunities for more contact between offices and citizens in the UK and in countries where aid is delivered, opening up opportunities for smaller NGOs and faith-based groups. They commit future funding to complement work with private sector suppliers, maximising the impact of their funding on poor people and increasing regular structured policy dialogue with CSOs on a regular basis.

Other guidelines (USAID) stress an openness for providing core or institutional funding and developing fund criteria through participatory processes, that is governed by a stable and regulatory environment in which CSOs can then carry out their work assured of agreed income.

There is a shared recognition of the legal and practical obstacles that CSOs face in obtaining funding and recommendations that most organisations, including the EU review its approaches to the allocation of public funds. Co-financing and geographical restrictions on funding, unfavourable tax regimes and sudden funding and budget cuts and onerous reporting mechanisms all contribute to a challenge environment in which CSOs struggle to operate.

SDC Financial Engagement Modalities with Swiss NGOs

This Image has been removed for copyright reasons the full image can be viewed here **https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/deza/en/documents/partnerschaften-auftraege/auftraege-beitraege/modalitaeten-zulassungen_EN.pdf**

Source: SDC *(undated)* Guidance for Engagement with Swiss NGOs

A K4D help desk report, (2019) focuses on the Advantages and Value of funding NGOs in the Global South and found limited evidence of the advantages or disadvantages of directly funding NGOs, rather than going through INGOs as discussed above under localisation. They provided the following guidelines for direct funding

1. Ensuring Accountability within organisations funded
2. Aiming to support short term results with long term sustainability
3. Investing in core capacity building in Southern organisations
4. Removing any existing barriers to funding southern organisations
5. Sharing information and promoting collaboration between funders
6. Supporting evidence generation and peer learning spaces with and between donors.

Defending and Protecting Civic Space

The most comprehensive study on defending and protecting civic space was undertaken by Hossein (2018) and produced by IDS with Act Alliance, funded by UK aid. The report identifies how new regulations have shifted power from civic to political actors and how the impact on development outcomes is directly related to the way in which political elites use that power. It suggests that where civic space is restricted or closing it is improbable that development has any chance of obtaining equitable, inclusive or sustainable outcomes.

While new regulations claim to strengthen governance and accountability of civil society, if not used sensitively these can serve to silence civil society and reduce its effectiveness. The research identifies civic space as changing rather than closing, with the growth of the digital sphere, the rise of right wing or extremist groups as well as urban protest movements. Civic actors are being pulled into a closer relationship with the state.

In some contexts, the state has created wider and more enabling spaces for civic action leading to new progressive and redistributive programmes, or through close collaboration in the delivery of programmes. However, in others there are clashes between civil society actors defending the less powerful against powerful political or economic elites.

The DAC guidance (2021) and a series of other reports focus on 'Enabling Civil Society' through the creation of an 'enabling environment'. (USAID 2013, ICNL 2018). USAID outlines the six basic freedoms needed for this (association, operation, expression, communication, assembly and to seek resources). DAC refer to checks on laws that prevent this, such as those that restrict peaceful assembly or limit freedom of speech. ICNL through the Open Government Declaration provides guidance on ways to protect civic space through negotiating those freedoms. It describes what might be 'legitimate constraints on freedom of association' which as a minimum should comply with Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This involves restrictions having a formal basis in the law, situations where assembly is a threat to national security or public safety and ensuring these restrictions do not undermine the basic tenets of a democracy. They provide clear guidelines on necessary registrations and commitments through law, regulation and practice with country examples of strategies for sector development and funding mechanisms.

Localising Aid

The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 led to a series of guidelines produced by OECD on 'localising the response' particularly within humanitarian aid. OECD defined this as

> *'a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses'. (OECD 2017 pg 1).*

They further identified several subcategories of local responders including national authorities, national and sub-national civil society actors, national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, national CSOs and NGOs, sub-national and local groups and local private sector organisations.

Localised response requires that "a local humanitarian responder is involved in the entire programme cycle: needs assessments, programme design and delivery and final review and evaluation. A mere transfer of in-kind items from an international organisation to a local humanitarian responder does not follow the spirit of the Grand Bargain commitments on localisation'' (OECD 2017 pg 6.)

The OECD report offers guidelines for direct support covering

- ➢ **Donor analytical capacity** (ensuring they deliver the best, most efficient results through using capacity in embassies and headquarters to interact with local humanitarian responders to assess the partners' financial, administrative and operational capacities)
- ➢ **Donor structure** (ensuring staff in the field have essential decision making capacity)
- ➢ **Grant Flexibility** (the capacity to insert crisis modifiers into existing grants with known local partners)
- ➢ **Donor administrative capacity** (rigorous selection and administrative procedures)
- ➢ **Long-term investment** (building trust for future working relationships)
- ➢ **Addressing legal restrictions** (that prevent funds from being transferred and agreements made)

They recommend channelling funds through larger organisations or donors where direct funding to local Southern organisations proves difficult. The recognise the risks involved in the localisation of aid but list strategies for mitigating that risk rather than avoiding it. These include contextual risk, institutional risk, programmatic risk, risk transfer and reputational risk. Their guidelines deal with humanitarian response rather than development planning, but affirm that 'Supporting localisation is a policy commitment that requires investment and capacities. Localising the aid also brings the potential to help bridge humanitarian action and development programming' (OECD 2017 pg 18).

An ICAI review of DFID's partnerships with civil society organisations published in April 2019 awarded an amber-red score, criticising it for unpredictable and unreliable behaviour in its relationships with Southen NGOs. Their five strong recommendations concerned a need to fill gaps in knowledge to optimise funding mechanisms, having more efficient and predictable funding streams, communicating more proactively to potential applicants and having a stronger focus on long-term results. They advised DFID to do more to encourage CSO-led innovation and provide a guiding framework for country offices on how to analyse and respond to the issue closing civic space within a national context. The DFID response recognised the need for a greater focus on localisation in its development programming.

A paper by Goodwin and Ager published in 2021 identifies three areas of constraint in relation to the UK governements move towards localisation: Logistical concerns in procurement and financial monitoring, conceptual ambiguity and narrow understandings of who does what and political considerations limiting the space for more radical interpretations of localisation. They recognise that the need to maintain public support for UK aid at home, invariably pushes governments to put UK interests first. The paper calls on FCDO to make its position on localisation clear in relation to bi-lateral and multi-lateral support, and to reflect this through clearer technical conceptualisation and operationalisation, validating its localisation strategy through the transference of power in decision making and increasing local autonomy on expenditure. While these comments are directed towards UK aid they have potential relevance for other donors and there is a clear guidelines around the need to incorporate an analysis of donor political cycle in their strategic engagement, acknowledging its current direction as well as the shifts made by former administrations.

Roepstorff (2021) links the lack of progress on localisation with shrinking civic space, saying that if localisation is to be taken seriously the sector and its partner organisations need to develop novel ways to protect civic space. Fairer distribution of funds, implementation of capacity strengthening activities and new forms of partnership are all essential, but partners need also to be aware of the space and the context in which local actors are able to operate. Roepstorff questions who is considered a local actor, (locally registered organisations and local branches of international NGOs?) and what roles are they given to play. She points out that local humanitarian organisations, particularly those working on environmental or human rights issues, are rarely seen as neutral, and put themselves at high risk in their response efforts. She recommends an assessment of the local political context and its laws and regulations in relation to permits for operating being granted and withdrawn. This is particularly the case in relation to migration and displacement activities, where permission for most local response in the Mediterranean, for example has now been withdrawn as govenments take over the management of migrants allowing only limited access to INGOs into camps and hostels.

While in some ways the Covid 19 pandemic has accentuated the localisation agenda leading to the withdrawal of INGO staff and stringent travel restrictions on international travel, local NGOs have also been affected by lockdown laws, preventing some local organisations from moving within regions and providing additional powers to governments to limit civic space. Increased local management enables local actors to direct aid but can make them more vulnerable to government restrictions, vigilante attacks or even criminalisation (Roepstorff 2021). In localising their agenda donors therefore need to look at a) the political and civic space in which local NGOs operate, their risk of smear campaigns or attack and ways in which they can be supported and c) involvement in an ongoing dialogue between CSOs and governments on the importance of protecting principled humanitarian action.

Decolonising Development

Decolonising development has only just started entering the literature despite the commitment in the WHS in 2016 to get more means into the hands of people in need and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian action. The Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 force development organisations to look more closely into what this mean for INGOs and donor organisations based in the West.

A 3 day consultation organised by Peace Direct, the Alliance for Peacebuilding, and Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security in 2021 found that many attitudes and practices in the aid

sector are derived from the colonial era and that structural racism is deeply embedded within the sector, in language, organisational structures and power dynamics benefitting the global North and reinforcing the 'White Saviour/ white gaze'. The resulting publication under the heading 'Time to Decolonise Aid' (2021) makes some clear recommendations for donors, INGOs and Policy makers, including

- Acknowledge that structural racism exists and acknowledge that there is a collective responsibility to tackle the problem, encourage conversations with grantees and communities about the power dynamics that influence the relationships between funder and grantee or INGO and local partner.
- Create space for change, especially for those with marginalised identities, and expect and encourage those groups to question the current system and the power relations that underpin it. Mind your language. End the use of outdated language such as 'beneficiaries' and involve communities in choosing new ways of describing terms that are no longer appropriate.
- Encourage an internal organisational culture of openness to critique, and ensure that this is cognisant of gender, age and any other factors that might impact someone's willingness to critique. Fund courageously and trust generously.
- À Recruit differently, and in particular reassess the need for recruiting expatriate staff for any position based overseas. Commit to recruiting a greater diversity of staff in offices in the global North. Invest in indigenous knowledge creation and value local knowledge

These recommendations also see INGOs as part of the problem, particularly the practice of maintaining country offices, answerable to those in the West. They recommend that INGOs

End the practice of 'White gaze' fundraising and audit your communications through a 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' lens.

Adopt a transition mindset for organisational strategies, which puts in place clear milestones for the transfer of power and resources to local organisations. Such a transition mindset should be enshrined in clear organisational strategies that measure success according to the extent to which an INGO is reducing, rather than expanding, its traditional organisational footprint.

Avoid localisation spin. Don't reframe 'localisation' to defend a particular organisational position or to justify the status quo.

Re-evaluate partnerships with local organisations so that they are more equitable, and mutually accountable, and support and strengthen local leadership and sustainability.

They recommend that all individuals working in the sector: Reflect on your identity and motivations for working in the sector, and what privileges and 'baggage' you bring to your work, remain humble, Shift access and power to those who don't have it, in whatever ways you can and organise and connect to networks and groups that support this agenda.

In addition to the above Cost Action – a four year project 2020 is working to reconstruct development resetting and diversifying structures institutions and spaces in which knowledge about and for development is produced.

The London School of Economics, the Universities of Sussex, Manchester and IDS among institutions offering courses and seminars on decolonising development.

4. Key Differences in Guidance Given and Implications for joint Development/Diplomacy outcomes

Where most guidelines agree on the principles or ways of working with CSOs (transparency, accountability, policy dialogue, facilitating a favourable environment and with an eye to long term as well as short term results, there is more divergence in strategies for approaching this. USAID recognises a single unit for the implementation of work with CSOs while others recommend CSO collaboration in every sector of development corporation and across government working. The Swiss openly offer 'access to Swiss expertise' in capacity development, while Italy do not fund capacity development of Southern organisations but supports them as partners of Italian CSOs in individual projects.

France is the only country that mentions the decolonisation of aid, which is integral to localisation and the valuing of local knowledge but not mentioned by any other guidelines. Italy also commits firmly to 'results-based management' and while adaptive management is not currently mentioned in FCDO or other literatures, Systems Thinking and adaptive programme design is actively being introduced through a range of Systems and Complexity oriented initiatives.

There have been comparatively few changes in guidance over this ten year period, but a notable shift in focus towards prioritising localisation and with the rise of identity politics a need to consider the ways in which Southern and Northern partners work together.

While there is no specific reference to conflicts between development and diplomacy initiatives The German Federal Foreign office publishes a series of guidelines for its direct grants to civil society organisations in Eastern countries and Russia. These are specifically intended to facilitate ''discussion and understanding outside the realm of politics and across national borders and to enable them to play a core role as key actors and important partners in governance'' (https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/europe/cooperation-with-civil-society/373732). Rather than engaging in service provision or development activities this programme aims to provide comprehensive support to 'the transformation and internal integration processes via collaboration between German civil society and civil societies of the Eastern Partnership' (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia). In an approach not dissimilar to the UK's British Council, they support cultural and civic education projects as a way to enhance social cohesion and the establishment of civil society structures in the region and to promote the foundations of a fundamental free, democratic and pluralist order' across urban and rural areas. Their aims, of building trust and promoting democratic values differ from those voiced in many other guidelines provided for development corporation.

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